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Body, Caring and Power in Teacher–Pupil Relationships: Encounters in former pupils’ memories

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This narrative inquiry aims to look at teacher–pupil relationships through teacher memories. When 49 university students of education were asked to write their memories of teachers, they told about their teachers in relation to pupils. The data were analysed thematically and, based on that, re-read through the concepts of body, caring and power in order to answer the question of how these can be understood as elements of the teacher–pupil relationship. We will also discuss the potential for encounter in teacher–pupil relationships, since we noticed that students especially seemed to recall encounters and non-encounters in the relationship. By listening to former pupils, it is possible to elicit significant memories of what, from their point of view, is in the core of being a teacher. The meaning of recalling one’s own teachers in teacher education is also emphasised.

Keywords: *Encounter; Narrative inquiry; Teacher memories; Teacher–pupil relationship*

Introduction

This research began from an encounter. Our paths crossed when Minna was starting to work on her Master’s thesis (Uitto, 2003) under Leena’s supervision. At that time, we recognised our shared interest in teacher memories and the intriguing question of why some particular teachers are remembered. We wanted to give a voice to a group of people who have seldom been acknowledged, and we thus wanted to appreciate former pupils’ recollections of their teachers. This goal is common in narrative inquiry (e.g. Elbaz-Luwisch, 2005) and by listening to former pupils, we felt we could try to fill in a gap in narrative teacher research, which has generally not taken into account pupils’ views of their teachers. The decision on whose voices to listen to is a serious ethical choice (Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997; Syrjälä, Estola, Uitto, & Kaunisto, 2006). Experience-based knowledge reveals something of what it is to be a pupil (see Pérez, 1998) but also, from pupils’ points of view, what it is to be a teacher in the everyday practice of educational institutions (see Vuorikoski, 2003a).

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Pupils' school experiences have been studied in the contemporary context of still attending school (Certo, Cauley, & Chafin, 2003; Laine, 1997; Westling Allodi, 2002). Some studies have focused on both students' reflections of school while they are still at school and their memories of school (Andersson & Strander, 2004; Lahelma, 2002). There has been interest in school memories, but memories concerning teachers seem to have remained out of the main scope of interest (with the exception of, for example, Salo, 2004). Cultural images of teachers (Salo, 2004), schools and classrooms are present in school memories. School and teachers have different kinds of significance for a person in different life situations, for example, when one is studying to be a teacher (Gudmundsdottir, 2001) or when one's own children go to school (Metso, 1999). In school and teacher memories, people tell about themselves, about their own bodies (Connor, Newton, Pennisi, & Quarshie, 2004) and, for example, about what it is to become a woman (Kosonen, 1998; Simonen, 1995). However, the memories and experiences of school are full of other people, such as friends and teachers (Johnson Rothenberg, 1994; Lahelma, 2002; Luttrell, 1993; Pérez, 1998; Vuorikoski, 2003b). Even researchers have sometimes approached their topics by telling about their own teachers, as did Hargreaves (2002) and Pryer (2001).

Our research process consisted of many interrelated phases. For this reason, we present our data collection, analysis, interpretation and formulation of research questions as a story. This helps the reader to understand how the research process evolved and how our research questions emerged.

Collecting Teacher Memories as Stories from the Past

It so happened that not only did we share an interest on teacher memories, but Leena had already asked her students of education to write about their teachers as part of a study assignment for a course entitled 'Orientation to Educational Sciences' in autumn, 2001. In addition to these 46 essays, three other students volunteered to write about their teachers. One of them was Minna. The experience of writing about her teacher memories with the students was significant for her. Forty of the writers were female and nine were male. We will give direct quotes from the students' essays, referred to as Essays 1–49. Finnish school was the context of reminiscing (see Kosonen, 1998), and both male and female teachers were recalled. The memories dated back to the time when the students were pupils in primary, junior secondary or senior secondary school at age 7–18. The memories varied in length and were about one or several teachers in connection with an individual event or several events. A couple of students even said that none of their teachers had been a teacher that they would still recall. Recalling was sometimes very detailed and thick and sometimes more general.

When Leena asked her students to recall their teachers, she invited them to tell about their past. The students also used expressions referring to recalling and memories in their essays. For these reasons, we refer to these students' stories as

memories. We regard memories as stories of the past that help people make sense of who they are. Memories are constructed in a certain time, and similarly to Pérez (1998, p. 281), we could characterise the students' teacher memories as "retrospective reconstructions" of their school experiences. They relate to the students' childhood, but there is a dialectical relationship in the memories between the present of adulthood and the past of childhood (Neustadter, 2004, p. 258). Moreover, we cannot ignore the aspect of future; all of the students were studying educational sciences and most of them were also studying to be teachers.

The dynamic process of recalling takes shape in the complex context of social, cultural and personal factors. Although the narrative traditions of our society as well as other people's stories about themselves affect us and our way of telling (Kerby, 1991), recalling is also a personal process of reconstruction that builds upon our personal experiences and, as Kosonen (1998) puts it, there is no recalling without a body. For example, the rules of the school become materialised in our bodies (Kosonen, 1998, p. 32). Yet, in this article, our attempt is not to distinguish the personal from the cultural. Through teacher memories we can get a hold of something that former pupils find significant and worth recalling (Carter, 1993). Stories recalled are not authentic descriptions of events experienced, but rather interpretations, as Kerby (1991) points out. This means that "truth" becomes a matter of adequacy of the implicit meaning of the past rather than of historically correct representation (Kerby, 1991, p. 7).

Analysing Teacher Memories: From relationship to encounter

At first, when reading the students' written memories, Minna saw them as stories of the different aspects of teachers' work. But since the writer her/himself as a pupil or some other pupil was always present in the students' memories, she realised that they were not merely stories of teachers, but rather stories of teachers in relation to their pupils. On the basis of this observation, we presented our first question to the material: what kind of relationships are remembered and what is told about them? This observation led us to see teaching and teachers' work primarily as working within human relations and the teacher–pupil relationship as the core of being a teacher (Goldstein, 1997; Noddings, 2001; van Manen, 1991). Teacher memories are rather a new starting-point in the discussion of this relationship. The teacher–pupil relationship is special in more ways than one. Teachers are doing their duties as civil servants and pupils are at school because it is their duty. Academic and moral matters are intertwined—and even without knowing it, teachers express moral meanings that may influence the pupils (Hansen, 2001). The teacher–pupil relationship is a relationship between an adult and a child/adolescent and thus essentially asymmetric. Van Manen (1991, pp. 74–75) describes the relationship as "a double intentional relation". The teacher cares for the child as who s/he is now but also as what s/he may become. In addition, these relationships last for a certain time, taking shape on the basis of the academic calendar and the structures of educational institutes (see Goldstein, 1997).

Following the discovery that students were actually telling about the relationships they had had with their teachers, our reading of teacher memories began to be guided by questions of what kind of relationships are remembered and what is told about them. This thematic analysis was mostly based on certain parts of the memories and the reading could be characterised as categorical content reading (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). However, the memories were analysed in the framework of the students' whole essays. During the research process, we often talked about our own teacher and school memories. Although we had ourselves gone to school at different times, it seemed that there was something very similar in our memories. A certain kind of respect for teachers and their work came up in our discussions, which is probably connected to the facts that Minna graduated as a teacher and Leena, who is a professor of education, considers herself a teacher educator more than anything else. Our respective backgrounds made us attentive (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2005) to the different voices in the memory material, though admittedly, they may have prevented us from hearing some other voices.

Three main themes—body, caring and power—were distinguished in the memory material. Each theme included both positive and negative voices and voices that were heard very loud in many essays, but also quieter voices heard only in a few texts. These more quiet, less frequently discussed issues could not be ignored, either. Not only did they deepen the themes, but they could actually be familiar to other students as well, although they, for some reason, kept silent about them. The memories were also analysed narratively, and Minna wrote a poetic story based on the memories (Uitto, 2003; Uitto & Syrjälä, 2008). Writing this new story made us understand how closely intertwined the themes of body, caring and power are. By mirroring each other, they could together reveal something essential about the teacher–pupil relationship. For this reason, the teacher–pupil relationships in the students' memories were re-analysed and re-read through the concepts of body, caring and power; we were moving from the memory material to theory and back from theory to the memory material. Thus, we ask in this article: how can body, caring and power be understood on the basis of the memory material as elements of the teacher–pupil relationship?

The teacher–pupil relationship can be referred to as a pedagogical relation (van Manen, 1991) and as interaction between a teacher and a pupil (e.g. Hansen, 2001). However, while writing this article, we were simultaneously working with a group of teachers who met to discuss their work and life in general (Estola, Kaunisto, Keski-Filppula, Syrjälä, & Uitto, 2006). These teachers repeatedly talked about how to encounter a pupil and were concerned about whether they were really able to encounter every child in the rush of everyday work. We had already noticed that some of the students used the term “encounter” when recalling their teachers. Encountering has been talked about as something teachers, and everyone else, should aim at (e.g. Buber, 1923/1993; Noddings, 2001) and we have also noticed that the concept “encounter” is often present in the literature concerning multiculturalism and learners with specific needs. We began to wonder about the

potential for encounter in teacher–pupil relationships, since encounter seemed to be part of the language used in practice by teachers and former pupils (cf. Gudmundsdottir, 2001). Thus, firstly, we aim to illustrate, on the basis of teacher memories, how body, caring and power can be understood as elements of the teacher–pupil relationship and, secondly, based on that, we aim to discuss what encounter can mean in the relationship between a teacher and a pupil.

Bodies Present

The Teacher as Sensed

It is impossible to talk about human relations without talking about the body, and the powerful presence of bodies and the embodied nature of the teacher–pupil relationship in the students’ teacher memories were almost disconcerting. The recollections came back to the students in “deeply embodied ways” (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 4). There were descriptions of “how the teacher blew up only rarely” (female student, Essay 23) or “how the teacher’s words have remained in the back of my head” (female student, Essay 44). One student told about singing tests. While the others were drawing, one pupil at the time had to go in front of the class to sing to the accompaniment of a harmonium (female student, Essay 4). Even this short extract made the pupil’s and the teacher’s body positioned in the classroom visible. Similarly, the memories of a teacher as a “grandmother figure” (female student, Essay 13) give certain bodily hints of the teacher’s appearance. Teachers were described as very bodily characters and the students told about their teacher’s body by using different senses:

Kaisa [an English teacher in junior and senior secondary school] used so much perfume that a cloud of fragrance hung in the air above the front desks. She also dressed with care and attention to colours. If it was a blue day, everything from her shirt to eye shadow and from her tights to jewellery was blue. Well, not the lipstick of course. (female student, Essay 48)

Our homeroom teacher [in primary school] was, however, an awfully unbalanced woman who suffered from temper tantrums and migraine. Our teacher’s husband worked as the school principal. When she got totally exhausted with us, she sometimes called for her husband to yell and roar at us. Then even the toughest boys cried. Personally, I was safe from the teacher’s rage, because I was the best student in the class. (female student, Essay 20)

The memories include vivid details about teachers’ appearance, their expressions, gestures, voice and smell as well as the way they dressed and touched. And, as in these memories, the teacher was often introduced through gender (see Salo, 2004). As shown by these memories, pupils pay first attention to their teachers’ bodies rather than their ideas (Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 124). Mind and sense have been considered as being of primary importance in school, whereas body and its

significance have often been ignored in educational research (with the exception of e.g. Connor et al., 2004; Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2003).

When the students were telling about their teachers, the teachers were simultaneously in front of their pupils, as if on stage, and very close to their audience of children (see Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2003). The senses of sight and hearing indicate that the teachers were distantly on stage, but the teacher's body was also observed from a closer range, especially through the senses of smell and touch. Even the teacher's voice can be enough to reach the pupils' bodies. In the memory of the yelling teacher, the pupils became part of the stage. The recalled incident told about crying pupils and their bodies taking in the teacher's yelling, whereas the teller herself was safe from the rage. The voice indicates the teacher's use of power. The act of giving some pupils privileges can be seen as a caring relation towards them, but it also places them in a "teacher's pet" position (Luttrell, 1993). There were, however, memories of how the teacher never, or at least very rarely, raised her/his voice. Voice can be encouraging, caring and inspiring, but it can also be degrading, indifferent and depressing (van Manen, 1991, pp. 174–175). The memory of a yelling teacher does not only tell us about the effects that the teacher's body can have on pupils, but it reveals the meaning of the body in teacher's work as bodily labour (see Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2003).

Powerful Bodily Closeness and Distance

Even at those rare times when I had the courage to raise up my hand, my teacher's expression was enough to tell us how useless it was to teach basic mathematics [in senior secondary school] to representatives of the "wrong" sex, i.e. girls. (female student, Essay 8)

I don't recall that our teacher of geography [in junior secondary school] would have often had to raise her voice, but there was still a blessed silence in our class. Her very posture told us that school is for studying, and leisure time is a different thing. (female student, Essay 33)

In the first memory, the student knows by looking at her teacher's face (see Estola & Syrjälä, 2002) that the teaching of basic mathematics to girls is useless. Besides facial expressions, the teacher's posture can indicate her aims in teaching and show what is expected of the pupil. In the second memory, the teacher set the limits with her body on what is and what is not appropriate at school. Yet, her body also revealed her caring interest towards the pupils and their studying. Quiet listening, meaningful looks and turning away—all teacher's pedagogical ways of being with children—are ways to communicate (van Manen, 1991, pp. 31–32) and carry moral meaning (Hansen, 2001). These two memories indicate the power of the teacher's body and its ability to tell and reveal. A teacher called Helena in the research of Estola and Syrjälä (2002, p. 60) is aware that her good attentions are not always in harmony with her bodily feelings—her mind and body do not aim

at the same goal. The next two memories show different bodily positions (cf. Estola & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2003) that the teacher and the pupil can have relative to each other:

I was surprised about my sister's ability to teach children with warmth: she sat on the couch surrounded by children and read them a fairytale. My 1st grade teacher did the opposite: S/he read standing far in front of the class. After the class, the children came to tell my sister about their own matters. When the pupils approached, she held out her arms, and the children got to experience physically their teacher's closeness. I commented to my sister that you actually are a mother, not a teacher! (female student, Essay 16)

Once on the 3rd grade at primary school I got a mark 6 for an exam. The teacher told this to the whole class and after that "whipped" me in front of the class, that is slapped me on the buttocks. My marks in geography certainly did not improve after that. (female student, Essay 35)

Closeness means that the teacher is concretely close to the pupils by being at the same level with them, not distantly in front of the class. It also includes a certain kind of intimacy and caring attention towards the pupils—the teacher physically touches and is present with her body and with her arms extended, ready to listen to the pupils. The student interprets her sister's intimate actions as part of being a mother, not a teacher. Although this comment can be read as sarcastic humour, it does suggest something similar to Vuorikoski's (2005, p. 42) comment on teachers having traditionally been guided to the role of a neutral, sexless and distant professional. In the second memory, the closeness of the bodies is totally different; it implies physical and degrading use of power. The power is directly used on the pupil's body, although sometimes the use of power can be much more silenced. This was the case in the memory about the expression on the face of the recalling student's teacher of mathematics.

Caring and Non-caring as Embodied Acts and Non-acts

Listening, Touching, Hugging, Physically Intervening

My teacher for my first two years of school was a 50-year-old childless woman, Arja. She treated us pupils as her own children. At least for the first year I remember her hugging us at the end of every day. Thinking back, it seems a beautiful act through which she showed us her caring and her genuine affection for us. (male student, Essay 27)

Noddings (1992; 2001) defines caring as a relationship, as an encounter between two people—the carer and the one cared for. The students specifically talked about their teachers as carers, which was also the case with the teacher Arja. This reminds us that the teacher–pupil relationship is inherently asymmetric with respect to caring (Noddings, 1992). Although the memory concerning Arja is explicit about caring,

the students reported experiences of both caring and non-caring. Caring and non-caring take turns, being closely intertwined in the memories. Therefore, whenever we talk about caring, non-caring is also implicitly present and *vice versa*. Sometimes this was the case even with the same teacher. A student said she felt she could tell all things, even her minor worries, to her teacher, Anni, knowing that the teacher would listen to her. However, she continued that once Anni forced her to read a text from a book, although she was not yet a fluent reader. Her classmate always whispered to her the next line. This made the student feel fear about lacking a skill and she did not want to admit this to anyone (female student, Essay 32).

The embodied nature of caring (Estola & Syrjälä, 2002) and the way the teacher showed caring through her/his body was highlighted in the memories of the teacher touching, listening and hugging, as Arja did. The teacher is concretely there for the pupil (see van Manen, 1991), her/his full attention on the particular pupil (Goldstein, 1997). The feeling of safety emanates from trust in the teacher and from the knowledge that the teacher really cares about the child and her/his worries. The embodied nature of caring and non-caring also showed in the memories of a teacher's intervention, concretely intervening. One student told about having been bullied for quite a long time in primary school. Eventually, she decided to ask her homeroom teacher for advice:

...she merely rolled her eyes and shrugged. Thus, the issue remained as trivial, and her only comment was to "keep away from each other", and nothing else was done to solve the issue. (Essay 14)

The teacher used her power by not concretely stepping into the pupil's situation and by omitting to do things that were important to the child (Nuutinen, 1994). The bullied pupil, however, did not leave the matter but talked about it to another teacher. "He took it seriously, having the ability to listen to me calmly and sensitively without making anyone the guilty party" (female student, Essay 14). After their discussion they went to see the homeroom teacher, who now also started to act. A concrete intervention was needed to solve the situation.

Interest in Pupils, their Learning and the Subject Being Taught

In the previous memory of bullying, the teacher showed interest in the pupil and her difficult situation by intervening, whereas the other teacher's disinterest and indifference became visible in her body and in the lack of action. Interest in something implies willingness to care for that something. Being interested is being present in a very intensive way; it refers to maintaining a caring relation to something or to someone (van Manen, 1991, p.196). The following two memories show a somewhat different picture of interest and caring:

I particularly recall with warmth the moments when we were preparing in a small group for the matriculation examination. We sat, with our woollen socks on, in her/his cold

apartment, going through the courses again, and every once in a while we had a short coffee break. This amazing teacher [of psychology, religion and philosophy] taught her/his students voluntarily at home... (female student, Essay 15)

...the teacher of religion [in junior secondary school] was lazy. S/he rarely came to teach on Fridays, and we had to wait for hours to find out whether or not s/he would come. During the lessons, s/he liked to talk about something unrelated to the topic and was obviously not interested even her/himself about the day's topic. (female student, Essay 41)

The first quoted incidence reveals how the teacher actively shows passion and commitment (Goldstein, 1997) towards not only the pupils and her/his work but also to the subject s/he is teaching (Noddings, 1992). This resembles the comment by one of the students quoted above, who talked about how the teacher's whole posture told them what school was really for. It was through her body that the teacher encouraged and supported pupils to study and to become interested. The teacher's interest and passion towards the subject shows in Pryer's (2001, p. 76) description of her teacher, Miss Britton, who embodied the whole world of ballet. Interest was present in the memories of teachers who had been demanding and had not let any of the pupils get away lightly with things. In the research of Certo et al. (2003, pp. 714–715), caring teachers were never described as easy, because they demanded and expected more of their pupils. According to Noblit (1993), different rituals and actions by the teacher show that power and caring are present in teachers' work. The students' memories suggested that acts of power, such as giving attention to every pupil and demanding things from them, are actually for the benefit of the child. These memories show the teacher's hope for the adolescent (Estola, 2003) and caring for what the pupil will be in the future (van Manen, 1991).

The memory concerning the teacher of religion shows the teacher's indifference and non-caring towards the subject and, at the same time, towards the pupils and their learning. The memory brings up the question of power. Although the pupils had to be on time in the classroom, the teacher did not have to, which reflects the inequality between the teacher and the pupils. Indifference showed as disrespect towards the pupils, not only as disregard of their time, but also as occasional disregard of their questions and ideas. In addition, the teacher's indifference showed in his/her failure to plan the lesson.

Caring and non-caring showed in the teacher memories more as acts and non-acts than as feelings (see Estola & Syrjälä, 2002). According to Goldstein (1997), also, every practical pedagogical decision, starting from the contents of instruction and the placement of desks in the classroom, should be guided by love towards the children. Yet, these acts and non-acts showed to the pupils that the teacher really cared or did not care; they reflected the teacher's feelings. For example, the student we earlier quoted said that, by hugging, Arja showed her caring and true affection to the children. Similarly, the way the homeroom teacher first bypassed the bullying situation with a shrug, was a disappointment to the pupil. "I felt myself an

insignificant member of the group” (female student, Essay 14). The memory reveals the feeling of being insignificant to the teacher and this indifference and non-caring showed in the teacher’s body and actions. It must be kept in mind that, as caring was connected to concrete acts, there were many kinds of acts, and caring can mean different kinds of things to different pupils. It may be that some pupils experience, for example, touching as threatening, and it really demands pedagogical tactfulness (van Manen, 1991) from the teacher to see when it is good to touch and when it is not.

Power Meets the Body and Caring

Degrading and Equal Encounters

In the next memory the student had just started the third grade at the age of 10 and tells about a situation from the textile work class, where they are finishing a bag meant for bringing sportswear to school. Power, caring and body are all present in the memory:

My teacher stood in front of the class, looking very severe and saying “This is a very demanding and difficult phase. I want everyone to be careful and I will not tolerate failure”. I grabbed a pair of scissors feeling insecure and trying not to remember the teacher’s words. I felt nervous. I could not afford to fail now. I did not want to cause disappointment either to my teacher or to my schoolmates. I wanted to carry out the demanding task and to be careful ... at the same time a hole the size of my finger came out of nowhere into the fabric. A HOLE! I can still remember my first reaction “how can I tell my teacher about this mistake?” For the next hour I sat at the back of the classroom nearly crying and trying to think about a way of escaping from the situation. Eventually, I had no other choice but to go up to my teacher and to confess that I had failed. Public humiliation in front of my schoolmates followed. I felt myself a complete failure and an ungifted child who couldn’t even cut the material. As a reminder of my failure, I had to sew a red patch on my pink bag to cover up my mistake. It was like a shameful reproach that labelled me as a loser, reminding me of my mistake.

This particular teacher of textile work controlled the classroom and us pupils with fear. She wanted to be an omniscient authority. She was not interested in her pupils as human beings, but kept a barrier between us and herself that was impossible to cross. Her way of treating us just as pupils and not as human beings pervaded all things. (female student, Essay 1)

Although fear brought safety to one student (male student, Essay 12), this student described the teacher’s use of power as controlling pupils with fear. To become accepted, one had to succeed in the task. The control showed in the pupil’s body as she grabbed the scissors, trying to erase the teacher’s words from her mind, as she saw the hole coming out of nowhere, and as she sat at the back of the classroom nearly crying. Besides using words, the teacher can control her/his pupils and their bodies through her/his own body. Such embodied power was present in the memory

of the teacher standing distantly in front of the class, looking very severe. Another student recollected her primary school teacher standing next to the door to the showers and watching that everyone showered after their PE class (female student, Essay 44). We already mentioned a memory in which the facial expressions of the mathematics teacher revealed what the teacher truly felt about teaching basic mathematics, especially to girls. All of these memories show how power is applied to the pupils, their bodies and also to their sex (Kosonen, 1998; Simonen, 1995; Vuorikoski, 2003b). After all, the teacher is the one who determines what the pupil is supposed to be doing, i.e. whether the pupil is to sit at her/his desk, stand beside the desk or do something else (Laine, 1997). However, at the same time as the teacher uses power on pupils, s/he is also an object of power. Teachers' work is controlled through different official and unofficial regulations and rules (Vuorikoski, 2003a) and through cultural expectations of what a teacher should be like.

There is always a certain asymmetry involved in teacher–pupil relationships (van Manen, 1991), starting from the concrete bodily fact that a pupil needs to look upwards at her/his teacher, whereas the teacher looks down on her/him (Connor et al., 2004, p. 504). In her memory, the student describes an insurmountable barrier between the teacher and the pupils. Such degrading memories told about pupils' experiences of having become devalued and humiliated, having felt shame and having been only one of the many pupils. The students described how they had met an authority who had power over them, favoured some pupils over others, knew everything and knew how to do everything. For the student, the red patch on the pink bag was the culmination of public humiliation and a kind of stigma of failure that embodied the shameful scene in the textile work class. The degrading use of power seemed to relate to the teacher's lack of caring commitment towards the pupils (Goldstein, 1997). From the pupil's point of view, the teacher was not interested in the pupils as individual human beings.

As a concept, power may have certain negative connotations. We often think of power as power over something (Townsend, Zapata, Rowlands, Alberti, & Mercado, 1999). Also Noblit (1993) described how he used to associate power with oppression. After he spent a year in one teacher's classroom, he began to distinguish power that is used solely for the sake of power and power that is used for the moral service of other people. In the teacher memories, power was also told about in this sense of service. Power showed more as humane and as something that is an inevitable part of the teacher–pupil relationship:

...Antti, who treated us as his equals, although he was for us the authority and the one with power. A fair teacher, I would say, and that is the highest rank I would give to a primary school teacher. (female student, Essay 30)

My primary school teacher was good, kind, safe and encouraging, a fabulous person indeed. Her/his humanity was the best thing. S/he was a person to a person and s/he didn't even once point out that s/he was at a higher rank compared to her/his pupils. (female student, Essay 41)

In these memories, humanity, equality and the teacher's normality as a human being are emphasised, and these teachers were also fair. There was no barrier to cross, but the teacher was genuinely present as her/himself with her/his feelings. Yet, as in the first memory, this does not mean that the teacher would not be an authority. Power implies authority (Harjunen, 2002), but authority in these memories implies that the teacher had power as an adult and as a teacher. The relationship between a pupil and a teacher is based more on equality between two people. Pupils are also treated as individuals, like "a person to a person".

Teachers' Power

Ever since the first school day, my teacher was my true idol. I wanted to be just like her. The teacher was an authority whose word was equal to God's. If the teacher said you had to go to bed early, we went... (female student, Essay 26)

The relationship with the teacher leaves a mark on the pupil both during the school years and even up to their adulthood. There were memories that showed mere admiration and respect towards the teacher, and how bodies did what the teacher told them to do. The teacher encouraged and made pupils eager to learn and taught important things about life. However, there were also memories, such as the one from the textile work class, about the pupil feeling herself a total failure and an ungifted child who was not able to accomplish even a simple task. And the memory continued to cause insecurity and fear even in adulthood in situations where she has to sew. "It seems as if I still expect the teacher to scold me after every task" (female student, Essay 1). The teacher's actual words can remain in one's mind and body and cause one to label oneself as poor in something. Pryer (2001, pp. 81–82) tells how she was physically punished for not knowing how to multiply large figures. This incident made her repeat to herself over and over again "I can't do math, I can't do math", which made her practically unteachable, and this personal mantra stayed with her throughout her high school. The values and expectations raised and maintained by the contemporary culture have been written into demands and carved into pupils' bodies, reflecting what we are allowed and supposed to do (Connor et al., 2004, p. 507).

I had the same teacher from first to fourth grade. She was a true archetype of a teacher: a grandmother figure who could be strict when necessary. When I was on the 7th grade, she died of cancer. I cried in the memorial service because I had always admired her and even loved her with my child's heart. This teacher of mine was one big reason for why I decided on the 8th grade to become a primary school teacher when I grew up. Although I didn't always like her teaching methods, I still admire her devotion to her work and her pupils. She gave us a big part of her heart, and that is something I want to do myself, too. (female student, Essay 13)

One's teacher can be a career role model in many ways. Although the person in this memory was not perfect as a teacher, her caring interest towards teaching and her

pupils is something the student wants to strive for. But there were also different memories: one student thought she could definitely be a better teacher than her teacher had been (female student, Essay 48). Personal memories can trigger expectations of what a teacher is supposed to be like and look like. Leggo (1996, p. 238) describes to “have felt the demand to be a knower, expert, repository of knowledge, purveyor of facts and skills.” Personal experiences can manifest as an asset; a student pointed out that her difficulties with her primary school handicraft teachers due to her being left-handed could help her understand similar pupils better than her own teachers did (female student, Essay 17).

Discussion on Encounter in the Teacher–Pupil Relationship

As students of education told about their teachers, they told about them in relation to the pupil. This relationship was defined by the mutually intertwined phenomena of body, caring and power. Teachers were present and worked through their bodies—the teacher’s body was defined by what s/he looked, sounded, smelt and felt like. The teacher showed caring by being there for the pupil, by intervening and stepping into things and by listening to pupils, but s/he also controlled and showed pupils what their place was. Pupils and their bodies were thus objects of both power and caring, and the power of these experiences was revealed in the pupils’ memories of moments of degrading humiliation, but also moments of equality and humanity. Interest and disinterest in pupils, their learning and the subject were also signs of caring. Caring and non-caring were reflected as acts and a lack of acts, and these concrete actions or non-actions made the pupil aware of being or not being cared for.

When listening to former pupils and their memories of teachers, the pupils’ personal experiences and the meanings they gave to these experiences emerged as essential. It began to seem that the students were actually telling about their teacher–pupil relationships in the light of how the teacher encountered or failed to encounter the pupil, and about the particular situations and moments that turned out to be encounters and non-encounters in their relationship with their teacher. Although a relationship with a given teacher could include both encounters and non-encounters, some particular encounters or non-encounters could define the whole relationship with the teacher.

The encounters and non-encounters seemed to be “pedagogical moments” (van Manen, 1991, p. 40), during which the teacher acted towards the pupil, non-action counting also as action. Encounters in the teacher–pupil relationship turned out to be embodied moments of intimacy (Goldstein, 1997) characterised by closeness, trust and safety. The teacher was taking into account each pupil individually, caring for the pupil, her/his thoughts and learning and also showing it through her/his body. Caring was also reflected in the passion (Goldstein, 1997) the teacher felt towards the subject s/he was teaching and how s/he mediated this passion to the pupils. Although power was self-evidently present, when encountering the child, the teacher used the power for the sake of the pupil; by getting involved, by caring and by being

committed (Goldstein, 1997) to the child/adolescent. The teacher seemed to respond to the pupil's need to feel accepted and meaningful (see Noddings, 1992). Non-encounters included experiences of being treated unfairly and degradingly and a feeling of not being cared for and being only one pupil among the many. This was felt in and through the body. Students told about teachers who seemed to be distant, lacked interest in the pupil and failed to see what even a minor event from the adult's point of view could actually mean for the pupil. The power of these encounters and non-encounters was obviously meaningful, as the former pupils could still recall a particular teacher years later.

It is likely that the Buberian (1993) way of thinking, which emphasises the dialogical nature of encounter, would not consider the encounters in our memory material as encounters at all. After all, there is always a certain asymmetry present between the teacher and the pupil, and in order to make justice to the students' memories, we had to discuss non-encounters as well. Still, we want to bring encounter into the discussion on teacher–pupil relationship, because we consider it essential to the teacher–pupil relationship. While the term “relationship” seems to refer to something transfixed and stable, “encounter” implies activity and also a need to promote activity. The teacher–pupil relationship can be seen as a series of encounters. The teacher and the pupil are together building their mutual relationship, constructing and re-constructing it in everyday situations, which may turn out to be encounters or non-encounters. These situations are experienced personally. Thus, the teacher's or a given pupil's memory of a specific event may be totally different and other pupils may not even recall it at all. This reminds us that teacher–pupil relationships and the encounters in them develop between two people surrounded by the other pupils and the school environment. There is no single pattern or right way for a teacher to encounter a pupil, but the person and the situation need to be taken into account (e.g., Noddings, 2001).

We appreciate that these students' teacher memories are the way they are because they were told in an essay that was part of a certain course of education. But acknowledging this does not make the memories any less valuable. When evaluating our research, we draw on the principles of evaluation listed by Heikkinen, Huttunen and Syrjälä (2007). The process of analysis and interpretation was based on our joint work with the students' memories and several related discussions. The analysis and interpretation of the memories was based on the whole sequences of memories, not merely the extracts. We described the evolution and concepts of our research and aimed to highlight the multiple voices of the memory material. Similarly, we allowed the memories to discuss with each other and tried to remain close to the language used by the students themselves in the different phases of research. This is important to preserve evocativeness; i.e. the ability of our research to evoke memories of teachers in our readers is part of its credibility. Our decision to listen to former pupils and to respect their memories of teachers was ethically important since these memories have not been studied often.

Teachers are an important part of all of our lives, but in view of teacher education, memories of teachers are especially significant (e.g. Conle, 2001). Students

should be provided an opportunity as part of their studies to recall and tell about their own teachers and experiences of school. We have continued the practice of recalling teachers in our teaching: we have given students opportunities to share teacher memories with each other and we have also shared these research results with them. We would like to encourage other researcher-teachers to do this as well. This research emphasises the meaning of teachers, teacher–pupil relationships and encounters through body, caring and power. Our plan in the future is to explore emotions and gender as part of the teacher–pupil relationship. Teaching consists of unique moments involving the teacher and his/her pupil(s), and the crucial thing is what the teacher does during these pedagogical moments. Encounter in the teacher–pupil relationship, which always involves power, requires one to be caring, intensively present, i.e. present in the moment with one's body and soul.

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