
THE JUGGERNAUT OF TRADITION: GADAMER, FEMINISM, AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION¹

Linda O'Neill
Northern Illinois University

For more than four decades the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer has been used to justify the crucial role of philosophical hermeneutics in the human sciences. Counterbalancing claims by scholars like E. D. Hirsch who have argued for objectivity in interpretation since the 1960s, Gadamer argues for the legitimacy of a more flexible, expansive interpretive space as a logical and ethical necessity.² Against the recent clamor for “scientifically based research” in educational policy and practice, Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics has been used to support the interpretive claims of practical wisdom in academia and in the public schools.³ In “A Deweyan Theory of Democratic Listening,” Jim Garrison places Gadamer’s “hermeneutic listening” at the pragmatic heart of educational philosophy by connecting it to Dewey’s definitions of freedom and democracy.⁴ Deborah Kerdeman more explicitly connects Gadamer’s hermeneutics to education identifying four ways in which his conception of understanding can be useful for educators. Gadamer’s hermeneutics encourages us to: 1) raise questions we might not otherwise conceive, 2) recognize the ways in which our views of ourselves are deeply embedded in our interpretations of our contexts, 3) ask what continuity might mean once we have “lived through a breach” and 4) investigate more scrupulously the relationship between understanding and knowledge. Kerdeman finds in Gadamer’s hermeneutics a call to students and teachers alike to rethink the question “Where do we stand?”⁵ Gadamer’s “call” seems in many ways to be ideally suited as a framework for teaching philosophy of education based on “conversations” with exemplary philosophers. Encouraging “conversations” with influential thinkers in the philosophical tradition is one way of making philosophy of education accessible, perhaps even welcoming, to a wide range of students. Yet many feminist scholars have found Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics to be seriously problematic. As Professor of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario Marie Fleming argues “it is a grave mistake to think of Gadamer as a potential friend” and as Veronica Vasterling, Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Women’s Study at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands concludes, while there is “much to gain” from reading Gadamer, “there is also much to resist.”⁶ These warnings have called into question some of my own choices in teaching philosophy of education, particularly as they relate to the tension between a hermeneutics of tradition and a hermeneutics of suspicion. In clarifying elements of hermeneutic tension related to personal practice, the following three questions, re-affirmed in the feminist critique of Gadamer, will be explored: 1) In what ways might encounters with a hermeneutics of tradition in philosophy limit the capacity for interpretation and critique? 2) How does one draw inspiration from a tradition from which one has

historically been alienated?⁷ 3) What are the pedagogical implications of the dynamic tensions between hermeneutical consciousness and critical consciousness?⁸

ENCOUNTERS WITH A HERMENEUTICS OF TRADITION

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics legitimates an essential space for educational interpretation, which seems particularly endangered in the increasingly narrow world of "scientifically based research" and data driven instructional decision-making. Gadamer's philosophical critique of scientific technique applied without practical, political wisdom can be used to challenge a wide range of educational policies that are dismissive of distinctions in disciplines as well as vast differences in personal and group social, economic, and political power influencing educational theory and practice. In addition, Gadamer reaffirms a faith in the self-correcting power of hermeneutics suggesting that in philosophy there resides a human capacity to oppose "all redarkening of what it has seen" including "its own dogmatism."⁹

In order to clear the space necessary for an ongoing conversation capable of correcting its own course, Gadamer argues for the ever-expanding virtuality of language extending meaning-making well beyond the conscious intentions of any author. The horizons of tradition fuse with the horizons of each new generation of interpreters to construct intersections of ever-old, ever-new meanings in an ongoing quest for understanding. This expansive view of interpretation seems to promise or at least accommodate increasing inclusiveness, including previously disregarded feminist perspectives, in the evolution of tradition. But it is precisely this view of interpretation that concerns scholars like E.D. Hirsch. In his pre-Core-Knowledge masterpiece, *Validity in Interpretation*, Hirsch argues for a validity secured in careful textual analyses leading to "justifiable" and authoritative pronouncements regarding the meaning of texts based on what the *authors themselves* meant to express. Gadamer seems, in Hirsch's analysis, to take too much liberty with traditions that should stand on their own ground rather than on the shifting sands of ever multiplying meanings constructed in each new generation's personal encounters with treasured texts and traditions.¹⁰ For Hirsch, exposure to canonical texts and traditions provide all that is needed to develop, not only a shared store of cultural capital that can lead to educational equity, but the capacity for critique as well.

While Gadamer argues that philosophical hermeneutics can extend interpretive scope by honoring the questions that lie at the heart of all understanding, Hirsch argues for interpretive precision honoring the author's meaning or intent. Gadamer's commitments lead him to ever expanding conversations with tradition. Hirsch's commitments lead him to an honored canon, "core knowledge" that he would argue every philosophically literate student needs to know. Such disciplinary core identities can be both comforting and

disturbing. While continuity and coherence in the arc of philosophical thought provide a reassuring connection to perennial questions and hopes for enduring truths, the fact that philosophical questions and quests have traditionally been embodied by a “band of brothers” remains problematic for feminist scholars.¹¹ For many decades they have argued that one does not easily draw inspiration from a tradition that refuses to acknowledge the power of its own exclusionary practices.

At the 2003 meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, Eric Bredo presented “Social Foundations’ Greatest Hits,” his personal selections from the foundations of education “canon.” Attempting to avoid “a Hirschian list of facts or concepts or books that ‘every culturally literate foundations student ought to know, ’” Bredo included the following philosophical entries in his annotated list: Plato’s *Republic*, Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Rousseau’s *Emile*, Emerson’s *The American Scholar*, James’ *Pragmatism*, *Talks to Teachers*, Dewey’s *School and Society*, *Democracy and Education*, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, *The Public and Its Problems*, *Art as Experience*, Greene’s *The Public School and Private Vision*, *Landscapes of Learning*, *The Dialectic of Freedom* and Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

In offering this list, with Maxine Greene as the female embodiment of the philosophical tradition in the midst of a highly selective “band of brothers,” Bredo suggests that we who teach foundations of education share traditional touchstones with “Wittgensteinian family resemblances.” We do not have a core curriculum, but we do have readings and concepts like “traits of siblings who are all part of the same family...with no single set of genes unique to all of them and no non-family members, no essential core...” This sharing of family resemblances does not require “a holy, sanctioned, or authoritative list.” It avoids Hirschian restrictions while allowing the breathing room necessary for corrective critiques.¹² Many of the philosophers represented in Bredo’s list of readings also figure prominently in my own undergraduate classes in philosophy of education. If it is possible that this pantheon reflects a gendered preference for a hermeneutics of tradition, the feminist critique of Gadamer implicates my own pedagogical practices as well.

HISTORICAL ALIENATION AND A HERMENEUTICS OF SUSPICION

It seems obvious that if we stay within the sphere of traditionally sanctioned authors’ words and meanings, as Hirsch proposes, and if those words and meanings are blind to feminist concerns, we can scarcely hope to promote greater understandings of our historically situated, gendered selves via scrupulously restrictive interpretations of traditional texts. But even if we endorse a more expansive Gadamerian hermeneutic, how is it possible to identify embodied prejudices within a tradition of “residues” so basic that we cannot conceive of our worlds without them? This question is especially thorny for feminists

exploring gender related prejudices established developmentally before we have the language to challenge them, within a culture prone to exploit them, and against an historical tradition happy to ignore them.

Gadamer claims that encounters with tradition hold more than the promise of increased understanding of others and of self; tradition can, in some circumstances, “function as a means for recognizing false prejudices.”¹³ In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer advises us to admit that we are dominated by prejudices in order to see what “manifests itself by their light.” When we do not acknowledge the mutuality in our relationship with tradition, we destroy “its moral bond” just as we destroy our moral connections when we treat other human beings as categories or objects for use: “*A person who reflects himself out of a living tradition destroys the meaning of this tradition...*” In understanding tradition, we should not seek to expunge our own judgments and prejudices as some research methodologies claim to do. Instead, we must think within our prejudices without being imprisoned by them. Situating ourselves in this way within a tradition “does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible.”¹⁴

Gadamer seems to be offering an encounter with tradition that balances the weight of the past with the concerns of the present. He reassures us that this encounter is not a trap, but a doorway. He offers philosophical justification for pedagogy that provides students with the interpretive space to question philosophical traditions in ways that make sense to them. But his offer is not without its own prejudices and pitfalls as contributors to *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer* demonstrate. This collection of essays is part of the *Re-Reading the Canon* series, which includes feminist interpretations of Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey among many others. In this volume, feminist scholars in philosophy, political science, and women’s studies identify in the work of Gadamer presuppositions about tradition and characteristics of tradition’s interpreters that have concerned feminist scholars for decades. Their critiques emphasize the limitations and blindness of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics and confirm the need for a hermeneutics of suspicion to expose the dogmatism hidden beneath the treasures of our traditions. These dogmatism hide assumptions about the nature of tradition itself and call into question the legitimacy of tradition’s interpreters.

According to some of his most eloquent feminist critics, Gadamer suggests a tradition that is both ambiguous and monolithic; in homogenizing the “we” of those who participate in “tradition,” he ignores issues of power. Gadamer does not seriously consider the possibility that his tradition is a collection of stories told by the victorious who establish their authority by virtue of the fact that the dissenters have been silenced, the losers have been banished, and the counter stories have been either censored past recognition, discarded, or eradicated. Like his teacher Martin Heidegger, Gadamer’s tradition is one that misses the fresh

air of natality with its celebration of birth and renewal. Instead, his tradition offers a horizon of finitude. There may be a virtuality in language, but our primordial experiences are of limitation. Gadamer extends the Heideggerian notion of “running toward death” and neglects the gendered embodiment of birth, just as he neglects considerations of embodied ethnicity. His hermeneutic circle of hope and disappointment is coded male; he does not acknowledge his need for a feminine ethic in his concepts of receptivity and community. For Gadamer, we are not so much of woman born as of tradition born. Steeped in the classics, Gadamer remains blind to traditions that are not his own. He seeks to understand, not the alienating power of tradition, but the vast rewards of embracing tradition with a hermeneutical consciousness that is “historically effective,” rather than historically trapped or determined.¹⁵

Gadamer’s feminist critics also believe that he remains blind and deaf to most of the lived differences that are revealed in the power and status of tradition’s interpreters. In identifying a Socratic embodiment of questioning as his metaphor for philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer essentially ignores the ways in which questions can be as coercive as dogma. This is especially true when the questioner has more experience, knowledge, power, eloquence, authority, or prestige than the person to whom the question is directed. When the resources of the questioner and the questioned are not equal, when the weight and momentum of custom are so great that a single individual or group would be foolhardy to offer an alternative in open defiance of a traditional order, then Gadamer’s historically effective consciousness will not suffice.

Here, the relationship between the limits of hermeneutical consciousness and the need for critical consciousness becomes apparent. Gadamer’s hermeneutics of tradition *requires* the counterbalance of a hermeneutics of suspicion to reveal ways in which interpreters are situated – enhanced or diminished – in categories of race, gender, class. The logic of question and answer cannot provide an effective counterbalance. Nor can a reliance on feminine aspects of dialogue. Receptivity cannot take the place of a systematic analysis of inequities given ongoing dialogues between “traditionally” unequal partners. A hermeneutics of suspicion is required for honest investigations of the many ways in which situated differences weaken and strengthen claims to question as well as claims to speak.¹⁶

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: TEACHING PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In encountering philosophical traditions, what resources do student questioners bring to the conversation? How often are they alienated rather than inspired by a juggernaut loaded with philosophical exemplars traveling the royal roads to hermeneutical and critical consciousness? Under what circumstances are they tempted to forget their questions altogether and join those who choose

to pull a “lord of the philosophical world” forward toward greater certainty, relinquishing their personal philosophical quests entirely?

In challenging Gadamer’s hermeneutics of tradition, the essays in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer* continue to inspire me to rethink my own teaching of philosophy of education. Within a hermeneutics of tradition, the Gadamer-inspired claim that “Philosophy is nothing other than disciplined dialogue about the few questions that we all share and which are most important to us all simply as persons....living centered in the asking of the universal and fundamental questions that bond together the free citizens of a free community”¹⁷ rests comfortably, at home in its invitation to philosophical engagement. Offering this invitation as one of many definitions of philosophy at the beginning of each semester, I sidestep the very questions that arise so naturally in a hermeneutics of suspicion: Disciplined how? Whose universal and fundamental questions? Shared in what ways? Bonded how? Free when, where, and to what extent?

I have perhaps placed too much faith in a hermeneutics of tradition as a natural gateway to a hermeneutics of suspicion, a habit of questioning, a capacity for recognizing and countering “false prejudices that are a product of socialization and sedimented interpretation serving hegemonic interests.”¹⁸ My philosophy of education team investigations and conversations all too often include a band of brothers plus one sister standing in as the female representative in a traditionally male pantheon beginning with Plato’s Socrates and extending through the “footnotes” of subsequent generations. True to type, the female embodiments of philosophy included in my selections from the philosophical tradition in education often represent an ethic of feminine receptivity, care, and nurturing. Recently Nel Noddings has been added to the group with selected excerpts from the *Challenge to Care in Schools*, a “classic” work arguably in that “feminine” tradition. Uneasy with the possibility of an overly hasty categorization and dismissal of Noddings’ philosophy including the curricular recommendations she delineates in “The Care Tradition: Beyond ‘Add Women and Stir,’” two supplementary pieces are included in the course readings depicting Noddings as the embodiment, not only of care, but of questioning. In “Learning from Our Students,” Noddings counters the conventional wisdom of *No Child Left Behind*:

The slogan “All children can learn” is popular today, but empty until we say what “all children can learn.” Can all learn to interpret great literature? Can all children learn to play the violin well? Can all learn algebra and geometry in a meaningful way?¹⁹

In “War, Critical Thinking, and Self-Understanding,” Noddings challenges, “Can students learn to think critically if they are not asked to engage with critical issues?” For Noddings, war is among the most critical issues students will face in their lives. She suggests that gendered aspects of war and violence seduce both females and males in a “traditional” dance with heroism exhibited and

admired. Tugging against the limitations of female essentialism, Noddings asks females and males alike to confront possibilities that are all too easy to project onto “others.” Noddings questions not only our capacity to care, but also our capacity to “commit ourselves to both the remembrance of victims and the understanding of perpetrators.”²⁰ This application to educational policy and war does not restrict itself to the dialectics of debate or the identification of logical fallacies. The goal of questioning here comes closer to the Socratic *elenchus*, a questioning that draws forth knowledge existing within each person. In evoking this embodied knowledge Noddings’ crisscrosses the hermeneutics of tradition and suspicion, calling for gendered, but not necessarily essentialist, responses to a questioner embodied female.

In considering Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics as justification for my own pedagogy, I return to questions reaffirmed in *Re-Reading the Canon*.²¹ In what ways might encounters with a hermeneutics of tradition in philosophy limit students’ capacity for interpretation and critique? The vast philosophical tradition, full of promise as well as prejudice, offers an inheritance of once embodied now encoded “careful, patient, systematic, and diligent” explorations into the “researches of human wisdom.”²² If students are to access this inheritance, they may need to draw inspiration from even those traditions that have historically been alienating.²³ To what extent can students find in philosophical tradition the resources needed to confront false prejudices serving hegemonic interests? How are any of us to combat prejudices so central to our identities that we cannot conceive of our lives without them? What kinds of philosophical conversations might offer females and males greater access to the riches of both a hermeneutics of suspicion and a hermeneutics of tradition?²⁴ The pedagogical implications of the dynamic tensions between hermeneutical consciousness and critical consciousness remain open. These tensions, so clearly delineated in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, tug at the very coherences of philosophical hermeneutics. They also play a vitalizing role in a “tradition” that embodies the ontological richness of *being in question*.

NOTES

1. *Juggernaut* (from the Sanskrit Jagannatha meaning “lord of the world”) refers to a form under which the Hindu God Vishnu is worshipped in India. Each year, a wooden image of Vishnu is placed in a vehicle so heavy that it takes hundreds of devotees many days to drag it to its destination. With thousands of pilgrims participating, there are some accidents and frenzied worshippers have been known to throw themselves under the vehicle, but it is *not* true, as legend has it, that vast numbers of people are crushed beneath the Juggernaut’s wheels. In recent educational reform literature, the term *juggernaut* is more often used to refer to politically driven initiatives than philosophical traditions. See for example Gerald W. Bracey’s phrase, “Indeed, as the testing juggernaut has rumbled across

-
- education [...],” in “The Trouble with Research: Part 3,” *Phi Delta Kappan* 86, no. 1 (2004): 91-92.
2. E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1967); Francis Schrag, “What Future for Social Science,” *Educational Theory* 54, no. 1 (2004): 89-101.
3. Chris Higgins, “From Reflective Practice to Practical Wisdom: Three Models of Liberal Teacher Education,” in *Philosophy of Education Yearbook 2001*, ed. Suzanne Rice (Urbana: Philosophy of Education Society, 2002), 92-99.
4. James W. Garrison, “A Deweyan Theory of Democratic Listening,” *Educational Theory* 46 (1996): 429-51.
5. Deborah Kerdeman, “Between Interlochen and Idaho: Hermeneutics and Education for Understanding,” *Philosophy of Education Yearbook 1998*, <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/1998/kerdeman.html> [cited 10 August 2004].
6. Marie Fleming, “Gadamer’s Conversation: Does the Other Have a Say?” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lorraine Code (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 110; Veronica Vasterling, “Postmodern Hermeneutics: Toward a Critical Hermeneutics?” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lorraine Code (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 17.
7. Lorraine Code, “Why Feminists Do Not Read Gadamer,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lorraine Code (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 14.
8. Paul Ricouer explored the potential “interpenetration” of Gadamer’s hermeneutics and Habermas’ “critique of ideology” as an alternative to the “false antinomy” of “either a hermeneutical consciousness or a critical consciousness” (*Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. J. Thompson [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981], 63).
9. Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Intellectual Autobiography of Hans-Georg Gadamer,” in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1997), 2-55, 16.
10. Hirsch’s concerns about the integrity of a text might be compared to Sartre’s commentary on Genet as he is being labeled a thief: “It is as if a page of a book suddenly became conscious and felt itself being read aloud without being able to read itself.” Quoted in Didier Eribon, “The Gaze of the Other,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (3 September 2004): B4.
-

11. In the human mythology of religion and psychology, we often see the power of the God (Vishnu) or the father (head of primitive families) theorized as either unassailable (religion) or dislodged (psychology) by a band of brothers discovering on their way to founding civilizations that they are stronger than any single individual when they combine forces. In Freud's analysis, the female embodiment of *Eros* and *Ananke* (Love and Necessity) functions not as a member of such a band but as both sexual object and maternal figure. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), 46-50. Bonnie Honig, author of *Democracy and the Foreigner* (2003) and editor of *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (1995), another entry in the *Re-Reading the Canon* series cited in this work, offers an analysis of problems of authority, freedom, and (re)founding within political (specifically national, democratic) contexts. In *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001), Honig observes that "the law by which we were founded is always lingeringly alien to us since we did not...will it for ourselves....And we never will – at least not in the full, unvarnished sense required by would-be radical democrats like Rousseau" (29-30). Looking at the "cultural, symbolic or political" roles of the foreigner in founding stories, Honig shows how Rousseau and Freud's "different imaginings of the natural father" (28) lead to foreign founder scripts that address the tensions between authority, freedom, and democracy in very different ways, depending upon whether or not that father is viewed as benevolent and disinterested enough to leave the scene when his "children" are able to govern themselves. When dealing with democratic stories of "self authorship and self identity" (31) there is a tension, which in Honig's comparison of Rousseau and Freud is between good father and bad father rather than female and male "codes." The tension here can also be compared to the tension between a hermeneutics of tradition and a hermeneutics of suspicion. Just as legitimation theorists in political science are concerned about alienation that leads to civic cynicism and withdrawal rather than engagement, advocates of a hermeneutics of *tradition* like E. D. Hirsch worry that the center will not hold if cultural critique comes too early or too often (i.e. before "cultural literacy" has been established). Advocates of a hermeneutics of *suspicion* like many of the scholars in Code's *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer* foreground the alienation of those once lost in legitimating, hegemonic processes and see in their recovery, hopes of sparking "civic activism, unrest, protest" (31) in ways that promise to reinvigorate democratic politics in national, local, and supranational registers.

12. Eric Bredo, "Social Foundations' Greatest Hits." Paper presented at the American Educational Studies Association meeting, Mexico City, October 2003.

13. Ingrid Scheibler, *Gadamer: Between Heidegger and Habermas* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 57.

14. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev., ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 360, 360, 360, 361.

15. On relations with traditions that are historically effective, please see Kathleen Roberts Wright, "(En)gendering Dialogue Between Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Feminist Thought," in Lorraine Code, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 39-56; Marie Fleming, "Gadamer's Conversation," 109-132.

16. I draw here from the work of Veronica Vasterling, "Postmodern Hermeneutics? Toward a Critical Hermeneutics," 149-180; Robin Pappas and William Cowling, "Toward a Critical Hermeneutics," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lorraine Code (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 203-230; Patricia Altenbernd Johnson, "Questioning Authority," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, ed. Lorraine Code (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), 307-324.

17. Francis J. Ambrosio, "Caputo's Critique of Gadamer: Hermeneutics and the Metaphorics of the Person," in *The Specter of Relativism: Truth, Dialogue, and Phronesis in Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. Lawrence K. Schmidt (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1995), 101.

18. Scheibler, *Gadamer*, 18.

19. Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College P, 1992); "The Care Tradition: Beyond 'Add Women and Stir'," *Theory into Practice* 40, no. 1(winter 2001): 29-34; "Learning from Our Students," *Kappa Delta Pi Record* (summer 2004): 154-159, 155.

20. Nel Noddings, "War, Critical Thinking, and Self-Understanding," *Phi Delta Kappan* 85, no. 7 (2004): 489-495, 494.

21. See Nietzsche's claim that "The only critique of a philosophy that is possible and that proves something, namely trying to see whether one can live in accordance with it, has never been taught at universities: all that has ever been taught is a critique of words by means of other words," quoted in Leslie Sassone, *The Process of Becoming: A Democratic Nietzschean Philosophical Pedagogy for Individualization* (Chicago: Discovery Association Publishing House, 2002), 50.

22. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged Second Edition*, ed. Jean L. McKechnie (New York: William Collins Publishers, Inc., 1979), gives a lovely first definition of research: "careful, patient, systematic, diligent inquiry or examination in some field of knowledge, undertaken to establish facts

or principles; laborious or continued search after truth; as *researches of human wisdom* (1539).

23. Lorraine Code, “Why Feminists Do Not Read Gadamer,”¹⁴.

24. One philosophical foundations student wrote in a conversation paper response to Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*, “Education had always taught me about the corrupt of the world, never the virtuous, and so the world gave the impression of a dark malevolent place” (“Conversation Paper #1,” 27 August 2004). This reflection and others like it have led me to ask under what circumstances students benefit from a hermeneutics of tradition as well as a hermeneutics of suspicion.