One could say that these four articles constitute various attempts at “objectification” through life stories geared towards intelligibility and academic publication requirements of quality and rigour. The articles provided by Martin Cormier, Diane Leger, and Sylvie Morais stem from their respective Master’s theses, whereas the text by Jeanne-Marie Rugira is based upon her doctoral work.

In its own way each one of these texts exemplifies ‘narrative as method’ which belongs to hermeneutic research concerned with the concept of objectivation.

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Objectivation is a target of sorts, a Kantian-like movement towards the idea: a conceptual horizon whose finalities are always provisionary.

Objectivation begins by trying to name. Then, through upward-spiral motions, it endeavours, by manner of intelligibility, to heighten reflection as far as possible. Each circle explored continually widens. The idea is to gather more and more symbols, the integration of which insures a communicative expression of the movement. The level of intelligibility is often equal to the degree of elaboration, the highest levels being the most complex and difficult to attain intellectually.

The most powerful philosophers, such as Heidegger, travel at hallucinating speeds along differing levels and across expansive cultural “universals.” This movement affords works of remarkable intelligibility and complexity. These works are highly elaborate.

However the personal lives of authors do not necessary reflect the intelligibility of their texts. Life's hazards do not always move along the same lines. Hence, it is possible that an evil, irresponsible, unrepenting being is capable of creating a cultural masterpiece. One can easily imagine a person—whose intentions are solely for the educational good of the whole—basing their work on a seminal work produced by a despicable person. Many of us are familiar with the wonderful Japanese-Canadian educator Ted Aoki; I heard him say one day at a Bergamo Conference (in 1983 or 1984) that he had succeeded in reconciling with those who had imprisoned him (during the second world war he was placed in an isolated camp with thousands of other Japanese descendant Canadian residents). He attributed his success at having found peace to reading Heidegger. Ted was well aware that Heidegger had been a member of the Nazi party. So, even though Heidegger might have been a Nazi sympathizer—a fact which has not been clearly demonstrated—Heidegger left behind good work.

Let us explain this a bit. Sometimes when accelerated by extraordinary talent the speed and amplitude of the ascending spiral motion turns excessive when faced with the opposing spiral motion—one equally related to the hermeneutical process—wherein the focus is on going deeper into the self, into one's interior life, to make sense of existence. When this happens—this excessiveness—the objectification process abandons the personal realm and moves into abstraction producing notably more advanced and sophisticated elaborations than housed in more concrete reflections. Such elaborations, while rare, are certainly a plus for society.

It should be noted that the departure point of the hermeneutic process can begin in abstraction. This is often the case in philosophical works. However, the motives therein not being educational nor towards greater personal development, one cannot say the circle is stuck in abstraction, it necessarily originates from there. There is no reference nor pretext with respect to the personal realm.

However, sometimes the hermeneutic process occurs during a personal crisis—when pain and indignation are too strong—and one decides to work it through self-analysis. Thought moves in larger and larger circles around a singular event, workings which affect the deepest level of subconscious. This downward spiralling movement is increasingly selective with regards to universal symbols and reference points, embedding them in the concrete. A sense of/for self, the effect being perhaps as singular and particular as the self in question.

In the downward movement, there are not any words, symbols, or linguistic signs; there are only feelings, sensations, and intuitions (in the sense of an impression, a ‘flash’). The
downward spiral is directly and intimately related to the body, and can go as far back as life in the uterus, if not further.

And yet this movement is nonetheless accompanied by representations, symbols, images, and words. In the beginning—this is the very meaning of hermeneutics itself—there is an attempt to name, to interpret, to explain what is happening. As such, there is a double movement: downwards, in order to feel more, and upwards, in order to understand better. Otherwise interpretation remains out of reach.

Nevertheless, sometimes personal introspection occurs too rapidly—is too overwhelming—to maintain an upward movement. There are at least two ways in which to account for this. In the first case it is possible that the wound was too deep and too advanced to be healed in a hermeneutic sense. An elaboration would occur via psychotherapy wherein introspection and interpretation continue, but remain individual and private. In a second case—wherein elaborations occur with respect to enlightenment or mystical revelations—interpretation is revealed in a divine language, the closest equivalency being silence. This is yet another private, if not secret, experience.

“Private” hermeneutics are of no lesser import than the other, but solely from a personal point of view, the culture at large does not stand to gain a great deal.

The four authors published here strive to balance these two circles in the field of serenity education. Balance is fragile as it is threatened by two tenacious ‘superegos’: the cultural means of production that demands form and reference, and inner means that push towards certainty, answers, and well being.

In their balancing act each discovers the speed of educational inquiry; the experience being similar to that when riding a bicycle. Each one effectuates a level of sophistication and degrees of procedurality—so necessary for educational inquiry along particular pathways—which lie somewhere between the novel and the essay.

The education of the self occurs in the transferring of weight between the two circles. Once objectivation begins, one must balance reflection between the two circles in ways that enable one to jump from feeling to concept, and the converse. All this at a workable speed to maintain equilibrium.

Falling is inevitable in the beginning, like riding a bike. But with experience, one can balance while moving greater strides, dancing on the bike, as cyclists say. The greater the stride, the more powerful the thought.

Two kinds of falls can be fatal: falls resulting from hate and those from indifference. Serenity is the victory over hate and indifference: serenity education is the way to this victory. A cautionary note: even though falls do tend to decrease with expertise, they can—just like on a bike—prove to be of a far greater danger for the experienced athlete.

Our four authors cautiously adopted a ‘method,’ no, rather a manner, of negotiating personal praxis with respect to peace and a general theory of wisdom.

**Martin Cormier**

Martin had the courage to undertake a challenging personal, intellectual, and artistic journey. A hermeneutic journey with elaborative work via image and text is a rare
adventure and a rather risky one in academia. As his advisor it was not easy to recognize the signs of what constituted beginning, middle, and end in a process that was, by all means, unique. But when I saw the light emerging from the hermeneutic spiral (it is easy to recognize), I knew the process had come to an end and that the creative research endeavour had been successful.

From a personal point of view, Martin freed himself from something and he discovered an original way to express it: a unique expression involving the language of shapes and colours, as well as words. And yet we found ourselves faced with text on the margins of university standards, particularly those in a faculty of education. Martin's work pushed the limits of what counts as a Master’s thesis. How to know—or if—the text would be accepted? Martin’s wager paid off. And we should all be glad: criteria have opened so as to allow for such texts and ensuing questions.

Martin's problematics were three-dimensional: artistic, personal, and philosophical. The theoretical framework included the visual arts (it is the image rather than the text which ‘speaks’) and portrayed method as manner, style and creation. A hermeneutic approach allows this, even promises it, but such actualisations are rare.

In a wider perspective, the research problem serves as a pretext to incite a journey judged more on the originality and relevance of the results than on its articulation. Martin’s text illustrates this tension perfectly. We discover that it is possible to write about education with shapes, colours, and pencil marks integrated into the text. The research in self development resides in these tools: not only from the materials used, but also from analysis and its expression. Yes, we can articulate thoughts and communicate what is essential by blending different means of expression. The only problem is that this is rare. Over the course of his Master’s degree Martin managed to do it: describing the circle in which he had enclosed himself over many years and from which he tries to escape. But he did not stop there; he clearly indicates two research directions that go beyond the personal: a complexification of writing with both text and image hence a contribution to the field of self developmental research.

There are three sources upon which Mark bases his text: artists, educators, and writers. However, one must ‘read’ the images at the same time as one reads the words. A new space opens up, a kind of counterpoint between images and words which informs us as to what is essential and which exemplifies a most successful integration of the hermeneutical model. The appeal to images reflects certain qualities found in Malarme’s verses; and the counterpoint foregrounds Barthe's intertextuality.

Diane Léger

Diane took on a colossal task: she brought to light an obfuscated yet central theme in education, one she entitles “the reintegration of the shadow.” This work forced her to move from relating to the world as ‘person’ to that of ‘subject.’ Diane queries whether educators create culturally adept persons upholding social norms guided by morality or whether subjects come to ethical positions in and of their own accord? Without revealing her opinion, Diane engages with this question along the line of praxis. The elaboration of the problematic and theoretical framework establish limitations of the problem, the parameters of which are defined with exceptional clarity, especially those with respect to morals and ethics.

However, Diane had to resolve a difficult issue in her research and writing. A large portion
of her study consisted of working on herself, of articulating her own life history. In this context, of course, development goes beyond the academic journey and joins with the life story and personal biography of the author who situates herself in an anthropo-phenomenological perspective wherein knowledge is incarnated in a caring, holistic experience inscribed in self-development. As Yinger, Johnson, and Lakoff have showed, this bodily, sensorial, pre-reflexive experience is a syntactical practice, one significant from a ‘semantics of action’ point of view (in Malet, Regis (1998) Identity in progress, Paris: L’Hamattan).

The author uses words, her words, to recount her journey and the difficult passage from the moral to the ethical. The know-how-sense-making is evidenced in her dialogical relationships with things, others, and herself. The journey leads to a decisive moment that marks a beginning as well as an end. The image of the mirror is inversed, and the ‘deni-a’ now signs ‘Diane.’

Sylvie Morais

Sylvie literally remakes her text: she rewrites it and goes beyond the experience of exile to towards ‘formativity.’

In sync with the spirit and style of phenomenology, Sylve develops her problematics from the onset of the writing process: the context is a breaking point; the opportunity, silence; the event, an exile (greatly exemplified in the painting).

The break represents a wonderful ‘crisis’ for the author’s being: a profound conflict between the teacher and the artist. We might have hoped for a clearer differentiation between the personal and the ontological, but we quickly become aware of the author’s astuteness: her search for balance is without complacency engaging her entire being with a concern for the universal while remaining singular. Such writing witnesses the artist who entertains double careers—in the realm of concrete experience—housed in Education and the Arts.

The author says that silence will find its place while continuing to show us the concreteness of the break, how it is rooted in her life. The text is a legitimate enactment of the phenomenological approach.

Many pages show how silence becomes a way into crisis: the difficulties of dialogue between artist and pedagogue being of particular note in the break. It is much later on in the text that we feel the immense weight of the problem, the ‘affective discourse’ that it implies: we see the daunting necessity of movement, events, and artistic practice as ‘formativity.’

There is significant mastery in this writing, writing which requires that we let ourselves be taken in by the journey. The reference to Rilke is decisive.

Jeanne-Marie Rugira

Jeanne-Marie’s thesis is demanding: one must fully immerse oneself in it. It is impossible to read it objectively or compare it to one’s own experience. The thesis was written primarily for herself albeit with a twofold focus: a life experience— which is never easy to recount, especially in a thesis—in which Jeanne-Marie pushes the limits of material demonstration (or what she refers to as “monstration”); and a navigation about thought and
demonstration (or what she refers to as “monstration”); and a navigation about thought and ethos, between two temptations associated with suffering: pushing it away or yielding to it. Two pitfalls which are nevertheless possible to avoid when we know how to face suffering in a non complacent manner. This is what Jeanne-Marie endeavours to portray.

Someone else could have chosen to study the phenomenon of human suffering and to do so at a distance. There would have been many examples and case studies from which to choose. However, Jeanne-Marie chose to relive her own suffering. In her body, soul, spirit, and heart, she focused on death, suffering, pain, and revolt. In sum, she faced the loss of the beings closest to her—which is already, in itself, exceptional knowledge with respect to knowing how to be (savoir-être). In this evocativeness, or rather, in these multiple rebirths of phenomenon “per se,” we witness Jeanne-Marie’s attempts to capture the many opportunities to think out loud, according to university expectations: the articulation of reasons, actions, and effects via concepts, notions, or models that can nourish the stockpiled representations that the anthropo-social sciences have attributed to the phenomenon of suffering.

Her text admirably illustrates a balance between the two hermeneutic movements: we accompany her through the personal transformation from suffering through compassion and serenity, and in the same breath, through a schema of a clearly articulated network of concepts delineating the relationship between the scream and those who witness one in crisis.

**Invitation**

I would invite readers to experience the speed and balance attained within these four remarkable narrative accounts.

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Jacques Daignault and Renée Fountain - guest editors

**About the Editors**
A specialist in curriculum theory and philosophy, Jacques Daignault (University of Quebec, Canada) foregrounds how French philosophers, notably Gilles Deleuze, can offer new perspectives to education particularly in the following three areas: pedagogy as aesthetics, acousmasics in narrative work and the virtual in technology. His last book (H)opéra pour Geneviève (2002) witnessed his political, existential and theological preoccupations which took form in a philosophical, pedagogical, novel-like story wherein writing autobiographically in education is portrayed alongside its neglected epistemological, poetical and methodological indispensables (http://jd.levinux.org/Livres/Hopera_pour_Genevieve/index.html).

His present interests revolve around the Free Software Movement (FSM) as both a philosophical and pedagogical occasion towards eliminating the digital divide. These interests have led him to develop proficiencies with respect to networking recycled computers using Free Software. He has created computer labs in schools as well as in a number of other organizations in economically challenged contexts in Canada and Africa (Gabon and Morocco). He just finished his term as president of the Quebecois Primary and Secondary Teachers Computing Association, the largest group of school-based technology users in Quebec. He also spearheaded a non-profit organization “Équinux” which is dedicated towards digital equity. He is presently writing a book about the philosophy underpinning the Free Software Movement and its relationship to both the virtual and to pedagogy writ large.

Renée Fountain is a professor of technology and technoscience at Laval University, Canada. She also has a great interest in health (she previously worked in this area at the University of Madison-Wisconsin, USA). Problematiques tend to entail the politicalization and complexification of: 1) digital equity and the Free Software Movement (FSM); 2) critical and creative engagement with technoscientific controversies (via Actor Network Theory and Foucault's power/knowledge & normalization concepts); and 3) performativities of agency (in light of increasing neoliberalist strongholds). Her work endeavours to reflect the philosophy of the FSM and is enacted in the extensive use of interactive webs sites and wikis in her courses (undergraduate and graduate) and in several research projects. Radical accessibility and authoring issues associated with the FSM and the psycho-social-political-pedagogical implications arising therein are presently of particular analytical import.

Translator’s Thoughts

In my experience, translation is the art of expressing someone else’s imagination, will, and spirit in a different voice that is in harmony with the original. It is a daunting task that requires a constant evaluation and re-evaluation of every word, sentence, comma, or period to ensure that there is a fine balance between staying true to the author’s meaning and meeting the high standards of writing style in the other language. The challenge in translating another writer’s work lies not only in finding the precise word or expression, but also in acquiring some of the background knowledge required to refine the translated ideas.

In my opinion, there is no better way to understand and appreciate an author’s work more deeply than to translate it. It has been a privilege and honour to express in English the profound, creative, and influential ideas of Jacques Daignault. I consider myself fortunate to have participated in this rewarding intellectual journey that promotes the sharing of
educational ideas to a wider, more linguistically diverse audience.

About the Translator

Valia Spiliotopoulos (Ph.D, University of British Columbia) has taught English and French as a Second Language for more than ten years. More recently, she has been an educational consultant for the BC Institute of Technology, and an instructor and faculty advisor to pre-service teachers at UBC. She was also a lecturer for the University of Toronto’s School of Graduate Studies, where she taught academic writing skills to graduate students. Her research interests include teaching and learning second languages using educational technologies.

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