TEACHER IDENTITY AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY: AN EXPLORATION THROUGH LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the meaning of ethical responsibility as a fundamental feature of teacher identity. While there is a tendency to construct both responsibility and teacher identity in terms of instructional practice, agency, and competency, this research foregrounds understudied complexes of dependency, uncertainty, and failure. Drawing on continental philosophy and psychoanalysis, I frame teacher identity from the vantage of concepts of natality, hospitality, and relationality to illuminate a central conflict of responsibility that places the teacher in a tension between an idealized conception of egoless passivity and the emotional situation of an ego-based affect of self-preservation and ego interests. Conflict and anxieties result, constituting the teacher's emotional world. Through my investigation of this tension, I offer critique of the all-loving teacher figure by exposing how this idealization conceals the implication of education in discourses of aggression, exclusion, and social control. Literary portrayals of child/adult and student/teacher relationships in novels provide novel data to examine these tensions.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

I feel lost and a bit absurd—as if I were tilting at windmills which aren't there, or shouting in an empty tunnel. I keep trying to remember who I am.
(Kaufman, 1964/2019, p. 120)

In Bel Kaufman's *Up the Down Staircase*, protagonist Sylvia Barrett describes to a colleague what she is feeling as a new teacher, capturing the experience of being a teacher: feelings of disorientation, loss of self, and uncertainty. Written from the point of view of a fictional teacher, this novel provides a lens through which to consider teacher identity. As a teacher myself, I find that narratives of teaching often focus on the teacher's institutional identity through depictions of linear progression toward the acquisition of knowledge, skills, strategies, and practices that will bolster student achievement. Sylvia's thoughts here allude instead to an alternative narrative of the teacher's unknowingness, her surprise, and her confusion.

Preliminary Thoughts on Teacher Identity

This dissertation draws on narratives, both fictional and nonfictional, to speculate about the ethical qualities of teaching insofar as teaching involves an openness to a radical obligation that exceeds the known rules governing the teacher's institutional role, in a professional sense. When I entered the profession over 25 years ago, I viewed my teacher identity in terms of gaining the requisite skills and knowledge pertaining to instructional and assessment practices, as well as developing a comprehensive understanding of subject-specific knowledge. I felt that with enough time, practice, dedication, and hard work, I would transform into a competent,

empowered, and effective teacher who would connect with accepting students and make a difference in their lives. I quickly realized, however, that my teacher identity extended far beyond the writing of detailed day plans, the implementation of well-crafted lessons, and the assessment of student achievement. Like Sylvia, I too felt lost, and discovered that my teacher identity also included dynamics of failure, unpredictability, vulnerability, obligation, and rejection. My dissertation turns to characters in novels who are positioned as teachers in order to explore how these dynamics affect teacher identity.

Teacher identity is comprised of one's social positioning (e.g., race, gender, class), one's professional and personal roles (e.g., roles of parent, spouse, administrator), and one's relationships with others (e.g., students, colleagues, friends). As these social and relational dynamics intersect, impact one another, and change at different periods of one's life, identity consistently shapes and re-shapes itself in response to shifting roles, daily encounters with others, and life experiences. Sharon Todd (2015) underscores the relational nature of identity, as well as its "impermanence" (p. 244), in her description of the Buddhist idea of the "non-self" (p. 244). In Buddhism, selfhood results from "the myriad relations we make in the world and the attachments we make to these relations" (Todd, 2015, p. 244). Consistent with this concept of identity, I theorize teacher identity in this dissertation as always in a state of flux and as a continuously evolving process of pedagogical interactions with students. The fluidity of the teacher's identity is amplified by her encounters with and attachments to many students and through her work in the ever-changing school environment, in which each new school year brings forth new students and relationships.[1]

Through probing the psychoanalytic dynamics that shape teacher identity beyond the teacher's institutional role, such as the unconscious, desire, and imagination, and examining the

teacher's ethical responsibility as theorized by continental thinkers within the philosophy of education, I add to the current literature on teacher identity through a unique approach that involves using literature as my data sources. The five texts I analyze feature white women who are teachers and teacher-like figures. While I do not engage in a sustained and in-depth interrogation of race, I pinpoint unconscious aspects of identity that unravel the stereotype of the white female teacher as a selfless, altruistic, saviour who unwaveringly cares for and rescues her students. In this unraveling, my study exposes how such idealized qualities are also less-than-ideal: where love is inflected with aggression, where welcoming narratives of inclusion are laced with anxiety and hostility, and where teaching itself is filtered through conflicts of both love and hate. Using literary portrayals of teachers and their students, I maintain that there is much to learn about the idea of *failure*, as this relates to the ethical demands of the profession and insofar as teaching is saturated with conflicts, uncertainties, and anxieties. I turn to novels to examine representations of pedagogical responsibility bearing in mind the teacher's dependency on Others and her radical exposure to all she does not know about her students and herself.[2]

Ethical Responsibility and Relationality

Ethical responsibility is a foundational aspect of my exploration of teacher identity. For an understanding of responsibility, I turn to Claudia Ruitenberg (2011a) whose work focuses on philosophical understandings of education and centres on Jacques Derrida's (1997/2000) concept of hospitality. Ruitenberg (2011a) examines the word "response" and highlights its root "spon," meaning "to engage, promise, or bind oneself" (p. 137). Based on this definition, one's responsibility to another might be conceived of in terms of response, as an act of binding oneself to another. Madeleine Grumet's (1988) understanding of responsibility stems from her work in curriculum and feminist theory and takes into account the influences of maternal attachment and

gender in teaching. Grumet (1988) suggests that human beings are inextricably bound to one another from the moment of birth: "We not only survive the birth of our children, but from the moment of their conception, their time and ours intermingle, each defining the other" (p. 19). The idea of maternal responsibility is picked up by Aparna Mishra Tarc (2015) who similarly views response from the perspective of entering the world as dependents, with maternal attachments. Drawing on Melanie Klein's thoughts on the infant's first attachment to her mother, she contends that "human subjectivity is continuously forming in response to our need of (m)others" (Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 34). Response, therefore, is an inevitable consequence of being born. Birth instigates response, the requirement to respond.

Sharon Todd's (2003) framing of responsibility emerges from her work with Emmanuel Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) concept of the Other. Todd (2003) grounds ethics in a call to respond, or what she views as a nonviolent response to otherness in the form of "an attentiveness to and the preservation of this alterity of the Other" (p. 3). At the same time, Todd (2003) points out that this ethical responsibility, in the form of a response that preserves the alterity of the Other, is complicated by the "layers of affect and conflict that specifically emerge out of an encounter with otherness" (p. 4). It is this 'affect and conflict' that establish the basis for my thinking as I seek to identify the specific tensions that emanate from ethical responsibility. Simon Critchley (1999/2009) describes Levinas' concept of an ethical responsibility as a passive act insofar as the "Levinasian ethical subject is a sentient self (*un soi sentant*) before being a thinking ego (*un moi pensant*)" (p. 194). This idea of the non-thinking ego is reiterated in Todd's (2003) reference to Levinas' concept of "egoless passivity" towards the Other (p. 13). Every teacher, however, brings her own ego into her pedagogical encounters with students and, with this, her desires and fantasies, her own history of learning, and her vulnerabilities and fears. I am

proposing a study of teacher identity that delves into the teacher's ethical responsibility, as she is caught between idealized conceptions of Levinasian "egoless passivity" (Todd, 2003, p. 13) and the embodiment of a real person with hopes, dreams, and anxieties.

Using as theoretical lenses the ideas of continental philosophers such as Emmanuel Levinas (1982/1985, 1974/1998), Jacques Derrida (1997/2000), and Hannah Arendt (1977), I critically reflect on commonly-held notions of teacher identity, and specifically constructions of white women teachers, which I contend are rife with unacknowledged failures that take shape in a range of mishaps, mistakes, and mis-guided projections of anxiety, frustration, anger, and love. Critchley (2001) explains that "the appeal of Continental philosophy is that it seems closer to the grain and detail of human existence. It seems truer to the drama of life, to the stuff of human hopes and fears" (p. 11). Hence, concepts of continental philosophy offer a perspective through which to explore the drama of educational life, including the hopes and fears of the teacher. Underneath the idealization inherent in the common construction of the white heroic teacher hailed to rescue children and the world from its many failures, my dissertation frames responsibility within the idea of relationships to Others, fraught as these relationships are with uncertainty, anxiety, ordinary failures, and conflicts of love and even hostility. My key research questions are as follows:

1. How might a study of the relational qualities of teaching, as represented in literary works, affect conceptualizations of responsibility and identity in educational research and practice?
2. How can ethical concepts drawn from continental philosophy help us re-think the common trope of the rescue fantasy embodied in the figure of the white woman teacher?

3. How can literary representations of student/teacher relationships inform our understandings of both ethics and responsibility as the relational foundation of teacher identity?

Too often, teaching is constructed as something that one applies to others, such as students, rather than as affecting the teacher herself (Britzman, 2003). Ethnographer and psychoanalytic theorist Deborah Britzman (2003) illuminates the emotional situation of new teachers in her seminal text *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*. In Britzman's (2003) words, sadly, ignored are "the rich complexities born of social interaction, subjective experience, dependency, and struggle" of what teachers do (p. 65). I am particularly interested in how these 'rich complexities' reveal themselves through literary representations of women teachers, with a view to complicate and challenge the assumed whiteness of both teaching and teachers. In a contemporary climate of accountability, standardized testing, and an intensified focus on learning goals and outcomes, teacher identities have been enveloped by the language of accountability, where accountability is measured by details of daily tasks and duties: lesson planning, assessment and evaluation, reporting, and instructional practice.

William Pinar (2012) describes a perception of learning based on "test scores" as an autocratic environment in which teachers have limited freedom and are answerable to a predetermined curriculum, and a perception which fails to treat teaching as an "intellectual" endeavour (pp. 40-41). Teaching has become a practical and technical act which has resulted in the "deintellectualisation of teachers and teaching" (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 111). Matthew Clarke and Anne Phelan (2017) write about the impact of government-imposed "professional standards" which emphasize "the skills and behaviours that teachers need to perform rather than the intellectual or ethical dispositions teachers should cultivate" (p. 60). In a sizeable portion of

studies on teacher identity, what it means to be an educator tends to coalesce into the institutional side of the teacher's role (Kempe & Reed, 2014; Nolan, 2016; Ticknor & Cavendish, 2015; Trent, 2013). In these studies, teacher identity is conceptualized through indicators of professional growth around instructional practice, agency, and competency. However, Todd (2003) suggests that "teachers are more than institutional agents" (p. 143) and stresses that the role of the teacher extends beyond her adherence to policy, procedures, and rules dictated by the institution (pp. 142-144). For Todd (2003), the ethical qualities of the teacher's identity exceed codes of conduct and regulations because of the human qualities of teaching; these qualities engender more questions than answers.

Drawing on Todd (2003), my dissertation examines the relational aspects of ethical responsibility and existence, with a focus on how the teacher's identity is constructed in the complex space between self and Other. In doing so, I note a gap in the research on teacher identity with its inclination to construct responsibility as both an individual and institutional act that can be developed, easily applied, and carried out with the right knowledge. What gets missed in this construction are the relational qualities of an ethically oriented responsibility that link teacher identity to less idealistic visions of education encompassing dependency, uncertainty, unknowingness, and failure. In sum, this dissertation brings together philosophy and psychoanalysis to explore teacher identity, with a focus on relationships. As the result of undertaking this exploration, I urge those of us in the profession to upend the stereotype of the white teacher to the rescue, embrace conflict as the ethical foundation of teacher identity, and welcome more divergent constructions of who teachers are and the work teachers do.

Bringing Together Philosophy and Psychoanalysis

For my study, I offer a theoretical framework founded upon three philosophical concepts: natality (Arendt, 1977), hospitality (Derrida, 1997/2000), and nonviolent relationality (Levinas, 1982/1985, 1974/1998). These concepts, which will each be explored through novels in three separate chapters, can be read as principles that inform, in ideal terms, how to co-exist with and welcome the Other with radical openness, create a space in which the Other's uniqueness is preserved, and allow her alterity to revitalize the world. Hannah Arendt's (1977) concept of natality will be explored first in this dissertation. Arendt was a political philosopher who can be counted among a critical group of continental thinkers (such as Theodor Adorno, Jacques Derrida, and Emmanuel Levinas) who sought to re-think several concepts and issues in the aftermath of the atrocities of the second World War. Among these concepts are responsibility, totalitarianism, democracy, and authority. Although the focus of her work was not education, Arendt did address education in one essay entitled "The Crisis in Education." In this piece, Arendt (1977) offers the idea that the fate of the world rests on the newness of the children born into it; it is through their natality that a tired and worn-out world is revitalized. However, too much natality unleashed upon the world can also be destructive if not managed. In the context of education, Arendt's (1977) discussion constructs the teacher's ethical responsibility in the twin terms of: a) conserving the natality of children and b) protecting the world from the potential destructiveness of too much natality.

The second philosophical concept studied in this dissertation is Jacques Derrida's (1997/2000) hospitality. Derrida was a French philosopher whose writings explore politics and religion, forgiveness and reconciliation, and cosmopolitanism and immigration. Derrida's (1997/2000) concept of hospitality, which addresses the idea of the foreigner seeking asylum,

has been taken up in education by scholars such as Claudia Ruitenberg (2016). Viewing hospitality and ethics as one and the same, Derrida (1997/2000) theorizes a framework of hosts and guests: the host responds to the guest by offering the guest a space, without placing conditions on the guest or expecting reciprocation.

The final concept I will be examining is Emmanuel Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) nonviolent relationality. Levinas was a French philosopher who was known for his reconceptualization of philosophy from primarily a study of knowledge and being (i.e., 'what is?') to a study of ethics (i.e., 'what is better?'). For Levinas (1982/1985, 1974/1998), ethics is set into motion by physical proximity to an Other, which, for him, constitutes a radically unknowable existence that refuses the grasp promised by reason. In encountering the face of an Other, ethics hinges on responding to the Other's radical alterity without thematization or categorization, that is, without knowing who, how, or why.

Serving as idealized conceptions of co-existence, embodying the perfection contained within these three philosophical principles becomes an impossibility. Psychoanalytically, tensions surface when these concepts come up against ego-based notions of gender, guilt, transference, and self-preservation. The novels I have selected feature teacher figures who are characterized through these tensions, and, as mentioned, are white women. The aim of my analysis in this dissertation is to expose the conflicts that simmer underneath the ideals that otherwise dominate normative discourses of 'good' teaching and the profession itself. The teachers of each novel embody a range of conflicts: they struggle to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives, they carry unacknowledged privilege and pain, they project guilt onto their students, and they take refuge from these very conflicts in fantasied ideals of their own heroism.

In considering the ethical responsibility of educators through these tensions, teacher identity shifts from being about the institutional and practical idealization of the teacher's role to being about the complexities and emotionality of being a teacher. The teacher is transformed from a two-dimensional institutional figure—who is often depicted as altruistic and selfless, who is perceived as existing solely within the walls of her classroom, who is considered a finished and fully-formed individual once she graduates from university and enters the profession as a 'real' teacher—to a three-dimensional individual who is always in the process of becoming, who has lived experiences, fantasies, desires, and emotion, and who is defined through who she is as opposed to the technical aspects of what she does (Britzman, 2003). The teacher becomes a real person: a flawed individual who is at once susceptible to others while also grappling with ego-protection, and has a childhood that haunts and a history of dreams and failures. My interpretation of identity seeks to expose these dual facets of the teacher, positioned as she is between her radical exposure to the Other and the cultivation of her own boundaries and desires, and by her life circumstances and chances.

In essence, in bringing together ethical responsibility and identity, my goal is to bridge the gap between two distinct theoretical frameworks: a philosophical egoless passivity that is other-oriented and an ego-based affect that acknowledges the emotional realities of teaching (Britzman, 2003; Stearns, 2013). One way of gaining insight into how identity is shaped in the midst of these two frameworks is through literature. In praising the use of literature to inform reality, Mishra Tarc (2015) suggests that "novel engagements are key to renewing complex, intertwining narratives of human coexistence" (p. 131). Following this, I employ novels as sites for theorizing the teacher's ethical responsibility towards her students. Literary depictions of teachers offer possibilities for redefining their work and interactions with students, as well as

developing new understandings of the dynamics and complexities involved in those pedagogical interactions.

Novels as Sites for Theorizing

I have chosen the following novels as sites to theorize teacher identity and ethical responsibility: *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Spark, 1961/2000), *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal* (Heller, 2003), *The Children Act* (McEwan, 2015), *Klara and the Sun* (Ishiguro, 2021), and *Educated* (Westover, 2018). One of these texts, *Educated*, is a memoir and not a novel. Still, I use the term 'novel' loosely throughout this dissertation to refer to literary pieces. I also use this term in reference to the philosophical concepts that form the basis for my exploration of teacher identity and ethical responsibility. Natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality centre the newness of a unique Other and gesture toward a singular individual who has never been before. The teachers I examine are all novel subjects, singular and unique Others who do not adhere to stereotypical depictions of teachers. My hope is that an examination of these novel teachers will illuminate new and unique readings of teaching and the work of teachers as informed by theoretical, philosophical, and psychoanalytical constructs. Furthermore, by turning to literary representations of teachers, I offer a novel approach to educational scholarship that departs from more conventional research of teaching and learning that tends to rely on the narratives of actual teachers (to be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two). I propose that literary representations of teachers represent aspects of teacher identity that may not surface in the narratives of actual teachers, such as aggression, anxiety, egoism, and control. The idea of what is novel also carries personal implications for me, not only as a researcher and author of this dissertation, but also as a teacher. Exploring the novel teachers in the books I have

selected has allowed me to access previously unconsidered and hidden aspects of my own teacher identity.

In a subsequent chapter, I provide more detailed summaries of these selected novels and also elaborate on my rationale for choosing them. For now, I wish to point out that all of the selected novels feature female protagonists. Three of these protagonists are 'traditional teachers' in that they teach students at schools; the other three are not traditional teachers, but are rather adults in a range of positions of authority and care. Ironically, I found that I needed to include representations of teaching beyond classroom depictions to lay bare the conflicts of responsibility that my dissertation unfolds, that are more often repressed in the name of the teaching profession. While the three characters in question here are not teachers in a traditional sense, their actions, conundrums, and dilemmas nonetheless reference these conflicts of influence, authority, and responsibility in ways that *do* concern the work of teachers.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie is the story of Jean Brodie, a teacher in 1930s Edinburgh whose teacher identity is depicted through the unhealthy attachment she develops to six of her students. In *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal*, Barbara Covett and Sheba Hart are contemporary teachers at the same school in London. Developing a close bond, their teacher identities are revealed as they share with one another their insecurities, desires, and beliefs, and navigate the consequences of a sexual relationship between Sheba and a student. *Klara and the Sun* presents a futuristic society in which children are educated at home through a virtual form of schooling; life-like robots, called artificial friends, have been designed to care for and keep children company. The protagonist, Klara, becomes a robotic friend to Josie. While Klara is not a teacher in the traditional sense, she is positioned as a teacher-like figure.

The Children Act is the only novel in which there is little mention of schooling; however, protagonist Fiona Maye develops a close and transformative relationship with a 17-year-old boy and her identity, like that of a teacher, is formed through and fundamentally impacted by her interactions with him. *Educated* stands apart from all of these novels. As noted earlier, it is not fictional like the other novels. Instead, *Educated* is the memoir of Tara Westover who recounts a childhood in which she did not go to school, the challenges she encountered to get into university, and her eventual success in obtaining a doctoral degree. I use Tara's story to theorize teacher identity and ethical responsibility in the absence of the adult teacher figure. I also contend that Tara is both a student and a teacher: as a child she teaches herself and eventually becomes a university student. *Educated* is the last text I explore in this dissertation and appears right before my concluding chapter. As such, it marks a transition from the fictional world of novels to the reality of our current-day educational system and leads the way for a discussion in my final chapter of how one might apply the ideas I present in the real world.

My decision to use novels in order to theorize ethical responsibility will also be described more thoroughly later on. In short, I might have used interviews with actual teachers instead. I believe, however, that literary representations of teaching offer a fruitful source of data that might not otherwise be obtained. Reflecting on my own teacher experiences and interactions with colleagues, the prevalent teacher narrative is one of selflessness and dedication, making a difference, developing good instructional practice, and increasing student achievement. I wonder if interviewing teachers would reveal alternative narratives of less acceptable thoughts and feelings that teachers might be too ashamed or embarrassed to admit; I have chosen novels to expose precisely these concealed thoughts and feelings.

In the chapter to follow, I begin by providing an overview of current research pertaining to teacher identity to situate the theoretical foundation for my own exploration and approach. I will show how there is a proclivity in the literature to construct teacher identity in terms of instructional practice measured through self-efficacy and individual agency, amid a smaller body of research that unravels the tensions emerging from, on the one hand, the teacher's personal imaginings of her work and, on the other, the constrictive terms of the institution. In Chapter Three, I present the concepts of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality and consider how these principles impact teacher identity and the enactment of the teacher's role. In Chapter Four, I describe my methodology and why I chose to use five novels as my data sources, why I selected these five novels in particular, and my reading process. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven are devoted to discussions of the novels and each of the philosophical concepts. In the concluding chapter, I provide a commentary on the implications of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality for teacher identity in today's educational climate.

Endnotes:

1. Because my examination of teacher identity focuses on female teachers and how gender is constructed, in the feminine sense, in education and in the teaching profession, I will be using the female pronouns 'she' and 'her' throughout this dissertation. The female pronoun is also used to disrupt the masculine pronoun that has been the default in the history of educational scholarship.

2. At times, the lower case will be used for the words 'other' and 'others.' At times, however, these words will be capitalized when I am referring to the 'Other' or 'Others' in a Levinasian sense.

CHAPTER TWO
THREE FIGURAL FRAMINGS OF TEACHER IDENTITY

> Outwardly she differed from the rest of the teaching staff in that she was still in a state of fluctuating development, whereas they had only too understandably not trusted themselves to change their minds, particularly on ethical questions, after the age of twenty. There was nothing Miss Brodie could not yet learn, she boasted of it.
> (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 43)

A review of the literature reveals numerous approaches to the research in recent years on teacher identity. Of these, I highlight three that frame teacher identity quite differently: one approach formulates teacher identity in terms of instructional practice, professional competency and efficacy, and the development of agency; another approach explores autobiographical influences and how cultural histories and childhood experiences of learning shape identity; a third approach considers identity from the vantage of emotion and conflict. The first approach I discuss in the section that follows is quite distinct from my research purposes and presents a conception of identity that is in opposition to the nuanced depiction of teacher identity that I seek. The second approach I describe comes closer to a nuanced depiction but still illustrates teacher identity linearly, with autobiographical narratives of improvement, progress, and agency. I then consider an alternative approach that is most consistent with my exploration of identity, portraying the teacher as conflicted, flawed, and emotional, and is the literature on which I strive to build.

Competence and Confidence: Developing the Effective Teacher

But Sheba was growing increasingly disconsolate. *She* did not feel that she had become a more competent teacher. On the contrary, she felt that she had surrendered to the "complacency" of the rest of the staff.
(Heller, 2003, p. 80)

In one approach to the research, teacher identity is conceptualized through a presentation of the effective, competent, and confident teacher. To this end, researchers examine the factors that inhibit and/or promote the agency and confidence of both preservice and inservice teachers (Kelley et al., 2020; Kempe & Reed, 2014; Melville & Bartley, 2013; Nolan, 2016; Trent, 2013), the benefits of forming strong bonds with others such as colleagues and mentors (Ticknor & Cavendish, 2015), how new teachers navigate various authoritative discourses of teacher education programs and student teaching experiences in the development of instructional practice (Sydnor, 2014), the impact of cultural backgrounds on teacher identity (Haddix, 2010; Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016), and the challenges faced by preservice teachers (Correa et al., 2014; Haddix, 2010; Sydnor, 2014; Vetter et al., 2013). Typically, teacher identity in this research is connected to emerging professional identities, the development of agentive and effective teachers, and growth in instructional practice. In general, identity construction is portrayed as following a linear path, from a lack of agency, confidence, and knowledge to an eventual state of having acquired these. This view of teacher identity has, in fact, become so widely accepted that it shapes teacher education programs. Kumashiro (2009) looks at teacher education programs in the United States "to examine the popular images of 'good teachers' that seem to inform the ways that we are preparing our future teachers" (p. 5). Teacher education programs are premised upon notions of linear progression of a movement "from foundational knowledge to advanced knowledge" (Kumashiro, 2009, p. 7) and the fallacy that teachers will eventually reach a point at which they have obtained the requisite amount of knowledge to be effective in their roles

(Kumashiro, 2009, pp. 7-8). Furthermore, based again on the notion of gaining more knowledge, preservice and inservice teachers are encouraged to engage in research, and this research tends to be based on classroom management and instructional practice (Kumashiro, 2009, pp. 10-12).

Certainly, the teacher's sense of her competence, as well as her self-confidence, may be needed to muster the courage to stand in front of the class (Britzman, 2006). Furthermore, teacher agency and feelings of empowerment and effectiveness (or lack thereof) factor into her identity construction. Arguably, the more agency a teacher has to enact the kind of teacher she imagines and/or wants to be will impact her identity, and her self-perception as either an effective or an ineffective teacher. The tendency of research, however, to focus on developing confidence and efficacy presumes a highly individualized construction of identity that can be sculpted into the right shape and size and fails to acknowledge both the social structures in which teachers work and the relational qualities of teaching. This individualized perception of what it means to become a teacher, in turn, perpetuates a linear and reductive conception of identity which can be summarized by the sentiment that given time all teachers will achieve success and fulfillment in their chosen profession; arguably, any less-than-competent feelings, that also emerge from the ethical work of teaching, dissolve in the wake of assumed confidence and competence that comes with experience. This perception also detracts from an analysis of the societal contexts of schooling that fail to welcome the teacher's social identity, relying on heteronormative ideas of the teacher that exclude those whose identities fall outside of white, middle-class women (Robertson, 1997).

Autobiographical Narratives of Improvement, Progress, and Agency

You girls are my vocation … I am dedicated to you in my prime.
(Spark, 1961/2000, p. 23)

Another approach in the literature on identity is to examine the ways in which autobiographical experiences shape identity and the teacher's embodiment of the role. Britzman (2003) points out that when teachers begin their careers they bring "the force of their own history of learning" (p. 1) and that teacher identity is formed "from a conflict in and with … flurries of autobiography" (p. 20). Consistent with these ideas, the impact on professional identity of previous schooling experiences, as well as life experiences, is the focus of a number of studies. Some of these studies show the benefits of reflecting on previous schooling experiences and postulate that reflection can be a source of insight and transformation. Hsieh (2016) examines preservice secondary teachers' perspectives of literacy instruction. She concludes that personal experiences of language learning, combined with current and new models of literacy instruction introduced through teacher education coursework, shape professional identities (Hsieh, 2016, p. 109). Furthermore, she identifies the value of opportunities to reflect on and question past experiences of schooling in order to consider alternative instructional models, as new teachers construct their professional identities (Hsieh, 2016, p. 109). Jackson et al. (2010) research the experiences of Mexican American bilingual educators in order to identify connections between histories of language learning and current instructional practice. Drawing on the premise that an awareness of one's identity can be transformative (Jackson et al., 2010, p. 30), these bilingual educators discuss and reflect on "ethnic identity, professional identity, knowledge, and experience" (Jackson et al., 2010, p. 32). The bilingual educators of this piece conclude that these opportunities to share and reflect on personal life stories can be beneficial in the construction of identity and the development of agency (Jackson et al., 2010, p. 36). They

describe feelings of support and validation, as well as increased self-awareness (Jackson et al., 2010, p. 31). Boyd et al. (2013) study the value of having preservice teachers reflect on past schooling experiences through the medium of online blogging. Their findings suggest that reflective blogging can provide an effective way for preservice teachers to make connections between past schooling experiences and current teaching practices, with a desired outcome of challenging these experiences and practices to create "a space for pedagogical change" (Boyd et al., 2013, p. 46). DiCerbo and Baker (2021) examine the benefits of autobiographical writing of teachers in rural settings. Specifically, they look at "a cultural autobiography assignment" in which experienced and new teachers reflect on their cultural histories to "consider their own culture in relation to their students' cultures" (DiCerbo & Baker, 2021, p. 96). A number of themes emerge from these personal narratives, including the influences of religious backgrounds, race, socioeconomic status, and privilege (DiCerbo & Baker, 2021, pp. 101-104). They conclude that autobiographical writing can be transformative in the development of agentive teacher identities that enable teachers "to approach teaching from culturally based perspectives" (DiCerbo & Baker, 2021, p. 106).

The two approaches to the research described in the previous sections provide some understanding of the ways in which identity is constructed. In these approaches teacher identity is generally connected to how increased confidence, agency, and self-awareness can lead to improvements in instructional practice. Furthermore, there is a tendency in these approaches to construct identity in relationship to resolvable issues and fixed outcomes that frame teaching and teacher identity from the perspective of overcoming conflict, as well as assume normative ideas of the teacher as white, middle class, and heterosexual. There is certainly value in researching factors that shape agency and increase confidence, the effects of professional dialogue and

forming bonds with colleagues and mentors, and how previous schooling experiences impact practice. There is also value in the use of autobiographical depictions of teaching and teacher narratives to enhance understanding of the teacher's role and how she forms her professional identity. However, Miller (2005) refers to the ways in which these depictions of teacher identity can "simply reinforce stationary, predetermined, and resolved versions of our selves and work" (p. 54). Britzman (2003) suggests that being a teacher is not about finding answers and solutions but about, "the oddest conditions and circumstances of *not learning* … [that] will be extremely significant to the matter of who we think we are as we become subjected to and subjects in education" (p. 2). To complicate and build on the depictions of teacher identity from these two approaches, deepen an understanding of what it means to be a teacher, and bring forth the ethical tensions, emotional conflicts, elusive and unresolvable qualities of being a teacher, I offer an alternative approach of literature. This approach conceptualizes the ethical qualities of teaching as less about finding an answer to uncertainty and more as a capacity to sit with complexity, where the relational question of ethics—or ethics itself as a question—is the foundation of teaching.

The Conflicted, Flawed, Emotional Teacher

> The distance—physical and mental—that had been traversed in the last decade nearly stopped my breath, and I wondered if perhaps I had changed *too* much. All my studying, reading, thinking, traveling, had it transformed me into someone who no longer belonged anywhere? (Westover, 2018, p. 312)

Miller (2005) suggests that we need to "pry open identity categories that still frame much of how teaching, learning … are conceptualized and enacted" (p. 55). To further 'pry open' and complicate teacher identity as conveyed in the previous two approaches to research on teacher identity, the approach described in the paragraphs to follow draws on notions of responsibility and relationality as the foundation of the teacher's identity, and brings forth psychoanalytic

aspects of identity including those of unconscious desire, object use, obligation, and rescue fantasies, as well as the dynamics of love, aggression, and control in education. Unlike the previously-discussed explorations of identity, this literature is distinguished in that scholars working in this area do not seek answers or link these ideas to improvements in practice and competency, nor is this their aim. Beyond discourses of improvement, psychoanalytic scholars take as axiomatic the notion that identity is an intricate and ongoing construction, much of it inaccessible even to ourselves, that provokes constant thought and more questioning (Britzman, 2006, 2009; Janzen, 2015; Lewkowich, 2012; Stearns, 2016; Taubman, 2006). The work that is outlined in what follows examines how discourse impacts teacher identity; recounts teacher stories of failure, loss, and disengagement from the profession; challenges assumptions of whiteness and heterosexuality by bringing forth the experiences of teachers who identify as Black and LGBTQ+; and describes how literature and film can be used to enhance understandings of teacher identity.

Discourses that Shape Identity

Britzman (2003) introduces to discussions of teacher identity Bakhtin's notion of authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse. Authoritative discourse is "static knowledge" with "the power to authorize subjects" (Britzman, 2003, p. 42) while internally persuasive discourse is "a many-voiced and heteroglossic discourse" that is fluid and encourages creativity and questioning (Britzman, 2003, pp. 42-43). At times in conflict with one another, these discourses can impact identity as they lead to the formation of ideals and value systems and dictate ways of being. In Bakhtin's words, these "determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior" (as cited in Britzman, 2003, pp. 41-42). Building on these ideas, Britzman (2003) strives for a "dialogic understanding" (p. 31) of

teaching by exploring how both forms of discourse shape the identities of two student teachers in high school. She explains that “teaching must be situated in relationship to one’s biography, present circumstances, deep commitments, affective investments, social context, and conflicting discourses about what it means to learn to become a teacher” (Britzman, 2003, p. 31). Through her observations and interviews, Britzman (2003) also uncovers the impact on identity of various myths that configure, and often limit, the discursive imagination of what it means to be a teacher. Too often, she argues, teacher identity is framed within a solutions-based narrative of moving from inexperience to experience, as well as the absence of conflict; this framing fails to capture “the turmoil of learning to teach” (Britzman, 2003, p. 222).

Like Britzman, Janzen (2015) explores the impact of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses on teacher identity. Through a psychoanalytical lens, she analyzes the discourse of six elementary teachers engaged in a book club discussion. She focuses on how teacher identity is affected by authoritative discourses around what it means to be a teacher and, also, a phantasy of identity. She defines this phantasy of identity as “an unconscious desire” to enact her teacher identity differently than what is expected of her in terms of her institutional role (Janzen, 2015, pp. 122-123). Her findings reveal a tension when the teacher’s phantasy of identity intersects with authoritative discourse that stamps out the ambiguities of desire in the demand for efficiency. This intersection may open up a space where being something other than what is prescribed through authoritative discourse becomes a possibility. Janzen (2015) writes that in this space “the subject may consider something previously unthought, lose a part of the self, transition to something new, or attempt to become *teacher* differently” (p. 125).

Personal Stories (of Not-success)

One teacher's withdrawal from teaching, resulting from her relationship with a student whom she defines as challenging, aggressive, and defiant, as well as emotionally distraught and suicidal, is examined by Janzen and Phelan (2018). These researchers explore teacher identity through "the binding responsibility to respond to the other" in a context of difficulty (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 2). In the name of responding ethically, the teacher, Lena, disavows the suggestions of outside experts (the social worker and school psychologist) because she feels they cannot offer help to this student whom they only know through reports and have neither met nor worked with in person (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 6). Janzen and Phelan (2018) describe how the emotional impact of such tremendous obligation can result in the teacher's downfall (p. 8). Lena experiences feelings of incompetence, being overwhelmed, consistent continuous anxiety, and disillusionment with the public education system, as well as isolation from colleagues and, subsequently, resigns early from teaching (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, pp. 8-10). Janzen and Phelan (2018) suggest that Lena's response to this student is akin to those who bear witness to deeply painful aspects of existence that are outside the realm of their own experience (p. 8). Janzen and Phelan (2018) conclude that Lena's ethical obligation, however imperfect, is "undermined by the institution" (p. 10) and the system's valorization of the professional expertise of unknown social workers and school psychologists over human connections (pp. 9-11). Despite Lena's negative experience, Janzen and Phelan (2018) view her story as one of courage and contend that a teacher's sense of obligation and her vulnerability allow for "an openness and hospitality to the possible, however apparently impossible" (p. 11). They also caution against the diagnoses of experts, as these can shut down open and hospitable responses to students (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 11).

Wang (2016) admits to her own feelings of failure through her recount of a negative teaching experience. Drawing on a prevalent concept in educational discourse of the teachable moment, when an "unplanned incident" (Wang, 2016, p. 455) can lead to a mutually-beneficial and fulfilling pedagogical interaction between student and teacher, Wang (2016) theorizes the "unteachable moment" (p. 456). This unteachable moment occurs when a "pedagogical relationship falls apart" (Wang, 2016, p. 456), the student refuses "to engage in meaningful learning" (Wang, 2016, p. 456), and the teacher is unable to reach the student (Wang, 2016, p. 457). Wang (2016) describes a personal unteachable moment, when a relationship with a student breaks down during a university course she is teaching. Adopting a psychoanalytic perspective, Wang (2016) reflects on how this moment allows her to contemplate the impact of her life experiences on her teaching and, particularly, how she projects onto her students the "un-mourned loss" she feels for her motherland and her "Chinese cultural identity" (p. 458). Underscoring the importance of mourning and working through personal loss, as well as feelings of loss and failure when students resist learning and pedagogical relationships shut down, Wang (2016) calls for educators to recognize the generative and transformative potential of unteachable moments and embrace the ways in which these moments can lead to "new understandings" of self and relationality and "create generative pedagogical conditions" (p. 458).

Stearns (2013) also contemplates her own teacher identity and feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and loss arising from her interactions with one student named Alice. Reflecting, like Wang (2016), on mourning as one aspect of student/teacher relationships, Stearns (2013) writes about the importance of mourning the loss of an idealized person (herself as teacher and Alice as student) in order to welcome the "flawed" person (p. 72). In this analytical reflection, Stearns (2013) depicts how Alice's unpredictable and oppositional behaviour and her lack of academic

progress cause Stearns anxiety. Alice has uncontrollable outbursts, is unable to spell or master phonics, and cannot add simple numbers in her head; she is noisy and disruptive; and she is prone to temper tantrums and hysterical crying (Stearns, 2013, pp. 76-79). Stearns' (2013) frank recognition of her own anxiety allows her to come to terms with the student that Alice is, rather than wishing for an idealized student (p. 73). She also comments on the "audit culture" of the present-day educational system in which children are viewed as problems who require solving, and in which teachers embrace diagnoses to relieve their own anxieties when students do not meet developmental expectations and/or adhere to the narrow discourses already in circulation (Stearns, 2013, pp. 74-75).

In another piece, Stearns (2016) employs Winnicott's concept of object use to contemplate teacher identity by positing that the student metaphorically destroys the teacher through acts of passive aggression and non-compliance. Returning to the example of Alice discussed previously, we might think of how students who are oppositional use their teachers as objects. Alice does not believe that she can meet the expectations of her teachers; her behaviour and slow academic progress frustrates them (Stearns, 2013, p. 76). One might read Alice's emotional outbursts and lack of academic progress as attempts to destroy her teachers: perhaps Alice takes comfort in the notion that despite her perceived inability to conform to teacher expectations, teachers continue to return everyday, ready and willing to teach her. From the perspective of object use, teacher identity in Stearns' (2016) conceptualization may be viewed as a psychical labour of surviving psychical destruction—not heroically or even masochistically—but through ordinary acts of returning to class every day, ready to care for and teach her students (p. 196). Object use, Stearns (2016) suggests, allows students to develop their sense of self in that they become more independent, while also coming to believe in the durability of the teacher,

as one who will not be destroyed. Through this process, the teacher comes to be regarded as a "whole person rather than a provisional teacher" (Stearns, 2016, p. 196). This view of teaching and learning, through cycles of destruction and survival, acknowledges the intricate relationships involved in educational settings, constituting not only pleasure but also pain. Stearns (2016) concludes her piece with a call to merge psychoanalysis and teaching: "Considering object use in an educational context also helpfully brings psychoanalytic discourse and an interpretive perspective into an educational framework, allowing for a deepened sense of the nuanced and complicated dynamics that underlie learning" (p. 202). The introduction of psychoanalysis to education provides an opening to discussions about the complicated space between self and Other and allows for a more complex approach to teacher identity, as residing in this conflictive terrain.

Disrupting Normative Constructions of Teacher Identity

Researchers have also sought to develop an understanding of how race intersects with teacher identity and affects relationality between teachers and students. Recognizing that schools are deeply racialized institutions, Johnson (2013) considers how a teacher brings her "whiteness" into the classroom (p. 9) in her examination of one teacher's identity. She highlights this teacher's continuous state of "racial becoming" (Johnson, 2013, p. 26), at times performing an identity of "white fear" in her anticipation of supposed threats of difference (Johnson, 2013, p. 30) and, at other times, "[subverting] whiteness with her students" in moments of openness and critique (Johnson, 2013, p. 28). Bringing autobiographical experiences into the classroom, she undermines her whiteness by poking fun at her husband's dated musical tastes and dance moves (Johnson, 2013, p. 17) but maintains her whiteness in comparisons between her own life

experiences and those of a student who comes from a “black, working-class family” (Johnson, 2013, p. 26).

Brockenbrough (2014) delves into the experiences of Peggy Lee, a white educator who works with Black and Latino queer youth in a community support agency in the United States. Through the theorical lens of “further mothering” (Brockenbrough, 2014, p. 254), Brockenbrough (2014) considers how Lee interacts with the children in her care. The idea of ‘further mothering’ is derived from “other mothering,” a term used to describe Black women educators who have a “deep, motherly investment in black students’ well-being and success” (Brockenbrough, 2014, p. 255). Using this idea, Brockenbrough (2014) highlights Lee’s “motherly devotion” (p. 256) to the youth at the support agency and the identity she forms of an educator who goes above and beyond. Lee shares stories of supporting youth who are “gender transitioning” (Brockenbrough, 2014, p. 259), of finding them food and housing, and of providing individual counseling (Brockenbrough, 2014, p. 260). Although she is praised by some, her whiteness is met with resistance by others, and she gains more credibility upon revealing that she is pansexual (Brockenbrough, 2014, p. 262). She is also criticized by one of the youth she supports for her “savior-messiah complex” (Brockenbrough, 2014, p. 263). Brockenbrough (2014) concludes Lee’s story by underscoring the importance of addressing the “dilemmas of white privilege” among white teachers who work with “youth of color” (p. 263).

In another work, Brockenbrough (2015) looks at how 11 Black male teachers “negotiate their roles as disciplinarians” (p. 499), as well as the expectation that they serve as father figures to Black students who do not have men in their home environments (p. 500). In interviews and two group sessions, some of these teachers describe feelings of “stress, anxiety, or frustration” (Brockenbrough, 2015, p. 507) from the pressure of having to enact a disciplinarian teaching

style that is inconsistent with who they are and what they believe as teachers (Brockenbrough, 2015, pp. 508-509); a "sense of marginality" and disapproval if they decide to use a "nonauthoritarian disciplinary style" (Brockenbrough, 2015, p. 508); and being unfairly cast in the role of the "enforcer who [can] frighten ill-behaved students" (Brockenbrough, 2015, p. 513).

In a third study, Brockenbrough (2012) explores how sexual identities impact relationality between teachers and students. Specifically, Brockenbrough (2012) looks at how Black queer male educators "negotiate the closet within urban schools" (p. 742). In interviews with five teachers who are not "openly queer" at school (Brockenbrough, 2012, p. 750), Brockenbrough (2012) notes a privileging of racial identity over sexual identity: "their sexualities, while significant, [are] not as influential as blackness in shaping their sense of self" (p. 751). Moreover, some participants are more comfortable talking about their "blackness" than their "queerness" (Brockenbrough, 2012, p. 751). The teachers in this study share stories of homophobia from students and some feel the need to "[regulate] their appearance, attire, gender performance, and personal disclosures across contexts in order to monitor their queerness" (Brockenbrough, 2012, pp. 758-759). Brockenbrough (2012) concludes that the closet might be perceived as an "agentive space" that enables teachers to "[navigate] the homophobic milieus" of their schools (p. 761).

In her research, Connell (2016) turns to teacher narratives "about coming out" (p. 599) to explore how "race and homophobia are co-constructed" (pp. 599-600). Connell (2016) discovers a tendency among white teachers, who are lesbian, gay, and straight, to "[racialize] homophobia" (p. 605). For example, one teacher explains his decision to come out to students because he views himself as "a positive gay role model" for students who do not have positive role models in the gay men from their Latino home communities (Connell, 2016, p. 606). Barbara, a white

lesbian teacher, describes her hesitation to come out to her coworkers who are African American due to her "preconceived notions" of a homophobic "black culture" (Connell, 2016, p. 606). A third teacher, who is white and straight, connects homophobia to the lower socioeconomic status and strong religious beliefs of the school community (Connell, 2016, p. 606). Connell (2016) suggests that these teachers portray "black and Latino communities as ignorant and intolerant with respect to LGBT identities" (p. 606). Based on these findings, Connell (2016) calls attention to how the teachers of her study shape their identities around bringing "understanding and acceptance to these backward communities" (p. 606). In addition, Connell (2016) comments on problematic comparisons between homophobia and racism, pointing out how some of the teachers she interviewed positioned gay and lesbian teachers as similar to "disadvantaged racial groups" (p. 612), and minimized the experiences of "marginalized students of color" (p. 615) at the school.

Gray (2018) examines the "tolerance discourse" (p. 422) of school settings. This discourse, Gray (2018) explains, functions within a framework of othering: "to be a subject of tolerance is to embody a presence that exists outside of the centre or norm" (p. 423). The tolerator is elevated above the one who is tolerated, and is afforded a "social and cultural superiority to the tolerated subject" (Gray, 2018, p. 423). Through interviewing a teacher named Jodie, who identifies as lesbian, Gray (2018) examines how this teacher is positioned by colleagues and students as someone to be tolerated. Jodie recounts stories of bullying by students (Gray, 2018, p. 426), as well as a lack of support from the school's administration (Gray, 2018, p. 426). As an othered subject, she becomes a "target for aversive responses from the majority" (Gray, 2018, p. 426), and this treatment has a harmful effect on her relationality with students. Because Jodie is rendered "a marginalized minority" by her students (Gray, 2018, p. 427), Jodie

views her students in terms of their low socioeconomic status and disinterest in academics, and they become “alien to her” (Gray, 2018, p. 427).

Gray (2013) also details the challenges of lesbian, gay, and bisexual teachers to come out at school and the manner in which teachers who do not conform to heteronormativity must “negotiate their private and professional worlds in complex ways” (p. 704) differently than their heterosexual colleagues. Gray’s (2013) interviews with four teachers uncover “psychological pressure that can result in stress, anxiety and depression” (p. 707), the need to keep their private lives separate from school, feelings of being “muted by the assumed heterosexuality of [the] workplace” (p. 708), and a lack of “social (heterosexual) capital to participate fully with the staffroom banter that gives one a sense of belonging” (p. 708). The teachers of this study describe their decisions to come out at school as well as the strategies they use to come out, such as correcting the heteronormative assumptions of colleagues during casual conversations (Gray, 2013, p. 709).

Using Literature and Film to Engage Teachers in Identity Work

While researchers in the preceding section conducted interviews with teachers to gain insight into identity and how teachers perceive and enact their roles, scholars have also used discussions of books and film to develop understandings of teacher identity. Lewkowich (2019) analyzes responses to literature as he explores the reading experiences of preservice teachers during a discussion of two graphic novels about adolescence, *This One Summer* and *My Perfect Life*. He looks at how reading these graphic novels about adolescent characters allows preservice teachers to reflect on their own adolescence, theorizing a connection between the memories of teachers and how they are able to respond to the experiences of others (Lewkowich, 2019, p. 504). The first of these graphic novels, *This One Summer*, brings about nostalgic feelings of

happy childhood memories among participants (Lewkowich, 2019, pp. 509-514) as the preservice teachers idealize adolescence as a magical time (Lewkowich, 2019, p. 514). On the other hand, the second graphic novel, *My Perfect Life*, has a different impact. This much "darker" story provokes "negative emotion" (Lewkowich, 2019, p. 515). Lewkowich (2019) links these reading experiences to identity construction, explaining that "in the context of their developing professional identities as teachers, [preservice teachers] are using these readings to develop a more critically reflexive awareness of who they are" (p. 514). Lewkowich (2019) concludes that opportunities to remember and reflect on past experiences through literature discussions are of value in teacher education, because memories of the past can shape "our ideals and desires" as teachers (p. 520). He also highlights the benefits of reading stories that engender negative emotions and unpleasant feelings, such as those in response to *My Perfect Life*, because these enable us "to consider our own experiences, as well as those of others, regardless of whether we initially like or understand what we see" (Lewkowich, 2019, p. 520).

In a different piece, Lewkowich (2015) analyzes the responses of preservice teachers to young adult literature. He contends that "young adult (YA) literature can foster a productive engagement with pre-service teachers' desires, fantasies and anxieties in learning to teach" (Lewkowich, 2015, pp. 349-350). Examining how preservice teachers respond to the characters and situations presented in two novels, *The Hunger Games* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, he uncovers several perceptions of preservice teachers pertaining to their own fantasies and understandings of teaching. For example, these preservice teachers focus on the vulnerability of a teacher-like character in *The Hunger Games*. In discussing this character, they contemplate the qualities of a dedicated teacher such as a strong belief in students and a willingness for self-sacrifice (Lewkowich, 2015, pp. 356-358). They applaud the devotion of this

character and comment on the emotional toll that devotion can take on a teacher, alluding to their own anxieties of "becoming too emotionally attached to their students" (Lewkowich, 2015, p. 358). Lewkowich (2015) also discovers troubling "binarial speculations" (p. 360) of preservice teachers about students, as they definitively perceive one character from *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* to be good and the other bad (pp. 361-362). For Lewkowich (2015), this simplification into binaries indicates a lack of understanding of the ways in which life circumstances can be beyond a student's control: "The pedagogical implications for such attitudes are ominous: if students are struggling—academically, financially, emotionally, etc.—all they need do is pick themselves up by their bootstraps and push on past their troubles" (p. 362). Furthermore, the depiction of one of the characters as purely good points to how teachers can impose unrealistic and idealized expectations on students (Lewkowich, 2015, p. 364).

Along similar lines, Robertson (1997) researches the identities of female preservice teachers by studying how they respond to cinematic representations of teaching. She asks 12 female preservice teachers to pinpoint one "image, character, scene, or event" that resonates with them from the film *Stand and Deliver* (Robertson, 1997, p. 125). Several participants are drawn to a brief scene in the movie during which "students demonstrate explicit love for their cherished teacher" (Robertson, 1997, p. 125). Robertson (1997) postulates that this scene is chosen because it captures "a desired, imagined reality of classroom life: the promise of student-teacher devotion" (p. 126). On the surface, this illustrates the female teacher's fantasy of being loved by her devoted students and signifies "a romantic idealization of the pedagogical encounter" (Robertson, 1997, p. 131). Robertson (1997) cautions how this seemingly harmless teacher desire to be loved by her students is, in fact, problematic in its positioning of students as objects who only serve to elevate and uphold the teacher (p. 134). Moreover, the wish to be loved raises the

potential for the absence of love and devotion in student-teacher relationships (Robertson, 1997, p. 135). The devotion fantasy also validates “feelings of omnipotence” over students who are viewed as requiring “salvation” (Robertson, 1997, p. 136). Robertson (1997) concludes that films and other mainstream cultural objects should be used in teacher education programs to identify and deconstruct the perceptions, expectations, and desires of women entering the teaching profession (p. 139).

Using Fictional Characters from Novels to Contemplate Teacher Identity

As seen in the previous section, researchers have used literary and cinematic narratives, in the forms of novels and film, to delve into identity through analyses of teacher responses to fictional representations of experiences and characters (Janzen, 2015; Lewkowich, 2015, 2019; Robertson, 1997). Other researchers have drawn on literature as a source of data through examining various scenes and characters of novels. Grumet (1988) postulates that the purpose of art is “to reorganize experience so it is perceived freshly” (p. 81). In a similar manner, Mishra Tarc (2015) has written about the ways in which literature can lead to self-discovery, enable us to feel, and allow us to see the world differently (pp. 54-55), as it stages an encounter beyond one’s personal experience and “immerses the self in the fictional world of the other” (p. 39). She describes reading as a transformative process that allows us to “temporarily ruin and renew a sense of ourselves in thoughts of each other” (Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 39). Alongside Grumet (1988) and Mishra Tarc (2015), I believe in the potential of literature to redefine the teacher figure, expose hidden aspects of her identity, provoke new and different thoughts around who she is and how she relates to students and, also, reveal her suppressed desires and fantasies.

Consistent with these notions, Taubman (2006) explores the teacher’s need to exert power and control, as well as her longing to be loved (p. 20). In his critique of opposing models

of adult/child relationships in which the adult is cast as the authority figure who punishes and controls children versus that of the adult who nurtures the child (Taubman, 2006, pp. 21-22), Taubman (2006) pinpoints the inadequacy of both models when applied to the context of education. Although the second model of the nurturing adult is perhaps more desirable, both models are inadequate in that they fail to recognize “the possibility that the desire to love and be loved and the desire to control or exert power are intimately related” (Taubman, 2006, p. 22). Following this argument, Taubman (2006) studies the interplay between aggression and love, and the sometimes ambiguous distinction between a teacher’s desire to nurture and care for her students and her need to control and manage them. He turns to the literary figure of Ursula Branwagen and one episode from *The Rainbow* during which she beats a disobedient student. Taubman (2006) writes that “in this brief episode her passion for nurturance and rescue have transformed into a passion for blood” (p. 26). Drawing on Lacan’s theory of “jouissance” as “an excess of aggressive enjoyment that is beyond pleasure and that is tied to pain” (Taubman, 2006, p. 28), Taubman (2006) considers Ursula’s act of inflicting pain. He suggests that the notion of jouissance can provide a better understanding of how teacher emotionality includes not only feelings of love and self-sacrifice but, also, aggression (Taubman, 2006, pp. 30-31).

Like Taubman, Lewkowich (2012) makes use of one scene from Elizabeth Hay’s novel *Alone in the Classroom* to theorize about the role of emotion in educational contexts (p. 454). Through an analysis of a scene in this novel during which new teacher Connie Flood violently disciplines a student with a strap, he examines “the emotionally and psychically provocative dynamics of teaching and learning” (Lewkowich, 2012, p. 455). These dynamics include those of love, fear, and vulnerability (Lewkowich, 2012, pp. 457-458) and aggression, power, and control (Lewkowich, 2012, pp. 464-465). Citing Connie’s feelings of vulnerability to acts of aggression,

Lewkowich (2012) speculates about her possible fear that she has been too kind and soft on her students (p. 457). Lewkowich (2012) contends that there is a tendency in education to pathologize, manage, and avoid the emotionality of teaching (p. 462). Rather, he advocates for the use of psychoanalytic theories to embrace, accept, and learn from the less desirable and hidden aspects of being a teacher, such as “the fear, shame, disgust, guilt, desire, and anxiety that teaching alerts us to” (Lewkowich, 2012, p. 461). He also points to the dangers of viewing teacher identity “as a stable, containable construct” and, instead, pushes for revealing in educational contexts what is uncertain, difficult, and troublesome (Lewkowich, 2012, p. 465).

Stearns (2015) draws from the fictional character of Ramona Quimby in her piece entitled “Bad Kids and Bad Feelings: What Children’s Literature Teaches About ADHD, Creativity, and Openness.” Stearns (2015) comments on our discomfort with children who exhibit “non-normative behaviors” (p. 410) and our propensity as educators to diagnose and pathologize that which does not conform to predetermined expectations. Justifying her choice of a fictional data source, she explains how a consideration of “imaginary badness serves as a reminder of the complexity of children’s inner lives and the worthy, if difficult, meaning of their resistance” (Stearns, 2015, p. 411). She also suggests that children’s literature, such as the Ramona series, offers access to what goes on in the mind of the child as well as provides insight into the “fantasies” that adults have about children (Stearns, 2015, p. 413). When I read Stearns’ (2015) piece for the first time, I was immediately engaged in the discussion of Ramona’s noncompliance, her creativity, and her antics. My emotional response was, in part, due to nostalgia. I was a fan of this series as a child, relating not to Ramona but to her older sister, Beezus, because my sister was so similar to Ramona. I was brought back to my own childhood, to my own memories of reading, to my own experiences with my sister. Perhaps more

importantly, however, was the way in which the portrayal of Ramona's badness, something that I always perceived to be endearing (perhaps, because I saw these qualities in my own sister), made me reflect on and rethink how I perceived the 'badness' of my own students. In light of these reflections, it is pertinent that Grumet (1988) describes how a work of art, in this case a novel, "[engages] expectations, memories, recognitions, and simultaneously interrupts the viewer's customary response, contradicting expectations with new possibilities, violating memories, displacing recognition with estrangement" (p. 81). It is my hope that my literary analyses will, similarly, interrupt familiar discourses and, in turn, provoke new and fresh ones through which to imagine the teacher differently.

In sum, a number of studies contribute to an understanding of teacher identity as it relates to institutional and professional notions of selfhood. It is evident from an overview of the literature in this chapter that research in the area of teacher identity relies primarily on a narrative methodology whereby teachers tell personal stories, reflect on past experiences of schooling, and share pedagogical beliefs. In the works that I have described in the three approaches, teachers share a myriad of experiences encompassing a wide range of topics from the improvement of instructional practice through collaboration with colleagues to the challenges of navigating racial and sexual identities in school settings. It is not my intention to diminish the value of these teacher stories. However, Miller (2005) calls attention to how some of the research that employs teacher stories can convey "one singular, authoritative, and completed (as in 'empowered teacher' or 'reflective practitioner') version of self, identity, experience, voice and story" (p. 51). As such, it becomes important to question the research that seeks understanding of and promotes conditions and practices that impact, and ultimately improve, the teacher's pedagogy and instruction, confidence, and agency. Phelan (2011) appropriately characterizes this type of

research as “consequence-oriented” in that it focuses on the “doing” aspects of being a teacher with the purpose of making improvements (p. 208). Within this context, Phelan (2011) identifies the need for what she calls culturally-oriented research, which she defines as “non-consequentialist” in that “it pursues understanding rather than improvement; it can tolerate interminable questions; it does not try to resolve the difficulties that its explorations may surface” (p. 208). The works of Britzman (2003), Janzen and Phelan (2018), Janzen (2015), Stearns (2013, 2015, 2016), Lewkowich (2012, 2015, 2019), Taubman (2006), Brockenbrough (2012, 2014, 2015), Wang (2016), and Robertson (1997) fall into this latter category of research insofar as they portray teacher identity in all its conflict, disillusionment, success and failure, and intricacies, not as a problem to be solved but as the complex ground of teaching itself. Drawing from and building on this research, my research explores how teacher identity is shaped by the demands of an ethical responsibility to students which include but also exceed the teacher’s institutional role. I am interested in building on this literature by adding to psychoanalytic contemplations of teacher identity the understudied notion of responsibility and, also, by identifying the tensions that surface from one’s ethical responsibility to students as a key layer of teacher identity. Through philosophical concepts of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality, I challenge discourses of improvement that construct teacher identity as an achievement of self-mastery or idealized application, and as defined through the technical, practical and institutional aspects of her role. Instead, I proffer a “non-consequentialist” (Phelan, 2011, p. 208) orientation that unearths the ongoing processes that comprise the teacher’s formation of identity, with all of the doubt, anxiety, conflict, and uncertainty that comes from novel encounters with Others.

CHAPTER THREE
NATALITY, HOSPITALITY, AND NONVIOLENT RELATIONALITY

> The word "education" comes from the root *e* from *ex*, out, and *duco*, I lead. It means a leading out. To me education is a leading out of what is already there in the pupil's soul. To Miss Mackay it is a putting in of something that is not there, and that is not what I call education, I call it intrusion …
> (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 36)

The concepts of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality shape the theoretical foundation for my study of teacher identity. As stated earlier, these concepts provide a novel lens through which to consider identity, the ethical implications of teaching, and the tensions that arise through the relational qualities of the profession. I contend that an exploration of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality can lead to a nuanced understanding of what it means to be a teacher and live with the ongoing demands and associated conflicts arising from one's ethical responsibility to students and to the social world they inhabit and eventually inherit.

Natality

> He was already sitting up, with the violin tucked under his chin, and without pausing to tune the strings, he began to play … Hearing Adam play stirred her, even as it baffled her. To take up the violin or any instrument was an act of hope, it implied a future.
> (McEwan, 2015, p. 119)

The concept of natality I will be drawing upon derives from the philosopher and sociopolitical theorist, Hannah Arendt. Although Arendt was not an educational theorist, she shares her concerns pertaining to the educational system in one of her essays entitled "The Crisis in Education." My discussion of natality is primarily based on this piece. Arendt's (1977) view

of natality, of being born, is based on the notion that an old world renews itself through the introduction of newness. She contends that education is founded upon natality (Arendt, 1977, p. 174), a consistent regeneration of an established world through new life (Arendt, 1977, p. 185). In this context, the role of the educator is simultaneously to protect newcomers while helping them to create a place in the world. The teacher must support the newcomer's initiation into the world, as the child "must be gradually introduced to it; insofar as he is new, care must be taken that this new thing comes to fruition in relation to the world as it is" (Arendt, 1977, p. 189).

Protection and conservatism, therefore, become key components of Arendt's depiction of natality. The new are in need of protection as they are brought into the world; when they begin school their unique qualities that make them both strangers in the world and strange to the world require protection from the interference of the outside world, levied in the name of development or socialization (Arendt, 1977, p. 189). The fact that we are each "unique, unexchangeable, and unrepeatable entities" renews the world (Arendt, 1958/1998, Labor and Life, para. 2). Natality is the world's wellspring, as new life interrupts the "ruin and destruction" that would ensue without it (Arendt, 1958/1998, Unpredictability and the Power of Promise, para. 6). At the same time, however, Arendt (1977) asserts that the newness brought forth through the singularity of human beings is itself a potentially destructive force, leading her to argue that "the world, too, needs protection to keep it from being overrun and destroyed by the onslaught of the new that bursts upon it with each new generation" (p. 186). Educators might easily relate to the tension that unfolds here. Newness, whether located in the young or in novel ideas, offers enormous potential that is otherwise threatened by the atrophy resulting from repeated or worn-out ideas. However, this very potential of the new carries the risk of overturning existing structures, including knowledge that also requires protection so as to preserve the archive of history. The preservation

of history, for Arendt (1977), guards against the "onslaught of the new" (p. 186) that rejects its dependency on the old. Educators assume the responsibility of "[mediating] between the old and the new" (Arendt, 1977, p. 193), as they protect and pass along history and traditions and, simultaneously, promote and maintain the singularity and uniqueness of the student (Arendt, 1977, p. 189). Arendt (1977) refers to this dual responsibility as conservatism, a term that denotes a capacity, in her words, "to cherish and protect something—the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new" (p. 192).

Arendt's (1977) interpretation of the adult's responsibility *vis-à-vis* the child is of relevance to my research question of how the ethical responsibility in teaching shapes understandings and conceptions of teacher identity. For Arendt (1977), the educator takes responsibility for introducing the new into the world and the world to the new because her authority is founded upon "an extraordinary respect for the past" (p. 193). Her love of the world places her in the authoritative position to represent the world, and it is through her authority that she is able to serve as a bridge between the past and the present (Arendt, 1977, p. 189). However, Arendt (1977) points out that this introduction to the world can have negative consequences as "we destroy everything if we so try to control the new" and "dictate how it will look" (p. 192). Therefore, as educators use their authority to conserve the past, they also need to be open to the new. As unique and strange beings, those born into the world need to be allowed to exert their newness.

Elaborating on her view of authority, Arendt (1961/2006) emphasizes that authority is neither about coercion and persuasion (What is Authority?, Sect. I, para. 5), nor about power (What is Authority?, Sect. IV, para. 3). She contends, rather, that it is about tradition and the past. She views authority as a requirement for civilization's survival so that "newcomers by birth

are guided through a pre-established world into which they are born as strangers" (Arendt, 1961/2006, What is Authority?, Sect. I, para. 3). She traces the derivations and roots of the word authority, pointing to the words "auctores," meaning "author" and "augere," meaning "augment." The role of authority is to "augment … the foundation" of the world (Arendt, 1961/2006, What is Authority?, Sect. IV, para. 3-4), through the passing along of tradition. The notion of the world's foundation is paramount. Arendt (1961/2006) explains that "authority, resting on a foundation in the past as its unshaken cornerstone, gave the world the permanence and durability which human beings need precisely because they are mortals—the most unstable and futile beings we know of" (What is Authority?, Sect. I, para. 9). Tradition is required to guide one into the past but, as Arendt (1961/2006) argues, it can also inhibit newness as she compares this to a chain shackling each new generation to the past (What is Authority?, Sect. I, para. 7). One can see the teacher's dilemma here, in maintaining an appropriate balance between allowing the novel to flourish and ensuring that the foundation of history upon which the world is built is left intact.

It is precisely this tension that is the focus of my dissertation, the tension that occurs when the teacher is responsible to introduce the student to the world as it exists—and as it struggles—while also making room for new ways of relating to its legacies. Natality brings into focus the dual and competing responsibility of the teacher as protector of the child and of the world. In Arendt's (1977) conceptualization of the contradictory potential of newness as revitalizing and destructive, the identity of the teacher as an authority figure is shaped through the demanding task of nurturing what is new and, also, affecting it. Returning to my initial questions, the teacher's duty to both the child and the world adds insight to the meaning of ethical responsibility in that the teacher's obligation is not only to the child but also to the world,

a world that the teacher has not created and, yet, a world for which the teacher becomes the representative.

Hospitality

> It sounds mad for a woman who has spent her life in the teaching profession to say so, but the truth is, I am not very good with young people. I am perfectly confident in a classroom, where the rules—regardless of whether or not they are respected—are clearly defined. But in other contexts I find myself at a loss.
> (Heller, 2003, p. 108)

Many of the features of natality are apparent in another philosophical concept, that of hospitality. Hospitality is about allowing the new to exist in its singularity and uniqueness (Derrida, 1997/2000). From the vantage of hospitality, responsibility in education is delineated through a framework of teachers/adults as hosts and students/children as guests. To provide the foundation for my discussion of hospitality, I will be employing the ideas of Jacques Derrida, a 20th century French philosopher who wrote about politics and religion. Similar to Arendt's (1977) discussion of the role of the adult in relation to the child with respect to natality, Derrida (1997/2000) describes the role of the host as one of providing a space for the guest. He characterizes this act as a nonreciprocal and unconditional offer in which, as host "I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names" (Derrida, 1997/2000, p. 25). In addition, this requires the host to give all, "all of one's home and oneself, to give him or her one's own, our own" (Derrida, 1997/2000, p. 77). However, unlike Arendt's (1977) depiction of natality, hospitality as an act of welcome and the bequest of one's space does not involve protection. Citing Sharon Todd, Ruitenberg (2016) highlights the distinction between welcoming a guest and engulfing the guest in that an ethic of hospitality "seeks not to 'envelop' or to protect" (p. 29). I would suggest that there is a notable difference between Ruitenberg's

(2016) notion of protection and Arendt's (1977) ideas on protection. Arendt (1977) conceives of school as a protective space, an intermediary between the private world of the home and the public realm of the world (p. 188). Arendt (1977) also views protection in terms of conserving the past, as a preventive act to ensure that newness does not overwhelm the world (p. 186). Alternatively, Ruitenberg (2016), from the viewpoint of hospitality, equates protection with restraint and control that can serve to invalidate the guest's otherness (p. 29).

Tensions arise in exploring the host's response to the guest. In an ideal situation, the host responds by "[exposing her] identity to the incoming of the other" (Ruitenberg, 2005, p. 215). Likewise, the guest also responds to the space she enters. Ruitenberg (2011a) calls attention to the Latin origin of the word "response," meaning "to engage" and suggests that "the concept of response involves a critical engagement by the guest" with the world (p. 137). It matters not only how the host creates a space in which the guest can respond but, also, how the guest inspires and provokes a response from the host that is itself transformative, without judgement or expectations. The host responds in a way that allows the guest to maintain her "otherness, that does not seek to recognize or otherwise close the gap with this singular other" (Ruitenberg, 2011, p. 32). Of course, this ideal is problematized by the fact that in schools teachers create spaces for and respond to not only one student but many students. Ruitenberg (2011a) raises the issue of how the alterity of the guest is affected when there is more than one guest, explaining that "one guest's needs and demands are necessarily weighed against another's" (p. 139). A relational, ethical responsibility implies transformation in terms of the host, in that she is required to respond without threatening the alterity of the student. Responding hospitably to many students becomes a tremendous ethical demand, especially considering that each is singular and unique and there is the possibility of a response to one student coming into conflict with another.

At the core of hospitality is the otherness, even strangeness, of the guest. For Arendt (1977) and her idea of natality, all new beings are entirely novel, “something that has never been here before” (p. 189). Likewise for Ruitenberg (2016), the guest is characterized through her strangeness as “fundamentally ungraspable” (p. 29), and “fundamentally unknowable” (p. 33). Hospitality is an involuntary “demand” in that the appearance of the stranger immediately implicates the host in an act of hospitality (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 55). Hospitality, then, becomes a validation of the otherness of the guest, signifying "an affirmation of the Other's strangeness" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 29). Such welcome takes on further significance in thinking about the teacher’s welcome of social difference. For instance, in Gilbert’s (2006) discussion of hospitality as it pertains to “conceptualizations of gayness” (p. 25), the strangeness of what is novel is viewed as elucidating the strangeness of the host herself. That is, the unpredictability of who or what will arrive provokes a response of welcome, not only to the guest but also to “what is most foreign within the self” (Gilbert, 2006, p. 32). The host, in responding to the novel, is thereby confronted with her own strangeness.

The strangeness of the guest requires vulnerability on the part of host. Whereas Arendt (1977) proposes that authority is one of the requisite characteristics of the adult who introduces the child into the world, Ruitenberg (2005) points to the vulnerability of such authority insofar as the guest eludes the host’s efforts to grasp otherness through empathy or understanding. In particular, Ruitenberg (2005) emphasizes the host’s vulnerable position by making reference to the double meaning of the word ajar: to be not quite right and “unfixed” (p. 9). Ruitenberg (2005) explains that when a door is ajar, it is not quite open enough to see who may come through it, leaving the host “vulnerable to the incoming of an other” (p. 9). For Ruitenberg (2005), the host’s identity needs to be ajar and unfixed, to allow for the possibility of the

unknown to enter (p. 10). The host must then accept that vulnerability even while feeling that her identity is at risk (Ruitenberg, 2005, pp. 220-221) and acknowledge that the guest may disrupt her selfhood (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 30). Hospitality, therefore, places a huge onus on the teacher that involves much more than simply welcoming the guest. Gilbert (2006), for example, describes how the "idealization of welcome fails to consider how difficult it can be to encounter what is not yet known or understood" (p. 28). Ethical responsibility then, according to hospitality, requires the teacher to be vulnerable and open herself up to the unknown.

The passing along of tradition is another aspect of natality that is echoed in hospitality. Ruitenberg (2016) asserts that making a place for the guest to arrive involves opening children up to the past, framing this as "a responsibility or duty that comes with having access to the world and with taking on the particular role of passing on traditions" (p. 15). Consistent with Arendt's (1977) warning about impeding newness, Ruitenberg (2016) draws attention to the possibility of restricting hospitality when decisions are made as to what knowledge should be passed along and what learning outcomes should result (p. 84). She makes specific mention of the passing along of knowledge to students through curriculum. Comparing curriculum to the vulnerable host, she contends it should be a fluid, penetrable, and revisable document (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 72) that allows for "reinterpretation" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 75). Ruitenberg (2016) refers to Derrida's questioning of the canon's authority, and contends that hospitable curriculum must be open to challenge and change (p. 73). The passing along of knowledge through the curriculum, she argues, should be enacted in the form of "a critical translation" and not as "an uncritical transmission" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 74). Placing the responsibility on teachers to perform this 'critical translation' adds another layer of complexity to teacher identity by positioning them as guests. For Ruitenberg (2009), curriculum becomes a "cultural" space

offered by the educational system with the teacher as its guest, thereby implicating teachers in a binary identity of both guest and host (p. 269). Teachers are hosts inasmuch as they become the medium through which the curriculum offers a space to students; however, they are guests, as well, to a curriculum they have been given to pass along. In construing the teacher as guest, her alterity also needs protection and the novelty she brings forth into the cultural spaces of education, where she has been welcomed, has transformative potential. Returning to Ruitenberg's (2016) notion of critical translation, the teacher is tasked with reinterpreting the curriculum by challenging it, recognizing what is missing from it, and allowing new ideas to be brought into it (pp. 74-76). And yet, I would argue that teachers are more often constructed as transmitters than translators, perhaps in part due to the ongoing legacies of the institutions they inherit. For instance, in our current outcomes-based educational climate of accountability and standardization, teacher identity tends to be subsumed by the need to 'cover' curriculum and assess and evaluate what students know as opposed to critically explore that curriculum (Clarke & Phelan, 2017). Arguably, the curriculum serves as more of a list of benchmarks through which to measure linear development instead of, in Arendt's (1977) thinking, a foundation of the past upon which to promote newness.

While hospitality entails ethical responsibility in the form of an unconditional welcome, its existence implies the antithetical notion of inhospitality or, in Derrida's (1997/2000) words, hostility. Drawing attention to the "perversion" and "pervertibility" (Derrida, 1997/2000, p. 53) of hospitality, Derrida (1997/2000) explores its Latin root "hostis," meaning "the foreigner" who is "welcomed as guest or as enemy" (p. 45). He suggests that hospitality can provoke an opposite and hostile response, whereby the concept of giving one's home and oneself to the guest leads to viewing the guest as a threat (Derrida, 1997/2000, pp. 53-55). Derrida (1997/2000) writes that

one begins to see the guest "as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage" (p. 55). Ruitenberg (2016) echoes this notion of hostility, referring to an inner conflict that materializes "between self-preservation and self-sacrifice" (p. 41). Hospitality, which is premised upon the notion of unconditional giving, has inevitable consequences for one's selfhood. One can theorize how this thin line between hospitality and hostility, between giving all and protecting the self, between perceiving the guest as desirable and as an enemy complicates the relational qualities of ethical responsibility. In a response of welcome, one gives up one's space to the alterity, strangeness, and newness of the Other. In turn, this response can subvert this act of selflessness into a need to protect one's home, one's space, and one's self.

Along with the paradoxical notion of hospitality/hostility, contradictions also emerge around the unconditional and absolute characteristics of hospitality. Ruitenberg (2009) describes Derrida's conception of hospitality as "aporetic" (p. 268). Because absolute hospitality is an unconditional gift given without expectations of getting anything in return, one cannot expect to know the stranger who may or may not come. At the same time, however, Ruitenberg (2009) points out that hospitality must be offered as a "personal address" (p. 268). In order to address someone, for instance, the host asks for something in return (she must ask for the guest to be known), thereby destroying the unconditionality of the gift (Ruitenberg, 2009, pp. 268-269). In turn, the guest also receives the host, giving rise to another reciprocal relationship (Ruitenberg, 2009, p. 270). Once the host offers that space to the guest, however, she no longer has that space to offer, underscoring the vulnerability of this position. As Ruitenberg (2009) explains: "Absolute hospitality annihilates itself: it is a gesture in which the host surrenders the home to

the guest, and is thus effectively no longer a host, and hence no longer in a position to offer hospitality" (p. 269).

As is signified in this dissertation, hospitality is not a goal or solution, or even an ethical standard to achieve. In fact, Derrida (1997/2001) suggests there doesn't exist an ethics of hospitality as ethics and hospitality are so interwoven that they are one in the same: "one cannot speak of cultivating an ethic of hospitality. Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others … *ethics is hospitality*" (pp. 16-17). Ruitenberg (2016), too, emphasizes that hospitality is not a goal to attain (p. 41) but, instead, an "abstract axiom" (p. 22) that permeates and guides our interactions with students. In considering the concept of hospitality, several points are of interest to my work on teacher identity. To begin with, the vulnerability that is required of the teacher compromises her own identity; to maintain the alterity of the guest the host is required to respond with an openness that threatens who she is. Also, teachers as hosts are transformed through their encounters with the unknown, in welcoming not only the guest but also what is unknown of the self. Furthermore, as a double-edged precept, hospitable interactions imply the possibility of non-hospitable ones. The threat of the guest, in the words of Derrida (1997/2000), can turn hospitality into hostility. Tensions between protecting one's sense of self and welcoming the guest, between being hospitable and being hostile, and between welcoming the unknowability of the self and resisting this unknowability expose the emotionally-turbulent terrain of what it means to be a teacher.

Nonviolent Relationality

> Do you believe in the human heart? I don't mean simply the organ, obviously. I'm speaking in the poetic sense. The human heart. Do you think there is such a thing? Something that makes each of us special and individual?
> (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 215)

The concept of nonviolent relationality extends the ideas brought forth in natality and hospitality. Todd (2015) contends that the problem with the current educational system is that relations between teachers and students are formed through a focus on the achievement of goals—including knowledge about curriculum and of the Other—as opposed to "an ethical engagement with life" which, for her, does not depend on knowledge (p. 241). In contemplating ethical engagement between the subject (the individual, the 'I') and the Other, Todd (2015) advocates for nonviolent interactions in which a welcoming of uncertainty can provide "ethical possibilities in education" (p. 242). This type of response engenders a not-understanding in which the subject doesn't presume to know, an activity that, according to Todd (2015), runs the risk of "encapsulating experience within neat categories of understanding" (p. 241). Similar to natality and hospitality, therefore, nonviolent relationality is founded upon a respect for what is unknown, in the form of newness, the strange, and the uncertain.

Nonviolent relationality is a responsibility that requires response. Levinas (1982/1985) views this responsibility as an involuntary imperative that is necessitated by the appearance of the Other (p. 96). At that time, the subject is not only responsible for her own subjectivity, but also for the "singularity and uniqueness of that Other" (Todd, 2003, p. 50). Responsibility, to a certain extent, defies awareness as it arises from being positioned by the Other in a way that demands a response, without yet knowing why or how to respond (Todd, 2015, pp. 250-251). Moreover, Todd (2003) contends that nonviolence relies upon passivity. She calls attention to Levinas' thinking around passivity, stating that passivity requires the subject to be radically open

to the Other, such that “it is the very responsibility born of passivity that enables a nonviolent relation to the Other to emerge” (Todd, 2003, p. 11). Passivity signals the radical quality of openness that is otherwise foreclosed in ego presumptions and defences that attempt to render otherness in ways that are recognizable within existing terms. Ethics emerge from “a passive encounter with difference” that is beyond comprehension and renders the subject vulnerable and receptive to the singularity and difference of the Other (Todd, 2003, p. 53). Similarly, hospitality requires passivity in the form of an unconditional response to the guest’s arrival. These notions of radical openness and unconditionality bring into focus the extent to which teachers, so often constructed as masters of their craft or experts of knowledge (Britzman, 2003), might rather embody passivity within a diagnostic culture that too often rejects the uncertainty of this position and seeks comfort in being able to place everything, from experiences to relationships to people, into categories for understanding, measurement, and evaluation. The idea of passivity also problematizes my conceptualization of identity, in that I strive to merge psychoanalytical notions of ego protection, the unconscious, and desire with an ethical responsibility that requires a passive response.

Nonviolence depends on the premise of learning *from* the Other as opposed to learning *about* the Other. Todd (2003) makes a distinction between these two ideas. Learning from the Other means that one does not attempt to get to know the Other or base encounters on knowledge of the Other (Todd, 2003, p. 9). Approaching an encounter from the perspective of learning about an Other exerts a violence upon that Other. Todd (2003) explains that when the ‘I’ tries to know or understand the Other, the ‘I’ is “exercising my knowledge over the Other, shrouding the Other in my own totality. The Other becomes an object of *my* comprehension, *my* world, *my* narrative, reducing the Other to me” (p. 15). In her commentary on Derrida’s conception of

hospitality, Dufourmantelle (1997/2000) echoes this idea of seeking comprehension. She explains that any attempts to know the Other are a means through which to ease one's own anxiety, and that this need to know is about "taming the unknown" so that "gradually the unease fades away" (Dufourmantelle, 1997/2000, p. 26). Dufourmantelle (1997/2000) suggests that it is through thought that one is able to unravel the mystery of what is not known (p. 28). Therefore, responding to the Other in a manner that minimizes violence becomes a strangely thought-*less* act which requires the individual to resist her need to alleviate her own discomfort of not knowing.

However, in the same way that hospitality opens up possibilities for hostility, nonviolence implies the potential for violence. Todd (2003) reminds us that the goal of education to socialize and "change how people think and relate to the world" implies violence (p. 20). Drawing on Levinas and Derrida, she explains that "violence is a necessary condition of subjectivity" (Todd, 2003, p. 20). The goals, then, are to look at the effects of violence, "whether it wounds excessively," and consider how to work toward nonviolence in educational settings (Todd, 2003, p. 20). Taking into consideration how to respond nonviolently to the unique qualities of every student in ways that don't seek sameness or comprehension brings to light what possibilities exist for ethical responsibility in settings that are premised upon the violence of getting children to act and think in certain ways. What does it mean, for instance, to support students to engage with and apply curricular knowledge in nonviolent ways, to preserve the alterity they each embody differently, when that very knowledge is implicated in a history of oppression and disavowal of social differences? As previously discussed, questions arise around government-mandated curriculum and standardized testing as a means through which to socialize children in the name of citizenship and belonging, and the extent to which teachers as authority

figures/hosts/subjects can create spaces in which children/guests/the Other are welcomed unconditionally, nonviolently, and with passivity and radical openness.

The Other can also exert a form of violence on the subject. In the same way that Derrida's (1997/2000) guest can be perceived as a threat to the host and arouse feelings of hostility, Todd (2015) depicts a threatening and harmful Other. She describes this Other as "a source of wonder, but also a source of pain and torment" (Todd, 2015, p. 250), and explains how such encounters precipitate "a kind of death for the ego" (Todd, 2015, p. 249). Paradoxically, while the ego forms itself relationally through experiences with the Other, the "unknowable" Other also takes apart and threatens the ego (Todd, 2015, pp. 247-248). There is sacrifice involved when "the self offers itself for the Other in a spontaneous gesture of generosity that is not self-interested but is for the Other" (Todd, 2003, p. 69). Todd (2015) incorporates the Buddhist concept of the "non-self" into this notion of sacrifice (p. 244). According to Buddhism, the self is so much a product of engagements in a variety of constantly changing experiences that "there can be no permanent or substantial self that can possibly emerge from this sea bed of constant change" (Todd, 2015, pp. 244-245). The self, therefore, seems to disappear in its relations with the Other.

According to nonviolent relationality, an ethical responsibility in education entails a complete giving of oneself to the Other; of course, this complete giving is an impossibility. The teacher, as an embodied person and not an idealized version of altruism and selflessness, brings to her encounters with students her own history, lived experiences, desires, and, indeed, ego. Key questions are raised for teaching and teachers: What can identity mean without a conception of ego? How do educators maintain their own selfhood in light of their ethical responsibility to students? Does the teacher need her ego to teach? How does this potential loss of self shape the

relational aspects of being a teacher? Can the ego be itself opened to moments that disrupt its protective borders?

Natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality provide the conceptual framework for my exploration of the ethical responsibility of education, and provoke many questions about the relational qualities of teaching and learning and the complex tensions involved in encounters with children, with newness, with what is novel. In the chapter that follows, I detail how I intend to use novel representations of child/adult relationships to consider these qualities and tensions, as well as discuss how literature is a viable and fruitful data source through which to explore teacher identity.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE USE OF NOVELS TO STUDY TEACHER IDENTITY

… I remembered it was my duty to learn as much about Josie as possible, and
that by listening in this way, I might gather fresh observations otherwise unavailable to me.
(Ishiguro, 2021, p. 118)

I have chosen literature as my data source insofar as it offers a site in which readers—and more particularly readers who are researchers—can dwell with the tensions, conflicts, and complexities that emerge at the intersection between teacher identity and ethical responsibility. In order to examine the qualities and implications of this tension, I analyze novels that depict the construction of teacher identity, as well as the theme of the teacher's responsibility *vis-à-vis* the student. In this chapter, I will delineate why I decided to use representations of teachers in novels to study teacher identity as opposed to gathering data from real teachers through methods such as interviews, observation, and group sessions and discussions. I will also justify my specific literary choices, and provide summaries of the novels I will be using.

The Choice to Use Representations of Teachers in Novels

Many explorations into teacher identity employ a narrative methodology to gather data; typically, teachers are interviewed, talk and/or write about their experiences, and reflect on these. To this end, researchers over the past several years have studied and discussed with teachers their instructional practices (Kempe & Reed, 2014; Melville & Bartley, 2013; Nolan, 2016), how their personal histories of learning shape pedagogical beliefs (Hsieh, 2016; Jackson et al., 2010), factors that can lead to increased confidence and agency (Ticknor & Cavendish, 2015; Trent,

2013), and their racial and sexual identities (Brockenbrough, 2012, 2014, 2015; Connell, 2016; Gray, 2018). While valuable insight has been gained through interviewing, hearing from, and observing real teachers, I believe equally valuable insight can be gained from examining the experiences of literary representations of teachers as conveyed through novels. Through the use of literary depictions of teachers, scholars in the field of education have been able to consider various aspects of teacher identity that may be regarded as unacceptable such as aggression, hate, anxiety, and desire (Lewkowich, 2012; Taubman, 2006). Hearing from teachers about their experiences and interactions with students can certainly provide some insight into teacher identity; however, I believe pedagogical experiences and interactions are often framed in a manner that tends to shy away from irrational and, what may be perceived as, undesirable aspects of teacher identity. Literature allows readers, including researchers like myself, an aesthetic distance through which to expose and contemplate these less acceptable emotional dynamics that shape teacher identity; the act of reading also stages a relational engagement that is analogous to ideas of ethical responsibility that arise in the philosophical concepts I am exploring.

Aesthetic Distance

Gerald Cupchik (2001) discusses the concept of aesthetic distance as that which "[situates] the person with reference to an aesthetic event. It involves an awareness of the event as such, be it a painting or a performance, as different from, though meaningfully related to, the everyday world" (p. 183). Novels, as aesthetic objects, allow readers access to feelings and experiences that can resonate with them, arouse personal memories, and provide opportunities for contemplation. Britzman (2006), defining novel as that which is unique and strange as well as that which is a literary work, writes that novels can be viewed as "points of entry into

understanding the work of trying to know the self and the Other" (p. x). Britzman (2009) further theorizes "slow readings" of novels from the vantage of psychoanalysis (p. 48). For Britzman (2009), "slow readings" refuse overly literal interpretations that are "too loyal to the original text" (p. 48) and instead encourage "wordplay between the signifier and the signified" as a "means for and function of our signifying interior world" (p. 49). Reading that operates on this slow ground allows the reader to attend to emotional conflicts that surface both in the text and in the reader, between the signifier 'on the page' and its registration in the reader's own 'interior world,' and creates a meeting point where the raw material of emotional complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity converge, and the reader can experience sadness, happiness, anger, anxiety, and anticipation alongside literary characters.

Mar and Oatley (2008) describe art, and specifically pieces of literary fiction, as "models or simulations of the social world via abstraction, simplification, and compression" (p. 173). In writing a scene in a novel, the author makes decisions as to what to include and amplify in that scene and what to downplay or leave out. Mar and Oatley (2008) explain that "a literary simulation is a simplification. Only factors thought to be important are incorporated. Although fiction stories are not simple per se, they are simpler than the social world they represent" (p. 176). The author thus simplifies an experience by bringing "particular phrases and images into the foreground so that we may experience them freshly" (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 176). Novels might be compared to a lamp that sheds light on the intricacies of an experience by "[compressing] complex human relations" and drawing to the reader's attention "only the most relevant elements" (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 177). Through the author's depiction of an experience, then, readers are able to ponder aspects of that experience that are brought to their attention. In regard to this dissertation, the authors of my selected novels simplify and magnify

the intricate and complex experience of being a teacher and I, as the author of this dissertation, bring these forth to my readers in order to shed light on teacher identity.

Engaging with an aesthetic object, such as a novel, provides temporal distance, as well, for thoughtful consideration and digestion of the intricacies of human experience. As a slow and, at times, laborious task the act of reading requires the reader to engage with the text over an extended period and to immerse herself in the complexities of the unfolding narrative. Grumet (1988) underscores the prolonged qualities of the reading process by directing attention to the origins of the words “read” and “ruminate” (p. 132). Ruminants are cattle animals such as cows and sheep that have four stomachs, one of which is called a read. These animals don’t digest their food immediately; instead, it is stored away until they find a good time to “masticate and digest it at leisure” (Grumet, 1988, p. 132). Similarly, the reading process is one of rumination during which the reader can take pause and leisurely digest the author’s words. Rather than act on a tendency, sometimes prevalent in education, to fix or resolve a problem, the reading process arguably slows the rush to fix a problem in the ‘real’ world.

Furthermore, reading fosters an affective engagement that is relevant to my study of the teacher’s emotional world by allowing us to make connections between personal experiences and those of characters in novels. In their research, Mar and Oatley (2008) discover that fiction can prompt for readers “vivid autobiographical memories” (p. 178). We can, therefore, relate to the emotions of characters in novels by drawing on our own emotions and similar experiences. It is through being affectively engaged by novels, either by making personal connections to characters or being exposed to unfamiliar experiences, that readers can then contemplate their own emotional responses in real situations and unravel their own “mental models of self” (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 182). As my goal is to examine and unravel the teacher’s psyche, novels

provide opportunities to access the inner thoughts of literary representations of teachers and engage with and experience, vicariously, familiar and unfamiliar emotions to develop an understanding of what real teachers may be feeling. Britzman (2009) reminds us of the constant presence of the unknown in our efforts to understand others through literature. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Britzman (2009) argues that reading stages "an encounter with what is illegible yet impresses psychical reality" *and* puts "these impressions into language to speak and write about what is ambiguous and unknown in external reality" (p. 47). Not only can literary works help us work through what is unknown in external reality, but also what is not allowed. Mishra Tarc (2015), for one, argues that literature can provide us with "the opportunity to examine the desires we bring to our meanings of external reality that we are not allowed in real life encounters with others" (p. 16).

While allowing readers access to unknown and unpermitted emotions, novels provide a safe distance for contemplation (Britzman, 2009). When embroiled in real-life situations that heighten and escalate emotions, it is difficult to process and analyze these experiences in meaningful and insightful ways. Aesthetic contemplation can allow readers to ponder emotions in "rational" ways (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 180). Because readers can become affectively invested in the experiences of characters in novels, they can experience emotions vicariously and at a safe distance, as a "controlled experience" (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 184). This carries implications for my own positionality as both a teacher and a researcher. As the reader and selector of the novels I am using as data sources, I have an affective engagement with the teachers I have chosen to write about in this dissertation. It is notable that in addition to being a researcher, I am also a teacher. The feelings and experiences of these literary representations of teachers provide access to my own teaching experiences, as well as unfamiliar teaching

experiences. One might suggest that being afforded “a controlled experience” (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 184) allows me, as teacher/researcher, to contemplate my own teacher emotionality in relation to the teachers of my selected novels and then, in a more rational and distanced way, extrapolate meaning to apply to more general considerations of teacher identity. Had I employed other means of obtaining data, such as through interviewing real teachers, I might not have had this distance. One of the goals of this dissertation is to reflect on the concealed and undesirable aspects of teacher identity to, in Miller’s (2005) words, “disrupt rather than reinforce static and essentialized versions” of who educators are and the work they do (p. 54). Because I am a teacher as well as a researcher, and because my identity has also been shaped to a certain extent by an ‘essentialized version’ of who a teacher is, I am not only seeking to disrupt teacher identity in general but also disrupting my own identity. Thus, the aesthetic distance of novels allows me to engage in this self-disruptive process in a distanced way and to consider the data more objectively and rationally.

Reading as a Relational Act

Novels not only serve as sites for theorizing about natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality; the act of reading itself can be interpreted through the theoretical lens of these concepts. Through Arendt’s (1977) concept of natality, novels can be perceived as objects that come into the world as new creations to which the author gives birth, much like the human newcomers who arrive into the world through natality (Britzman, 2009). As unique and singular entities, novels present new ideas that carry the potential to revitalize the world. It is also through the authority of the novel that knowledge and an understanding of the world is passed along. The author’s mortality is survived by the immortality of her ideas and these persist, signifying renewal and revitalization as new readers experience the text. In relation to hospitality (Derrida,

1997/2000), authors may be conceptualized as vulnerable hosts. Britzman (2006) describes the work of art, which in this case is the novel, as "in excess of the artist's intentions" (p. 110), in that the artist cannot foresee or predict how her artistic creation will be taken up by its audience. One might make a comparison to the space offered to the guest who then changes that space: the reader, in similar fashion, will alter the fictional space that is provided through the novel in ways that are unknown to and unintended by the author, as the reader brings her own interpretations to the text. Novels can also arouse feelings of hostility as readers encounter new ideas, new situations, and new experiences which can disrupt one's ego and challenge one's understanding. Like the relationship between the host and guest in concepts of hospitality, the novel stages a relationship that invites the reader to encounter what is strange within herself (Britzman, 1998; Gilbert, 2006). Through the lens of nonviolent relationality (Levinas, 1982/1985, 1974/1998), reading might be interpreted as a passive interaction with alterity. As noted above, Britzman (1998) conceptualizes the act of reading as an encounter with the unknown that opens the possibility of "unhinging the normal from the self in order to prepare the self to encounter its own conditions of alterity" (p. 85). Reading becomes an encounter with otherness, the unknown, and what is uncertain; it requires an openness on the part of the reader and allows for an engagement that is tolerable, even as it threatens the ego.

I believe new understandings can be gained from using novels to think about who we are as educators and how we come to know ourselves and the Other. I now turn to the specific novels through which to gain these new understandings, and the ideas they present that provoke us to question, wonder, rethink, and challenge our assumptions about education, children, teaching and learning, ethics, and the world.

The Novels: Selection and Summaries

I have chosen five novels, all of which illustrate adult/child relationships and feature situations in which the adult characters are in positions of responsibility with respect to children. It is through analyses of this responsibility and the perspectives of these literary figures, as well as the themes conveyed through these novels, that I theorize about how a teacher's identity is impacted by the relational aspects of her role, her dependency on others, and the complexities of the emotional world she inhabits.

In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Jean Brodie is an educator at a private day school for girls. A teacher with very unconventional ideas about teaching, she has dedicated herself to a group of six girls, referred to as the "Brodie set" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 5). The story is told from the perspectives of one of her students, Sandy Stranger, many years later, as she recounts the story of Jean's eventual downfall. Because the story is told from the point of view of her student, the reader is given a sense of the blurred boundaries that can and do occur between students and teachers. This blurring is further emphasized through the novel as the reader develops an idea of Jean's identity as affected by her students' melodramatic perceptions of her heroism and responsibility to mold them into the "crème de la crème" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 8).

What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal is the story of two teachers: Barbara Covett and Sheba Hart. Contemporary teachers at the same school in London, Barbara and Sheba have very different views of the teacher role, as well as different life experiences. Barbara is unmarried and without children, and suffers from tremendous loneliness and feelings of inadequacy. Sheba is married with children but also feels inconsequential and decides that pursuing a career in teaching will give her life meaning. When Sheba's dreams do not come to fruition, she begins a sexual relationship with an underage student and Barbara becomes her

confidante; Barbara also becomes obsessed with Sheba and works to ensure that Sheba will never leave her. Barbara's first-person narration, structured around her writing an account of Sheba's scandalous relationship, provides an interesting point of view. The reader gains an understanding of Barbara's own teacher identity as well as Sheba's, but this understanding is clouded by Barbara's overwhelming isolation, her feelings of disconnectedness and lack of fulfillment, and her desperation to maintain a relationship with Sheba.

Jean, Barbara, and Sheba all struggle with feelings of disempowerment, lack of fulfillment, and unrealized dreams. As the plots of both novels unfold, investments in their own natality and their reproductive goals as gendered teachers harmfully impact their students, and dynamics of love, sexuality and desire, disempowerment, and control come to shape how they enact their teacher roles and ethical responsibility.

The Children Act tells the story of Fiona Maye, a High Court judge who is called upon to preside over the case of hospitalized 17-year-old Adam Henry. Adam refuses a life-saving blood transfusion on the grounds of his religious beliefs as a Jehovah's Witness. Fiona must intervene and decide whether to legally force him to have the transfusion or to respect his wishes and allow him to die. This novel illustrates how responsibility can collapse into the caregiver's fantasied rescue of the child, which, in this case, might also refer to Fiona's bid to rescue her own failing personal life. Even though *The Children Act* does not feature a student/teacher relationship, it is applicable to this dissertation in its depiction of the responsibility that an adult feels towards a child as fuelled, complicated, and overturned by the transference of unthought feelings. Fiona feels an overwhelming sense of guilt as she grapples with her obligation to Adam. Metaphorically, this novel raises the question of how the teacher may welcome the new and strange—in this case Adam's rejection of a life-saving treatment— when this does not conform

to her ideals of responsibility and obligation. Is her decision to protect him from death, what she perceives to be her ethical responsibility, itself a violence that refutes his singularity and his own self-knowledge? While the third-person narration of the novel provides an objective rendering of Fiona's story, it also contrasts the highly-personalized descriptions of Fiona's insecurities, feelings, and desires. This combination, of a distanced and removed third-person narrator and the protagonist's deepest and inner-most thoughts, creates an affective engagement that draws in the reader while, at the same time, allowing the reader to consider Fiona's emotionality from an aesthetic distance.

The futuristic world of *Klara and the Sun* becomes a frightening depiction of a technologically-driven society in which children attend a virtual form of online schooling. Because children are isolated and have infrequent opportunities to socialize with their peers, artificial robotic friends have been created to keep children company and stave off loneliness. Klara is one such robotic friend, purchased for a child named Josie. Told from Klara's point of view, the novel details their friendship as Josie transitions into adulthood. Klara's first-person perspective allows the reader to empathize with Klara. For example, as Josie grows up and Klara is left behind, the reader develops an understanding of how the teacher feels when the student grows up and no longer needs the teacher. It is also of note that I use this novel to explore the concept of nonviolent relationality and its notion of egoless passivity. The egoism of Klara's 'I' narration contrasts both the egoless passivity of nonviolent relationality and Klara's characterization as the selflessly devoted teacher-like figure whose only purpose is to serve Josie. This contrast conveys one of the tensions that arises from considerations of nonviolent relationality, that of ego-based affect and egoless-ness. In addition, the reader accesses this futuristic world through Klara's eyes. As a robot who is unfamiliar with the world, Klara's

descriptions of what she sees and experiences are, at times, cryptic. This requires extra work and time on the part of the reader to decipher the text, thereby slowing down the reading process and allowing for, returning to Britzman (2009), a "slow [reading]" (p. 48) of the ideas presented in the text.

In *Educated*, Tara Westover recounts her life growing up in the rural town of Buck's Peak, Idaho. She is schooled at home because her father does not believe in the educational system. As Tara gets older, she decides she wants a formal education and, against her father's wishes, attends university and eventually earns a PhD from Cambridge. Because this is a memoir, it is told from Tara's first-person viewpoint. However, Tara does not position herself as an authoritative author. Instead, footnotes are scattered throughout the book in which she admits to the reader that her recollection of events may not be entirely accurate. These admissions point to Tara's vulnerability as a non-masterful subject, in that she doesn't try to impose her ideas on the reader. By contrast, Tara's upbringing is one of precisely such imposition—and violence—during which her parents impose their ideas on their children. Through Tara's first-person narration, the reader is able to experience her emotions and, also, to experience the unfamiliar. I would suggest that for many readers, including myself, Tara's descriptions of her upbringing would be strange and new.

I use *Klara and the Sun* and *Educated* to theorize the impact of the teacher's disappearance, a phenomenon I connect to present-day concerns around online versions of schooling necessitated by the pandemic. Tara doesn't have a strong teacher figure who can help her navigate her transition into the world as an adult. Klara, portrayed as a teacher-like figure, does little to support Josie's engagement with the world, and Josie's virtual schooling falls short

as well. Both of these novels shed light on the value of the teacher's physical presence, as well as her ethical responsibility to support the student's transition into the world.

My Reading Process and Final Selection of Novels

My selection process began with reading new novels and rereading familiar ones I remembered as I contemplated this project. I chose the novels under consideration in this dissertation using the philosophical concepts of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality as my guide and frame. Each novel offers a case study that contextualizes these constructs as they are enacted in teachers' minds and relationships. I used very broad criteria at the start of my dissertation for which novels I chose to read: books about teachers, or books that focused on relationships between teachers and students or adults and children. To find these books, I conducted Google searches of 'novels with teachers,' 'fictional teachers in novels,' and 'classic novels about teachers.' I also reread books I remembered from pleasure reading and from university courses. I read *To Sir, With Love*, *Up the Down Staircase*, *Coraline*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *The Children Act*, *The Giver*, *Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend*, *Sharp Objects*, *Nervous Conditions*, *Wonder Boys*, *Never Let Me Go*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *The Abstinence Teacher*, and *Alone in the Classroom*. In this initial phase, I started to notice and be drawn to characterizations of teachers and teacher-like figures that could be used to theorize the tensions between idealized conceptions of the teacher's ethical responsibility and ego-based psychoanalytic concepts. I was also drawn to the novels I selected because they contained themes I had identified in concepts of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality such as the singular Other, conservatism, egoism, and selflessness; they all contained a relationship between a teacher or teacher-like figure and a child or children; and they each brought up

psychoanalytic ideas of self-preservation, obligation, guilt, aggression, the teacher as protector and rescuer, and expectations of student love and devotion.

Through working on the draft for my chapter on natality, in which I paired Grumet's (1988) ideas of gender and reproduction with Arendt's (1977) ideas of natality, I developed an interest in looking at female teachers. Although it was not my intention at the start to focus on teachers who are women, as I continued my reading in the area of teacher identity, I became increasingly interested in issues that are specific to women in education. This interest took shape through reading *Bitter Milk*, in which Grumet (1988) details the feminized roots of teaching and its impact on the teaching profession, describes her own positionality as mother and teacher, and paints the portrait of the traitorous female teacher who serves a patriarchal agenda. Robertson's (1997) piece about fantasies of rescuing children and of student devotion among female teachers struck a chord with me as well, as she writes about the lack of prestige in the teaching profession. Stearns' (2013, 2016) writings also left an impression, as she contemplates personal challenges and shares stories of success and failure.

Klara and the Sun was the last novel I selected and was chosen quite late in the writing of my dissertation as a result of the arrival of COVID-19. Being an educator during a pandemic, when bricks and mortar schools were closed due to lock-downs precipitated by the pandemic and schooling was conducted online and remotely, led me to develop and ponder new ideas around teacher identity and new insight into what it means to be a teacher. *Klara and the Sun* explores the impact of this form of schooling through Ishiguro's (2021) depiction of a world in which children attend school virtually.

Educated is the one novel that requires some further explanation. It is not a piece of fiction and does not feature a traditional teacher. Whereas in the novel *Klara and the Sun*

teachers are starting to fade away but are still present, at least virtually, in *Educated* the teacher has completely disappeared. I use this novel to delve into a discussion around what happens when there is no teacher and the child has to teach herself. What is interesting, however, is that Tara eventually receives formal schooling and is able to convey to the reader the value of an education at the university level. As such, Tara's educational trajectory seems to happen in reverse: instead of beginning as a student and becoming a teacher, Tara begins as her own teacher and then becomes a student. Positioned as the final novel of my study, *Educated* supports a transition from the literary world of novels to the real world of education, which I further explore in the concluding chapter.

In summary, my process of selection involved "slow readings" (Britzman, 2009, p. 48)—reading and rereading many books, attending to the emotional conflicts they stirred in me as a reader, drafting various sections of this dissertation, engaging in discussions with colleagues, and reading texts by educational scholars such as Grumet (1988) and Robertson (1997). The final five novels I have selected have notable commonalities: they all feature protagonists who are white women, thereby allowing me to disrupt prevalent narratives of teacher identity that normalize whiteness and femaleness. The characterizations of the protagonists in these novels shed light on tensions that arise from idealized concepts of ethical relationality and ego-based affect of self-preservation and ego interests. Also, the experiences of the singular and novel women from my final selection of books resonated with me. Jean Brodie's outrageous behaviour surprised and intrigued me; I felt sympathy for the lonely Barbara Covett and was compelled by Sheba Hart's lack of fulfillment as a mother and failure as a teacher; I was drawn to Fiona Maye's sense of obligation and attachment to Adam; I was inspired by Tara Westover's story of

academic success; and I was moved by Klara's characterization as the ever faithful and devoted robot.

In the next three chapters, I use the central concepts that orient my readings—natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality—to speculate about the psychical conflicts that emerge from the ethical obligations of teaching. Through my interpretations, I construct and present three teacher composites, that are based on various tensions arising from the teacher's ethical responsibility, her role, and her identity. In Chapter Five, I use the concept of natality to explore a composite of the *gendered* teacher, and examine characters in Muriel Spark's (1961/2000) *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and Zoe Heller's (2003) *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal*. Through the features of hospitality, Chapter Six focuses on the *guilt-ridden* teacher as portrayed in Ian McEwan's (2015) *The Children Act*. In Chapter Seven, I paint a portrait of the *non*-teacher from the vantage of nonviolent relationality, and turn to Tara Westover's (2018) *Educated* and Kazuo Ishiguro's (2021) *Klara and the Sun*.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE INTERSECTION OF STUDENT AND TEACHER NATALITY

In her text *Bitter Milk*, Madeleine Grumet (1988) delves into the historical context of the public education system, highlighting the feminization of teaching in the 19th century when the profession changed "from men's to women's work" (p. 32). This shift both empowered and disempowered women. As agents of a centralized public education system, women were used to fulfil a patriarchal agenda of delivering "children to the state" (Grumet, 1988, p. 39). At the same time, however, women were able to enter the workforce in one of the few professions available to them at the time, earn a living and develop independence, and realize their own matriarchal goals, or what Grumet (1988) terms the reproductive project of their "own belated individuation and expression" (p. 28). These gendered roots of the teaching profession form the basis for my exploration in this chapter of the *gendered* teacher.

My focus is on the teacher's natality in relation to this context and ongoing legacy. Specifically, I explore natality as framed by a tension that mirrors Grumet's (1988): that is, I am interested in the teacher's own desire to individuate herself and leave her impression on the world in the context of the historical feminization of the profession, which often creates stereotypes of women teachers as 'natural' caregivers rather than as theorists and makers of their craft. As I will show, this tension may be a foundational aspect of identity that complicates how teachers enact their ethical responsibility to support the natality of their students. I contend that Arendt's (1977) idea of world renewal through the natality of children comes into conflict with

the teacher's own natality and, in particular, her reproductive goals (Grumet, 1988) of renewing herself and finding purpose and personal fulfillment through her work with students.

The World's Renewal Through Natality

Hannah Arendt (1977) views the birth of children as the world's source of revitalization and the purpose of education as addressing "the fact that human beings are *born* into the world" (p. 174). The survival of the world hinges on birth, since "without a world into which men are born and from which they die, there would be nothing but changeless eternal recurrence" (Arendt, 1958/1998, Labor and Life, para. 2). In this dissertation, Arendt's articulation of renewal offers a way to think about the teacher's responsibility. Such responsibility pertains not only to the child, but also to the world by means of the child: to conserve the newness of the child in order for the child to exert the fact of her natality upon the world. From an Arendtian perspective, the child's natality requires protection and nurturance so that her singularity may, in turn, bring what is new to the world. Linking the foci of the teacher to both the child and the world, Arendt (1961/2006) describes the dual responsibility of meeting educational and political needs: educational needs focus on "natural needs, the helplessness of the child" while political needs focus on "the continuity of an established civilization" (What is Authority?, Sect. I, para. 3).

Arendtian responsibility seems to require from the adult a form of selfless love, focused not inward but outward, directed towards the world and the child. In fact, Arendt (1977) pinpoints the notion of love as the essence of education, explaining that education is "the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it" and "where we decide whether we love our children enough not to … strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new" (p. 196). Yet, Arendt's concept of natality does not take into

account the natality of the adult charged with the responsibility of world renewal, and hence the teacher. When considering teacher identity from the vantage of natality, tensions materialize in light of the teacher's responsibility for others and the need to protect her own natality. Applying the concept of natality to the teacher, there arises the question of what it can mean to theorize the meaning of responsibility between, on the one hand, the idealized selfless teacher who exists solely for her students and, on the other hand, the self-involved teacher who, with personal dreams, desires, and ambitions, has her own natality that requires protection and nurturance. It is the work of this chapter to imagine, theorize about, and give expression to this middle ground as foundational to world renewal through education, which I argue is affected by the teacher's *renewal.*

The Teacher's Renewal Through Reproduction

Grumet's (1988) discussions about reproduction provide a context through which teacher natality can be explored as it comes into conflict with the teacher's responsibility to ensure the world is revitalized through the student. As Grumet (1988) writes, "the process and experience of reproducing ourselves" is of central importance to humankind (p. 4). Defining all human beings as "gendered," she highlights our common implication in "the reproductive commitments of this society" (Grumet, 1988, p. 6). This reproductive involvement extends to those who do not literally have children of their own because humankind is a product for which everyone is responsible, in procreative as well as symbolic ways (Grumet, 1988, pp. 6-7). Elaborating on her concept of reproduction, Grumet (1988) identifies three forms: the biological which denotes procreation and literal birth; the ideological which signifies the continuance of culture and tradition; and the critical which encompasses a return of the adult to her own childhood, this time to open a different, untraveled path (pp. 8-9), and is described as the "reflexive capacity of

parents to reconceive our own childhoods and education as well as our own situations as adults and to choose another way for ourselves expressed in the nurture of our progeny" (p. 8).

This third form, critical reproduction, becomes a means, in education, through which to compensate for the biological and ideological implications of reproduction (Grumet, 1988, p. 8). Grumet (1988) associates critical reproduction with curriculum, defined as that which "expresses the desire to establish a world for children that is richer, larger, more colorful, and more accessible than the one we have known" (p. xii). The distinction between paternity and maternity—and so gender—becomes an essential element of critical reproduction. Linking the domestic life of the home to the maternal realm, and the public life of the school to that which is paternal, the reproductive projects of each take on different forms. From a maternal perspective there is a direct and explicit connection to the child through the biological process of giving birth (Grumet, 1988, p. 10). Conversely, from a paternal viewpoint the connection to the child is "uncertain and inferential" and dependent on the labour of women (Grumet, 1988, p. 10). Thus, to account for the indirect and equivocal connection between men and children, "the paternal project of curriculum is to claim the child, to teach him or her to master the language, the rules, the games, and the names of the fathers" (Grumet, 1988, p. 21). From a maternal position, however, the reproductive project involves weakening the ties between mother and child, so that both "become more independent of one another" in order to enter into the symbolic world (Grumet, 1988, p. 21). In short, the paternal curricular goal is one of continuance whereas the maternal goal is one of separation; schools become spaces in which these two cross-purposes come to fruition via the teacher. As such, gender not only plays a role in pedagogical interactions but is a fundamental consideration when exploring how the teacher enacts her responsibility

towards the child and the world, the relational qualities of teaching, and conceptualizations of teacher identity.

I link Grumet's (1988) concept of critical reproduction to my theory of teacher natality. Using Arendt's (1977) ideas to define student natality in terms of the student's newness and singularity—both qualities that require nurturance, protection, and containment and that will be exerted to re-energize a tired and worn-out world—we might similarly think of teacher natality in terms of the teacher's desire to be individuated (Grumet, 1988, p. 28) and singular in her own right, to be reborn through her work with students, and, through this rebirth, to reflect on, reconceive, and re-imagine different possibilities for herself as well as her students.

Returning to Arendt, several questions arise when examining natality from the vantage of Grumet's (1988) notion of reproduction. How does gender, as one aspect of teacher identity, affect Arendt's concept of natality? How do the "reproductive commitments" (Grumet, 1988, p. 6) of teachers, as gendered beings with their own natality to protect, impact pedagogical interactions? How does teacher natality impact reproductive aims and, in turn, how is teacher natality shaped by reproductive aims?

The Gendered Teacher Identities of Jean, Barbara, and Sheba

In order to delve into these questions, I turn to three fictional teachers: Jean Brodie from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, and Barbara Covett and Sheba Hart from *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal*. A look at these three teachers reveals conflicted individuals whose gender becomes a key component of their teacher identities in relation to natality. I will be considering Jean as the *gendered surrogate*: a substitute mother, as well as a type of anti-mother, to a group of six girls. Barbara is the *gendered biographer*: a sad and isolated figure, seeking to connect with others, who meticulously documents her account of a scandal involving

a colleague. Sheba is the *gendered homemaker*: an unsatisfied wife, mother, and amateur pottery maker who seeks fulfillment from a sexual relationship with a student. In characterizing these teachers as gendered, I reiterate Grumet's (1988) definition of the gendered human being as one who "[participates] in the reproductive commitments of this society" (p. 6). In noting reproduction as a quality of gender, I maintain that neither gender nor reproduction refer to essential origins rooted in biology or birth. With scholars of gender and sexuality, I understand gender to be a complex embodiment of desire that is lived uniquely at the intersection of other markers of identity such as race, class, nation, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1991). Returning to Grumet (1988), I further suggest that gender is a structural idea and inheritance baked right into the profession of education. From this perspective, education is imbued with stereotypical ideas of woman-ness that are also imbued with ideas about race. My aim in this chapter is to unpack some of these ideas as they are represented in the characters of Jean, Barbara, and Sheba: all are white women teachers with different attachments to the reproductive commitments that Grumet (1988) links to both gender and education. In this chapter, I zero in on these attachments with a view to complicating and challenging the long-standing assumption that teaching is a 'natural' practice or a 'calling' belonging to white women. I show how reproduction is complicated by feelings of disempowerment and the teacher's own investments in her natality, even though cultural myths of teaching continue to uphold the white teacher as saviour of other people's children. In other words, teaching is far from a selfless activity; it is deeply personal, often conflictive, and linked to both privilege and power.

In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Jean Brodie is a teacher in the 1930s at the Marcia Blaine School for Girls. The novel depicts her relationships with six students, referred to as the "Brodie set" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 5): Sandy Stranger, Jenny Gray, Rose Stanley, Eunice

Gardiner, Mary Macgregor, and Monica Douglas. Spark (1961/2000) centres on one student/teacher relationship in particular, between Jean and Sandy. Throughout the novel, Jean strengthens the bond she shares with her students as they transition into adulthood. As an unconventional teacher who does not follow the rules and who portrays herself as an exciting, single woman in her prime, Jean uses her students to nurture and realize her own natality at the expense of theirs.

In *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal*, Barbara Covett and Sheba Hart are teachers at the same school in current-day London who develop a friendship with one another. As an unmarried woman, Barbara suffers from tremendous loneliness and desperately wants to connect with someone. Sheba, a wife, mother, and amateur artist decides to enter the teaching profession after years of caring for her family at home, in the hopes of finding fulfillment and purpose. Sheba eventually reveals to Barbara that she is having a sexual relationship with a student. The novel, told from Barbara's first-person narration, is her account of this sexual relationship. Through her depiction of what happened, the reader learns about Sheba's life, her insecurities, and her hopes, as well as Barbara's. As the plot, which focuses on Sheba's sexual misconduct, unfolds, Barbara's loneliness, her desperate longing to belong and form connections with others, and her obsessive personality are brought to light.

Jean: The Gendered Surrogate

Throughout the novel, Jean is portrayed as the matriarch of the Brodie set and assumes the role of a substitute mother to her students, or a second/other mother, outside of the home. She exerts a powerful influence over her students and is intensely invested in their lives. Her interactions with them go beyond what would be considered conventional. She takes them to see the opera (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 65) and the ballet (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 62), brings them to her

home to have tea (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 26), and goes on long walks with them through the streets of Edinburgh (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 27). Jean's position as an 'other mother' is reinforced in a portrait of her students, painted by the school's art teacher who superimposes Jean's physical characteristics over those of the girls: he paints "the dark and Roman face of Miss Brodie on that of pale Rose," her "high cheekbones and long nose" on Monica Douglas, and her features over the "small and neat" ones of Eunice (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 101). In this artistic rendering, the girls take on Jean's physical features as if they are her offspring.

As this other mother, Jean actively works to create a strong bond with her students, akin to that of actual mother and child. In Grumet's (1988) words, the mother/child bond is that in which "the child realizes his or her form within the woman, the woman realizes her form through the child. They constitute each other" (p. 27). In order for mother and child to thrive individually, the bond must be undone. The maternal goal of critical reproduction is to compensate for this collapsed bond by facilitating symbolic attachments beyond the maternal pairing, in the name of differentiating from one another, achieving autonomy, and finding new objects in the social world (Grumet, 1988, pp. 19-27). In her maternal role, however, instead of loosening the mother/ child bond Jean strives to strengthen it. As consequence, teacher and student identity become entangled, and newness is arguably submerged in the suffocating bond between them. The interconnectedness between Jean and her students is most obvious in how the girls are lumped together and identified throughout the novel as a collective group, as the Brodie set. Furthermore, their identities are continually linked to Jean. They are described as "unmistakably Brodie" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 6), "immediately recognizable as Miss Brodie's pupils" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 5), "Miss Brodie's girls" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 66), and "the Brodie set in the eyes of the school" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 111). Sandy even perceives herself and her peers to be a

part of Jean, envisioning them as part of the larger whole that constitutes their teacher: "Sandy looked back at her companions, and understood them as a body with Miss Brodie for the head" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 30). Jean perpetuates the notion that her students exist as an extension of her, they belong to her, and they are her progeny in statements such as "give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 9), "you are mine" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 97), and you are "of my stamp and cut" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 97). As they get older and start to detach themselves from her, Jean becomes the mother who wants to maintain her hold on her children. For example, Jean wants Sandy and Jenny to teach her Greek as they are learning it because "she was determined to enter and share the new life of her special girls" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 82). She also worries that her students will become "personally attached" to another teacher once they enter the senior school (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 83).

Jean seeks fulfillment in the position of substitute mother and, specifically, through what she perceives as a selfless devotion to her students. Feeling that she can do a better job of raising her students than their biological parents, they are frequently reminded of her unwavering dedication. For example, she tells her students that they are her "vocation" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 23), that she is "dedicated" to them in her "prime" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 23), of the troubles she has "encountered on their behalf" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 26), and that she will serve out her "duty" at Marcia Blaine even though she views the school as an "education factory" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 112). Jean reminds them that she is the only one who can ensure their success in life, which is described in vague terms as becoming "the crème de la crème" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 14), and laments that it might be too late because she did not have them when they were younger (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 22). Casting herself in the role of other mother, Jean comes to view herself as the dedicated and selfless teacher who does a better job of raising her students

than their parents. She envisions the attainment of her own natality through raising and returning them to the world in the image of cultural icons like the women she admires most, such as Anna Pavlova (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 63), Florence Nightingale (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 78), and Sybil Thorndike (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 78). Not only does Jean use the girls of the Brodie set to actualize her own natality; she also uses them to avoid her natality. Rather than risk her own desire and admit failure in not becoming a cultural icon herself, her impact on the world is achieved through nurturing and promoting the potential greatness of her students, her progeny.

The troubling implications of Jean's involvement in the lives of her students is most apparent in the characterization of Sandy. As Jean becomes more and more attached to her students, Sandy becomes equally attached to and affected by Jean to such an extent that she is not able to thrive in her own life post-Jean. This inability to exist beyond Jean is summed up when Spark (1961/2000) writes of Jean's impending death that this "was her last year in the world and in another sense it was Sandy's" (p. 56). Jean and Sandy both die; Jean dies a literal death by succumbing to illness and Sandy a metaphorical one. Sandy, subsequently, enters a convent and changes her name to "Sister Helena of the Transfiguration" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 127), ceasing to be Sandy Stranger. Sandy, now Sister Helena, is depicted like a prisoner at the end of the novel, as she clings to the bars of the grille at the convent's gate and answers a visitor's question about the influences in her life: "There was a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 128). By bringing Jean and Sandy together in this last scene of the book, the reader is left with a sense that the two are forever connected, the mother/child bond left intact.

Although she is portrayed as substitute mother, Jean also becomes representative of a type of anti-mother. As the gendered surrogate, Jean's teacher identity as substitute mother

stands in contrast to the biological mothers of her students. Attempting to claim an unending relationship with her students and, thus, disavowing the maternal project of reproduction, it follows that Jean serves the patriarchy. In Grumet's (1988) words, one might identify Jean as a "traitor" who takes the child away from the mother to deliver the child to the patriarchy (p. 25). In this traitorous position, Jean effects the transition from the woman's domain to that of the man's, from the "from the fluid time of the domestic day to the segmented schedule of the school day, from the physical work, comfort, and sensuality of home to the mentalistic, passive, sedentary, pretended asexuality of the school" (Grumet, 1988, p. 25). Arguably, Jean represents this transition from biological mother to patriarchal anti-mother. She is perceived by her students as an asexual role model, discernible from other adults, and, especially, their mothers. According to Suh (2007), Jean "appears to transcend the mundane bodily existence of their mothers" (p. 90). One example of such transcendence occurs in a scene when Sandy and Jenny are composing a fictional story about Jean and her lover; they decide she that she wouldn't have sex because she's "above all that" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 20). Another example occurs when Mr. Lowther, the music teacher, develops an attraction to Jean and her students find it "impossible to imagine her in a sexual context at all" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 61). Similarly, when Monica witnesses a secret kiss between Mr. Lloyd, the art teacher, and Jean, her students spend their time wondering if Jean is "capable of being kissed and of kissing" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 53). In these ways, Jean is differentiated from their mothers in how she is perceived as non-sexual. Although children might have difficulty imagining their mothers as kissing or being kissed, mothers are still viewed as sexual, at least insofar as they procreate. Jean's identity as dissimilar to the mothers of her students is further emphasized through Jean's identification as a woman in her prime. On numerous occasions she refers to her prime in a bid to set herself apart from the biological

parents of her students (e.g., Spark, 1961/2000, p. 12, p. 44, p. 47, p. 108). At one point, Sandy and Jenny contemplate that their unmarried and single teacher has a "prime" whereas their parents have "sexual intercourse" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 16). Through the creation of an identity as an exciting woman who is out in the public world and who does not lower herself to sex or mothering, Jean presents an alternative to the domestic life of the household and child-rearing. In reflecting on Jean when they are older, her students feel that "she was really an exciting woman as a woman" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 116).

Even though Jean is asexualized, she is portrayed as a sensual figure as well. On the one hand, she forms an identity around not bearing children and being different from her students' mothers; on the other hand, she constructs an identity of a romantic, passionate, and sought-after woman who chooses to be on her own. Returning to my previous discussion in which Grumet (1988) contends that the transition between home and school marks a movement from the "sensuality of home" to the "asexuality of the school" (p. 25), Jean represents both asexuality and sensuality. She is the object of desire of two of the male teachers on staff, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Lowther. She also shares stories with her students of her short engagement to Hugh, a war-time hero (Spark, 1961/2000, pp. 12-13). Yet, she tells Sandy about how she "renounced the great love" of her prime (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 56). Therefore, while there is a movement away from sexuality as this pertains to procreation, Jean's identity implies a movement towards non-procreative sex, sensuality, and pleasure. In this sense, she does not adhere to the asexuality of the patriarchal institution of school.

In her non-conformity and the ways in which she represents the sensual anti-mother who does not procreate, Jean uncovers for her students the possibility of a different life path. Suh (2007) explains that Jean "provides an alternative model of middle-class femininity that diverges

from the prevalent route of marriage" (p. 90). It is of note, however, that none of Jean's students adhere to this different model of womanhood. Comparing Rose to "a heroine from a novel by D.H. Lawrence," Jean prophesies that Rose "will be a great lover" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 110). Rose does not become the great lover Jean had imagined but rather "made a good marriage soon after she left school" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 119). Eunice, whom Jean wishes "to become at least a pioneer missionary in some deadly and dangerous zone of the earth" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 62), ends up married to a doctor (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 26). Mary dies at an early age in a fire (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 15), Monica marries a scientist (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 121), and Jenny ends up married as well (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 81). Even Sandy, who deviates from the conventional path of marriage and becomes a nun, does not fulfill Jean's hopes. When she hears that Sandy has entered a convent, Jean says "What a waste. This is not the sort of dedication I meant" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 63). Ultimately, Jean's reproductive goal, shaped around her students rejecting traditional notions of womanhood and becoming exciting and empowered women, is unfulfilled.

Although Jean is characterized in contrast to the mothers of her students, and as the traitorous teacher taking the child away from the biological mother (Grumet, 1988, p. 25), she does not deliver those in her charge to the patriarchy. In fact, she opposes the patriarchal agenda, its rigid curriculum, and the structured and "segmented schedule of the school day" (Grumet, 1988, p. 25). Instead, Jean provides instruction of topics she believes to be relevant, and does so in a very unstructured manner. She does not teach the mandated curriculum but, rather, what she feels her students should know. Her students are described as "vastly informed on a lot of subjects irrelevant to the authorized curriculum" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 5). She does not conform to a structured day schedule and her teaching of different subjects is delivered through various haphazard narratives. In one such haphazard narrative, the class is supposed to be doing a

grammar lesson, but Jean instead tells them the story of a man she was supposed to marry (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 12). In another scene, Jean's lesson centres on a recount of her trip to Italy, and she has her students take out and pretend to be using their history books because they "ought to be doing history at the moment according to the time-table" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 46). She teaches history by taking her students on walks through parts of the city because she feels "they should see where history had been lived" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 29). Her non-traditional approach to instruction is regarded with annoyance by her colleagues and referred to as "Miss Brodie's experimental methods" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 48). Hence, Jean's identity is shaped in opposition to conventional maternal notions of domesticity (e.g., marriage, procreation, and motherhood), and serves a paternal reproductive aim of taking the child away from the mother. Nonetheless, her teacher identity also signifies a rejection of the patriarchy. This active defiance of the patriarchy can be interpreted as Jean's offer of newness, her effort to envision something different from what has been and "to choose another way" (Grumet, 1988, p. 8), for herself as well as her students.

Jean's identity as substitute mother and anti-mother is accentuated by her love of fascism. She expresses her questionable political views to her students on several occasions. For instance, she shows her students pictures of Mussolini's marching troops and praises him for ending unemployment and littering in the streets (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 31). At another point in the novel, Jean tells her students how Mussolini and his army are "doing splendid things" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 44) and calls Mussolini "one of the greatest men in the world" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 44). Her political views point to her emerging—but also destructive—natality. Despite this dubious political affiliation, Jean's attachment to fascism might be conceptualized by Grumet (1988) as the teacher's "project of her own belated individuation and expression" (p. 28).

Fascism in 1930s Britain was associated with new and exciting ideas and was represented as a way for women to obtain agency and power (Suh, 2007, p. 95). Spark (1961/2000) details the unmarried women of this time period, like Jean, who "crowded their war-bereaved spinsterhood with voyages of discovery into new ideas" (p. 42). Citing propaganda pamphlets of the time, Suh (2007) demonstrates how fascism was presented to women as a way for them to obtain "unprecedented political activism," with promises that "under a fascist state, domestic women's special interests would be politically represented" (p. 95).

Consistent with Arendt's (1977) ideas about the natality of the becoming child who is undergoing formation (p. 185), Jean is described in terms of her natality, "in a state of fluctuating development" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 43), as one who is not "static" but growing like her students (Spark, 1961/2000, pp. 43-44). As a woman who is experiencing her own becoming alongside her students, Jean's interest in fascism illustrates both her vulnerability and her desire to discover new ideas, to imagine and experience different possibilities of womanhood, and to be an individual. She also worries that her students will not exert their individuality, warning them not to end up "as a Girl Guide leader in a suburb" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 62), and admonishing the idea of "team spirit" because this idea "cut across individualism" (Spark, 1961/2000, p. 78). Jean's fascist beliefs also exemplify the dangerous potential of natality. Her interest in fascism, while indicative of someone who is seeking out new ideas and a means through which to achieve agency as a woman, also shows how natality, left untended or uncritically engaged, can risk destruction of the common world. It becomes ironic that Jean views fascism, an oppressive ideology that represents a failure of individual thought, a lack of agency, and a collective psychology that demands group allegiance, as a way to develop her individualism and reject traditional and normative social structures.

In sum, Jean's natality is apparent in the identity she constructs of herself as a surrogate to her students. As a gendered surrogate, she represents a myriad of contradictions. She is depicted as a mother figure to her small group of selected students but, also, as an anti-mother as she challenges conventional notions of motherhood and domesticity. She furthers the paternal goals of curriculum and, at the same time, subverts these. She claims and removes the child from the biological mother (Grumet, 1988, p. 21) but not to comply with paternal goals of curriculum, in her rejection of the ideological reproduction of oppressive patriarchal values of the time period. Her love of fascism and the way in which she is portrayed as a Mussolini-like dictator, on the one hand, lends itself to an interpretation of Jean as a patriarchal figure. On the other hand, fascism in 1930s England was presented as a feminist movement to empower women (Suh, 2007). Her own reproductive goals, as such, focus on imagining different possibilities for herself and her students, and her natality is apparent in her opposition to traditional ideas of motherhood and domesticity, as well as in her fascist political views. It becomes increasingly apparent as the story unfolds that her reproductive aims strongly influence her teacher identity and the ways in which she actualizes her natality, how she contradicts traditional roles of women, attempts to turn her students into her own progeny, and desires to (re)produce empowered women.

Jean's natality at its outset indicates good intentions, centred around creating a teacher identity, and indeed a female identity, that is different from patriarchal conceptions of womanhood of the time period. Admirably, Jean wants to empower her young charges. Her natality, however, becomes destructive as Jean develops an unhealthy and suffocating attachment to her students. In the end, her characterization illustrates a failure of natality. The question arises: why does Jean's natality, which starts off with such promise, end so terribly? In order to further pinpoint the aspects of teacher identity that result in this failure, I turn to another teacher

figure, that of Barbara Covett from *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal*. An exploration of Barbara, and a comparison between her and Jean, will shed more light on the connection between natality and reproductive goals, the impact of teacher natality on identity formation, the intermingling of teacher natality with that of the student, and whether or not it is possible for teacher natality to rise to Arendt's hope of world renewal and regeneration.

Barbara: The Gendered Biographer

Barbara Covett is a teacher at St. George's, a school in present-day London. Even though Barbara's teacher identity is under investigation in this chapter, there are few interactions in the book between Barbara and her students. Unlike Jean's characterization, which is mainly developed by analyzing her interactions with students, Barbara's teacher identity is made manifest through the first-person narrative structure of the text. It is through this narrative that the reader is given access to Barbara's thoughts, her pedagogical beliefs, and how she views the teacher role. Barbara self-identifies as a disciplinarian (Heller, 2003, p. 56), and doesn't relate to children or want to form relationships with them. In fact, Barbara admits that she is not comfortable in the company of children outside of the classroom: "It sounds mad for a woman who has spent her life in the teaching profession to say so, but the truth is, I am not very good with young people" (Heller, 2003, p. 108). She is, however, fine with children in a classroom setting where there are "clearly defined" rules (Heller, 2003, p. 108). She perceives her strengths as a teacher to lie in her ability to manage her class and in what she refers to as her "superior disciplinary skills" (Heller, 2003, p. 56). She believes in a back-to-basics, three Rs approach to instruction and to sending children out "into the world knowing how to do long division" (Heller, 2003, p. 29). Barbara makes fun of a colleague's more progressive methods of "making the children do expressive dances to Pink Floyd and singing 'American Pie' with them" (Heller,

2003, p. 35). She scoffs at Sheba's "do-gooding fantasies" and at younger teachers who want to make a difference (Heller, 2003, p. 29), and advises Sheba not to try "to please the pupils" (Heller, 2003, p. 67), a practice which, in her opinion, is nonsensical idiocy (Heller, 2003, p. 67). Barbara also has little sympathy for the challenges children face growing up. When Sheba's daughter, Polly, is expelled from school, Barbara refutes the idea that Polly's behaviour is indicative of a child who is "vulnerable" and "anxious" (Heller, 2003, p. 143). Another example of this lack of sympathy occurs when Barbara's written report to the headmaster indicates that she sees no hope of "rehabilitation" for one student in particular, and suggests that the only solution is expulsion (Heller, 2003, p. 63). Accordingly, Barbara does not see her teacher role in terms of developing relationships with students, trying to relate to them, or saving them. Instead, she sees her role as managing and controlling students and preparing them with the basic skills they will need to survive in the world. Contrary to Arendt's (1977) idea about natality—the adult must foster the newness of children so that this newness can renew the world—Barbara fails in every way to nurture student natality. Unlike Jean Brodie who, though ultimately unsuccessful in nurturing and bringing out the natality of her students, believed that her students carried the possibility of natality, Barbara does not seem to recognize student natality at all, or the possibility of world renewal through her students.

Instead, Barbara's only thoughts of natality are focused on her natality, and the fact that she has failed to make her own impression on the world. Describing the "thinness" of her existence (Heller, 2003, p. 104), she regards herself as "invisible" (Heller, 2003, p. 121) and irrelevant (Heller, 2003, p. 201), and laments her inability to fulfil the "only indisputable purpose humans have on earth" of bearing children (Heller, 2003, p. 196). One may speculate that because Barbara feels her own natality has been so neglected, she is unable to see the potential of

natality in others. Along this vein, in Barbara's view, children should not be given second chances but should be expelled; children are not vulnerable but culpable; children do not renew the world but survive in it; teachers do not promote newness but manage behaviour.

One might contend that Barbara's disciplinarian approach to education is consistent with Grumet's (1988) notion of the female teacher as the traitor who delivers the child "to the patriarchy" (p. 32). Furthermore, Barbara appears to fit Grumet's (1988) description of the ideal teacher of the past as "one who could control the children and be controlled by her superiors" (p. 43). However, despite the fact that Barbara is able to control and manage her students, she is not entirely complicit with the patriarchy, represented in the novel by the headmaster of the school. Barbara agrees with her colleagues that he is a "pedantic man—a petty-minded despot" (Heller, 2003, p. 61) and calls him a "progressive bully" (Heller, 2003, p. 61) and an "odious little man" (Heller, 2003, p. 63). She has no interest in trying to please him, which is illustrated when he is critical of a report she has written for him (Heller, 2003, p. 64). When he tells her to rewrite it and that this is an opportunity for professional advancement, she responds that she doesn't want to be a "deputy head" and that he should get someone else to write it (Heller, 2003, p. 64). Hence, Barbara's approach to instruction and her pedagogical beliefs suggest a certain adherence to patriarchal reproductive aims; however, her dislike of the headmaster and her noncompliance can also be read as subverting these aims.

Even though Barbara does not shape her teacher identity around forming attachments to students, she is desperate to find attachment in the form of a life companion. Her overwhelming feelings of loneliness, isolation, and of not mattering are depicted throughout the book. For example, she perceives that others see her as "safely unremarkable—invisible" (Heller, 2003, p. 121). She refers to her "no-end-in-sight solitude" and thinks "I cannot do this anymore. I cannot

pull myself together again and spend the next fifteen hours of wakefulness fending off the fact of my own misery" (Heller, 2003, p. 197). She believes she is a confidante to others because of her own "irrelevance," that she matters so little that people think she won't reveal their secrets because she is "so remote from the doings of the great world" (Heller, 2003, p. 201).

It becomes apparent that Barbara is looking for a symbiotic relationship that is similar to that of mother and child in which, as Grumet (1988) explains, "they constitute each other" (p. 27). Barbara's wish to form this type of connection is illustrated in the hyperbolic phrases she uses in conjunction with notions of friendship. When she tells of her initial encounters with Sheba, she aggrandizes the relationship they are developing by describing it as an "intuited kinship" (Heller, 2003, p. 19), a friendship of "uncommon intimacy" (Heller, 2003, p. 19), and a "bond" that "went far beyond anything that might have been expressed in quotidian chitchat" (Heller, 2003, p. 19). One may infer that Barbara seeks out this connection because she equates the meaninglessness of her existence with the fact that she doesn't have children of her own. Barbara feels that it is a great accomplishment that Sheba has raised two children, and much more of an accomplishment than having a career (Heller, 2003, p. 115). She expresses her regret that she didn't have children because "the only indisputable purpose humans have on the earth is to reproduce" (Heller, 2003, p. 196). This reinforces the fact that her daily interactions with children in the role of teacher do not provide her with a sense of purpose. She views purpose and fulfillment through procreation as opposed to teaching. As such, she compensates for her sense of incompleteness through forming attachments to colleagues that border on obsession. She strives to find her "soul mate" (Heller, 2003, p. 38), and finally does through her relationship with Sheba.

Barbara feels her natality emerging through her friendship with Sheba and through authoring the story of Sheba's scandal. Her sense of purpose is evident as she positions herself as the "best qualified" and the "*only* person" who can tell the story (Heller, 2003, p. 8). For Barbara, the telling of Sheba's scandal takes on the qualities of a reproductive project. With no children of her own, Barbara, in the self-proclaimed role of Sheba's biographer, reproduces Sheba's life story. Barbara's natality, however, also gets submerged in that it is completely contingent upon Sheba. Barbara's sense of worth and purpose is mediated through Sheba's need and dependency on her; Barbara matters only insofar as Sheba needs her. The novel's concluding line illustrates this, as Sheba goes for a walk and Barbara is secure in the knowledge that Sheba "knows by now not to go too far without me" (Heller, 2003, p. 258). Barbara's selfhood is shaped through someone else. Just as Jean Brodie is dependent on her students, Barbara is dependent on Sheba. Moreover, the relationship between Sheba and Barbara, as interpreted by Barbara and conveyed through her first-person narration, is very one-sided. Barbara portrays herself sympathetically, at times, when Sheba's self-involved personality comes to light. Barbara notes the imbalance in their relationship, describing herself as "the listener" (Heller, 2003, p. 2), and explaining that she cannot count on Sheba because she "occupied a very low place on Sheba's list of priorities" (Heller, 2003, p. 149). When Barbara's cat is dying and she seeks comfort from Sheba, Sheba is only concerned with why her underage lover, Steven Connolly, has not called and half-heartedly gives "so cursory—so silly" remarks of consolation (Heller, 2003, p. 184). It is also ironic that Barbara's natality is actualized through the authorship of someone else's life story and not her own.

It might be suggested that her role as Sheba's biographer reinforces the idea that Barbara's own life is of little consequence, and that her life only matters in relation to Sheba's

scandal. Of course, the narration of someone else's life story does not necessarily imply that the author's life is inconsequential. However, because Sheba's scandal thrusts Barbara into the focus of public attention, Barbara is suddenly noticed and matters. Barbara self-identifies at the beginning of the novel as Sheba's spokesperson and describes how the media has pegged her "the saucy schoolteacher's spin doctor" (Heller, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, in speaking on behalf of Sheba and deciding to author Sheba's story, Barbara is able to exert the fact of her natality by finally making an impression on the world; nonetheless, it is an impression that relies heavily—almost parasitically—on Sheba's story and not Barbara's own.

The relationship between Sheba and Barbara eventually develops the qualities of a mother/child relationship. Sheba is, in fact, depicted throughout the novel as possessing childlike qualities and Barbara becomes a mother figure in her life. Sheba even self-identifies as a child, explaining to Barbara that her marriage to a much older man has allowed her to stay a child: "I've artificially prolonged my youth by being with Richard. I've been allowed to stay a child, don't you see? All my adult life, I've been the younger person, the baby in the group" (Heller, 2003, pp. 132-133). At one point, Barbara notes that "there *is* something fundamentally innocent about Sheba" (Heller, 2003, p. 119). When the scandal breaks and both are let go of their teaching positions at St. George's, they move in together and Barbara calls herself "Sheba's caretaker" (Heller, 2003, p. 7). Barbara performs a variety of parental-like duties to care for Sheba: she worries about the holes in Sheba's shoes (Heller, 2003, p. 128), prepares her meals (Heller, 2003, p. 258), cooks Sheba "nursery food" due to her loss of appetite (Heller, 2003, p. 9), and even makes her take naps (Heller, 2003, p. 3, p. 258). Barbara positions herself as essential to Sheba's survival, worrying about how Sheba would ever get by on her own, who

would cook and shop for her, and who would ensure she showered regularly (Heller, 2003, p. 254). Without a child of her own, Barbara turns Sheba into her daughter.

As the adult figure, Barbara's natality comes into conflict with that of Sheba. Barbara perceives the materialization of her own natality through her relationship with Sheba. Yet, Barbara's obsessive attachment to Sheba interrupts Sheba's own natality. Like Jean's students whose natality is submerged by the suffocating bond Jean creates with them, the bond that Barbara creates between herself and Sheba is equally stifling. This stifling is best illustrated in the concluding scene of the novel, during which Barbara demolishes a sculpture that Sheba has created. The sculpture depicts a mother-like figure with a child (whom Barbara believes to be the student with whom Sheba had her affair): "The cross-legged 'mother' figure had been fashioned in Sheba's image … As for the hideous, pink boy-man spilling fatly across her lap—he was a crude but unmistakable likeness of Connolly" (Heller, 2003, pp. 255-256). Barbara smashes the statue to pieces (Heller, 2003, p. 257). Barbara doesn't act in accord with Grumet's (1988) positioning of the paternal project of curriculum being to remove the mother from the dyad in order "to claim the child" (p. 16); instead Barbara claims the mother, Sheba. By destroying Sheba's artistic rendering of the mother/child dyad—a dyad that Barbara feels she has never experienced—Barbara is able to recreate a dyad between herself and Sheba. In the end, Sheba only has Barbara. She has lost her husband and her home, she is only allowed supervised visits with her children, and she has been fired from her job. As such, the book concludes with Sheba going for a walk alone and Barbara content that Sheba will always return to her (Heller, 2003, p. 258). Sheba is, of course, to blame for much of what has happened to her. Barbara, however, uses the situation to her advantage, exploiting Sheba and preying on her vulnerable state. As a result, Sheba's chance at natality is completely thwarted. The destruction of the statue not only

alludes to the destruction of a mother/child bond but, also, the destruction of something Sheba has created as an artist. Sheba has been stripped of all of her roles: mother, wife, teacher, and artist.

Throughout, Barbara feels an absence of natality and does not view her teacher role in terms of filling this void. While Jean's sense of purpose is acquired through the identity she constructs as a mother-like figure *vis-à-vis* her students, Barbara does not envision her teacher role in regards to relationality with students. She does not harbour any fantasies of saving children, nor does she conceive of her relationships with students as a means of personal fulfillment or through which to gain a sense of purpose. Instead, she views teaching as a practical activity that involves teaching students the basics so they can get by in the world, and her identity is formed around her ability to discipline and manage her students. Her reproductive project, as this pertains to children, hinges on taking the child from the home, managing and controlling her, and giving her the requisite skills to survive in a patriarchal society. That being so, Barbara does not endeavour to nurture the natality of her students or even recognize that there is the potential for natality among her students. Her project, therefore, seems to be one of continuance that is consistent with paternal aims. And yet, she doesn't submit to the patriarchy completely, as illustrated in her dislike of and oppositional attitude toward the male headmaster of the school.

Feeling inconsequential, invisible, and isolated, Barbara identifies procreation as that which gives one's life meaning and she compensates for the fact that she doesn't have children of her own by seeking to connect with an Other and find a "soul mate" (Heller, 2003, p. 38). She associates this connection with her natality: once she forms an interdependent attachment she will no longer be disregarded and she will matter. Yet, Barbara doesn't seek attachments with

Others such as students, or through her teacher role, but rather through friendship with adults. Through her friendship with Sheba, she perceives the emergence of her natality and, similar to Jean who is elevated through her role as surrogate mother to the Brodie set, Barbara finds self-worth in taking care of Sheba.

As mentioned before, Barbara's natality may also be glimpsed in her writing the story of Sheba's scandalous relationship with Steven Connolly. This storytelling gives her a voice and a sense of purpose. Her natality, however, is only achieved through her unhealthy and destructive attachment to Sheba. Like Jean, Barbara represents a failure of natality. Barbara does not engage in renewal of any kind and Sheba's natality is also destroyed. Having considered two teachers who fail to realize Arendt's vision of natality, I now contemplate a third and final literary representation, that of Sheba Hart. As a teacher who is also a mother with children of her own, I consider whether or not this dynamic carries different implications for the teacher's natality and her reproductive aims.

Sheba: The Gendered Homemaker

Feeling deprived of her natality as wife and mother, Sheba views the pursuit of a career as a way to actualize her natality. She has a makeshift art studio in her basement in which she dabbles in making pottery and is hired as an art teacher at St. George's. Unlike Jean and Barbara, Sheba is married with two children; therefore, an analysis of her portrayal has the potential to offer another layer of insight in relation to the gendered aspects of teacher identity. Essentially, Sheba and Barbara are foils of one another. While Barbara is single and alone, Sheba is fully entrenched in family life. While Barbara holds no illusions of saving children or sees this as part of her teacher role, Sheba enters into the teaching profession with fantasies of rescuing her students. While Barbara believes herself to be inconsequential because she is not a married

woman with children, Sheba views herself as inconsequential because she *is* married and *has* children.

Sheba's natality is illustrated in her aspirations, her lack of fulfillment, and her insecurities. First, she wants to move beyond her sheltered existence in the home, an existence that she feels has allowed her to stay a child. Second, stemming from her feelings of failure as a mother, she wants to make a difference in the lives of children, to rescue them, and to be valued by them. Third, as an aging woman who is insecure about losing her beauty and youth, she wants to attach herself to what is young and new, a desire which plays out in a sexual relationship with Connolly. Stemming from these aspects of her natality, her reproductive goals are multilayered. They involve extricating herself from the roles of wife and mother, obtaining independence, and removing her student, Connolly, from his biological mother. Sheba does not achieve these goals, but undermines them. Removing herself from her home and family, she falls back into two new suffocating and destructive relationships with Barbara and Connolly. She attempts to collapse the bond between mother and child, between herself and her own children. To counteract the interruption of this bond, she forms new symbolic attachments that exceed typical maternal pairing relationships. Although Sheba places herself back in an attachment that mirrors that of mother and child, she wants to be Connolly's lover as well as his mother. Therefore, she fails to actualize her natality and, in the process, disavows maternal reproductive goals.

One of the novel's motifs is how one derives meaning from life. Barbara believes that being in a close relationship with someone, being someone's "soul mate" (Heller, 2003, p. 38), as well as being a parent gives life meaning (Heller, 2003, p. 196). Accordingly, she views Sheba's life as meaningful because she is a married woman with children. Sheba disputes this. She does not derive fulfillment from her role as mother and wife. Rather, Sheba determines that

she is “hopelessly without achievement” (Heller, 2003, p. 115) and that marriage has been a hindrance that has made her miss “out on opportunities” (Heller, 2003, p. 131). Initially blaming her husband, Richard, for these missed opportunities, Sheba comes to realize that marriage and motherhood haven’t prevented her from doing anything. Instead, she tells Barbara it is the opposite: “It turns out that Richard and the kids hadn't been stopping me from doing anything. Quite the reverse. Marriage for me has been a wonderful cover-up for my fundamental lack of drive” (Heller, 2003, p. 132). Sheba also expresses to Barbara that her role as mother has not given her life meaning, that raising children does not provide the same satisfaction as doing things in the world (Heller, 2003, p. 115) and that “children give you a lot of things, but not meaning” (Heller, 2003, p. 196). She sees motherhood as working in complete “obscurity” (Heller, 2003, p. 115). Thus, Sheba believes that her natality has been impeded, that being a wife and mother has not given her the same sense of accomplishment as doing things outside of the home.

Sheba’s lack of fulfillment as a mother is further evidenced in her portrayal as a mother. Although she is close to her son, Ben, she speaks candidly of his birth and her disappointment when she found out he had Down’s syndrome. She describes to Barbara and another colleague her disgust at her first glance of Ben because he was different, and that he was “a mistake. He shouldn’t have been born” (Heller, 2003, p. 96). She has a strained relationship with her daughter, Polly. One example of this occurs when Polly is kicked out of school and runs away from home (Heller, 2003, p. 210). A scene follows during which Sheba slaps Polly (Heller, 2003, p. 225) and Polly calls Sheba “a bitch” (Heller, 2003, p. 222). Sheba even admits to Barbara that she feels more maternal instinct toward Connolly than she does her own daughter (Heller, 2003, p. 172). These instances and feelings reveal a woman who has not experienced success as a

mother and for whom motherhood has not turned out as expected. Although Sheba loves Ben, she did not expect to have a child with Down's syndrome and, perhaps, had hoped to have a better relationship with her daughter. Her sense of failure as a mother is compounded by her insecurities about aging. She admits to Barbara that her marriage to Richard, an older man, has allowed her to remain young: she has always been "the baby in the group" because Richard and his friends have always been older (Heller, 2003, pp. 132-133). Barbara believes Sheba is envious of her daughter's beauty (Heller, 2003, p. 144) and describes Sheba's sadness over aging. She explains that Sheba has been "close to tears on a number of occasions, describing the withering of her buttocks or a new knobble of varicose she's found on the back of her knee" (Heller, 2003, p. 144).

Sheba enters the teaching profession with hopes of finding the fulfillment she lacks. Based on her comments about being a wife and mother, Sheba associates teaching with being out in the world and "doing things" (Heller, 2003, p. 115). She also wants to make a difference in the lives of her students, with Barbara characterizing her as a teacher with "do-gooding fantasies" (Heller, 2003, p. 29). And yet, her foray into teaching, like her role as mother, does not turn out as expected. Sheba is unable to manage the class and her students (Heller, 2003, pp. 22-23), she is perceived by the rest of the staff as having a "short fuse" and being an "exploder" (Heller, 2003, p. 23), and, in frustration, swears at her students (Heller, 2003, p. 23). Sheba eventually surrenders to the apathetic attitude of the other teachers and gives up "trying to make the children learn" (Heller, 2003, p. 80). As a result of her disillusionment with teaching, she looks elsewhere for meaning and fulfillment and finds this in her relationship with Connolly. Arguably, this relationship provides her with the sense of fulfillment she was hoping she would get from teaching.

Like Jean and Barbara, Sheba shapes her identity around saving someone younger than herself, in her case Connolly. Recall that Jean comes to view herself as the only one who can save her students and promote their potential greatness and Barbara believes she is the only one who can help Sheba. Sheba's self-worth is bolstered by positioning herself as Connolly's saviour, as the one who will rescue him from his not-so-ideal home life, and who sees in him what others don't. When Connolly takes an interest in learning about art, she reflects that this "was what she had hoped teaching would be" (Heller, 2003, p. 44). She attributes her teaching to bringing out his intelligence: when he analyzes a painting, she thinks to herself that "Connolly's special needs teacher would have been very shocked, she thought, if he could have seen his learning-disabled pupil chattering so enthusiastically about Degas!" (Heller, 2003, p. 46). She tells Barbara that Connolly's father is violent at home (Heller, 2003, p. 49). After their relationship is exposed, Sheba is furious when she reads an interview with Connolly's mother about their happy life at home: "Mrs. Connolly was lying … trying to make her son's home life seem more wholesome and happy than it was" (Heller, 2003, p. 49). Similar to Jean who takes the Brodie set on outings, Sheba takes Connolly on excursions around London to give him worldly experiences he has not had such as visiting the National Portrait Gallery, eating West Indian food, and seeing Hampton Court (Heller, 2003, p. 124). Sheba, therefore, sees Connolly as vulnerable and in need of her. Instead of seeing the tremendous wrong in having a sexual relationship with an underage student, she believes she is giving Connolly the love, affection, and opportunity he has missed. In this way, her attachment to Connolly gives her the sense that she is making a difference by taking care of him, and she develops the fantasy of rescuing him. This rescue fantasy seems to provide her with "feelings of omnipotence" (Robertson, 1997, p. 136) over Connolly, who is positioned as someone who requires salvation.

While Sheba forms an identity around being a better parent to Connolly than his own parents, she is also elevated by his sexual desire for her and by his youth. Given her insecurities about growing old, she attaches herself to youth in the form of Connolly, who makes her feel desirable. When Connolly first draws a picture of her, she is flattered when he entitles it "FOXY LADY" (Heller, 2003, p. 30) and expresses her pleasure to Barbara over being "so candidly admired" (Heller, 2003, p. 32). Debatably, she no longer gets this kind of attention from her husband for whom she feels "contempt" because he is not aware of her affair, an indication in her view that he does not love her (Heller, 2003, p. 182). So, on the one hand, Sheba forms a relationship with Connolly in which she places herself in the position of mother; on the other hand, she enjoys the sexual attention she gets from him. In sum, her relationship with Connolly raises her self-worth by making her feel that she is not only saving him from his home life but, also, that she is a sexually desirable and attractive woman.

Sheba simultaneously adheres to and subverts maternal reproductive aims. Removing herself from the home and loosening her personal mother/child bond, she forms a new mother/child bond with Connolly. She romanticizes their relationship, wanting the public to know it is about more than just sex, that "they were *in love*" (Heller, 2003, p. 123). Connolly eventually wants to end the relationship and Sheba becomes desperate to maintain her hold on him. Like Jean who cannot exist without her students and Barbara who is obsessively attached to Sheba, Sheba is dependent on Connolly. Barbara accurately notes "how enslaved Sheba had become to the boy" (Heller, 2003, p. 160). Sheba writes letters to Connolly expressing her feelings and making "passionate statements of her commitment to him" (Heller, 2003, p. 181). She is jealous of his relationships with other girls, and becomes desperate at "the thought of his touching someone else—of someone else touching him" (Heller, 2003, p. 182). At one point, Sheba sees

him with someone else and thinks “Please, God, don’t let him be in love with someone else” (Heller, 2003, p. 232). She lays claim to Connolly, not to deliver him to the patriarchy, but to fulfill her own needs and desires. Her attempts to bring to fruition her own natality through her artwork and her role as teacher are ultimately thwarted. She clings to her relationship with Connolly because she associates this relationship with the actualization of her natality. Her strong attachment is emphasized in one of the last scenes of the novel. Even after their relationship is revealed and she has lost everything, her husband, her children, and her job, she is still unable to see the wrong in what she has done, illustrated in her creation of a sculpture of a mother-like figure, resembling herself, with a child resembling Connolly, sprawled across her lap (Heller, 2003, pp. 255-256). She derives her sense of self through being with him, in being needed by and desirable to him.

So, What Can We Conclude About Natality and the Teacher’s Identity?

Sadly, an exploration of Jean, Barbara, and Sheba leaves us with a bleak picture of the teacher figure. Not only are they unable to actualize their own natality and promote the natality of their students, but natality, in each of these cases, turns into a destructive rather than generative force. Instead of revealing the ways in which natality instigates renewal, the characterizations of these fictional teachers expose its pitfalls. And yet, the starting points of Jean’s natality and those of Barbara and Sheba are hopeful. For all three teachers, natality is, at first, empowering: it signifies uniqueness and singularity, the prospect of newness, resistance to the status quo, and a sense of belonging. Jean’s natality, initially, sets her apart from others, establishes her individualism, and is associated with her experimentation with and embracing of different and new ideas, as well as a rejection of confining social structures and norms. She embodies a new model of womanhood for her female students so that they are able to discover

unconventional options that do not involve marriage and motherhood. Barbara's natality is wrapped up in her overwhelming need to belong and to form meaningful connections with others, which is an understandable and relatable need and not one that implies anything sinister or wrong. Sheba envisions her natality in terms of finding an identity beyond that of wife and mother, and cannot be faulted for wanting to enter the workplace as an artist and a teacher. Accordingly, these teachers can be viewed as women who seize control of their lives, take risks, seek possibilities beyond their life circumstances, and play active roles in determining their futures. They are women who envision natality as a means through which to shape their destinies.

That being said, at some point natality, when exerted by Jean, Barbara, and Sheba from its start to its conclusion, takes a disturbing turn. Jean, in her desire to (re)produce a new breed of empowered women through transforming her students into the best they can be, develops a suffocating dependency on her students which has harmful consequences and results in her eventual downfall. Barbara, in her desire to (re)produce a symbiotic relationship that she does not share with a child of her own, develops an unhealthy attachment to Sheba which fuels her paranoia and obsessive personality and, also, isolates and ruins Sheba. And Sheba, in her desire as an aging woman who was once beautiful and young to (re)produce and re-experience that youth, develops a scandalous liaison with a student, severing her ties with her own children and husband and exploiting an underage boy. With all three teachers, natality assumes a relational quality in that it is actualized through attachment and dependency. Indeed, the natality of each of these women is contingent upon someone else: Jean's natality is connected to her ability to influence and change the future of her students; Barbara's natality emerges through becoming Sheba's one and only soul mate; Sheba's natality is realized through being sexually desirable to

Connolly. As such, the gendered aspects of teacher identity hinder and interrupt natality, both of the teacher and of the student, and are strongly influenced by reproductive goals. Jean, Sheba, and Barbara, in essence, become ‘other mothers’ who perceive their own success and failure in terms of this role. Jean becomes a mother to the Brodie set, Barbara takes on the role of Sheba’s caregiver, and Sheba becomes a mother to Connolly. Each teacher figure takes the child away from the parent but not with an aim of independence for the child or the mother. Instead, it seems to be with an aim of establishing a new mother/child bond, a bond that becomes unhealthy and stifling. As women who start off as empowered by taking control of their destinies, they end up dependent on others, weakened, and lost.

Arendt’s (1977) concept of natality gives expression to the tremendous responsibility educators can feel. In truth, the fate of the world rests on their shoulders as they are tasked with caring for the child, as well as promoting her newness. This requires a form of selflessness that is, of course, impossible. Like every child, every teacher carries the possibility of her own natality, and this natality also needs protection and nurturance. Implicated in the teacher’s natality are the reproductive projects of all human beings as gendered individuals. An exploration of Jean, Sheba, and Barbara reveals how teacher natality can become dangerously intertwined with reproductive goals. The gendered teacher becomes the teacher whose personal desires and ambition influence how she interacts with her students. In the novels under investigation, the gendered teacher figure seeks attachments to others and becomes dependent, paranoid, and obsessive. The gendered teacher also takes on the qualities of an other mother, shaping her identity in response to ideas of saving her students and doing a better job of raising them than their biological parents. The gendered teacher becomes the traitor who claims the child from the parent, but not necessarily to further paternal goals of curriculum. An examination

of teacher identity through the fictional characters of Jean, Sheba, and Barbara illustrates how the reproductive aims of teachers are shaped by their conceptions of self, their natality, and their perceptions of the teacher role. In turn, the ways in which these characters construct their teacher identities and enact their teacher roles are impacted by their reproductive aims.

Natality, therefore, as it stands in relation to Jean, Barbara, and Sheba, does not fulfill Arendt's promise of renewal and regeneration. Ultimately, Jean, Barbara, and Sheba represent a lack of realization of Arendt's ideas of natality. The teacher's own natality becomes an obstacle to that of the student and compromises her sense of ethical responsibility. In the next chapter, I turn to another literary representation, that of Fiona Maye from *The Children Act*, to consider what ethical possibilities surface when considering the teacher role from the vantage of hospitality.

CHAPTER SIX
THE (IN)HOSPITABLE AND GUILT-RIDDEN TEACHER

As a society, we continue to create and adhere to narratives of the idealized teacher who is calm and rational, dedicated and selfless, able to maintain control in any and all situations, in possession of all the answers, and unencumbered by a personal life and individual strife. This idealized teacher is, moreover, conceptualized in terms of woman-ness and whiteness, representing an altruistic saviour figure who nurtures and rescues children (Robertson, 1997). Deborah Britzman (2003) explores these commonly-held narratives of the teacher figure, which she terms cultural myths, and the ways in which they inform and shape teacher identity. These myths create a general image of an omnipotent being Britzman (2003) calls the "rugged individual," who is "a transcendental being, able to rise above the disorder of social life and be untouched by its dynamic and its beckonings" (p. 235). This ideal bestows upon the teacher both "power" and "culpability" (Britzman, 2003, p. 235) and sets up the teacher for failure. When the teacher is unable to measure up to this impossible standard, she is held culpable and guilt surfaces in light of her failure to be what society expects and what she comes to expect of herself.

In this chapter, I offer a portrait of the *guilt-ridden* teacher. My focus is on how guilt relates to the teacher's sense of responsibility to her students. In particular, I suggest that guilt is an effect of hospitality, which, taken from the vantage of philosophy, refers to a radical stance of openness to students/guests in the classroom, and relatedly, visitors who fundamentally shape the

teacher's very sense of self. An exploration of the guilt-ridden teacher in relation to hospitality lends further insight into ethics as an organizing principle of student/teacher relationships, and the implications of framing teacher identity from the vantage of responsibility.

My study of the guilt-ridden teacher will begin with a description of responsibility through the theoretical lens of hospitality (Derrida, 1997/2000). I then pinpoint two forms of guilt that emerge in relation to the concept of hospitality: a form of professional guilt resulting from the teacher's inability to meet idealized expectations of the rugged individual; and an alternative form of ethical guilt arising from the teacher's obligation and susceptibility to the student. These two forms of guilt guide my discussion of Fiona Maye, a teacher-like figure in *The Children Act*.

Hospitality: The Vulnerable Host and the Ungraspable Guest

The concept of hospitality opens a discussion of responsibility though a framework of teachers/adults as hosts and students/children as guests. Derrida (1997/2000) envisions the responsibility of the host to provide space to the guest. In its purest form, according to Derrida (1997/2000), the act of providing a space to the guest is both unconditional and non-reciprocal, requiring nothing in return from the guest (p. 25). It is also an act in which the host must give up everything, "all of one's home and oneself" (Derrida, 1997/2000, p. 77). Drawing on Derrida's concept of giving all, Ruitenberg (2009) brings into focus the impossibility of hospitality as an unconditional act of absolute relinquishment. She points out that hospitality implies a personal address during which the host offers the guest her space; however, as soon as there is an expectation of response and an acceptance of the offer, both host and guest enter into a reciprocal relationship in which there are conditions (Ruitenberg, 2009, pp. 268-270). Moreover, Ruitenberg (2009) argues that once the host offers up her space to the guest, she no longer has a

space to offer, thereby negating her position as host to still more others (p. 269). In the end, hospitality destroys itself (Ruitenberg, 2009, p. 269) in its impossible demand to provide an unconditional offer. Hospitality is not a final outcome to reach (realistically, it can never be achieved); rather, it is an ethical positionality that constantly permeates, informs, and guides interactions between the self and the Other, between host and guest. As such, hospitality and ethics are intimately bound up together. As Derrida (1997/2001) contends, "ethics *is* hospitality" (p. 17, emphasis added).

Hospitality hinges on the notion of the singular and unique Other. The guest is characterized through her strangeness as "fundamentally ungraspable" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 29) and "fundamentally unknowable" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 33). The host provides a space that allows the guest to preserve her "otherness" and that does not attempt to change the guest or impose understandings (Ruitenberg, 2011, p. 32). Essentially, the space allows the guest to exist in her uniqueness and singularity, without conditions or restrictions. In providing that space, the host responds to the guest without knowing how her response will be taken up by the guest or even if her response is appropriate. Ruitenberg (2016) explains that an "ethic of hospitality involves a leap without the safety net of knowing one has done the right thing" (p. 33). Hospitality is not only impossible; it is also shrouded in uncertainty. This uncertainty, to respond without knowing the guest, and without knowing the outcome of the response, can understandably provoke feelings of discomfort and distress in which the host wonders if she has done right by the guest.

In conjunction with creating a space that is respectful of the guest's otherness, the host also responds to that otherness. Ruitenberg (2011a) envisions the host's role as two-fold: to welcome the guest into the space that has been created, and to respond to the guest within that

space. In this sense, the host becomes a respondent alongside the guest, taking a position of what might be called response-ability. As respondent, the host is vulnerable to the guest and accepts that her selfhood may be disrupted; this not only positions the guest as the Other who is welcomed but, also, as the Other who poses a threat. Derrida (1997/2000) describes this inverse effect of hospitality by pointing out that the words “hospitality” and “hostility” are both derivatives of the Latin root “hostis,” meaning “the foreigner” who is “welcomed as guest or as enemy” (p. 45). Unsurprisingly, hospitality can arouse feelings of anxiety toward the guest, during which the guest “becomes a hostile subject” (Derrida, 1997/2000, p. 55). The host’s hospitable response becomes contingent upon an acceptance of her own vulnerability, as well as her willingness to open herself up even to harm from the guest. Identifying this openness as a key component of hospitality, Ruitenberg (2005) explains that the host must be “vulnerable to the incoming of an other” (p. 9) and accept that her own identity may be at risk (pp. 220-221). Thus, taking on the role of host entails a responsibility to be open to the unexpected, with the knowledge that the unexpected may unsettle one’s sense of self.

Professional Guilt

These dynamics of vulnerability and response-ability are linked to language and the social world, both of which are key to my novel study of teachers. After all, teachers’ work is framed by the language of teaching and the social structure of the school. In what follows I offer an interpretation of one form of guilt the teacher might incur, which I term professional guilt, that surfaces from the teacher’s interpellation into narratives of teaching and, in particular, the cultural myth of the rugged individual (Britzman, 2003). This interpellation involves psychoanalytic dynamics of transference, self-perceptions of omnipotence, and fantasies of rescuing students.

Becoming a Teacher Subject Through Interpellation

Judith Butler's (1997) work on interpellation attributes a subject's actualization to the speech act of being addressed: "it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible" (p. 5). Butler (1997) cites Althusser's notion of the subject who comes into being when addressed by an officer of the law:

> In the famous scene of interpellation that Althusser provides, the policeman hails the passerby with "hey you there" and the one who recognizes himself and turns around (nearly everyone) to answer the call does not, strictly speaking, preexist the call. (p. 25)

Butler (1997) contends that the respondent who turns to answer this call becomes a subject through an acknowledgement of the guilt that is implicit in the officer's address (p. 25). Because there are laws and social structures that govern human interactions, we are all subjected to and responsible for one another; this subjection places us in positions of guilt, even though we haven't necessarily done anything 'wrong.' In relationship to the concept of hospitality, Butler's guilty subject reminds us that we are called into being as guests to the nation's laws of order, the rules of the house, so to speak.

There may also exist a form of *professional* guilt that emerges from the teacher's interpellation into the discourse of teaching, affected as it is by the cultural myths that prevail in the teaching profession. This form of guilt, akin to the legal and social guilt assumed by the subject in Butler's (1997) theory of guilt, results from the teacher's interpellation into an identity that is strongly influenced by the concept of the "rugged individual" (Britzman, 2003, p. 235). Citing Althusser, Britzman (2003) describes how certain narratives, or myths, can impel individuals to "identify with the ideologies that 'summon' them" (p. 223). As stated earlier, the myth of the rugged individual calls forth an identity of the teacher who is independent, all-

knowing, and in control (Britzman, 2003, pp. 224-232). When the teacher responds to the student's address of "hey you there, teacher" and fails to live up to the standard set by the myth of the rugged individual, she has only herself to blame and, in blaming herself, assumes an identity of the guilt-ridden teacher.[1]

Transference: The Convergence of the Past and Present

The myth of the rugged individual constructs a teacher identity that ignores the uncertain and emotionally-charged world of the classroom. Teachers are conflicted beings with their own egos to protect and their own experiences of learning; tensions are bound to surface in enacting the teacher role while bringing to that role the emotional situation of one's own history, present conflicts, and future aspirations. Thinking psychoanalytically, the teacher's emotional situation can be described from the vantage of transference, which refers to the migration of old conflicts onto new situations (Britzman, 2003, pp. 14-15). Transference occurs when "we lend old meanings to new events" (Britzman, 2003, p. 15). Indeed, under the condition of transference, Britzman (2006) tells us that "present occupations are filtered through and distorted by old conflicts" (p. 112). This projection of old conflicts onto new experiences and situations, and which includes distortions, underscores the fragile, blurry, and imperfect qualities of our relationships with others. Britzman (2006) suggests that relationality is "organized" through transference in that "we see ourselves in others" (p. 156), which at the same time risks imposing an overly powerful narrative of the self onto Others, and which, in Levinasian terms, constitutes an ethical violation. Citing Anna Freud, Britzman (2003) gives the example of the teacher who relates to her students through her own history of schooling, and treats her student in such a way as to "undo" the wrongs that occurred to her in school (p. 15). These attempts to undo past wrongs can result in noticing certain students while ignoring others, and in loving certain

students while hating others (Britzman, 2003, p. 15). This collision of time becomes the wonderful messiness that encompasses the work of educators and that also muddles the teacher's role as respondent. As the lived experiences of teachers collide with those of students, histories return to affect judgements, ambiguities abound, boundaries are tested, and teachers are put into positions of uncertainty in which they don't have all the answers, they may doubt their responses, and they make incomplete responses which don't always go as intended.

The myth of the rugged individual may defend against these complexities. Typically, the concept of ruggedness is associated with masculinity, and the idea of the rugged individual in conjunction with the stereotypical image of the female teacher implies contradictory notions of female subservience and male strength and omnipotence. These self-perceptions of omnipotence engender rescue fantasies whereby female teachers envision themselves as not only capable of but also responsible for saving their students from unhappy home lives, from the dangers of the world, and even from mortality. Robertson (1997) examines precisely this tendency in her study of the heroic self-identifications of teachers, taking shape in what she calls the "promise of student-teacher devotion" (p. 126). Robertson (1997) contends that fantasies of devotion "may provide legitimacy for feelings of omnipotence," spurring on the belief that (particular) students need elevation and saving (p. 136). While putting the teacher in charge, so to speak, the teacher's rescue fantasy also plays into the contradictory ideal of the subservient teacher: one who is endlessly and selflessly devoted to the students she is charged to rescue and who has the knowledge, resources, and power to successfully achieve the goal of salvation (Robertson, 1997). The rescue fantasy, however, also conceals an undesirable possibility of failure: the teacher cannot always save the student, the student might resist those rescue attempts, the student will not always love the teacher, and, of course, the student might not need to be rescued in the first

place (Robertson, 1997, p. 135). Furthermore, the rescue fantasy can be interpreted in terms of transference, as the teacher's bid to rescue herself "in the guise of helping" her student (Britzman, 2003, p. 15).

Ethical Guilt

If interpellation implicates the teacher as a respondent in the classroom, teacher guilt can arise from the address of the student; when the teacher responds to the address, she adheres to a professional identity that is informed by societal narratives of the rugged individual which fuel guilt. Sharon Todd (2003), however, suggests an alternative theory of guilt based not on the teacher's emotional situation but on a Levinasian conception of the Other. In particular, she proposes that guilt resides in an address that exceeds the teacher's personal orbit and arrives from outside of the law and social world. Thus, while Butler (1997) contends that guilt resides in the subject's inclination to turn when summoned by the police officer's address, Todd (2003) proposes that guilt emerges *before* the act of turning, from the host's radical state of openness "to the Other, to the alterity that marks the Other's life as infinitely unknowable" (p. 107). This alternative form of guilt derives from the teacher's sense of obligation to the Other and her exposure to the singular and unique guest who cannot be known, understood, or grasped.

The Teacher's Binding Obligation and Susceptibility to the Other

From the perspective of the teacher's responsibility to the strange, incomprehensible, and ungraspable guest, the formation of a guilty subjectivity is not located in a response to a hypothetical address rooted in the symbolic order (whether from a police officer or even a student who hails the teacher), but from the unavoidable position of susceptibility that pre-exists and exceeds the law and the social and linguistic implications of the address. Guilt emerges from

one's exposure to the radical unknowability of the Other or, returning to the language of hospitality, the utter strangeness of the guest.

It is within this state of exposure that guilt takes the form of a binding obligation in which the host must assume complete responsibility for the guest's subjectivity (Todd, 2003, p. 109). Certainly, such an overwhelming task asks too much, to provide a response that is enough to satisfy an address that comes from an unexpected guest whom the host does not and cannot know. Todd (2003) explains that:

> The self's encounter with the Other is of the nature of a surprise—unplanned, unthematized—thereby making all responses to the Other belated, after the fact, and post-traumatic. In not being capable of the response that would fulfill the command, one can only be found guilty. (p. 110)

Because the host is always caught off guard and surprised into response by the radical alterity of the guest, her response can never be good enough to satisfy the address and the host is rendered guilty in her insufficient response. Furthermore, guilt arises because the host is given no choice as to whether or not to respond: as soon as she is addressed, she is obligated to the guest. It is as though the host is relentlessly persecuted by the guest, whereby "the suffering of the Other and the possible death of the Other pursue one fully and absolutely" (Todd, 2003, p. 111). The host, then, is thrust into a position of immediate and unavoidable obligation in which she must acknowledge, accept, and shoulder the guest's pain, suffering, and even mortality (Todd, 2003, p. 111). As such, response takes the form of an active passivity: the host actively responds to the address by subjecting herself to the guest and, at the same time, is passively and inescapably connected to that guest. Consequently, Ruitenberg (2011) views the host as "decentered" and functioning "in a mode of *response*" (p. 30). It is within this framework of being addressed and

having to respond that the host undertakes an obligation that binds her utterly, thoroughly, and undeniably to the guest "in a relation of guilt" (Todd, 2003, p. 109).

Janzen and Phelan (2018) conceptualize of this obligation as "visceral" (p. 2), perhaps more of an affective and elemental feeling than an intellectual one. In their study of one teacher's experience with a student in need, they capture how the teacher's obligation to respond to the child and the child's suffering develops into an overwhelming sense of "incessant demand" (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 2), a "binding responsibility" (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 2), an "unremitting requirement" (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 5), and an act of "bearing witness" to that which sometimes defies understanding (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 8). They point out the difficulty of enacting an obligation "to something unforeseeable and which remains ultimately and always uncertain, unknowable" (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 6) and to how the teacher can become further overwhelmed by her daily physical and emotional proximity to the suffering of the child (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 7). This proximity, combined with the constant need to respond, increases the teacher's sense of urgency and her fear of failure (Janzen & Phelan, 2018, p. 7). In light of the enormity of the obligation, and the very real possibility of failing the child, one can see the potential for tremendous guilt to materialize and for this guilt to have a lasting impact on pedagogical interactions and teacher identity.

In sum, two distinct theories of guilt emerge: that of Butler (1997) who draws from Althusser's work, and that of Todd (2003) who elaborates on the ideas of Levinas. Each theory identifies different origins of guilt. Butler (1997) postulates that guilt is assumed when the innocent subject turns to respond to the call of the Other, uttered in the symbolic order of law. I have extended this concept of guilt to propose a form of professional guilt that is rooted in the cultural myth of the rugged individual (Britzman, 2003) and that is animated in transference.

Indeed, the myth that teachers are self-made experts hooks into a felt history of quite the opposite: vulnerability and failure, leading to feelings of guilt. Todd (2003) articulates a theory of guilt that departs from this psychoanalytic interpretation. She locates guilt in ethical notions of subjectivity and susceptibility to the Other, the guest. This philosophical view identifies a form of guilt that exceeds and exists prior to language and the law, in the host's position of complete susceptibility to the radical alterity of the guest. Within this context, teacher responsibility is an obligation to bear both the guest's unexpected subjectivity and the burden of the teacher's always incomplete response.

Fiona: The Guilty Judge

To explore these aspects of the guilt-ridden teacher and their implications for thinking about ethics and education, I turn to Fiona Maye, a fictional teacher-like figure from *The Children Act*. Fiona is a High Court judge who must decide whether or not to force 17-year-old Adam Henry to have a life-saving blood transfusion that goes against his religious beliefs as a Jehovah's Witness. This case is complicated by emotional turmoil in her personal life when her husband reveals he is unhappy in their marriage and is going to have an affair with a younger woman. As feelings of guilt about her marriage are transferred to her handling of Adam's case, her identity as judge becomes intertwined with that of wife, she struggles with how to respond, and she crosses the boundaries of professionalism.

Fiona's powerful position as a judge reinforces her racial privilege, and she comes to represent the white woman with fantasied ideals of heroism. In Fiona's self-identification as the rugged individual, she believes her role is to protect and save the children and families who enter her courtroom and that she possesses the calm and rational disposition and requisite knowledge and understanding to successfully carry out these rescues. This belief is spurred on by the fact

that she does save Adam, at least for a time, by requiring him to undergo a blood transfusion. From the theoretical lens of hospitality, however, Fiona's portrayal as the white woman saviour figure is complicated by the guilt she incurs as the vulnerable host. In a consideration of Fiona as a guilt-ridden character, several questions come to light: How might guilt show us something about the teacher's openness to the Other? In what ways does Fiona incur and embody guilt, and how does this guilt continue to shape her identity? What inner conflicts surface as Fiona enacts her role as host and respondent *vis-à-vis* Adam? And how does the notion of welcoming the unanticipated guest play out in the novel?

In terms of its relevance to hospitality, *The Children Act* illuminates the tensions that emerge when the adult is called upon to welcome the new, strange, and unknown: Adam's character, his religious beliefs, and his rejection of a life-saving medical treatment. Fiona, as the host who is placed in the position to respond to Adam's call, is characterized through her feelings of guilt as these pertain to Adam's case and her other court cases, as well as her failing marriage. Like the strange and singular guest in concepts of hospitality, her interactions with Adam are equally strange and unique as Adam's case becomes atypical of others over which she has presided. As the plot progresses, Fiona feels an obligation to Adam, even though Adam does not initially seem to want or need her help. In the end, her identity is radically altered by Adam, causing emotional disquiet, lapses in judgement, and uncharacteristic behaviour.

The Children Act does not feature a teacher/student relationship. The dynamic relationship that forms between Fiona and Adam, however, takes on many of the qualities of that relationship. First of all, teachers, like judges, are tasked with making decisions in the best interests of their charges. At times, this process of decision making turns into a teacher's desire to rescue and save her students and a feeling that she, alone, can do this (discussed in the

previous explorations of Jean Brodie and Sheba Hart). Fiona, in general, feels it is her role as a family court judge to intervene and help children, by making decisions based on their best interests according to the laws outlined in the legal document, *The Children Act*. She even literally saves Adam by requiring him to have a blood transfusion. Second, both teachers and judges stand in positions of legal authority and can be thought of as other parents. In *The Children Act*, for instance, Adam becomes so attached to Fiona that, at one point, he wants to adopt her as his mother and go live with her. Third, similar to the teacher who does not choose her students, judges do not choose the cases that come to them. The teacher welcomes countless unknown students into her classroom throughout her career; Fiona, too, welcomes into her courtroom the countless unknown children of the cases assigned to her.

There are also, however, some differences between Fiona's role as judge and the teacher's role. Although teachers occupy positions of power, they do not have the same kind of power and authority as a judge in a court of law. This lack of power might suggest that the teacher is more susceptible to the student and placed in a position of greater passivity than a judge, because, unlike a judge, a teacher cannot force a student to do something. Whereas Fiona is able to exercise her legal authority over Adam by requiring him to undergo a blood transfusion to save his life, a teacher could not force this upon a student or a student's family. Another difference is that even though a judge like Fiona might be working on and presiding over multiple cases involving many children and families, a judge is not required to respond to all of these children and families at the same time. A teacher in a classroom, however, must respond to many students simultaneously. This requirement to respond to the alterity of multiple students complicates the teacher's position as host. Commenting on the challenge of being host to many guests, Ruitenberg (2011a) contends that when the host must provide a response to many guests

“the singularity of each [guest] is violated as two sets of needs and demands, each incomparable with any other, must now be appraised and prioritized in relation to each other” (p. 139). Therefore, while there are many similarities between Fiona’s role as judge and the teacher’s role, these differences arguably place the teacher in a more challenging position as host than that of a judge.

Adam: The Singular and Incomprehensible Guest

Guilt is a key component of the host/guest dynamic that develops between Fiona and Adam, and has a profound and lasting impact on Fiona’s selfhood. McEwan’s (2015) nuanced characterization of Adam as one who cannot be easily categorized or understood places Fiona in the position of vulnerable host to the unknown, unexpected, and incomprehensible guest. Ruitenberg (2005) compares the host’s vulnerability to the door that is slightly ajar, open enough to let someone in but not quite open enough to see who is coming. Certainly, Adam is the guest that Fiona does not anticipate. When Fiona becomes involved in his case, she finds herself open to a radical sense of his otherness. As the “fundamentally ungraspable” (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 29) and “fundamentally unknowable” (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 33) guest, Adam defies categorization. This is illustrated through McEwan’s (2015) characterization of a teenager who seems, simultaneously, to be wise and innocent: at once beyond his years and younger than other 17-year-olds. This combination compels Fiona. She feels he is of “high intelligence” (McEwan, 2015, p. 108), someone who knows his “own mind” (McEwan, 2015, p. 118), who is “possessed of considerable maturity and articulacy for his age” (McEwan, 2015, p. 123), and who has “exceptional insight for a seventeen-year-old” (McEwan, 2015, p. 125). His insight and intelligence are apparent when Fiona first visits Adam in the hospital. When she enters the room, he is contemplating complex notions of “relativity” and the illusion of time (McEwan, 2015, p.

103). When he shares his religious beliefs with Fiona, he is described as the “discoverer of elementary facts, the formulator of doctrine rather than its recipient” (McEwan, 2015, p. 117). Conversely, his childishness, innocence, and immaturity are conveyed. During their visit, Adam is presented as a “mischievous provoking child, hugging his knees through the bedcovers” (McEwan, 2015, p. 107). He vocalizes his thoughts like a child might, moving from topic to topic as ideas come to mind, talking “breathlessly, earnestly” (McEwan, 2015, p. 103) without self-consciousness or inhibition. Fiona makes note of the disordered appearance of his hospital bed, in which he is surrounded by books, his laptop, headphones, candy wrappers, and clothing strewn about (McEwan, 2015, p. 103). When comparing him to her own teenage relatives, Fiona reflects on Adam’s “unworldliness” and observes that “his defining quality was innocence, a fresh and excitable innocence, a childlike openness” (McEwan, 2015, p. 112). His “innocent eagerness” is also mentioned as a trait that makes him impenetrable and not easy to pin down (McEwan, 2015, p. 119).

Fiona’s Professional Identity: The Rugged Individual

As the guest who eludes comprehension, Adam challenges Fiona’s self-identity as the “rugged individual” (Britzman, 2003, p. 235) and her guilt emerges from an inability to live up to the unreasonable expectations she has set for herself around this idealized figure. As stated earlier, Britzman’s (2003) portrait of the rugged individual is that of an omnipotent and highly competent professional who can control any situation (p. 224), who is an expert of her craft (p. 227), who is able “to anticipate and contain the unexpected” (p. 224), and who is the sole and autonomous “source of knowledge” (p. 229). Fiona forms a professional identity around precisely these traits. Functioning best with predictability, structure, and clearly defined rules, she chose the legal profession because of its “respect for the rules” (McEwan, 2015, p. 200). She

never lets her emotions get the better of her, keeping these in check, rarely exhibiting any form of emotional outpouring, and monitoring her "emotional tone" (McEwan, 2015, p. 96). She is "not prone to wild impulses" (McEwan, 2015, p. 180), infrequently raises her voice or shouts (McEwan, 2015, p. 4), and is viewed by her husband as "always so self-contained" (McEwan, 2015, p. 218). On the one hand, Fiona's choice to become a judge is inconsistent with someone who seems to want to evade turmoil. Even Fiona admits that her court cases are brimming with emotional messiness, "with strange differences, special pleading, intimate half-truths, exotic accusation" (McEwan, 2015, pp. 4-5). On the other hand, this choice of profession lends itself to Fiona's propensity for emotional containment in that she views herself as the detached onlooker who can be involved in these cases from afar. She feels that she brings "reasonableness to hopeless situations" (McEwan, 2015, p. 5). One can infer that Fiona sees her role as judge to mitigate, control, and contain the emotionality that erupts in her courtroom (and, arguably, her own mind), and to intervene as the rational and distanced voice of reason when the situation seems beyond resolution.

In order to achieve this task, Fiona relies heavily on a legal framework, using the language of the law to come up with answers and solutions. She describes her duty to "[assimilate] at speed" (McEwan, 2015, p. 5) her cases by applying the "relevant principles of law" (McEwan, 2015, p. 28). Fiona's method of assimilation is illustrated in the systematic, thoughtful, and meticulous way she drafts her court judgements by presenting the facts, borrowing some learned phrases from other lord justices, deconstructing relevant concepts, and citing precedents. For instance, in composing the draft of a judgement for a custody case, she allots "several hundred words to a definition of welfare" (McEwan, 2015, p. 16), cites other justices of the court (McEwan, 2015, p. 16), identifies "some relevant ingredients" of "the good

life" (McEwan, 2015, p. 17), and explores the idea of well-being in "four hundred words" (McEwan, 2015, p. 17). In another difficult decision involving conjoined twins, she describes her ability to render a decision "in just under a week and thirteen thousand words" (McEwan, 2015, p. 28), finding a relevant "doctrine" to rationalize her decision to end the life of one of the twins to preserve the life of the other (McEwan, 2015, p. 29). Within her legal framework and through her extensive knowledge of the law, she processes human tragedies, such as parents who fight over the custody of their children, or twins who cannot both survive, or a 17-year-old dying of cancer. As the autonomous and self-reliant rugged individual, she forms a false perception that she can control and contain suffering by reducing it to quantifiable word counts and well-structured, rational arguments and justifications, and that she will be able to solve any problems that arise from the unfortunate circumstances of people's lives.

The Inhospitable Host: Fiona's Professional Guilt

When Fiona encounters the impenetrable and singular Adam, it becomes clear that Fiona is not the rugged individual with all the answers who can contain human suffering and tragedy. As their relationship evolves, Fiona begins to lose control and guilt ensues, as her self-identity is called into question. For instance, Fiona ponders if the decision to visit Adam at the hospital is "a sentimental error of professional judgment" (McEwan, 2015, p. 95), but she moves forward nonetheless. During her conversation with Adam, Fiona is aware of an inappropriateness to the content of what she is saying. She tells Adam, for example, that years ago the courts removed children from their homes when it was suspected their parents were engaged in "satanic abuse" (McEwan, 2015, p. 104) and wonders what the social worker, also present in the room, is thinking of her remarks (McEwan, 2015, p. 105). Later, she acknowledges that she has "overstepped the mark, the legal mark" (McEwan, 2015, p. 109) when she asks Adam if God

would be pleased if he ended up “blind or stupid and on dialysis” (McEwan, 2015, p. 109). Toward the end of that first meeting, she puts forward the idea that she sing while he accompanies her on the violin. Again, she is aware that this is inappropriate, as well as uncharacteristic of her, and that it “risked undermining her authority” (McEwan, 2015, p. 120). Suddenly Fiona is crossing boundaries she had previously been able to maintain, perhaps because she has been confronted with a guest who is so unique, both in who he is and in the ungraspable nature of the illness he is facing. The reader is left with the impression of a guilty woman, guiltily checking for the reaction of the social worker and questioning the appropriateness of her behaviour.

Later in the novel, months after the resolution of the case, Fiona’s guilt returns due to a major breach of her professionalism. She kisses Adam: “Her intention was to kiss him on the cheek, but as she reached up and he stooped a little and their faces came close, he turned his head and their lips met” (McEwan, 2015, p. 174). Fiona experiences tremendous anxiety over this kiss, worrying about repercussions at work and scolding herself for her “ludicrous and shameful transgression of professional ethics” (McEwan, 2015, p. 180). Fiona prides herself on processing and filtering human troubles through the rationality of a legal framework, on remaining detached and basing responses on intellect and the word of the law, and on enacting the role of the rational judge. However, in her interactions with Adam she fails to live up to these standards. Increasingly, she behaves emotionally and, in her view, irrationally. Contrary to her self-perception of the rugged individual who is both unflappable and in control, she has been weak and unprofessional, and has lost her grasp of the situation.

Nevertheless, Fiona feels that she has been charged with saving Adam and that she is powerful enough to succeed. Her omnipotent self-image of protector and saviour is reinforced by

Adam. After Fiona renders her judgment allowing the hospital to transfuse Adam, he tells her that she saved his life and protected him (McEwan, 2015, p. 164), that she was "the antidote" to the "poison" that was his religion (McEwan, 2015, p. 168), and that she was the rational "grown-up" (McEwan, 2015, p. 169). In a letter, he praises her "calm voice" and "clear mind" (McEwan, 2015, p. 145). Fiona tumbles into a fantasy of rescuing Adam because Adam casts her in precisely this role. However, Fiona's fantasy places on her a tremendous and impossible responsibility and, to reiterate Britzman (2003), gives her "undue power and undue culpability" (p. 235). When Adam dies, Fiona's omnipotence becomes self-blame, as if she who was solely responsible for his life is now entirely responsible for his death. If Adam has depended on her to protect and save him, to be the rational and clear-minded adult with all the answers, then she has let him down.

Fiona's guilt is compounded by a letter Adam writes, his last letter, in which he angrily casts her in the opposite role to that of saviour. In a poem, he portrays her as Satan disguised as a beautiful fish who tempted him away from his religion and the protection it offered (McEwan, 2015, p. 211). Fiona is confronted with the flipside of the rescue fantasy—the concealed possibility of hatred—that the child "may in reality not post love to the teacher, but may rather post hate, rejection" (Robertson, 1997, p. 135). Robertson (1997) contends that the teacher's rescue fantasy serves as a defense mechanism against a troublesome alternative: the "fear that pedagogy can—and, indeed, does—get de-railed" (p. 135). Fiona's rescue fantasy protects her from a fear of rejection and of not being loved, but being hated, and, in a broader sense, she is protected from the fact that her good intentions can go off-course. Against a backdrop of rejection and guilt in her personal life (her husband intends to leave her for another woman), the transference is alive and well in her attempts to rescue herself from a failing marriage and her

husband's infidelity. In casting herself as Adam's rescuer, she is able, for a time, to fend off the devastation of rejection and elevate her self-worth. In any event, Fiona's attempt to rescue herself by rescuing Adam is "de-railed" (Robertson, 1997, p. 135) in the worst imaginable way: Adam rejects Fiona and he succumbs to the illness from which she tried to save him.

Returning to Ruitenberg (2011, 2016), Fiona's rescue attempts are not ethical, in the sense of hospitality: saving Adam becomes a means through which to protect her own sense of worth. Moreover, Fiona's expectations of receiving love and devotion from Adam impose conditions on the guest, thereby turning hospitality into an act of reciprocity. Hence, the rescue fantasy forecloses any possibility of hospitality in its purest form in that the guest becomes an object of the host's guilt. In the end, Adam is forced to bear the burden of Fiona's guilt because he cannot be saved and does not reciprocate with love. Hinted above, Fiona's attempts to save Adam may also be interpreted as self-rescue. Fiona is experiencing loss in her personal life: the loss of her marriage, her youth, and her chance at motherhood. She conveys this sense of loss on numerous occasions. For example, she thinks of her sex life that had once been "regular and lustily uncomplicated" and its "slow decline of ardor and frequency" (McEwan, 2015, p. 22). She reflects on the physical signs of aging, that "its early promise was shining through" in her husband's "white chest hair," his thinning head hair, his muscle loss, and her own "ankles thickening in coquettish reply" (McEwan, 2015, pp. 22-23). During a dinner date with her husband, she is disappointed when she is not able to see him "as though for the first time, see the strangeness in him, as she had many years before, when she fell in love with him" (McEwan, 2015, p. 183). She also dwells on her childlessness throughout the novel (McEwan, 2015, p. 30, p. 48, p. 139), and guiltily broods over not contributing children to her larger extended family (McEwan, 2015, p. 25) and her "flight from her proper destiny" of motherhood (McEwan, 2015,

p. 48). She blames herself for allowing the "idea of her own family" to fade as she worked harder and longer hours to advance professionally (McEwan, 2015, p. 48) and that she denied "existence to two or three warm and talented individuals" (McEwan, 2015, p. 49). These worries point to a type of gendered guilt that is connected to a sense of loss and regret: the loss of her ability to excite her husband, of her marriage, and of her youth, and regret over focusing on her career as opposed to bearing children.

Fiona projects all of this onto Adam in a heated transference relationship. Specifically, her highly gendered guilt is transferred to Adam, who comes to represent an intersection of youthful enthusiasm, passion, and hope and the inevitability of death. Fiona has come to this crossroads in her own life, a point when she is looking backward at her youth and forward to old age. She terms it "the infancy of old age" (McEwan, 2015, p. 47), a phrase that fittingly captures the contradictory combination of youth and age. Thus, Fiona's impetus to save Adam is complicated by an unconscious need to save herself from the pain of loss: the end of her relationship, her childlessness, and ultimately her own mortality. Unlike her husband, Adam is excited by Fiona. He reveals to her that she has ignited a passion in him to enjoy a future in which he will be able to see and discover the world and everything that exists beyond the sheltered environment in which he has been brought up (McEwan, 2015, pp. 169-170). Furthermore, in their last face-to-face encounter, Adam proposes to Fiona that he come to live with her (McEwan, 2015, p. 172), thereby placing Fiona in the role of surrogate mother and 'saving' her from childlessness. While kissing Adam provides a momentary evasion of her own mortality, in the end it only reminds Fiona that there are many years between them, that they are separated by "all the years, all the life" (McEwan, 2015, p. 175). Hence, this stolen attempt to return to youth only gives expression to the impossibility of this effort.

Fiona's attempts at self-rescue preclude hospitality. The guilt she projects onto Adam for her failing marriage and her childlessness turns Adam into an object of transference and a means to her own ends of resolving personal conflict. As the host who perceives the guest as a projection of herself, Fiona's rescue fantasy—whether it be to rescue Adam or herself—disavows Adam as a separate and singular being. Yet, Fiona is not conscious of her transference and it is precisely because she is unaware of her transference that her relationality *vis-à-vis* Adam is inhospitable. In this way, *The Children Act* might be interpreted as a cautionary tale, that the teacher's unconscious transference can be an obstacle to the teacher's openness to her students.[2]

Unfortunately, it is not until after the fact that Fiona becomes aware of her inability to recognize Adam in his own right: "Adam came looking for her and she offered nothing in religion's place … He came to find her, wanting what everyone wanted, and what only free-thinking people, not the supernatural, could give. Meaning" (McEwan, 2015, p. 220). Had she noticed the profound impact of her decision on Adam to require him to undergo the blood transfusion, she may not have acted like Althusser's police by constructing his religion as a breach of the law she upheld. Instead, Fiona minimized Adam's reaching out to her and wanting to live with her as typical teenage rebellion, and did not recognize how her decision was about more than a medical matter; she had called into question his entire belief system. Only when Adam dies, can Fiona finally see that law is a relational text, and she begins to wonder what might have happened if she had responded to Adam by saying "yes"—not in the sense of absolving her responsibility to intervene but to find out what other possibilities might show up, such as the possibility of supporting Adam's search for meaning in the face of mortality (Gilbert, 2006).

McEwan's (2015) narrative and how he characterizes Fiona instantiates the power of ideologies, such as that of rugged individualism, to impact identity and summon very well-intentioned people, like teachers, into ways of being, feeling, and acting. Even more, Fiona's story helps us see that transference may be unavoidable in all relationships. Because people lead complex lives in which they take on multiple roles, it is impossible for one's personal life not to impinge on one's professionalism.

The Hospitable Host: Fiona's Ethical Guilt

However, another form of guilt is evident in Fiona's radical susceptibility to Adam's subjectivity and the sense of binding obligation that she feels. According to Todd (2003), hospitality entails a binding, undeniable, and immediate obligation that pursues the host absolutely and completely. Arguably, Fiona is pursed in this manner, in the pattern of address and response that emerges in *The Children Act*. Fiona is consistently and repeatedly addressed by Adam and put into a position of response and, consequently, develops a sense of tremendous obligation toward him. Janzen and Phelan (2018) propose that this obligation materializes as a feeling of being "compelled to act" (p. 2), and a "sense of the incessant demand for a response" (p. 2). Indeed, Fiona is compelled by Adam and becomes overwhelmed by her obligation to respond to him; it is also evident as the plot transpires that Adam continues to pursue Fiona even though she tries her best not to encourage him. This pattern is established in Fiona's first encounter with Adam's case, when her court clerk calls her on a Sunday evening at home to inform of a hospital that is seeking an order to transfuse a cancer patient, Adam, against his wishes and those of his family (McEwan, 2015, pp. 34-35). Although Adam's refusal is not a direct address by Adam, as he does not call her himself, Fiona is, nonetheless, summoned by Adam through this call and placed in a position of having to respond. Other encounters between

Adam and Fiona are of a similar quality. For example, Fiona seems almost compelled to visit Adam in the hospital before she makes her decision about the blood transfusion. This first person-to-person encounter leaves the reader with the impression that it is Adam who has called forth Fiona to appear in his hospital room to answer his address: it is Fiona who must enter his space and, because he has already started to address her, she is already belated in her response (McEwan, 2015, p. 103). Succeeding interactions are likewise initiated by Adam, when he addresses Fiona through writing letters (McEwan, 2015, p. 142, p. 147, p. 186) and unexpectedly appears where she is staying in Newcastle during a circuit tour as judge (McEwan, 2015, p. 161). One might even suggest that when Fiona is informed of Adam's death at the end of the novel (McEwan, 2015, p. 204), this interaction has been initiated by Adam and impelled a response. Adam's continuous address follows Fiona and, in Todd's (2003) words, "persecutes" her (p. 111). As host, Fiona is relentlessly pursued by the guest and responds with an active passivity. She is inescapably obligated to Adam; in enacting her obligation, she actively takes on the burden of his suffering, thereby establishing an attachment to Adam "in a relation of guilt" (Todd, 2003, p. 109). It is through this relation that Fiona takes responsibility for "the Other's subjectivity, the Other's freedom, and the Other's mortality" (Todd, 2003, p. 109).

As noted earlier, Fiona's passivity is underscored by the disorienting effect Adam has on her professionalism and her maintenance of boundaries with Adam. Beyond her unprofessionalism, Fiona's confusion takes on visceral qualities: Adam seems to reach into the depths of her very being and affect her in ways that defy understanding on an intellectual level. That Fiona cannot apply intellect to make sense of what is happening to her reinforces her disquiet: she acts at the behest of Adam. From the moment she enters his hospital room and they first meet, Fiona is thrown off by Adam as she is plunged into the "semidarkness" of his hospital

room; her disorientation is intensified by the "glowing screens" of the hospital equipment that surrounds Adam's bed and the sound of Adam's voice in the process of speaking (McEwan, 2015, pp. 102-104). The depiction of the sick child in this scene is also disconcerting. After all, there is nothing more unsettling than the image of a dying 17-year-old who is connected to various pieces of medical technology. Fiona's disorientation is further demonstrated by a role reversal that comes to typify their interactions in which she is cast in the role of child/student. When Adam asks Fiona to comment on a poem he has written (McEwan, 2015, pp. 112-114), she is reminded of being called upon by the teacher as a young student: "Fiona hoped that by starting to speak she would discover what she thought. It was like being at school" (McEwan, 2015, p. 114). When Adam follows Fiona to Newcastle, she wonders, like a child who wants to please the adult, "why she was so anxious not to disappoint him" (McEwan, 2015, p. 169). And, when Adam attempts to correspond with Fiona through letters, Fiona drafts different versions before deciding not to send any reply (McEwan, 2015, pp. 145-146). In these cases, Fiona might be compared to the student drafting several versions of a piece of writing to submit to a teacher and anxious to get it just right. Fiona's confusion and disorientation highlight her inescapable participation in an act of hospitality; it is as though she is being carried along by Adam and has no alternative but to bear the burden of his subjectivity and, in bearing that burden, assume guilt for his suffering.

Todd (2003) contends that the host's guilt surfaces because there is an inadequacy to her responses, that she is unable to provide "the response that would fulfill the command" (p. 110). This inability is in part because the host is confused, like Fiona, by the surprising and unexpected nature of the address. Strangely, the address is simultaneously anticipated and unforeseen: in her susceptibility to the guest, the host knows the address will come and waits for it; at the same

time, the address is “unplanned, unthematized” (Todd, 2003, p. 110) like the guest who is ungraspable and unknowable. Certainly, Fiona is startled by Adam and is often late in her responses, as she appears to be ‘playing catch up’ to his address. Returning to Adam’s hospital room on that first visit, Fiona feels as though she is being “left behind in a daze” from a conversation that he has already started (McEwan, 2015, p. 103). What is more, Adam’s letters sent via post create an obvious delay in their communication. There is even a belated quality to her response to the news of Adam’s death. When she learns of this news, she is performing at a concert. At the moment she is about to go on stage, she is told of Adam’s death: a colleague “put his hand on her arm, wanting to impart an item of interest to her that had been kept out of the newspapers” (McEwan, 2015, p. 204). Rather than responding in the moment, she saves her response for later, after she has performed and returned home (McEwan, 2015, pp. 209-210). Again, Fiona’s response to Adam’s address is after-the-fact. Interestingly, McEwan seems to stage a moment of empathy in that the reader’s response in this instance is also belated: the reader is not privy to the specifics of the news that is imparted to Fiona at the concert. It is only later that the reader understands that Adam has died (McEwan, 2015, p. 217).

Fiona’s belated responses are also lacking in quality. She either doesn’t respond at all to Adam or she tends to dismiss his feelings. She doesn’t reply to any of the letters that Adam writes to her, despite the fact that Adam implores her to respond (McEwan, 2015, p. 145). Moreover, her responses minimize Adam’s feelings in her failure to recognize her profound impact on him. When Adam reveals to her that he is questioning his religious faith and relationship with his parents, instead of recognizing the complexity of those feelings she dismisses these as completely “natural” for a teenager (McEwan, 2015, p. 171). Her immediate response to Adam’s death seems inappropriate, as she puts aside the news in order to go on stage

to perform: “she drew a deep breath and softly exhaled to purge herself of the last scraps of recent conversation” (McEwan, 2015, p. 205). It is not until after Adam has died that Fiona realizes she is guilty of responding insufficiently to him. She reflects on how she cast him aside after their kiss, didn’t respond to his letters, selfishly worried about her reputation, and failed to see what he was trying to tell her in the last poem he wrote (McEwan, 2015, p. 220).

In putting off her responses, or not responding at all to Adam, her responses appear to be too little and too late. Her responses, however, are not indicative of a lack of thought or of caring. In fact, it is the opposite: she seems to put a lot of thought into how to best respond to Adam. She drafts different versions of letters to reply to Adam and contemplates whether or not to send these. She suggests, perhaps, that his feelings are natural for his age because she recognizes that it is not healthy for Adam to be so attached to her and that she needs to dissuade this attachment. It is only in hindsight that she is aware that Adam’s feelings are far more complex and complicated than ‘normal’ teenage angst and rebellion. In one of the last scenes of the book, she realizes that she has failed Adam, that she played a part in taking away from Adam his religious faith, and that “she offered nothing in religion’s place, no protection” (McEwan, 2015, p. 220). Consistent with her other responses, this response, in the form of her guilty realization, is also after-the-fact and too late to save him. Fiona’s insufficient responses call attention to the overwhelming and impossible demand of hospitality. Because hospitality requires immediate response amidst tremendous uncertainty, surprise, and obligation, it becomes an unachievable act that can never be successfully rendered.

As a demand that cannot be fulfilled, the host can only shoulder the guest’s subjectivity. Todd (2003) contends that “guilt emerges because it is almost as though responsibility—indeed subjectivity—*demands too much of the self*” (p. 110). Fiona’s responsibility to the dying Adam

demands too much of her. In her position as host, she can only “bear” Adam (Todd, 2003, p. 110). To do otherwise, such as to “identify with” or “console” (Todd, 2003, p. 110), or even attempt to save him, assigns conditions, and may serve selfish motives of elevation and alleviation of guilt, and “consume” (Todd, 2003, p. 110) him through transference and projection. However, in her position as judge, Fiona must decide, weigh risks and benefits, and embody authority in such a way as to act on Adam’s behalf where she feels he cannot. At play here is a tension between ethics and the law. While Fiona uses the law to secure the ethical imperative to save Adam’s life, from a Levinasian perspective it is the reverse. That is, Fiona must also attend to her ethical obligation to Adam’s alterity—even if she cannot understand or fathom it—as *informing* judgment via the law. It would appear this second direction asks too much of Fiona. The act of bearing the guest sheds light on how challenging it is for the host to assume a position of passivity. This passivity—of witnessing and bearing the guest’s subjectivity and, specifically, the guest’s pain, suffering, and mortality—becomes unbearable and engenders guilt. One might even suggest that a form of survivor guilt emerges in Fiona. Adam’s subjectivity is unbearable for Fiona because she cannot reconcile the idea of his youth with that of his death and the loss of the future he should have experienced. That an aging woman like herself, who has already had her chance at life, should survive and that he should not is a reality she cannot grasp.

So, What Can We Conclude About Fiona’s Guilt?

This brings us back to the foundational question of whether or not Fiona’s guilt is hospitable. On the surface, Fiona’s guilt seems inhospitable. And, as suggested earlier, Fiona’s professional guilt, materializing from her self-identity as the rugged individual, *is* inhospitable. However, it is my contention that the guilt arising from Fiona’s susceptibility to Adam’s

subjectivity *is* consistent with hospitality. A key indication of the host's hospitality is her embodiment of the vulnerability that guilt signifies. Todd (2003) explains that self-identifying as vulnerable to the anguish of guilt is the host's affirmation of her absolute "exposure," and thus her response-ability (p. 111). Ethics, in her view, is conveying guilt as a "sense of responsibility that is struggling to figure out how one bears the weight of someone else's pain" (Todd, 2003, p. 112). In my view, Fiona is weighted with the kind of powerful and punishing guilt that registers as the radical exposure described by Todd (2003). Indeed, it is felt before and in spite of her capacity to name, identify, and process it. Guilt, for Fiona, exists in the overwhelming obligation she feels toward Adam. Its namelessness speaks to its visceral qualities: it reaches deep within the recesses of her being; it is beyond intellect and rationalization; it is located in her underlying and consistent sense of disorientation, confusion, and not being herself. All of these qualities speak to Fiona's absolute and utter susceptibility to the Adam's alterity.

While Fiona is beyond words, McEwan (2015) is able to convey her complete exposure, nakedness, and shame, particularly in the final scene of the novel. Here, he describes her as "excessively vulnerable" (McEwan, 2015, p. 214), undone, and "at the furthest extremes of grief" (McEwan, 2015, p. 218). Such absolute exposure is almost intolerable and life-changing. She decides to leave her husband because "she could not bear any longer to be seen" (McEwan, 2015, p. 218). Fiona's feelings of utter vulnerability and shame about being seen not only point to the depths of her self-identification as guilty host, but also to her ethical struggle with how to bear Adam's mortality. The concluding words of the novel leave a lasting impression of Fiona's guilt: in "a steady quiet voice" she tells her husband "of her shame, of the sweet boy's passion for life and her part in his death" (McEwan, 2015, p. 221). At last, Fiona, the decentred host, can symbolically bear Adam's impact on her life and finally grapple with the significance of his loss.

This opening up and decentering is depicted by Todd (2003) in terms of learning *from* the Other as opposed to learning *about* the Other; of exposing oneself completely to alterity as opposed to perceiving that alterity as "*effects* of the self" (p. 111). In view of the ways in which Fiona's guilt appears to both foreclose and open up ethical possibilities, does she achieve hospitality in the end? Determining whether or not Fiona becomes an ethical host risks reducing hospitality to a linear process in which one starts off as unethical and eventually becomes ethical. This seems to violate the very concept of hospitality which is, at its core, about its uncertainty and impossibility as opposed to clear-cut answers and achievable goals. Of relevance is Todd's (2003) assertion that the self's responsibility to the guest does not follow a "simple sequence of events" and should not be viewed as a "developmental process" (p. 112). Instead, Fiona's characterization illustrates how guilt can and does materialize simultaneously as an unethical projection of the self and an ethical derivation of the Other. Additionally, bearing the guest's suffering is not a goal to reach; rather, it is "a *movement* toward the Other" (Todd, 2003, p. 112). When conceptualized as movement, hospitality is not a final destination but a seesaw between ethics and ego defenses. Fiona has been impacted by and learned from Adam. Even though, sadly, her learning is not beneficial to Adam, she will continue her movement toward ethicality with subsequent guests in future encounters.

What Ethical Possibilities Are Revealed Through Hospitality?

Whereas my exploration of the gendered teacher reveals a failure of natality and, in particular, the teacher's natality as an obstacle to ethical relationality, my look at Fiona's guilt in this chapter has provided hopeful possibilities. Fiona incurs two forms of guilt: a professional guilt that is rooted in the psychoanalytic concept of transference and related to her self-identification as the rugged individual; and an ethical guilt that is rooted in Levinas' concept of

the Other and the host's radical state of openness and susceptibility to the guest. The first form of guilt forecloses ethical relationality between Fiona and Adam because Fiona projects onto Adam her insecurities and feelings of failure arising from her marriage and childlessness. The second form of guilt, however, is an ethical derivation of Fiona's susceptibility and sense of binding obligation to Adam. This second form of guilt positions Fiona as the vulnerable host who passively opens herself up to Adam, guiltily bears his suffering, and is, ultimately, decentred and changed.

Adam brings forth an intrusive singularity and otherness that unsettles and transforms Fiona and disrupts her self-identity as the rugged individual. The next chapter focusses not only on the teacher's transformation and openness to the singularity and otherness of the student, but also on the intrusive otherness the teacher brings forth in her interactions with students. Specifically, I explore teaching and learning as a confrontation between the teacher's ego and the student's ego, and as the introduction to both the teacher and the student of what is beyond and outside of their orbits of experience. My look at Jean, Barbara, and Sheba in Chapter Five uncovered the gendered teacher's failure in terms of ethical responsibility as conceptualized through natality; my look at Fiona in this chapter has revealed the possibilities of ethicality in regard to guilt and hospitality; in the next chapter I will consider the teacher's ethical responsibility from the perspective of Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) theory of nonviolent relationality and what ethical possibilities exist, or do not exist, in the intrusive otherness the teacher brings to the student.

Endnotes:

1. Althusser (1971/2006) has his own theory of teacher identity, pointing out how difficult it is for teachers to resist the ideologies that summon them. Althusser (1971/2006) suggests that schools are far from the "neutral environment purged of ideology" that they should be, and that the teacher becomes "trapped" and might not "even begin to suspect the 'work' the system … forces [the teacher] to do" (p. 98). The teacher who can resist these ideologies is, according to Althusser (1971/2006), a "rare" type of "hero" (p. 98).

2. Britzman (2006) terms this "de-realization" (p. 112). She refers to Freud's strange denial of the reality of the Acropolis when he first saw the historical monument. Freud postulated that his denial was the result of transference emanating from the guilt of outliving his father and that "he did better than his father who never could travel to such far-off places" (Britzman, 2006, p. 112). Fiona similarly de-realizes Adam in that she discerns his suffering through her own guilt. Describing the impact of this phenomenon in pedagogical encounters, Britzman (2006) suggests that it "will be difficult to see an actual student, just as it was difficult for Freud to see the Acropolis" (p. 113).

CHAPTER SEVEN
NONVIOLENT RELATIONALITY AND THE NON-TEACHER

The disappearance of the teacher has been a concern for some scholars (e.g., Biesta, 2012). Indeed, Gert Biesta (2012) sheds light on the shift from the language of teaching to that of learning, coining the term “learnification” (p. 36), in which students are foregrounded at the expense of teachers. In this construction, teachers are sidelined as facilitators or, in Biesta’s (2012) words, “repositioned … from someone who is at the heart of the educational process to one who literally stands at the sideline” (p. 38). Referring to Levinas, Biesta (2012) theorizes the teacher’s role in terms of bringing to students “more” than they “contain” (p. 41), by giving to an Other, in this case the student, something that is outside of her “field of experience” and “in a way that is fundamentally *beyond* [her] control” (p. 42). Based on this theory of giving, one might suggest that teaching involves a confrontation of egos that instigates transformation through exposure to unsettling and intrusive newness. In this confrontation, it is not only the teacher’s ego that intrudes upon that of the student, but the teacher’s ego is also susceptible to the intrusive newness of the student. This idea of susceptibility to intrusion and transformation is reminiscent of the concepts of natality and hospitality discussed in the preceding chapters: Arendt (1977) describes how the newness exerted by children has transformative potential to re-energize the world; Derrida (1997/2000) describes how the host must be vulnerable and open to the strangeness of the guest. In this chapter, these ideas of intrusion and transformation form the basis of my thinking for an exploration of the pedagogical failure of the teacher who does not

bring to the student more than the student contains, or the *non-teacher*, who, in turn, gives rise to a *premature teacher* in the student.

Thinking with Arendt (1977), I suggest that learning without a teacher, or being thrust prematurely into the role of the teacher, may be read as a failure of adult responsibility to introduce the world, in all its joys and terrors, to those who are newly arrived. Thinking back to Arendt's (1977) concept of natality, the problem is that bringing children into the world too soon leaves them to their own devices, without the knowledge they need to navigate the social and political conflicts they inherit. For Levinas (1982/1985, 1974/1998) however, the idea of entering a nonviolent relationship with the Other depends upon unknowingness. Uncertainty and ambiguity are foundational to his philosophy of ethics and so Levinas (1982/1985, 1974/1998) invites us to consider how the ambiguity of student/teacher relationships may open ethical possibility as well. Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) concept of nonviolent relationality becomes a central concept in this chapter, through which I consider the ethical qualities of liminality (Todd, 2014) in pedagogical relationships, and also question the troubling effects, particularly on younger people, when they do not have the authority of adults to support their entry into the world. Ultimately, my concern is that when the teacher's role is obscured and eroded, it interrupts the ethical possibilities of her work, which involves bringing to students more than they already contain.

To examine these tensions, I start by looking at the non-teacher in *Klara and the Sun*, in which Kazuo Ishiguro (2021) presents a futuristic society in which children are schooled virtually. For my examination of teachers in this novel, I identify three components of the educational system: artificial friends, virtual schooling, and interaction meetings. Artificial friends are life-like robots that have been designed as caregivers and to keep children company.

Klara, an artificial friend and the narrator, is positioned in the novel as a teacher-like figure; she is purchased for a sickly child named Josie. Because this futuristic society has adopted a form of virtual schooling that is conducted online via devices called oblongs, the second non-teacher I will be examining is not an individual character but, instead, the portrayal of Josie's oblong, virtual teachers. A final component of the educational system is the interaction meeting: groups of children meet without teacher supervision or any adult guidance, evidently to compensate for the social interaction they are lacking due to virtual schooling. Here, the non-teacher is encapsulated by the absence of a teacher during these meetings.

I then look at Tara Westover's (2018) memoir, *Educated*, which follows her experiences as a child who does not receive a formal education through public schooling. For my study of teacher identity through this text, I will be introducing Winnicott's (1969, 1988, 1965/2018) concepts of omnipotence and object use to postulate that Tara becomes her own teacher—a premature teacher—in the absence of another who can bring to her more than she contains. I will first explore Tara's parents as non-teachers, and then consider the non-teacher through Tara's description of not being formally educated. Interestingly, Tara's educational trajectory occurs in reverse: she begins as her own teacher at home, and then receives a formal university education, signifying a movement from teacher to student. Tara's thoughts on being formally educated at an older age and *having teachers*, as opposed to educating herself as a child in the absence of a teacher, provide insight into the value of having teachers who disrupt and unsettle one's orbit of experience.

Relationality Through Nonviolent Dialogue and Liminality

From the perspective of Levinas' (1974/1998) nonviolent relationality, the philosophical concept of this chapter, the self is called into an inescapable position of responsibility by the

Other, thereby setting into motion an ethical engagement between self and Other. Levinas (1974/1998) contends that this form of ethical engagement depends on the self's "extreme passivity" (p. 47). This passivity, however, is active: one actively subjects oneself to the Other through an absolute "exposedness" (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 92), and is actively obsessed with fulfilling one's undeniable responsibility (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 55). Gert Biesta (2012) and Sharon Todd (2014) build on Levinas' ideas by proposing two similar concepts: dialogue and liminality. Ethical encounters between the self and what is radically Other than and outside the self are transformative for both parties. What is radically Other can refer to embodied otherness in a unique and singular Other, as well as otherness in the form of knowledge that disrupts one's experience and worldview. In terms of an encounter between a teacher and student, the teacher responds to the student by bringing forth her own otherness through introducing the student to intrusive and disorientating knowledge that stretches and extends ego boundaries and instigates movement and growth. Consequently, the student comes into the world; the teacher experiences a becoming as well, by embracing and opening herself up to the student's alterity. To be sure, tensions arise that come to shape teacher identity, with respect to maintaining her selfhood, extending the ego of her student, and allowing her own ego to be displaced and expanded in the process. In the upcoming sections, I will delineate several aspects of Levinas' nonviolent relationality that hinge on his idea of the face-to-face encounter between subject and Other. I will then bring forth Todd's (2014) concept of liminality and Biesta's (2012) concept of dialogue to consider how nonviolent relationality can be applied to the context of teaching and learning.

Levinas and the Face-To-Face Encounter

Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) conceptualization of nonviolent relationality hinges on maintaining the alterity of the Other. Responsibility to the Other begins with the face-to-face

encounter between the individual ‘I’ (the subject) and the Other. For Levinas (1982/1985), it is the literal and symbolic act of encountering the Other’s face that triggers ethics, by placing the subject into an involuntary position of response (pp. 95-96). In fact, Levinas (1982/1985) identifies the encounter with an Other’s face as foundational to all interactions, as that which is “presupposed in all human relationships” (p. 89). Responsibility begins when the Other meets the subject “as face” (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 95), whereby this encounter between faces serves as “a commandment” (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 89) that “orders and ordains” the subject into responsibility (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 97). The look of the Other and looking at the Other immediately place the subject into the ethical position of responsibility (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 85); this position is “incumbent” upon the subject and cannot be refused (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 101). Moreover, Levinas (1982/1985) stresses that the responsibility of nonviolent relationality plays out as a perpetual debt to an Other that can never be completely fulfilled (p. 105). Instead, there is a “non-symmetrical” (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 98) condition, in which the subject gives all and must “owe all” (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 89) without an expectation of receiving anything in return (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 98).

In giving and owing all, a passivity is required that derives from this position of irrefutable responsibility for and persecution by the Other (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 111). Levinas (1974/1998) stresses the utterness of this passivity: a “passivity more passive than all passivity” (p. 14), that it is “extreme” (p. 47), “hyperbolic” (p. 49), “bottomless” (p. 111), and “absolute” (p. 114). Within the thoroughness of this passivity, one comes to exist as “one-for-the-other in passivity” instead of for the self (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 50). One becomes “obsessed with responsibility” for the Other (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 55) and subjectivity is construed through subjection to the Other (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 14). Essentially, one “[finds] oneself while losing

oneself" (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 11), and oddly this extreme form of passivity becomes active. In sacrificing everything and being obsessed with one's responsibility for the Other, "activity and passivity coincide" (Levinas, 1974/1998, p. 115).

Reminiscent of the concept of hospitality, relationality is enacted nonviolently when the subject avoids any attempts to categorize the Other into a knowable frame. In seeing the face of the Other, Levinas (1982/1985) stresses that the subject must refrain from noticing even "the color of [the Other's] eyes" (p. 85). Levinas (1982/1985) distinguishes between being "beside the Other" by attempting to know and understand the Other, versus being "confronted" with the Other (p. 57). When the subject is confronted with the Other's face, the subject is then "in direct relation with the Other" (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 57). This direct relationality is an ethical stance, insofar as the subject does not "thematize" or consider the Other as "a known object" (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 57); any such moves on the part of the subject foreclose ethics. The Other remains non-thematizable, as well as non-synthesizable. Always returning to the face, Levinas (1982/1985) differentiates "a togetherness of synthesis" from "a togetherness of face to face" (p. 77). When the subject is confronted by the face of the Other, ethical relationality is based on a "togetherness of face to face" as opposed to an incorporation of the Other's ego into that of the subject (Levinas, 1982/1985, p. 77). Todd (2003) refers to these Levinasian ideas of thematization and synthesis as "shrouding the Other," a move through which the Other is diminished to an object of the subject's "comprehension" and "narrative" (p. 15).

Thinking with Levinas, Todd (2003) seeks to restore the risk "of ambiguity" involved in the face-to-face encounter with otherness (p. 68). The subject opens herself up to risk when confronted with the uncertainty that derives from the alterity of the Other: a radical otherness that negates "any stable meaning" (Todd, 2003, p. 68). Todd (2003) also makes reference to

Freud’s notion of conflicting egoistic and altruistic urges that co-exist in all of us. The altruistic drive seeks a connection with the Other, which functions in tension with and “in excess of” the egoistic drive that seeks self-interested pleasure through knowledge of the Other (Todd, 2003, p. 84). Ethical possibilities are found within this tension, and specifically when the altruistic drive “displaces self-interest in an encounter with difference” (Todd, 2003, p. 84). Ethical relationality therefore emerges from the displacement of the ego and is contingent on being open to the ambiguity inherent in the Other’s alterity. Todd (2003) writes that “the Other disrupts the stability of the ego, insofar as the ego becomes extended, its identity challenged and called into question” (p. 84). In this sense, she suggests that Freud’s altruism is consistent with Levinas’ (1982/1985) “togetherness of face to face” (p. 77) in which the subject does not seek a connection in sameness nor make a bid to thematize or synthesize the Other’s ego. Instead, the interaction is “a drive to exteriority” (Todd, 2003, p. 84), an ethical relationship with that which is, precisely, not within one’s grasp and beyond one’s own orbit of experience. An ethical response resides in the subject’s receptivity “to the Other to the point of transformation” (Todd, 2003, p. 89).[1]

Todd and Biesta: Liminality and Dialogue

Building on ideas of ambiguity, risk, altruism, and exteriority, Todd (2014) and Biesta (2012) envision nonviolent relationality unfolding between teachers and students in a transformative, liminal middle ground. Todd (2014) theorizes about pedagogical interactions taking place on an uncertain “threshold” of becoming (p. 234), in an “ephemeral, anticipatory state of the ‘next instant’” (p. 237). Ethical responsibility is positioned on this threshold in an “inbetweenness of relationality” (Todd, 2014, p. 241) involving an “encounter with the unknowable other” (Todd, 2014, p. 239). In this liminal state of becoming, the interaction

between student and teacher is a mutually transformative "relation to otherness" in which each is able to reach beyond themselves and surpass their individual corporeality (Todd, 2014, p. 240). Power imbalances that traditionally exist between teacher and student are displaced and learning occurs within an encounter of radical alterity (Todd, 2014, pp. 234-235). The interaction is one of "mediation and exchange" that is framed by a "respect for the other's becoming" (Todd, 2014, p. 241).

Similarly, Biesta (2012) draws from Levinas to posit education in terms of relationships that allow individuals to surpass their limits and to experience more than they contain. The process of teaching and learning is traumatic because it involves intrusion from outside the individual, from an exteriority that is thoroughly Other (Biesta, 2012, pp. 41-42). Teaching is not about bringing out what is already inside the student, as proposed by current educational thought geared toward constructivism; rather, teaching is about the interruption and intrusion by "something that is radically and fundamentally *other*" (Biesta, 2012, p. 42). Given this context of traumatic interruption, Biesta (2012) reminds us that neither teaching nor learning are smooth or comfortable processes. Indeed, teachers can expect that students will resist the arrival of knowledge because of its newness and otherness (Biesta, 2012, p. 42). Biesta (2012) further outlines two forms of this resistance: a) to rail against the intrusion by imposing one's will on the Other (what he calls "world-destruction") and b) to withdraw from the newness conveyed through the Other (what he calls "self-destruction") (p. 43). It is between these two extremes, "in the frustrating middle ground between world-destruction and self-destruction" that the conditions for dialogue are created (Biesta, 2012, p. 43). This dialogue—a dialogue structured around the intrusion of radical newness and its transformation through the work of meaning-making—encapsulates the process of teaching and learning.

In bringing Levinas (1982/1985, 1974/1998) into conversation with Todd (2014) and Biesta (2012), I am weaving together a theoretical framework through which to explore a final composite of this dissertation, which I am calling the non-teacher. The concepts of liminality (Todd, 2014) and dialogue (Biesta, 2012) provide a way to apply Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) philosophy of relationality to educational practice. Elaborating on Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) concept of the unknowable and non-thematizable Other, ethical responsibility resides in the teacher/student relationship that entails exposure to that which is unknown and exterior to each; this exposure allows each to cross the thresholds of their becoming by exceeding their limits. Student and teacher are both transformed through a process of experiencing the world through one another: "we come 'into the world' and the world comes into us" (Biesta, 2012, p. 43). This idea of coming into the world is reminiscent of Arendt's (1977) concept of natality in which newcomers come into the world to change it. Similarly, Jervis (2012) underscores the adult's responsibility to "teach the child about the world as it is, so she can have sufficient understanding to act someday in a way that will change the present state of the world" (p. 192). Therefore, it is not only the student who 'develops' by transitioning from one threshold to the next; the teacher also grows, experiencing her own becoming while simultaneously supporting her student. Because this transformation occurs for both teacher and student, identity categories and professional roles are disrupted in the productive, if at times painful, middle ground of transformation that arises for both the student and the teacher. This dual transformation is reminiscent of my discussion of Jean, Barbara, and Sheba in Chapter Five: all three characters were experiencing their own becoming; however, in these cases they did not help their students to advance.

Klara and the Sun: A Three-Pronged Approach to Teaching and Learning

I now turn to Kazuo Ishiguro's (2021) *Klara and the Sun* as my first site for theorizing the non-teacher. In this novel, Ishiguro (2021) presents a futuristic world in which only certain children who have been genetically-enhanced, called "lifted" children (p. 82), have access to an online/remote version of schooling. Although it is never explicitly explained, the reader is able to surmise that parents in this world have the choice about whether or not to have their children lifted; however, having a child lifted involves a risky medical procedure that can lead to serious health conditions and possibly premature death. It is also implied that having one's child lifted is a costly endeavour. There are two children featured in the novel, Josie and Rick; Josie is lifted whereas Rick is not. It is not clear why Rick was not lifted when he was younger and readers are left to wonder about financial constraints or his mother's concerns over the health implications. However, Rick's mother, Helen, experiences some regret about this decision later in life because Rick does not have access to the same educational opportunities as Josie. Life-like robots, referred to as artificial friends (AFs), have been designed to shield children from loneliness. Even in the adult world, robots, called "substitutions" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 190), have also begun to take over many jobs. Klara, the protagonist and narrator of the novel, is Josie's AF. While Klara is not an official teacher in the formal educational system of oblong schooling, she is positioned as a teacher figure *vis-à-vis* Josie insofar as it is her role to keep Josie safe and meaningfully occupied. Still, Josie's and Klara's roles are ambiguous; after all, Klara is herself a learner as she attempts to incorporate relevant information about Josie's life in a larger effort to fulfill her mission as Josie's AF. As Josie transitions from adolescence into adulthood with her loyal AF at her side, Klara experiences her own becoming as she learns about love, death, and the complexities of human emotion. Klara is in fact so life-like that she experiences a range of

feelings, builds strong connections with others, and cares deeply for Josie. Because she has been designed to be completely devoted and loyal to the child who purchases her, she is characterized by the extreme of an ego-lessness that becomes problematic. Moreover, Ishiguro (2021) weaves a cautionary and timely tale of what happens when a society adopts an elitist version of online schooling; this is, of course, a prescient concern in light of the inequities reproduced via emergency online education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Barrett, 2021; Farhadi & Winton, 2021).

Klara: The Non-(intrusive) Teacher

Klara is positioned as a teacher figure throughout Josie's life, albeit not in an officially sanctioned school-based way. Like a teacher, she is depicted as a caregiver, watching over her charge, and worrying about Josie's mysteriously ailing health (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 85, p. 132). Klara's job is to "look out" for Josie (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 90) and be there for Josie whenever needed (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 176). Functioning *in loco parentis*, she acts in the place of Josie's mother, Chrissie, and takes care of Josie in Chrissie's absence; Chrissie even contemplates quitting her job so that Klara will no longer be needed (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 255). This is similar to the positioning of Jean, Barbara, and Sheba who all form self-perceptions of surrogate parents to those in their care; it is also similar to Fiona who, in her position as judge, steps in and assumes a parental role by overriding the decision of Adam's parents to allow for a blood transfusion. Furthermore, Klara is programmed to perform the duty of doing whatever she can to serve, protect, and save Josie—this self-perception is common among the characters already studied in this dissertation and adheres to a cultural myth in educational discourse of the omnipotent and altruistic teacher (Britzman, 2003). Klara comes to epitomize an idealized version of the selfless teacher figure who exists solely for her student, even going so far as to devise and implement a

challenging and dangerous plan which puts herself at risk to heal Josie with the phantasmic help of the sun (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 163-64). Josie's mother credits Klara with her daughter's maturity, pointing out how she has grown up under Klara's guidance and become "more considerate" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 107). Also, Klara is depicted as very knowledgeable, with stores of information to pass along. She has been created with "intellectual powers" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 197), and possesses "sophisticated understanding" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 43) and "such unusual insight" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 300). One of Klara's greatest qualities is her ability to synthesize information and "absorb and blend everything she sees" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 43). Because Rick, unlike Josie, does not have access to oblong teachers, Klara eventually becomes his tutor to help him get into college (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 264). Although the oblong tutors are the sanctioned teachers of this world, their role seems to consist of transmitting information and knowledge to students. Klara, on the other hand, seems to be intended to serve a relational function with respect to Josie, perhaps because oblong teachers do not fulfill this need. Thus, Klara serves many of the functions that are often associated with the teacher role: caregiver, substitute parent, and protector.

In some ways, Klara's characterization is consistent with Biesta's (2012) and Todd's (2014) concepts of dialogue and liminality. Like their descriptions of the dual transformation of the teacher alongside student, Klara experiences her own becoming alongside Josie. At the beginning of the novel as she awaits purchase in the store window, she enjoys watching passers-by (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 8-9), reflecting on their actions (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 10, p. 17), and questioning the range of human emotions she observes (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 18). While Rosa, Klara's friend who is also an AF, is content to simply watch what is going on, Klara wants to engage with what she sees. The store manager praises Klara's exceptional abilities, pointing out

that Klara has “the most sophisticated understanding of any AF” in the store (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 43). To be sure, Klara pushes herself to imagine experiencing emotions such as anger (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 20) and sadness (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 23). Klara’s excitement to come into the world is also conveyed through Ishiguro’s (2021) descriptions of several firsts, such as going outside (p. 59), driving in a car (p. 96), and seeing a waterfall (pp. 100-101). Moreover, she is open to having complex discussions that push her thinking. One such discussion occurs with Josie’s mother, Chrissie. As mentioned, Josie suffers from a mysterious illness and, at one point, Chrissie shares with Klara her desperate need to replace her daughter should she die (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 210-211). A second example involves a conversation between Klara and Josie’s father, Paul. They engage in a debate over the unique and unduplicatable qualities of a human being during which Klara listens and responds to Paul’s fear that there is nothing so unique or special about his daughter that can’t be duplicated (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 221).

As Klara experiences her own becoming, she is characterized as the quintessence of Levinas’ (1982/1985, 1974/1998) nonviolent relationality whose purpose is to fulfill a perpetual debt to the Other. Klara carries out this purpose by supporting Josie wholeheartedly and giving of herself unconditionally. Even though Josie treats Klara unkindly at times, Klara never wavers in her role as Josie’s compliant companion. For instance, during a meeting with her peers of lifted children, Josie fails to intervene when the other children suggest throwing Klara across the room (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 77-79); Josie also admits to her peers that maybe she should have purchased a better and more updated model than Klara (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 78). Yet, Klara doesn’t challenge Josie’s behaviour. As Josie prepares to leave for college at the end of the novel, a Klara who is no longer needed is exiled to a cluttered utility room in the house (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 290). She is then thrown away to spend her final days, euphemistically termed her “slow

fade," in a garbage dump (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 294). Again, Klara accepts this without question. Klara also physically sacrifices herself for Josie. She comes to believe that Josie's health depends on destroying a machine with the "P-E-G Nine solution" that is part of her makeup; she allows this solution to be extracted from her head, without knowing if this will destroy her (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 223-224). Throughout her life, Klara remains devoted to keeping Josie happy and wishes nothing more than "to be Josie's AF" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 135). Indeed, she epitomizes an idealized version of the teacher figure who only exists for her student, selflessly gives of herself, and eventually fades away to imperceptibility when she is no longer needed.

Ironically, however, Klara's egoless passivity also risks engulfing Josie. To elaborate, Klara's greatest qualities are her "appetite for observing and learning" and "to absorb and blend everything she sees" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 43). Viewing her role to passively observe Josie in different situations (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 82) and to learn everything she can about Josie (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 118), she attempts to 'absorb' and grasp Josie. It is revealed later in the novel that this grasping will be vital to implementing an unthinkable plan, developed by Josie's mother, to turn Klara into a clone should Josie die by her mysterious illness (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 210). Klara accepts this task and promises that she can, in fact, become Josie (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 216). She demonstrates her commendable abilities of observation and imitation on a couple of occasions, by reproducing Josie's walk (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 44) and mimicking her speech (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 104-105). Furthermore, Klara disputes the notion of the inaccessible and singular Other. Comparing the human heart to a multi-roomed house, Klara feels that "a devoted AF, given time, could walk through each of those rooms, studying them carefully in turn, until they became like her own home" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 216). Therefore, even though she never imposes her ego on Josie, she exhibits a violent form of relationality in believing that she can become Josie.

To put it starkly, Klara does not adhere to Todd (2014) and Biesta's (2012) idea of the teacher but, rather, is a non-teacher whose identity negates their ideas of dialogue and liminality. In her interactions with Josie, she does little to promote meaningful engagement with the world. This is understandable as Klara has been designed to be loyal and compliant, and to ensure Josie's happiness and safety without interfering or intruding upon her worldview. Throughout the novel, Klara fails to encourage Josie to reflect on her actions and reconsider her perceptions of events. Rather than push Josie to feel discomfort, Klara remains silent or defers to Josie's understanding of situations. For example, when Josie almost allows her peers to throw Klara across the room and admits that maybe Klara is not a great AF model, Klara says nothing (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 78-84). When Josie gets into an argument with her best friend, Rick, and he leaves in anger, Klara is silent (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 131). When Josie is offended by Klara's suggestion to apologize to Rick, Klara defers to Josie (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 134). While waiting outside a theatre one evening, a woman demands to know if Josie is intending to bring her "machine" into the theatre to take up "sought-after seats" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 238). Josie fails to support Klara; instead, it is a nearby stranger who tells the woman to leave them alone (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 238). As her ever loyal and unobtrusive robot friend, Klara does not use these situations to present a different perspective, to provoke thought, or to risk Josie's discomfort.

The Oblong Professor: The Non-(engaging) Teacher

As a lifted child, Josie has access to an elitist form of online schooling that occurs via devices called oblongs and with teachers who are mathematics and science professors (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 54, p. 58). An exploration of these oblong professors illuminates an educational system that is failing its children. Like Klara, oblong professors are non-teachers in that they fail to support Josie to engage with the world or to push her thinking. The few references to these

online teachers leave an impression that these teachers do not establish the type of relationships with their students that is consistent with the dual transformation of teacher and student through exposure to the radical alterity of one another. Josie's professors do not appear to demonstrate an openness to her otherness, or to employ teaching methods that entail an exchange and working through of ideas to allow their students to come into the world. For instance, at the end of one lesson Josie expresses her relief at not having to look at her professor, Professor Helm, anymore (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 58). During this particular lesson, there doesn't appear to be any meaningful back-and-forth interaction between student and teacher; rather, Professor Helm frequently reprimands Josie, who eventually gives up by telling him she's "done it" in "exactly the way" he instructed (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 58). In another scene, a group of parents are discussing the "uncivil" physics teacher, Professor Kwan (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 67). Josie jokingly suspects that one of her "mega-accredited" physics tutors is building a bomb in his shed (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 187). There is no indication that these professors are engaging their students to extend their egos, nor are they presented as embodying a Levinasian openness to their students; they appear instead to serve the purpose of transmitting information. Moreover, it stands to reason that this technologically-advanced society would educate children in these mathematical and scientific areas and the notable absence of other subjects, such as language, literature, and history, might indicate a fear of provoking thought and increasing the critical consciousness of future generations.

Interaction Meetings: The Non-(present) Teacher

A final component of this world's educational system is the "interaction meeting" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 65). Because children are isolated at home with their oblong devices and do not attend bricks and mortar schools with peers, they do not have opportunities to develop social

skills and learn from the perspectives of other children. To make up for this, interaction meetings allow for groups of children to gather face-to-face in order to learn how to "get along with others" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 65) and "sort out" arguments on their own (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 81). In theory, these might provide intrusion from what is outside the self, beyond one's own experience, and thoroughly Other (Biesta, 2012); however, they are only for lifted children so there is little exposure to different life experiences, perspectives, and worldviews. Furthermore, children are left on their own to resolve social issues that arise with no adult to promote meaningful engagement "between 'self' and 'other'" (Biesta, 2012, p. 43). This lack of engagement is obvious in the one and only interaction meeting that is described in the novel. Josie's best friend Rick, who is not lifted, reluctantly attends the meeting at Josie's urging. The children immediately assume he likes action movies. They don't know how to respond when Rick explains that he actually enjoys old movies because "everything was so different then" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 73); they return to the topic of action movies, and feel certain that he must like "car chases and stuff" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 74). The rest of the meeting centres on whether or not to throw Klara across the room (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 77). Arguably, this is not the type of peer interaction that allows children to engage with their world. Without adult intervention, the alterity that Rick brings forth doesn't result in any form of disruptive and intrusive learning, and the potential value of these meetings goes unrecognized. It is also notable that Josie's mother fails to perceive these in terms of exposing her daughter to new ideas, perspectives, and experiences. On the contrary, she believes Josie's academic success depends on how many meetings she attends, reminding Josie that the "kids who don't do well in college are always the ones who didn't attend enough meetings" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 65).

Implications of the Non-teacher

Klara's characterization as the non-teacher and the two other components I've identified, oblong professors and interaction meetings, shed light on the frightening implications of an educational system that fails to engage young people in questioning the world they inherit, instead producing compliant children who will become compliant adults. Far from educating children to engage with and become in the world (Biesta, 2012) through teacher/student "mediation and exchange" (Todd, 2014, p. 241), the identity of the non-teacher as portrayed in *Klara and the Sun* is premised on keeping children content and comfortable, not disrupting or extending their egos, and not developing relationships. Instead, children are 'educated' to accept what is happening in their world. While Josie and Rick, the two featured children in this novel, are not the foci of this chapter, and student identity is not the topic of this dissertation, it is relevant to look at how students may be impacted by the identity of a non-teacher. After all, I am not only studying teacher identity but also its relation to ethical responsibility. Having said that, in no way is my critique directed at teachers alone; rather, my concern is with how structures and discourses may exalt the non-teacher as a tool in a larger project of eroding public education. An exploration of Klara, oblong professors, and interaction meetings provides insight into the loss of education as a site of collective responsibility and, returning to Arendt (1977), the destructive qualities of natality when children, like Josie and Rick, are educated by a system of non-teachers.

Josie's Compliance

As a relative newcomer to the society that Ishiguro (2021) depicts, it is understandable that Josie does not challenge many aspects of this technological world. However, it is nonetheless unsettling. Under the care of her mother, who seems to have invested hope in Klara, Josie does not contemplate, for instance, the ethical implications of artificial intelligence. Even

though Klara is a machine, she has been designed to possess human traits such as the ability to feel emotion, to be reflective, and to have memories. At one point, Klara describes her range of feelings and explains that the more she observes, “the more feelings become available” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 98). She feels sadness (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 98), excitement (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 92), happiness (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 300), and worry (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 84). She is also insightful and reflective. By way of illustration, at the beginning of the novel she often reflects on the feelings of those who pass by the store window (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 16-18); later, she considers the loneliness of a lady sitting by herself (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 246). Additionally, she possesses memories. The novel closes with Klara contemplating her various life experiences such as a trip with Josie’s mother to Morgan’s Falls and being in a diner with Rick and his mother (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 297). Josie belongs to a society that has created these very human-like robots without any regard as to how they should be treated. Josie develops a close bond with Klara; they spend the majority of their days together as Josie transitions into adulthood. She assures Klara that she will “never let anything bad happen” to her (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 240, p. 254), is worried about purchasing her “against [her] will” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 25), and promises that she won’t end up in a cupboard if she is purchased (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 25). Relating to her like a human being and not a robot, she wants Klara to experience special sights like Morgan’s Falls (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 88) and worries that Klara is missing out because Josie is always sick (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 96). Josie shares intimate thoughts with her, telling her about her late sister (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 88-89) and revealing her fears about going to college (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 296). In the end, however, she is able to discard Klara when she has outlived her usefulness. Josie does not seem bothered when Klara ends up in the storage closet of her home (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 290) or when she is finally left in a garbage dump to spend the remainder of her days (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 297).

In addition to how Klara is treated, there are other frightening scientific advancements that Josie does not challenge. Josie doesn't question her mother's decision to have her genetically enhanced, or challenge this practice in general, even though she is aware that this has compromised her health and was presumably responsible for her sister's death years earlier. Rather, Josie expresses that she is glad she was lifted and "wouldn't wish it any other way" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 277). Moreover, although Josie loves and supports Rick and plans to spend her life with him, she does not question a society in which lifted children are given access to an education and unlifted children are not, and in which lifted and unlifted children are not supposed to interact. She is content to part ways with him at the end of the novel, going off to college with her new lifted friends; Rick also accepts this, as he finds new friends in the city (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 286). Neither seem bothered that someone who is lifted cannot be with someone who is not lifted, and accept this because it is just the way it is. Rick explains to Klara that "it couldn't have worked out" and that he has his "own plans now" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 288).

Although the reader is not able to ascertain whether or not Josie is fully aware of other concerning aspects of her society, we can infer that she has some awareness of the technologically-advanced world in which she lives, and that robots are increasingly being used as substitutes for human beings. Klara is one such substitution, as a robot who is filling in as friend and caregiver. At one point, Josie herself is at risk of being replaced by Klara. Unbeknownst to her, an artist/scientist, Mr. Capaldi, is using Klara's observational skills and ability to imitate Josie to create a robotic form of Josie (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 205-208). Suspecting something is not right, Josie questions her parents about this (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 213). While the reader is not privy to the specifics of what is discussed during this questioning, one gathers that Josie does not entirely believe that Mr. Capaldi is simply painting her portrait. She may only have suspicions

about Mr. Capaldi, but she does know that in the workforce her father has lost his job due to robots, what are termed “substitutions” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 190). This awareness, however, never goes anywhere. After a miraculous recovery from her poor health, Josie contentedly transitions into adulthood, losing her ties with Rick and going off to college with her lifted friends (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 295-297).

Rick’s Untended Natality

While Josie fails to act on her suspicions, Rick actively contributes to society’s technologically-driven agenda with his own creation of “data-gathering” drone birds (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 244). Impressively, he has accomplished this on his own with online “information sources” and books (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 243). When asked about the ethical implications of his creation, Rick answers that “in the end, it’s for the legislators to decide how these things get regulated, not people like me” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 245). As a form of natality (Arendt, 1977) that is not tended to or addressed by a teacher—Rick does not attend virtual school like Josie because he is not lifted—Rick has manufactured these drone birds without any teacher intervention, without anyone to push his thinking to consider the potentially frightening repercussions of these drone birds and the impact of his natality upon the world. Josie and Rick both appear oblivious to what the future may hold for their generation, as they transition into adulthood in a robotic, scientific, and technological world.

Parental Responsibility

One cannot fault Josie and Rick for their obliviousness; after all, they have been raised by mothers who, similarly, do not question the practices of this world and abide by its rules. Josie’s mother, Chrissie, is thoroughly implicated in these: she has had her two children genetically enhanced to provide them with the chance at a better future, has enrolled Josie in online

schooling, and has purchased an AF to keep Josie company and act as caregiver. Rick's mother, Helen, is less implicated in that Rick is not lifted and he doesn't have an AF. She comes to realize, however, that she too must follow the rules. Helen admits to Chrissie that she regrets not having Rick lifted (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 235), and even tries to reconnect with a "rich and influential" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 230) former lover in an attempt to get her unlifted son into college (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 246). Given their compliant mothers, it follows that Josie and Rick do not challenge what is happening. In contrast to this approach, Josie's absent father is critical of what is happening, and withdraws from society with others who have also been replaced by "substitutions" in the workforce (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 190). He clearly disapproves of his daughter's AF, ignoring Klara when they first meet and only saying hello reluctantly when prompted by his ex-wife (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 187). He is very angered by what Mr. Capaldi is planning (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 200) and reveals to Klara his fears of living in a world in which "science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter, nothing there our modern tools can't excavate, copy, transfer" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 221). Be that as it may, his critique of the world is just as problematic as his ex-wife's compliance: he is part of a lawless horde of "white people" who feel they need to "arm [themselves] quite extensively against other *types*" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 229). In this way, he, too, is aligned with a melancholic political ideology—fused to a fantasy of a time before—intent on eroding social structures that should otherwise support democratic processes, such as equitable access to health care and education, and the public good. Jervis (2012) describes Arendt's notion of parental responsibility as being to introduce the world to the child in order for the child to one day change the world (p. 192). Josie's parents, positioned as they are at opposite extremes of involvement versus withdrawal,

represent two kinds of failure that both result in not providing their daughter with a "sufficient understanding" (Jervis, 2012, p. 192) to confront the world as it is in order to change it.

Final Thoughts: Teacher Failure in *Klara and the Sun*

Ultimately, Josie and Rick represent a generation of future adults who are unable to recognize how the scientific, robotic, and technological advances of their world might be used in unethical and irresponsible ways. They are both denied teachers who can provide an education that will enable them to transition into and engage with the world in meaningful ways. Klara's characterization as non-teacher illustrates how the selfless, egoless, and devoted teacher does not fulfill the ethical responsibility of bringing to the student more than she contains and of introducing her to unsettling and intrusive otherness. Even though Josie has access to schooling whereas Rick does not, her online non-teachers also fall short. Her online non-teachers epitomize Biesta's (2012) absent teacher, viewing their roles in terms of transmitting knowledge rather than establishing transformative relationships between teacher and student. At first, Klara seems to relate to Josie with a Levinasian egolessness, but it becomes increasingly evident as the plot unfolds that her interactions with Josie do not allow her to come into the world. Designed to be a loyal and compliant robot friend, her sole purpose is to ensure Josie's happiness and safety without providing discomfort or interfering with her worldview. In the end, Klara's egolessness is misleading: her observational skills, desire to learn everything about Josie, ability to synthesize and imitate Josie, and eventual promise to 'grasp' Josie to such an extent as to become her clone point to a decidedly non-Levinasian view of the Other. Furthermore, Josie and Rick's parents do not help their children develop an understanding of the world as it exists, because they are either so implicated in its unethical practices or so withdrawn from these that

they seem to lack this understanding themselves. As consequence, Josie and Rick transition contentedly into adulthood, and into a world that will continue as is.

***Educated*: A Journey from Self-taught to Learning from Others**

Educated is an autobiographical account of Tara Westover's life, chronicling her journey from the rural Idaho mountains of Buck's Peak, where she grew up, to Cambridge, where she received her PhD. The youngest of seven children, she spends her childhood days working for her father, sorting and crushing metal for his metal scrapping business. A devout Mormon who is fearful of the government, her father doesn't believe in the public education system; therefore, Tara is homeschooled as a child. Tara's father creates a self-contained environment in which Tara is educated through his worldview and her identity is shaped through his powerful narrative. Tara's mother is similarly shaped through this oppressive narrative, but is also complicit in creating and perpetuating it. While Tara recognizes her mother's oppression and weakness, she also admires and praises her mother for the various roles she successfully takes on throughout Tara's life, including those of midwife, doctor, teacher, and businesswoman. Tara yearns to attend school and eventually decides to attend university against her father's wishes. Despite many obstacles, she completes an undergraduate degree at BYU and goes on to finally acquire her PhD at Cambridge.

While *Educated* does not feature a traditional teacher/student relationship in that Tara is not a teacher in a classroom with a group of students, there are nonetheless *non-teachers* to explore in this memoir. Tara's educational journey also offers the opportunity to explore the *premature* teacher. In the ensuing section, I introduce Winnicott's (1988, 1965/2018) theory of the good-enough mother to position Tara's parents as non-adaptive teachers. I argue that because Tara's parents do not adapt to her intellectual needs, Tara becomes a premature teacher who is at

the same time a non-teacher in that she is without the support of authority figures who enable her to engage with the world. Instead, she must depend on herself to fulfill her own needs. I then explore how Tara is finally able to be a student with teachers who engage with and enable her to come into the world. Therefore, while Tara's story is that of a student who overcomes barriers to become educated, it is also an educational journey in reverse. Even though she is educated by her parents, particularly through her father's strong and thwarted worldviews, I argue that these efforts are more about dogma than they are about teaching in the sense described by Biesta (2012) and Todd (2014). Ironically, under the weight of her parents' ideology, Tara teaches herself to become a student—supported by teachers—when she eventually enrolls in higher education. In essence, Tara must educate herself in all the various subject areas to get into university; as such she moves from the position of her own teacher to that of a university student.

Winnicott: The Not Good-Enough Teacher

To understand why Tara assumes the teacher role, I turn to Winnicott's (1969, 1988, 1965/2018) psychoanalytical notions of omnipotence, object use, and the (not) good-enough mother. As will become clearer in the paragraphs to follow, I contend that Tara occupies the same psychical space as the infant who receives inadequate care from the parent and, as consequence, self-parents. Winnicott (1988) theorizes that the infant's life begins with an illusion of her own omnipotence, arising from a sense of being undifferentiated from the mother. Abram (2018) explains that Winnicott views this "merging state for the infant" as not yet distinguishing "between Me and Not-me. He sees his mother's face and believes her face to be his" (p. 70). Within this undifferentiated state, the infant develops an illusion of omnipotent control that results from "the good-enough mother" who adapts to the ongoing needs of the baby (Abram, 2018, p. 221). Winnicott (1988) describes how the good-enough mother meets her child's needs

"by her extremely delicate adaptation to the (emotional) needs of the infant" in order to "allow the baby this illusion" (p. 101). The mother continues to provide what the infant needs, and the infant feels omnipotent. Abram (2018) underscores how important it is for the infant to feel omnipotent, because it builds a nascent sense of trust that the infant can find what she needs in the world (p. 232).

According to Winnicott (1988), the baby must have this sense of this illusory omnipotence to have the fortitude to then experience disillusion, another crucial stage of childhood development (p. 101). Disillusionment results from a phase of object relating and object use, during which the infant differentiates between herself and her mother. During this phase of differentiation, the infant metaphorically destroys the mother, who is the object; the mother must survive this destruction, or the infant will be "consigned to always protect the object" (Abram, 2018, p. 214). The infant's attempt at destruction places the object, in this case the mother, outside of the infant's control, thereby differentiating mother from child. When the mother survives the infant's destruction, the infant's illusion of omnipotence is broken, allowing for the "necessary disillusionment" to occur (Abram, 2018, p. 215). Winnicott (1965/2018) explains that if the good-enough mother successfully adapts to the infant's needs so that the infant can develop an illusion of omnipotence, and then allows herself to be destroyed and survives this destruction, the infant can "gradually abrogate omnipotence" (p. 146). Moreover, the infant is able to engage creatively with the world, through an understanding of "playing and imagining" (Winnicott, 1965/2018, p. 146). Through these stages of omnipotence, disillusionment, and differentiation, the infant develops the "capacity for trust" in an external reality that will provide her with what she needs (Abram, 2018, p. 232).

This process of developing trust is contingent upon the good-enough mother who adapts to her infant's needs; otherwise, the infant never feels omnipotence, is not able to experience disillusionment, and consequently develop trust that someone outside of her sphere of control, who is a differentiated being that exists apart from her, will provide her with what she needs. In this instance, the infant "lives falsely" (Winnicott, 1965/2018, p. 146). Winnicott (1969) discusses the child who has successfully differentiated herself from the mother versus the child who has not: "two babies are feeding at the breast; one is feeding on the self in the form of projections, and the other is feeding on (using) milk from a woman's breast" (p. 711). In this analogy, the baby can only use the breast for required nourishment once she realizes the breast is outside of her control and not "a projective entity" (Winnicott, 1969, p. 712). Furthermore, it is critical for the object to survive the infant's destruction; survival is indicated through non-retaliation (Winnicott, 1969, p. 713). If the object, the mother, retaliates, the infant "can only feed on the self and cannot use the breast for getting fat" (Winnicott, 1969, p. 713).

I contend that Tara is analogous to the infant who can only "feed on the self" (Winnicott, 1969, p. 713). In terms of her schooling, Tara is educated through an overly rigid form of relationality by her parents. As such, her parents may be interpreted as, to use Winnicott's (1988) idea, non-adaptive. The rigidity of her environment places Tara in a psychic position similar to Winnicott's infant who has experienced a "not good-enough" and non-adaptive situation (Abram, 2018, pp. 220-222), and who is unable to differentiate, develop trust, and use outside objects, initially the parents, to get what she needs. Tara becomes the student with a not good-enough teacher: one who does not adapt to her intellectual and academic needs. Tara is unable to develop trust and use the teacher to get what she needs and, thus, can only rely on herself to fulfill those needs.

Tara's Parents: The Non-(adaptive) Teacher

Tara's parents educate through a violent form of relationality. Instead of being respectful of Tara's becoming (Todd, 2014), meeting Tara's intellectual needs by enabling her to engage with the world (Biesta, 2012), and opening themselves up to be transformed by Tara's radical alterity (Levinas, 1982/1985, 1974/1998), her parents educate Tara through imposing their narratives and worldviews on her. Tara's mother attempts some form of school at home for all of her children; however, her version of school does not provide much in terms of teaching and learning: she announces on haphazard days that they are "doing school," and then has Tara and her siblings read books in separate rooms (Westover, 2018, p. 46). Clearly, her mother's method of 'doing school' does little to provide intrusion or opportunities to experience knowledge that is "other and strange" (Biesta, 2012, p. 42). Consequently, Tara is educated to a larger extent by the narrative of her father which becomes foundational to her sense of self and worldview.

Tara feels that her life has been narrated by others (Westover, 2018, p. 197) with the most prominent narrator her father. His narrative is comprised of his ideas of a woman's place in society and his paranoia of the government. He believes that public schools are a "ploy" by the government to turn children against God (Westover, 2018, p. 5) and that the "Days of Abomination" are coming so the family must prepare by stockpiling food (Westover, 2018, p. 8). Accusing his daughter of "whoring after man's knowledge" when she decides to attend university (Westover, 2018, p. 125) and insisting that women belong "in the home" (Westover, 2018, p. 125), Tara's father leads her to believe, at an early age, that her life path is that of motherhood. She remembers as a young child longing after her brother's destiny instead of hers: "My future was motherhood; his fatherhood. They sounded similar but they were not. To be one was to be a decider. To preside. To call the family to order. To be the other was to be among

those called" (Westover, 2018, p. 259). In a Levinasian sense, Tara's existence is shrouded by the ideology of her father's beliefs.

Tara grows up in a household where her mother is "among those called" (Westover, 2018, p. 259). Self-identifying as a "pleaser," Tara's mother feels she is always "contorting herself, compulsively, unwillingly" for others (Westover, 2018, p. 27). Her mother consistently adheres to this paternalistic narrative of being a woman; Tara therefore believes that the desire to be the one who decides as opposed to the one who answers is perverse (Westover, 2018, p. 259). Nonetheless, Tara appropriates her father's notions of womanhood when she wonders what to study in university. She 'decides' that studying music is consistent with his "idea of what a woman is" whereas her "love of history and politics and world affairs" is not (Westover, 2018, p. 228).

Throughout the book, Tara's father consistently tries to dissuade Tara from her dreams of becoming educated. He imposes his religious views on her, telling her that she will be punished by God for going to university because "His wrath is stirred against [her]" (Westover, 2018, p. 133). When Tara tries to save money for tuition, he starts to charge her for things such as car insurance and rent, and then wants her to move out (Westover, 2018, p. 137). After starting university, Tara is reluctant to go back to working in her father's metal scrapping yard as this feels like she is regressing; he responds by telling her she will have to leave (Westover, 2018, pp. 168-169). As she attempts to redefine herself and to escape his narrative, her father actively stands in her way. For Tara's father, there are two mutually exclusive options: either Tara remains loyal to his narrative or she betrays both him and herself. As Tara explains, "my father had taught me that there are not two reasonable opinions to be had on any subject: there is Truth

and there are Lies" (Westover, 2018, p. 132). Tara's identity is shaped around her father's truth, a truth that Tara perceives as unquestionable, but also unbearable.

Her mother's narrative incorporates contradictory messages of encouragement and discouragement. There are moments when she supports Tara; however, she is also complicit with Tara's father in discouraging her to pursue an education. One example of her mother's support is when Tara starts to doubt her decision to go to school, her mother encourages her to "burst out" of her home "in a blaze" (Westover, 2018, p. 133). Another example occurs when Tara is struggling to learn trigonometry, a subject area on the college entrance exam; her mother spends hours trying to help her (Westover, 2018, p. 125). Her mother even defies her husband, albeit secretly, to help Tara: when Tara needs her parent's tax returns to apply for a government loan that she knows her father will oppose, her mother secretly helps her find and make copies of these documents (Westover, 2018, p. 205). Yet, these demonstrations of support are negated by instances when her mother echoes the words and thoughts of Tara's father. Echoing her husband, Tara's mother tells her that when Tara returns home, at the end of the semester, if she doesn't work for her father she will not be allowed to live in the house (Westover, 2018, p. 168) despite Tara's protests that going back to work for her father is regressive. A second example of her mother's lack of support occurs when Tara refuses a blessing from her father to absolve her of the 'sins' she has committed; he leaves in anger and her mother follows (Westover, 2018, pp. 304-305). After an argument, Tara's father refuses to attend her graduation ceremony and her mother also refuses (Westover, 2018, p. 250). Thus, while there are some examples of her mother's support and encouragement, there are examples that point to the opposite.

In Winnicottian terms, Tara's parents may be read as non-adaptive caregivers who educate via an intrusive, even violent form of relationality. Tara's identity is reduced to her

father's perception of what he wants her to be, and she is enveloped by his ego, his fear of the government, and his fundamentalist beliefs. To reiterate Todd's (2003) thoughts, she is objectified through his narrative and understanding (p. 15). When Tara resists, and tries to exert her alterity and find her own voice, her father responds with anger and control. He tries to thwart her attempts to become educated through financial control by charging her rent so that she will not be able to afford her tuition; by telling her she must move out if she will not go back to working for him in his scrapyard; by frightening her with threats of God's wrath. The only way he can protect his own sense of self is to engulf her new-found selfhood. In Biesta's (2012) words, he responds to her resistance by trying to overcome her: "Here we try to impose our will upon the world, upon that which we encounter as other. This ultimately leads to a destruction of the very 'thing' that resists" (p. 43). Tara realizes that if she is not willing to be used "to sustain" the "boundaries" of his ego (Todd, 2003, p. 85), she and her father cannot co-exist. Reflecting on her father's unwillingness to accept her singularity, Tara tries to imagine "scenes in which she and her father were of two minds" but recognizes that "no future could hold them; no destiny could tolerate him *and* her" (Westover, 2018, pp. 132-133). Even though there are times when her mother encourages Tara and supports her decision to attend school, in the end she is, likewise, unable to embrace Tara's alterity.

Tara's education through her parents is not one of "mediation and exchange" (Todd, 2014, p. 241) in which her becoming is respected and nurtured. It is only Tara's own strength and determination that allow her to move forward. With tremendous difficulty and despite severe, almost debilitating self-doubt, she is resistant to and undeterred by her parents, and they counteract this resistance through attempts at destruction. Biesta (2012) explains that when the response to resistance is destruction, students "only appear as objects, but not as subjects in their

right" (p. 43). Tara's childhood schooling is one of transmission: her father transmits his knowledge, viewing her as a voiceless object without a subjectivity of her own.

Tara: The Non-(reliant) and Self-reliant Teacher

Returning to Winnicott (1965/2018), Tara responds to the not good-enough education she receives by taking on the responsibility of her own education. She becomes her own teacher, a self-reliant teacher. Despite being caught in Tara's father's narrative, her mother serves as a role model in this regard. The reader is left to wonder how much of this idealization is Tara's defense against the many failings of her parental environment. Tara proudly describes her mother's numerous achievements beyond the role of wife and mother. Her mother is a woman of many trades: a midwife, a businesswoman, the family's teacher, and the family's doctor. When her mother becomes a midwife, Tara sees a confident and knowledgeable woman, who is "the one in charge" and making money for the first time in her life (Westover, 2018, p. 17), and comments on her "secret strength" (Westover, 2018, p. 22). Tara also describes her as an "expert, an uncontested power" (Westover, 2018, p. 58) and a "wise woman with an answer to every question" (Westover, 2018, p. 60). Her mother is the one her family turns to, time and again, with all their medical needs (Westover, 2018, p. 72, p. 92, p. 145, p. 185, p. 219). What is more, Tara's mother eventually becomes a highly successful entrepreneur, who manufactures healing oils (Westover, 2018, p. 260) and runs a business that "dwarfed" her father's metal scrapping business as well as all the other businesses in town (Westover, 2018, p. 272).

It is evident that Tara respects and admires her mother and is in awe of her accomplishments and her ability to teach herself a variety of skills in many different enterprises. By way of example, her mother learns how to stitch the women who tear during birth to avoid sending them to the hospital. In this instance, Tara reflects on her mother's "self-reliance"

(Westover, 2018, p. 18). In a second example, Tara's mother creates natural remedies to heal headaches and menstrual cramps; Tara observes her spending days "blending oils" and working "with a pad and pen so she could record every step" (Westover, 2018, p. 58). Because Tara views her mother as self-made and self-reliant and learns from and admires these qualities, it might be suggested that Tara adopts this self-reliant attitude herself. At the same time, however, this narrative of self-reliance belongs to her father: his goal is to be self-reliant and "completely off the grid" (Westover, 2018, p. 15). He repeatedly conveys this 'off the grid' narrative throughout the text. For instance, he pressures his wife to become a midwife as part of "one of his schemes for self-reliance" (Westover, 2018, p. 15). There are numerous incidents when family members are harmed, and Tara's father will not allow them to seek medical treatment from a doctor. For example, one of Tara's brothers is seriously burned in Tara's father's scrapyard and Tara's father gets her mother to treat the burn instead of going to the hospital (Westover, 2018, p. 72). Another incident occurs when another one of Tara's brothers gets into a life-threatening motorcycle accident. Tara's father insists that her brother be brought home to Tara's mother (Westover, 2018, p. 145). When Tara's father himself gets into an almost fatal accident, again he insists that he not be taken to a hospital, telling his family that "he'd rather die than see a doctor" (Westover, 2018, p. 219). In addition to becoming her own teacher, Tara also learns from these non-adaptive parents not to trust social systems of support, even when they are direly needed.

As her own teacher, Tara explains that "learning in [her] family was entirely self-directed: you could learn anything you could teach yourself" (Westover, 2018, p. 46). Tara recounts several moments of teaching and learning during her journey of self-education. When she starts to develop an interest in attending public school, for example, she reads on her own

various science, math, and history books she is able to find (Westover, 2018, p. 61). In another memory, Tara delineates her study of religion, and how she began to "write short essays on doctrines like faith and sacrifice" even though there was no one to read these (Westover, 2018, p. 62). She defines this as her education: the hours she spent "sitting at a borrowed desk, struggling to parse narrow strands of Mormon doctrine" (Westover, 2018, p. 62). She also describes hours spent teaching herself basic mathematical skills such as addition, multiplication, division, decimals, and fractions, and the more complex concepts of trigonometry (Westover, 2018, p. 125).

From Self-Educated to Educated: Tara's Educational Journey in Reverse

Although it is admirable that Tara takes on the task of educating herself, she learns the true value of an actual *other* teacher, and instruction that pushes her thinking and extends her ego, when she finally attends university, her first formal educational experience. Of note is how Tara's educational trajectory occurs in reverse: in childhood she is her own teacher in response to parents who are not able to fill this role; she then moves on to become a student. Thus, instead of moving from student to teacher, she moves from teacher to student. As a student, more so than as a premature teacher, she is pushed to exceed her limits and broaden her subjectivity through her university education, and details her transformation when confronted with a world, and knowledge, that is radically new and Other to her. Her university education, the only formal education she receives, entails intrusion and resistance as Tara encounters traumatic knowledge that interrupts the worldview she has inherited from her parents. There are numerous descriptions of this trauma, as well as Tara's resistance. Tara writes about her first few months at university during which she "clung to every truth, every doctrine" of her father (Westover, 2018, p. 156). She describes the trauma of learning for the first time about the Holocaust, and wonders if it

“was the shock of learning about something horrific, or the shock of learning about my own ignorance” (Westover, 2018, p. 157). Learning about slavery and the civil rights movement, she recounts how the “world had turned upside down” (Westover, 2018, p. 177). She is unsettled to discover what really happened at Ruby Ridge with Randy Weaver and his family. Whereas she has grown up believing that the Weavers were targeted by the government because they wouldn’t put their children in school, she comes to understand that “white supremacy was at the heart of this story, not homeschool” (Westover, 2018, pp. 209-210). It is this form of education that finally allows Tara to extend herself and to experience the world.

Tara: The Dialogic and Liminal Teacher

Having considered Tara as a premature teacher, I now explore the ethical qualities that Tara demonstrates in her authorship of *Educated*. Even though Tara doesn’t become an actual and traditional teacher, in her relationality *vis-à-vis* the reader of her book she exhibits many qualities of the teacher that Biesta (2012) and Todd (2014) describe through their theories of dialogue (Biesta, 2012) and liminality (Todd, 2014). In the section that follows, I use these to speculate how Tara might interact pedagogically and ethically with others. She embodies Levinasian qualities of nonviolent relationality through her radical openness to alterity, her embracing of ambiguity and risk, her movement toward exteriority, and her willingness to allow her ego to be disrupted and extended.

As noted above, Tara is open to extending her ego by allowing her selfhood and worldview to be interrupted and disrupted. Leaving the insular world in which she has grown up, she risks her ego by opening herself up to new and traumatic knowledge that is far beyond the narrow worldview of her upbringing. As a risky movement toward exteriority, in the form of new and traumatic learning, all of the truths she has known and that have shaped her identity are

called into question. The way Tara embraces this risk suggests an individual who recognizes the importance of being confronted with what is unsettling.

Tara also opposes the notion of imposing her understanding and narrative on an Other. She rejects fixed and absolute knowledge that is beyond questioning and that fails to account for possible alternatives. The following examples about small incidents from her daily life illustrate an openness to other views. When she recounts the events of her life story, she doesn't impose absolute truths on the reader. Instead, footnotes are scattered throughout the text to suggest to the reader that there are alternative interpretations and memories of the various events she recounts. For example, when writing about when her family acquired a phone in their home, she admits that "there is considerable disagreement" as to when this occurred (Westover, 2018, p. 18). These types of questioning of memory and openness to other perspectives recur throughout the text. As another example, in recounting the story of a brother's injury, in a footnote she explains that her brother's memory of the event is different from hers and admits that perhaps her memories "are in error" (Westover, 2018, 75). In yet one more illustration of how Tara rejects the idea of fixed and absolute knowledge, Tara relays the story of another brother who is injured by adding a footnote to indicate that "others remember it differently," and then details those differences (Westover, 2018, p. 128). Similarly, for her description of her father's near-fatal accident, Tara includes a footnote to let the reader know that it is possible her "timeline is off here by one or two days" (Westover, 2018, p. 219). By rejecting the idea of fixed and absolute knowledge, she embraces ambiguity as opposed to certainty; this is evident in her numerous admissions to the reader that her recollection of events should not be taken as the unquestionable truth. In these moments, she is a liminal teacher who invites interpretation to allow the Other to engage with knowledge instead of simply absorbing 'facts.'

Tara's interest in history also demonstrates her recognition and acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity. Specifically, Tara decides to study the partial and biased interpretations of historians:

> I supposed my interest came from the sense of groundlessness I'd felt since learning about the Holocaust and the civil rights movement—since realizing that what a person knows about the past is limited, and will always be limited, to what they are told by others … Now I needed to understand how the great gatekeepers of history had come to terms with their own ignorance and partiality. I thought if I could accept that what they had written was not absolute but was the result of a biased process of conversation and revision, maybe I could reconcile myself with the fact that the history most people agreed upon was not the history I had been taught. (Westover, 2018, p. 238)

Tara's desire to study historians demonstrates her awareness of the damaging impact of imposing a worldview on an Other, thereby preventing that Other from engaging with the world. Rather, Tara seems to possess the qualities of a subject who refuses to position her knowledge as absolute or ideal and instead extends her ego by allowing herself to be transformed. Ironically, even though Tara's own sense of groundlessness is the result of the violent relationality she has experienced as a student, it is precisely this groundlessness that allows Tara to exhibit nonviolent relationality as a teacher to the reader of her narrative. Tara's groundlessness leads to her awareness of ambiguity, uncertainty, and unpredictability; this awareness is consistent with a teacher who can build relationships that are based on a mutual respect for the becoming of the Other and who will be open to her own continued becoming through those relationships. Arguably, she recognizes her own "ignorance and partiality" and views education as a dialogic "process of conversation and revision" (Westover, 2018, p. 238). At the end of the novel, Tara

provides her definition of self-creation: “the ability to evaluate many ideas, many histories, many points of view” (Westover, 2018, p. 304). Through her journey of being educated, she has discovered what it means to be empowered, to come into the world, and to form nonviolent and ethical relationships.

Final Thoughts: Education as Exchange and Mediation

As a self-taught teacher, Tara is denied the opportunity to interact and form a relationship with a teacher figure who can create the conditions for her engagement with the world. This is not to suggest that parents cannot be teachers to their own children or to criticize homeschooling; many parents choose to homeschool their children and do so successfully. In Tara’s case, however, the education her parents provide is lacking, consisting as it does of her father’s narrow worldview and her mother’s inadequate attempts at “doing school” (Westover, 2018, p. 46). *Educated* underscores that teaching and learning is about interaction, about a back-and-forth exchange and mediation of ideas between people who push one another, intrude upon one another, and bring the world into one another. This can only happen when meaningful and respectful relationships are formed between students and teachers, during which in-the-moment and spontaneous decisions are made and acted upon. Otherwise, education turns into a monologue like that of Tara’s father, students become objects instead of subjective beings, and the teacher is reduced to nothing more than a transmitter of information akin to a textbook or online Google search (Biesta, 2012).

Summary of Ideas

This chapter’s focus on the non-teacher brings to light the ethical responsibility of teachers to give to students more than they contain (Biesta, 2012, p. 41). An engagement with otherness, be it in the form of an Other’s ego or knowledge, and a vulnerability to allow that

otherness to be transformative, is critical to teaching. In *Klara and the Sun*, Klara does not encourage Josie to engage with otherness. As a non-teacher/robot whose identity is structured around serving Josie, keeping her safe and comfortable, and not intruding upon her understanding of situations and her worldview, Klara does little to instigate Josie's engagement with the world. Similarly, her oblong non-teachers fail to teach in ways that will push Josie to extend her thinking. Interaction meetings have the potential to provide children with opportunities to engage with otherness; however, the lack of a teacher, the non-present teacher in this case, signifies another failure. As a result, Josie and Rick, the two children in the novel, come into their world as unquestioning and unchallenging adults who will, conceivably, further unethical and irresponsible practices. In *Educated,* Tara's parents are non-adaptive teachers who do not meet her academic and intellectual needs, and impose their views and beliefs on Tara. Tara, as the non-reliant teacher, teaches herself, and comes to realize the value of exposure to new and intrusive ideas. Both novels underscore the collective responsibility of education as that of relationality between students and teachers, a confrontation of egos, and a process of engaging with unsettling otherness.

In conclusion, my exploration of the non-teacher is of particular relevance given today's educational climate. I believe we are in the midst of witnessing the arrival of the non-teacher. Prior to the pandemic, the Ontario Ministry of Education was in the process of looking into online e-learning courses in secondary school. COVID-19 then arrived and, to adhere to province-wide lockdowns, a significant portion of schooling during the pandemic occurred without flesh-and-blood, in-person teachers, or students, in online forums such as Google Meet and Zoom. Virtual/remote learning has become a reality that doesn't seem to be going away. Virtual/remote learning will continue to be offered, for now, for all students from Kindergarten

to Grade 12; furthermore, there is a new requirement that secondary students complete two online e-learning credits in order to graduate. This shifting educational landscape gives rise to fears that virtual pandemic classrooms might replace bricks and mortar ones, leaving one to wonder if Ishiguro's (2021) futuristic world of artificial friends, oblong schooling, and interaction meetings might, indeed, be our not-so-far-off reality. If so, we are left with a question of what the future of learning can mean in the absence of flesh-and-blood teachers. This chapter has demonstrated why this shift carries great ethical risks for both students and teachers, and makes a strong case, with Biesta (2012), for the need of teachers and state supports to usher children and young people into the world with intention, care, and social responsibility in these efforts.

Endnote:

1. However, altruism carries the possibility of unethical response and egoism that is based on satisfaction and pleasure rather than an openness to risk and ambiguity. In such an instance, altruism devolves into self-interest whereby the subject "uses the Other to sustain its own boundaries, its own repetitious self-same" (Todd, 2003, p. 85).

CONCLUSION
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation has framed teacher identity from the philosophical standpoint of the teacher's response-ability. As I have examined through Arendt's (1977) natality, Derrida's (1997/2000) hospitality, and Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) nonviolent relationality, the teacher's ethical responsibility resides in her ability to respond with a radical openness that seeks to preserve the alterity of her students. At the same time, my dissertation speculates about what responsibility can mean in acknowledging that teachers, too, embody their own alterity and carry emotional histories that complicate such openness. Moreover, I have zeroed in on the identities of women teacher figures to interrogate invisible standards of whiteness and gender in the profession. In sum, my exploration has examined the tensions that arise between the woman teacher's ability to respond and gendered notions of care, transference, guilt, and ego defense. The use of novels as sites for theorizing interactions between students and teachers has brought into focus the emotional terrain of education and the uncertainty and anxiety of being a teacher.

To think through the stakes of these tensions, my work delves into concepts proposed by continental philosophers who sought to re-orient the meaning of ethics in the aftermath of its historical rupture, marked by the Holocaust. Where knowledge had previously been regarded as 'first philosophy,' for these thinkers, ethics became a primary foundation for thinking through meaning. Through a study of natality, hospitality, and nonviolence, my dissertation reframes

education with regard to the ethical qualities of the pedagogical relationship, while also holding in tension the affective dynamics of psychical life.

In thinking with Arendt (1977), Derrida (1997/2000), and Levinas (1982/1985, 1974/1998), a central conflict of responsibility emerges that implicates education in discourses of aggression, love and hatred, desire, control, and failure. Specifically, through Arendt (1977) I have considered the notion of natality as a particular quality of education that signifies the vitality of the newness born into the world. Following Arendt (1958/1998), I have suggested that the uniqueness of each newcomer, broadly defined as an "unexchangeable" and "unrepeatable" individual (Labor and Life, para. 2), allows for the continuation of the world through transformation and renewal. The teacher's dual responsibility is to welcome newcomers into the world, while also ensuring the world is not overrun by this onslaught of newness. Derrida's (1997/2000) notion of hospitality has allowed me to contemplate responsibility from a framework of teachers/adults as hosts and students/children as guests. From the vantage of hospitality, the teacher's role is to provide a space to the guest in which she can thrive in her singularity and uniqueness. The host assumes a vulnerable position of being exposed to the radical alterity of the unexpected Other, a guest who must remain "fundamentally ungraspable" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 29) and "fundamentally unknowable" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 33). Levinas' (1982/1985, 1974/1998) nonviolent relationality has helped me to foreground the face-to-face encounter between the self and Other that sets into motion an ethical responsibility that is beyond refusal, and that requires a passivity on the part of the subject. For teachers, nonviolent relationality reformulates teaching less as a question of mastery or control and more as a deep dive into passivity that exposes her own vulnerability in trying to help others learn.

Indeed, all three concepts—natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality—decentre the teacher, pointing to the ways that teachers put aside their own egos in order to focus on those of their students, through nurturing student natality, creating hospitable spaces of welcome, and responding without the violence of ego imposition. The quality of ethics that concerns my dissertation, and the philosophers who inform it, is not a discourse of intention. Instead, it signals the non-intentional implication of teachers in ethical relations with students, with knowledge, and with the communities in which they work. The question is not whether teachers are ethical subjects, or even whether they make the right choices, but rather how and to what extent they engage the ethical qualities of pedagogy, including times when they refuse it. As Todd (2003) remarks, Levinasian ethics is not a destination but a movement toward egolessness (p. 112), even while such egolessness is an unachievable ideal. For this reason, I turn to Todd (2003) to articulate a "doubled view" of Levinas that draws on psychoanalysis and examines "the ways in which people come together, both with definite histories that shape the reception of and response to the Other, and with the kind of surprising openness that exceeds these histories" (p. 13). Through explorations of the *gendered* teacher, the *guilt-ridden* teacher, and the *non*-teacher, I have sought to illuminate tensions that surface from this 'doubled view' and, specifically, how these tensions inform teacher identity. When the teacher's ethical responsibility comes into contact with psychoanalytic conceptions of subjectivity, student natality gives rise to that of the teacher's, hospitality engenders hostility, and nonviolent relationality may trigger self-preservation. These 'flipsides' encapsulate complex dynamics of uncertainty, vulnerability, and imperfection that fundamentally shape how the teacher enacts her role and can affect the ethical foundation of her identity.

Implications of Literary Representations of Teachers

Through these flipsides I have critiqued the idealized white female teacher who selflessly nurtures, loves, and rescues her students, and who occupies a position of certainty, expertise, and knowledge. Through my analysis of various novels, I have shone light on teacher figures who are insecure, at times aggressive, conflicted, and struggling to find their own place in the world. In the upcoming subsections, I consider the implications of these not-so-ideal teachers by highlighting connections between the representations of teaching in the novels I have described in this dissertation and the literal contexts of teaching and learning.

Natality: The Teacher's Renewal, Reproductive Aims, and Finding Purpose

Teaching incorporates a myriad of aspects that animate personal dreams and interests, failures and triumphs, and histories and life experiences, as teachers seek to bring forth student natality and navigate their own. My consideration of the gendered teacher exposes how these aspects shape teacher identity, as she grapples with her own renewal while also tasked with the renewal of the common world, and as her life experiences become entangled in those of her students. As a gendered surrogate without children of her own, Jean from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Spark, 1961/2000) becomes a substitute mother to her students. Characterized as a liberated woman in her prime who chooses not to marry or bear children, she is, conversely, a disempowered figure whose reproductive goals result in attempts to fulfill her own natality through her students. Lonely and isolated, Barbara, from *What Was She Thinking?: Notes on a Scandal* (Heller, 2003), views procreation as that which gives life meaning, and feels inconsequential because she does not have children of her own. On the other hand, Sheba, from the same novel, feels inconsequential because she *does have* children and her role as mother has not provided fulfillment. When Sheba's sense of purpose fails to materialize from taking on the

teacher role, her frustration and sense of failure spill over into a sexual relationship with an underage student. As Jean, Barbara, and Sheba attempt to leave their own impressions on the world, they impede the natality of their students. Forming charged and unthought attachments to their charges, and in Barbara's case to Sheba, they all fail to recognize, protect, and nurture the newness and singularity of the Other.

Teacher natality, both nurtured and un-nurtured, abounds in school settings. Many of my colleagues pursue hobbies outside of school; some go into teaching with dreams of finding a sense of purpose and meaning and are then frustrated when these dreams are not realized; and all have reproductive aims and personal histories that influence, to varying degrees, their teacher identities. The birth of my son influenced my teaching, as I juggled teaching the children of other mothers, being the mother of a son taught by other teachers, and going "back and forth between the experience of domesticity and the experience of teaching, between being with one's own children and being with the children of others" (Grumet, 1988, p. xv). My look at teacher identity through the theoretical lens of natality reveals the importance of recognizing that teachers, like students, are invested in their own natality, and this sense of natality impacts how they perceive their roles and enact their ethical responsibility *vis-à-vis* Others. It is my contention that, ironically, teachers may be poised to support the natality of their students when they can honour their own.

Hospitality: Guilt, Heroism, and Rescue Fantasies

Also shaping teacher identity is the prevalence of inspirational narratives that circulate in education. These success stories centre on how teachers close achievement gaps, improve test scores, and single-handedly make a difference in the lives of students. It is not surprising that teachers develop "heroic identifications" (Robertson, 1997, p. 124) and enter the profession with

an expectation of "student-teacher devotion" (Robertson, 1997, p. 126). My examination of Fiona in *The Children Act* (McEwan, 2015) illustrates how this self-perceived heroism can result in a form of guilt that forecloses ethical relationality between teacher and Other. Fiona forms the identity of an omnipotent and "rugged individual" (Britzman, 2003, p. 235) who believes she can save the Other, Adam. This materializes as an unethical bid to rescue herself from a failing marriage, her childlessness, and her impending old age. At the same time, however, Fiona exhibits a radical susceptibility (Todd, 2003) to Adam. Her characterization illustrates how guilt can emerge simultaneously as a projection of the self and an ethical derivation of the Other.

Self-perceptions among educators as saviour-like figures emanate, in part, from the language of our educational system, as well as narratives around teaching and learning. Adjectives used to describe students as 'underserved,' 'at risk,' and 'underachieving' identify children as 'less than,' as being 'under' and in need of elevation. Related to developmental positioning, this thinking is rooted in the modern era, a time when children became objects to track and measure on their way to westernized views of rationality (Walkerdine, 1993). This objectification of students, Robertson (1997) points out, can lead teachers to indulge in rescue fantasies that "ignore or distort the latent relations of White, heterosexualized power and privilege inscribed in student-teacher and teacher-community relations" (p. 135). These fantasies foreclose ethical relationality between teacher and student, because the teacher views the student as an object instead of a subjective Other who is singular and unique. Admittedly, my own teacher identity has been affected by fantasies of rescue. Throughout my many years of being a teacher and an administrator in various school communities, I have been enticed by false perceptions of my own omnipotence, as well as personal feelings of elevation from trying to 'save' students and make a difference in their lives.

While teachers may need rescue fantasies to bolster themselves and find meaning in their work, these fantasies, albeit inspirational, do not square with the idea that students have their own minds and aspirations. What is more, Robertson (1997) reminds us that students, in practice, may not always love the teacher but may display hatred, "rejection, boredom, refusal, or ignorance" (p. 135). Derrida (1997/2000) submits that hospitality also implies antithetical notions of inhospitality and hostility (pp. 53-55). The student who doesn't display love or devotion, who resists being saved, who is oppositional or defiant can engender feelings of hatred and aggression. Taubman (2006) further describes the ambiguous connection "between the desire to control and the desire to love" (p. 20), and how the "desire to save the less fortunate" can lead to aggression, control, and violence (p. 23). To cite Grumet (1988), this "truer image of teaching" (p. 50) is kept hidden from those entering the teaching profession and quiet by those already in the field.

Nonviolent Relationality: Intrusiveness, Online Schooling, and Thematization

There are further connections to be considered, between novel portrayals of teachers and the present-day context of education. Teaching is an act of bringing to students more than they contain, and, in Biesta's words (2012) giving the student a gift of otherness. In this conception, the teacher comes to represent embodied otherness, as well as otherness in the form of the new and intrusive knowledge, information, and perspectives she brings to her students. Through my investigation of nonviolent relationality, I have introduced the ironic figure of the non-teacher whose authority fails to provide this gift of otherness to the student and to adapt to the student's academic and intellectual needs. This failure is illustrated in *Klara and the Sun* (Ishiguro, 2021), in which the educational system is composed of teachers and teacher-like figures, such as artificial friends like Klara and oblong professors, who repeat old tropes of rote information that

do not extend the egos of the children of this futuristic society. Similarly, in *Educated* (Westover, 2018), Tara's parents fail to provide an education that enables her to engage with the world by exposing her to different worldviews and perspectives. Both novels underscore the implications of the teacher who does not provide a form of schooling that will allow the student to exceed her limits and experience what is beyond her orbit of experience.

This description of the non-teacher raises contemporary concerns about online schooling and the ethical potential of nonviolent relationality when teachers try to re-create teaching and learning virtually, a challenging task that educators faced when schools were mandated to close during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sarah Barrett (2021) considers the possibility of a "quality education" (p. 102) online, in which students are able "to interact with other students and engage with ideas in a way that promotes their ability to be part of a community while still feeling free to disagree with, critique, and take care of each other" (p. 103). She identifies several difficulties that surfaced during COVID-precipitated online schooling, including students who did not turn on their cameras or were not able to participate because they did not have devices or internet access (Barrett, 2021, p. 108), the lack of "face-to-face" interactions (Barrett, 2021, p. 109), a decrease in the "quality of interactions" (Barrett, 2021, p. 112), as well as a "lack of in-the-moment spontaneous interaction" (Barrett, 2021, p. 113) among students and between teachers and students.

Barrett (2021) also discusses the prospect of students who disappeared when bricks and mortar schools were closed during the pandemic. One teacher noted how online learning took away "incidental communications" (Barrett, 2021, p. 112) through which teachers engage with students and students engage with each other. From my own experiences with students, these incidental communications—often occurring outside of the classroom, such as during recess

times, in the hallway, or in the school cafeteria at lunch—are crucial in establishing relationality with students. It is during these informal and non-academic interactions that teachers connect with and learn from students, build trust, and engage with students, often in more meaningful ways than during formal lessons that take place in the classroom. These incidental interactions are also based on sensory experiences of sight, sound, and gestures that do not necessarily happen in online spaces when cameras and microphones are on and then muted, in encountering a student's face, seeing a student's smile or tears, and hearing a student's frustration or laughter. I believe these incidental and sensory experiences with students are foundational aspects of the pedagogical relation, and that open ethical possibilities between the self and the Other. One wonders, then, what happens to the teacher's role when these sensory experiences and moments outside of the classroom disappear, and the face-to-face encounter with and physical proximity to the Other does not exist. Furthermore, is ethical engagement even possible between teacher and student, self and Other, in virtual environments of teaching and learning and, if so, how does this different form of ethical engagement shape the teacher's identity?

My look at the non-teacher also engenders concerns about a long-held belief in education that we need to grasp, learn about, and thematize students to be effective teachers. Contrary to this, Todd (2003) proposes an "ethical attentiveness to strangeness" (p. 9) in which the subject resists her own need to 'grasp' or settle otherness and, rather, respect the Other's radical alterity (pp. 8-9). I think back now to how I used to usher in each new school year with an annual September practice of getting to know my students by reading through the various documents in their Ontario Student Records and speaking with their previous teachers. Beginning-of-the-year activities in my classroom, and in many classrooms, always focused on learning *about* students. Systemically, we try to understand and know students through pathologizing and categorizing.

Stearns (2015) comments on our propensity to diagnose children who demonstrate "non-normative behaviors" (p. 410). Consequently, student/teacher interactions become less about the Levinasian face-to-face encounter and more about getting to know students through documents such as previous years' report cards, standardized test scores, psychology reports, and learning diagnoses. Indeed, this has been intensified by online/virtual schooling. Some parents continue to opt for online schooling, even though bricks and mortar schools are now open, and teachers are teaching students without ever meeting them in person, and, in some cases, never even seeing them on camera.

Recommendations: From Theory to Practice

Several questions surface in considering how we might apply the theoretical understandings of this dissertation to practice. Is there a place for teacher natality to be nurtured alongside student natality? How do we work through and find meaning in the complexities of the transference and rescue fantasies? What does hospitable education look like, if we take the teacher's emotional world seriously? How do we educate nonviolently within the present-day diagnostic culture? Or, how much interference is 'enough' to invite students and teachers to stretch into new and unthought places of learning? Next, I begin with practical suggestions at the school level, and then move onto thoughts pertaining to broader systemic change. The first set of suggestions addresses ways we might recognize and nurture the natality of teachers alongside the natality of students; the need to rethink our daily practices and interactions in order to create more open and hospitable school environments; and the necessity to reframe teaching and learning as a process of intrusion and disruption.

Nurturing Teacher Natality

My study suggests that professional development for teachers should incorporate explorations of lived experiences and teacher natality. An understanding of their own natality and life stories will better enable teachers to nurture the natality of their students. We also need to support the natality of teachers, which may consist of encouraging teachers to pursue their personal interests outside of school, as well as bringing those interests into their teaching practices. As a vice-principal in elementary schools, I have worked with principals who have encouraged teachers to bring their personal interests into the school by having them teach these subject areas. This is important because elementary teachers are not typically considered specialty teachers and are expected to have general knowledge of how to teach all subject areas. In some instances, this has meant that a teacher might teach a homeroom class core subject areas like literacy and mathematics for some of the day, and then teach a subject area of interest, such as music or visual arts, to various other classes for the remainder of the day. This might be viewed as a means through which to nurture the natality of the staff, and I believe the instruction is sometimes better because teachers are teaching subject areas in which they have specialized content knowledge and, also, for which they are passionate. It is not my intention here to minimize ideas of natality and world renewal by reducing these to a matter of teacher interests or to imply that Arendt had hobbies in mind in her theorizing of natality. However, providing teachers with opportunities in school to develop their personal interests and showcase talents might, arguably, be viewed as a way for teachers to individuate themselves and give them a sense of being singular and unique.

I also believe we need to apply Arendt's (1977) notion of natality to new teachers entering into the profession. As an older teacher with many years of experience, I have always

welcomed the opportunity to work with preservice teachers, often learning as much from them as they did from me. Welcoming teacher newcomers into my classroom revitalized my own practices. For a number of years, I have been part of a committee to support first- and second-year teachers. Teachers who are newcomers to the profession are crucial to the continuance of education; they revitalize our schooling system, in the same way that the natality of each new generation renews the common world, by offering novel ideas to guard against the atrophy of worn-out and dated pedagogy and practices. Yet, viewing new teachers as agents of revitalization and renewal provokes questions around Arendt's (1977) ideas of preservation and conservatism. Does the newness of teacher newcomers also need to be managed like that of children, in order to prevent the destructive potential of natality? If so, what does 'managing adults' look like in practice? More importantly, what traditions and existing structures should be conserved in an educational system in which it is now acknowledged that there exist systemic barriers, inequities, and a history of oppressive practices? How might we support new teachers to bring forth novel perspectives in order to challenge practices that do impose barriers, perpetuate inequities, and/or are oppressive?

Creating Hospitable Schools

There are also numerous ways we might think about revitalizing schools through hospitality, and through day-to-day interactions with students. Ruitenberg (2005) writes of a principal who rode the school bus every morning with his students, putting at risk his principal identity (pp. 217-218). She describes how bell hooks let herself be whirled around by a student who came to class late (Ruitenberg, 2005, p. 219); here, hooks demonstrates an hospitable openness by allowing herself to be physically and emotionally vulnerable to a student and welcoming the disruption to her identity as professor, author, and social activist. Ruitenberg

(2005) describes one mother's parent/school partnership, which indicated "a genuine hospitality, a willingness in both this mother and the teachers to receive and regard each other as equals" (p. 220). She also identifies inhospitable symbols in schools, such as signs directing visitors to report to the office upon entering the school (Ruitenberg, 2005, p. 221), and the common practice of questioning and penalizing students who come to school late instead of asking them if everything is alright (Ruitenberg, 2005, p. 196). As teachers, we need to frame our practices and interactions with students and parents from the perspective of hospitality. Most schools, for example, have signs requesting visitors to report to the office. In addition, school doors are always kept locked; parents and students who arrive late need to buzz the office from outside to get in. With recent COVID protocols, the number of visitors to schools was lessened. Arguably, these practices are inhospitable and, yet, the intention is to ensure student safety. Are there other ways to maintain safety while also being more hospitable? At times, students will wander into other classrooms to socialize with friends. To address this, teachers may adopt the practice of locking their classroom doors. Students who leave to go to the washroom are, therefore, locked out of their classrooms upon returning. Similarly, students who are visiting another classroom for a 'legitimate' reason are not able to freely enter. Again, this seems to be an inhospitable practice; is there another way? I have also worked in schools where students leave at lunchtime to buy food at nearby restaurants and are late returning to school because of the extra time this takes. How might this be addressed hospitably? While schools often call home in such cases, a different response might be to inquire as to the reasons for lateness.

Still more examples come to mind. At some schools, very few parents attend school council meetings, which I have too quickly interpreted as a lack of parental involvement. However, as a vice-principal, I spend a large portion of every day addressing parent concerns,

talking to parents on the phone, returning their phone calls, and meeting with them when they come to speak with me at school. Adopting a different perspective, I am now able to reconsider that the number of parents who attend council meetings is not indicative of parental involvement. Reflecting on my conversations with parents throughout the years, I realize they are highly involved and engaged in the education of their children. I put forth these examples to show the value of rethinking everyday practices, actions, and beliefs that are too often unchallenged. These examples, which all reflect the openness of schools to the Other, in essence, which reflect the hospitality of the schools, are examples that highlight the room for hospitality in schools. Hospitality resides not only in grandiose notions of large changes to the educational system; it can also be found in reframing our daily actions and interactions.

Re-envisioning Teaching and Learning as Intrusive and Unsettling

Lastly, in terms of recommendations at the school level, I think we need to reconceptualize the idea of learning as one of trauma and discomfort. Current pedagogy, as Biesta (2012) points out, builds on theories of constructivism which frame teaching as a process of drawing out what already exists in the student's realm of experience, as opposed to introducing new and unsettling otherness that resides outside of the student's experience. It is understandable that educators worry about inflicting discomfort on students. Yet, unless we view the ethical responsibility of educating students as a process which involves the intrusion of difficult and novel otherness and giving to students more than they contain, we prevent students from engaging with and coming into the world. For me, this reconceptualization of teaching and learning begins at the school level and, specifically, in my role as a vice-principal. School administrators need to encourage teachers to address, exchange, and work through difficult concepts and ideas in their classrooms; several recent traumatic events come to mind such as the

storming of Capitol Hill, the war in Ukraine, and the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools. School boards recognize the need to address these world events with students; however, I believe teachers are nervous about how these discussions will evolve. Administrators play a role in enabling teachers to navigate these discussions, in seeking out and providing text-based and people resources teachers can draw on, and supporting and advocating for teachers if parents are upset about engaging their children in this difficult learning.

Broader Systemic Considerations

There are broader systemic pieces to tackle as well. In the upcoming subsections, I consider a variety of ways in which to apply the concepts of natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality to the educational system as a whole. In particular, I share thoughts that pertain to the limitations of outcomes-based education that adhere to linear conceptions of development; the necessity to recognize and address the emotional aspects of teaching; and how we might rethink teacher education programs and professional development.

Outcomes-based Education and Linear Development

First, I turn to Ruitenberg's (2016) critique of outcomes-based education, and her concerns about inhospitable practices of having predetermined curricular expectations that each child must achieve at the end of specified grade levels. She points out how this "fails to give place to unforeseeable learning" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 84). If the process of teaching and learning hinges on interactions between teacher and student, both of whom, through their singularity and alterity, bring to one another more than each contains, it is impossible to predict and anticipate what learning will occur. Furthermore, the singularity of student and teacher alike suggests that learning outcomes will vary from student to student. Still, we continue to use curriculum to measure achievement and determine which students are not following the

prescribed path of linear development and meeting curricular benchmarks. As consequence, children are positioned as objects that require ‘fixing,’ and pathologized with diagnoses of various psychoeducational ‘disabilities.’ I am not proposing we get rid of the curriculum, or put an end to assessment or report cards, or even stop the process of identifying students who need support; however, we need to consider the ethical intricacies of these practices. Do we need to grade very young children according to predetermined standards? What are the implications of giving a grade one student, for example, ‘D’ marks on a report card with comments describing a limited understanding of subject matter and an inability to demonstrate certain skills? What does it mean to diagnose a six-year-old with a learning disability?

These practices depict teaching and learning as the achievement of predetermined goals and adherence to linear notions of development. Following this, teachers, like students, are placed on a linear trajectory of their own professional development, moving from a point of inexperience to one of expertise and finally possessing the requisite knowledge to ‘teach effectively.’ Britzman (2003) describes how this results in the teacher’s uptake of “a noncontradictory subjectivity” (p. 223) which ignores the “complexity of pedagogical encounters” (p. 227). Teaching and learning are reduced to predictable activities that are “mapped and prescribed” (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 8), involving the teacher’s mastery of skills, her application of instructional strategies, and her ability to maintain control and manage a class. In this construction, student and teacher alike are stripped of their subjectivity and singularity. Students become objects to be tracked, measured, and controlled, and teachers become objects who implement curriculum and adhere to predetermined standards of practice (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 29). Clarke and Phelan (2017) explain how this objectification takes away the teacher’s “subjective judgement” (p. 29), leading to Biesta’s (2012) concerns regarding

the teacher's disappearance. Regardless, teachers *know* that teaching is far from a predictable, objective, and controlled activity. Still, these discourses take effect and are stubborn sites for critique. New teachers can be prone to cast the emotional complexities of teaching and learning in opposition to what they envision as professional success, holding fast to the idea that it is only a matter of time and experience before they will be 'good' teachers. This can result in self-blame, whereby teachers attribute mishaps, disruptions, and failure to their own perceived shortcomings rather than analyze the institutional constraints of their work. In turn, Clarke and Phelan (2017) describe feelings of "stress and exhaustion," of "professional alienation," and "high attrition rates" (p. 17). In her text *Practice Makes Practice*, Britzman (2003) advocates for a consideration of precisely this intersection between institutional constraints and pedagogical endeavours in teaching. Against the idealized discourse of mastery, Britzman's (2003) work urges us to focus on developing research and observational skills that will allow teachers to "understand the dynamics of classroom life in complex ways" and take active roles in "reconceptualizing … educational life" (p. 239).

Teacher Emotionality

Teachers may develop an understanding of classroom dynamics through exploring their own emotionality and learning about psychoanalytic notions of transference and projection, guilt, and fantasy. Britzman (2003) points out that teacher emotionality is often neglected. Taubman (2006) warns that neglecting the emotional qualities of teaching is potentially dangerous because emotion, when ignored, can be projected onto others in harmful ways (p. 27). He emphasizes the importance of working through undesirable feelings that surface in educational settings and offers Lacan's theory of "jouissance" as one possible framework through which to engage in this work (Taubman, 2006, p. 31). Jouissance is defined as an ecstatic form of enjoyment that is

connected to aggression, pain, losing control, and transgressive acts (Taubman, 2006, pp. 28-29). Incorporating into teacher education programs ideas like jouissance, according to Taubman (2006), might allow teachers to examine their own feelings of aggression, "control and love that persist in the psychic lives of teachers" (p. 30). Indeed, "the persistent presence of emotions in educational life" has been recognized by Lewkowich (2012, p. 468). Robertson (1997) also recommends that teacher education programs include the study of "unconscious fantasy" (p. 136) and, in particular, feelings and emotions that arise from depictions of teaching and learning in popular culture.

Literature is already being used to explore psychoanalytic notions of subjectivity. Numerous researchers in the field of education have used fictional texts as well as popular films as entry points to theorizing teacher identity (Lewkowich, 2012, 2015, 2019; Robertson, 1997; Stearns, 2015; Taubman, 2006). "Screenplay pedagogy" and popular films are also proposed by Robertson (1997) as vehicles to "explore what fantasy hopes for and ignores when it imagines teaching" (p. 139). Lewkowich (2019) suggests turning to "reading experience as a method of shared, collaborative inquiry" in order to better understand how teachers "envision their teaching practice" (p. 504). Because the less honourable feelings that surface from student/teacher interactions can be difficult to confront, fictional portrayals of adult/child relationships may open discussions about taboo topics of rejection, failure, fear, and anger.

Fictional narratives may also be beneficial to the formation of teacher identity by encouraging teachers to tell their own stories. If teachers have the opportunity to use fiction to think through their own experiences and frame these aesthetically, as though scenes portrayed in a novel, they might then risk revealing personal stories of failure and uncertainty. Candidly sharing her own emotional experiences of teaching, Stearns (2013) gives voice to a narrative of

"educational failure" (p. 74), an alternative and very real possibility in teaching and learning that we often silence. Stearns (2013, 2016) writes openly about her failures: pedagogical interactions that have challenged her, bumpy relationships she has developed with students, and students who have resisted her teaching. She applies the idea of mourning to reflect on these: "Mourning a theoretical, idealized person who isn't plays an essential part in knowing, teaching, and learning from the flawed but real person who is" (Stearns, 2013, p. 72). Similarly, Wang (2016) recognizes the need for educators to embrace "pedagogical failure" (p. 455) when students resist learning (p. 456) and relationships break down (p. 458). Wang (2016) suggests that reflecting on and working through these difficult moments of teaching and learning, through a process of mourning, might allow teachers to develop deeper insight into their practices, their sense of self, and their interactions with students. How might we bring narratives of loss to teaching and learning? How might we theorize mourning as a way to confront and come to terms with our own thwarted expectations, 'bumpy' pedagogical relationships, and loss of control, loss of an idealized self-perception, or loss of the compliant, loving, and receptive student who isn't?

Teacher Education Programs and Professional Development

I also envision a shift in teacher education and professional development. Both tend to be very practical and overly literal. Over two decades ago in 1996, I recall that my initial teacher preparation program addressed how to write lesson plans, what to do in the first week of teaching, and how to program for specific subject areas such as the arts, language, and mathematics. I do not recall any coursework pertaining to philosophical notions of education. Furthermore, throughout my teaching career I have taken numerous additional qualification courses and attended many workshops and professional development sessions. Generally, these courses and sessions have emphasized practice over theory. My observations here echo

Britzman's (2003) worry that, over and over, teaching continues to be construed as "technical rather than intellectual" (p. 55). Clarke and Phelan (2017) share these concerns, noting that teaching is no longer an "ethical, critical or creative act" (p. 12). It wasn't until my graduate studies that I had the opportunity to delve into more philosophical and theoretical understandings of education. Professional development needs to encompass thinking about education from a philosophical standpoint. I disagree with anyone who views philosophy as opposite to practice. Indeed, my own interactions with students look quite different now because of my engagement with philosophical constructs such as natality, hospitality, and nonviolent relationality.

My graduate work also gave me the time and space to study and contemplate, to explore, and to creatively consider, engage with, and try out different ideas about teaching and learning. All teachers deserve this time and space. I consider this form of unencumbered experimentation a luxury that most teachers don't have. Because education has become so fast-paced and action-oriented, teacher don't have the time to think. Instead, they are encumbered by a consistent sense of urgency to be a more effective teacher, to continuously improve practice, to move students along faster, to show evidence of progress, and to be accountable. Clarke and Phelan (2017) remark that professional development for teachers has been "colonised by the language of potentiality" (p. 56), and advocate for teachers to have "periods of sustained study" (p. 10). They point out how this allows one "to lose their stubborn attachment to particular lines of inquiry and to comforting ideas such as best practice" (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 10). When teachers have the chance to engage with new ideas, they are able to adopt what Clarke and Phelan (2017) term "aversive identities" (p. 35) which lead to "novel modes of thinking" and the development of "alternative teaching selves" (p. 35).

It is through philosophical contemplation and the uptake of aversive teacher identities that we might theorize educational renewal and revitalization. Ruitenberg (2016) describes the teacher's role to help students "find a place—their own place—in the world that is being opened up" (p. 92). How might teachers find 'their own place' in educational spaces, so that they may then go on to transform these? How might we conceive of teachers as guests, as Others, who are welcomed into existing structures and traditions so that they may change these with their radical alterity? Reminiscent of Grumet's (1988) discussion of critical reproduction, Ruitenberg (2016) distinguishes between the passing along of curriculum through translation versus transmission (p. 74). The former opens up the item to be passed along—in the form of curricular knowledge and skills—to be received in a "distrustful" as opposed to "uncritical" manner (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 74). Rather than simply relaying and repeating old and tired ideas, translation involves the infusion of new ideas into the curriculum, like the singular guest who changes the space she has been offered or the newcomer who exerts her natality to revitalize the tired and worn-out world. Thus, curriculum is reframed as host to the teacher/guest, welcoming her with an "openness to future reinterpretation, to shifts in its boundaries" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 75). Shifting curricular boundaries might entail, for instance, including in the study of biology not only traditional lessons on the "eye color of fruit flies," but also traumatizing explorations into how biology is contaminated with "the specters of eugenics" (Ruitenberg, 2016, p. 79). In this way, the teacher is able to interrupt the curriculum, building on its foundation by bringing to it more than it contains, and becomes an agent of transformation and not merely of transmission.

Teaching continues to be an undervalued profession. This, in part, stems from its gendered roots and what Grumet (1988) refers to as the "feminization of teaching" during the nineteenth century when schooling shifted from "men's to women's work" (p. 32). At the

elementary school level in particular, teaching is often associated with the practical activity of caring for children instead of an ethical endeavour of educating the next generation. Yet, Robertson (1997) reminds us that the first teacher education programs appealed to idealized notions of womanhood and selflessness. Women who entered the profession circa 1920 to 1960 were "attracted to teaching because of the prospects teaching offered to influence and serve" (Robertson, 1997, p. 137). In a profession that is still dominated by women, we need to continue to focus on gendered notions of teaching, and on what is revealed through the narratives of women in education. The novels in this dissertation were selected for the purposes of addressing not only the complexities of teacher identity and the teacher's ethical responsibility *vis-à-vis* her students, but specifically how this ethical responsibility is complicated and compounded by gender: women who are mothers, women who do not have children of their own, women who are daughters, women who are single, women who are wives and partners.

Concluding Remarks

It has been difficult to be an educator during COVID-19. The ways in which teachers and students have been required to relate to one another has undergone a drastic transformation. Online schooling has called into question the teacher role and underscored how important it is for student/teacher interactions to occur in physical spaces. Even though in Ontario parents continue to have the option for their children to attend virtual versions of school, many students are now returning to bricks and mortar settings and we are all re-learning how to relate to one another, to navigate those face-to-face encounters, and to co-exist in ethical ways. The teacher's ethical responsibility is an overwhelming and, at times, unimaginably large task; to be certain, it profoundly impacts her identity and shapes how she enacts this role. Teaching is a responsibility, however, that involves sensory experiences and relations that bring people together. Online

learning has led to my realization of the frightening disappearance of children, children who press a button to mute themselves or disappear from their classrooms, who do not log into their classrooms at all, or who cannot attend because of a lack of access to technology. This virtual version of schooling turns teaching and learning into a solitary activity occurring in private spaces. Returning to the concrete school building has reinforced that education is not only about curriculum; it is about being in proximity to one another and relating to one another face-to-face, person-to-person.

It seems fitting to conclude a dissertation about teacher stories with my own teacher story. Rather than a pivotal event, I would like to share a compilation of quotidian experiences from today. There was the student who told me how much she hated me and that I was so annoying; there was a student who walked with me while I supervised the schoolyard at lunch, asking me about my religious beliefs and telling me that she wanted to get a pet, as we both shivered together and moved around to keep warm in the cold December air; there was the student who came to the office in tears because she didn't want to go to physical education class; there was the student who ran down the hallway, almost bumping into me in his rush to get to class after the lunch bell; there was the student who nervously revealed fears about going to high school next year; and there was the student who smiled under her face mask when I complemented her on an answer she had given. While all ordinary experiences in the day of a teacher, these many little moments that made up today, and that make up most of my days, encapsulate how I enact my ethical responsibility, unfolding through and interwoven into millions of small, everyday occurrences of smiles and tears, of incidental conversations in the schoolyard, of laughter and displays of anger, of frustration, sadness, and anxiety. It is in

attending to the ethical qualities of these moments that big changes may emerge on the horizon of possibility.

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