

## Radicalizing the Pedagogical Relation: Passion and Intention, Vulnerability and Failure

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The pedagogical relation, the idea of a special relationship between teacher and child, has long been a central theme or “problem” in human science education and pedagogy (*Gisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*; Klafki 1970, p. 58). Wilhelm Dilthey, the founder of the human sciences asserted in 1888 that “the study of pedagogy ... can only begin with the description of the educator in his relationship to the educand” (p. 8). In this statement, Dilthey not only establishes the indispensability of the student-teacher relationship for continental pedagogical theory, he also identifies life-world description as most appropriate for its study. In so doing, he can further be said to have anticipated one of the fundamental tasks that reconceptualist curriculum theorizing has set for itself – from the autobiographical phenomenology of William Pinar’s “method of *currere*” to more recent (auto-)ethnographic descriptive and interpretive forms. This task is the description of the lived experience of teaching and of being taught, and their imbrication in the relational and intersubjective. However, it is in the work of Max van Manen and his students that the pedagogical relation has received its most explicit and sustained treatment (e.g., van Manen, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2013, 2015; Saevi & Husevaag 2009, Friesen & Saevi 2010, Saevi 2011). In this work, the pedagogical relation is seen as different from other relations: for example, as intentionally cultivated by the educator for the sake of the educand, and as in this and other senses asymmetrical; and also as an eminently ethical and tactful relationship.

Herman Nohl, a student of Dilthey’s, gave original definition to the pedagogical relation, characterizing it as a “passionate (*leidenschaftlich*) relation between a mature (*reif*) person and one who is becoming, specifically for the sake of the latter (*seiner selbst willen*), so that he comes to his life and his form” (1988, p. 134). However, even as Nohl’s conceptualization was taking shape, it was censured by Theodore Litt (1967) for its isolation from “impersonal” socio-political realities (pp. 60-61); and it has been subsequently criticized on many other counts, including in terms of the autonomous authority it grants to those responsible for the most vulnerable in society. Finally, any TV pop-psychologist would warn against a relation that is at once “passionate,” and allegedly only for the “sake of” an “other” and his or her future. Some scholars have at least indirectly indicated their discomfort such characteristics.<sup>1</sup> In the face of these and other, more overtly critical responses, we are led to ask: “Is the pedagogical relation relevant or even possible and desirable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century –and if so in what form?”

I respond to this question first with an overview Herman Nohl’s understanding of the pedagogical relation based on his original texts,<sup>2</sup> something which has apparently not yet been undertaken in English. I then consider some of the ways in which the pedagogical relation has been addressed as a “problem.” In the light of these concerns, I argue that the pedagogical relation needs to be radically reconceptualised in terms of its key components –its asymmetry, intentionality, temporality and “passionate” nature. I then reference Bernhard Waldenfels’ notion of

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<sup>1</sup> Wulf for example incorrectly renders *leidenschaftlich* as “compassionate,” which in German would actually be *mitfühlend*, *teilnahmsvoll* or *erbarmungsvoll* (2003, p. 31). Van Manen describes the pedagogical relation as involving simply “a passion with its own pleasures and pains” (van Manen 1991, p. 74; emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup> The principle texts in this regard are: Nohl, H. (1988). *Die pädagogische Bewegung in Deutschland und ihre Theorie*. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, particularly the sections titled: “Das Wesen des erzieherischen Verhaltens” and “Der pädagogische Bezug und die Bildungsgemeinschaft” (pp. 226-240); and Nohl, H. (1949). *Gedanken für die Erziehungstätigkeit des Einzelnen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Erfahrungen von Freud und Alder*. *Pädagogik aus dreißig Jahren*, Pp. 151-160, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

“the alien” – a radicalization of the relational characteristics of “otherness” and “intentionality” – to suggest what this revision and reconfiguration might be.

As Klafki explains, the pedagogical relation was thematized long before *geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik* was named as such. Klafki reminds us that this relation was a central theme – if not the central theme – in educator J.H. Pestalozzi’s life and career (197, p. 55). Two short, familiar passages from Pestalozzi’s Letter from Stanz might suffice as an introductory description:

I determined that there should not be a minute in the day when my children should not be aware from my face and my lips that my heart was theirs, that their happiness was my happiness, and their pleasures my pleasures... Such was the foundation upon which I built...

Pestalozzi’s words are illustrative of at least one characteristic of the pedagogical relation already adumbrated by Nohl: that it is for the sake of another. Pestalozzi’s concern, for example, is that the children are “aware that [his] heart was theirs, that their happiness was [his] happiness.” The focus is not on *his* happiness or feelings, but on the experience of his charges. This emotional description can also be seen as a manifestation of the “passionate” character of the pedagogical relation, one that might somewhat allay the pop-psychological concerns alluded to above. It refers to an affective, intersubjective bond. It appears as a kind of identification with or emotional mirroring of the children’s responses to their lived experience, their emergent “subjectivity.” From these characteristics arise what Nohl identifies as a key “pedagogical criterion:”

In this approach to the subjective life of the child lies the pedagogical criterion: the claims (*Ansprüche*) that social relations and objective culture make on the child must all be subjected to a transformation, based on the question: what is the meaning of this claim or demand in the context of the life of this child...? (1988, p. 127)

Nohl’s concern, as Biesta (2014) has expressed it, is with *how* this child *is* (his or her subjectivity), rather than with *who* she is (identity) or with what she can do (efficacy). Putting this phenomenologically, the adult’s “pedagogical interest” (Giesecke 1997, p. 244) or his or her “intentionality” (Klafki 1970, 58; Mollenhauer 1972, 21), is structured and focused around, and attuned to the child’s experience. The teacher attempts to identify with the child and his or her experience, to see the world as it is seen by the child, rather than by the adult. The significance of what is thus encountered is then “transformed,” from an adult point of view to the perspective of the child, or at least the perspective that the child is seen to hold.

This emphasis corresponds with a further noted feature of the pedagogical relation: its *asymmetry*. The child and the adult do not meet as equals in such an “intentional” relation; they obviously are not friends who are together for their mutual benefit. As Nohl explains, this relation has as its principle, unique and inalienable purpose the unfolding or self-fulfillment of the educand and of his or her subjectivity.

This basic approach ... has its point of departure in the child... [It] finds its goal above all in the subject and his/her physical and personal realization (*körperlich-geistige Entfaltung*) – that this child here comes to her life’s purpose (*Lebensziel*), this is its autonomous and inalienable task. (Nohl 1949, p. 152; as quoted in Klafki 1970, p. 58)

Nohl is also clear about the *personal* and *individual* character of the pedagogical relation –or what Mollenhauer has called its “*dyadic*” structure (1972, p. 21). In speaking of “this child here,” Nohl is emphasizing that he is not addressing a generalized notion childhood or children as an abstraction, nor even a specific group or generation (e.g., his own children or contemporaneous youth movements). Instead, he is appealing to the irreplaceable particularity of *this* unique child, and his or her relation with a single teacher.

However, Nohl does not see this relation, despite its singularity, as having its home in a setting with only one educator and one educand. He describes it instead as becoming manifest in a *Bildungsgemeinschaft*, a “pedagogical” and formative community of cultivation and education. Nohl speaks of this community as being “sustained by two forces” which are seen slightly differently by adult and child. For the adult, these are “love and authority,” and “as perceived by the child,” these are “love and obedience (*gehörsam*)” (p. 138). Of course love, authority and obedience are all terms that require clarification. The love of the teacher, as Nohl describes it, calls for a “community of love with the child, which opens all doors in the child, and collects and secures the child’s whole... life in the trust of such love” (1988, p. 138). This love moreover, is two-fold: It is love for the child in his or her own present reality, and love for his or her “ideal” or for what he or she *can be* or *become*. This can be said to mark a particular temporality of the pedagogical relation: It is split between a concrete present and an imagined future, rather than being –focused just on present needs or the demands of the future.

Like love, the “authority” and “obedience” implied in a pedagogical relation and a “community of formation” need to be contextualized by Nohl’s emphasis that the relation cannot be forced, but that it is entered into freely by both educator and educand. It proceeds as much from the *authority* of the adult as from the *freedom* of the child:

Authority does not mean force, even if this authority, under certain circumstances, must forearm itself (*wappnen*);<sup>3</sup> and obedience does not mean following blindly or acting out of fear, but instead the free assimilation by the child of the adult’s will to her own. (1988, p. 139)

As a result, if the legitimacy or authority of the adult or the free obedience of the child is absent, the pedagogical relation can or will fail: The teacher, Nohl says, “may not be offended or hold it against the educand (*gekränkt sein*) if the relationship does not succeed... One would instead attempt to bring the child into relationship with another” teacher or adult (1949, p. 154). The pedagogical relation, in short, is also characterized by its *fragility*.

### **The Pedagogical Relation after Nohl?**

Readers may have noted the conspicuous absence of any reference to children’s “vulnerability” and “defenselessness” in Nohl’s description of the pedagogical relation. Similarly conspicuous is the absence of

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<sup>3</sup> Nohl, like Pestalozzi, sees recourse to corporeal punishment as a part of or a possibility in the pedagogical relation. Pestalozzi, in fact, is clear about its utility in his Letter from Stanz: “In the same way, when I heard that it was reported that I punished them too severely, I said to them: ‘You know how I love you, my children; but tell me, would you like me to stop punishing you? Do you think that in any other way I can free you from your deeply rooted bad habits, or make you always mind what I say?’ You were there, my friend, and saw with your own eyes the sincere emotion with which they answered, ‘We do not complain of your treatment. Would that we never deserved punishment; but when we do, we are willing to bear it.’” However, unlike Pestalozzi, Nohl explicitly advocates a move away from corporeal punishment, and describes the possibilities of a “new pedagogy” as follows: “Everywhere it is a matter of awakening self-activity, and to win the “will” of the child, whereas the oldest pedagogy thought progress lay in terms of training, force and habit” (1949, 157).

sustained consideration of adult fallibility and misdirected adult “passion,” as well as a mention of the ways that children teach and question us, as adults, about how we should act, and about their own subjectivity and potentiality and its realization. Despite the importance, even urgency, of these issues, the critique most frequently levelled against Nohl has been much broader in scope: It objects to Nohl’s insistence on the pedagogical relation’s autonomy and isolation from more general political, cultural and socio-economic realities. It is perhaps simplest to illustrate the thrust of this argument through reference to Nohl’s own biography, particularly during the time of National Socialism and the Second World War and. During the Nazi regime, and in the very same book that explains the pedagogical relation, Nohl characterizes his work as a search for the “biological” and “spiritual substance” for the “construction of our essence as a *Volk*” (1988, p. 286). And after the war, Nohl did not reflect publically on his complicity, only writing privately and derisively of the “muck-raking (*Wühlen*) through the pain and blood of the past” that this would entail (Nohl, 1946; as quoted in Ortmeier 2008, p. 105). The absence of an informed and critical awareness of political and cultural realities in their relation the theory and practice of education, Nohl’s own example shows, is dangerous and untenable.

Postwar German scholars have sought to frame and reinterpret the pedagogical relation specifically in response to their own political and socio-cultural realities. For example, amid the protest and unrest at the end of the 60s, Wolfgang Klafki provided both a careful explication of this idea and a cautionary comparison of an “authoritarian” pedagogical style with one “social-integrative” and “democratic” (1970, pp. 84-91). A second example is Herman Giesecke’s book-length study from 1997 which explores Rousseau, Pestalozzi and others as precursors to Nohl, and which also attempts to update “the pedagogical relation [for a] pluralistic society” (pp. 243-272). It does so by emphasizing a professional ethos for teachers. It concludes this discussion by citing a 16-point “oath for educators” from the famous German educationist Hartmut von Hentig –one that begins by committing the educator to “respect the individuality of each child, and defend this against everyone and anyone” (von Hentig 1993, p. 246; as quoted in Giesecke 1997, p. 266). The cruel reality, however, is that von Hentig himself was complicit in a multi-generational pedophile ring at a renowned progressive boarding school –and that he has labelled the young victims “seducers” (Eppelsheim 2011, n.p.).<sup>4</sup> This example from von Hentig’s life, like that from Nohl’s own biography, presents powerful empirical, if not strictly academic, counter-evidence to any approach that might grant a single individual socially autonomous authority over the most vulnerable and powerless.

In English on the other hand, the pedagogical relation has been given constructive coverage by Max van Manen (e.g., 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2013, 2015), Stephen Smith (1998), Tone Saevi (2011), Erica McWilliam (2014), and others. Concerns regarding adult emotions, responsibility and authority in the face of children’s vulnerability are also addressed by these authors in English. For example, the title of a 2009 article by Saevi and Husevaag asks whether, in the pedagogical relation, the “child” is actually “seen as the Same or [as] the Other?” Saevi and Husevaag ask further: “How do we encounter the otherness of the child pedagogically when we, by necessity, are trapped in the social conventions of the grownup world?” (p. 35). Saevi and Husevaag’s conclusion is that this encounter can only remain a constant and perilous challenge: “our challenge as adults and pedagogues is to become more attentive to the experience of the child and to acknowledge the child’s *utter otherness* as the basic precondition for pedagogical relational practice” (2009, p. 37; emphasis added). Similarly, in a short piece

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<sup>4</sup> Eppelsheim writes that von Hentig defended this school (*Odenwaldschule*) despite knowing of the fact that “Gerold Becker, who led the school from 1972 to 1985, as well as other teachers, had abused and raped children there.”

titled “Phenomenological Pedagogy,” van Manen and Adams concern themselves with the self-understanding of the adult in this relation or encounter. They ask: How can one “identify and ‘form’ oneself in the everyday experience of the pedagogical encounter... in the life of the child?” (2014, p. 609). Their answer presents a similarly strenuous challenge: Such identification and formation, they say, “is only possible if one does not lose oneself in this identification but, in spite of and even thanks to this identification, remains oneself and at the same time empathically lives in the situation of *the other*—the child” (p. 609; emphasis added).<sup>5</sup>

However upon closer examination, these questions and responses only seem to lead to further questions. For example: How do we see or acknowledge the other when Emmanuel Levinas, as the philosopher of the Other, insists that the other is not only “unknown but [also] unknowable, refractory to all light” (p. 76) ? What does it mean to “identify” empathically with the situation of the child as “other” as van Manen and Adams advocate? Again, it is Levinas who warns that “the relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion, or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in the other's place... The relationship with the other,” he adds, “will never be the feat of grasping a possibility” (1987, pp. 75-76) No high minded oath or strenuously attentive concern is a precondition for a relation with this “other.” The Other, Levinas says, is to be encountered only through “an absolute passivity,” or through a kind of “persecuting obsession” (1991, pp. 110, 121). These go “against intentionality,” he explains, “such that responsibility for others could never mean altruistic will, instinct of ‘natural benevolence,’ or love” (pp. 111-112) Using slightly different terms, Levinas emphasizes elsewhere that

To be in the presence of something is not to open it to oneself, and aim at it thus disclosed, nor even to “fulfill” by intuition the “signitive thought” that aims at it and always ascribes a meaning to it which the subject bears in itself... Proximity is not an intentionality.

Of course, the pedagogical relation, as described by Nohl is nothing if it is not intentional. Indeed, it is a “thoroughly intentional (*absichtsvoll*)” relationship, as Mollenhauer characterizes it (1972, p. 21; emphasis added). It is defined by the pedagogical intention –a personal and individual interest that is made all the more crucial and precarious through the authority of the adult and the vulnerability of the child.

Speaking of “the other” and appealing to Levinas’ relational ethics seems only to illustrate the impossibility of a coherent articulation of the pedagogical relation. On these terms, at least, a reconfiguration or updating of Nohl’s pedagogical relation for the present appears impossible. However, this does not mean that Levinas’ phenomenological ethics and the broader phenomenological tradition do not contain the seed of new possibilities.

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<sup>5</sup> A further example is van Manen’s 2000 article on “Moral language and pedagogical experience,” which presents an “exploration into the meanings of care...” to sensitize us to “pedagogical relations... [as] lived and experienced” (p. 315). Here and elsewhere (e.g., 2002), van Manen recognizes that for Levinas, ethical “responsibility can only be understood... if we can somehow transcend the intentional relation” (2000, p. 319). However, van Manen simultaneously and consistently ties Levinas’ notion of “responsibility” to broader notions of “care,” “caring responsibility” and “care-as-worry.” Thus understood, van Manen concludes that care stands as “the source for understanding and nurturing the more derivative varieties of care ...in our research literature and professional practices” (p. 326). Levinas’ notion of responsibility, however, is one of *absolute* responsibility, quite distinct from care *tout court*, and not generalizable to “varieties of professional care.” In fact, if “care” is to be found at all in Levinas, it appears *not* in conjunction with “responsibility,” but in Levinas’ critiques of Heidegger’s notion of care (*Sorge*) as a manifestation of intentionality (e.g., 1998, pp. 212-215).

Referencing closely the work of Bernard Waldenfels, a scholar of Levinas and a student of Merleau-Ponty, I now outline in the briefest some of possible characteristics of a reconfigured understanding.

This begins with the proposition that the pedagogical relation can no longer be a relation that is asymmetrical in comparison to other types of relations and interactions. Instead, *all* relations are asymmetrical, with the pedagogical relation representing at most a *special type* of asymmetry. The notion of “self” as teacher in relation with an “other” suggests an underlying comparability or symmetry between the two. What otherness “delimits,” Waldenfels explains, is an *opposition* between two things that still involves a certain symmetry. However, pedagogy and human relations in an age of immigration and globalization deal regularly with experiences that don’t fall into a pattern of symmetrical opposition –experiences such as familiarity, recognisability and “ownness” on the one hand, and estrangement, foreignness, and “withdrawal” or “escape” on the other. These experiences, Waldenfels explains, belong to the sphere of the alien:

The alien... does not arise from a mere process of delimitation. It emerges from a process which is realised simultaneously as an inclusion (*Entgrenzung*) and an exclusion (*Ausgrenzung*). The alien is not opposed to the same, rather it refers to the *Self*... to myself or to ourselves, including the “sphere of ownness” from which it escapes. What is alien does not simply appear different, rather it arises from elsewhere. The sphere of alienness is separated from my sphere of ownness by a threshold, as is the case for sleep and wakefulness, health and sickness, age and youth, and no one ever stands on both sides of the threshold at the same time. (2011 p. 7)

The radically asymmetry implied in the relation of ownness to the alien also radicalizes Nohl’s idea of “*this* child here,” or the child’s singularity. The adult’s sphere of ownness is constituted through the exclusion of the alien, and he or she cannot step outside of it. Just as the adult is separated by a threshold from his or her own childhood, the adult is also separated from the child before her by a threshold –a separation which neither identification nor attentiveness can overcome. Indeed, intentional acts of these kinds only reduce what might be alien to what is my “own.” Also, Waldenfels –writing with Meyer-Drawe in the article “the child as alien” –says that the child can be seen to belong, in cultural and historical terms, to a special class of “alien.” Reminiscent of Foucault’s (1978) grouping of figures such as the “hysterical women” and the “masturbating child” as targets for social sexual control (pp. 103-105), Meyer-Drawe and Waldenfels refer to a metaphorical “gravitational field” constituted by the alien: “[It] correspondingly forms itself around three figures, the child, the wild [one or child], and the fool or idiot” (1988, p. 272). In this characterization, Meyer-Drawe and Waldenfels effectively ascribe to our relation with the child (or the wild one or idiot) a special or extreme asymmetry. It is not only a matter of an opposition of “alienness” versus “ownness;” the child, they are saying, is alien to the adult in the same politically- and historically-burdened way that the “native” or “savage” are still at times juxtaposed with the “civilized,” the cultured with the barbaric, or more simply, lunacy with sanity or the nonsensical with the commonsensical.

In addition, not only the child, but also the adult is experienced as alien in this context. The adult experiences his or her own conflicting and unarticulated desires and impulses in relation both to herself and to the child. Speaking of specifically parents and their children, Wilfrid Lippitz observes that “parents, those who are ostensibly closest to their children, are rendered foreign to themselves through their children. And children are rendered foreign in the eyes of their parents” (2007, p. 91). There are thresholds, in other words, which bisect not only the pedagogical relation, but the parent’s or adult’s experience of their own “selves” within it. As an adult, in such a context –as

well as in other settings— one simply *cannot* “remain oneself,” as van Manen and Adams suggest. We do not enjoy a stable self-identity or self-sameness in relation to the alien, the child. Instead, we are subject to instability and difference in our experiences of ourselves, our past and the children or child in our present.

Lippitz continues by explaining that this alienness and the thresholds it implies are also palpable in the temporality of the pedagogical relation:

the responsibility of the parents for the future of their children... [is marked by] a radical break. How can they answer for their children if they do not also have at their disposal the time that belongs to their children? [...] In a radical sense, parents cannot take *any* responsibility for their children, since they do not have the future of the child available to them. Should they attempt to appropriate this responsibility without a view to the difference that separates the generations, then they lose their ethical justification and grounding. (2007, p. 91)

This radical temporal break changes not only adult *responsibility* and *authority* but also the child’s *will* and *trust*, as well as the *love* that Nohl sees as uniting them. As Lippitz’ description suggests, these “forces” cannot be seen to circulate in uninterrupted interchange between child and adult. For the adult in particular, such love can no longer be responsibly or reliably directed to the child’s future in an unproblematic sense. Not only is this future “unavailable” to the adult, it also cannot be observed from a stable position of self-identity by the adult. As a further consequence, the “love” of the adult and its relevance to the child’s present reality is also put into question, since this, too, is doubly marked by alienness, both that of the adult and his or her past, and that proper to the child’s “ownness.”

One thing that is not “broken” or reduced in this possible revision of the pedagogical relation, though, is *passion*. However, this passion is different from the one named by Nohl. It is not one that actively “collects and secures a child’s whole life” (1988, p. 128); instead, it is one as it is one that is “touched, affected, stimulated, surprised and to some extent violated” (Waldenfels 2011, p. 46). This passion takes the form of what Waldenfels calls pathos, which he uses “to designate those events which are not at our disposal, as if merely waiting for a prompt or command, but rather happen to us, overcome, stir, surprise, attack us” (2011, p. 26). These are experiences or events which do not arise through a strenuous effort or structured intentionality, but rather despite it, even in resistance to it:

In sum, everything that appears [to us] as something has to be described not simply as something which receives a sense, but as something which provokes sense without being meaningful itself... I call this happening pathos, *Widerfahrnis* or af-fect, marked by a hyphen in order to suggest that something is done to us. (2007, p. 74; emphases in original)

Pathos or *Widerfahrnis* is experienced as a provocation, stimulation, surprise and violation –it provokes a response. As the words “pathos” and “provocation” themselves suggest, our response to the “event” is not one of “sense-making” or “ordering,” but of a particular reaction, a sensing and feeling that exceeds and envelops cognition, as Waldenfels puts it:

Responsivity goes beyond every intentionality because responding to that which happens to us cannot be exhausted in the meaning, understanding, or truth of our response. All this is not restricted to the affective background of our cognitive and practical modes of comportment; it concerns these modes in their essence... (2011, p. 28)

In underpinning cognitive and practice modes “in their essence,” responsivity is not confined to moments of sudden shock or surprise, but is a part of what touches, affects or stimulates us moment-by-moment. The unexceptional and enduring character of this pathos is expressed in Waldenfels’ original German term *Widerfahrnis*. It begins with a prepositional prefix (*wider*) meaning “against;” this is followed by the verb “*fahren*,” to travel –with “*erfahren*” meaning to experience. Together, these meanings suggest a kind of “friction” that is inherent in all experience. It is experience “despite oneself” or one’s own intentions; it is experience “against the grain,” so to speak.

It is in the adult’s ongoing experience of her purpose and feelings being constantly “affected, stimulated, surprised and to some extent violated” that the passion and intentionality of the pedagogical relation can be understood. The intense and intimate mirroring and identification characteristic of the relation –emphasized from Pestalozzi through to van Manen– can thus be seen in terms of the irresolvable tension implied in the relationship between intentionality on the one hand and *Widerfahrnis* or pathos on the other. It is perhaps only in this sense that proximity and estrangement should be said to exist in the pedagogical relation “spite of and even thanks to... identification,” as van Manen and Adams put it.

“The authentic experience of the child on its own and for us” as adults, as Meyer-Drawe and Waldenfels conclude, “is a *failed* experience, but as such a continuous challenge, supported through familiarity or intimacy (*Vertrautheit*), and strengthened by its being unsettled (*Beunruhigung*)” (p. 286; emphasis added). However, this failure is not entirely counterproductive or limiting; instead, it can be viewed as fertile, or to borrow (with Lippitz) Levinas’ term, *fecund*: “It is only” in terms of the of the child’s alienness, Lippitz concludes, “that generativity and plurality is to be thought of in the context of pedagogy, which otherwise so easily shuts itself off in adult perspectives on action and meaning” (2007, p. 74). The pedagogical relation, in short, is a “responsive” and unsettled relation more than it is one of any intention and identification. It is only in the context of the manifold, uncomfortable tensions of proximity and alienation, intention and passion –and under the shadow of past and present abuse and tragedy– that the pedagogical relation can be said to still retain its relevance today.



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