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Experiences of "Hospitality" by Racialized Immigrant Pre-service Teachers on Canadian School Landscapes: A Phenomenological Perspective

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Abstract

Through a phenomenological perspective, we frame the experiences of "hospitality" of racialized[i] immigrant student teachers as they recount their field placements in a number of Canadian schools. This article presents the following themes which emerged from the study, and which also serve as section titles: 1) The classroom door as threshold: Crossing workaday and festive worlds; 2) More foreign than foreign; Stranger than strange; 3) You are who I think you are; Not who you know you are; 4) Actively inviting the threshold; Passively accepting the barrier; 5) Sensing the cold: The hostility in hospitality as hostil/pitality?; 6) The hiddenness of potential: Growing in foreign soil; 7) The strangeness of Canadian students: Hospitality beyond hospitality; 8) Inspiriting the festive: Pedagogy *as* hospitality. The paper concludes by showing that living hospitably with the foreign-other on the Canadian school landscape is not so much a problem as it is an invitation for teachers to realize the call of their vocation.

Introduction

> *Calvin sits quietly with his head down. He is staring at the tape recorder set down in front of him. He seems a little hypnotized by the numbers marching forward on the face of the machine. We wonder if the question we just asked him was too personal, too difficult for him to answer. We know he is vulnerable and we need to take care. Finally, he looks up and says: You know… the teacher I worked with should have known something of hospitality; it goes without saying. In one word, I felt like a "Stranger" there…not welcomed.*

Calvin is an international student teacher who immigrated to Canada from the Congo Kinshasa.

He is speaking of the supervising teacher with whom he worked during one of his field placements in a Canadian school. Even though he seemed quite unaware of it, his words eerily echoed for us Derrida's analysis of "hospitality":

> The word "hospitality" means to invite and welcome the "stranger" *(l'étranger)*, both on the personal level – how do I welcome the other into my home? – and on the level of the state – raising socio-political questions about refugees, immigrants, "foreign" languages, minority ethnic groups, etc. (Caputo, 1997, p. 110)

All student teachers are to some extent pedagogically vulnerable when they leave the known world of the university and enter schools to do their "practice" teaching. But for non-white[1] immigrant pre-service teachers like Calvin, this sense of vulnerability can be much more acute. In the teacher education program where we work, not only do many of these students report having difficulties "fitting into" Canadian schools, but a fair number of them fail their student teaching placements outright. Failing a practicum or even experiencing traumatic events during one often results in the student never teaching in Canada. Calvin is an example of a student who did not succeed in his practicum and who has never taught in this country. While painful for Calvin, the experience can be instructive however because it offers us an opportunity to inquire into theoretical work on hospitality and ultimately wonder and ask: worked. Such attributions bring us to wonder: "What is the experience of hospitality or the lack thereof, by those made "Stranger" on the Canadian school landscape?"

Methodologically Speaking

This inquiry may be unique because, while educational researchers have looked at the experiences of immigrant students through lenses of diversity, multiculturalism, race, gender, inclusion, as well as other axes of identity/difference, comparatively few have done so from a phenomenological perspective. We have chosen to fill this vacuum by writing from within a tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology associated with the Utrecht school and in line with van Manen (1997; 2002a; 2002b), Henriksson (2008), Kirova and Emme (2009), Langeveld (1983), Løgstrup (1971) and Saevi (2005) who have all sought to address sensitive educational issues. The lives of those who are made Other by a host society can be very painful. For this reason it seemed important to choose a methodology where the writing of the lived experiences of those who live on the margins is considered an "ethical-aesthetic responsibility of the researcher" (Henriksson & Saevi, 2009, p. 36). Dealing with the lives of others, especially those who are in vulnerable positions such as Calvin, is always a tenuous and fragile endeavor and requires a sensitivity that many other research approaches lack. In the case of racialized immigrant students training to be teachers in North American schools, it can be too easy to gloss over their experiences as being due to racism or an inability to acculturate to a new system, as though these were simple equations were sufficient.

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1 We use the terms "racialized" or "non-white" as do Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli (2009) rather than "visible minority" because the United Nations and Canada Race Relations have noted the latter as being "discriminatory" and "racist."

From a phenomenological perspective, lived reality is always much more complex than any theorizing or statistics can account for. Thus we posit that issues such as racism or a failure to acculturate are not simply concepts to be eradicated or fixed but rather that they are always already unique human experiences, whether they be ones of pain, of rejection or even of triumph. And while we might wish, like Blanchot and Zakir, to liberate ourselves "from the exclusionary powers of concepts themselves" (2010, p. 11), it must be recognized that ultimately all we have are words with which to paint the actual experiences of those living them. As Lester (1999) says "the purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation" (p. 1). What is it like then to experience hospitality or the lack thereof from within such a perspective? Phenomenology strives to paint 'experience' in such a way that one need not be an immigrant to a new country, trying to become a teacher, in order to understand the phenomenon of hospitality itself. In this sense, have we not all, at one time or another, been welcomed by the hospitable host or conversely, experienced the unwelcoming host who has made us feel unwanted and uncomfortable? Hermeneutic phenomenology with its "profound existential orientation" (p. 37) allows for such connections or "*résonances*" between the experiences of the person having lived them and those reading of them on the page. In fact, it is when such things resonate, sometimes called the "phenomenological nod," that we know that we have achieved a certain level of perceptivity and beauty in our writing, or, the hallmark of good phenomenology.

Hence it was through a careful and sustained reading of racialized immigrant pre-service students' lived experience descriptions – LEDs – (van Manen, 1997) that we sought to uncover how students had lived hospitality and welcome, or the lack thereof, in Canadian schools where they had completed their field work. From this analysis, we were constantly brought to ask: "What might it be like to experience being a Stranger or be made to be the Stranger, on a foreign school landscape? And how might we understand the experience of being a Stranger in terms of hospitality and welcome?"

Classroom Door as "Threshold": Crossing Workaday and Festive Worlds

In responding to the university's need for teachers to supervise pre-service students, those who take on this responsibility are, at least implicitly, agreeing to share their classrooms or 'pedagogical homes' with others. In this sense, the teacher is *host* to his[ii] or her *guest* – the student teacher. The good host, in a hospitable gesture makes "room for the arrival of the Other" (Fraser, 2008, p. 167), inviting the student to join him or her in the classroom – a space that heretofore had belonged solely to the teacher. The willingness of the teacher to share his or her pedagogical space with the student suggests the words: "Come in, come in" (Still, 2010, p. 4), even if not said out loud. To be hospitable means then to open one's door to the other and to say: "Welcome to my home, please join me here." It is from such a perspective that Still (2010) tells us that "hospitality in theory and practice relates to crossing boundaries....or thresholds" (p. 4). Jager (1998) goes even further by saying that such thresholds *are* hospitality and that crossing them requires a certain attitude of openness on the part of the host as he welcomes his guest.

From a phenomenological perspective, we begin from the notion that as human beings we stand, always already "in relationship to others, to things, and to the world" (Jager, 1998, p. 1).

What is of particular interest to us in Jager's work is his exploration of "two very different types of relationships to this world" (1998, p. 2). The first being an attitude which emerges from *the world of work or the workaday world* as humans strive to transform the natural world in order to meets their needs and the second, an attitude which opens up "*a festive world* and cultivates close alliances with human, divine, and natural beings in such a way that both the self and the other are thereby revealed to one another" (p. 2). Jager (1998) explores the never separate "mysterious transition" which occurs when we move from the "neutral and indifferent" (p. 27) space of the workaday world, to that of an essentially festive" (p. 28) and relational world that is structured by "hospitality and dialogue" (p. 27). Such a transition or crossing happens, he tells us, when a "person interrupts his absorption in the world of work, where he is in the habit of removing one obstacle after the other, and enters a very differently structured world that leads him to a threshold and fills him with the hope of a hospitable and personal encounter" (1998, p. 27). What is it like to be a student teacher standing at the threshold between the university world and that of the school practicum?

> *Sam, an Algerian student, is standing before the bulletin board outside of the university field placement office. He places his finger on the page and slowly moves it down until he finds his name. He then moves his finger across it until he comes to the name of the teacher with whom he is to work during his first field placement. The name belongs to a woman and suggests that she is of Canadian origin. Sam feels his stomach tighten. He is nervous but also hopeful. He knows that he may have to work harder than his Canadian colleagues who were born in this country and who know the schooling system here well. Having grown up in Africa, he recognizes that the schools there were very different from what he will encounter in this practicum. Faced with the unknown, he is nervous. He just hopes that his teacher will like him.*

It is interesting to note that even before he started his practicum, Sam was not so much worried about his performance as a student teacher but rather that his teacher would like him personally. In that moment of the unknown, of the mysterious wait, this immigrant student appeared hopeful that he would be met first by a teacher's "festive" attitude and not by the neutral indifference of his or her workaday world. His words remind us of Jager's fictitious geologist and the "reticence and hesitation in his footsteps as his entire body…move[d] in a way that testifie[d] to his mental and physical understanding that he [wa]s approaching a *threshold* which [would] lead to the mysterious domain of an *other"* (*emphasis in original*, 1998, p. 28). Like the geologist, did Sam somehow sense that he was moving toward a threshold as he awaited his first field placement? Symbolically the *classroom door as threshold* represents for us various possible moments of crossing as students transition from the university world to the practicum world and move from the identity of student to that of teacher. Here we use the word *symbol*, as does Jager, in its ancient and literal meaning of "*a bringing together a host and a guest within a hospitable realm*" (1998, p. 48).

More Foreign Than Foreign; Stranger Than Strange

> *Nicholas, who also came to Canada from the Congo, is speaking to the director in charge of field placements at his university. He has always considered himself to be a positive person who can adapt to just about any situation but he has had such a nagging feeling in his gut ever since he met the teacher who is to supervise him in his field placement that he feels he must consult with the director. "I don't know," he is saying, "I can't really explain what I felt when I met with her. It's just that I got the sense that she was uncomfortable with me. That she was uneasy about working with someone like me, you know an African." The director looks at him and says:"Nicholas I know you well enough to know that you would not come to me unless you were really very concerned. You aren't the type of person to ask for special treatment or to complain unnecessarily so your feelings do worry me. I think it would be best if I assigned you to a different teacher."*
> *Nicholas lowers his head and moves around uncomfortably on his chair before finally responding: "I don't know sir I might just be imagining things. Maybe everything will be fine." The director replies: "I don't want you to feel bad for talking to me. I think you need to trust your feelings. I'd rather prevent potential problems before they occur, alright?" Nicholas is relieved but at the same time he feels guilty because he really can't put into words why he feels the way he does about this teacher.*

What might it have been that Nicholas sensed in the teacher in that very first meeting? Jager again notes that at the threshold – in that moment before the classroom door opens – a person or here a student teacher, is always 'stranger' to the one who is to welcome him. Taken up with her work, the student can only hope that the teacher will be able to put aside her workaday world and enter the festive space, at least momentarily, in order to transform him, as Jager and Derrida similarly suggest, from a stranger to her guest. Although we do not know exactly what transpired in their meeting, we wonder if on some level Nicholas did not feel his *strangeness* in the eyes of this teacher being reflected back to him? Is this perhaps why he suspected that the teacher was uncomfortable with his Africaness? What does it mean to be African and not Canadian in a Canadian school field placement? Nicholas seems to realize, on some level at least, that he is about to enter a school community which is not his own. He seemed to realize that consequently he would be both different from most members and that his African-ness would set him apart from the usual identity of a teacher in a Canadian school. Was what Calvin sensed then perhaps the "identity" of which Derrida speaks, as the "identity of identitarianism" which are but "self-affirming, self-protecting, homogenizing identities that make every effort to exclude the different" (Caputo, 1997, p. 106)? "Such nationalist identitarianism," Derrida argues, "does everything it can to prevent the 'other' from crossing over 'our' borders" (Ibid). In the case of the student teacher, nationalist identitarianism would mean preventing or discouraging the student teacher from crossing the threshold of the classroom door. Although we cannot know if this was the teacher's intent, it does point to Nicholas at least sensing a lack of hospitality on the part of the teacher who was to host him. We wonder what kind of host Nicholas had expected.

In order to consider such a question, we might best begin by drawing some ontological differences between the classroom and other spaces that we inhabit in the world. Consider the

case of knocking at the door of a friend's home for instance. In that moment before our knock is answered our expectation is that we will be met by a *festive* attitude – that our friend will be happy to see us – that our host will welcome us as a guest through an opened door. As such, the home is often a festive space, rather than one of labor, where family and friends gather together to live and to celebrate with each other. Conversely, in the case of the school classroom we are considering, the work world is always already both a work space and a festive one. Here the attitude the student will be met by will always depend on which world the teacher is occupying at a certain moment in time. It is the teacher's ability to move out of her work world attitude and into a festive one which will allow her to meet her student hospitably. Hospitality in this sense "means to invite and welcome the 'stranger' (*l'étranger*)" (Caputo, 1997, p. 110) festively or over the threshold and into one's space. It seems that Nicholas was not greeted by such an attitude when he met this teacher.

To be fair, perhaps it is this need to integrate a festive attitude (as mentor) in a space that is fundamentally oriented towards work (evaluating and judging the competencies of the student teacher) which makes the practicum experience quite confusing and difficult for some teachers. When is the teacher to be in her workaday world and when in the festive world? There is no fixed or even knowable answer to this question. All that can be said is that being a good host for the student teacher appears to depend on the host's ability to move with ease across both the workaday world and the festive world space or to be both a *judge* of the student's performance and a caring *host* as the situation calls for. A teacher as caring host may better recognize that the student teacher standing at the threshold of the classroom door, as "*not – yet* guest but still *stranger,"* may suffer from a certain ontological "incompleteness" as Sartre (1983, p. 507) would say. That is, he may suffer from a fragility caused by his relative ignorance of the workaday world he is about to enter. As such not only is he dependent upon the teacher's welcome and hospitality, but in a sense, is hostage to the teacher's good will. Hence, to hope for a festive response appears to be a *call* by the student for the generosity of the supervising teacher. Quinn's words reflect this call:

> *Before and beneath me, before and beneath the "silver night" of our academic labours, lies the "step of the stranger" – thus, the question of hospitality, with its resonant, radical call to make room for that which is, in truth, foreign-other.* (2010, p. 101)

If all student teachers, regardless of where they may come from, are always *strangers* or *foreign-others* to the teachers they will work with, then how might such foreignness be magnified for the racialized immigrant student teacher who has, *a priori*, been made "foreign" by his host country? Is this student not possibly at risk of being made "doubly foreign" – "doubly strange" – "doubly other" by those on the Canadian school landscape? Is it perhaps not more difficult for some Canadian teachers to welcome students whom they see as being *strange-strangers* or *foreign-foreigners*, as guests in their classrooms? And might this double-foreignness or strangeness in any way make the call of these students harder to hear for some teachers? Did Nicholas' *call* to the practicum director reflect his anxiety that he was being made doubly strange – too strange – by the teacher he was to work with? And in hearing his student's call, was the director not an example of a host who was able to step out of his workaday world momentarily in order to open up a relational festive space with his student and to respond humanely to Nicholas'

fears? Whether the intended practicum experience would have been successful or not is less important here, we believe, than was the director who was able to invite his student over the threshold of his office door and make him feel more guest than stranger.

You are Who I Think You Are; Not Who You Know You Are

Sam is standing alone in the staff room of the school where he is completing his first practicum. It is the second recess and Sam is sipping coffee from his cup. His supervising teacher walks up to him and says: "Sam! Can I speak to you for a minute?" to which Sam replies: "Of course." He follows his teacher to the side of the room, who then turns to him and says: "Sam you know, you are someone who was colonized...It is the French who colonized the people in your country, and you have the same mentality as them. I mean you have the same tendency to turn around the issue...you say things like "Oh really? But you don't ever really answer."

Sam who is from Algeria knows that technically what the teacher is saying is true: Algeria is a country that was colonized by the French. What shocks Sam though is that the teacher would say such a thing to him and then generalize his behaviour to his whole country or population. Before Sam can respond, the teacher, seemingly oblivious to his student's discomfort continues on: "You the colonized you tend to always beat around the bush. When I was in University I did a short practicum in Lyon, France...and I know they always said things like: You North Americans...but they never got to the point..."

Sam is quite horrified by what he is hearing but finds himself unable to respond. Just then the bell rings and the teacher announces quite jovially: "Well time to get back to the barracks!" like nothing odd has just happened. Sam stands rooted to his spot, feeling crushed. He wants to leave and never come back.

What must it be like to be told by a teacher *who* you are, when you yourself feel that you are not that? The teacher, seemingly oblivious, does not appear to consider that his actions might be received as hurtful or even racist by his student. While it is impossible to know the person's actual intentions in saying what he did to the student, it is nonetheless possible to wonder if he was not perhaps confusing Jager's "worlds" on some level. Could it have been that he believed that his words were only "constructive criticism" and therefore quite legitimate in his role as a supervising teacher from within a workaday space? If so, does this not point to the inherent danger of a teacher falling prey to a "desire to control the [student] and to use him as an instrument in the service of [his] workaday projects" as Jager (1998, p. 33) says? In not engaging "a festive desire to witness [his student's] free and spontaneous self-manifestation" (Ibid), the teacher, at least for Sam, seemed to be objectifying him as that which he thought him to be (or even his whole "race" to be) rather than creating a relational space where he could encounter who this particular student really was in his authentic self. One might say that when one does not engage "the festive" with another, that the possibility of rendering the other "thing" is increased. Jager himself takes a much harsher stance than this by saying that "only severe pathology could limit us merely to one perspective and deprive us of a counterbalancing

perspective of the other" (p. 6)...and "only madness could condemn a person to become imprisoned on such a landscape" (p. 15). Was it such a madness that made Sam want to leave the school immediately? And in not being able to so because it would have meant failing his practicum, was he not in a sense a prisoner on this landscape of madness? It might be noted then that the possibility of living as a prisoner on a landscape of madness is what sets apart a person like a student teacher from the guest in a home. In contrast to this guest who is always free to leave if and when he is made to feel unwelcomed by his host, the student teacher's position may better be reflected by Derrida's (2000) notion of a "hierarchy of guests and hostages" (p. 153) within traditional understandings of hospitality. Here, some student teachers like Sam, rather than feeling like guests, are made to feel like strangers trapped in a hostage situation or like prisoners to their supervising teachers' every whim.

Actively Inviting the Threshold; Passively Accepting the Barrier

> *Calvin arrives early every morning to the school where he is doing his practicum. He only got a few hours sleep last night and he is exhausted. He opens the lid of the photocopying machine to make copies of the assignment his students will be completing this morning. He places the paper on the glass and lowers the lid. He thinks back to all the work he has done over the last weeks since his field placement began. The fact that he majored in Language Arts and Social Studies in his pre-service teaching program at the university and is now being asked to teach senior Math and Science classes has been a constant stressor for him. But when he complained to the field placement director he was told that in high schools this was normal and that if he wanted to teach at this grade level then he would have to accept that sometimes he might have to teach things he hadn't been specifically trained to do. Calvin couldn't believe his ears and walked away from the office feeling defeated.*
>
> *Coming out of his reverie, he presses the print button on the copier and listens as it begins to spit out sheet after sheet. Later, he stands at the front of the class as the students pass the assignment to each other. One student raises his hand and asks Calvin what he means by the first question on the page. Calvin looks down and begins to explain when he sees from the corner of his eye, a group of students fooling around. He looks over at his teacher who is sitting at his desk. As usual he has his back to the class and is not paying attention to what is happening. Calvin stops explaining to the student and tells the others to stop what they are doing. The students continue like he hasn't said a word. He feels like crying, he doesn't know what to do. He looks pleadingly at the teacher's back. "Why doesn't he help me?" he thinks. "Why doesn't he ever pay attention to me teaching? Can't he see that I need help?"*

Two days after this event happened, Calvin quit his field placement. He never spoke to his supervising teacher about this decision or to anyone in the field placement office at the university. He simply quit and never went back. How are we to understand the experiences that he lived?

Student teachers tend to believe, at least implicitly, that a teacher's agreement to work with them was not simply a *passive* acceptance but rather an *active invitation* on their part. If Calvin was starting from the belief that his teacher had wanted him there, had maybe even actively sought him out, then it would make sense that he would not understand his teacher's demeanor towards him. Ontologically, to actively invite someone is quite different from simply accepting that he or she *must* be there. Passive acceptance points to Westmoreland's (2008) "conditional hospitality" which only ever concerns itself with rights, duties, obligations, etc." (p. 1). that is intrinsic to a workaday space where, in our case, a teacher would see his role as solely one of evaluation and certification (which may create a sense of an "unwilling welcome" on his part). On the other hand, an active invitation – from within a festive space – is more of an opening to the one invited and can show "a willingness to be with others" (Fraser, 2008, p. 7). In this sense, actively inviting appears to be more of a willful act, a welcoming welcome, an answering of the student's call through a teachers' generosity. While both Derrida and Jager see this type of active invitation as a "gift" one must not mistake it for an open invitation to any and all. As Derrida cautions, the host must not turn himself into "*khôra* which welcomes all, as a kind of receptacle" (Caputo, 1997, p. 110) but rather the host-teacher, in being the official "owner" or authority of his classroom, "holds onto his ownership" and hence sets limits to his gift to the other. The teacher-host, not letting the student have free reign in the classroom, is never *only* festive. In this sense, the festive never erases the workaday world and vice versa. The teacher always remains the teacher and never becomes solely the friend of the student since such a capitulation would be disastrous. Of course, as we saw with Calvin, teachers who refuse to "bridge the distance between themselves and their [students]" (Jager, 1998, p. 1) can be just as disastrous. A student such as Calvin may leave the placement without even feeling able to notify the teacher of his decision.

It seems to us that Calvin's experience resonates with Jager's description of a workaday world where "entering this world is like beginning a long march on a road where every step on the way demands the removal of a physical or mental barrier and where each new breakthrough, as soon as it is achieved, brings into view some new obstacle" (p. 31). Such barriers, according to Jager, are but the work world's resistance to "human dwelling" and its need to show its indifference to human emotions and desires (p. 32). The teacher's indifference may have been transmitted to Calvin through the simple gesture of the teacher keeping his back to him, especially when we begin from an understanding that "there are no grounds of knowing the other than through the face of the Other before me" (Fraser, 2008, p. 198). In keeping his back turned to his student did this not perhaps send a message of unwelcome and inhospitality to Calvin?

If hospitality is, as Jager says "threshold, altar, doorways, and monuments" (1998, p. 34) then he sees the inhospitable as barrier, obstacle, and resistance. The student's hopeful anticipation of crossing the classroom threshold and being welcomed as a valued guest by the host teacher appears to have been extinguished when Calvin discovered that the hoped-for threshold was nothing but a series of barriers placed before him. The student may have felt that with his back turned, the teacher was keeping him a stranger, holding him hostage in his "world of everyday work…[where] each task and each problem [that] present[ed] itself was an obstacle to [his] progress" (p. 33). With the accumulation of obstacles before his path, Calvin finally walked away from the field placement and ultimately failed to graduate.

Sensing the Cold: The Hostility in Hospitality as Hostil/pitality

> *Sam sits in the interview chair fidgeting. We have asked him to describe for us the teacher he worked with during his second field placement. He seems to be searching for the right words. Finally he looks up at us and says: "You know the teacher wasn't very welcoming; she was quite cold toward me.*

Sam's use of the word "cold" seems instructive to us. What did he mean by his supervising teacher being *cold* and how might this relate to a lack of hospitality? Etymologically, from the Old English, *cald* or *ceald,* "cold" or "coldness," *has roots in gel-/*gol-* "cold" as *gelare* "to freeze," *gelu* "frost," *glacies* "ice." Cold has also been linked since the 1530s to the notion of frigidity from L. *rigidus* "hard, stiff, rough, severe," from *rigere* "be stiff" (Online Etymology Dictionary). It might be said that Sam's hope that the teacher would not focus on what he was doing wrong, was in fact the hope that his teacher would not be overly "severe" (as in the French sense of the word "to be strict"). Perhaps closer to Sam's meaning is cold *qua* a certain "cold-bloodedness", as used in the 1590s in speaking of persons, "without emotion; unfeeling" in their actions. The phrase refers to the old notion that blood temperature rose with excitement in the literal sense of reptiles, etc., from c.1600 (Ibid). Or perhaps, he speaks of a "cold-heartedness" as in the O.E. "cealdheort" or to be "cruel" (Ibid). Was Sam's teacher somehow cruel in his eyes? Could only focusing on what Sam did wrong in his teaching not be perceived as somehow cruel?

The idea of "cruelty" brings us back to Derrida's notion of the inherent tension within hospitality whereby hosts always already retain mastery of their houses (in our case, classrooms) and therefore have the ultimate power to decide how they will *be* with their guests (or student teachers). Such a tension points to idea that

> …there is always a little hostility in all hosting and hospitality. By virtue of its etymology, the word "hospitality" carries its opposite within itself... The word "hospitality" derives from the Latin hospes, which is formed from hostis, which originally meant "stranger" and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or "hostile" stranger (hostiles), + pets (polis, potes, potential), to have power. (Caputo, 1997, p. 110)

Is it perhaps this hostility within hospitality that Sam sensed? In what ways may the teacher have shown him hostility through the power that she wielded? How is the hostile host cruel by her very coldness or coolness? Could it be that Sam expected only the hospitable and welcoming part of hospitality, only a festive attitude, and hence was unprepared to encounter the hostility of his host? Was what Sam experienced with his teacher then more of a cold-hearted closedness than the warm-hearted openness that he had so hoped for? In seeking a welcoming support from the teacher, Sam may have been greeted rather with the heartlessness of a "hostil/pitality" as coined by Derrida (Caputo, 1997, p. 110) – a hostility which is built into hospitality to allow the host to limit his gift of an open welcome in order to "retain mastery of his house" (p. 111) or here the classroom. While the hostile in hospitality does serve a purpose, it can also lead to a certain paralysis on the part of the host that renders him or her unable to move from the indifferent workaday space to a festive and relational one. Was it this paralysis that Sam interpreted as a "coldness" or a "cold attitude" coming from his teacher? While one could criticize the teacher for

displaying such a demeanor to her student, we choose to see it otherwise.

We will consider it rather as does one who instructs us not to see this *aporia* or paralysis as something negative but rather as being part and parcel of all hospitality. Such a paralysis, he says, is what the good host must push through, push past, in order to truly welcome the guest. As such, "hospitality really starts to get under way only when we "experience" (which means to travel through or go through) this paralysis (which is the inability to move)" (Caputo, 1997, p.111). Thus we learn that "for hospitality to occur, hospitality must go beyond hospitality" and in this sense, hospitality is never truly there or present in the moment but always "to come" (Ibid). Hospitality must be actively pursued then and not passively expected because when hospitality does not go beyond itself, it does tend to "fall back into itself, and becomes a bit of ungracious meanness, that is, hostile" (Ibid). To pursue something actively would require that a teacher be aware of the very nature of the thing being pursued – here, hospitality. A teacher who knows nothing of the hospitable would not even be aware of her meanness or hostility. It seems to us that a teacher who is able to push against her paralysis is one that is cognizant that "hospitality is what is always demanded of [her], that to which [she will] never measure up…that [she will] always be too close-fisted, too ungracious, too unwelcoming, to calculating in all [her] invitations" (p. 112) but that which must always be strived for. Might it not be that it is in striving toward a hospitality, that is always just out of the teacher's reach, that the teacher finds herself fulfilling her ethical and professional responsibility to the student teacher with whom she agreed to work?

The Hiddenness of Potential: Growing in Foreign Soil

Nicholas is sitting beside his supervising teacher's desk waiting for her to give him feedback on the teaching he did today. As she makes her way across the classroom, never once does she look him in the face. Sam is uncomfortable and worried. "She never looks at me," he thinks to himself. He doesn't understand why this is. The teacher sits down behind her desk and looks down at a sheet of paper. Nicholas waits a bit and then asks her: "How do you think I did today?" The teacher moves the sheet around and replies: "Well I noticed that you really had a hard time managing the students during Science class. And I wasn't impressed with how you went about teaching the Algebra lesson after that. You're going to need to prepare your material better and when you teach you need to spend less time with your back to the students. You will also have to arrive earlier than you have because you'll be taking over my recess supervision next week."

"Okay," Nicholas says. He doesn't move but sits waiting. He thinks that more must be coming. Surely he did at least one thing right today. Finally, the teacher looks at him and says: "Is there anything else?" "No," Nicholas replies. He grabs his bag and walks out of the classroom.

If, as Derrida says, welcome *is* hospitality, then for Nicholas some positive feedback and a minimum of *support* from his supervising teacher appears to be an intrinsic part of such a welcome. But what does Nicholas mean here by support? And how does support relate to a

welcoming welcome, or in other words, to hospitality? The nexus of hospitality, Pohl (1999) informs us, is "the dignity and equal worth of every person and valuing contributions, or at least their *potential* contributions, to the larger community" (p. 180). It would seem that in seeking support from the teacher, Nicholas was perhaps truly seeking to have his dignity maintained and to be valued not only for his actual contributions but for those that remained still only potentialities. Etymologically, "potential" from the late 14c., carries within it meanings of "possible" "or possibility" from L.L. *potentialis* and "power" L. *potentia* (see *potent*) (Online Etymology Dictionary). Interestingly, as we saw above, "hospitality" also carries within it the meaning of *potentia* – "to have power" (Caputo, 1997, p. 110). If the power within hospitality is the host's ability to welcome the guest but still "remain master of the premises" (Ibid) then what might the power be within *potential*? For our purposes, we retain the following definitions of potential as: "capable of becoming" and a "latent excellence" with "latent" understood here as that which is "present but not visible" (Dictionary.reference.com).

What, we might wonder, was Nicholas "capable of becoming"? What was his hidden potential as a *teacher-in-becoming?* Did his teacher, with her potential to be hospitable, not have the *power* to make visible that which still lay hidden within him if she had so wanted? Might this not reflect the true power of the teacher-host – to gift the student with her insights into his potential-to-become a good teacher or withhold these out of a sense of hostility and meanness toward him? Sharing such insights may be the ultimate gift of hospitality. The generosity within hospitality, the generosity of a teacher-host who is able to share with the student small glimpses of his hidden potential that are all but invisible to him, may be the ultimate gift. Hence, like hospitality itself, the teacher may need to make an effort to "see" that which is not-yet-there in the student teacher or to push past the *now* and into the *to-be*. Given that a student's potential contributions are not yet *yet*, the supervising teacher may need to approach the student with a certain existential trust; the supervising teacher may need to approach the student with a certain belief that even though she cannot yet see the student's possibilities, they are nonetheless there. This process may require not only trust but also a certain willingness on the part of the teacher-host to give the student teacher the gift of "time". With gift of "time"the student teacher may develop to *be-come or come-to-be* the teacher he or she can be. The good teacher-host then, much like the gardener, trusts that in time the seed, invisible though it may be at present, will, with enough care, water and warmth from the sun, manage to break through the dark earth and fulfill its true potential. Is such nurturing what Nicholas meant then by support? Did he imagine that, like the seed hidden below the soil, had he had access to a nurturing environment, an environment that would have allowed him to grow into a full-fledged plant, flower, tree or teacher? Potential then seems to require that the teacher accept that it is often not yet possible to see that which is hidden within a student but only believe and trust that such possibilities will in time emerge. This trust may require as Sartre says: "[…] seeing [the Other] from that which one does not see; constructing the other from that which one ignores, […] foreseeing what one cannot foresee and foreseeing oneself from that which one cannot foresee" (1983, p. 17).

In the absence of such trust, the student may be left to trust himself, to trust in his own potential or in that which he cannot yet see but only believes to be there. But can student teachers ever truly see their own potential, especially given their limited knowledge of teaching? How is it possible to ever see one's potential without the gaze of the other coming to validate what we think we may be seeing? As the teacher watches the student attempt to teach, through the eyes of

her own experience, is she not the one who will most likely glimpse the first signs of his potential? What would it have meant to Nicholas had his teacher shared with him such glimpses? Would it have given him hope to persevere in the face of the difficulties he was encountering? How important might this hope be in a field placement? While one cannot answer such questions definitively, we do know that such things as hope and trust are always already part of a festive realm. Hence for the teacher who trusts in the hidden possibilities of her student teacher, every glimpse of his potential becomes reason for celebration. Like a parent who watches her child take his first steps or speak his first words, she feels the excitement of seeing her student unfold before her very eyes by taking his first steps toward becoming the teacher he will be.

The Strangeness of Canadian Students: Hospitality Beyond Hospitality

> *Calvin is sitting at a table speaking to his university counselor. He has just announced that he will be quitting his practicum after only three weeks. The counselor is aware that this will be the second time that Calvin walks away from a field placement but at least this time he is telling someone instead of simply not showing up as was the case the first time around. "Why do you want to quit, Calvin? What's wrong?" the counselor asks sympathetically. Calvin, looking down, says quietly, so quietly in fact that counselor has to lean forward to hear him. "There's lots of reasons," he says. The counselor waits for him to say more. "It's the students here in Canada. They scare me. They're crazies!" he says vehemently. The counselor asks calmly: "What do you mean by 'crazies' Calvin?" The student doesn't look up. He thinks he might cry but continues on: "In Africa, discipline is the normal way of things you know? The children there are disciplined. The teacher has things to teach, and he teaches. Here the teacher I am working with does not talk to me, does not tell me what to do, I don't know what to do with these students! Where I am from, there's no such thing as 'classroom management' or 'discipline strategies' because you would never see a student roll her eyes at a teacher, or a boy with his pants hanging down so that his underwear is showing or a student sitting with earphones in her ears while a teacher is trying to teach. Having to teach such children all my life! No, I just quit!"*

If the racialized immigrant student teacher can be perceived as a strange-stranger, or a foreign-foreigner by the supervising teacher, then for those like Calvin, Canadian students can appear to be just as alien, just as strange and just as foreign. For some student teachers who were raised in countries with very different educational systems than the system they encounter here in Canada, students in the schools can appear to simply not fit their pre-conceived image of what students are and how they should behave; to them they are truly foreign entities. Such gaps between "world views" could be theorized as being due to the different influences that social and pedagogical movements have had across different countries. For example we are cognizant of the impact that "the Self-Esteem Movement" has had on the North American psyche of both parents and teachers which led to the "child-centered movement" in schools. This movement did not have the same impact in Europeen or African countries. While such theories can sometimes be helpful in understanding why the immigrant student teachers may encounter certain problems

with classroom management and student discipline specifically, they also run the risk of over generalizing such difficulties to every student who was born elsewhere, and as such can easily begin to carry racist overtones. Phenomenologically, in carefully considering the individual experience, such blanket theorizations many times simply do not apply. Therefore while a number of researchers have shown that non-white immigrant student teachers do experience more difficulty with classroom management than do their white Canadian born counterparts (see for instance Cho, 2007, 2010; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011;) we have found revealing exceptions to this rule.

> *Janie, a young Cambodian student teacher, sits at the front of the class speaking to a group of students. She has just told them that because they didn't complete their homework that they will have to go to detention. The students are refusing to go so Janie says: "Do as you like, but if you don't come to detention today, there will be consequences." The students don't show up so the next day, Janie confronts them again, telling them that they will spend detention with her during their lunch hour.*
>
> *At lunch, Janie sits looking at the three students, one girl and two boys, all from her junior high Math class. They are fooling around and being noisy. Worse they are doing so in English when being in a French Immersion program they should at least be speaking in French, she thinks ironically. Janie puts her head down and pretends to be reading while she listens to what they are talking about. Although they are not speaking directly to her, she hears them laugh and say: "What's your name? Tan Tan, Tchuing Chaow" She knows they are saying this because she is Asian. Janie looks up and tells them: "My name is none of your business. You should be acting as you do in other detentions and not be talking to each other." One boy replies: "This is how we always act. We talk!"*
>
> *Janie doesn't answer. She puts her head down once again and just keeps working. One student then says loudly: "Hey you! How old are you anyways?" Janie stays silent, not even looking up. The students all laugh as one shouts out: "20, she's 20 years old!" while another says: "No, she seems too young…maybe she's only 13!" Janie still does not respond. One student then says angrily: "Hey! I asked you something. Why aren't you answering me?" Janie keeps on working. Another student joins in asking: "So when will you be done? When are you going to leave us? You told us that this was your last week, so next week I don't want to see you here!"*
>
> *Suddenly Janie feels like she will start crying but she forces herself to stay quiet and pretends to write in her notebook. The one girl then says: "You know in our class when you teach, I don't understand anything you say. So it's your fault that I'm not learning anything." Now Janie finds herself fairly screaming in her mind: "Oh my God! I had no problems completing my university courses but now I am having so many difficulties with my professional work placement as a teacher! What am I going to do?"*
>
> *The students continue laughing amongst themselves and making noise. Finally, having calmed herself, Janie looks up and says to them: "You, you are all not*

> *showing me any respect as your teacher. I am here as your teacher, even if I am only in my field placement. Now you will write to me something in regards to your behaviour, on what you have done here...and if you really want to talk about me, then go for it, but write it down on paper, don't talk about it. And if you don't do it, you will get another detention."*
>
> *The whole time she is saying this, Janie keeps a serene smile on her face, which seems to especially anger one of the boys who says: "You think I'm funny or what?" Janie answers calmly: "No nothing is funny." The boy appears confused by her response and by her continued smile. Finally he says: "Aren't you mad at me?" Janie looks directly at him and answers: "No, not at all." All three students are staring at her now with perplexed looks on their faces. Janie gives a small laugh and says: "Don't you remember when I told you on the first day that I arrived here, that I love you - that I love you simply because you are my students, even if only for a short time. I love you all; I adore you, no matter what, because I am your teacher."*
>
> *The students sit there trying to take this in. Finally one boy says: "You, you are the only teacher that says she loves her students here." At this, all three students lower their heads and begin to write. The bell sounds loudly. As the students stand to leave, each hands Janie their sheet and walks out without a word. Janie breathes a sigh a relief. She is happy with herself.*

While there is no doubt that Janie must have been quite disoriented by her students' bad behaviour – behaviours that she had likely never imagined possible in the strict Cambodian school system where she grew up – interestingly she did not react by comparing both systems, as Calvin did. Rather it seems she saw the students before her, not as different or strange, but as somehow familiar – as "children" in a universal sense – children as essentially the same ontologically no matter where they were from. Is this not who the Good teacher is, or the tactful teacher of which van Manen (1991) speaks? Is the good teacher not universally the same everywhere – pedagogically capable or "caring" as Nodding would say? Capable of recognizing the familiar in the strange, in order to care for it, to love it unconditionally? Might this not be pedagogy which *is* hospitality and hospitality which *is* pedagogy? A hospitality which is able to go beyond itself and a pedagogy which can transcend its own limits? In her ability to respond to her students' inappropriate behaviour, Janie appears to have stepped out of her role as *guest* and into the role of *host*, simultaneously transforming her students into her own "guests" and the classroom into her temporary home. In becoming host, she took control of hospitality, she started to make it happen, to push it against its limits, to move it over its threshold, past its own self-limitation. In doing so she was able to offer her students *"a gift beyond hospitality"* (Caputo, 1997, p. 111, emphasis in original). One might even say that in taking over the role of host, she preempted the role of the teacher by taking the one supervising her now hostage. This is a risk that Derrida (2000) has spoken of:

> So it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage – and who really always has been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest becomes the host of the host. (p. 123)

In this sense, "the host has welcomed into his home the very thing that can overturn his sovereignty" (Westmorland, 2008, p. 7). In the case of this student teacher, this move is not a bad thing, but something one would hope for. The guest must become the host of the host at some point if he or she is ever to become a teacher. Hospitality does appear then to be an "interruption of the self" as Derrida has said (2000, p. 51), albeit not only the interruption of the host's self but of the guest's as well. These interruptions seem necessary in order to permit the student to *come-to-be* a teacher herself one day, since without such disturbances to the self, she may never make the required move from guest to host or from student to teacher. On the other hand, Calvin seems to have lived a type of paralysis, one that did not allow him to move into the role of host as Janie did, when confronted by the strangeness of his students. Calvin it seems did not have what was required for a student teacher to preempt his teacher's role and become teacher to the students: Confidence and belief in himself.

In Calvin's case it is also ironic to note that while he rejected the students he was called to teach, he continued to demand that his teacher play the good host to his guest. In this sense, he appears to have expected that which he himself could not give. While he wanted his supervising teacher to help him, to teach him to teach, to be there for him and perhaps see his potential to be what he was not yet, he could not do the same for his students. In judging them as "crazies" as "less than ideal guests" he saw not what they could be but rather what he thought they already were. Janie brushed aside what the students were trying to make her believe they were. She exposed, both for them and for herself, the hidden potential to change at any point.

Janie also had the confidence to do something Calvin was not able to do. Janie actively reached out to her hosts in order to obtain their support and their validation for her actions with her students.

> *After her terrible episode with the students in detention Janie sits down with her supervising teacher and her university counselor to discuss what happened. Once she finishes telling them her tale, her supervising teacher says: "Janie those particular students are just like that. They were testing you and you know what dear…you passed with flying colours! You can bet they won't try that again." The counselor adds: "Janie you proved yourself today. You have shown what a capable teacher you are. Just look at how they behaved with you. You should not feel bad at all about anything that went on – this is their problem! And it's not just you, as your teacher says they do such things with all their teachers." Janie feels so relieved to hear this. She feels ten feet tall. She thanks both of them profusely and then says: "What I think I learned from all this is that with difficult classes or students you need to use different types of strategies than you would with "easier" more passive ones. This practicum is allowing me to learn so much. I'm young and I'm new at this, but I think that teaching is really for me. I love it, even if it's hard sometimes." Her supervising teacher smiles and says: "The fact that you were able to handle such a difficult situation Janie, means that you will be able to handle everything in teaching…you're already there!" Janie is so happy that she is seen as competent and able. She truly feels for the first time that is really a teacher.*

Janie's learning here may well represent what Fraser (2008) meant when he wrote of "the pain and joy that true living hospitality brings" (p. 199). The pain in the experience of being made prisoner to one's hosts and then having to overturn their authority (at least temporarily) on the school landscape, is mediated here for Janie, by her teacher and university counselor who are able to validate her feelings and actions for her. Although they are functioning from within their workaday world, these hosts are simultaneously allowing the festive to enter the space and thereby open up for Janie, "a world of hospitality and conversation" or a world where all can celebrate the student's success.

Inspiriting the Festive: Pedagogy *as* Hospitality

Considering racialized immigrant student teachers' experiences in Canadian schools from a phenomenological perspective has revealed the complexity of such situations. From these students' accounts, we can neither identify why some fail and others succeed, nor can we articulate specific changes needed in teacher education programs to ensure the success of all such students. However, the lived experiences that we have shared do point to a certain hospitable-pedagogical movement which seems fundamental to a "successful meeting" between teacher-hosts and student-guests. It appears that teacher-hosts who recognize that they must occupy two world spaces and that these need to continuously flow one into the other will be able to allow the festive to mediate the seriousness of their workaday world and hence increase their ability to maintain empathy and the human dignity of their student teachers. Allowing the festive to inspire (*in-spirit)* their work world has the potential to transform their classroom door into threshold and prevent it from becoming a barrier. Such festive in-spiriting also increases the teacher-host's ability to hear the *call* of the student teacher and to respond by encouraging the student teacher to usurp his or her role as teacher in order that the student may *come-to-be* his or her own teacher-host and welcome all children as guests in their own classroom. It appears then that the hospitable pedagogue – be it the teacher-host in relation to their student teacher-guest or the student teacher-host toward their student-guests in the classroom – is one who cares equally for anyone who shows up before them, regardless of their country of origin, the colour of their skin or the accent with which they may speak. As Fraser notes:

> ...if life is always everywhere bearing witness from beyond one's experience (Gadamer), then hospitality as pedagogy is not primarily about being helpful to teaching and learning, but, rather, is an intricate, joy-and-pain-filled sojourn of living in the presence of whatever and whoever shows up. (2008, p. 17)

From such an understanding, teacher education programs might want to consider, in addition to courses dealing with the contents of various programs of study, courses which address *pedagogy as hospitality*. We have argued that *pedagogy as hospitality* is a pedagogy that does not judge students or student teachers *a priori*, as being less than ideal, crazy, or as having something fundamentally lacking in them. Rather a pedagogy that *is* hospitality inspires teacher-hosts with the ability to see the potential in all student-guests right from the start even though it may not be immediately visible to them. These teacher-hosts are able, "in a moment of madness, [to] tear up the understanding between themselves and their guests, act with "excess," and make an absolute gift of their property...[because they know] that that is the only way the guests can go

away feeling as if they were really made at home" (Caputo, 1997, p. 111). Whether the guest is the student teacher to the supervising teacher's host or the students in the classroom as guests to the student teacher-host, all must be made to feel at *home* in the practicum classroom (*home* being where the festive and work worlds meet). Of course this would be much simpler if the roles of host and guest were fixed and well defined for the student teacher beforehand but as we have shown, such certainty is not the nature of hospitality and neither is it that of pedagogy. As such both the student teacher and teacher host are called to move spontaneously from one role to the other, from one world to another, and back again. And while there are no predetermined steps to this pedagogical dance of hospitality, it does start at the classroom door – the threshold – where a stranger appears and is made guest through the welcome and generosity of the teacher host who is able to believe in the student's hidden potential. In the absence of the festive and the relational, student teachers become only means to an end or a means to certification that turns them into objects, prisoners or hostages on a landscape filled with barriers and obstacles where the classroom is but an "empty space" (Fraser, 2008), void of any meaning, and violent in its inhospitality.

To conclude, living hospitably with the foreign-other on the Canadian school landscape is "not a problem to be overcome but rather is "an invitation to awe, wonder, and respect, to heed the call of the Other before [us. Because true hospitality] holds hope and despair together in this journey called life" (p. 199) which is the vocation also of the teacher called to teach. Teachers or student teachers who are able to show hospitality to those they wield power over constantly strive to push hospitality beyond hospitality, beyond its bounds, as they stand waiting on the threshold of their classroom door, arms open wide, standing under the metaphorical banner of the African proverb: *We love; therefore we are* (p. 205) and smile.

Endnotes

[i] We use the terms "racialized" or "non-white" as do Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli (2009) rather than "visible minority" because the United Nations and Canada Race Relations have noted the latter as being "discriminatory" and "racist."

[ii] We have tried to balance masculine and feminine pronouns in order to avoid the overuse of "him/her/ or "he/she" – when possible we have stayed faithful to the gender of both students and teachers in the anecdotes.

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