



John Dewey's Concept of *Consummatory Experience* and Its Relevance to Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, the idea of teaching as consummatory experience is discussed in the context of the American educational thinker John Dewey's later works, especially, *Art as Experience*. A phenomenological analysis of a narrative provided by a literacy education teacher is used to explore the meaning of Deweyan concept of consummatory experience and its relevance to teacher education.

Key Words: John Dewey, phenomenological research, teacher education, narrative analysis, consummatory experience

INTRODUCTION

This is a philosophical paper in the field of foundations of education. It inquires into a seemingly simple question. *What does it mean to be fully alive as a teacher?* This paper therefore focuses on the quality of teachers' experience. It explores using a phenomenological method of analysis what it means to be fully alive as a teacher and what happens when teaching is experienced in such a manner. In other words, what is the relationship between teaching that is truly fulfilling for the teacher and experience that is truly educative for the student(s)? There is no doubt that the two are intimately connected. Truly fulfilling teaching and truly educative experience go hand in hand.

In attempting to articulate what it means to be fully alive as a teacher and how teacher education programs should be structured to foster an environment where teacher-candidates become fully alive, I will draw upon—besides my own journey of teaching and learning—the works of one of the most prominent American philosophers, John Dewey. As a great thinker, as well as a great educational philosopher, Dewey continues to exert an enormous influence on our thinking regarding education and our times. It is my conviction that in order to comprehend what it means to be fully alive as a teacher we must strive to come to terms with his thought, and to understand it anew.

This philosophical research, then, is a contribution to the very process of understanding Dewey anew in the context of experience of teaching and teacher education. The call for a renewed understanding of Dewey is especially relevant since Dewey's later works, in particular, *Art as Experience*, bring his commitment to be fully alive into sharp focus. It is important to realize that Dewey's concept of "consummatory experience," that is, experience in its most fulfilling mode, and his understanding of what makes experience educative are intimately related to one another.

The present work is meant to initiate a process whereby the significance of this intimate relationship is brought out. The originality of this analysis lies in its focus on the experience of teachers. A philosophical discussion of the Deweyan concept of consummatory experience from the perspective of teachers has not been attempted before. Dewey's own articulation of what constitutes educative experience is very well-known. When the object of philosophical analysis is educative experience, Dewey scholars (and Dewey himself) focus on students. When it is consummatory experience, the focus I argue should be the experience of teachers.

METHOD

This study is a *philosophical* research. In its form and content it most definitely is not a positivistic endeavor. It does not employ empirical modes of inquiry such as experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, or survey research (Lee & Yarger, 1996). Strictly speaking, it is a philosophical research

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which is informed by a certain mode of qualitative inquiry, commonly known as *interpretivism* (*hermeneutics*) (Schwandt, 2000). Interpretivism is based on the *Verstehen* tradition in the human sciences. According to Schwandt (2000),

the *Geisteswissenschaftliche* or *Verstehen* tradition in the human sciences arose in the reactions of neo-Kantian German historians and sociologists (i.e., Dilthey, Rickert, Windleband, Simmel, Weber) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the then-dominant [in education, still dominant] philosophy of positivism (and later, logical positivism) [behaviorism in education is an outgrowth of the latter]. At the heart of the dispute was the claim that the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) were fundamentally different in nature and purpose from the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). Defenders of interpretivism argued that the human sciences aim to *understand* [italics added] human action. Defenders of positivism and proponents of the unity of the sciences held the view that the purpose of any science (if it is indeed to be called a science) is to offer *causal explanations* [italics added] of social, behavioral, and physical phenomena. (p. 191)

It is my conviction that educational sciences qualify (or ought to qualify) as human sciences understood within the framework of *Geisteswissenschaften*. This suggests that the sciences of pedagogy ought to approach their object of inquiry with the aim of understanding (*Verstehen*) rather than explanation. Understanding human action—in our case, the practice of teaching—is about understanding the *meaning* of that action. It is assumed in the *Verstehen* tradition in the human sciences that human action is inherently meaningful, that is, it is distinct from the “action” of inanimate physical objects and phenomena. Therefore, human action cannot be studied in the same way that rocks, planets, geological forces, climate patterns, and so forth are studied.

The essence of the interpretivist inquiry is based on what is called “the hermeneutic circle.” According to this method, “one must grasp the situation [the whole] in which human actions make (or acquire) meaning in order to say one has an understanding of the particular action [the part]” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). The relation of part to whole and vice versa assumes an all-important role in hermeneutic/interpretivist inquiries for “the meaning of the part is only understood within the context of the whole; but the whole is never given unless through an understanding of the parts. Understanding therefore requires a circular [but not logically vicious] movement from parts to whole and from whole to parts” (Gallagher, 1992, p. 59).

In this study, the whole, the meaning of which we are trying to understand, is the everyday world of being a teacher and the potential of this world to be experienced in a consummatory way. Understanding how this everyday world—technically referred to as “the life-world,” or *Lebenswelt* in German—of teaching is constituted, a phenomenological analysis is employed. Phenomenological analysis is an interpretive tool and helps us focus on the *wholistic everyday lived experience* of being a teacher before such experience is theoretically thematized and generalized.

The aim of this study is to grasp what consummatory teaching experience *means*. The aim is not to formulate an initial set of hypotheses regarding the causal relationships that obtain among certain variables that have been identified (isolated) and then subject it to rigorous testing, and finally either accept or refute it. The goal is not to establish causal relations among the elements that constitute consummatory teaching experience. We have a much more modest goal. We simply are trying to gain an understanding of the meaning of such experience. The starting point therefore is not a hypothesis to be tested but an interpretation of everyday teaching experience.

This research then is *hermeneutical-phenomenological*. It is *hermeneutical* for we already have a certain general and somewhat vague understanding of the experience in question. We are, however, *interpreting* (not testing) the meaning of this experience in order to grasp/understand its significance in a more refined and determinate manner. Furthermore, our interpretation of this experience takes place as we engage in that experience. In other words, unlike positivistically framed research methodologies, our interpretation of this experience and the experience itself are not (and cannot be) separate. It is

phenomenological for we are committed to an understanding of everyday lived experience. The research is anchored in *lived* experience. It starts with lived experience, it reflects on it, and then it goes back to it. In other words, it never leaves the domain of everyday lived experience. It aspires to enhance our understanding of the meaning of lived experience.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

In order to understand what Dewey means by “consummatory experience,” I would like to provide a detailed analysis of a true account given by Lori A. Norton-Meier—an American teacher educator in literacy education—in her article “A Thrice-Learned Lesson from the Literate Life of a Five-year-old” (2005). Despite the fact that she never uses the word “consummatory” in her article, she is definitely a consummated teacher and is narrating a consummatory experience of teaching. Since she primarily works with narrative approaches to research, it comes as no surprise to see her start the article by providing a narrative account of an actual lived experience through the telling and re-telling of which her “professional journey of continual transformation” (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 286)—her growth experience—is made sense of.

The article as a whole can be seen as one big story unfolding over many years rather than a conventional academic sharing of research results. The reader of this paper is strongly encouraged to read Norton-Meier’s article in its entirety. For the purpose of our analysis, I would like to share the initial story that Norton-Meier uses to weave together the elements of her consummatory experience. What warrants our description of her experience as “consummatory” will be explored by engaging in an analysis of the initial story itself and how she appropriates it throughout her entire career in three phases. Therefore, it is essential to reproduce the story—Aaron’s story—here so that we can make sense of the analysis that accompanies it (my comments are *italicized*).

It is 3:05. *It is interesting to note that Norton-Meier starts the narration by indicating the time—in this case, the chronological clock time. As we will shortly see, however, it is not the chronological time itself that matters. Rather, the clock time sets the time, and therefore, the mood of the day. It really does not matter whether it is 3:05 or 3:04. What matters is what the time signifies and how it contextualizes the drama that is about to unfold.* The bell rings and children from Laramie Elementary School move hurriedly out of classrooms as they buzz about the day’s activities. I escort my group of 28 kindergarten students to the front of the school building because I am always worried they will get lost in the chaos of over 400 children leaving the building! *We can see right at the start the way Norton-Meier experiences solicitude for the well-being of her students. She feels responsible for them outside of as well as within the classroom. Her attitude is one of genuine care and concern for her students. This is an important aspect of consummatory experience. Again, consummatory experience is not just about having a good fulfilling time. Rather, the whole movement of consummation gets started with an experience of some sort of unease or perturbation.* They tell me when they see their ride or a sibling who has come to walk them home. Aaron walks by himself, which always worries me a little in this urban Midwestern neighborhood because the school sits right next to a major four-lane highway, and traffic moves very quickly. This particular neighborhood is also situated close to a busy downtown area that sees its share of gang violence, drug trade, and prostitution. *Here Norton-Meier is not merely giving an objective description of the physical setting surrounding the school building. There is a certain quality that guides her observations. She is not a neutral observer. Rather, the aspects she notices in the environment are colored by the quality of uneasiness and the perceived threat of danger. The situation is qualitatively experienced; it is imbued with uneasiness.*

“Bye, Aaron,” I say to him, “Hurry on home now.” His deep brown eyes glow when his lips turn to a smile and he tells me that he isn’t going home. He is on his way to see his mother at her work.

In the few short months I had known Aaron, I learned that he and I had much in common. Aaron lived in a single parent home as I did at his age. We both had roots in rural ways of knowing. Aaron’s extended family farmed in the South, my family in the Midwest. Aaron spoke the language of his family and community, African American Vernacular English. I spoke a standard form of English

wrought with what many would call rural “farmisms.” *Here Norton-Meier reveals some of the affinities in their respective backgrounds by making a retrospective detour. We see how the recent past enters into the temporality of the present experience of the relationship between Aaron and Norton-Meier. Furthermore, besides the similarities of their past and its acknowledgement, Norton-Meier also hints at the dissimilarity between Aaron’s language and hers.*

I smile back and ask him where his mother works. Aaron stretches out his arm and points to the local drinking establishment that sits on the corner across from the school. I am shocked and wonder to myself, “He goes to a bar after school? Is this dangerous? Is this true? Is this really where his mother is working?” Concerned, I decide to walk with him to be sure he will be okay. *This is an important moment. Norton-Meier is taking a risk. She, instead of turning around and going back to school, or walking towards her car, continues conversing with Aaron, which she did not have to. She is eager to find out more about Aaron’s destination for she is concerned about his safety. As she finds out that he is headed to a bar nearby, a torrent of questions rushes into her mind for this is quite an unexpected situation. At this moment, the context is thickening. By asking him where his mother works, Norton-Meier renders herself vulnerable by irreversibly committing herself to hearing a response that she has no control over, and when she receives a response she has not expected a bit, she is caught in an off guard moment. Then and there she makes a decision at the heat of the moment without going through an extended rational deliberative process for she is already engaged with the unfolding events in the present moment.*

Aaron lights up when I say I will walk with him tonight. He takes me by the hand and we walk towards the bar that has been a source of great controversy in the short time I have been at this school. Petitions have circulated to get the dilapidated building closed down, with residents arguing that a bar next to a school is inappropriate. Others argue that the bar has historical significance and has been in the neighborhood longer than any other building, so it must be preserved for future generations. The students on the playground often wonder out loud when it will fall down since the building is in such poor repair. As we walk, Aaron continues to talk non-stop about his mom, her work, and what he does when he gets there. *It turns out, however, Norton-Meier’s experience of “shock” when she hears that Aaron is going to a bar after school is not directed to “bars in general” and does not arise solely based on the commonsense notion that children should not go to bars. Rather, there is a certain history here. It is not any bar they are talking about. It is a specific bar with historical significance. Moreover, there is a certain controversy surrounding the issue of the proximity of the bar to the school. This aspect of the story reveals another dimension to the temporality of their interaction—which works somewhat in the background—that brings these two characters and their relationship together. The context is not limited to two people only. It is a social environment to which both of them are related. Norton-Meier, whether she likes it or not, is already a party to this controversy by virtue of being a teacher in the school. She is inevitably concerned about the issue for she is already given to it. She is already in the midst of it. This is only one instance of how the past impacts her present. And the issue is a contentious one. There is a tension between two perspectives which accentuate two different values and therefore two different courses of action: close down the building or preserve it.*

When we walk through the door, several of the patrons shout greetings to Aaron. It is dark, and I notice that I am the only White person there. Aaron tugs me along as an older Black man comes forward to shake my hand. He says that he knows who I am based on how much Aaron talks about kindergarten and Mrs. Norton-Meier. *Another climactic moment. Notice how Norton-Meier communicates her mood as well as the atmosphere of the environment by referring to her experience of the quality of the situation. She says “It is dark . . . and I am the only White person there.” Quality is not that of the physical objects per se—their color, shape, quantity, texture, solidity, and so forth—but it is the pervasive quality that informs us about the overall significance of the situation we are experiencing. In her case, she feels singled out. She immediately understands the significance of being the only white, for there is a whole history to this feeling and this history is saturated with events that are still alive in the way people react and relate to each other. This understanding, however, is not a matter of thematic knowledge. She does not really think about it and comes to a conclusion that she is indeed the only white person in there. The significance of the situation is immediately felt and undergone.*

Aaron crawls onto a barstool next to an elderly man and asks, “Hey Joe, ya’ ordered yet? I can read the menu to you again.” Breaking into a big smile, the elderly man pats him on the back and says how glad he is that Aaron is here to help him.

Aaron comes over and whispers to me that it is a good thing that I am teaching him to read because they need him to read a lot here at the bar. I stammer and stare as I watch Aaron communicate in the language of his home, his community, and his world—a language that he easily uses to negotiate the knowledge about reading and writing that blend home and school for him. I question myself, “Why don’t I see more of this in school? Do I create a space for Aaron’s home language in my classroom?” *Norton-Meier stammers and stares for she is having an epiphany. She realizes, maybe for the first time—by her own admission, this whole experience with this child “shattered her thinking, shaking her to her core”—the importance of the child’s own horizon of meaning, that is, the child’s own world, his own meaning universe and the role of the social environment in shaping this universe, setting its parameters. Prior to this transformative experience she had never understood the significance of the role of context in our understanding of the world and the way we navigate ourselves vis-à-vis this world. Maybe she had read in one of her educational psychology textbooks when she was in college that context matters in learning. However, the meaning of this vital information had never materialized before since it was not really experienced in the there and then of a situation. It merely was a piece of information—a truism almost—to be memorized and regurgitated in an exam. She had successfully passed her exam, but she failed to really learn what it meant. Now, things are different. She finds herself in a situation and she is learning what it means to appreciate the context of the learner and the learner’s perspective by being within a situation. As she experiences a peculiar unease, she is forced to re-evaluate her role and significance for this child. She experiences, in other words, a tension, not as an idea (in the form of cognitive dissonance) but as in the concrete flesh and blood of a transaction—or more poetically put, an encounter—taking place in an unfolding situation. The tension between her life-world and that of Aaron. The tension between her understanding of her role as a teacher and how inadequate this is in addressing the needs of her students. The tension between her identity as a teacher and the identity of Aaron as a student. The tension between her identity as a White teacher and the identity of Aaron as a colored student. All of a sudden, Norton-Meier finds herself asking difficult questions. She is compelled to ask these questions for she is alive to the situation she is in. She could have dismissed this encounter without dwelling too much on it. She could have anesthetized herself to the unease she was going through. Instead, she engages the situation by being present to it. She opens herself to what the situation has to reveal to her. She is now exploring certain possibilities that she has never thought were even relevant before. This is definitely an eye-opening moment for her. This is a consummatory moment for she is open to the temporality of the present. Notice, nobody is trying to teach her anything, but she is learning nevertheless. She is learning a lot. Neither Aaron nor the old man is trying to teach her anything. But they are her teachers anyway by virtue of having significance in the situation that they are—all three of them—mutually constituting.*

Aaron’s mother comes out of the back looking nervous to see me as she smooths her hair and apron. Her eyes fall from my face to Aaron’s as she says, “Has Aaron been bad?”

“Oh no,” I quickly responded,

“Aaron just told me I could walk with him today.”

“Yeah, mama,” Aaron takes my hand, “I’m gonna show her around!” She nods slowly. I don’t really know what to do but follow Aaron, his excitement obvious as he flashes a smile at his mom and begins the tour. As we walk, Aaron points to each word and reads every beer sign on the walls. *Norton-Meier follows Aaron’s lead; she submits to his excitement. She doesn’t really know what to do but follow Aaron. Exactly. She doesn’t have to know what to do. She doesn’t have to control everything. She doesn’t have to manage Aaron’s or others’ behavior. She doesn’t have to manipulate anyone. She can relax into the situation. She can trust the flow of the situation. She can let Aaron take charge. She can delegate responsibility to this little fellow. She is not an isolated subject up against a world of foreign objects. She is already part of an immensely meaningful situation. She touches and is touched at the same time. She is already outside of herself giving and receiving, acting and being acted upon. There is a certain rhythm she is part of and she is moving with it within it. This time, for a change, she just has to be at the receiving end of this experience in which she is encompassed.*

“BUDWEISER—KING OF BEERS. LITE. OLD STYLE.”

Then, he spells each word.

“See, Ms. Norton-Meier, I’m reading the walls just like at school!” he exclaims as he tugs me along. This is the child I viewed as struggling with literacy in the classroom. It is clear that he is totally literate in his world!

We stop by a table where four men are playing cards. Aaron cries, “What are you doin’, Roy? That’s a full house.” I realize that Aaron knows how to play poker—a complex game with its own vocabulary, rules, and complicated ways of thinking about your opponent’s next move.

Roy asks, “Did you do any writing for me today?” Aaron gets his journal out of his backpack and reads every page to Roy. In return, Roy tells him stories from his own life and how he used to write letters every day when he was in the war so his mother would know he was okay. Aaron sits on his knee, hanging on his every word. *By now, the initial epiphany is consolidated and is transformed into a revelation. The meaning of the situation can be clearly discerned now. The meaning is heightened: Aaron is not illiterate!*

I say my good-byes and they all tell me to come back and visit any time. Aaron’s mother gives me a bag full of food to take with me. I walk back to the school with a million thoughts racing in my head. Aaron was at the top of my “kids who are struggling” list. He had just exposed me to a whole new world that I am not representing in my classroom. He carries the classroom into his outside world but do I let him bring his world into the classroom? Do I allow any of the children to? *Norton-Meier is experiencing growth. She is revitalized. Her taken-for-granted understanding of the meaning of her interaction with Aaron has been transformed. A new more expansive meaning has emerged. She has learned how to relate to Aaron in a better more unified way, in a way that lets her see the whole individual, and not a caricature of it. She is exhibiting an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. This does not, however, mean that she is experiencing complete tranquility and bliss, maybe something along the lines of Zen satori (Japanese Buddhist term for enlightenment). On the contrary, her experience is riddled with tensions, yet it is anything but fragmentary, disconnected, inchoate, deadening, mindless, blunted and anesthetic. Rather, it is aesthetic. The aesthetic quality of the experience, its beauty, so to speak, does not originate from, say, the carefree enjoyment of the idyllic simplicity of nature. The aesthetic quality originates from her experience of the dramatic tense unfolding of events and her willingness/openness to let herself become part of the flow. Moreover, the shift in her perspective affords her the ability to move from the particularity of the situation—her experience with Aaron’s world—to a more encompassing (universal) understanding of the experience of all her other students. Yet again, such enhancement in her understanding—from the particular to the universal—is not an antiseptic theoretical construct. Her new more expansive understanding has emerged out of the situation she found herself in but it did not leave the situation behind to be transmitted to a level of existence beyond any situation. Her experience is still situational but more unified and expanded now. In other words, she has not graduated from the messy world of practice to the orderly and precise world of theory. She is still in the messy world of practice for that is the only world we have!*

I am ashamed by my ignorance and judgmental attitude. Aaron has taught me a powerful lesson. I go to the teacher’s lounge to share my epiphany in relation to this experience and my concerns with my own teaching. My colleagues’ responses are surprising to me.

“Oh, you can’t let that world come in here.”

“That world is violent . . . so sad.”

“His mother is awful for letting him be in that environment.”

“He’s around drunks all the time.”

“Reading beer labels is not literacy.”

“He is doomed to failure.” *The reversal of the roles—Aaron becoming her teacher—is a powerful and transformative experience for Norton-Meier for she is sufficiently attuned to the situation and its tensions that she is brave enough to acknowledge the power a little guy can have over her. In other words, because she is open to the temporality of the present, she has experienced growth. This is by no means the case for her colleagues though. They are not willing to leave the familiarity of their mundane understanding of the world. They are pretty content with their own convictions. They are closed off to further inquiry. They are closed off to growth for they are closed off to the possibility of seeing things in a different way. Norton-Meier’s journey, in many ways, exemplifies “the monomyth of the hero’s journey,” the theme brilliantly written about by Joseph Campbell, the foremost scholar of*

mythology and author of the enormously popular The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Norton-Meier leaves her familiar understanding of the world and ventures out into the unknown. There she confronts dragons (inner and outer)—the unfamiliar—wrestles with the forces of tension and conflict, and wins a decisive victory; she returns to the world she once belonged to in order to bestow the results of her achievement on her fellow colleagues, but to no avail. Departure, transformation, and return: the basic rhythm of growth experience, situational through and through. Yet there is a universality to it. Notice that the return is always returning to the situation itself experienced qualitatively and immediately in the here and now with this group of people in this place at this time. When we are transformed, our understanding of the situation is enhanced. The situation is not eliminated and replaced by theory. Theoretical understanding—the cognitive picture—is a phase in the unfolding drama whereby we articulate the new understanding in order to consolidate it. Once we have consolidated it, once it becomes habitual, that is, once it becomes part of us and we become part of it, once our self is infused with “intelligent habit,” we are capable of receiving the future in its novel possibilities.

I walk to my room thinking that a value—or lack of value—has been attached to the experience Aaron is getting by the same people who will try to help him learn in the next few years. I worry that he may come to feel that his world is bad, that his mother is bad, that all the things he has learned in the initial years of his life are meaningless. How will Aaron ever find success in this world of school when his freedom to live his life is judged as not good enough by individuals on the outside, people who do not understand or value his world? Will Aaron be a risk taker? Will he have the freedom to choose his future? *Being no longer on the outside, Norton-Meier is genuinely concerned about the future of Aaron, and also about the future of all her students in the person of Aaron. With some intensity, she is now asking existential questions, questions related to the meaning and value of our lives, questions related to the meaning of our relations with others, questions related to the direction of our lives, questions related to the purpose of our lives. In short, these are all questions that are oriented towards the future. The answers to these questions are not meant to provide accurate predictions of the events that will take place at some future time. She is not trying to predict the future. The concern here is not with the chronological time. Norton-Meier is not trying to come up with a new scientific model of teaching—a new heuristic maybe, a magic wand—that will guarantee that certain outcomes are attained by controlling the initial conditions and variables. Her concern is not the calendar future. Her concern is the immediate understanding of the present regarding its meaning and purpose. She is looking at the present, and the present is always oriented towards the future for future gives us the direction and purpose to our actions in the present.*

On the following day during writing workshop, I pull my chair up alongside Aaron, and we decide to write a story together about our experience. When we share our story with the rest of the class, many more children are prompted to share stories from their worlds—stories of Sandra’s next-door neighbor who raises 200 birds and of Manuel’s grandma who had a runaway tamale! *Norton-Meier returns to life. She is alive, and not at the expense of Aaron but thanks to him. It is beautiful. Aaron and she radiate this beauty. This is a consummated experience for them. As a result, many more children participate in life with them.*

The story does not end here, however. Rather, it represents a *turning point* [italics added] in my teaching career. I was faced by my own small view of the world and my limited definition of language, literacy, and learning. It was as if a door opened up to an exciting new world that I had not considered as a source of my teaching. I realized with the help of Aaron and the other children that it was my job as a teacher to use strategies that let children learn about the languages of their cultures through sharing their stories and their personal literacies and experiences. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 288)

For Norton-Meier, her interaction with Aaron was a real experience, of which one says “that was an experience.” It stands out as an enduring memorial of what true teaching and learning experience may be. It stands out because it is “marked out from what went before and what came after” (*Art as Experience*, LW10: 43). It was “a turning point” for her. She was transformed and her horizon of meaning has been expanded. She is now open to “an exciting new world.” This sums up the essence of consummatory experience—a unified heightened sense of meaning leading to truly

educative experience. The heightened sense of meaning experienced here is not an esoteric meaning; on the contrary, it is everyday meaning, or put more accurately, the aesthetic dimension of everyday meaning. The aesthetic potential of everyday experience has been tapped. Such a potential cannot be actualized in chronological mode of time. We can theorize about it all we want and provide first-rate guidelines, instructions, heuristics, models, etc., none of which can substitute for the actual experience itself in the lived time.

This, however, does not mean that the chronological mode of time is totally useless and has to be entirely jettisoned. The truth of the matter is that the chronological mode of time is always embedded within the lived time. Lived experience precedes and prepares the ground for the experience of reflection about the possibilities of the lived experience. Norton-Meier's realization of an exciting new world prompts her to reflect on the taken for granted understandings regarding teaching, learning, language, literacy, culture, pedagogy, and their inexhaustively rich interrelationships, and causes her to look for novel ways of thinking that would help her integrate her experience at a higher level of understanding. In other words, she is compelled to grow.

With the compelling energy of this heightened sense of meaning, Norton-Meier goes to work. She is introduced to a variety of literature—I would venture to claim that not coincidentally for now she is sensitized to see things that she has not even considered existed—that suggests ways to transform her curriculum in ways that would consolidate the new insights gained through her experience with Aaron. After a series of similarly transformative experiences which were triggered by the initial experience with Aaron and were built on it, Norton-Meier decides to go back to school to pursue a graduate degree.

It was the questions I had about curriculum, print in the real world, and creating home-school partnerships that brought me back to graduate work. Little did I know that I would show up with a few questions and leave with many more as my thinking was challenged and learning continued. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 289)

As the second phase of her professional (as well as personal) transformation, the graduate work Norton-Meier now engages with is driven by real-life experiences gained in the first phase of her journey with Aaron. She does not out of the blue decide to pursue a graduate career. Her experience, much like a river, is flowing “without holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers” (*Art as Experience*, LW10: 43) from phase one to phase two. Phase one leads into phase two. However, this should not suggest that these two phases melt and fuse into unity. They do not disappear and lose their own character. As phase two carries on what went before, each phase gains distinctness in itself. For Norton-Meier, there is a clear-cut division between the first telling of the story when she was Aaron's kindergarten teacher and her second telling of the story as a graduate student. The two phases, however, are connected. What connects the two is the process of growth which can only take place from within. This growth is not merely an intellectual growth. Yes, her intellectual understanding in regards to issues like literacy, language, culture, pedagogy, and so forth has expanded and now she is capable of handling higher level of work in the graduate school. But the whole point is that Norton-Meier has grown as a whole, as an individual who is much more open and sensitive to what is transpiring in her environment. She is more in touch with her social and physical environment. She feels she is integrally related to her environment. She is not merely smarter. Rather, she is much more unified in her understanding of the world and how she is connected with it. She is more aware of and receptive towards the processes unfolding both within and without so much so that the distinction between what is within and what is without is no longer static and hypostatized. It has become dialectical. There is a dynamic ongoing conversation—a dialogue—taking place in her experience.

As part of this dialectical experience—the ongoing dialogue transpiring at multiple levels—Norton-Meier engages in professional inquiry.

A variety of professional readings helped to offer me new perspectives on Aaron's experiences and my own related experiences. Discussion with other teachers and students played an essential role, as well as various opportunities to write, share, and receive feedback from others. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 293)

She delves into an intensive theoretical work as part of her studies and comes across a framework through which she re-interprets her work and her experience with Aaron. Whitmore and Crowell's appropriation of Ken Goodman's theory of invention-convention (as cited in Norton-Meier, 2005) becomes a useful tool to understand "the teacher's role in keeping the *tension alive* [italics added] between personal invention and social convention" (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 289). The tension between these two opposing forces—invention and convention—becomes very instructive for Norton-Meier. Utilizing the theory to explore further the myriad interrelationships involved in teaching and learning literacy reveals deeper and wider dimensions in her understanding of the original situation experienced in phase one. As she continues the dialectical inquiry process, which she is increasingly encompassed and intimately engaged with (as opposed to being on the outside as a spectator), she asks more and more penetrating and refined questions as a result of which she finds herself "with a new lens to view Aaron's story with many new questions" (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 291).

The crucial message we need to take home with us is that the theoretical work at this phase is grounded and driven by her original experience with Aaron. Furthermore, it always goes back to real-life experience. Theory never remains theoretical. It is fed back into our experiences. Moreover, theory is not meant to provide us with ultimate unchanging incorruptible answers. Rather, as we see in Norton-Meier's case, we are pushed to ask more (and more refined) questions.

The significance of the original experience Norton-Meier had with Aaron cannot be underestimated for, far from being dissipated, it is still vital and dramatically shapes and directs her academic career now as a teacher educator—the third phase.

I read Aaron's story to help [my students] see that our entire semester will be based on learning from a child's point of view. After reading the story, we talk. The discussions lead to the sharing of personal literacy and schooling experiences as well as the questioning of our assumptions about language and learning, the pervading deficit view in relation to family, and the creation of a student-centered curriculum that values and validates each student's culture and ways of knowing. (Norton-Meier, 2005, p. 292)

"Aaron's story" is not just another trick in the bag that Norton-Meier is utilizing to transmit a certain technique to her pre-service teachers. "Aaron's story" is *her* story. She embodies it. She is who she is as a teacher educator (and as a person) because of the meaning experienced in that story and the way that meaning has been incorporated into her life experience. The events that compose the story are chronologically in the past. They are gone. However, in Norton-Meier's experience, they are present and alive. The story is not finished. It is still unfolding. It is still pregnant with novel meanings. This is a *consummatory* experience.

CONCLUSION

We learned a lot in university classes, but I think that that which we really needed to know, we did not get. I think that a lot has to do with the "here and now." It is easy to think of, "Well somebody does this to me, then I follow this and this and this." But every situation is so different and every student is so different. So what I learned in the abstract does not seem to fit any particular case. (Roth, 2002, p. 132)

That which all teachers, pre-service and in-service alike, novice and seasoned alike, really need to know cannot be taught but can be learned. That which cannot be taught but can be learned is *the consummatory experience of being and becoming a teacher in a classroom*. This experience is not a matter of cognition alone. In other words, it is not about *knowing* per se. Therefore the sense of panic experienced in any discussion of knowledge needed for teaching is misplaced. Teaching and learning to teach, when approached with an aggressive objectifying attitude, appear to be an immensely complex and demanding task to teacher educators. When teacher educators waltz with the illusion that the best way to get knowledge of things is to objectify them, that is, when we grasp things not as events with significance unfolding in a multifaceted dynamic situation to which we belong but as

things looked at by an outside observer disconnected from their environment, we “de-live” them (Harman, 2007).

When the consummatory experience of being and becoming a teacher in a classroom is “de-lived,” all of a sudden, we remove ourselves from the temporally unfolding situation we are immersed in and delude ourselves into thinking that we can “rise above our environment to some pure, lofty pedestal and pass judgment on the world, as if we were untainted by it” (Harman, 2007, p. 31). Moreover, we sincerely believe that the distance gained will engender clarity and a firm grip on the situation. What it engenders instead is distortion. The living situation, when “de-lived,” becomes distorted. Instead of living in tune with the significance of the situation we are immersed in, we frantically attempt to control it from outside. We do this by analyzing, or rather, compartmentalizing the situation we have objectified into manageable bits and pieces. The situation then looks incredibly complex. We become overwhelmed with all the elements that need to be accounted for and controlled. We literally become control freaks! We freak out for we have isolated ourselves from the situation at hand but at the same time we need to get a grip on the situation as well. This is an impossible situation: trying to be in and out at the same time!

For Dewey, this conception of knowing—the quest for certainty as he calls it—is at best ill-conceived, at worst seriously pathological. For him, the situation is never atomistically constructed; rather, it is always already holistically given and us within it. It is not composed of separate and independent elements that need to be combined through the agency of a misconceived Cartesian cogito. As teachers, we are not Cartesian cogitos trying to *know* the world to give an encyclopaedic account of it from an invulnerable Archimedean point (Burke, 2000, p. 111). As teachers, we are not “calm, antiseptic observer[s] dressed in a white coat, standing on a lofty tower and describing everything neutrally” (Harman, 2007, p. 43). We are never isolated creatures, but live vulnerable human beings immersed in a specific environment made up of other live things and humans that are equally vulnerable as us. We are situational creatures through and through and the enfolded meaning within the situation dramatically unfolds, and we unfold with it. We are not out there on our own seeking to know, control, and manage the world we are not a part of. We are in the world in association with other people in it. It is a shared world. We share it with our students and colleagues and others. We do not have to know everything; we do not have to control everything; we do not have to be on top of everything. We do not have to be an expert. We can rely on others. It is okay. We can rely on their judgment. We can trust them. We can ask for help. Other people, including our students, know a thing or two as well. We need to relax a little bit. We are not running the show by ourselves. It is not a one wo(man) show in the first place.

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John Dewey'nin *Bütünselleştirici Deneyim Kavramı* ve Bu Kavramın Öğretmen Eğitimi Açısından Önemi

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ÖZ. Bu çalışmanın konusunu *bütünselleştirici deneyim olarak öğretim edimi* kavramının Amerikalı düşünür ve eğitim felsefecisi John Dewey'nin özellikle son dönem çalışmalarından *Deneyim Olarak Sanat* adlı eseri çerçevesinde görüngü bilimsel (fenomenolojik) bir araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak incelenmesi oluşturmaktadır. *Bütünselleştirici deneyim* kavramının ne anlama geldiği özellikle öğretmenlerin öğretim edimi sırasında yaşadıkları açısından incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda bir eğitimcinin öğrencisiyle yaşadığı ve kendi ağzından anlattığı pedagojik deneyimi görüngü bilimsel bir araştırma yöntemi doğrultusunda öykü çözümlemesi tekniği kullanılarak incelenmiş ve Dewey'nin bu kavramının ne anlama geldiği ve özellikle öğretmen eğitimi süreçlerinde nasıl kullanılabileceği anlatılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: John Dewey, görüngü bilimsel araştırma, öğretmen eğitimi, öykü çözümlemesi, bütünselleştirici deneyim

ÖZET

Amaç ve önem: Bu çalışmanın amacı Amerikalı eğitim felsefecisi ve düşünürü John Dewey'nin son dönem çalışmaları bağlamında ortaya çıkan *bütünselleştirici deneyim (consummatory experience)* fikrinin ne anlama geldiğini incelemek ve bu kavramın öğretmen eğitimi programları açısından nasıl bir öneme sahip olduğunu araştırmaktır. İlk çok olağan ve sorgulama gereği düşünülmeyecek kadar basit gibi görünen “bir öğretmenin yaptığı işe kendisini tam anlamıyla şevkle verebilmesi ne demektir?” sorusu aslında tam da sorulması ve incelenmesi gereken bir sorun olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Zira çoğu eğitimci eğitim-öğretim edimi açısından bakıldığında işini çoğu zaman pek de hevesle istekle şevkle yapamadığını görür. Öğretmenin şevkle öğretim edimi içinde bulunamaması öğrencinin de öğrenme sürecini olumsuz etkilemektedir. İşte tam da bu noktada öğretmenin kendi deneyiminin görüngü bilimsel olarak incelenmesi ve başka hiçbir araştırma metoduyla su yüzüne çıkamayacak bulguların anlaşılması önem kazanmaktadır.

Yöntem: İnsan deneyiminin dışarıdan bakılarak nesnel olarak incelenmesi çok önemli bilgilerin kazanılmasında hiç şüphesiz etkili bir yöntemdir. Bununla beraber genelde insan deneyiminin, özde de eğitim-öğretim deneyiminin kendine özgü özelliklerinden dolayı bu deneyime içeriden de bakma gerekliliği vardır ve bunu sistematik, bir başka deyişle, bilimsel olarak yapmak mümkündür. En azından 19 ve 20. yüzyıl Alman insan bilimleri (*Geisteswissenschaften*) geleneği açısından bu mümkün ve gerekli görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada da bu gelenek doğrultusunda nitel bir araştırma metodu olarak görüngü bilimsel (fenomenolojik) bir yaklaşım uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda bir öğretmenin kendi deneyiminden yola çıkarak içinde bulunduğu eğitim-öğretim bağlamını çözümleme çabası içine girmesi ve bunu yaparken de daha önceden farkına varmadığı davranışlarına ilişkin çok değerli bilgiler edinmesi ve bu bilgilerin ışığında kendi öğretmenlik deneyiminin gelişmesi ve zenginleşmesi hikayesinin analizi fenomenolojik metod doğrultusunda yapılmıştır.

Bulgular: Görüngü bilimsel çözümleme sonucunda bütünselleştirici deneyimin eğitim-öğretim edimi açısından önemi ortaya konulmuştur. İnsan deneyimi anlamlı olma yönelimi taşır ve anlamlı olabildiği oranda insan hayatını zenginleştiricidir. İnsan deneyimindeki anlam kendiliğinden hazır bir şekilde verilmemiştir. Deneyimin anlamlı olabilmesi bir uğraş gerektirir. Anlamın kazanılması yaşanan zaman içinde dramatik yani içinde uyuşmazlık ve gerilim bulunan ve tamamen kontrol edemediğimiz öğelerin karşılıklı etkileşimiyle gelişen bir sürecin sonucudur. Bu süreçte bizi düşünmeye ve

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sorgulamaya zorlayan olaylar karşımıza çıkar ve eski alışkanlıklarımızla başa çıkamayacağımız problemlerin yeni ve daha olgun bir yaklaşım geliştirerek üstesinden gelmek mümkün olur. Bu çalışmada da bir öğretmenin öğrencisiyle olan eğitimsel (pedagojik) ilişkisinin o öğretmenin deneyimini nasıl zenginleştirdiği ve öğretmen ve insan olarak nasıl bir büyüme olgunlaşma yaşandığı fenomenolojik analiz sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır. Böylesi bir olgunlaşma deneyiminin geçirmiş olduğu evreler, Dewey felsefesinin temel kavramları aracılığıyla çözümlenmiştir.

Sonuç: Genelde insan deneyiminin özelde de eğitim-öğretim deneyiminin dinamiklerini öğrenmenin ve anlamının kolay ve kestirme bir yolu yoktur. Öğretmen eğitim programları belli bir bilgi birikimini en etkili biçimde aktarmanın ötesinde eğitim-öğretim deneyiminin daha anlamlı yaşanabilmesi ve bir olgunlaşma sürecine dönüşebilmesi için yaklaşımını değiştirmek zorundadır. İyi bir öğretmen olabilmenin ve öğretmenliği şevkle yapabilmenin yolunun hazır bilgi ve tekniklerin edinilmesinin ötesinde bir süreci gerektirdiği ortadadır. Bu sürecin nasıl anlaşılması gerektiği konusunda John Dewey'nin çalışmaları ve felsefi yaklaşımı yol gösterici niteliktedir. Ayrıca böylesi bir sürecin çalışılması konusunda nitel araştırma metodlarının önemi de göz ardı edilmemelidir.