ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: CARE IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN TEACHERS

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        This is a study of care in the lives of six women elementary school teachers. It

expands and challenges some of the dominant constructs of care found in the literature

that often underplay the dynamic of context, gendered identity and power in the making

of caring pedagogies. I chose narrative inquiry as a means to study because I was

particularly interested in exploring how these women understand and experience care in

their lives as teachers. This approach looks to the three-dimensional space of experience

as a source of knowledge and understanding. The pedagogies of care held by these six

women reflect their needs to care in particular ways: They see themselves as self-

sacrificing, they see care as an isolated act, and they believe they need to look to the

authority of others to validate their knowledge and experience. I assert that these

understandings of care are informed by dominant patriarchal discourses about

womanhood and caring that contribute to their enactments of care as teachers. Through

these enactments, I believe these women are unknowingly complicit in the devaluation of

their voices and experiences. The culture of the school contributes to these

understandings in complex ways. There seems to be a dynamic relationship between these teachers' ability to free themselves from the determination of others and their ability to care for students. I posit that if pedagogies of care are to meet the needs of students and at the same time empower women teachers to name themselves as gendered beings, they will need to be more *authentic, critical, collective* and *inclusive* than those explored here. This study complicates traditional constructs of care by drawing on the voice and experience of these women. The findings significantly contribute toward conversations at the intersection of pedagogy and gendered identities. As such, it raises critical questions about how contexts shape our life experience and the meanings we make of that experience as women and as teachers.

CARE IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN TEACHERS

by

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This work is dedicated to the many bold and beautiful women in my life, as we work together for the freedom to name our places in the world.

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I want to respond in a way that furthers the other's purpose of project...
I am seized by the needs of another.
(Noddings, 1992, p. 16)

CHAPTER ONE

The Study

This is a study of care in the lives of six women elementary school teachers. It expands and challenges some of the dominant constructs of care found in the literature that often underplay the dynamic of context, gendered identity and power in the making of caring pedagogies. I focus on how these women's understandings of care evolve from their life experiences and how the contexts in which they live and work help to shape those experiences. These contexts include the institutional setting of the school as well as the familial and societal contexts in which they live. Throughout this exploration, I pay particular attention to the power relationships inherent in all contexts, and the struggles of these women to name themselves as gendered and caring beings.

As individuals with unique life experience, the six women in this study reveal understandings of care that reflect their biographies, framed and shaped by socio-cultural-familial norms they encounter throughout their lives. Though they come from varied cultural backgrounds, the divergence in their understandings is only partly explained by these differences. More specifically, it is the people, events and life circumstances of their storied lives that significantly shape their versions of care in and out of school. Despite the many varied interpretations of care represented by these women, however, there is a dominant theme among them: there is a shared understanding of care as central to their identities as women. All six women embrace the idea that care is central to their constructs of womanhood, although they differ in how care manifests itself in their lives as women in the larger society, and in the context of their roles as teachers.

All six women view their identities as teachers as being shaped largely by their understandings of care. As such, I have come to call their constructs of care as teachers '*pedagogies of care*.' Here, I draw on Freire's construct of pedagogy as a relationship (Freire, 2000). These women's gendered understandings of their identities have significantly impacted how they enact these pedagogies of care in their roles as teachers of young children. Though all women point to meeting the needs of students as central to their pedagogies of care, their enactments of these constructs differ, in part, because of the range in their life experiences. These enactments are also influenced by the dynamic relationship between these six women's understandings and various aspects of the school context. In particular, relationships with administrators, the climate and mission of the school contribute significantly to the meanings they make of care in this place.

By examining these women's stories, I show that their constructs of care are varied and complex. These constructs are informed by past and present experience, shaped by the contexts in which these six women live, the people with whom they relate, and the events they encounter. They are intricately interwoven with their constructs of gendered identity, presenting them with particular challenges as they strive to name and enact their versions of care in teaching contexts. They struggle to understand care as both pivotal to their constructs of womanhood and as a dimension of practice that they *choose* to enact in their roles as teachers. Because the contexts in which they live are infused with relations of power in which particular versions of womanhood and teaching are inscribed, their stories of becoming are dynamic and unfinished.

In this first chapter, I lay out three overarching goals of this work: to challenge dominant construct of care found in the literature; to raise critical questions about the

contexts in which these women struggle to make meanings of care; and to draw on the voices and experiences of real teachers as sources of knowledge and understanding. I then discuss myself as a researcher, my use of narrative inquiry as a means for studying life experience and introduce each of the six women.

Goals of the Study

Challenging Dominant Constructs of Care

Notions of care are embedded in discourses of teaching. We find them in professional literature about teaching, in policy documents, mission statements of teacher organizations, and in the media. The mission of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), for example, is, "Ensuring Competent and *Caring* Education for all Children and Youth" (www.aacte.org homepage, emphasis added). Within the standards document set forth by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is a call for "…*caring*, competent, and qualified teachers [to] teach every child" (2002 Edition, emphasis added).

Even President Bush, in his remarks at the 2003 Teacher of the Year Ceremony stated, "Students are fortunate to have talented and good-hearted people in their lives." When describing the winner of the award, Betsy Rogers, he pointed to her willingness to care for her students in a multitude of ways: "She gives before school tutoring to students who need extra help learning to read, and volunteers on school committees after hours. She attends sporting events and birthday parties for her students. She helps the families of disadvantaged students through local church and community groups." In Betsy's own closing remarks she says, "All of us want to live in a country where our

legacy to the world is how we've taken *care* of our children" ([www.ed.gov/Speeches/04-2003/04302003.html, emphasis added)](www.ed.gov/Speeches/04-2003/04302003.html, emphasis added).

The assumed and obvious nature of care that seems to pervade society and discussions of teaching is well represented by Noddings' statement, which precedes this chapter. She writes, "When I care, I really hear, see or feel what the other tries to convey. I want to respond in a way that furthers the other's purpose of project… I am seized by the needs of another" (Noddings, 1992, p. 16). Caring, in this sense, is a responsibility, an outward act of giving "care," and is generally accepted as central to women's lives and work. Because the field of teaching predominantly consists of women, it stands to reason that teaching, too, would be defined by "caring." In this study, I do not talk about men as carers. I chose to work with women because, while the field of teaching consists primarily of women, the dominant notions of care embedded in constructs of teaching appear to be patriarchal in nature. I was interested in understanding how women's experiences of care reflected or challenged these notions. However, I would agree that research should be done on how all educators engaged in teaching defined by care experience this aspect of their work.

The idea that women are particularly suited to professions like teaching where caring plays a central role stems back to the 19th century when females first began entering the profession. Hoffman (1981) writes, "the accounts of some women tell us that they chose teaching not because they wanted to teach children conventional right from wrong, but in order to foster social, political, or spiritual change: they wanted to persuade the young, move them to collective action for temperance, for racial equality, for conversion to Christianity" (p. xviii). Today, in teaching and in the related fields of

nursing, ministry and social work, there is a shared understanding of the ethic of care as a "calling." Those attracted to such work typically describe their foray into the profession as a response to a "calling," in this case a "call to care" (Lashley et al., 1994). Nurses, in particular, describe "caring" in terms of a moral commitment to protection, maintenance and enhancement of one's physical and emotional wellbeing (Watson, 1988). These same understandings have been applied to the teaching field in conversations of creating "safe environments for learning."

Later research in the field of psychology supports the argument that caring meets women's natural need for connections with others. For those particularly interested in the moral development of women (Gilligan, 1982, 1987, 1988), caring is seen as a means of response, of developing and sustaining the relationships essential for female identity development. Girls, Gilligan states, define themselves through the attachment they have with others. Caring, in this light, is a means of responding to an innate need to feel connected with others. Gilligan might suggest that because most teachers are women, there is a natural tendency for us to seek connectedness through this role.

Women's seeming preoccupation with relationships is seen to prepare us for professions like teaching and nursing in which caring for others is emphasized. Seminal work in psychology positions caring as both central to women's identity and involving outward acts of giving care. Gilligan (1988) and others challenge the notion that caring for others must mean sacrificing self, suggesting that instead female identity development is about finding that middle ground where both self and others can be "included." However, in society at large such inclusive constructions are not valued. Women continue to be defined in opposition to men as preoccupied with concerns over

connection and emotion; ever striving to be nurturing and self-sacrificing (Gore, 1993). Internalizing these understandings, women tend to suppress their own desires for those of others. This is reflected in the prevailing notion of caring in teaching, characterized as a relationship through which the teacher engrosses herself in understanding what her students need, and in turn, has her needs met when those students' needs are fulfilled (Noddings, 1992, Weil, 1951).

And yet, as Kreisberg (1992) reminds us, dominant behavior is a social phenomenon. Patterns of behavior are shaped by humans and so transformable by human action as well. Kreisberg points to examples of resistance and rejection of dominant definitions of power in the literature and in society, suggesting that through human agency such power relations can be challenged and ultimately changed (p. 16). Similarly, I suggest that dominant notions of "care" are in constant struggle with constructs of care informed by life experience and shaped by dynamic contexts. In other words, traditional notions of caring that are, although widely accepted, only represent one set of understandings. I am hopeful that, in sharing these stories these traditional notions of care might be challenged and enlightened.

Today, "care" as an aspect of teachers' life experience is under-theorized in the literature on teaching. Research of this sort does not pay sufficient attention to the messy relationship between constructs of teaching and constructs of gender or to the contexts in which these meanings are negotiated. An important aim of this paper is to further complicate dominant constructs of care, redefining pedagogies of care in ways that are more reflective and inclusive of women's experience.

Power, Knowledge and Identity

The understandings of care that I bring to this study are influenced by critical feminist perspectives with relation to moral development and the social construction of knowledge. These perspectives place issues of power, knowledge, and identity development at the forefront of their arguments. Recent contributions from post-structuralism have enhanced these understandings and helped me to view teacher identity development as both internally and socially constructed.

The theme of socialization is prevalent among feminist writers who insist that women, in particular, internalize the definitions society attributes to them (hooks, 1984). hooks claims that women internalize the dominant culture's understandings and judgments of our worth. Gore (1993) similarly draws on Foucault's "regimes of truth," explaining that through such regimes, knowledge is produced and distributed. Gore suggests that dominant discourses (such as the capitalist patriarchy) institutionalize and maintain such distribution, as do discourses that exist in opposition to the dominant structure. Gore describes both feminist and critical pedagogies as regimes of truth that exist in opposition to the dominant structure of capitalist patriarchy. The actualization of these regimes of truth, according to Gore, takes place within individuals (women, in this case), through "technologies of the self." Technologies of self constitute the lens through which we understand our mannerisms, speech and actions. For Gore, as for Foucault, morality is both socially-imposed and internally-constructed, as individuals continue to act upon and judge themselves within the technologies of self they adopt.

In this way, patriarchal discourses, for instance, inform our knowledge of the world by positioning certain experiences (white, middle-upper class, heterosexual male)

over others. Dominant patriarchal discourses work in complex and contradictory ways to shape women's experience at the same time that other discourses, such as familial, cultural, the culture of school, of teaching, inform our experience as well. Women are constantly negotiating the messages we receive about what it means to be a woman. Thus, the meanings of care that women teachers have with regards to our work are continuously socially constructed. For the purpose of this study, I use the term socially constructed to mean both socially-imposed and internally-constructed, implying the constant internal discourse between self and others. This struggle between internal and external discourses—and the efforts of teachers to understand and act upon what it means to care in the midst of this struggle—is another focus of this paper. I strive to unearth some of the power struggles at work in the lives of these teachers and the impact they have on their evolving identity development.

Voice and Experience as Sources of Knowledge

Life experience, and the stories we tell of it, constitute the only window we have into meanings of humanity. We know what it is to be human because we experience life. We share our experiences with others so that they may broaden their understandings of what it is to be human. As Van Manen (1990) says, "We gather other people's experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves" (p. 62). And yet, research that derives meaning from teachers' life experience and voice is too often absent from conversations of teacher education. There is a growing interest in narrative work as a means to gain knowledge and understanding from the experiences of teachers (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995, Pagnucci, 2004). In this tradition, a third, and final, aim of

this paper is to further enlighten understandings of "care" as an essential aspect of teachers' experience by delving into the storied lives of six women. I draw on their experiences and the stories they tell of those experiences as sources of knowledge and understanding.   In order for you, the reader, to make sense of the meanings I make, however, I must first share with you my own storied existence for the purpose of laying bare my assumptions, purposes and failings.

Who am I?

The story I tell here is of knowledge, language and power. It begins on the cracked and worn arm of my father's brown leather chair. Here we poured over the newspaper each weekend reading aloud and sounding out difficult words. It consists of scenes on my old olive green bedspread where my mother read and reread Peter Pan, encouraging me to close my eyes and imagine the images created by the language on the page while I snuggled into sleep. Rarely did a day go by that I did not see my mother with her nose in a book or a crossword puzzle. Rarely did an evening pass that I did not engage in some discussion or debate with my father about an issue of concern. My parents instilled in me a respect for knowledge and a thirst for learning that has carried me through my many years of schooling. They taught me that education is a key to power and freedom. They also taught me that with such freedom and power comes the responsibility to use what I learn in the service of others around me.

The story continues at the age of eleven when my parents divorced and I moved to Virginia. While still living a loving story with my mother and father, the innocence with which I wandered through my first ten years was challenged by new realities. I

entered a whirling world of hidden truths and hurtful words dropped from the mouth of

an alcoholic stepfather. Words in this place were not puzzles to be sorted or scenes from

a book to be imagined. They were tests of intelligence, rites of passage and slices

through my soul. I learned valuable lessons here about hurting. Neglect, harsh words and

physical anger are only of the few ways that people hurt each other. From my experience

I can add to this list deceit, disappointment and silence.

Today I am the woman that my parents nurtured me to be in those early years

together. I am committed to ideals of social justice and seek to put what I have learned

toward work in a world that is far from perfect. As a reader and thinker today I am

critical in ways I may not have been had my father and mother not helped me see the

injustices at work in our world. I am also the woman that grew out of the later

experiences in my life. I am deeply committed to issues of gender discrimination and

socialization, as well as violence against women and children. As a teacher today I am

awake and alert to the emotional and social dynamics of my classroom in ways I may not

have been had I not lived in a home rocked by emotional and physical abuse. While my

experience has taught me that violence takes many forms and hurts in many ways, so too

have I come to understand care as a complex and contradictory term.

I am now a mother myself, and care means so many things. I never dreamed I

could care about anyone as much as I do my daughters. This new depth of care comes

intricately woven with emotions of fear and guilt. Because I care so much for my

daughters, I am fearful whenever I imagine that something might happen to them. My

expanded ability to care has led me to feel new degrees of fear. With that care also

comes a sense of guilt whenever I am torn between being with my daughters and doing something for myself. As I write this afternoon, my family is out having a picnic. Rather than joining them, I chose to stay in my office and write. As I do whenever I make such a choice, I feel guilty for choosing my work over our family.

Guilt and care have played out not just in my personal life but in my professional one as well. Throughout my career as an elementary classroom teacher, caring became an integral part of the practice and identity I constructed within the context of my work. I began to understand the many dimensions of care as I engaged in efforts to care about my students' academic, social, emotional, moral and physical well-being. My passion to nurture and care for my students sometimes led to working long into the night preparing lessons to meet their various needs. At times it meant weekends spent at soccer games and ballet recitals to show support for my students and their interests. It meant phone calls to parents, long meetings with specialists, trips to the dental office or simply a hug on the playground. Care came to be a central tenet of the identity I formed as a teacher.

While teaching in this context, however, I began to be critical of what care meant for me as a teacher. I wondered about the ability of schools to be caring places when they were at the same time so interested in ranking and labeling children. I wondered about my role in such a system and how care had come to mean for me both caring about the individuals in my classroom and their marks on standardized exams. I wondered about others who seemed to use my sense of caring as a tool to impose guilt on me as a teacher. How often I heard the words, "if you cared about your students, you'd..." and I'd feel compelled to meet an expectation that I deemed unfair. I wondered about my complicity in these guilt traps. What did this say about the woman I was? About my

socialization into this culture of teaching? I wondered about my construct of care that

seemed so broad and yet ever-growing. I began to see my entire self as connected to who

I am as a teacher—not just as one who has learned to organize, plan, and manage—but as

one who has learned from experiences with humility, prejudice, and personal struggle.

Still today, as I embark on a new journey as a university professor, I am in the process of

becoming.

Narrative Inquiry

I chose to engage in narrative inquiry as a means for studying the life experiences

of these women elementary school teachers. Because teaching is an intimately personal

endeavor, research of teaching and of teachers' understandings demands attention to our

life experience. Teachers' storied lives, the retellings we share of our life experience, is

the data with which I worked to enlighten my own understandings of "care." Narrative is

one way of representing and understanding experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

It reflects the notion that experience is fluid and relational, and it allows for sense-making

via narrative writing. In this way, narrative inquiry is both the method of research

(collecting, sharing and writing narratives) as well as the methodology (thinking about

life experience narratively.)

This paper reflects my understanding of identity development as an ongoing

process situated among a variety of contexts. People are constantly in relation with

others, always in social context and so the boundaries of space must be fluid in a study of

their experience.   Furthermore, all experiences grow out of other experiences and lead to

still other experiences. So while the teachers with whom I worked were situated in a

specific school at a specific time, the understandings of care that they shared were borne out of experiences that transcend boundaries of time.

All teachers were in the midst of unique storied lives. The contexts in which they have lived and worked, in which they live and work still, are more numerous than I am likely ever to know. Because I understand the process of identity development as a continuum of experience, both personal and social, it was necessary to recognize the fluid nature of these storied lives. I chose narrative inquiry as the means to do so, because it mirrors the qualitative and interpretive way in which I was thinking about the realities under study (methodology) and the means by which I believed it is most appropriate to explore them (method).

We experience life while situated in a multitude of contexts. Among these contexts are the institutions and systems of power in which we live and work. How these power relations contribute to our ability to become the people we choose to be is an important focal point of my work. This critical stance, while not integral to narrative work, is nonetheless an important lens through which I view my contributions to the narrative field of inquiry. Here, I draw on Freire's notion of narrative as the action of conscientization, or the practice of retelling one's experience in order to better understand and act in one own's freedom from determination (Freire, 2000).

The 3-Dimensional Space of Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) speak about the three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry as being one in which researchers look forward and backward, inward and outward while situating themselves and their study in place. In this way researchers can explore the three central pieces of Dewey's (1938) foundational place: interaction

(personal and social explored inwardly and outwardly); continuity (past, present and future explored backward and forward); and situation (place explored in specific contexts). Researchers that continue to generate questions, puzzles, and field texts in response to these different dimensions are continuously made aware of the situatedness of their inquiry and the fluidity of experience.

Research Questions

The main research question for this paper was: *How do teachers understand and experience care in the context of their work?* My subsidiary questions evolved from my desire to address all dimensions of the 3-D space defined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). They are as follows:

Table 1

Subsidiary Research Questions

Dimension of Space	Subsidiary Research Question

Backward	How have teachers' life experiences contributed to their understandings and convictions about care?
Forward	How do teachers' understandings of care contribute to their ongoing identity development as caring professionals?
Inward	In what ways do teachers reflect upon the implications of their constructs of care and the understandings from which they are derived?
Outward	How do teachers understand and act on the various messages that they receive about what it means to care within their school context?
Situated in Place	What factors contribute to or hinder teachers' ability and will to construct for themselves and act upon what it means to care?

This set of questions was designed to respond to the need for greater understanding of the tensions that teachers face as they construct for themselves and act upon what it means to care in the context of their work.

The Six Women

Each of the participants lives within the area surrounding Amarette Elementary. Amarette sits just outside a major metropolitan area along the Eastern seaboard. Like many metropolitan areas, it is characterized by a high influx of immigrants, mostly Central American (Guatemalan, Salvadorian, Honduran). The immediate neighborhood is home to a great number of immigrant families, most of whom live at or below the poverty line. However, just next door is another neighborhood reflecting a higher socio-economic level. The school draws from both neighborhoods as well as the greater

county, as it is a magnet school offering Spanish Immersion studies. Amarette is the

place where I began my teaching career in 1997.

None of the teachers lives within the boundaries that feed Amarette, but all live

within roughly ten miles. All women characterize themselves as middle-class, though a

number have experienced other positions of economic status throughout their lives.

Table 2

Background Information on Participants

Name	Age	Teaching Assignment	Years Taught	Years at Amarette	Ethnicity	Languages Spoken	Family Situation
Mary Ackerman	28	3rd Grade	3	3	Caucasian	English	Married
Ella Mitchell	50	Music Specialist	19	11	Caucasian	English	Divorced with children
Elizabeth Braslav	38	2nd Grade	3	2	Eastern European (Croatian)	English	Married
Ava Tsadik	44	2nd Grade ESOL—part time	8	5	Cuban	English, Farsi, Spanish	Married with children
Kathy Dressler	35	Art Specialist	10	6	Caucasian	English	Divorced
Sarah Rodriguez	35	Dual Language Kindergarten	5	1	Caucasian	Spanish, English	Married with children

Table 2 reveals that the women's ages range from 28-50, and that they serve in a

variety of roles within the school community. Only two are full-time regular grade-level

teachers. All others serve as specialists in music, art or with special populations of

students in the ESOL or Immersion programs. At the time of the study, participants

ranged in their teaching experience from three to 19 years, one was new to Amarette. Four are Caucasian and born in America, one a second-generation Croatian immigrant, one Cuban. All have been married, two are now divorced. Four have children.

Because our initial interviews were very open-ended, each participant took me on a walk through her life at a different pace and with a different focus. For instance, Ella spoke a great deal about the difficult road she had made through two failed marriages and how they have impacted the woman she is today. Sarah took me all over the world as she described life as the wife of a foreign service officer. Elizabeth talked mostly about her current battle with infertility and how it brought up memories of her mother, whom she lost at an early age. I asked each woman to tell me her story and I listened intently. The purpose of those first interviews was to set the stage for our ongoing discussions and allow me to begin to reconstruct the life stories that were ongoing for each of my participants. It is from this place—the place of introduction—that I begin the conversation of care in the lives of these women.

Mary Ackerman

Mary and I met early in the morning for our first interview, when she said her mind was most clear and there were fewest distractions. That morning we shared coffee and muffins—a tradition that carried on throughout our time together. Her classroom was located in the "clubhouse," a semi-permanent structure located outside the main building. The focal point of her room was the gathering space on the floor bordered by the blackboard, the classroom library, and groups of student desks. Her room suggested the idea of community—that what Mary and her students did here, they did together. The

students had a great deal invested in the room—their artwork decorated the walls, their published works were showcased in the library. The room seemed to belong to everyone.

The first time we talked, it was a cold January morning. Mary wore a heavy wool sweater and corduroy pants. Her thick strawberry blonde hair, which reached the top of her shoulders, was pulled back at the base of her neck this day. She was cheerful and energetic and seemed genuinely happy to see me. We unstacked a couple of chairs and settled in at one of the students' tables. I started by asking her, as I did all the women, to tell me about where she'd come from—about her family, her childhood and growing up.

Mary told me about growing up in Connecticut, where her family moved when she was just four years old in hopes of finding better schools and a setting more appropriate to raise a family than they'd had in Manhattan. Her mother stayed at home and volunteered at various organizations and charities in the community. Her father was a lawyer. Mary attended public schools until she graduated and left to attend a small, private women's college in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Mary spoke very positively about her experience in public school and the many friends she made there. She insisted that the strongest friendships of her life were made during her time in Connecticut. She also claimed that her public school experience prepared her well for the academic challenges she would face in college.

What Mary didn't expect upon her move south for college, however, were the incredible cultural differences she would encounter. Though she says she met many "phenomenal women" in Virginia, she said she never quite felt at home for a variety of reasons—the first being that her mother had attended the same college which, she felt, overshadowed her experience there; and second, she was a northerner uprooted and

replanted in the south. She missed her good friends from home and felt as if she were living in a "different world."

In 1997 Mary graduated from college with a degree in English and theatre arts. Despite her many experiences working with children throughout high school and college, she admits that she never intended to teach. After college she tried her hand in business, working for a research firm for health care practices, but soon decided the corporate world was not for her. She returned to graduate school to pursue her masters in elementary education. While there, she worked in the annual giving development office of a local private school. As one of her student teaching assignments, she was placed at Amarette, and knew immediately that she wanted to stay on as faculty if she could.

Since graduating with her masters, Mary has married her college sweetheart. At the time of this study, she lived in a townhome with her husband and her dog. She was beginning her third year as a teacher at Amarette. After running me through a timeline of her life to date, Mary confessed that she was really excited to participate in a study of care in the lives of teachers. She began to tell me about her prior year at Amarette when she was asked to take a leave of absence after breaking her leg. She was struggling with the death of a friend at the same time and trying to give her students more than she had. Unbeknownst to her, her principal and colleagues grew increasingly concerned about her health and wellbeing and eventually told her she needed to take time to care for herself. The idea of care as a teacher, she now thought, had to include herself, and it was this idea she wanted to explore further.

Ella Mitchell

Ella and I have known each other since my first days at Amarette in 1997 when I began my teaching career there. I was a classroom teacher and she the music specialist who ran the Music Lab, a room full of keyboards and computers where students of all ages learn to compose their own music. The image I had of Ella from those early days was that she had a strong personality—outspoken and somewhat intimidating. I was genuinely surprised when she volunteered to participate in this study years later. What I quickly learned, however, was that Ella was not at all as I had imagined she would be once I got to know her. Throughout the course of this study, I grew to respect and admire her as we shared intimate stories, confessed fears, and revealed a great many scars.

Ella grew up in the 1950s. She was the oldest and most practiced teacher that participated in the study, having taught 19 years. When she recounted her childhood to me, it was with a great deal of humor and candidness. She referred to her family as both "the world's perfect family" and the "family freak show." Her parents were both twins. Her father's brother married her mother's sister at a twin wedding. Then the two couples settled next door to one another and the two men opened a business together. Ella referred to both her father and her uncle as her "dads" and her cousins, three boys and three girls in all, as siblings: "They are an identical set of parents… They went to NIH and everything. So genetically my cousins are my brothers and sisters because my parents are all from the same egg." When her parents (both sets) retired, they moved to twin houses on the water and carried on together. Throughout her life, Ella's family has been the subject of many talk shows and magazine articles.

She described her mother as the typical 50s stay-at-home mom. Her mother never wore pants, never cried. Ella never doubted that she too would grow up to attend college,

get married and have children. She admits, however, that the life she has since created for herself was everything for which her 50s background did not prepare her.

In July, after graduating from college, she found that she was pregnant and got married. She had two daughters before ending that marriage at an early age. She remarried soon thereafter to an abusive, violent alcoholic who mistreated her and her two daughters. During the course of that marriage, she had three more children, one she lost at birth and two boys. In the early 1990s she began an extremely difficult divorce and child custody battle, the two of which lasted a total of ten years.

Ella's decision to take a job at Amarette was not her own. She had been out of teaching for a while and when the judge at her custody hearing asked her what she did, she replied that she had trained to be a teacher. He then ordered her to get a job. At the time of this study, Ella was in her 19th year of teaching, eleven of which had been at Amarette. She was the music specialist who ran the Music Lab, teaching children to appreciate and compose classical music. On the side, she performed as a jazz singer, her true passion, at local clubs and coffee houses. Her two girls were aged 23 and 21, the younger of which was a single mother living at home with Ella. Her boys were 14 and 12. The older boy was at a private boarding school and the younger one living with her.

In our initial conversation, Ella said that she thought caring for students had to do with preparing them for the realities of the world. She said that, in her classroom, music was a secondary curriculum to "life." The lessons she had learned throughout her experience as an adult had taught her that good did not always triumph over evil and the right thing to do was not always clear. She was anxious to talk about various versions of what it means to care and what they might look like in the classroom.

Elizabeth Braslav

Unlike most of the other women who participated in this study, Elizabeth preferred to meet off-campus for our talks. We met once at a restaurant, and a few times at various coffee houses where we could be a bit more anonymous than we could be at Amarette. She said in that initial interview that she was struggling with what it meant to care for her students—she believed that teaching should be more about children's social/emotional development than about "pumping in knowledge and skills," and was hoping to find a better way to balance the two. She also said that sometimes she wondered whether she cared too much for her students—so much so that it wasn't healthy for her. She struggled to find a balance here as well—caring for her students and caring for herself.

Elizabeth was 38 years old at the time of this study and struggling with infertility, an issue that quickly rose to the surface as we got to know one another, and seemed to overshadow much of what we discussed. Her brother and his wife were expecting as were many of Elizabeth's colleagues at Amarette, which was very difficult for her. She had been trying to have a child for going on four years and was in the process of undergoing in-vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments as a last resort.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth had separated herself from much of her family as she didn't believe that they understood her dream of having children and the great difficulty she was having in doing so. Her father had remarried to a woman without children, and Elizabeth found neither of them to be sympathetic or supportive. Her brothers were trying to convince Elizabeth that it was time she give up trying and move on. And

because so many of Elizabeth's peers at Amarette were either parents already or expecting children, she confessed to feeling isolated in her work setting. She did not choose to be around women who were successfully having children because she found it too difficult. She admitted that she had no one to talk to about her problems.

Elizabeth lost her mother at the age of 18 to ovarian cancer, which was still very difficult for her to talk about even twenty years later. At the time of her mother's death, Elizabeth was attending college. She lived at home and was caring for her younger brother and father, cooking and cleaning. She wanted to take a leave of absence and come home, but her father insisted that she finish. She got a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and eight months after graduating left to backpack in Australia and New Zealand. She admits it was her attempt to run away from her father and all the sadness that surrounded her home. In 1990 she moved to the west coast to live with a friend where she tutored, taught ESOL classes, and worked as a public relations specialist for a cruiseline. In 1994 she left for Japan to teach for one year and then to DC for a lobbying job. In 1996 Elizabeth turned thirty and decided she really wanted to go back to school. She moved to live with her brother who had just had a baby and serve as his nanny. Six months later she applied to graduate school. She graduated in 1999 with a degree in education.

Elizabeth met her husband just before she moved to the west coast in 1990. They maintained a long distance relationship that had its ups and downs for nearly ten years. In 2000 they married and moved into their current home on the outskirts of the Amarette district. At the time of our interviews Elizabeth was part of a group that met regularly to share their experiences with infertility. She seemed to garner support from the women

she'd come to know there. Otherwise, she had become somewhat estranged from members of her family and spoke little of friends. She still missed her mother terribly and referred to her often as we spoke. She often reflected that the life she had led to that point would have been quite different had her mother been alive. She characterized her mother as a worrier who would have feared her daughter traveling the world as she had. Having been a first-generation immigrant herself, Elizabeth's mother socialized mostly with neighborhood women and stayed close to home. Elizabeth spoke lovingly of her mother as a nurturing woman who loved her family and wanted the best for her children. Elizabeth longed to be the mother that she once had and was broken-hearted that she'd been unable to do so to that point.

Sarah Rodriguez

The first time Sarah and I met to talk was at a wonderful Thai restaurant that she recommended, located not far from where either of us lived. We met there at 11:00 for an early lunch and stopped only because I ran out of tape at 2pm! I felt immediately at ease with Sarah as we settled into our table—she was outgoing and kind with a beautiful and warm smile. She seemed very at ease, asking about me and my family, making suggestions about dishes to order for lunch. It struck me how comfortable Sarah seemed in the company of someone she hardly knew, but I soon came to see this as a by-product of her life as part of a military family.

Sarah was born in 1969, the eldest of four children. Her father was in graphic information systems with the Air Force and her mother held a doctorate in education. Throughout her childhood, Sarah lived in various towns throughout the southern United

States, once traveling to Germany for two and a half years. When she entered the seventh grade, her father left the military to attend school and they settled in Texas. Sarah's traveling days were far from over, however. Immediately after graduating from college and getting married, she moved to Japan. Her husband, a Mexican immigrant, was now an American foreign-service officer, whose job would take them to places such as California, Korea, and Argentina.

Throughout the early years of her marriage, Sarah taught in various settings. She worked at a school in Japan, then returned to California where she got her teaching credential and taught at three different schools. In 1997, Sarah's husband was hired at the State Department and they moved to Virginia. She became pregnant that same year and had her first daughter. They then moved to Korea where she stayed home for two years to care for her baby. Their next post was to Argentina. They had their second daughter in 2002 and shortly after returned to the States where Sarah took a job at Amarette.

Sarah spoke of Amarette Elementary as her home. She remembered a colleague during her interview saying that the greatest resource at Amarette was the people who were there because they all work together and no one feels threatened. She knew right away that she wanted to work in such a place. She described the school as a community of learners, a place where people treat each other professionally. After having a number of difficult experiences in California where she worked with antagonistic administrators and unprofessional colleagues, she welcomed a fresh start at Amarette. Her greatest struggle now, she admitted, was trying to balance teaching and her family—her two great loves. This struggle is what attracted her to the study—a chance to explore what it meant

to care as a teacher and where she might find a place for herself and her family as recipients of care.

Ava Tsadik

Ava's family escaped from Cuba in 1963 when she was just three years old. Traveling along an "underground railroad," Ava, her parents, and her two-month old brother made their way to America via fishing boat, taxi, and milk truck. Lost at sea and surrounded by sharks for nearly twelve hours, they were eventually rescued by a United States destroyer and transported to Key West. This is the story that began our interview on February 2, 2004. "Amazing," I wrote in my notes afterwards, "that there are such life stories nestled in the histories of women all around me. I've known Ava for years and never bothered to ask her about her childhood. What a story of survival and courage!"

Ava's father apparently never intended to stay in the U.S. for very long. He was confident that the communist regime would fall and they could return. Instead, the family settled in Chicago in a Spanish speaking community. Ten years later her parents became U.S citizens. In 1977, fourteen years after their arrival, her father bought a house—which meant, she explained, that he had finally accepted the fact that they would not ever return to the country of her birth. Much of Ava's family joined them in America. Only Ava's aunt remained behind to stay with her husband who had been sentenced to 25 years in prison. He was serving the later part of this sentence under house arrest.

Ava's life in America began in Chicago, where she attended public school as a child. She remembered being very sheltered as she was part of a tight community of

immigrants inside the city. At the age of 19, her immediate family moved to California.

There she attended college. She worked toward a degree in political science thinking she

would become a lawyer. While in college, she met an Iranian man, another political

science student, and upon graduating, married and moved to New York. He took a job

working for the United Nations. She took a job as a secretary there.

In 1986 she gave birth to her first child, a daughter. They named her Tahereh,

which, she explained, means Immaculate. Her husband wished to return to Iran, as he

was the eldest son in his family and thought he should return to care for his nine siblings

and aging mother. Ava did not want to go. In 1987 they had another daughter, Fatima.

They decided to stay in the United States and raise their family here. Just a year and a

half before we met for that first interview, they had welcomed their third daughter, Aliah

(meaning exalted) into the world.

At my request, Ava and I spent a good amount of time in our initial interviews

talking about the differences in Iranian, Cuban and American cultures. She explained

that in Iranian as well as Cuban culture, there are certain roles that each gender is

expected to assume. She was to be the caretaker in a physical sense, and her husband

was to financially provide for his family. Her family (immediate and extended) was very

strong and thus a tremendous source of support for her and her husband. She cherished

the closeness she shared with her own parents and with her children. Her father, who had

grown ill, was living with her, as were all of her children—something she thought was

quite natural and which made her happy. She believed that it was her duty to care for

those she loved.

For Ava, the topic of this study struck right to the heart of what she was working so hard to balance as a teacher, a mother, a daughter, and a wife. She discussed her role as caretaker and the many dimensions of her identity as such. She admitted that at times she felt overwhelmed by her need to care for her father, her children, in particular her infant and her husband. At the time of the study, she had cut back to part-time work at Amarette to make more time for her family, which seemed to make things a bit easier. Because she was an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher and worked exclusively with immigrant children from Amarette's immediate neighborhood, Ava also talked about the incredible needs of her students. This, she admitted, was one more way in which she tried to care for others.

Kathy Dressler

I knew Kathy when I was a third grade teacher at Amarette. Although I never worked with her on a consistent basis, we occasionally had been on vertical study teams together. As there were three full-time art teachers at Amarette, each wash assigned specific classrooms with which to work, so I had worked with others more directly. Still, when I came to talk with Kathy that first time in January, we greeted each other as old friends as she welcomed me into the art room. All of my conversations with Kathy took place here, usually when the room was empty, in between classes or after school. However, we would have an occasional interruption as another one of the art teachers or volunteers would come in to gather supplies. Kathy was happy to make time during her day to meet with me—either over lunch, during her planning period or when she had openings in her schedule. Because she shared her time between teaching art and working

with teachers in their classrooms to integrate art into other areas of the curriculum, she was rather flexible.

At the time of this study, Kathy was a single woman, divorced some years prior. She had no children and lived alone in a home that she owned, roughly twenty minutes from Amarette. As a product of the 1970s, she grew up at a time when women were assuming more responsibility in the work force and choosing paths that led to diversifying the roles they had inside and outside of the home. Kathy describes the women in her life as setting an example for her of independence and self-sufficiency. She always saw herself as someone for whom work would play a big part. Straight out of high school, Kathy attended a state college where she graduated with a degree in psychology. She immediately went on to pursue a masters degree in early childhood education and entered the teaching field in 1993 at the age of 24. As Kathy talked about her years in school, she remembered spending much of her spare time working. She spent many summers helping her mother sell real estate and doing assessment. She worked in daycare settings, tutored and volunteered with children with special needs.

In the years since her divorce, Kathy had become very adept at seeking her own sources of fulfillment and strength without relying on a man to make her feel complete. These included painting, taking classes, running, playing with her dog, working with her mother, a realtor, to show houses and meeting friends out for dinner and dancing. In fact, when I asked her to tell me about whom she cared, she responded emphatically, "Me!"

Kathy's construct of care emphasizes looking out for oneself, providing one's own financial and emotional security. These understandings reflect her experience as a young girl growing up in a household of independent women, witnessing and then living

through her own divorce, having to rely on herself to pay the bills, put food on the table, and pull herself together when others let her down. Kathy is very aware of her choice to care for herself and admits that in taking time to do so, she is putting less time and effort into her role as a teacher. She believes that she cares sufficiently for her students while making time to care for herself, something others around her don't seem to agree is possible.

Summary

As outlined in this chapter, there are three goals of this dissertation: to complicate care by exploring its meaning at the crossroads of discussions of gender and teaching; to ask critical questions about power, knowledge and identity as they relate to these women's efforts to construct meanings of care in their lives; and to draw on women's voice and experience as sources of knowledge and understanding. In chapter two, *Conversations in Literature*, I explore various strands of literature that I believe are relevant to this conversation of care. I begin by reviewing literature on the historical context of teaching as traditionally women's work, look across various constructs of care represented in literature of teacher education, delve into issues of socialization and consciousness as they relate to the identity development of women, and investigate some of the contradictions in feminist literature. I end with a discussion of research strands on identity development in teachers.

In chapter three, *Methodology*, I further explain narrative inquiry as both a methodology and method. I explore theories of experience, lay out my subsidiary research questions, discuss context, means of data collection and analysis. I also spend

some time discussing the dilemmas involved in studying a familiar context and writing that is both descriptive and interpretive in nature.

In chapter four, *Caring as Women*, I explore how each woman's construct of care is embedded in her understandings of what it means to be a woman, how this is related to her upbringing, experience, biography, societal, cultural and familial norms/expectations. I have come to see care as integral to the identities women are socialized to assume, and teaching as primarily defined by the experience of women. I explore the struggles of women to construct meanings of care amid the contradictions inherent in this understanding.

Chapter five, *Caring as Teachers*, explores how each woman's construct of care as a teacher includes meeting the needs of students. Yet, I argue that these women identify and strive to meet those needs in strikingly different ways, ways that reflect their varied lenses of life experience. I raise the question, "For whom are they caring?" in an effort to complicate simple constructs of care defined by reciprocity and motivational displacement.

Chapter six, *Caring in Context*, explores three aspects of the school context these women point to as impacting their efforts to enact care. I begin by talking about the relationships each has with the principal. I then turn to the notion of a "shared vision" about what constitutes good teaching as a source of support for teachers. I discuss how these women try to make sense of the messages they receive from various levels of authority. I also talk about the idea that professional development is a means of self-improvement that allows teachers to better meet the needs of their students.

Finally, in chapter seven, *Care in the Lives of Women Teachers*, I return to a discussion of the fluid, relational and contradictory nature of identity as a means for understanding how these women construct pedagogies of care as teachers. I look at care as an essential component of gender and teaching constructs, asking questions about how these various understandings inform one another. I talk about the ways in which these women's pedagogies of care seem to reinforce their marginalization as women as they listen to others' voices, posit themselves in traditional, patriarchal images of woman, work in isolated situations, and sacrifice themselves for others.

I suggest that if care is to achieve the ends these teachers seek to achieve, than it must be conceived of more critically. I call for professional development that involves critical-autobiographical inquiry emphasizes the production of knowledge, point to the need for a more diverse work force and raise important questions about the socialization of women into a culture of teaching that reinforces their marginalization.

In the end, I argue that the findings of this study are important because they draw attention to the individual biography of teachers and the understandings that they construct about what it means to care in the context of their work. They point to the discourses evident in and around teaching and their impact on identity development, and bring constructs of gender and gendered-knowing into discussions of what it means to become a teacher. And finally, they point to the significance of context, demonstrating ways in which these teachers negotiate the tensions of caring for self and others within specific regimes of truth.

CHAPTER TWO

Conversations in Research

In this chapter, I explore the ethic of care as it is understood in relevant threads of literature pertaining to teachers and teaching. The purpose is to gain an understanding of teaching in an historical context and to problematize the idea of "care," highlighting the contradictions inherent in critical feminist thought and practice around the idea. In the end I consider the implications of this contradictory nature of care on the identity development of teachers.

Steeped in a history of being women's work, teaching is characterized by an ethic of nurturing and caring. In the first section, *Caring Professionals*, I explore the historical context of teaching in an effort to understand how it has come to be a field dominated by women. This literature sheds some light on the ways in which teaching has come to be defined by an ethic of care. I then explore various constructs of care that are present in the literature today and how such research has contributed to my thinking about care as a researcher.

In the second section, *Critical Feminist Contributions*, my goal is to explore what feminist scholars have to say about care as it relates to teaching. I also consider the implications of literature on the moral development of women as I try to answer the question, *Why is it that women find themselves particularly suited for a caring profession such as teaching?* Finally I address issues of socialization and consciousness as they relate to the identity development of women.

Beginning with the assumption that meanings are socially-constructed, I explore in the third section, *Contradictions in Care*, the ethic of care as conceptualized by feminist thinkers, demonstrating how it may serve to both empower and disempower female teachers. Such contradictions are problematic for teachers who are confronted

with mixed messages about what it means to care in the context of their work. I intend to focus on the relationships between power and care, and guilt and care and to explore what each of these contradictions might mean for teachers.

In a section entitled, *Teacher Identity Development*, I consider the implications of such contradictions for teachers as they engage in the difficult work of becoming caring professionals. I draw on two bodies of literature that frame the act of becoming quite differently. First, life-cycle research posits teachers as skilled technicians who are in the business of picking up and using techniques of their trade. Research by those such as Hargreaves (1994), Britzman (1986, 1991) and others speak to the relevance of teachers' institutional biography as they struggle to define their experiences. I review this literature, in part, to reveal the absence of the critical lens on this work.

Finally, in a section called *Care in the Lives of Teachers*, I provide a summary of the analysis offered here and explain how the purposes of this study were guided by overriding themes of this literature review.

Caring Professionals

In 1846 Catherine Beecher made the claim that as moral beings whose responsibility it had always been to nurture and raise young children in the home, women were destined to carry this work into the schoolyard: "The educating of children, that is the true and noble profession of a woman—that is what is worthy the noblest powers and affections of the noblest minds" (*Remedy for Wrongs to Women: Address*, in Hoffman, 1981, p.45). Mary Swift, also a pioneer in the teaching field, wrote in 1839, "Females are peculiarly adapted to teaching: they possess more patience and perseverance than the

other sex, and if the moral cultivation of the school be attended to, they will find little difficulty in governing" (*Preparing to Teach*, in Hoffman, p.66). Indeed, when we read the accounts of women—Black, White, Northern, and Southern—as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, we find the language of care deeply embedded in their descriptions of the roles and relationships they chose for themselves. Responsibility extended beyond the classroom to include such duties as treating the sick and elderly, instilling children with the importance of good manners and hygiene, religious instruction, the establishment of houses of worship and securing funds for materials.

Teaching was seen as more than the work of instructing children in school subjects, but nurturing the spirit and character of families and communities as well. Christian women in particular were called to "serve" as teachers: "[T]he Christian female teacher will quietly take her station, collecting the ignorant children around her, teaching them habits of neatness, order, and thrift; opening the book of knowledge, inspiring the principles of morality, and awakening the hope of immortality" (Beecher's *Remedy for Wrongs to Women*, in Hoffman, p. 51). To pick up and transplant oneself in the deep south with hopes of educating recently freedmen and women, to commit oneself to the inner city schools of New York to teach the English language to newly come immigrants were not decisions made lightly. For some, the choice to teach was a lifelong vocation that supplanted marriage and family. For others, it was preparation for their (more natural and destined) roles as wife and mother. For most, teaching was about "doing good"—a calling met with great sacrifice: "He who knows all things knows that it was for no selfish motive that I came here, far from the few who are so dear to me. Therefore let me not be selfish now. Let the work to which I have solemnly pledged

myself fill up my whole existence to the exclusion of all vain longings…" (Charlotte L. Forten's *A Black Teacher Goes South,* in Hoffman, p. 155).

Care is what came to define teaching for women of Harriet Beecher's day. Still today, we see care threaded throughout discourses of teaching. Yet the definitions assigned to care are complex and varying. For some, "care" is still regarded as a form of agency; a sense of purpose aimed at bringing about social justice (Hoffman). For Casey (1993), an ethic of care is derived from one's connectedness with an historical network steeped in cultural and religious understandings. Such connectedness calls us to see ourselves as agents of change committed to moral, political, or religious aims. The idea of teaching as a "calling" and its connection to religion stems back to the days of Beecher when females first began entering the profession. Hoffman (1981) writes, "the accounts of some women tell us that they chose teaching not because they wanted to teach children conventional right from wrong, but in order to foster social, political, or spiritual change: they wanted to persuade the young, move them to collective action for temperance, for racial equality, for conversion to Christianity" (p. xviii).

Today, in teaching and in the related fields of nursing, ministry and social work, there is a shared understanding of the ethic of care as a "calling" (Lashley et al., 1994). Nurses, in particular, describe "caring" in terms of a moral commitment to protection, maintenance and enhancement of one's physical and emotional wellbeing (Watson, 1988). These same understandings appear to be embedded in conversations of teachers who enter the field in order to "make a difference" in the lives of others.

Recent literature strives to explain how this intrinsic motivation to care for others results in less pay for care workers (Folbre, 2001). This includes childcare providers,

nurses, teachers, and therapists. Such work addresses the disparities in wages for those engaged in care work and those in other lines of work. Emerging theories include the devaluation of work primarily carried out by women (England, 1992, Steinberg, 2001), the delayed actualization of care work as it contributes to social growth and character development (Coleman, 1993, England & Folbre, 2000), and the intrinsic desire to care as negating the needs to offer lower pay (Folbre, 2001). While this work strives to understand how and why care workers are more poorly compensated for their efforts (men and women alike), however, it does little to further understandings of what it is to care. The issue of compensation arose only once in all of my conversations with the women in this study and was not a central theme of the work.

However, research on this "mercenary" approach to teaching has unveiled some disturbing assumptions held by teachers with regards to their students' life experience outside of schools. Work by Oakes (1985), Rist (1970), Valdes (1996, 2001), Valenzuela (1999) and others points to the power of "deficit thinking" on the part of teachers in contributing to the negative schooling experiences of some students. Assumptions that students are not adequately cared for, supported or loved outside of schools further enhance teachers' feelings that they must "save" students from their own life experience. This line of research complicates the more benign understanding of care as a calling.

Nel Noddings (1992), a leading voice on the topic of care as it relates to teaching, puts forth a construct of care that includes "engrossment and motivational displacement." She suggests that in order to aptly care for another, one must replace her own needs and desires with the needs and desires of another. Noddings further asserts that caring relationships are reciprocal in nature, meaning that each member of the relationship

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identifies and meets the needs of the other. This endeavor requires careful "attention" on the part of each carer. Such understandings of care draw on the work of earlier research by Weil (1951) and others, who define care this way: "The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth. Only he who is capable of attention can do this" (p.). Caring, in this light, is self-less in its conception.

Discussions of care have been numerous within the more recent tradition of multicultural education (Banks, 1995, Delpit, 1995, Ladson-Billings, 1994, Lareau, 2000, Valdes, 1996, 2001, Valenzuela, 1999). These researchers suggest that teachers' efforts to care must be embedded in pedagogy that is informed by student's socio-cultural life experience. Ladson-Billings, for example, in her work with African-American students, writes that teaching must be culturally-relevant to students' experience if we are to help children find meaning in schools. Valdes and Valenzuela write about Latino youth and the disconnect between their school and home experiences, calling on educators to think more critically about how schools devalue students' life experience.

As an element of moral development, care is defined by Gilligan (1982, 1987, 1988) as a means of response; of developing and sustaining the relationships essential for female identity development. Girls, Gilligan states, define themselves through the attachment they have with others. Caring in this light means responding to an innate need to feel connected with others.

In her analysis of care among British primary teachers, Jennifer Nias (1992) found that for only a minority did care mean more than what Gilligan might call "interpersonal relationships." For those few, care involved a commitment to quality

teaching and continued self-improvement. It could be that in this case, when asked about

care, these teachers defined it more narrowly than it is conceived here. For this reason,

while Nias' teachers spoke of academic and social growth, these areas did not seem to

fall under their definition of "care" as they understood it. Similarly, Book and Freeman

(1986) found that for many teachers in elementary school contexts in particular, there is

an emphasis on "the interpersonal aspects of teaching and minim[alization] the academic

ones" (p. 146). This raises the interesting point that not only does there exist a plentitude

of definitions for care in the context of teaching, but a variety of ways in which different

aspects of students' growth are prioritized as needing care. The working definition of

care (for both self and others) that I bring to this study draws on the work of those

mentioned above. I have outlined these aspects of student growth as I have come to

understand them on the following page in Table 3.

Table 3

Aspects of Student Growth Said to Need Care

Aspect of Student Growth	Description
Physical	Described by Jennifer Nias (1992) as the personal aspect of

Emotional	student growth, the *physical* and *emotional* consist of one's physical safety, the ability to meet one's basic needs of nutrition, medical care, shelter and clothing, as well as positive self-esteem and general mental health and contentment.
Intellectual	The *intellectual* aspect of growth is defined by Nias (1992) as the concern over one's academic growth and potential. I draw on Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences to include artistic, emotional, kinesthetic, auditory, etc. intelligences as well as the traditional notion.
Social	Added to the paradigm by Hargreaves (1994) and explored by others such as Thorne (gendered play and relationships), the *social* aspect is defined as concern with one's ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships with others.
Moral	The *moral* aspect of student growth, addressed by Gilligan (1982), hooks (1984), Casey (1993), Hoffman (1981) and others, speaks to the concern over the development of value systems and understandings of right and wrong. For Gilligan and others this development is intimately tied to the gendered socialization of young people.
Socio-Cultural	Banks (1995), Delpit (1995), Ladson-Billings (1994), Lareau (2000), Valdes (1996, 2001), and Valenzuela1(1999) speak to the importance of caring for individuals' cultural, gendered, racial and ethnic identity in the context of teaching and learning. *The socio-cultural* aspect of growth is concerned with promoting the healthy self-image of one's unique self.
Spiritual	The *spiritual* aspect is rarely addressed in the literature of teaching today. However, given the historical context of teaching, this aspect remains a controversial one with regards to teachers' purposes and pedagogies.

For the purposes of this study, these aspects of student growth are overlapping and interrelated. I have outlined them here to demonstrate how caring for others can be understood in a multitude of ways.

The 'ethic of care' so deeply entangled in the identity of teachers is what came to define teaching as women's work in the 19th Century. It continues to shape the character of teaching today. Perhaps a look at past and present research on women's moral

development will help us understand how it is women come to see themselves as suited for a profession so defined by care.

<center>*Critical Feminist Contributions*</center>

Women as Moral Beings

Morality, in its simplest construct, is the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. Right and wrong, however, assume different meanings and persuasions when we consider for whom and by whom moral decisions are carried out. Recent work on morality suggests that differences in identity development are often a result of gender, and challenges earlier understandings drawn from studies involving primarily male subjects (Gilligan, 1982). Traditional analyses of morality conducted by Freud (1905) and later Kohlberg (1976) defined separation as a necessary step in identity and morality formation, concluding that girls' resistance to detachment is a failure in their development. Because girls were seen to be overly concerned for others and unable to rise above context, Kohlberg assumed that had failed to meet a necessary stage that preceeded more mature moral thought, that is, concern with individual freedom and blind justice. As such, women were relegated to a position equal to that of adolescents. Freud explained that women "show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgments by feelings of affection or hostility" (1925, pp. 257-8).

Feminist thought has used such studies as examples of theory derived from the dominant culture of male experience and incorrectly used as a measure for all. In many ways, they have succeeded at redefining morality as it applies to women, reordering the

concerns and considerations to better reflect female experiences. For example, whereas boys are said to define themselves through their separation from others, Gilligan (1988) suggests that girls try to find an "inclusive solution to the problem of conflicting loyalties" (Gilligan, p. 13). Contrary to men, who, through separation, naturally evolve to an understanding of morality as individual rights and "blind justice," women continue to see rights and justice as embedded in relations with others. In her earlier study of college-aged women, she finds that elements of care and connection with others outweigh the presence of rights in women's discussions of morality. Without exception, the women in her study speak to what they see as a necessary and natural relationship between what is right and good for the individual and what is right and good for others. Take the following excerpt from the response of a 25 year-old law student as an example:

> We need to depend on each other, and hopefully it is not only a physical need but a need of fulfillment in ourselves, that a person's life is enriched by cooperating with other people and striving to live in harmony with everybody else, and to that end, there are right and wrong, there are things which promote that end and that move away from it… (p.20)

Following this argument, women's preoccupation with cooperation and relationships seems to prepare us for professions like teaching and nursing in which caring for others is emphasized. Gilligan, however, challenges the notion that caring for others must mean sacrificing self, suggesting that instead identity development is about finding that middle ground where both self and others can be "included." The problem, as we shall see, is that in society at large such inclusive constructions are not valued. Women continue to be defined in opposition to men as preoccupied with concerns over

relationships and emotion; ever striving to be nurturing and self-sacrificing (Gore, 1993). Internalizing these understandings, women tend to suppress their own desires for those of others.

Morality and Identity as Socially Constructed

The theme of socialization is prevalent among feminist writers who insist that women are unable to think of ourselves as anything other than failing because our definitions of success and morality have been crafted in men's experience; not our own. bell hooks, (1984) for example, states, "Like other exploited groups, women internalize the powerful's definition of themselves and the powerful's estimation of the value of their labor" (p. 105).

hooks' claim that women internalize the dominant culture's understandings and judgments of our worth is reminiscent of Jennifer Gore's (1993) use of Foucault's "regimes of truth," the means by which knowledge is produced and distributed. Gore suggests that dominant discourses (such as the capitalist patriarchy) institutionalize and maintain such distribution, as do discourses that exist in opposition to the dominant structure. Gore describes both feminist and critical pedagogies as regimes of truth that exist in opposition to the dominant structure of capitalist patriarchy. The actualization of these regimes of truth takes place within individuals (women, in this case), through what she calls the "technologies of the self." Technologies of self, in a sense, constitute the lens through which we understand our mannerisms, speech and actions. For her, as for Foucault, morality is both socially-imposed and internally-constructed, as individuals continue to act upon and judge themselves within the technologies of self they adopt. In

this way, although feminist pedagogy exists in opposition to the dominant structure, it does not ultimately exist outside of it as it is constantly informed and influenced by that structure.

Others, such as Freire (1998) and Kreisberg (1992), have addressed this same relationship between discourses and the socializing power of dominant concepts of reality. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire writes, "[The oppressed] are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized" (p. 49). He explains that only through a pedagogy of critical reflection can the oppressed free themselves from their complicity in their own dehumanization. Kreisberg call this the "saturation of consciousness" and draws on the work of critical theorists' concept of hegemony to explain its power:

> It is the process through which the dominant culture supplies the symbols, representations, morality, and customs that frame, form, and constrain what we do and say, the principles that underlie our thoughts and actions and the broader structures that shape our experiences in the various institutions in which we live (e.g., family, school, workplace, government, and religious institutions). (p. 15)

Gramsci (1972) describes this saturation of consciousness as so thorough and deep that the realities of domination become "common sense." Hegemony as an ideology is powerful and all encompassing as it works on our body and mind on the level of our everyday experience. He writes,

> On fundamental levels, who we are, what we want, what we need, and thus what kinds of social relationships we seek out and create are shaped by the patterns and daily routines of our everyday lives. In part this occurs through the process by

which ideology seeps deep within our personalities, into the depths of our unconscious, shaping our personalities, needs, and desires. (p. 16)

The image of women as non-aggressive, nurturing and self-sacrificing has its roots in centuries of gendered power relations. Such an image, critical feminists suggest, is socially, relationally and internally constructed by women throughout their lives. It is the act of embodying this image that keeps women from demanding things for ourselves. The technologies of self that women adopt can be as harmful as the messages we receive from others—causing women to suppress our feelings and desires for fear of appearing selfish.

Female teachers, in particular, rarely demand anything outside of the classroom. The following vignette may help explain why. It is taken from my own experience as a 3rd grade teacher when I was appointed to the Superintendent's Advisory Committee of our district, a large county in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. What follows is an excerpt of the conversation held between various members of the committee and the Assistant Superintendent during the question/answer session at the close of a meeting:

> Superintendent: Any other questions or concerns that we might address as a group? (Pauses. Calls on a female high school teacher who has raised her hand.)
>
> Teacher: I have a question about the buses for the after-school programs.
>
> Superintendent: Yes?
>
> Teacher: Um… Well, we have an after-school tutoring program at our school that runs from the time the last bell rings until 4:30pm. I stay after to tutor a number of students in this program, which I enjoy a great deal. However, more often than not the buses that are scheduled to pick the students up afterwards are very late. …Sometimes as late as 5:15 or 5:30.
>
> Superintendent: Yes.

Teacher: So I guess I'm wondering whether there's something we can do about the buses, or whether the teachers are expected to stay until every child is picked up… (almost mumbling) I mean, our contract hours end at 3:00…

Superintendent: (with a disbelieving look that he shares with everyone in the room)… Well, I should hope so! Buses or no buses I'd hope that you would *care* enough about those children to see that each one gets safely home! If it were me I wouldn't be quite so concerned about my contract hours… (emphasis added in italics)

(SAC Notes, February, 2000)

As this vignette illustrates, the image of woman as self-sacrificing and caring looms large on the modern day horizon. While the woman depicted here goes so far as to raise her hand and ask for some leniency in the responsibility she has for her students, she is quickly silenced (and if I may, berated) for doing so. The superintendent (a male authority figure) makes no bones about pointing out this woman's failure to *care* about her students to the entire group. At no point does he address the question at hand (the tardiness of the buses), but rather puts the responsibility back on the teacher to stay with her students until each child has gotten safely home. Not surprisingly, the subject dropped after the superintendent's last statement and the meeting came to a close. Not even I, feminist scholar in training, had the nerve to join this poor woman in pushing the issue.

What I find striking about this vignette in hindsight is the tone and wording of the woman's question. Perhaps because she suspected the superintendent would respond the way he did, or because she felt guilty about wanting to go home at the end of a long day, she is not direct when posing her question. She begins with an um… and then a well…, and makes a point of sharing that she volunteers her time to stay after with these students—something she enjoys very much. When she finally gets to her question she says, "I guess I'm wondering," doubting herself whether this is indeed what she means to

ask. And as if she knows that it will be irrelevant to the discussion, she adds, in a

mumble, that her contract hours end at 3:00. It seems quite clear that she does not feel

justified in making this case before her audience. Equally as interesting was the eaves

dropping that I did immediately following the meeting as I made my way to the car—

overhearing sidebar conversations that began as the room emptied. I brushed past two

separate groups of women who were whispering about how they couldn't believe the

teacher had the nerve to ask such a question!

Needless to say, critical feminist arguments that women are indeed actors in our

own socialization are reflected loud and clear in this example. Not only did the male

authority figure exercise his power over the teacher(s) in the room, but the teacher in

question worked to devalue her own question and her colleagues helped her finish the

job.   The "technologies of self," defined here as the socially accepted image of what it

means to be a woman, act to suppress this teacher's belief that she has a right to put her

own needs over the needs of others.

 Research suggests that such socialization begins in early childhood and is

institutionalized through family and school (Thorne, 1993, Simmons, 2002, Belenky et al.

1986).

> The identities that women develop within the context of relationships with others
>
> are shaped by understandings of what it means to be a woman in the world today.
>
> In a world that socializes girls to prize relationships and care above all else, the
>
> fear of isolation and loss casts a long shadow over girls' decisions around
>
> conflicts, driving them away from direct confrontation. By taking uncomfortable
>
> feelings out of everyday relationships, girls come to understand them as

dangerous to themselves and others, worthy of being carefully shielded or perhaps

not disclosed at all. (Simmons, 2002, p. 70)

In Rachel Simmons' study of adolescent girls, she finds that their preoccupation with maintaining relationships works against their efforts to express their true feelings: "In my conversations with girls, many expressed fear that even everyday acts of conflict would result in the loss of the people they most cared about. They believed speaking a troubled heart was punishable. Isolation, they cautioned, was irreversible, and so too great a price to be paid" (p.69). She blames a world that socializes young women into roles defined by care.

If, as Gilligan suggests, women are defined in opposition to men in society, it is worthwhile to explore what it means to be a man in the world today. It is expected and acceptable that men will act upon their own self-interest, assert themselves and engage in competition, and make judgments void of emotion. Thus, we might conceptualize the accepted woman as one who acts selflessly, refrains from competition and assertiveness, and makes judgments in the context of emotion. There is reason to believe, however, that making issues of gender so black and white ignores the complexity of individual life experience as it impacts identity development. Belenky et al. (1986) acknowledge that there are a multiplicity of ways in which women know and view the world. While they argue for socialization through family and schools as institutions, they recognize that this process of internalizing society's expectations varies in degree and form depending on life experience. Furthermore, we must consider the impact of class, race and life circumstances on the degree to which these technologies of self are adopted and experienced. Setting women in an oppositional stance against that of men denies them

the right to bring their own meanings and understandings to words such as "power," "authority," and "success." It simply removes them from women's rightful domain.

Kreisberg makes the point that it is within relationships and experiences that most reflect the dominant ideology that the "saturation of consciousness" is greatest. Because institutions, family relations, work contexts and religious practices are human constructs, they are capable of changing and challenging traditional dominant discourses. The act of agency, of challenging dominant discourses in an effort to obtain freedom from oppression, is reminiscent of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. Freire makes the point, however, that it is only through critical reflection, through the discovery that they themselves are "hosts" of the oppressor, can the oppressed engage in a struggle for liberation (p. 49). Kreisberg suggests that by redefining dominant discourse, creating alternate versions of reality, power relations can be challenged. Feminist writers have been at the task of redefining care as it relates to the moral development of women for some time. They have tackled the language of power and authority in hopes of recasting the meanings women bring to their work and promoting voice and empowerment among women. Ironically, their efforts may be perpetuating the very power relations and stereotypes they hope to break down.

Contradictions in Care

Feminist writers have attempted to recast "care" in ways that validate female experience and our preoccupation with relationships and emotion. In so doing, they have celebrated women's place in caring professions such as teaching as an opportunity to redefine power and success in a capitalist-patriarchal society. Yet the reality of identity

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development is that it occurs in contexts where such revised notions are not valued. Women continue to be socialized into a world that devalues the role of emotion and connectedness with others; a world where power and success are still defined by white men. Because caring for others is seen as a central tenet of teaching, it seems women are forever lost in the contradiction of what it means to be successful. The understandings of power and success proliferated in society do not include care. Women, by definition then, in claiming care as central to our lives and work, have relegated ourselves to a position of powerlessness in the eyes of society at large. This is one of the many contradictions inherent in feminist thought about care. Investigations into the relationship between power and care (Sernak, 1998), and guilt and care (Hargreaves, 1994), have offered new interpretations of teaching as a complex and often contradictory moral enterprise.   In this section, I will explore these contradictions and their implications for teachers who strive to care in the context of their work.

Authority and Care

Critical feminists seem to share a common understanding that individuals are active in their own oppression via the consciousness and corresponding behaviors that they adopt. Such consciousness is inherently informed by those in power. It is only, as Freire (1998) suggests, through reflection that this consciousness can be questioned and in turn challenged: "This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation" (p. 49).

The critical nature of Freire's work speaks to the contradictory nature of care for women—highlighting the need for constant dialogue about and reflection upon the origins of the meanings they bring to care. The importance of such reflection in this case is two-fold: it can help liberate women from the confining definitions attributed care by a society dominated by men, and it can help them work toward creating a construct of care that is aware of its oppressive power. While Freire writes that oppressors cannot, or more specifically will not, act on behalf of the oppressed, he does suggest that pedagogy can be forged *with,* but not for the oppressed. As teachers, women are in a precarious position as both powerful (in relation to their students) and struggling for power (in relation to a society who defines them in opposition to men). The tensions involved in resolving what it means to care in this place are central to the identity development of teachers.

For teachers in particular there are contradictions embedded in their roles. They are expected to have authority and control within their classrooms, but not act in an authoritative or controlling manner. Furthermore, while they are expected to maintain order within the classroom, they are not to demand it in their lives outside the classroom. The act of combining the socially sanctioned woman with the intellectual and authoritative demands of teaching is a tricky one. Friedman writes, "In our culture, the roles of nurturer and intellectual have been separated not just by gender, but by function; to try to recombine them is to create confusion" (1985, p. 13). In this sense, authority of intellect is ascribed to men. Masculine reason and logic, in opposition to female emotionality, lie outside the realm of female experience. When female teachers assert themselves as intellectuals they are seen by others as betraying their natural role as care provider.

Authority in the classroom is often understood as management of student behavior and discipline. Conceptualized this way, authority denotes a sense of power over students—a characteristic of male social relations; not female. Within the classroom, feminists call on female teachers to avoid, "or at least not reproduce, perceived characteristics of patriarchal pedagogy such as its emphasis on hierarchy, competition, control" (Gore, 1993, p. 70). Because women are seen as innocent and good, they are expected to create an alternative classroom environment, which is both democratic and nurturing. Here, as Friedman argues, "authority is incompatible with the feminine."

Like other feminist scholars, Friedman explains that in defining women oppositionally, patriarchy essentially denies women "the authority of their experiences, perspectives, emotions and minds" (1985, p. 206). In efforts to refute the idea of women as non-authoritative, feminist thinkers have come to espouse alternative constructions of the word authority; constructions more suited to the female experience. Nancy Hartsock emphasizes such a view: "women have not recognized that power understood as energy, strength, and effective interaction need not be the same as power that requires the domination of others…" (1981, p.14). Friedman argues for an authority in which "intellectual capacities can be …infused with the nuances of nurturance" (p. 208). Belenky et al. speak of authority and power in terms of women's voices as they reflect an evolving mind and self.

bell hooks (1984) suggests that feminists' attempts at redefining the prevailing notion of power, however, have been unsuccessful (p. 84). "While different concepts of power are more frequently discussed at this time, it is the exercise of power as

domination and control that prevails, that is seen as the most significant form of power"
(p. 91). hooks argues that even in feminist circles, power and authority are defined thus,
revealing an inherent contradiction in feminist theory. For hooks, women that espouse
alternative visions of power and then seek to gain power through the structures of the
dominant culture ultimately perpetuate existing power relations. (Female professors are
one such example of this group. For more on this, see Culley et al., 1985, pp. 11-20.)
She even goes so far as to say that because individual success does little to impact the
goals of women as a collective, such achievement is "narcissistic" in nature (p. 94).

hooks' argument that women cannot both seek power through the dominant
system (which emphasizes competition and the exploitation of others) and work toward a
common good is convincing. I believe, however, that it leaves us with little hope of
establishing an authority that women find both worthy of chasing and compatible with
their self-image. The bipolar logic of feminism, like that of the patriarchal society,
reinforces the positioning of women as oppositional to men. It insists that women should
not be authoritative or seek power as defined by men. Instead, women are to celebrate
what they do best—nurture and care. Women are in fact nurturing, they argue, as well as
intuitive and emotional. Rather than seeing these characteristics as failures in
development of rational selves, feminist scholars argue that women might put forth these
characteristics as the matter from which a new concept of authority might arise. The
redefining here is not of power but of care as powerful rather than powerless. Feminists
argue that women should not see authority as something that they *cannot* exert, but rather
something that women *should not* exert over others (and ourselves). In so choosing,

however, I would argue that we perpetuate the power dynamics we are said to challenge. Friedman might agree. She writes,

> In our eagerness to be non-hierarchical and supportive instead of tyrannical and ruthlessly critical, we have sometimes participated in the patriarchal denial of the mind to women. In our radical and necessary assertion that the feminist teacher must validate the personal and the emotional, we have sometimes ignored the equally necessary validation of the intellect. In our sensitivity to the psychology of oppression in our students' lives, we have often denied the authority we seek to nurture in our students. (p. 207)

Jane Flax summarizes, "In our attempts to correct arbitrary (and gendered) distinctions, feminists often end up reproducing them" (1987, p. 638). Teachers, in particular, are left at the crossroads of such contradiction as they attempt to develop their professional identities.

Care and Guilt

In recent years there has been great emphasis on the importance of infusing an ethic of care back into teaching (Noddings, 1992). This call for an ethic of care in teaching, however, has often been used by those in power to draw teachers' attention away from their professional needs and toward the needs of school and society. Michael Fullan (1993) is one such writer who speaks to the importance of drawing on teachers' sense of moral purpose as an impetus for change. Recognizing that teachers have little say in the content of curriculum and evaluation, little time for planning and preparation and small salaries, Fullan argues that it must be their sense of purpose and responsibility

that keeps them invested in their work. By cultivating teachers' sense of moral purpose, he suggests, reformers might increase their investment in the reform efforts sought. Playing on teachers' sense of moral purpose, however, does little to impact the amount of power and authority they actually have over their work. It simply guilts them into working toward change for others while suppressing the need for change with regards to themselves.

Guilt as a consequence of care is a dimension of teaching that Hargreaves (1994) explores in depth. Drawing on the work of Alan Davies, Hargreaves points to two different types of guilt suffered by those responsible for nurturing: persecutory and depressive (p. 143). Persecutory guilt is that which one feels for not having lived up to the expectations and demands of others. In the world of teachers this is most clearly tied to the demands of accountability measures and the increasing demands for teachers' time. Depressive guilt, or true guilt, according to R. D. Laing (1969), "is guilt at the obligation one owes to oneself to be oneself" (p. 144). In other words, the obligation a teacher has to listen to and follow her inner voice. "Those teachers," Hargreaves argues, "whose purposes are strongly shaped by the commitment to care, especially teachers of younger children, are particularly prone to depressive guilt" (p. 144). He explains that for these teachers, caring for the whole child is emphasized more than in secondary grades where teachers are subject matter specialists and seem to focus more on academic pursuits. For this reason, teachers feel greater guilt for not having been able to live up to their own expectations of caring for all aspects of their students' development.

Hargreaves describes teacher guilt as an irresolvable dilemma given the current state of education. He understands the "guilt traps" of teaching as symptoms of the

greater societal problem: a mismatch between the antiquated structure and function of schooling and a changing world. In his book, <u>Changing Teachers, Changing Times,</u> Hargreaves (1994) lays out his argument that schools were developed in modern times and so are steeped in traditions of control and efficiency. Feminists would characterize this modern structure as shaped by capitalist patriarchy. Whereas Hargreaves argues that the world in which we live is postmodern by definition and so has evolved to a far more complex epistemology, feminist scholars argue that such a world exists only in research journals and lofty books. Rather, society does in fact reflect capitalist and patriarchal interests because wealthy, white men hold power. In this vein, education is not exempt from these power relations. The mismatch then is not between modern and postmodern epistemologies but the dominant capitalist patriarchy and those who oppose it.

Deborah Britzman (1991) defines the struggle for identity as the conflict between internally persuasive discourse and authoritative (capitalist patriarchal) discourse. Teachers struggle to define themselves in a world of mixed messages. "Internally persuasive discourse has no institutional privilege, because its practices are in opposition to socially sanctioned views and normative meanings. It is the discourse of subversion" (p. 21). Guilt, for her, is introduced when female teachers cannot reconcile this conflict and find a voice of their own. Gilligan's "inclusive solution" proves unattainable:

> Finding the words, speaking for oneself and feeling heard by others, are all a part
> of this struggle… Voice suggests relationships: the individual's relationship to
> the meaning of her or his life experience and hence to language, and the
> individual's relationship to the other, since understanding is social. (Britzman,
> 1991, p. 23)

Britzman's discussion of discourses might just as well be the struggle between persecutory and depressive guilt or the struggle over Gore's technologies of self. A teacher must negotiate who she might rather disappoint—her colleagues and superiors, or her sense of self. To live up to the moral purpose they bring with them to teaching, teachers must sacrifice themselves. As Guskey (1995) argues, this can harbor resentment and lead to disenchantment with the profession. In this way, agency derived from an ethic of care can be weakened and ultimately discarded as teachers find themselves unable to resolve their complex and contradictory identities.

Teacher Identity Development

In order to make sense of what care might mean in the lives of teachers, it is first essential to explore the development of teacher identity. This section will address two bodies of literature that speak to such development: life-cycle research and research on the affective dimensions of teaching.

Life-Cycle Research

The first body of literature addressed here attempts to outline a teacher's life as it moves through various stages and takes on different characteristics. Such literature uniformly describes a teacher's struggles in a very technical and behavioral manner. Perhaps an epistemological remnant from modern times (as Hargreaves, 1994, argues), such a stance posits the teacher in the light of a skilled technician carrying out specific functions within the greater schooling structure.

The focus of this body of literature seems to be identifying characteristics and needs of teachers at various stages in their careers. Though not all agree on the length of each stage or the terminology used for defining them, many have described the process of moving through one's career in similar ways. Burden (1982) posits three stages to the teaching career: Survival, Adjustment and Maturity. According to his synthesis of the literature, the Survival stage lasts only the first year and is characterized this way, "Teachers [are] concerned about their adequacy in maintaining classroom control, teaching the subject, improving their teaching skills, and knowing what to teach (lesson and unit planning, organizing materials, etc.)" (Fessler, 1995, p.175). Unruh and Turner (1970) define the initial teaching period (one to five years) as characterized by "problems with management, organization, new curriculum developments and being accepted by the rest of the staff" (Fessler, 1995, p.173). Similarly, Fuller and Brown (1975) write, "Early concerns with *survival* arise when preservice teachers first come into contact with actual teaching. Now their concerns are with their own *survival* in teaching as well as control, mastery of content, and supervisor evaluations (emphasis added)" (Fessler, 1995, 172). There seems to be a consensus among researchers who contribute to this body of literature that teachers' first few years can be characterized this way: "The major kinds of problems and difficulties that teachers experience are readily identifiable. Most of them relate to the management and conduct of instruction" (McDonald and Elias, 1983, pp. 42-3). There are fewer recommendations about how to support teachers at later stages of their career, but the emphasis on technique remains apparent.

Such research reveals that the preoccupation with the how-to's of teaching begins in the traditional student teaching model that precedes an individual's entrance into

teaching. Reflecting an essentially behaviorist view of learning, such an "apprenticeship" emphasizes the student teacher's ability to mimic the teacher's outward behaviors (Britzman, 1986, p. 443). But well before individuals even enter the student teaching phase, they have many years of apprenticing from the other side of the desk (Lortie, 1975). A teacher's work is incredibly familiar to anyone who went through compulsory education and so seems, on the surface, to be about what we see teachers doing: carrying out lessons, managing behavior, holding conferences, putting up bulletin boards.

Hargreaves (1994) suggests that the "apprenticeship" model of student teaching is antiquated and reflects constructs of teaching and learning that are no longer at work in today's world. Such a model assumes that knowledge required to teach can be learned through observation. This reduces teaching to an amalgamation of actions while negating the presence of the thought or feeling behind those actions. It should not surprise us that teachers are anxious to learn the "tricks" of teaching or that professional developers are quick to offer in-services that provide them. This makes for a relatively easy indoctrination and evaluation process as "tricks" are generally observable behaviors that can be ticked off on a checklist and rattled off as quick fixes to teaching challenges.

However, as time and research have shown, traditional professional development designed around these understandings has not been enough to keep teachers in the classroom (Goodlad, 2002, Darling-Hammond, 1999). Teachers are leaving the profession faster than ever before out of frustration and feelings of inadequacy. They do not feel supported and in times of despair fall back on what little they know of teaching—knowledge gained through their own life experience as students and their apprenticeships as student teachers. In doing so, Britzman (1986) suggests, novice teachers set

themselves up for failure by perpetuating the "cultural myths" of teaching: "(1) everything depends on the teacher; (2) the teacher is the expert; and (3) teachers are self-made" (p. 448). Beliefs in these myths promotes the understanding of teacher as an island unto herself—all knowing, all controlling, naturally born. It denies the need for professional development and reinforces the isolating design of the teaching world. "Today, the renewal of teacher education is hindered like no other field by myths derived from yesterday's knowledge made credible by mandated policies" (Goodlad, 2002, p. 218).

As Britzman (1986) argues, it is up to teacher educators to redefine the knowledge base for teaching to promote a view of teachers as "intellectual" rather than "technician." To do so, teacher educators must encourage teachers to examine their life experience in order to deepen their understandings of what it means to be a teacher: "The underlying values which coalesce in one's institutional biography, if unexamined, propel the cultural reproduction of authoritarian teaching practices and naturalize the contexts which generate such a cycle" (p. 443). It is important to demystify the process of becoming a teacher. Uncovering biography is one way to support teachers as they become active in their own process of becoming (p. 452).

It is curious to me how traditional "life cycle" literature deals with teaching in such a technical manner. Undoubtedly understood as a "caring" profession, the absence of research on the affective dimensions of teaching in such literature is stark. Perhaps because care has always been seen as innate to women in the field, it has not until recently garnered the explicit discussion and study it deserves. Interpreting teaching as a moral enterprise, a more recent body of research examines teaching more personal

dimensions, including feelings of isolation, emotional responses to critical incidents in one's career, and struggles for voice (McDonald and Elias, 1983, Measor, 1992, Britzman, 1986). Still others have focused on the ethic of care, the emotions of guilt and the sense of moral purpose (Fullan, 1993, Hargreaves, 1994, Britzman, 1991, Noddings, 1992). I turn now to this body of literature.

Research on the Affective Dimensions of Teaching

McDonald and Elias (1983), whose work follows the same vein as many technical theorists, begin to complicate the work of teaching as it is positioned in the "life-cycle research" by addressing the struggles of beginning teachers. Acknowledging the preoccupation of teachers with issues of management and control, they suggest that there is an emotional dynamic impacting teacher growth and development rarely addressed in the literature. They write, "the least studied aspect of this transition period is the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation and loneliness that appear to characterize it" (p.). McDonald and Elias go on to say that most teachers have little support available as they traverse this harrowing terrain and that these experiences may indeed have an impact on retention over time:

> Almost all teachers report that they went through this transition period 'on their own.' They had little or no help available, and found help only through their own initiative. …There is probably a strong relationship between how teachers pass through the transition period and how likely they are to progress professionally to high levels of competence and endeavor. (pp. 42-3)

In a similar vein, Measor (1985) describes what she calls "critical incidents" in the career of a teacher that bring about emotional responses, forcing individuals to reprioritize their beliefs about teaching and help firm up one's identity. In her study of 48 secondary teachers, she explores moments during their teaching when their authority was challenged by students. She suggests that these incidents, in their severity, pushed teachers to take a stand in their classrooms and thus began their identity formation as teachers who dealt with discipline in particular ways. In an early attempt to link action with consciousness and identity formation, Measor begins to explore how decisions teachers make help determine the trajectories their careers will take. While she still remains wedded to the notion of adopting particular behaviors in response to disciplinary problems, I believe she raises some interesting questions about how life experience influences the development of a professional identity. The identity development of teachers in this sense is borne out of experience and reflection.

Karen Whelan, writing about her own experience as a beginning teacher, echoes these assertions. She describes her first set of parent conferences and the dismay she felt as she followed the scant advice from colleagues to keep to a "strict timeline" and "just discuss the marks" since "that's all [parents] really want to know" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999, p. 22). She writes,

> In this, my first teaching experience, I followed blindly on a path that had no internal sense of direction for me. It was only later in my career that I would come to realize what a profound impact these beginning experiences would have in shaping my beliefs and practice about the sharing and celebration of student learning and growth. (p. 23)

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Beyond feelings of isolation and anxiety, Karen describes a battle she fought within herself over whether to follow the advice of more experienced teachers or follow her own instincts. Especially in times of self-doubt and weariness, she suggests, it is easier to listen to others, "When you become weary as a traveler, sometimes it is easier to follow along in silence than it is to listen to your own voice. I cannot help but think about what important parts of myself I leave behind on the trail when this occurs" (p. 31). In time, Karen is able to define for herself the value of conferencing and her commitment to sharing and celebrating student success. Her ability to do so, however, is described by her as 'in spite' of professional development and school socialization, not because of it.

Deborah Britzman (1991) defines the struggle for survival as the dialogue between internally persuasive discourse and authoritative discourse. For her, "internally persuasive discourse has no institutional privilege, because its practices are in opposition to socially sanctioned views and normative meanings. It is the discourse of subversion" (p. 21). In light of Britzman's contributions, the struggle described by Karen Whelan is one for voice.

> Finding the words, speaking for oneself and feeling heard by others, are all a part of this struggle… Voice suggests relationships: the individual's relationship to the meaning of her or his life experience and hence to language, and the individual's relationship to the other, since understanding is social. (Britzman, 1991, p. 23)

As Karen finds her voice, she begins to develop an understanding of herself as teacher—survival as a personal journey.

In her study of pre-service teachers, Britzman (1991) shares the story of Jamie Owl, a young woman who is working to become a teacher while drawing from her life

experience as a student who hated school. Britzman explains, "she must do battle with an identity that could not be uncoupled from the structure she disavowed" (p. 75). Jamie herself states, "It's hard to separate my person from my teaching" (p. 98). Indeed, this is the state of becoming a teacher that is often omitted from discussions of professional development for emphases on technique and content knowledge. We must go beyond recognizing who teachers are to making efforts to understand who they are becoming as they journey into the world of teaching.

There is a growing body of research on the identity formation of teachers by researchers such as Britzman (1991), Danielewicz (2001), and Hargreaves (1994). What this research adds to our understanding of teacher development is that there is a complex and often contradictory process as individuals begin to shape their professional identities. This process incorporates what the individual brings to teaching (her personal and institutional biography), as well as the socialization within the school and the socio-political context within which all of this occurs. What appears to be generally absent from these discussions of identity formation are critical examinations of the power relations at work in the lives of these teachers and the way their various life experiences are informed by them.

Care in the Lives of Teachers

Caring for and about others is embedded in the discourse in and around teaching. It is present in the language teachers use to define themselves and their roles. It exists in literature and the research on teaching. It is steeped in a history of the profession that defines women as naturally suited to teaching because they are good, patient and

nurturing. It is in feminist work that calls for alternatives to the exploitative power and authority relations of our patriarchal society. It is in the words of those in power who insist that women need not preoccupy themselves with anything outside of the relationships they establish with their students. The regimes of truth that exists in and around the teaching profession are powerful. And as Gore (1993) suggests, the power of these regimes lie not only in the messages they send about what is acceptable and valued in society, but in their ability to suppress from within through the images of self and understandings that women develop in response to those messages. The moral purpose that women find in teaching is intimately connected, indeed derived from, the constructs care that they adopt. Unfortunately, such agency can be weakened or defeated by the guilt also endemic to these constructs.

Considered in light of the contradictions in feminist thought discussed in this chapter, care can be both empowering and disempowering for teachers. On the one hand, it works to validate feminine experience by emphasizing the importance of the relationships Gilligan and others suggest help define women from the start. In the end, however, it does little more than reinforce the definitions and understandings transmitted so clearly through dominant discourse. The bipolarity of its logic defines women in opposition to men, thus denying women the plurality of our own experience. It removes authority, power and success (as we've come to understand them) from our rightful domain. Authority, power and success are acceptable only insofar as their goal is freedom of the collective, not individual gain. Though ideally caring would lead to what Gilligan calls an "inclusive solution," such a solution is not possible because of the value society places on caring for others. Women do not see ourselves as equal to others who

are worthy of our attention and care. Teachers, situated in a profession that calls upon them to exercise this ethic on behalf of their students, are especially susceptible to guilt as they try to make sense of mixed messages. That feminist scholars unknowingly contribute to the power of this regime suggests to me that there is not enough reflection and research around how various messages are received and internalized by teachers.

The work of Belenky et al. (1986) offers what might be a working model for such research. Listening to women as they reflect on their development, these authors make the case that women's ability to develop and exercise our voice is representative of our varied experience. Drawing back to our discussion of Gore's analysis, I might suggest that this study of voice is just as much a study of the degree to which these women have internalized various regimes of truth and the technologies of self that produce and sustain them. Belenky et al. outline five "ways of knowing" that they claim represent the self images of the women in their study. Like Gilligan's work, that of Belenky et al. is critiqued by those such as Maher and Tetrault (1996) who suggest that their work over simplifies the experience of women. They criticize Belenky's work on the grounds that it is both reductionist in nature and overgeneralized. While I draw on Belenky's work here as a starting point for thinking about how women have been depicted in the literature, I am cognizant of its limitations.

What Gilligan and Belenky offer are examples of research that value the power of "listening" to women talk about their experiences. The purpose of this study is to make sense of how women understand care in their lives as teachers. What role care plays in their definition of their role as teachers, how care interacts with their constructs of power, agency and guilt, and the degree to which women are critical of their own understandings

of care are all important lines of inquiry. In the end, the understandings fostered through this research will contribute to a more holistic approach to understanding the nature of care as it relates to female teacher identity development and the need to support efforts to develop pedagogies of care amidst the contradictions and tensions inherent in teachers' lives.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

The central question of this study was: *How do teachers understand and experience "care" in the context of their work?* In asking this question, I hoped to explore the experiences of teachers struggling to define for themselves what it means to care as teachers, and how they negotiate the tensions involved in caring for others while caring for themselves in various contexts. I chose a narrative inquiry approach to this study because I was particularly interested in exploring how these six women understand and experience care in their lives as teachers.

Furthermore, I wanted to draw on women elementary school teachers' voice and experience as sources of knowledge. As discussed earlier, the obvious nature of "care" as a central tenet of teaching and of womanhood is notably under-theorized by teachers and by women. I believe that in order to gain understanding about what it means to care in the context of teaching, research must go directly to the primary sources of these life experiences. Narrative inquiry, as a tradition, points to experience as an important source of knowledge. In borrowing the experiences of these six women, I hoped to enlighten my own and others' experience as a teacher, researcher, and teacher educator.

This study was situated in time and space, and yet the temporal and spatial boundaries to the inquiry were fluid. John Dewey (1938) wrote that all experience is at once personal, social, and continuous. Though people are individuals and must be understood as unique, bearing their own history and experience, they are also constantly in relation with others, always in social context. As such, all experiences grow out of other experiences and lead to still other experiences. So while the teachers that I studied were situated in a specific school at a specific time, the understandings of care that they have were borne out of experience that transcends both time and space.

In this chapter, I discuss narrative inquiry as method, describe the research context, dilemmas involved in studying this familiar place, outline methods of data collection, and analysis. I end by discussing issues of validity, generalization and the ethical dilemmas embedded in critical-feminist research that takes on a narrative stance.

Narrative Inquiry as Method

Narrative inquiry is necessarily interpretive in nature (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). For Erikson (1986), qualitative research that is interpretive in nature is a matter of substantive focus and intent, rather than of data collection. As Erikson writes, the technique that is chosen does not necessarily constitute the method used. His example of continuous narrative description done by both a positivist researcher and an interpretive researcher demonstrates that the method of data collection is understood and analyzed differently depending on the orientation of the researcher. Placing narrative description in the context of narrative inquiry as defined by Clandinin and Connelly makes clear the interpretive stance I bring to this work. The narrative descriptions are the data with which I have worked to gain understanding of "care." Any meaning that I excavate from these life texts is my own interpretation.

Interpretive research "involves being unusually thorough and reflective in noticing and describing everyday events in the field setting, and in attempting to identify the significance of actions in the events from the various points of view of the actors themselves" (Erikson, p. 81). Like Wolcott (1995), Erikson argues that induction and deduction are in constant dialogue during fieldwork. Following deliberate lines of inquiry, one must be open to the possibility of the specific terms of that inquiry to change

in response to data collected. Moving the emphasis from procedure and observable behaviors to understandings, interpretive research allows for greater understanding of the cognition involved in teaching; the "mental life" of teachers as they develop the dispositions central to their teaching identities.

The Three Dimensional Space of Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) speak about the three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry as being one where researchers look forward and backward, inward and outward while situating themselves and their study in place. I have come to understand this space as inhabited by both researcher and participants. Not only is it necessary that I look backward and forward, inward and outward alongside my participants as we come to understand and retell their stories, but I must also consider my own storied experience while situating myself in the role of researcher. After all, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write, "We are complicit in the world we study" (p. 61). By positioning myself as a storied character in the inquiry alongside my participants, I offer my experience, my interpretations and my retellings up to the reader as one possible set of meanings derived from the stories shared. For just as with literary work in the humanities, the pages of interpretation and critique are often far more numerous than the pages of original text. It is the best we can do to be honest and forthcoming about who we are as we try to make sense of what we know. The purpose of narrative inquiry offered by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is both to remake ourselves as researchers and offer up research understandings that may lead to a better world (p 61).

Research Questions

I designed five subsidiary questions that I believed would allow me to address all dimensions of the 3-D space defined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000): backward, forward, inward, outward, and situated in place. (See Table 1, p. 15). This set of questions was designed to respond to the need for greater understanding of the tensions teachers face as they construct for themselves what it means to care in the context of their work. They were designed to address the full realm of Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional space. What follows is an explanation of how I understand each question's relevance to the overall goals of this study.

Looking Backward: How have teachers' life experiences contributed to their understandings and convictions about care?

The purpose of this question was to allow for an exploration into the meanings "care" has in the storied lives of teachers over time. I was interested in understanding how teachers have come to understand care at various times and places throughout their lives, and how such understandings contribute to the way they view its relevance to the work that they do. This question was designed to open the temporal and spatial boundaries of the inquiry so that teachers might begin to see their evolving understandings as part of the continuum of experience that Dewey addresses. I was also interested in understanding if and how teachers differentiate between caring as teachers and in other realms of their lives.

Looking Forward: How do teachers' understandings of care contribute to their ongoing identity development as caring professionals?

This question was aimed at helping me to understand how teachers continue to negotiate their identities as caring professionals. Through their ongoing experience and reflection on that experience, teachers' constructs of care continue to be challenged, shaped and developed. I intended to explore how the various contexts in which these teachers live and work help to shape their ideas of care and then how those ideas of care contribute to their work as teachers.

Looking Inward: In what ways do teachers critically reflect upon how they construct and enact their constructions of care?

Reflective practice is seen by many teacher educators as an essential part of effective teaching (Zeichner, 1987). Reflection allows teachers to be purposeful in their decision-making and more responsive to students. Is it enough to simply reflect on our practice? Should we not also reflect on the assumptions and understandings we bring to our work that influence our practice? Reflection on our efforts to care as teachers is important because care is a complicated relational endeavor.

As authority figures in classrooms, teachers wield power over their students and so in their efforts to care can unknowingly further oppress and stifle students' growth. Freire states that simply being in this position of power makes the oppressor unable to lead the struggle for freedom and empowerment. Rather, a pedagogy of freedom must be forged with, not for the oppressed. This certainly begs the question, in what ways do teachers care for students and what are the consequences of those efforts? Is "care" a benign act?

Furthermore, as Noddings (1992) suggests, caring relations often fail in their relational quality because they are not received as caring. It seems that in order to

establish the reciprocal caring relations that Noddings claims must be central to our work as teachers, we must be willing to reflect on the reception of our efforts to care. This question allowed for a critical lens on what it means to care in the context of teaching.

Looking Outward: How do teachers understand and act on the various messages they receive about what it means to care within the school context?

This question was designed to help me look outward at the ways that care seems to play out in the stories of teachers. The contexts in which teachers live and work are filled with messages about how teachers, and women in particular, should care. Paying attention to how teachers come to understand and act on such messages allowed me to explore how such regimes of truth are internalized by teachers and what technologies of self are adopted as a consequence.

Situated in Place: What factors contribute to or hinder teachers' ability and will to construct for themselves and act upon what it means to care?

I believe that the technologies of self adopted by teachers have been influenced by the multiple contexts in which they have found themselves over time. The school context is one significant context helping to shape their understandings of what it means to care. Jennifer Gore (1993) suggests that the dominant culture (in this case, society and perhaps school culture) defines what it means to be a teacher through various messages that it disseminates. These messages may be shared through meetings, presentations, or documents, formal or informal discourse. This question was intended to help me understand how the contexts in which teachers work either help or hinder their efforts to care for themselves and others.

Research Context

The context for this research study was the context in which I first began my teaching career. I taught at Amarette Elementary for a combined six years in a variety of roles, as a student teacher, as a substitute teacher, and as a full-time teacher of third grade and kindergarten. I chose to return to Alan County and to Amarette Elementary School to study for a number of reasons. As I mentioned before, my passion for teaching and learning stems back to the lessons I learned from my parents about knowledge as power and freedom. I was determined to work in the community where I'd lived my years as an adolescent. I believed that I could use what I'd learned to empower young people to live the stories they chose. Amarette Elementary School, where I began teaching, is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse in Alan County. It is the most diverse when one considers the range of socio-economics represented there. It was my experience that in this place care meant a multitude of things for me, a teacher. One reason I chose to return to Amarette was because of the wide range of opportunities it offers for teachers to engage in complex and varying caring relations.

Another reason for my returning to Amarette was the extraordinarily high expectations the leadership of the school holds for its teachers. Amarette Elementary has a reputation for being the most demanding on teacher time and ability in the county. As a teacher there, I quickly learned that the home visits, neighborhood walks, extensive professional development and collaboration in which I engaged were not required of my peers at other schools. And while those at my school seemed to find pride in their level of commitment, they were quick to admit that such drive and dedication was exhausting.

Unfortunately, teachers left our school at an alarming rate looking for "easier" work, where teaching wasn't so emotionally draining. We found ourselves overwhelmed by the troubles of our students, frustrated by a system that didn't seem to value them, and exhausted by our efforts to serve as their advocates. I worried myself sick about whether students would come to school with breakfast in their bellies and warm clothes on their backs. I sought out medical care for students and their families when parents were unable or unwilling to do so themselves. Teaching at Amarette meant caring about my students inside and outside of school. And it tired me out. Very often someone would say, "If you've taught here one year it's like ten years someplace else. You learn more and feel more in a year here than other teachers do in a decade." I believed that Amarette offered a unique place to study as there were so many varied opportunities to care for students.

The third and final reason for my returning to Amarette and to Alan County was the exceptional commitment both have made to the professional development of their teachers. Amarette, in particular, because of its high levels of teacher attrition and turnover, has worked hard to institute professional development opportunities for teachers new to the school and to teaching. But learning in this place does not stop with teachers. All members of the school community are expected to be involved in their own professional development and the professional development of colleagues. Some of these professional development opportunities are specifically designed to help teachers better meet the needs of their students. Others are intended to offer outlets for teachers to develop capacities that may or may not directly impact their instruction. Groups such as Teachers as Readers engage in bi-monthly book talks, Teachers as Writers engage in autobiographical and creative writing.

For these reasons, I decided to return to Amarette to conduct this study. While a core group of teachers continued to teach at Amarette after I left, nearly 80% of the staff has turned over since I had left three years before. This includes the principal and one assistant principal at the administrative level. Consequently, the school was at once very familiar and very strange. I had the benefit of having lived a part of Amarette's past story and being susceptible to what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) call "taken-for-grantedness" that is necessary for true narrative inquiry. Yet, as they also suggest, a narrative inquirer must be able to step back from this familiar stance so that she might see the stories unfolding in a larger landscape of time and space. I believed that my experience at Amarette would allow for just this type of inward and outward study. Later in this chapter, however, I will explore some of the dilemmas that arose during the collection and analysis of data that resulted from my familiarity with the context.

Alan County Public School System

Alan County Public School System (ACPS), located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, is a suburban school district serving over 166,000 students in 241 schools (ACPS Home Page, 2003). It is the largest county in its state, serving 14% of eligible statewide students. It is also one of the wealthiest counties in its state, maintaining a school year budget of $1.6 billion, averaging nearly $10,000/student each year. Like any large county in a metropolitan suburb, Alan County has pockets of extreme wealth and extreme poverty, and serves a diverse population of students. Of the over 166,000 students in Alan, more than 20,000 are currently enrolled in the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program. These students are multi-ethnic and

speak over 100 home languages (ACPS Home Page, 2003). In a county as large as Alan, nearly 19,000 teachers hold classroom appointments in any given year.

County Mission Statement and Strategic Targets

"The mission of Alan County Public Schools is to educate all students to meet high academic standards and to prepare all students for responsible citizenship in the 21st century" (School Board Vision, Mission, and Strategic Targets, FY 2002-4). The strategic targets for the county include broad goals such as exceeding the Standards of Accreditation, increasing the graduation rate, increasing SAT scores, helping all students to read at grade level by the end of second grade and narrowing the minority student achievement gap for Black and Hispanic students. Because the county is so large, however, the implementation of both the mission and strategic targets is planned and carried out at the division and school levels. For this reason, I turn to the individual school mission statement to gain a better understanding of how such goals are expected to be met by individual teachers in their classrooms.

Amarette Elementary School

Amarette Elementary School is "the most culturally, linguistically and economically diverse elementary school in Alan County with over 900 students from 45 countries speaking 20 different languages" (Overview and Mission Statement, Amarette Web Page, 9/2003). Designated as a magnet school in 1992, Amarette serves not only its immediate attendance, but students from outside its area as well. Acceptance of magnet students is done through a computerized random lottery. The school claims to emphasize

an inquiry, experiential approach to learning where children are challenged to think

critically and reason logically to become problem solvers (Amarette Web Page, 9/2003).

Identified as a magnet school and a Title I school, Amarette receives additional funding

that support the maintenance of a variety of labs and resource centers as well as

additional resource and support staff. Labs include a science discovery lab, performing

arts theatre, communications center, math exploratorium and music technology lab. An

optional Spanish partial-immersion program is also available. During the 2003-4 school

year, the school's total enrollment equaled 910 students, served by over 80 specialists and

teachers, ten instructional assistants, 2 guidance counselors and three administrators.

> Amarette's mission statement reads as follows:

> Amarette Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences provides a superior
> education within a pluralistic community. Our vision is to foster a supportive
> environment where students can become independent, literate, self-directed
> learners. We believe all children can learn to become problem-solvers, make
> connections in their learning, and seek educational excellence. Our high
> expectations include that students will develop a sense of responsibility, integrity,
> cooperation, and an understanding of cultural differences. As professional
> educators, we also hold ourselves to the same high expectations; thus we read,
> research, and reflect on our own learning and teaching to further our intellectual
> development. In addition, we work to make families and community-members
> partners in teaching our students. As part of the teaching and learning process, we
> regularly revisit our expectations and reflect on our methods. We then seek to
> identify, unlock, and capitalize on our students' strengths and interests so they can
> achieve those expectations. When students are not meeting those expectations,
> we develop and implement strategies to respond. We collaborate with one
> another and our students, respecting different styles of learning and teaching, so
> that we can achieve our goals more effectively. (School Vision and Mission
> Statement, Amarette ES Home Page, 2004)

The planning committee of the school, consisting of eight teachers, specialists and

administrators, further developed this mission statement in a list of beliefs about learning.

This list is intended to reflect the culture and philosophy of Amarette Elementary.

They are listed below:

- We build strong home, school, and community partnerships.
- We teach strategies that develop independent learning and problem solving skills.
- We provide collaborative opportunities for both children and teachers.
- We create meaningful and challenging learning environments that provide opportunities for students to learn by experiencing.
- We hold high expectations for all, recognizing that students learn in different ways and at different paces.
- We engage in a cycle of assessment, reflection and goal setting in order to support student achievement.

(Amarette ES Home Page, 2004)

Amarette's number of new teachers in recent years has exceeded the county average at seventeen. In 2003-2004, the staff welcomed twenty new teachers to the school. Not surprisingly, the demands of such teacher turnover are high on veteran teachers and leadership at the school. Teachers that have worked at the school for a minimum of three years are eligible to become mentors to new hires as well as cooperating teachers for student interns of local universities. Some years this means that practically every veteran teacher is mentoring in one capacity or another.

Another challenge of such teacher turnover is the training of new teachers in Amarette's philosophy and vision. The school leadership recognizes this as a priority and has implemented a number of support networks to help acclimate teachers to their context for teaching. The following is a brief overview of the central professional development opportunities offered at Amarette (information gathered from Reading Specialists Suzanne Whaley and Kathleen Fay via phone interviews):

Wednesday Workshop

The Wednesday Workshop (WW) grew out of a need by school reading specialists to support a large number of new teachers. Before Wednesday Workshop, reading specialists worked with new teachers during the first half of the year to help them establish language arts routines such as reading and writing workshops. The year that WW was started, 27 new teachers joined the Amarette staff and the traditional method of support offered by reading specialists was out of the question. It was designed to be a weekly workshop lasting one hour where new teachers explored topics of language instruction including conferring, spelling, analyzing anecdotal records, leading a morning message, book leveling and engaging in interactive writing. It has since grown to include topics across the curriculum and address teachers at all stages of their career. The current model of WW begins in the fall with an eight-week session on establishing classroom community and learning about students. Topics such as kid-watching and teaching second-language learners are also addressed. In December the reading specialists lead a month-long session on running records that is required for all new teachers. Beginning in January a new topic is introduced each month and led by a different volunteer, veteran teacher. Topics include guided reading, science and art connections, writing workshop and using the new math series. Teachers throughout the school are expected to attend two of the four month-long sessions as part of their professional development.

Faculty Meeting Study Groups

Another integral part of the professsional development offered at Amarette is included in the monthly staff meetings. Teachers have organized into inquiry groups around topics of study based on interest. They remain in these groups throughout the year and use staff meeting time to meet and discuss their topics. Examples of some of the topics under study during the 2003-4 school year included communicating with parents, arts integration, conferring and differentiation.

Team Meeting Study Groups

Teachers are also expected to participate in grade-wide study groups around a topic of interest selected by team members. One team member acts as facilitator and specialists are assigned to sit in on team meetings that relate to their field of interest. For example, during the 2003-4 school year, the third grade team studied labeling, the implications of identifying children as GT, LD, etc. The principal has communicated her support for these grade-level inquiry projects and has offered financial assistance should they choose to read a common book on their topic or use time outside of school to meet and study.

Visiting Experts

The leadership at Amarette strives each year to bring "experts" into the school to live and work with teachers for extended periods of time. In years past they have hosted researchers and writers such as Ralph Fletcher, Marilyn Burns, Rachel MacAnallen, Alma Flor Ada and Isabel Campoy. Their visits typically include modeling lessons, leading teacher workshops and holding brownbag talks over lunch.

Teachers as Readers/Writers

For teachers who are interested in pursuing a personal love of reading and/or writing, Amarette hosts small groups of teachers that have common reading experiences (book clubs, essentially) and that come together regularly to share creative and autobiographical writing.

As I mentioned before, the administration at Amarette is known to hold high

expectations for its teachers in terms of professional development. This list of staff

development opportunities would likely lead one to believe that those expectations are

exceedingly high and top-down. However, many of these examples were created in

response to teacher requests for support. WW was designed by reading specialists at the

school in hopes of meeting the needs of teachers who asked for support establishing

language arts routines. Team Meeting Study Groups began as one team undertook a

study of its own and requested financial support from the administration when purchasing

texts. And the Teachers as Readers/Writers groups are groups of teachers who pull

together out of their own desire and giving of their own time. Only the Faculty Meeting

Study Groups and the Visiting Experts can truly be seen as imposed on the staff, yet even

these play out in collaboration between administration and staff members. Study groups

are selected on the basis of interest and experts are invited once school-wide emphases

and questions have been agreed upon by the faculty. One of the reading specialists from

Amarette whom I spoke to about these many varied professional development

opportunities described the professional climate of the school this way: "If you're a real learner, a reflective teacher, we're always giving you something new to think about. It won't ever get boring" (Interview, Suzanne Whaley, September 23, 2003).

Studying the Familiar

The fact that I had taught at Amarette Elementary years prior to this study presented some interesting dilemmas for me as a researcher while studying there. I have explained some of the driving forces behind my decision to conduct my study at Amarette. These include the diverse needs of the student body, the high expectations held by administrators and the extensive opportunities for professional growth as teachers. These aspects of the environment at Amarette, I believed, pointed to a unique venue for studying "care" as a dimension of teaching identity. And yet, what I came to learn soon after beginning my inquiry was that these very aspects that I believed defined Amarette's environment constituted only one interpretation of that environment. Maxine Greene (in Ayers and Miller, 1998) talks about "taken for granted-ness" of our experience and the need to "experience the lived reality of one's existence" by confronting the world critically (p. 17). She points to the situatedness of meaning and the understanding that context gives meaning to ideas (p. 12). Drawing on this notion, I have come to see how my life experience as a faculty member at Amarette gave meaning to my sense of place. I had understandings of what made Amarette unique that I had taken for granted.

As I talked with the women in this study and reviewed our conversations, I saw that this "culture" of Amarette I had known was interpreted in many ways by others. In

fact, the idea of a "shared vision" among faculty became a strong theme of discussion and analysis. I found myself continuously trying to make sense of the multiple interpretations of this place, each one adding a new dimension of my own experience of Amarette. I wonder, however, the extent to which my "taken for grantedness" impacted my ability to see Amarette. It is true that any researcher brings with her a lens through which she views the phenomenon under study. Merleau-Poney (1962) explains that invetigating the phenomena of life experience means re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of that world. (p. viii) This is what I strove to do.

That mine was an "insider's" perspective provides my study with another level of experience and understanding from which to build meaning. And yet, there were times when I heard participants say things like, "You know what I mean" or "You know, it's Amarette" as if we had a shared language and understanding of this place. I tried very hard to push these teachers to be explicit in their meanings. As a consequence of asking them to explain what they mean, however, I then wondered whether I had brought our connection into question in a way that would betray the trust we had established. Obviously, the relationships I forged with these women grew out of a shared experience that preceded this study, regardless of whether we had actually known one another or not. As I will discuss later, the majority of my participants felt there was a "shared vision" among faculty at Amarette about what constitutes good teaching and caring. I wondered about the extent to which these women believed I was invested in this vision and what impact this might have had on their willingness to evaluate it. While this is true of any research that involves interviewing or observation, I wondered about the way they viewed my role as a researcher who once belonged to the faculty. I often found myself

explaining to my participants that Amarette had changed in many important ways since I had worked there as a means for pushing them to both explain their thinking and see me as less invested in the culture of the school. That Amarette had changed is quite true. The school was under new administration and many of the faculty with whom I had worked had since left. But it is also true that a number of teacher leaders were still in place and I had many friends still working there. It is hard to say the degree to which this understanding influenced the tone of our conversations.

Methods of Data Collection

To address the research questions listed above, I conducted an initial interview, a minimum of three interviews over a six-month period, as well as a concluding interview with each of the six teacher participants. I also invited teacher participants to engage in one group interview to discuss care as it relates to their work. All six attended. In addition, I observed each teacher at least once in the context of her classroom. The purpose of these observations was to serve as a basis for conversations about how teachers' understandings are present in their lives and work. These interviews and observations helped me to understand how teachers were making sense of what it means to care and how they were translating such understandings into practice. In addition to meeting with teacher participants, I interviewed others in the school contexts, including the principal and two reading specialists. The purpose of these interviews was to further elucidate how the contexts in which these teachers work define what it means to care. Finally, a review of various material culture including the school vision and mission statement, the school website, and weekly staff memos helped me to see how messages

about care were disseminated in the context under study. In this section, I explore the process of participant selection as well as the purpose of each form of data.

Selection of Participants

The unit of analysis for this study were the narrative stories of six women elementary school teachers. I explored these teachers' understandings of what it means to care in their lives and work through interviews and classroom observations. I was particularly interested in how women, who define themselves as caring professionals, construct an ethic of care in relation to their work. Purposeful sampling, then, was important to the selection of my participants. As Merriam (1998) explains, purposeful sampling comes into play when a researcher seeks to "discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p.61). The criteria for participant selection are explained below. (For Consent Forms, see Appendices A-C).

Self-Selection

Because I was particularly interested in delving into the stories of teachers who believe that care is central to their lives as teachers, it was necessary that I engage participants who were self defined as "caring professionals" or striving to be "caring professionals." To do so, I shared the overall purposes of this inquiry with grade-level teams at the school and asked for volunteer participation. I presented the study as an inquiry in which participants would work alongside me

as the researcher to make sense of care in this context. By this I meant that I would follow Clandinin and Connelly's suggestion that my work would be a place where their voices are honestly shared. To this end, my participants constituted the first audience of my work and in that sense were co-writers of the final research texts. Once I had obtained a list of eight potential volunteers for the study, I asked all to participate. As it turns out, one of the original eight participants left the study early when her husband was called to Afghanistan. Mikki was afraid that with her responsibilities as a mother of three and being a first-year teacher, she would not have the time to put towards the study. Mia, the eighth participant, met with me for an initial interview and once more. She also attended the group interview at the end of my time at Amarette. However, we had trouble connecting and so I had little data with which to work. I ultimately decided not to write about Mia, leaving me with six main participants in the study.

Elementary School Teachers

I chose to study elementary school teachers. The purpose of focusing on teachers at the elementary school level was to explore Hargreaves' claim that the work of primary school teachers is highly defined by care.

Female Teachers

Female teachers were selected for the purposes of exploring the relationship between gendered-knowing and socialization into a culture of teaching. Research suggests that women are socialized in ways that cause us to define ourselves as

particularly suited to professions where care is emphasized (Gilligan, 1982, Belenky, 1986, Thorne, 1993, Simmons, 2002, hooks, 1984). Caring for others can and often does mean sacrificing self (Gilligan, 1982). In this way, women are particularly vulnerable to feelings of guilt and discouragement as they fail to live up to the expectations of a "caring profession." The inability to reconcile what it means to care for self and others is a contributing factor to teacher turnover (Britzman, 1991, Hargreaves, 1994). Because nearly one third of the population of teachers exits the profession in the first three years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1999), it is imperative to study how constructs of care are negotiated in the context of teaching.

Teachers of Varied Biography

I intended to select teachers on the basis of their biography. In the event that I had many volunteers, I would have selected as diverse a group as possible. As it turned out, I had eight volunteers, all of whom began the study with me. I did not have the luxury of picking and choosing a more representative group. In the end, the women who participated did range in background, allowing for a deeper exploration of teacher biography as it relates to identity development in particular contexts, perhaps problemetizing Gilligan's broad claims about the moral development of women as a homogeneous group. Four of the women were American-born Caucasian, one was of Cuban origin, one of Croatian origin. Their life experience, however, varied in other important ways as well. Four of the women were married, two divorced, three had children. Sarah was married to

a Mexican man, raising her children in a bilingual household. Ella was divorced, raising her children and grandchild. Ava was living with her three children and aging parents. The women ranged in age from 28-50 and in teaching experience from two to 19 years. All women were middle class.

Sources of Data

For the purposes of the study, I analyzed three types of data: transcripts from interviews with various members of the school context, field notes from observations of the teacher participants while teaching, and official school documents reflecting the mission and vision of the school. Each source of data is described below.

Interviews and Dialogue

I conducted an initial interview with each teacher participant at the onset of the study. This interview was modeled after Paul Thompson's (1978) life-story interview (See Appendix D). Its purpose was to invite participants to reflect on their lived stories leading up to their current place in time and space as teachers. The suggested format was flexible in nature and moves through informants' life history in the following manner: preliminary and general information, long-distance migration, grandparents, parents, family, daily life in childhood, community and class, school, employment, leisure and courting, marriage and children, changing daily life, later life. This interview was the longest of the interviews, roughly two to three hours in length, as it was intended to span teachers' life history. It was intended to allow both the participants and the

researcher (me) to look backward in time and space, providing an historical

context for the study of care that followed.

Throughout the remainder of the study, I interviewed each woman at least three

more times (See Appendix E). Some, like Mary, I interviewed five more times.

These interviews were fairly unstructured in format allowing for a free-flow of

conversation about topics of interest and concern to teachers that were relevant to

our ongoing study of care. They lasted anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. The

closing interview served as a final "official" conversation about the topic of care

and helped smooth the transition of my exit from the site. In addition to these

interviews, I held post-observation interviews after any classroom visits in order

to clarify questions about the observation (See Appendix F).

I also interviewed the principal (See Appendix G) as well as two reading

specialists (See Appendix H) at the school. During these interviews, I asked

questions about how they understand care in the context of teaching as well as

how such understandings are shared and nurtured in their school setting. All

interviews were audio-taped. I also took field notes during and after each

meeting.

Observations

The purpose of my observations was to gain a broader understanding of the

contexts in which the teachers work and the ways they strove to enact care in

these contexts. Because I could not translate my own understandings of these

contexts into assertions about how the teachers understood them, my observations were followed by interviews where I asked teachers to discuss how they were making sense of the events and people they encountered during my observations. I observed each teacher one to three times while she was teaching. For most, these observations took place within their classrooms. For Ava, whom I observed twice, I followed her from classroom to classroom as she worked with individual and groups of ESOL students. For Sarah, I followed her outside as she had her students studying cicadas, which required hands-on experience with nature.

Material Culture

As with my observations, the purpose of collecting material culture such as the school vision and mission statement, staff memos and other school documents from the website was to gain a broader understanding of the contexts in which teachers work and the messages about care that these contexts create and disseminate. They were only useful to me in so far as I was able to ask participants how they have come to understand their contents and compare intended outcomes with individual enactments by teachers.

The following chart lays out each method of data collection and the research question it was intended to address:

Table 4

Data Collection Matrix

Research Question	Means of Data Collection

Backward: How have teachers' life experiences contributed to their understandings and convictions about care?	Life-story interviews with participating teachers
Forward: What is the range of constructs about care that teachers share? What aspects (if any) are emphasized?	Interviews with participating teachers
Inward: In what ways do teachers reflect upon the implications of their constructs of care and the understandings from which they are derived?	Interviews with participating teachers
Outward: How do teachers understand and act on the various messages they receive about what it means to care within the school context?	Material culture Classroom observations Interviews with principal and reading specialists
Situated in Place: What factors contribute to or hinder teachers' ability and will to construct for themselves and act upon what it means to care?	Interviews with participating teachers

Analysis: Interpreting Meaning and Significance

My analysis drew from the following assumptions about teachers and teaching explored earlier in this study:

- Teaching is, in society at large, generally understood as a profession well suited to those who are nurturing, caring, and self-sacrificing.

- Teachers care for their students in a multitude of ways.

- Teacher biography is vast and varied, which in turn helps define the understandings of care that they bring to their work.

- Knowledge in general, and about teaching in particular, is socially constructed.

- Institutions, formal and informal, are characterized by regimes of truth and are distributed through the discourses that they share.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe the process of analysis in narrative inquiry as moving from field texts to research texts. Researchers, they suggest, should begin by asking questions of significance and meaning of the field texts, reading and rereading. I began by coding individual transcripts for words, phrases and themes I saw reoccurring. I then worked with each woman's data to create a concept web using Inspiration software. (An example of a web is included in Appendix J.) These concept webs allowed me to explore various strands of conversation and their relationships to one another. From here I made a large chart where I tried to outline major areas of discussion. For example, each participant spoke in length about how she had come to understand "care" as a woman and about others in her life that had taught her what womanhood entailed. This thread emerged across all women's data and so was a column on that chart. Another column included various aspects of the school context that seemed to support or hinder their efforts to care as teachers in this place.

I then decided to write out each woman's story, paying particular attention to my five research questions. I grouped my subsidiary questions together and wrote each piece around three main ideas: how each thought about care as a woman, how each thought about and strove to enact care as a teacher, and how the school context helped to shape her construct of care. Within these descriptions, I strove to also answer my questions about how each teacher reflected on her understandings. These write-ups were mainly descriptive in nature, as I tried very hard to represent the women's experience as they had retold it to me. The initial layer of analysis had helped me to determine what data spoke

to each question and how various threads of conversation might go together to help shed light on experience.

At this point, I looked across the narrative pieces and at the various analytical tools I had developed (concept webs, charts, write-ups) and found that some of the women's stories resonated with others in important ways. I then rewrote some of the descriptive pieces together, making connections between women. For example, the idea of motherhood was paramount to both Elizabeth and Mary, although in some interestingly different ways. I decided to write these two narratives together in order to see what commonalities existed in their language and thinking. In the end, these rewritten chapters helped highlight similarities and differences among the women. However, I did not keep them intact in this way for the final draft.

Instead, I continued to revisit the write-ups and to look for common themes across them. In order to engage in this newer level of analysis, I asked questions of the text about how each woman was understanding care. For instance, all of the women talked about care as meeting the needs of their students. This was a defining aspect of care for each teacher. I decided to explore this theme by drawing on the narratives I had written for each woman. I also found that each woman's construct of care seemed to be intricately intertwined with her construct of gendered identity. In order to pursue this theme, I looked across narratives and asked questions about the relationship between constructs of gender and care. Finally, I found that various aspects of the school context were important as these women strove to understand and enact care in this place. I decided to explore this theme as a separate chapter as well, asking about how each aspect impacted their understandings of and efforts to care. There were many smaller themes

that emerged that I thought would be chapters in their own right. Yet, after writing about them, I found that they really contributed to larger discussions. For example, at one point I thought I would write a chapter about the isolation of teachers' efforts to care. In the end, however, I included this discussion in chapter five, where I talk about caring as teachers and meeting the needs of students.

I struggled with whether to keep the women's narratives intact as I had first written them or to write thematic chapters. I was torn between what I felt was a more honest representation of each woman's experience as a whole and a more analytical discussion of what the narratives contribute to our understanding of care as an aspect of the human experience. I came to the understanding (after much reading and discussion with others) that the goal of my research was to contribute to understandings of care and that the narratives were the means by which to do so. The life experience of these women was my data. And yet, I wanted to lift their voices and experiences as vessels for knowledge and understanding. Ultimately, I decided to write by themes because I believed my analysis was clearer and more compelling. Within each thematic chapter, however, I have tried very hard to keep each woman's narrative intact. It is a balance I have worked hard to strike.

The research text that grew out of the questioning and coding described above, then, is both descriptive and analytical in form. This allows the reader of my dissertation to feel "a sense of being there in the scene" (Erikson, p. 163). I believe that the particulars of the narratives serve to validate the retellings I share; confirming for the reader what I have claimed are valid interpretations of the data collected. In the end, I

believe that the stories I retell contribute to better understandings of how teachers understand and experience care in the context of their lives and work as teachers.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) remind their readers of the importance of staying close to the field texts in order to avoid the reductionist tendency of writing from memory. "Memory is selective, shaped, and retold in the continuum of one's experiences," they write. This proved to be very important to me throughout my writing process. In order to keep from reducing the stories under study, I continuously revisited the transcripts and questioned my interpretations, pushing myself to represent the richness, the complexity and the inherent contradictions in the narratives I was telling.

I also shared drafts with the six women participants at various times throughout my writing. First, I was interested in confirming that I had the specifics of their narratives correct (dates, places, ages, etc.). Further, while I communicated to all of the women that the analysis was my own, I welcomed their reactions to my writing and interpretations of their life experience. Occasionally, I got feedback that further pushed my thinking and enhanced the analytic writing and discussion. For instance, after reading a draft of chapter four, Sarah wrote to me with an alternative interpretation of her construct of care. In this draft, I had suggested that Sarah did not include herself in her efforts to care. She explained that by knowing her family was cared for, she could then relax and feel less guilty about taking time for herself. Thus, she believed that caring for others was a means of caring for herself. I further discuss this idea in the discussion section of chapter four. It is important to note here that I would not likely have included this perspective had I not shared the draft with Sarah in the first place. Thus, as with

others inside and outside of the study, Sarah's participation and thoughtfulness contributed to the depth of my arguments.

Issues of Validity and Generalization

Validity means for me the ability of my assertions to reflect accurately and adequately the contexts and participants I studied. As Eisner and Peshkin (1990) write, "Validity, in a basic sense, pertains to the congruence of the researcher's claims to the reality his or her claims seek to represent" (p. 97). I do not believe that there is an objective reality that needs to be represented by my work. Rather, there are ways of seeing the world, held by participants in my study that need to be as accurately represented as is possible. As an instrument of analysis, I run the risk of misinterpreting what others say and do—as all of my analysis is necessarily interpretation of one sort or another. By sticking as closely to the data as possible, reading and rereading transcripts, documents and field notes, by having my participants read and respond to my interim and research texts, and through descriptive writing that allows my readers to confirm or disconfirm my claims for themselves, I believe that I have done my best to present a valid representation of the people and places under study. In so doing, I hope to have shed light on the nature of care.

The purpose of this work is not to generalize to all teachers or to all women. Because these are six stories of teachers' lives, my goal is in-depth study and understanding of how these teachers understand and experience care. The purpose, rather, is to answer questions about how these teachers experience and understand care, and in turn raise still more questions about how care might be storied in educational

narratives. In so doing, I have made claims about what aspects of care may be prevalent for those under study, how those dimensions and understandings are supported or hindered by the contexts in which they live and work, and what this may mean for others interested in care as a dimension of teaching. This inquiry is, for me, the beginning of a long line of research tied to the development of caring professionals and the intersection of gender studies and teacher education.

Research for Whom?

Roman and Apple (1990) ask the question, "For whom is research or inquiry conducted?" (p. 39). Answering this question has, in many ways, presented an important dilemma in my research study. As with all researchers, I research for myself. I want to validate my own experience as a woman and as a teacher that suggests care is more complicated than the literature suggests. I want to better understand how it is complicated and how care comes to be understood and enacted by others. I want to better understand how teachers' identities evolve so that I might better serve prospective teachers in my courses. And, as with any scholar, I want to make a contribution to the field in which I work.

This part of the question is easy to answer. What became more complicated for me over time, was what it might mean to research for my participants and other women like them. I believed that I did, in fact, hope that my research would benefit my participants in some way. But as I wrote about these women, I found myself unsure about how. I was torn between writing their stories descriptively and offering analysis of those descriptions. I knew that as a researcher I needed to make sense of their stories in a

way that would contribute to the goals of the study outlined by my research questions. But I found myself walking a thin line between analysis and judgment. At one point, one of my committee members asked me, "Who cares more? Who cares better? Is there a better way to care? If so, what does it look like?" My instinct was telling me that there was indeed a better way to care—that caring as a woman teacher should mean being political, working in a collective, working for change in their own lives and the lives of others. And yet, I didn't see many women doing this. Did this mean that they weren't caring? Who was I to tell them how they should care? I wrestled with being a "knowing other" and a colleague and friend who had lived alongside them for these many months.

I have defined my research as critical feminist in its approach. For me, this reflects the understanding that I am critical of the ways in which meanings are negotiated in societal contexts. I believe that there are many experiences, voices and understandings that are marginalized, if not neglected altogether, by dominant discourses. As a woman and a teacher, I have often witnessed the de-valuing of my own and my colleagues' knowledge and experience. And so, part of my goal with this research study was to put these six women's experience and voice in a position of power—looking to them for enlightenment on a central aspect of the human experience. Was this goal in contradiction with my goals to enlighten the very women I am studying? Can I at once point to these storied lives as sources of knowledge and then suggest that these women do something better with their lives?

There seems to be an inherent theoretical contradiction at work here. Narrative work seeks to understand a particular aspect of life experience through rich description. It does not inherently seek to judge that experience or change it. Critical and feminist

work seeks to change experience, to empower, to free. It has been a difficult struggle to come to terms with what research might look like that lies at the intersection of these two traditions. I have come to a place where I feel I have answered the question to the best of my ability at this juncture. Like Freire, I believe that a researcher cannot empower, change or free others from their oppression. I believe the best we can do is offer opportunities for others (and ourselves) to experience other ways of being in the world that may drive them (or us) to seek change. As Roman and Apple (1990) write, feminist work requires a "commitment on the part of the researcher to allow her or his prior theoretic and political commitments to be informed and transformed by the life experiences of the group she or he researches." (p. 62)

Perhaps the reading of this text is a method of consciousness-raising or changing in itself. That depends on the reader. But because I am committed to social justice ideals, I feel that it is my job to offer critical interpretations of these women's lives in hopes that they might begin to think more deeply about who they are becoming. I do not seek to judge them, but rather to discuss what I see, draw comparisons, highlight tensions and raise questions about the implications of their understandings. I am using their narratives as data for phenomenological description that seeks to better understand "care." But I am also trying to better understand the power relations at work in their lives and how, as women, we might begin to construct meanings and experiences for ourselves through which we can become free to name ourselves as gendered and caring beings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Caring as Women

In this chapter, I explore the significant similarities among these six women's constructs of care as they are rooted in their constructs of gender. I make the argument that they see themselves as women, in part, because they are carers, and they ascribe to themselves particular caring roles because of how they define themselves as women. As such, it is impossible to name what care is without exploring the dialectic relationship between dominant patriarchal discourses of womanhood and the roles these women assign themselves.

Gore (1993) reminds us that understandings about who we are as gendered beings are so deeply entrenched in the societal contexts in which we live that we are as good as blind to their existence. We help to perpetuate them by living uncritically—through our unawareness of their influence on our lives. We ascribe to them and enact them because they are as much a part of us as the air we breathe and the water we drink. In this chapter, I argue that the women in this study have internalized regimes of truth about womanhood that includes care as a defining aspect. As such, any conversation that we had about what it means to care was embedded in discussions of how they view themselves as women. Because care is so obviously a part of who they are, they had great difficulty in making explicit the reasons why they care or how they conceive of caring. Rather, they talked about the things they do as women that exemplify their caring nature. They spoke about care through the many roles they ascribed themselves—as mothers, daughters, spouses, friends, sisters and as teachers.

Across cases, there were shared beliefs about the role of women as carers and the types of caring that are acceptable for women. Despite the differences in the ways each

woman has come to see herself as a carer, all participants referred to the obvious nature of care as something that women do or are expected to do in all areas of their lives. Teaching, it turns out, is one small piece of each woman's identity as a carer. (Carer, in this case, being used synonymously with the term woman.) Furthermore, all women agreed that caring for others means sacrificing self, though the ways that they gave of themselves varied considerably. Only one participant, Kathy, refuted this stipulation, though she admitted that others around her, and society in general, subscribed to the idea, making her efforts to care for herself a source of tension in the school setting.

In the following pages, I explore each woman's story and the understandings of care that have evolved from her life experience in an effort to provide context for the ensuing discussion of her identity as a caring professional. As I will show, it is because there are such differences among their biographies that the presence of dominant constructs of womanhood across them is so striking. That underneath each woman's construct of care lies a deep-seated need to see oneself as a carer of others and that such care must mean sacrificing self, I believe, raises important questions about the power of Gore's technologies of self in helping to shape identity and the implications for a profession consisting primarily of women.

Elizabeth Braslav: "All you do is focus on what you do not have."

Elizabeth Braslav lost her mother at the age of 18, and she has spent most of her life searching for a "grounding," a connection like the one she and her mom once shared. For her, the one and only place where she believes she will find it, the source of her

identity and place in the world, is in motherhood. Yet, for six years she and her husband have been unable to become pregnant.

In light of the struggles she is having, the construct of care that Elizabeth has developed over time is intricately woven around her ideas of motherhood and mothering. The conversations I had with Elizabeth rarely left the subject of motherhood—whether it was her relationship with her own mother, her desire to be a mom, or the difficulty she has in dealing with the fact that others around her are becoming mothers. The preoccupation with these ideas dominated Elizabeth's thinking about care and the discussions we had of it.

Though she had lost her mother over twenty years ago, Elizabeth found this very difficult to discuss. The pain and loss she felt were still quite raw. And her more recent battle with infertility seemed to only heighten her feelings of emptiness. As a result of her difficulty in dealing with both the loss of her mother and her inability to become pregnant, Elizabeth had grown so sad, in fact, and resentful, that she had isolated herself from friends, family and colleagues. It is from this place that Elizabeth and I began our talks and tried to make sense of who she was as a woman and teacher.

Elizabeth's parents were first generation Croatian immigrants. They moved to Germany upon her father's graduation from medical school in an effort to secure a better life for themselves, but soon after, their visas were revoked. They decided to move to the United States, to a suburb of Chicago, once they had sponsorship from Elizabeth's aunt. It is there that Elizabeth and her two brothers, one older and one younger, grew up.

Elizabeth describes her parents' immigration experience as traumatic in that they had to denounce their homeland in order to gain citizenship here. Yet, they seemed very

committed to the idea that she and her siblings would assimilate into American culture.

Elizabeth's first language was Croatian, but her parents did not encourage her to read or

speak in her home language. They wanted her to become fluent in English and strove to

do so themselves. She remembers her mother getting together with other ladies in the

neighborhood to watch soap operas, Sesame Street and other shows in order to gain

English proficiency. Both of her parents were highly educated, she says. Like the

parents of her second language learners today, however, they struggled to communicate

and get ahead in a foreign land.

Throughout her childhood, Elizabeth and her mother were very close. It is no

surprise, then, that when her mother was diagnosed with stage III ovarian cancer at the

age of 49, Elizabeth was devastated. After finally being diagnosed, her mother lived only

a short time, passing away shortly after Elizabeth had begun her first year in college.

After her mother's funeral, Elizabeth decided to move home in order to care for her father

and younger brother. She talks of cooking and cleaning, trying in many ways to be her

mother. Yet, the sadness that had swept over her had also taken hold of the other

members of her family and they soon found it hard to even relate to one another.

Elizabeth's father was a psychiatrist, and she found it surprising that he could not cope

with his emotions or those of his children. In the years that followed, he withdrew from

them in important ways. Elizabeth sadly says, "In many ways I lost both of my parents

when my mother died."

Elizabeth's father did impress on her the importance of finishing college,

however, which she did before packing up to do some traveling on her own. Upon

graduating, Elizabeth began what would become a decade of worldwide travel, taking her

to such places as Australia and New Zealand, Holland, Seattle, and Japan. Of this time in her life, Elizabeth recalls, "In some ways I was trying to escape my dad and my brothers and everything that had happened." She says that her mother's death "opened the door" for her to leave her home and travel. "I would have remained tethered to her had she still been there," she explains, "She was a worrier and would have freaked if I'd told her I was leaving for Australia or New Zealand or some place. My life would have been different." And though Elizabeth admits that she might not have had such rich and varied travel experience had her mother been alive, she admits that she still feels rather lost without her mother here. It seems that the sense of identity and grounding that her mother once provided is something Elizabeth has spent many years searching for elsewhere.

In the years leading up to our conversations, Elizabeth had evidently come to the decision that the identity and security for which she was searching was to be found in a relationship in which she would be a biological mother herself. Unfortunately, she and her husband, Jack, had so far been unable to have a baby. When we began our interviews, Elizabeth was in the midst of a difficult battle with infertility through which she had undergone a number of treatments and surgeries, all of which seemed to be "taking over [her] life." The unending cycle of hope and disappointment was an emotional roller coaster that was taking its toll on her strength and spirit. Though she had her husband to support her, Elizabeth still often felt as if she were going through it alone. She says,

> It's hard when your spouse wants the same thing you want but doesn't have the
>
> emotions that are bigger than himself, and my husband is very, very good about

being supportive and all, but you know, he is not in it. He is with me, but he is not in the emotional state that I am in.

The idea of adoption was one Elizabeth was not ready to consider. Early on in our talks, she made it clear that she would use all of her resources in an effort to have a baby of her own. She says, "I am lucky that [my husband] wants to adopt. He is all for it and it is me that is more hesitant… It is just like, you want your own child. Who wouldn't?" It was vital to Elizabeth that her baby would be biological, and that she be given the opportunity to create with another human being the bond that had so long ago been broken for her.

Outside of her marriage, there were not many with whom Elizabeth would discuss her desire to have a baby. At school, she told only those who needed to know, the principal and secretary who scheduled substitutes. Early on she had shared with a few people and then regretted that she had because the procedures had not worked. She shared that she hated feeling as if others were waiting to hear news and constantly wondering whether she'd been able to get pregnant. "I don't know if I can handle people knowing and then going around saying, how's it going?" she said.

Her family, too, had long ceased to be a source of support. Since the time she left home to travel, nearly twenty years ago, she had been unable to rebuild a relationship with her father. He had remarried and Elizabeth did not particularly care for his new wife. She described her as "not nurturing," a woman who never wanted children. For this and other reasons, Elizabeth felt as if her stepmother was someone who would have little understanding of her feelings. Elizabeth's older brother had two children, her God-children. Yet, in recent years, she had grown estranged from her brother as well because

she felt as if she could not bring herself to be around them. The fact that they had been able to have children so easily was difficult for Elizabeth. Her younger brother was expecting twins at the time of our interviews, which also affected her. She found it hard to be as happy and supportive for him as she wanted to be in light of her struggle.   She says,

> It is bigger than yourself. I mean actually I can say, this person is having a child and it is wonderful, this is a person I care about, like my sister-in-law and my brother. I know I should be happy and I am in a very rational way, but emotionally it is so much bigger than me and it is hard for others to understand who have not gone through it.

At one point her older brother said to her that she needed to "let it go and get on with life," a statement for which Elizabeth was finding it hard to forgive him. She resented the fact that he did not understand how important becoming a biological mother was to her and had, for the time being, decided that not having a relationship with him and his family was best. She says,

> It has been really hard, but in some ways not being close to them is a good thing because I do not want to be …He doesn't get it and he is never going to get it and I would rather not have that kind of relationship with him at this time than try to explain to him what this is like because I have tried and he just doesn't get it. …His whole attitude is, 'look at what you already have.' I know what I have is great. I don't have to look at horrible things in the world to know and appreciate what I have.

As Elizabeth reflected on this and other relationships with members of her family, she commented, "The hardest part is I have completely eliminated contact with [them]." Fortunately for Elizabeth, she had found a support group that seemed to offer her a respectful, open place to discuss her feelings, her fears and her disappointments. All of the women in this group were struggling with infertility. They were of varied ages and stages of their battle, but all shared a common longing to become mothers of their own biological children. Of this group, Elizabeth said, "It is a sisterhood… Kind of like a sorority that you never wanted to join, but here you are." For the most part, Elizabeth spoke positively about this group. However, whenever a member of the group became pregnant, Elizabeth swam in a pool of mixed emotions ranging from envy and resentment to hope and happiness. She says,

> The hard thing is when I am in the group, we talk about it when a couple of them get pregnant, it was like, you are in this group together and there is a wall or a fence and one day three of you are able to jump over that fence and you are on the other side and you can see through the fence and you can see the people on the other side and you were with them just a day ago. Like, okay, when is it going to be my turn to jump over the fence? What is keeping me from jumping over the fence? Is it that I can't physically get my legs to spring me over? It is always like, what is keeping me?

Elizabeth was keenly aware of other women's discomfort in discussing pregnancy and children around her. One example was her colleague and friend, Barbara. During the year that we were meeting, Barbara became engaged and invited Elizabeth to her wedding. A couple months later, Elizabeth learned that the wedding date had been

moved up, unbeknownst to her. She assumed that it was because Barbara had become

pregnant and went to ask a friend about it. She recalled,

> She didn't want to tell me. I was really annoyed, like okay, now I am not going to
>
> the wedding because of the sensitivity. But, I kind of understand… I think I
>
> would have been better if she just when I approached her about the wedding, if
>
> she had just told me honestly, but I kind of felt like a leper. You know, she didn't
>
> have the heart to tell me…

She tells of women in her group and at work that deliberately hid their pregnancies or lied

about being pregnant in her presence. Though she would have rather they had told her

the truth, she admits that hearing the truth is sometimes just as hard.

I believe that Elizabeth's reflections point to the fact that, for the most part,

dominant culture (male, heterosexual) tells women they will grow up to become mothers,

that it is their destiny to do so. Because of this, it is understandable that women are

ashamed when they are unable to fulfill this role. Others, men and women alike, don't

know how to respond to their difficulty. There doesn't seem to be language appropriate

for talking about infertility. Phrases like "unsuccessful," "inability," are laden with

negativity, suggesting that a woman is inadequate in some way if she does not or cannot

have a baby; in a sense, she is not wholly a woman.

Elizabeth spoke occasionally of her upbringing that instilled in her the belief that,

not only will she become a mother, but she could easily become a mother before she is

ready and so she should save herself for marriage. She says,

> Your whole life you never know, your whole life, it's so strange, you're always
>
> trained you'll get pregnant, you can get pregnant, you can get pregnant at any

time of the month, so then you're scared. I think especially, well my mother was

Catholic so she even brought in that good girls don't have sex until they're

married, so I'm fed this and then she dies and I'm 18 years old.

Like most teenage girls, Elizabeth was warned of all the dangers of pre-marital sex and

how easily sex could turn into an unwanted pregnancy. What she doesn't remember ever

hearing is that some women are unable to have children and how difficult this is for them.

She says,

I don't ever remember being told that it's hard to get pregnant. So, I don't know

why, I was 34 when I got married, yet I thought, oh, it will be easy to start a

family. Everyone gets pregnant, don't they?

In her comments here, Elizabeth points to two important messages pervading

much of dominant Western culture: first, that women should "save" themselves for child

birth and rearing because this is the purpose of sexual relations; and second, that if a

woman is unable to bear children, she has failed as a woman and should be ashamed.

Rarely do we hear about unsuccessful or terminated pregnancies even in conversation

among women themselves. These events are considered a source of shame and

disappointment rather than part of a natural cycle of life. Elizabeth's comments suggest

that these messages, which she internalized as a woman herself, left her ill-prepared to

deal with her difficulty in getting pregnant. Such messages are reinforced by women's

unwillingness or discomfort in broaching the subject of infertility, as is true of the women

in Elizabeth's life.

Care for Elizabeth seems to have always been represented by the physical and

emotional connections present in the relationship between mothers and their children. It

involves, at the very least, caring for another's physical needs, such as providing food, clothing and shelter, as well as bonding on a psychological level, providing emotional support and gaining the fulfillment of sharing unconditional love with another being of blood relation. In some ways, this notion of a caring relationship exemplifies Noddings' idea of reciprocity. Elizabeth longs for a relationship through which she can both give love and receive it in a mutually, reciprocal way. Though she has a loving relationship with her husband, it does not meet the specifications of the mother-child bond. There is something unique, and even mystical about this relationship that Elizabeth has not found in her connections with anyone outside of her own mother, leaving her to believe that she will only find it again in a relationship with her own biological child.

The mystique surrounding motherhood has been present for as long as women have been giving birth. Despite the fact that more and more women are working outside the home, powerful messages about the importance of mothering saturate our culture. In The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined All Women (2004), Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels take a look at popular culture in order to make sense of the messages pervading American culture with regards to mothering. They write that from news reports to magazines, television shows to popular fiction, women today are bombarded by messages about mothering as an impossible ideal. This "new momism," they suggest, is a "self-defeating quest for perfection that has been glorified by American society" (book jacket). Such a quest is defined by cultural norms that suggest "happiness is having a baby," and having a baby will "save your life" (p. 17). Like others (Warner, 2005), these authors suggest that this ideal has "evolved over the past few decades, becoming more hostile to mothers who

work, and more insistent that all mothers become ever more closely tethered to their kids (p 23). But it is not just mothers who are held to impossible standards, they suggest. Rather,

> [Momism] redefines *all women, first and foremost, through their relationships to children.* Thus, being a citizen, a worker, a governor, an actress, a First Lady, all are supposed to take a backseat to motherhood …By insisting that being a mother—and a perfect one at that—is the most important thing a woman can do, a prerequisite for being thought of as admirable and noble, the new momism insists that if you want to do anything else, you'd better prove first that you're a doting, totally involved mother before proceeding (p. 22) [emphasis added].

For Douglas and Michaels, the new "momism" signifies a backlash against the feminism of the 1960s, 70s and 80s that sought to provide women with freedom of choice to be something other than a mom. Today, given the choice, women choose motherhood because it is seen as the highest calling to which we can aspire. Iris Krasnow sums up this feeling in her book, <u>Surrendering to Motherhood</u> (1997):

> For as long as I can remember I have been wrestling to find something that would give meaning to my life, something to feed my spiritual hunger, soothe my churning psyche, to ground me in the Now (p. 45).

Motherhood, defined as a connection to children, the "calling" to provide for and nurture others is triumphed as the true vocation of women in our dominant patriarchal societal context. As such, women are constantly negotiating our own identities in light of these understandings. It is a regime of truth about womanhood that informs and shapes our experiences as women.

Elizabeth's construct of care is shaped by her beliefs about motherhood as central to womanhood. The extent to which she has been willing to go in order to secure such a caring relationship include sacrificing herself physically (through multiple rounds of medication and treatment, emotionally (as she deals with mood swings due to hormones, cycles of hope and disappointment) and socially (as she isolates herself from family and friends). Because she has defined care in such a seemingly narrow way, she has forced herself into a rather desperate situation. Being a carer, to Elizabeth, seemingly means being a biological mother. The fact that she has been unable to have children of her own appears to have left her feeling as if she has failed as a carer, and thus, as a woman. As we will see, these themes of motherhood and connection will be significant in discussions of her teaching as well.

Mary Ackerman: "I've always thought I was the bad child."

Another thread of patriarchal discourse about womanhood draws on the notion that women come to define ourselves through our attachment to others. This understanding is supported by the work of psychologists such as Carol Gilligan (1982), who suggest that caring relationships are essential to female identity development. According to this line of thought, our attachment to others offers us opportunity to know ourselves through others' eyes. We strive to please others in an effort to have them look favorably upon us. Thus, the ways others respond to us send us important messages about our character and worth.

Gilligan's work offers a point of reference for understanding Mary's life experience. Mary has worked tirelessly to please her mother in efforts to garner praise

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and acceptance, first as a daughter, then as a woman in her own right. For years, that praise and acceptance was denied her. As Mary and I sat down to talk in the winter of 2003, she explained that she saw herself as inadequate and selfish, much the way she believed her mother viewed her. It seems the ideals of self-sacrifice, giving to others, remaining calm and quiet despite one's own discomfort were not exemplified by Mary's mother, yet they were characteristics that she demanded of Mary. Mary described trying to live up to the high (rather impossible) expectations her mother held for her, and in return, being berated and belittled for being too emotional, too self-centered and unworthy of success or praise. These messages, which have apparently bombarded Mary throughout her lifetime, have seemingly had important implications for how Mary has come to understand who she is as a woman.

At the time of our interviews, Mary was attending weekly counseling sessions in an effort to try and understand how her mother's behavior and words communicated powerful messages about who Mary should be as a daughter and as a woman. She was working hard to counteract the destructive toll they had taken on her sense of self worth. She explains, "I've always thought that I was the bad child. Always. I've never done anything good and then people… are like, what are you talking about? I'm like, no, if I did something great, then we would know it."

Mary's counselor told her that she believed Mary's mother to have narcissistic personality disorder, meaning that she was unable to care for others in a constructive way. As a result, she believed that Mary had never truly been given a chance to build self-esteem. Mary admitted that even as an adult, every time she walked into her parents' house, the first thing she heard was always a criticism. She shared with me a memory of

Christmas day a couple years before when she arrived at her mother's house dressed in slacks and a sweater. Her mother told her that she was not dressed well enough to eat at her table with linen tablecloths and napkins, and Mary ended up eating in the kitchen with the dogs.

And just the summer before, after applying for a summer workshop in writing at Teachers College in New York, Mary was talking to her mother on the phone explaining that she hadn't yet heard whether she'd been accepted. Her mother responded that she probably wouldn't get accepted and shouldn't get her hopes up as there were many other people more worthy. Messages like these were ones Mary had come to take in on a daily basis from her mother; ones she hardly ever considered to be hurtful or spiteful. For Mary, they were true. She had internalized them to the extent that she had come to see herself in all the ways her mother saw her. Even when her husband or friends raised questions about the way her mother acted or spoke to her, she usually explained it all away, excusing her mother and blaming herself.

Mary began seeing her therapist late the spring before this study began, after having been asked to take a leave of absence from her teaching position. Looking back on that period in her life, Mary says that she can see now why she needed to take a break. She had just spent months of her life traveling back and forth to Connecticut every weekend in support of her friend, Beth, whose mother was dying of cancer. "I went up every weekend to help Beth and watched her mom… I'd never seen cancer before," Mary recalls. Beth's mother, Ann, had been like family to Mary, and though Mary felt compelled to be there for Beth, she found it incredibly difficult to watch someone she loved so much wither away.

Mary shared her memories of Beth's mom as a strong, witty, beautiful woman whom she admired throughout her life. She described her as "selfless" and "giving," always taking the time to see how others were doing and feeling. Mary remembered, "In the weeks before [Ann] died, she was falling out of her chair. But still she would say, 'What's going on? How are you doing, Mary?' I'm like, 'I'm fine. How are you?' What do you say?" Mary describes Ann as the kind of woman who would stop at nothing to continue life as she'd known it and refused to give in to her illness:

> [Ann] was an assistant in the school, and she lost the use of her hands and wouldn't tell anyone. She would sneak to the bathroom and use coat hangers to zip up her fly to go to the bathroom and stuff. And she wanted to go for the final treatments when she couldn't even walk. She's like, 'Take me. I want to go.' And the whole family got her there because that's what she wanted to do. She wanted to keep fighting it. I mean, everyone knew. It was like days, and she wanted to go.

Mary's admiration of Ann reveals something about the woman Mary is today. She talks of the way Ann continued to fight the illness that was eating away at her right up to the very last moments of her life. She speaks of her strength and resolve, of her selflessness as she continued to ask about Beth's friends and show care and concern for others. It is not surprising, then, that as Beth suffered through her mother's illness, Mary acted in the ways that she did. For weeks in a row, Mary took the long drive to be there for her friend despite the fact that she was working full time as a new teacher. "It was just a given," she says. It would be months before Mary took the time to acknowledge how much her friend's loss was also her own. She recalls,

I was really thinking a lot about it. It was definitely on my mind, and last year indirectly or I guess directly it influenced what was going on with me at school, which was hard to balance cause I didn't really realize it. I thought I was fine… I didn't realize how it was affecting me. I needed time. I was just—I just thought about it as being support for Beth, so I was fine and this wasn't really affecting me.

Thinking back on her many trips north to visit Beth and her family, Mary says she was made to feel as if she were being overly emotional and taking things too personally. Mary's mother said to her, "This is not about you," making her feel as if she had no right to grieve. When Mary's mom accompanied her to Ann's funeral, she said to Mary (in a voice Mary believes was much louder than a whisper), "I can't believe all these people are here for her. I mean, she wasn't that great of a person," embarrassing Mary and once again belittling the feelings she was having. Looking back on that time, Mary says that she was incredibly sad, but admits that she was unable to recognize how much she was suffering herself and the impact it was having on her life inside and outside of school.

It is likely that Mary did not take the time to grieve because she rarely took time to care for herself. Years of messages telling her she needed to be less selfish and think more of others taught her that she was not worthy of her own love and attention. Mary had grown quite accustomed to hearing that she was a "drama queen," "overly emotional," and "needy." Her mother's behavior and response to Mary's emotional needs at the time of Ann's death were consistent with other times in her life when she asked for help and was belittled in return. The events of the year before brought to the forefront some unhealthy aspects of her relationship with her mother. As a result, she

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had begun to think critically about how her mother had treated her and how their relationship had, over time, contributed to Mary's evolving sense of self.

Shortly after Ann passed and Mary had returned to the routine of her life, she had another unfortunate event occur. While playing with her dog, Miles, Mary broke her leg. She tells the story of calling her mother, asking her to come down and help out for a few days while she struggled to get back on her feet. Her mom responded that she had golf and could not get away. When Mary's husband blew up over this response, Mary remembers saying, "Well you know, she does have this schedule." The thought that Mary's health could take precedence over her mother's golf game was foreign to her. She was not at all surprised by her mother's response. So she pulled herself together and returned to work, tired and broken, trying her best to keep up her usual pace. At one point during our conversation, Mary pondered out loud,

I sit and wonder too… Do I expect too much? I come back so many times feeling that I'm really selfish. And though people say otherwise, I still feel like that's true. 'You just expect too much, Mary. Why would I come down there just because your leg is broken?' [Mom] said.

Shortly after returning to work, her principal, Dawn, pulled Mary aside to tell her she needed to take some time off to care for herself. Mary remembers the shock she felt at hearing that Dawn was so worried about her. She says, "At one point finally Dawn (the principal) was like, you know what? You're going home. This is ridiculous. It's wearing you out. You need a break. Go home." She explains that Dawn is her hero for having sent her home because she never would have stopped to recognize that things were just too difficult. "Dawn actually said that I needed to do a better job of taking care

of myself," she remembers, laughing. "I thought, yeah, my dog broke my leg, but [Dawn] was like, 'This is really a blessing in disguise. You need to take time for yourself.'"

Against her better judgment, Mary retreated to her home and took time off, but not before talking with her friend, Travis, one of the counselors at the school. He too said to her, "It's time that you take a break. You're a disaster." Mary went home reeling from the realization that perhaps she hadn't been holding herself together the way she imagined. In the days that followed she spoke with her mother and told her what had happened. Her mother's response was, "Well, it sounds to me like you got fired." Immediately Mary became upset and called Dawn to find out if this was so. Dawn quickly reassured her that it was not, she just believed that Mary needed to take some time for herself and regroup given everything that had been going on for her. She recalls Dawn saying, "Why would I fire you?" and responding, "Well, I wasn't doing my job. I wasn't doing a good job."

Mary's language here reveals that she has deeply internalized the messages her mother has sent over the years. She often feels selfish and inadequate. It did not seem like a farfetched idea to her that she might have been fired and not even realized it given her inability to "do a good job" while dealing with the emotional and physical stressors in her life. Still, she remembers feeling incredibly surprised when those around her at work told her that she needed to care more for herself. On the contrary, Mary felt as though she needed to work even harder, give more to her work because she "wasn't doing her job." It never occurred to her that what she needed was to care for herself. She reflects,

I had no idea. I was like, 'I broke my leg. I hate my dog right now!' I thought everything else was fine and they're like, 'No, it's not okay.' Dawn said, 'You never stop, Mary.' And I'm like, 'I stop!' But no, I don't. Looking back, I don't. So my counselor, that I still go see, is working on helping me learn to take care of myself.

It seems that Mary's deep internalization of these messages about the woman she should strive to be has led her to focus on what more she could do to please and care for others. Whenever she thought of herself, she saw only her failings, the things she could have or should have done better. Her broken leg and the loss of a good friend did not make her feel that she deserved time and space to grieve and recover. Rather, the hurt and loss she was feeling only made her feel guilty. She believed she had no right to feel sorry for herself. She only had to work harder to overcome the difficulties she faced. Kreisberg (1992) refers to this internalization as the "saturation of consciousness," when one becomes so immersed in the norms and expectations placed on her by others that they become "common sense" to her as well. Like Freire and others, Kreisberg points to the fact that we can adopt oppressive ways of thinking about ourselves that are just as powerful, if not more so, than the language and actions others direct towards us. When asked about what she thought tipped Dawn and Travis off on her needing to take better care of herself, Mary responded,

I did not notice it—but Dawn asked me how much weight I'd lost. I had no clue and I really didn't even know how to answer the question because I didn't know. I knew that I'd been crying a lot but I thought—my best friend's mom died last year and I just thought with that weight on me… but I really had no clue what was

going on with me. People this fall said, you know, you'd just walk down the hall

and there was no smile anymore. I seriously had no idea. Travis was like, 'Yeah,

you could just walk down the hall and people could run into you, run over you

and you'd just get up and keep on walking and not even be fazed by anything.'

And that was a really scary thing to know.

Looking back, Mary can now see that the physical pain and difficulty that resulted

from her broken leg only added to the pain and sadness she was already feeling in the

wake of Ann's death. She has since decided to put in "a lot of safety nets and people

looking out for [her]." She is afraid that she is incapable of recognizing when she might

be spiraling out of control and has asked friends and colleagues to "keep an eye on her."

Travis is one of those people. Yet, when asked who the others were, Mary pointed to her

friend in 5th grade, the counselor, the reading teacher… Beth, interestingly, was not

among her list of security nets. When I asked whether she had shared with Beth how

much she was struggling in her life personally and professionally over the last year, she

admitted,

No, I didn't want her to know at all. I didn't want to tell her because I was like,

you've got so much you're handling. When I did finally tell her it was in a very

round about way, like it was with most people. I said everything was about my

leg. You know, I can't walk, so…

I believe that the fact that Mary did not share her troubles with her best friend is

significant. It suggests, to me, that she still sees herself as a burden to others. Despite the

fact that she spent countless hours driving to and from Beth's home in Connecticut for

weeks on end the year before and stood by her side when Beth said goodbye to her

mother, she did not feel as if she could ask Beth for support in return. It seems the messages that Mary's mother has been sending her throughout her life—messages about her self worth, about her emotionality and tendencies to over-dramatize and take things too personally—have left their mark. Mary has come to see herself through her mother's eyes, believing that taking time to care for herself, to ask for help, are shameful and unnecessary.

Throughout her life, Mary has been bombarded with powerful messages about the kind of woman she should strive to be. Her mother's constant dismissal of Mary's feelings and accomplishments has left Mary with little self-esteem and sense of self worth. She has come to believe that she is overly emotional and dramatic, that she is never good enough and that her needs are less important than the needs of others. The woman Mary hailed as her role model, Ann, lived a life that in many ways emphasized and reinforced the messages about womanhood that Mary constantly received from her own mother. Ann was always giving to others and putting herself last. Even in her final days of a struggle against cancer, she refused to acknowledge her own pain and suffering, trying to keep up at work and asking others how they were doing. It is no wonder that Mary looked to Ann as an example of the type of women she should strive to be. These are things Mary has come to believe she needs to do a better job in her own life. I have come to understand Mary's desire to connect with others grows out of her inability to share a genuine, reciprocal relationship with her mother. I believe it is also reflective of the many messages she has internalized about the importance of nurturing and sacrificing self for others' wellbeing.

It seems that care for Mary reflects, in some ways, the same preoccupations with securing unconditional love as did Elizabeth's construct. Both women are in search of a loving relationship that accepts them for who they are—Mary has tried for years to gain this acceptance and love from her mother, Elizabeth hopes to find it by having a child of her own. A difference here is that Elizabeth once had such a relationship with her own mother, and so her ideas of motherhood and womanhood shadow the example her mother set for her. Alternatively, Mary strives to find exactly what her mother has refused her for so many years. She wants to be self-sacrificing, to offer unconditional love and support to friends and family because it is the very things she, herself, craves. Like Elizabeth, Mary is willing to sacrifice herself—sometimes to the extent of physically and emotionally harming herself—in order to secure desired relationships and to be the woman she strives to be. She ran herself into the ground, losing weight, becoming exhausted and emotionally drained rather than taking the time to grieve for a friend. She refuses to complain about her own difficulties for fear of being a burden to others. And, as we will see, she gives of herself as a teacher in many of the same ways. It seems care for Mary means giving of self in any and all ways necessary to please others, to gain their approval and maybe even to be loved.

Ella Mitchell: "I feel very responsible that I couldn't protect my girls."

Ella is the product of a 50's upbringing that she describes as reminiscent of the Ozzie and Harriet Show. When she recounted her childhood to me, it was with a great

deal of humor and candidness. She referred to her family as both "the world's perfect family" and the "family freak show." Her parents were both twins. Her father's brother married her mother's sister at a twin wedding. Then the two couples settled next door to one another and the two men opened a business together. Ella referred to both her father and her uncle as her "dads" and her cousins, three boys and three girls in all, as siblings: "They are an identical set of parents… They went to NIH and everything. So genetically my cousins are my brothers and sisters because my parents are all from the same egg." When her parents (both sets) retired, they moved to twin houses on the water and carried on together. Throughout her life, Ella's family has been the subject of many talk shows and magazine articles.

She described her mother as the typical 50s stay-at-home mom: "My mom stayed home, didn't work, wore a housedress. I didn't see my mother in a pair of pants until I was in college. Never seen my mother cry." The fact that Ella would grow up and attend college, get married and have children was expected. She explains, "I knew I was supposed to grow up, there was no doubt about education. You went to college. You would never question it… I graduated in May, I was married and pregnant by July." Ella admits, however, that the life she has since led has been one for which her "perfect 50s family" did not prepare her.

Ella's first marriage ended after she welcomed two daughters into the world. She remarried soon thereafter. During the course of her second marriage, she had three more children, one she lost at birth and two boys. Her second husband, it turned out, was an alcoholic who often turned violent and abusive. In time Ella learned that he had been

sexually abusing her daughters. In the early 1990s she began an extremely difficult

divorce and child custody battle, the two of which lasted a total of ten years.

The circumstances in which Ella found herself left her feeling powerless. She shares that

felt she had failed to protect her children, a responsibility she deemed central to her role

as their mother. And even then, as she struggled to disentangle herself from her husband

and create a safe place for herself and her children, she felt as though others were

interfering with her ability to do so. Ella recalls feeling scared and angry when her

husband would show up to take the children for his allotted time with them. He was

often clearly drunk and yet she felt trapped by her custody arrangement, afraid that if she

refused to let them go it would work against her in court. She remembers, "He would put

them both in the front seat, you know, one seatbelt." Ella put her faith in the judge who

had ordered strict adherence to their agreement in hopes that it would mean her children

would be safe in her care when all was said and done.

Nussbaum's (1999) argument for cultural norms is poignant here as we consider

Ella's predisposition to traditional values. She recalls following the path she was

destined to follow as a female growing up in the 50s and 60s. If we consider Ella in this

light, we see a young woman who started out in her adult life with little sense of agency.

She saw herself filling out her destined roles as wife and mother with little thought put

toward the reasons for doing so. Perhaps this is because she was unaware of other ways

of being, perhaps she simply felt compelled to do what was expected of her. Though she

made choices along the way, life seemed to be following its prescribed course. She

continued to have little awareness of the circumstances shaping her life and little power

to change them. Over time, however, circumstances would push her to think critically

about the forces at work in her life and consider alternate ways of being in the world.

Ella's experience throughout her trial caused her to lose trust in the notion of

justice and fair treatment under the law. In the end, after ten years of court, Ella lost

custody of her boys—a decision she believes was due to her husband's greater access to

resources. She recalls, "On paper he won. You have to go through this hideous

evaluation thing. Well it turns out that he slid a little money under the table to the

evaluator…" During the trial Brad became engaged to another woman, something he

admits that he did simply to get his boys. Ella felt as if she was playing by the rules the

whole time. She did not drink, had not cheated on her husband, and when the judge said,

"Go get a job," she did as she was told. She went back to teaching on the judge's orders

so that she could provide for her children and keep them with her. Yet her experience

taught her that playing by the rules did not mean that you came out on top. She explains,

> I went in believing honesty wins out, good versus evil, I'm patriotic beyond, and
>
> red white and blue and apple pie and we were good Americans and that's why we
>
> came here from England… and found out that it has absolutely nothing to do with
>
> the truth. It's who plays the game better, who's got more money. And I believed
>
> all that stuff—but I've spent so much time in court now and learned so much law
>
> that I never wanted to know, that it became sport and that's what it is—it's a
>
> sport.

A sport that, in the end, would determine the fate of Ella's family. Brad had sexually

abused her daughters, spent the better part of their marriage under the influence of

alcohol, mistreated her and was using everything he had to bend the system in his favor

during the trial. Ella felt powerless to fight him. She knew only to trust in the authority of the judge. She remembers saying to the judge on more than one occasion, "You are deciding the outcome of my life and that of my children." The fact that decisions like these were completely out of her control haunted Ella as she struggled to understand the forces at work in her life.

These experiences, however, did something to alter Ella's self perception and sense of voice. Belenky (1986) writes that her data does little to address the question, "Why or when do women shift from one way of knowing to another?" In some ways Ella's story speaks to this question. Something about Ella's struggles to protect her children and fend for herself against an abusive husband and her encounters with a judge who represented the harsh realities of loopholes in the justice system opened her eyes to other ways of being in the world. Namely, a way of being that included finding and using her voice and acting on behalf of herself and her children. She says, "I had serious backbone growing to do because I wasn't that way before Brad." As Ella became less inclined to trust in the authority of outsiders, particularly institutions and men, she began to build support networks around herself, to recognize the lessons her experience taught her and to assert herself by asking tough questions and demanding answers. "I feel very responsible that I couldn't protect my girls," she says, "When it came to my boys, I've become vicious and mean. People say, 'Ella, you're intimidating.' I'm like, 'No, I've just been in court for ten years.'"

And so she has. Ella speaks of one instance later in the divorce proceedings when her husband, Brad, came to pick up her boys from school. It was not his day to pick them up, yet he arrived at school anyway, drunk, and began an argument in the office. Ella

overheard the argument and rushed downstairs from her classroom to intervene. Knowing that it was only because she had been in earshot of the situation that she was able to prevent her children from leaving with him, she became angry and marched down the hall to call her principal out of a meeting. She remembers saying to her principal at the time, "I'm in the parent head now, Hon, so you can forget I even work for you. You want to see somebody bring charges real quick? You've got my drunk husband down there and if I didn't go down there and look, he could have walked out the door with my boys." Such an episode is not likely one that Ella ever imagined for herself as a young woman. Nor is it one that she might have seen herself enacting even five years before. But, as she explains, her life circumstances taught her to come out of the corner swinging. Ella's life experience has helped her to develop a sense of authority over the choices she makes; authority that is at once critical and cautious. She has become more assertive and more vocal in her efforts to enact her role as a mother.

Today Ella sees herself as a protector. Care means not only looking out for herself, but for her children, guarding them against what is harsh and real in the world and helping them navigate that world skillfully. This means not relying on others to know what is best for her or her children and not depending on others to care for them. In the context of her classroom, care means preparing students for the realities of life. It means helping her students to see the world for what it is and having the strength and sense to act in that world on their own behalf. As she says, "Kids gotta know what's comin', man—I used to think good triumphed over evil, but it doesn't."

Ava Tsadik: "I think it's good and important to be a care taker."

Like the other women in this study, Ava's construct of care is intertwined in the understandings she has of what it means to be a woman. Ava's gendered identity, however, is derived from her unique experience as a Cuban woman living as a Muslim convert in America. Ava spent a good deal of time sharing with me the complex, and often contradictory sets of norms and expectations by which she tried to live her life. Caring in this place meant many things for Ava and she often felt pulled in many directions. The one aspect of her caretaking that she emphasized was communication. Ava's efforts to care for others (her parents, husband and extended family, daughters, students, and others) included talking and listening—using her voice to speak for others and for herself in assertive ways.

For Ava, the topic of this study got right to the heart of what she was working so hard to balance as a teacher, a mother, a daughter, and a wife. She discussed her role as caretaker and the many dimensions of her identity as such. She admitted that at times she felt overwhelmed by her need to care for her father, her children, in particular her infant, and her husband. At the time of the study, she had cut back to part-time work at Amarette to make more time for her family, which seemed to make things a bit easier. Because she was an ESOL teacher and worked exclusively with immigrant children from Amarette's immediate neighborhood, Ava also talked about the incredible needs of her students. This, she admitted, was one more way in which she tried to care for others.

Ava's family escaped from Cuba in 1963 when she was just three years old. Traveling along an "underground railroad", Ava, her parents, and her two-month-old brother made their way to America via taxi, milk truck, and fishing boat. Lost at sea and surrounded by sharks for nearly twelve hours, they were eventually rescued by a United

States destroyer and transported to Key West. This is the story that began our interview on February 2, 2004.

Ava's father never intended to stay in the U.S. for very long. He had left Cuba for political reasons and was confident that the communist regime would fall and they could return within a short time. Having been a banker in Cuba, he and his family had lived an upper-middle class lifestyle, making their adjustment to factory work in the city of Chicago a difficult one. The family settled in the city in a Spanish speaking community. Ten years later Ava's parents became U.S citizens. In 1977, fourteen years after their arrival, her father bought a house—what meant, Ava explained, that he had finally accepted the fact that they would not ever return to the country of her birth.

Much of Ava's family came from Cuba after Ava did. In fact, Ava's parents were able to sponsor eight siblings and their families before American policy changed and no one was allowed to come. One of Ava's aunts remained in Cuba to stay with her family there. Ava explains, "My uncle was sentenced to 25 years in prison, served seven on the Isle of Youth (an Alcatraz type of prison) and then served the rest of his sentence on a type of house arrest." Though her father often spoke of returning to visit his sister there, he had done so only once. He knew that any return trip would mean money to the regime he so fiercely despised.

Ava's life in America began in Chicago, where she attended public school as a child. She remembered being very sheltered as she was part of a tight community of immigrants inside the city. At the age of 19, Ava's parents moved to California to be closer to her mother's side of the family. She attended college there. She finished her B.A. in political science and married her husband the very next day, "to honor [her]

father's wish that [she] finish college before [she] got married." Ava and her husband, an Iranian man whom she had met in school, moved to New York where he took a job working for the United Nations. She took a job as a secretary there.

In 1986 Ava gave birth to her first child, a daughter. They named her Tahereh, which she explained to me means Immaculate. Her husband wished to return to Iran, as he was the eldest son in his family and thought he should return to care for his nine siblings and aging mother. Ava did not want to go. In 1987 they had another daughter, Fatima. They decided to stay in the United States and raise their family here. Just a year and a half before we met for that first interview, they had welcomed their third daughter, Aliah (meaning Exalted) into the world.

As with the other women in this study, Ava's life experience has shaped her understandings of care in particular ways. At my request, Ava and I spent a good amount of time talking about the differences in Iranian, Cuban and American cultures. I wondered about how Ava viewed herself as a woman at the crossroads of these three distinct cultural traditions. She explained that in Iranian as well as Cuban culture, there are certain roles that each gender is expected to assume. As a woman, she is to be the caretaker in a physical and emotional sense, and her husband is to financially provide for his family. Ava had deeply internalized these understandings about her role as a woman. She cherishes the closeness she shares with her parents and with her children, explaining that her role as primary care-giver for her family brings her a great deal of pride. At the time of this study, Ava's father, who had grown ill, and mother were living with her, as were all of her children—something she thought was quite natural and which made her happy. She believed that it was her duty to care for those she loved.

I once asked Ava if she cared for everyone in the same way. "I guess so," she said, "Mostly, though, I do a lot of talking." Ava shared with me the many ways that talking had played an important role for her as a care-giver. As the eldest child in her own family, and thus the first to learn English, Ava took on a great deal of responsibility at an early age for helping her parents communicate with others. She recalled instances where she would speak with doctors, bankers, service-people and others on her parents behalf because of the language barrier between them. Even today, as her aging parents live with her, she is often called upon to speak on their behalf. At the time of this study, Ava's father was in a rehabilitation center for a stroke. Because her mother does not speak English, Ava has taken on the responsibility for translating back and forth and making tough decisions about her father's health. She explained that, "I think very often children who grow up speaking English in a household where their parents do not assume the role of adult earlier than their peers." She recalls having dealt with the family's finances at an early age and having a good deal of voice in household decisions even as an adolescent simply because she was fluent in English and her parents were not.

Talking played an important role in her efforts to care for others in her family as well. She spoke of her brother, who recently had become a father to twin four-month-old babies. She said that he called all the time and sought Ava's advice, counted on her to listen and talk him through difficult times. With her own daughters, Ava felt that talking and listening played a paramount role in her ability to care for them. Her eldest daughter was in college and her second eldest in high school at the time of our interviews. Ava explained that in talking with her daughters, she found that she could connect with them "in a non-threatening manner as an equal rather than talking down to them." She recalled

a scene where she was watching a movie with Fatima, and used this opportunity to talk with her about important issues. She said, "We talked about the lessons of the story. I found this to be a powerful way to address issues of love, family, marriage. Fatima goes through spurts where she wants to talk and doesn't want to talk. I enjoy the moments where we can talk as equals."

Ava's efforts to care for her husband, she feels, are sometimes overshadowed by the others around her who needed her time and attention. She recalls the early days of their marriage when he was very demanding about the food that she prepared, because women in his culture are expected to be responsible for cooking. Over time, however, he has come to recognize the many roles Ava assumes inside and outside of the house and has taken a greater role in preparing meals. Ava explains that she had to occasionally "neglect [her] relationship with him because of everyone else (especially [her] parents) pulling [her] away." Fortunately, she has the support of her sister-in-law, who explaines to him that Ava is simply doing her best to care for everyone around her. Ava welcomes this support and source of understanding. In fact, Ava often spoke of her family (immediate and extended) as being very strong and thus a tremendous source of support for her, her husband and her children.

Ava reflected on what it means to be a woman for her. She explained that she was often surprised by a contradiction in the way Middle Eastern women are depicted in Western culture—as meek and submissive—when in fact the Muslim women she knows truly run the gamut, just as they do in American culture. Most of the Middle Eastern women she knew, she described as "keeping things together, the source of support and strength for their families." This characterization of women as strong in their roles as

mothers, daughters, sisters and friends, for her, came into conflict with more Western understandings of what strong women should be and do. As other women's stories suggest, dominant patriarchal discourses define women as nurturing, motherly, self-sacrificing and relational. Ava recognized that in addition to these more traditional notions of womanhood, American culture called on women to work outside the home as well. Though Ava does work, she resists the expectation that she should, as it comes into conflict with her desire to fulfill the role she ascribes herself as primary caregiver for her family. Ava explains,

My culture is extremely demanding on women, I think. And I feel tugged at because I am living in the American culture which, I think, puts non-traditional additional responsibilities on women as bread-winners. In this culture, I think women are expected a lot more to work and right now I feel like I should not have to work. I really feel like I shouldn't, but my husband just doesn't make enough money. A lot of men in this society don't make enough, maybe it's that we're so exposed to consumerism and materialism that we think we need all these things and it's hard to give it up.

Ava believes that her most important role as a women remaines her role as a caretaker and that, though she enjoyed teaching, her responsibilities outside of her home make it all the more difficult for her to care for her family. She says,

I think it's good and important to be a caretaker. I think it's a good role because society needs that, every family at some point needs caring for. And you know, I think it's important to care for your children and raise good children that you'll leave behind. And it's important to take care of your parents. I believe that we

should and I believe that I'm modeling for my children compassion and love for parents. But I really feel pulled right now with the responsibility of being a bread winner too. And I feel like it should be one or the other.

Ava had stayed at home with her two older daughters, not returning to work until they were school-aged. By then, her daughters were more independent and she could enjoy working outside of the home. She explains, "I was at a different point in my life where I could say now I'm making some money and I'm going to spend it like this, and my kids are old enough and we can go off and travel, and stuff and life was looking different. With Aliah, there was this big turn, where I decided I can't work full time. I can't leave her all day long. It's not what I did with my others kids. It's not what I believe in."

Ava counts on her daughters to care for the baby while she is at work, something she admits is probably reflective of her own belief that females should do the physical care-taking. She wondered aloud whether she "would place so much responsibility on my elder children if they had been boys." Because Ava's mother was busy caring for her father, her older daughters shared responsibility for raising Aliah. While she explained that she believed this was good experience for both of them, she suggested that had they been boys, she might have thought about it differently. "Perhaps," she said, "I would have demanded more financial responsibility from them instead."

Ava's understandings of what it means to care are reflective of her experience as a woman living in the midst of varied cultural realities. As such, caring involves many things. As a daughter of Spanish-speaking parents in an English-speaking society, she serves as their voice with regards to medical and financial affairs, she cares for them

physically and emotionally, preparing their meals and cleaning their clothes. As a sister, she is a listener and advice-giver, she is a source of emotional support for her siblings. As a mother, she talks to and listens to her daughters, provides for them physically as well as financially. As a wife, she helps provide for her family, while still caring in more traditional ways for her husband and children. These varied roles seem to be indicative of the familial and cultural norms she has internalized. They pull at her from many directions, often leaving her feeling as if she is unable to care for everyone as she would like to. Underneath the complex web of expectations, however, is Ava's clear and simple passion for being the caregiver she is to so many people. Like the Middle Eastern women she admires, she strives to be an eminent source of strength and support for the many members of her family. The fact that she does so in the midst of a foreign culture with added expectations for her as a woman makes her job more difficult, but nonetheless important to her.

Sarah Rodriguez: "There are a lot of things you do out of necessity."

Sarah Rodriguez's construct of care reflects her understanding that caring for others means making sure they are safe, that they feel secure and comfortable in their surroundings. It means taking responsibility for others in ways that sometimes mean doing things you don't want to do. This understanding is ever present in her personal life, as a mother of two who is married to a foreign-service officer. In light of her family's constant moves, she has worked hard to ease transitions for her children, support her family financially and provide a stable, positive environment at home through great sacrifice on her own account.

Throughout her life, Sarah has lived all over the world in places such as Japan, Korea, Argentina, Thailand, Michigan, California, Texas and Washington, DC. Her varied experience has opened her eyes to a multitude of ways of being in the world, something she believes is a strength in her teaching. Sarah has learned a number of important lessons in her life about what makes for good teaching, about good and decent ways to relate to people and about the importance of family.

Sarah was born in Houston, Texas in 1969. Her father was in the Air Force and her mother was a teacher who decided to stay home when Sarah was born. In the early years of Sarah's life, she moved first to Michigan, then to Thailand, Germany and to Abilene and Lubbock, TX. Throughout her childhood and into adolescence, Sarah's mother stayed home fulltime to raise her four children, Sarah, her two sisters and her brother. When Sarah was thirteen years old and the family had returned to Lubbock, TX, her mother went back to teaching. Sarah described herself as coming from a family of teachers. Her mother is a high school teacher and adjunct professor, her grandmother taught in a one-room school house until she married. Her father had been a university professor while working on his graduate studies. Her sister is also a junior high school teacher. Sarah knew from the age of six that she, too, wanted to be a teacher. Something, she says, is reflective of her passion for learning and for being in schools.

Upon graduating from high school in Lubbock, Sarah decided to attend her parents' alma mater, the University of St. Thomas, because she felt she had a sense of comfort there. She says,

> I went to St. Thomas because my grandmother lived in Houston so I had that
> support network. I had aunts and uncles there. My parents had gone to this

school, it was small… there was a connection that my parents had and so the people that had been there when my parents were students were kind of looking out for me as well. I had a relationship with the university because they had a relationship with the university. I had a scholarship from an essay competition too, so that helped.

Of this time in her life, Sarah recalls that it was a difficult transition for her. In her first year at university she lost her scholarship because her grade point average was lower than it needed to be. Fortunately for her she did not need the scholarship to remain in school. Yet, Sarah believes that it was unfair for the university to take away such financial support at such a critical juncture for her. Today Sarah feels strongly that scholarships for students who are just beginning university should not be contingent upon grades. Rather, universities should be in the business of supporting students through such a difficult transition to greater independence. She explains,

So much learning happens that is not related to academics when you first go to college… and you just make so many choices about your personal time and you have so much to learn about managing it that I think it's really important to give young people the opportunity to develop those skills.

Sarah has watched many of her friends and siblings go through similar struggles as they've moved away from home and wonders why it is schools don't pay more attention to what research says is the normal development of adolescents. "You're still an adolescent in your twenties," she explains,

That child and adolescent course I took said up to about age 22 you're still adolescent and making adolescent choices, you think things don't happen to you,

they happen to everyone else. And it's really important for universities to be

aware of those kinds of changes taking places when they're trying to teach

responsibility.

Sarah wondered about so many other students who depended on scholarships to remain in

school and how unjust such a system of grade-dependent scholarships is. She critiqued

society's unfair willingness to let young people dapple in the adult world at an early age

without necessary support to help them learn to live responsibly. Having taught in Japan

for two years after graduating from St. Thomas, Sarah had the opportunity to be exposed

to another culture where even junior high and high school students are still very much

children. She says,

Teaching junior high school students in Japan is like teaching third graders here.

They are very innocent, very trusting, they hold their teachers' opinions in very

high regard, they are looking for approval still, and you can see that the whole

system of values that children have in the United States is so different.

Sarah's teaching exchange through the JET program (Japanese teaching

exchange) began two weeks after graduation and getting married to her college

sweetheart, Joe Rodriguez. They dated throughout college and left for Japan together to

teach through the Japanese Administrative Education Program. Sarah had intended to

stay at St. Thomas for five years in order to get her teaching credential, but left after four

to join her husband. She graduated instead with a liberal arts degree in education and

Spanish language. They were married the same weekend they graduated and left two

weeks later. While in Japan, Sarah served in the role of assistant teacher, working on

curriculum, co-teaching lessons and serving as a native English-speaking role model for

her students. Sarah recalls this experience as wonderfully educational and a time when she met many good friends. Yet, professionally, she says,

> It was very frustrating because I didn't have the responsibilities of, you know, as the classroom teacher, you have all the responsibility and I wanted all the responsibility. I didn't have any evaluation responsibility outside of recording the listening test on the cassette tape, which didn't really count for me. I wanted more than I was being given so after two years I was ready to go home. I wanted my teaching credential, I wanted my own classroom. I wanted that before, but…

But Sarah had sacrificed getting her credential in order to begin her married life with Joe and go with him to Japan. This decision was the first of many she would make in order to put her family first.

In 1993 Sarah and Joe left Japan and Joe entered the foreign-service. They were posted first to Korea and then to Argentina. While in Korea, Sarah and Joe had their first daughter, Roya. Sarah stayed home with her and did some English-language tutoring on the side. Then when moving to Argentina she knew that she would need to secure a job in order to help Joe provide for their family. The job that she sought was also with the Foreign Service. Sarah would be working with individuals who were in need of visas in their Argentina office. She was excited about the work, but soon learned that it would require her to leave her family for six weeks to attend training at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, VA. At the time, her second daughter, Bria, was only seven months old. She remembers, "Tuesday they told me I had the job and I had to leave on Saturday for the United States. And Bria was seven and a half months old and I was

nursing around the clock and there was no way to wean. I had to just pack up and go."

Sarah describes this time in her life as very difficult. She says,

> It was hard and the weaning thing was really hard. Just to quit nursing cold turkey is not a smart move. It was very, very painful. And I was also not ready to stop nursing emotionally; it was just a hard turning point. And then I had to give my little, bitty teeny baby to somebody else to take care of.

When asked how she made the decision to take the job and leave her family, Sarah recalled,

> There are a lot of things you do out of necessity. You don't have a choice and you need to take care of your family. And there's more than one way to have to take care of your family. And so that's what I did. That was the job that would offer us the most security and the most stability.

Things in Argentina were anything but stable. In the weeks after Sarah and her family moved there, the president was forced to resign his office. Ten thousand demonstrators were marching the streets night after night right outside of their bedroom windows banging pots and pans. Sarah says,

> It was like that for days and days. My older daughter stopped sleeping altogether and everything was in such turmoil. We never knew what the economy was going to be like. We needed something really secure. Working for the U.S. government was all cut and dried, taken care of. I would have exactly the same paycheck each month. It wasn't going to change and fluctuate with the Argentine economy, except to our benefit, really, paid in dollars. All good things. So that was a good choice.

While in Argentina, Sarah worked long days interviewing as many as 120 people a day for visas. She describes her work as having been exhausting but really exciting. She says, "And all the different people, that was very interesting too, and getting to practice my Spanish all the time was really great." Soon, however, the administration changed and Sarah's new boss was very difficult to work for. In June, Sarah left to interview for teaching jobs in the United States. She knew that Joe would soon be posted to Washington, DC and she would need to find work in order to help provide for their family as she had done in Argentina. She explains, "I needed to have a job when we got here or we couldn't put our kids in child care, we couldn't afford to buy a house, we wouldn't be able to afford rent."

Knowing that she would have a better chance of securing a good teaching job by interviewing in person, she flew to DC in order to meet with county officials and principals personally. Within days she had interviews scheduled at two different schools, one of which was Amarette Elementary. She recalls,

> Dawn offered me the position the same day I interviewed. I didn't even leave the school. She said I want you on this kindergarten team and she showed me around the school and I felt really at home at the interview. I felt like I was talking to my mom and my sister about teaching while I was there.

Sarah was interviewed by a panel of faculty including two teachers on the kindergarten team and two administrators. She describes the interview as "very comfortable, funny and friendly." Though she had gotten lost and arrived thirty minutes late for her interview, she says everyone present was "completely and totally understanding, very supportive." Her first impressions of Amarette were incredibly

positive. She talked about walking through the school and seeing "so many positive reflections of what was happening in the school." "I knew this was the place I'd be happy working," she remembers. The most memorable thing about the interview, Sarah recalls, was the way Janie Patch answered her question about the resources the school had to offer. She recalls,

> Janie said, 'Our greatest resource is the people who work here. We all work together. No one has to be afraid if they are having a hard time doing something, something's not working for them. We can go to any person in this school for help and get it and not need to feel threatened because we need to do that.' And I thought, wow. I want to work here. And they talked a lot about being a community of learners, teachers too. I thought, yeah, that's where I want to be.

And, so, in August of that same year, two months before her husband's post was up in Argentina, Sarah packed up and moved herself to DC. Again, she had to leave her family behind in order to secure her job and get settled professionally. She explains,

That was a really hard thing to do, but it's one of those things you have to do what you need to do for your family. I didn't want to do it again because I had done it before and it was so hard, but Joe was supportive. When I asked Sarah whether she looked back on that decision as having been a good one, she said,

> Yeah, I'm glad I did it. There's so much more stability for us now as a result. We had some hiccups and difficulties… We've just had so many changes in a short period of time and it's hard… It's been quite an adventure.

Sarah was grateful to the school in Argentina that provided extraordinary support to her girls during that transitive time. She remembers that they immediately began

counseling both girls and the moms at the school scheduled play dates. At home, the girls had a wonderfully loving nanny that Sarah and Joe eventually brought with them to the States. Sarah was thankful that her daughters were in such good hands while she was away. Unfortunately, within two months of arriving in DC, the family's nanny decided that she wanted to return to Argentina, leaving them without childcare. Sarah remembers this time as being especially scary. She had two days to find childcare for her children and no place to look. She calls it "divine intervention" that a colleague came to her with a referral that same day. The girls ended up staying with a woman in her home and falling in love with her. Sarah says, "She is so loving. We walked in the door and she sat down and played with Bria right away. I thought, God, that's good. The girls love her. I could not ask for a better situation."

At the time of this study, Sarah and her family were beginning their second year in the area. They expected to be in the DC area for a total of three years, which Sarah said would be the longest amount of time she had ever taught in one place. Her older daughter would be attending Amarette as a kindergartner in their third year and after that, she did not know where they were headed. She was grateful for how things had worked out and that, for the time being, she was happy in her work. But she was ready for whatever adventure would come next.

The experiences in Sarah's life seem to have taught her important lessons in how to handle transition and adjustment. She has learned to make the most of every situation and to take responsibility for her life. She and Joe share responsibility for providing for their family, raising their children, taking care of household chores. Though she admits that her career was destined to sit on the "back burner" as the wife of a foreign-service

officer, Sarah is certainly putting forth her share of effort in supporting her family. She has needed to be versatile and ready to adapt, to make sacrifices for her family, and has done so willingly. She considers the security and stability of her family to be of highest importance and so has made difficult decisions in order to secure these things.

I believe that it is because Sarah, herself, grew up in a military family that moved around quite a bit that she is keenly aware of the insecurity that can breed in such transition. She knows well the difficulty in making new friends, adjusting to new places, starting afresh time and again. And though she has chosen a similar lifestyle with her husband, Joe, she has done so with her eyes open. She intends to make such a life as stable and secure for her own daughters as she can. And this has meant a variety of things over the course of their marriage. In Korea, where she could not work, it meant staying home with Roya. In Argentina, where things were very unsettled politically and economically, it meant returning to work, traveling for training and leaving her family for a six-week period. In DC it means working to help provide financial support for her family so that they can afford childcare and housing in an expensive market. It has meant seeking out quality childcare and schooling for her daughters in various settings and entrusting their rearing to others when necessary. As Sarah says, it is doing things "out of necessity" when the only other choice is instability and insecurity.

The non-traditional responsibilities placed on women in American culture that Ava resists are, in many ways, central to Sarah Rodriguez's construct of gendered identity. Providing for her family financially is just one of the roles Sarah ascribes herself as a woman. In fact, Sarah seems to understand security, financial and otherwise, as a means of caring for those she loves. Sarah has sacrificed herself in a variety of ways

in order to provide this security for her family. And though I posit that her willingness to do so reflects her internalization of dominant patriarchal discourses about putting others' needs above her own, she interprets things differently. Upon reading this chapter, Sarah wrote to me explaining that she saw her efforts to care for her family as also being efforts to care for herself. She says, "I would argue that doing what needs to be done ultimately is good for me. When my family is stable and healthy, I have more time to give to myself."

Still, I wonder about the hierarchy of needs embedded in Sarah's thinking. This statement suggests to me that Sarah cannot take time for herself until others are sufficiently cared for, that making sure her family is stable and healthy is her first priority. This understanding reflects Nodding's construct of the reciprocal relationship between mother and child, in which she says mothers are rewarded through their fulfillment as nurturers. The problem with this understanding is that it assumes others' happiness is enough to make women feel fulfilled. Sarah does not state that she is fulfilled by seeing her family cared for, but rather than it eases her mind enough to allow her to think of herself. This, to me, complicates Noddings' construct and points, rather to the impact of patriarchal discourses that inform our thinking. Perhaps it is not as Noddings suggests, that we put others needs above our own because it is enough to see others' needs met. Rather, we put others' needs over our own because we have internalized this understanding as a defining characteristic of our roles as women.

Kathy Dressler: "It's good to know you can take care of yourself."

Kathy is the one woman in this study whose understandings of what it means to be a woman, in some ways, stand in contrast to the traditional norms discussed here. Kathy does not sacrifice herself in order to meet the needs of others in the way the first five women do. And yet, she recognizes the importance of self-sacrifice as an expectation of womanhood and of teaching. She is very aware of the choices she makes to care for herself over others and the way these choices are perceived by others. So while Kathy is seemingly more successful than others in her efforts to live outside of these dominant cultural norms, her awareness of them nonetheless constantly pushes her to justify her choices to herself and others.

Kathy was born in 1969 in a town not far from Amarette Elementary School where her parents still reside today. As a product of the 1970s, she grew up at a time when women were assuming more responsibility in the work force and choosing paths that led to diversifying the roles they had inside and outside of the home. Kathy is an only child, born to a father who did defense contracting and a mother in real estate. Because Kathy's mother worked outside of the home, she was often cared for by her grandmother or her father.

Having been born two decades later than Ella, there were differences not just in the nature of familial roles, but in the societal and familial expectations for her as a growing girl. Kathy describes the women in her life as setting an example for her of independence and self-sufficiency. All of the women in Kathy's immediate world were independent, working women. She describes her house as having been "loud and crazy, always full of people, women in particular." From an early age Kathy remembers her mother, her aunt, and family friends having jobs. She says, "That was just part of their

lifestyle." Unlike others in this study, who were expected to grow up and become mothers and wives, Kathy's upbringing emphasized becoming a career person who could take care of herself financially.

Early on, events in Kathy's life began reinforcing these messages. As a young girl, Kathy witnessed her aunt's divorce. She watched as her aunt patched her life back together and remembers learning a lesson about the importance of being able to look out for yourself. Out of this experience grew a determination to own her own home and do the work herself to her house before she got married and settled down. "It's good to know you can take care of yourself," she says.

Kathy feels as if she grew up in an era of feminism where women were "capable of doing anything and expected to be independent." She always saw herself as someone for whom work would play a big part. Straight out of high school, Kathy attended a state college where she graduated with a degree in psychology. She immediately went on to pursue a masters degree in early childhood education and entered the teaching field in 1993 at the age of 24. As Kathy talked about her years in school, she remembered spending much of her spare time working. She spent many summers helping her mother sell real estate and doing assessment. She worked in daycare settings, tutored and did volunteer work with children with special needs.

At the age of 24, Kathy married Bob, her boyfriend of nearly four years. Kathy says, "I did enjoy being married. We had fun." Unfortunately, Kathy was unaware that at some point in her marriage Bob had begun cheating on her. "I had no idea what was going on," she recalls. Kathy and Bob's married ended just three short years after it began. She says of that time, "It was definitely difficult, so I tried to keep things as

constant as I could. They say you should try to do that. So there's not too much change all at once. So I worked to keep my house—the house I'm in now." The experience of finding out that her husband was cheating on her reinforced lessons that Kathy had been learning since she was a young girl; namely that you have to look out for yourself because you can't necessarily rely on others to do it for you.

Kathy was working at Amarette at the time of her divorce and recalls feeling supported and cared for by those around her. Like others, the relationships she formed at Amarette played an important role for her as she worked through this difficult time. She remembers her principal at the time who took special steps to make sure she had the time and space she needed to grieve and to heal. She says,

> I was allowed to not join a committee and there was sort of an unwritten rule that
> said I could be absent from things. She gave me the space I needed to take care of
> myself without becoming overwhelmed by work. This was really important for
> me and I'm grateful she recognized that I needed that.

Kathy also made many friends within the school that supported her at this difficult time. She says that to this day she maintains strong friendships with many of her colleagues, that Amarette has been more to her than just a place to go to work.

In the years since her divorce, Kathy had become very adept at seeking her own sources of fulfillment and strength without relying on a man to make her feel complete. Now at the age of thirty-six, she says she would marry again, but she's not in a hurry. "Now that I'm out there dating, I really wonder if there's anyone I could put up with for the rest of my life," she says laughing. But adds, "Then again, I don't want to not be married when I'm sixty. I'd like to share things with someone."

In the meantime, Kathy is making the most of her freedom and trying to live a life that she can look back on with pride. She says, "When I'm eighty I want to remember all the fun things I did." Unlike other women in the study, Kathy often spoke of the ways she was trying to care for herself outside of the classroom. These included painting, taking classes, running, playing with her dog, working with her mother, a realtor, to show houses and meeting friends out for dinner and dancing. In fact, when I first asked her to tell me about whom she cared, she responded emphatically, "Me!"

Kathy had reached a point when the demands of teaching in particular took a backseat to other aspects of her life. She told me,

> I've learned to shut off the work mode. You just have to get to a point where you go, you know what? It really doesn't matter. In the grand scheme of life, if I am not totally prepared for tomorrow, the world is not going to fall apart.

When asked how she had learned to be less stressed about her teaching, she responded,

> In a way I think it is kind of a bad attitude because it is like, they are not paying me enough for me to work that hard. It is not valued enough by society so why should I? Or maybe it is just like personally you get to a place where you are like, okay I am going to go insane if I keep working that hard. Those things let me justify it. It is giving myself permission to slack, which I think comes about by necessity. You can't do that for thirty years or you will be a very stressed out person.

Does this mean that Kathy's understanding of what it means to care as a teacher has changed over the course of her career? Kathy explains,

I definitely do not care less about the kids. I think I connect with them more now than I did at first. Maybe because I don't have nine million things in my head, you know? I don't think I care about the job less, just myself more. I may put less time into it, but I don't think I care less. Maybe it is just being that you have to put time into other things too. You know, this is kind of how life goes. At different periods in your life you care about different things more. You can't care about everything in life 100% of the time, so maybe at certain periods of time your focus goes into certain things and you know, I wish I had an hour a day to paint and an hour a day to write and an hour a day to exercise. But you'll never be able to do that, so it's like, okay well maybe this week I will work more on this thing or maybe this year I will work on this a little more, or this decade or whatever. Not that you care more or less about those things, but you just choose for certain reasons to care about certain things now.

Kathy and I puzzled over how it was that she had reached a point where she could include herself as an object of care when so many other teachers struggled to do so. She hypothesized that it had something to do with an individual's stage in her career. She said, "Maybe it's okay to revolve around, you know, when you're 22 years old and you don't have a family and obligations maybe it's okay to overdo the work area of your life for a few years, get it under control, start working in other areas of your life." Still, I found it striking that Kathy was so aware of her own needs and so comfortable trying to meet them even when it meant putting less effort into other dimensions of her life. When considered next to others in this study, it seems Kathy has been a great deal more

successful in putting her needs above the needs of others—both inside and outside of the classroom.

Kathy's construct of care emphasizes looking out for oneself, providing one's own financial and emotional security. These understandings reflect her experience as a young girl growing up in a household of independent women, witnessing and then living through her own divorce, having to rely on herself to pay the bills, put food on the table, and pull herself together when others let her down. Kathy is very aware of her choice to care for herself and admits that in taking time to do so, she is putting less time and effort into her role as a teacher. She talks about this very matter-of-factly, saying that she cannot give 100% of herself to any one thing at a time. She does not claim to care for her students less, but admits that others may think that she does so because she is not there for as many hours as her colleagues. This suggests something about the way Kathy perceives the definition of teacher care within her school setting. She seems to understand that others are going to make judgments about how much she cares for students based on a set of criteria to which she doesn't subscribe. She believes that she cares sufficiently for her students while making time to care for herself, something others around her don't seem to agree is possible.

Today Kathy is self-sufficient in many ways. She is the only participant who spent time discussing the things she does to care for herself that did not include caring for others (as with Sarah). Unlike others in this study, Kathy does not have the responsibility of a spouse or children, of aging parents. So it is true that she has not had as many opportunities to care for others in the ways that her colleagues have. I believe that this difference in her life experience has important implications for how she thinks about

herself as a woman. As with Ella, the circumstances and relationships in Kathy's life have taught her valuable lessons about taking care of herself. She sees protecting and providing for herself as a top priority. Even in her role as a teacher, Kathy resists putting students' needs above her own. This suggests that the social phenomenon, which is dominant discourse, can be challenged and resisted as Kreisberg suggests. As I will discuss in later chapters, however, there are important ways in which Kathy's construct of care does reflect dominant patriarchal discourses, in particular around issues of authority and voice, which have significant implications for her life as a teacher.

Discussion

Varied Constructs of Care

The women in this study have varied constructs of care, reflecting their unique experiences as socio-cultural-gendered beings. Elizabeth and Mary talk a great deal about building meaningful, unconditional relationships with others. For Elizabeth, she strives to have a child of her own and to be the mother she lost so many years ago. Mary, who has spent her life striving to please her own mother, desperately wishes to find the acceptance and love that has been denied her. Both women emphasize ideas of physically and emotionally nurturing others. And both have sacrificed themselves greatly in order to enact these ideas. Caring for both of these women, it seems, has come to mean extreme self-sacrifice driven by a desire to connect with others.

Ella grew up with similar understandings of what it means to care for others. At an early age, she got married and began her family. It wasn't until circumstances forced her to assert herself on behalf of her children that she began to think of care differently.

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Today, Ella thinks of caring for others as protecting them from the misplaced authority and abuse of others. As a mother, she strives to protect her children from abusive men, random authority of the courts, and other sources of harm. As a result, it appears she has further developed her sense of voice and agency.

Sarah has come to think of caring as providing stability and security for those she loves. At times throughout her life, this has meant doing things she has not wanted to do, such as leaving her family for training or in search of a job and entrusting the care of her children to others. But because she is a product of a military background, she has a keen awareness of the difficulties inherent in moving from place to place and constantly starting anew. In order to overcome the insecurities derived from such experience, she strives to be a source of strength and stability for her family.

Ava's construct of care involves many things. Mostly, she sees herself as someone who "does a lot of talking." Since she was a young girl, Ava has been a voice for her parents, who do not speak English. She is a source of wisdom and advice for her brother and for her own children. She also prides herself on providing for her family's physical and emotional wellbeing. She cooks, does the washing, cares for them when they are sick. She strives to be like the other women in her extended family who she characterizes as "holding the family together." Though Ava does work outside the house, she sees this responsibility as an added burden to her more important role as primary caregiver at home. She comments on the unreasonable demands placed on American women as breadwinners and stresses the importance of caring for family as a woman's most important role.

Kathy is the one participant in the study who emphasized caring for herself. She talked a great deal about the ways she strives to do so—taking time to paint, exercise, socialize with friends. She has learned valuable lessons throughout her life about the necessity of being financially and emotionally self-sufficient. As such, she puts her own needs first. As a teacher at Amarette, she feels as if others don't understand her need to care for herself. In fact, she admits that others consider her a "slacker."

The differences among these six constructs of care reflect the varied life experience of these women. The messages they have received about what it means to be a woman, what role care plays in such definitions, have been filtered through events and relationships throughout their lives. And yet, common among all women is the understanding that caring for others is essential to their roles as women. Regardless of how they see themselves as carers, they recognize that caring is what women do. It is to a discussion of such dominant cultural norms that I now turn.

The Power of Cultural Norms

The varied constructs of care represented here are reflective of each woman's life experience, and yet there are important similarities among them. Each woman has, to some extent, internalized the notion that being a woman means caring for others in particular ways--providing emotional and physical nurturance, offering unconditional love and support, protecting those they love, talking and listening—traditional expectations that they have come to accept. The idea that women are expected to care for others rarely even became a topic of conversation because each of the participants responded "of course" when asked this question. And when we consider the many ways

that these women care for those around them, it is clear that caring is an integral part of their gendered identities. They define themselves as women through their roles as carers—as mothers, spouses, daughters, friends, and as teachers.

The "traditional notions" of womanhood that include self-sacrifice, nurturing and pleasing others are reflective of dominant patriarchal discourses, which separate men and women on the basis of psychological, physical and emotional characteristics and ascribe them specific roles, strengths and limitations. These notions are present in the language of all women, whether they accept or discredit them. For some, they are deeply internalized; what Kreisberg (1972) calls the "saturation of consciousness." Mary, for example, questions her own feelings and sees herself as needy, selfish and overly emotional. In order to compensate, she works very hard to please others, often sacrificing her own physical or emotional health. For others, like Ava, these notions are also deeply internalized as is evidenced by the roles she has ascribed herself. Yet, she views them as sources of pride. She cherishes her role as mother and daughter and relishes in her ability to care for those she loves. She does not question that these roles are hers to assume, but struggles against the more recent expectations placed on her to provide for her family financially as well. Even Kathy, who seemingly refutes such traditional notions of womanhood, has a sharp awareness that such notions exist in the culture around her. They are present in her language even when she is talking about caring for herself. She recognizes that every effort she puts towards caring for herself detracts from her ability to meet the expectation that she should put others' needs above her own.

There are, however, examples of women finding alternate ways of being in the world despite the power of these cultural norms. Kathy's understandings of what it means to be a woman stress independence and self-sufficiency. Nowhere in our discussions does she refer to herself as nurturing or motherly or even a protector, as Ella did. What is it about Kathy's construct of womanhood that belies Gilligan's assertion that women need to connect with others? How is it that she has been able to step outside of such "natural tendencies" to connect with and relate to others? Like other women in this study, Kathy received important messages about womanhood from her mother. Throughout her life, experience reinforced these messages. Kathy does not seem to have the same need to secure relationships with others, nor does she rely on others to provide for her. She does not feel the need to sacrifice herself in unhealthy ways to win the acceptance or praise of others or to provide for them. I believe this reinforces the argument that various social and cultural norms work dynamically to shape our identities, and that life experience can push us to consider alternate ways of being in the world.

Ella's case exemplifies this point as well. Throughout her life, she has made a number of choices—choices in marriage, in schooling, in career and motherhood—which have been hers alone to make. Yet her life story keeps running up against others—men, administrators, institutions—who have challenged her sense of authority and pushed her to keep redefining herself as a woman. Ella has made choices in light of experience she has had. As a result, she has created for herself alternative ways of being in the world that include asserting herself to protect others when she finds the life she is living to be unacceptable.

The life stories shared here, I believe, reveal something about the power of societal, cultural and familial messages that we receive throughout our lives as well as the significance of life events and circumstances in opening doors to new ways of experiencing the world. These messages have helped to shape both the constructs of care and the constructs of gender held by all of the women in this study. I would not argue that any of these women live outside of the dominant patriarchal norms discussed here. Rather, they have been awakened to them to varying degrees. Ella's life experience has taught her about the importance of establishing her own voice and trusting in her own authority, beginning to challenge the norms she had so deeply internalized. Kathy has been raised to believe that she should provide for herself, seemingly contradicting traditional notions of womanhood. Yet, as we will see in later chapters, there are other important ways in which these two women's constructs of care as teachers reflect the very norms from which they are trying to free themselves.

Summary

Care, as a dimension of identity, is indeed complex and confounding. As I have shown in this chapter, the constructs of care held by each woman in this study are deeply entangled in their constructs of what it means to be a woman. Though the constructs are different in important ways, reflecting their unique life experience, they are similar as well. These similarities point to the power of cultural and societal norms and dominant discourses in shaping our self-knowledge. For these women, womanhood is shaped in many ways by the idea of caring; and care, as a construct, reflects particular understandings about traditional roles ascribed to women. In order to understand how

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these women think about care as teachers, I needed to unravel much more than how they

thought about care as women, but how caring had come to define them as women,

something I had not initially anticipated. In the following chapters, I intend to explore

how such understandings have played out in these women's professional lives as

teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Caring as Teachers

In this chapter, I explore the way care manifests itself in the teaching identities of the participants. Teaching, as a part of their greater identities as women, is one particular role through which they enact care. I use the term *pedagogies of care* to explain the ways these women's teaching is shaped by their understandings of care and their roles as carers. I draw on the Freirean notion of pedagogy, which is in essence a relationship between teacher and student. Freire (in Freire and Macedo, 2001) describes this relationship as involving a willingness on the part of the teacher to assume the role of learner as well. He writes, "Those who are called to teach must first learn how to continue learning when they begin to teach" (p. 114). This implies a continual openness to receive new understanding and meaning from our students, even as we hope to help them do the same. In some ways, this relationship is reminiscent of the reciprocal caring relationship. However, it relies less on the student to identify and meet the teacher's needs. Rather, the pedagogical relationship demands that teachers allow themselves to be continually informed by their students so that they are learning with and from them.

As I have shown, the women in this study have varied constructs of care that reflect their life experience. These constructs emphasize various aspects of caring, such as protecting, nurturing, talking and listening, and providing for others. In this chapter, I explore one common thread among these varied understandings that plays out in their roles as teachers: caring means identifying and meeting the needs of students.

Weil (1951) describes care this way: "The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth. Only he who is capable of attention can do this." Noddings (1992) draws on this understanding of care as attention, stating that "the state of consciousness of a carer is characterized by engrossment and motivational displacement" (p. 15). For Noddings, as for Weil, caring involves supplanting one's own needs and desires with those of another, something that can only be accomplished by paying very close attention to that person's needs. The women in this study define caring for students as identifying and meeting the needs of their students. Yet, I argue here that they are unable to supplant their own needs as carers with the needs of others as they claim to do. Despite the fact that all of these teachers work in the same school building with the same population of students, they conceive of their students' needs very differently. They have come to understand their students' needs through their unique lenses as women with particular socio-cultural-gendered experience. In fact, I believe that the needs each woman has identified are, in fact, her own needs that she has projected onto her students in an effort to care for them.

This argument further complicates Noddings' understanding of caring relationships by calling into question the notion of reciprocity. Noddings suggests that a reciprocal relationship requires each member to identify the other's needs and then respond in appropriate ways. As such, each member of the relationship is rewarded. I suggest that caring relationships, in particular those between teachers and students, are not so simple. The notion of reciprocity assumes that each party is receiving what he or she needs from the relationship; that a teacher, for instance, is rewarded when her students perform well and her students are rewarded when they learn and grow. Yet, the

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women in this study interpret their students' needs in a variety of ways. Thus, they strive to meet them in a variety of ways. Though I will argue that all of the women are rewarded through their participation in their relationships with students, I believe these teachers are rewarded because it is their own needs as carers for which they are actually caring. In the end, I will raise the question as to whether teachers can identify the needs of students, to what degree this is possible, and what experiences might be necessary in order to make this happen.

Elizabeth Braslav: "The kids need that one-on-one."

Elizabeth's pedagogy of care as a second-grade teacher reflects her desire to connect with others in authentic and meaningful ways. In our conversations throughout the year we met, she spoke lovingly of her students, their strengths and challenges, and the various ways she strove to meet their needs. For her, one-on-one relationships were the crux of her approach to teaching. And though she felt that she connected with some students more than others, she never stopped trying to get to know every child in her class as a person—focusing on his or her emotional, social and physical wellbeing as much as academics. She says,

> My ideal teacher is someone who allows herself to 'know' her students beyond
> the academic arena. This means getting to know the families and the concerns
> that they may have about this student or about life in general …I feel that teaching
> has more to do with the emotional wellbeing of children than pumping in
> knowledge and skills.

In her efforts to care for her students, Elizabeth does such things as eat lunch with them in the lunchroom, invite them into the classroom before school begins, and spends time with them outside of the school day. Teachers at Amarette are required to sit with their students during the first week of school in order to maintain order and demonstrate appropriate lunchroom behavior. Most, if not all, teachers stop sitting with their students thereafter in order to have lunch on their own or with colleagues. Elizabeth, however, continued to sit with her students quite often throughout the year. She says,

I think maybe the second week one of my kids said, 'Will you sit with us today?' and I said 'Sure.' So if they asked me to sit with them, I would sit with them, and they asked me almost every week. Sometimes more than once, so I sat with the kids at lunch and you know, it is funny, but there is no other teacher that would sit with their kids. Most of my colleagues are like, no way, that is my time, and it is my time …I think it is really important to show them that you don't mind eating with them.

Eating with her students is one way that Elizabeth finds she can get to know her students better and pursue one-on-one relationships with them. She wondered if next year she might even begin eating in the classroom with her students since the lunchroom is so loud and she can hardly hear what some of them were saying.

Elizabeth also carves out time for her students early in the morning, before the initial bell rings at 8:40 ushering students into their classrooms. School policy states that any child who arrives early should go to the cafeteria and await the start of the day. Elizabeth, however, welcomed three or four students who routinely arrived early into the classroom to spend time with her instead. Though she admits that this took time away

from her as she tried to prepare for the day, she nonetheless thought it was an important means of relationship building with her students. She says,

> It was usually the same kids who would come early and I think they really liked that time and sometimes they would say, 'Can I do anything for you? Can I unstack the chairs? Can I write the message?' So, I don't know, I think that is helpful in terms of just showing some caring, you know, talking to them about their life. It is the only quiet time of the day and when you just have three or four kids, it's nice.

Once, Elizabeth recalls having had a student who continuously arrived as early as 7:20 or 7:30 am. He made a joke of trying to "beat her" to school in the morning and she eventually talked with the school counselor about it. He was being raised by his father, as his mother had been deported the year before and apparently his father left for work at 6:30 am. She remembers,

> He would be woken up by his dad to say goodbye, but then he couldn't get back to sleep, so he would get up and get ready for school and brush his teeth. He wanted to go to school. Can you blame him? I had the counselor talk to the dad and say, you know, you just can't leave your kid unattended at home and that some other arrangements had to be made and I just felt… just shitty for doing that. I was like, okay, just let him come to school an hour early.

Elizabeth believed that for many of her students, school offers a sense of security that stands in stark contrast to their often unstable and unpredictable lives. And she, as their teacher, represents that security as the one adult with whom they spend the majority of

their day. Many of the children in her classroom spend more time with her than they do any other adult on a daily basis.

Even after school ends in June, Elizabeth continues to spend lots of time with her students, taking them to the movies or to local museums. As she reflected on her efforts to care for her students, however, Elizabeth explained, "Sometimes I feel that I care too much for students and their situations above and beyond what is expected and/or healthy for me. I feel that I am struggling with how to find a balance in my life—to care for me, my family and for my kids." There are things, she admits, that Elizabeth needs to get done at school, things like copying, making phone calls, reflecting on the day, that she has trouble squeezing into a reasonable eight or nine hour day. Yet, she struggles with carving this time out for herself as a teacher. She says, "I have all these things I have to do or I would like to do without the kids being there, but I also know that the kids need some one-on-one because they are not getting it at home." Elizabeth's understanding of her students' needs goes beyond their academic strengths and weaknesses to include their emotional and social needs as well. She believes that her students need more adult interaction and loving attention than they are getting at home. As their teacher, she takes it upon herself to provide it for them. Like others in this study, Elizabeth is aware of the greater context in which her students live and seems to interpret it to mean that, for many, school offers a safe haven. It appears that she finds herself particularly suited to the role of caregiver in this place as it is something she strives to be in her own life. Yet, the demands of meeting her students' many needs are, at times, overwhelming.

During the year that we met, Elizabeth had a great many of her own needs that required attention. All of the emotional and physical expense of her many procedures

and medications were clearly wearing on her. When I asked how she felt she had balanced her care for self and others with so much on her plate, she admitted that at times she'd felt moody and tired, that she'd missed a lot of school due to doctors' appointments and surgeries. However, Elizabeth felt confident that she had not "neglected [her] duties at school or caring for [her] kids." This aspect of her work was too important to let go.

When I visited Elizabeth's classroom, I was taken by the overwhelming sense of calm and quiet that characterized the environment there. All of the students were working independently or in small groups on reading and writing while Elizabeth worked her way around the classroom having one-on-one conversations with students. Everyone seemed at ease and comfortable in their surroundings even as resource teachers came and went, also whispering in quiet voices and working with individual children. I rarely saw Elizabeth smile, and often wondered in my notes whether she was as sad as I believed she was. She stayed quite busy, so much so, in fact that at one point a student said to her, "Mrs. Braslav, you're doing too much. I think you should relax." To which, she responded, "You're probably right, Jorge. You're probably right." In thinking about Elizabeth's demeanor in her classroom, I wondered whether working with children was a source of added sadness given her private struggle to have a baby. During our March interview I asked her about this and she responded,

> It is definitely a double-edged sword. I think I get more strength from it and I do
> know if I had a job where I had no contact with children, I think the emptiness,
> the feeling of desire for kids would be even stronger.

Working at Amarette, however, has its particular challenges. Many of the students with whom Elizabeth shares her day live in homes without heat or water,

without adequate food or clothing. For some, their parents are all but absent from their lives whether due to work, deportation, or unhealthy choices such as gang participation or drug use for which some had gone to jail. She wrestles with the reality that many of her students have been brought into a world that is so ill-prepared to provide for them. As a woman struggling to have a baby, she sometimes becomes angered by this. She says,

> I mean but there are times when you think, this kid's not getting what he needs outside of school. And how sad that is that there are kids who are raising themselves or they're raising younger siblings or being raised by siblings.

In light of her own desire to care for a child, Elizabeth seems to find this difficult to accept. As a result, she assumes a great deal of responsibility for her students' wellbeing. She strives to provide them with a safe place and to build nurturing relationships with them in efforts to care for their emotional, social and physical needs. Her preoccupation with motherhood, to care as she was cared for, is present in her discussion of teaching here. Teaching is one role through which Elizabeth is able to enact her construct of womanhood. In many ways, teaching provides for her an opportunity to become the mother she had not yet been able to be.

Mary Ackerman: "I care for [my students] unconditionally."

Mary's understandings of what it means to care as a woman are reflected in her identity and approaches as a third-grade teacher. Mary strives to be all the things she believes a teacher and woman should be: giving, selfless, supportive, putting her students' needs above her own. In her own words, she says, "I care for [my students] unconditionally." Throughout our dialogue Mary stressed that she wanted students to

exceed socially and emotionally as well as academically, that she wanted them to be comfortable and be able to make friends, working together. And she wanted her students to feel as if they could come to her about anything to talk, knowing they would have her to listen and understand. She says,

> I want them to exceed socially, academically. I care for them as people outside of academics and I think I weigh that part a lot heavier. Maybe [people] think I weigh that too much, but [they're] just gonna have to deal with that because that's the way I am.

Mary points to the classroom environment as an important factor in helping students gain a sense of confidence and willingness to take risks. She says,

> I think the kids are gonna get a lot more out of the day if they feel comfortable walking in here instead of just teacher up at the board, you listen, direct teaching… we can get a lot more accomplished if we can lock in and they're discovering stuff on their own and they feel comfortable pulling out materials while I'm over here doing something else. I like to work in the classroom that way.

> When asked how she thinks about students' social growth, Mary responded, "Making friendships with each other, being able to work in a group, that comes with school too—you have to be able to work with others." She reflected on her students' struggles to come together as a class and learn to treat one another with respect and kindness, saying,

> A lot of these kids this year have been working with [the counselor] because they came in and socially they were just not there for third graders. It's been tough to

get them to realize that punching is not the answer. …Sometimes it just means taking five extra minutes to talk with the kids about other ways of solving a problem. I don't mind cutting a lesson short to take five minutes when the kids need something or they had a bad night and yeah, I'll take time out to talk with someone who needs to talk. 'Oh, did Mom really beat you with a belt? We need to do something about that.' I don't see that as a drawback. And letting them know that they can ask for help. It doesn't have to be from me. I just want them to be comfortable.

In her efforts to create a safe and comfortable place for her students, Mary often invites them to stay in the classroom for lunch rather than going to the cafeteria so that they can have a "family-style" meal together. She makes sure to do this whenever there is a birthday in the class because she believes that her students are unlikely to have parties at home. She also has cast parties after students put together theatre performances, where she gives each student a flower and serves cookies and punch. She says,

I don't see the problem with giving them some time together and honestly it does end up making things easier cause they acknowledge that I know what fun is and that I know when it's time for fun. And I think we build respect that way—we know when it's fun and when it's learning time.

Because of this, however, Mary gives up a great deal of her personal time to be with her students. She also gives up personal space. Not only does she carve out special time within her day to celebrate her students' lives and achievements and dip into instructional time to welcome students' lives into her classroom, but she has all but worked her

physical self out of the classroom. There is no space in the room that she calls her own. At one point the year before, she recalls Travis coming in to her room and asking where her desk was. She replied that she did not have one. The classroom was shared space and she didn't want her students to feel as if any part of it was "off limits." This seems to reflect Mary's belief that her primary role is to care for and nurture others. Everything in the classroom is there for the betterment of her students.

Mary gives of herself in a multitude of ways outside of the classroom as well. She participates in the critical literacy group, where teachers come together to study social justice issues, write papers, and present at local conferences. She is also part of the CETA (Changing Education Through the Arts) program, where she works to bring the arts into her classroom and help other teachers to do the same. And, along with a colleague, she started up an after-school homework club aimed at providing support for students whose parents are unable to help with homework at home either due to work commitments or limited English proficiency. She explains that all of these things take time and it is sometimes hard to keep up with it all, "I don't have to help with the homework club, which a friend of mine and I started. And it's so hard, but it's a great thing for the kids. They need it." When asked why she does participate, she responded, "Because I love the kids! I really do!" The fact that love means sacrificing so much of her time, energy and space is something it seems Mary has learned throughout her lifetime.

Like others in this study, Mary has particular ideas about the needs of her students. In our conversations, she focused on the difficulties her third-graders had in solving problems and communicating in appropriate and productive ways. She believes

that many of her students are in need of people in their lives who can help them learn to live and work alongside others in respectful ways. "For a lot of my students, I look at their circumstances and a lot of them are struggling to make friends. Some of them think it's okay just to punch someone in the face," she said. Mary attributes her students' difficulties in her classroom to a lack of sufficient support from adults at home. She believes that students resort to aggressive behavior either because this is what they see at home or because there is no one at home to help them develop healthy means of conflict resolution.

Interestingly, Mary refers to tending to this aspect of student growth as being a "mom figure." For her, a teacher needs also to be a mother when her students have not had adequate rearing in social and emotional domains. Clearly, the characteristics of motherhood to which Mary is referring are not those she sees displayed by her own mother. Yet they are the characteristics that her mother demands Mary develop in herself. Mary's mother never celebrates her the way she celebrates her students. She does not offer a safe, open place to share her feelings the way Mary does for the children in her classroom. Her mother does not offer encouragement and praise the way Mary does as a teacher. Yet, Mary has developed a pedagogy of care as a teacher that incorporates all of these things. She has learned that she must sacrifice herself wholly if she wants to care for others adequately. She must put herself last and never complain. She has an idealistic image of what a mother and teacher should be that is derived from the very messages she has received by the women in her life, though she rarely saw such an image enacted.

The idea of mothering is also present in Mary's pedagogy of care with regards to her relationship with beginning teachers on her team. Being only a third-year teacher at the time of this study, still Mary took it upon herself to help the newer members of her team. She says,

I just try to let them know, I remember how it was. It was only two years ago. You're stressed all the time and I don't want that. I just didn't want them to feel that they were left high and dry. And some members of the team… a small percentage, but big enough… they don't want to talk about stuff at the team meetings, and that's not fair. Not that we need to rehash everything, that's a step back for the team as a whole, but we need to allow time to bring people up to speed.

Mary talked about conversations she had with administrators trying to make sure that new teachers would be given classrooms inside the building and not in the portables, or in the "clubhouse" where she was. She believes that this cuts them off from the culture and community of the school in important ways. For new teachers, in particular, she knows how vital it was that they are given a chance to meet people, learn where things are and feel a part of the school community.

Mary's relationships with the newer teachers on her team reflects the same commitments she has to her own students. She wants to provide them with a safe place to work where they feel comfortable. She wants them to know they can come to her with questions or concerns. And her efforts appear to have been well-received. Countless times during our morning conversations, Andi, a new teacher who occupied the classroom next door to her, dropped in to ask questions and chat about upcoming events.

Mary admitted that this took a great deal of time, particularly before and after school when she was prepping for the next day's instruction, but that she felt it was worth it. "No one else is looking out for them out here," she said.

In many ways, Mary has defined herself as a sole source of support for those around her, and it is a role she assumes well. It is one for which her life experience has groomed her. The messages she received from both her mother and Ann, as two influential women in her life, seem to have taught her that it is important to give and put her own needs behind the needs of others.

Ella Mitchell: "I teach a lot more than music in here."

Today Ella sees herself as a protector. Care means not only looking out for herself, but for her children, guarding them against what is harsh and real in the world and helping them navigate that world skillfully. This means not relying on others to know what it best for her or her children and not depending on others to care for them. Similarly, in the context of her classroom, care means preparing students for the realities of life. It means helping her students to see the world for what it is and having the strength and sense to act in that world on their own behalf. As she says, "Kids gotta know what's comin', man—I used to think good triumphed over evil, but it doesn't."

The struggles that Ella has undergone and the identity she has been forming as a result of her experience provide the foundation from which we come to see her as a teacher. A 19-year veteran in the profession, Ella serves in the role of Music Technology Teacher at Amarette Elementary. Her music classroom is filled with keyboards that are connected to computers for the purpose of exploring the composition of music. Students

work with Ella to understand and appreciate various forms of music, to explore rhythm, tone and meter, and to write their own music. And though Ella's passion for her work is evident in all she says and does, she repeatedly stated that she taught much more than music in her classroom. For one thing, Ella explained that she works to connect what students were learning about music to history. She talked about how much American history she could teach if given the chance, using music as the medium. She says,

> It explains history. The whole thing and it gives background knowledge. How many of our children know this stuff? This is the American musical heritage. It's not Bach, it's not Beethoven, we borrowed all that crap. And the thing about jazz with the kids is that they go home and process. You can't be wrong. So if you want to try it, you can't screw this up.

Ella loves the asymmetry of jazz and the lessons she thinks she can teach students about life. She explains,

> It's not symmetrical and I think kids, and this is the only part when I get serious and what not, but I think kids need permission not to be perfect. And in jazz, it's the imperfection, I mean let's be real. How did scat get, how was scat born? Scat was born because Louis Armstrong forgot the words to the song and imitated his trumpet… How great is that?

Using music as a means to address bigger issues in life is something Ella does often. "The curriculum is life," she told me. For Ella, caring for students has to do with talking and listening to them, and preparing them for the realities of the world. Ella's students (like most Amarette students) hailed from the local community, which she believes is riddled with gang violence, poverty and underage pregnancy. She is well

versed in the lingo used by adolescents regarding gang membership, sex and crime, and she seems to believe herself to be fairly in tune with what was really on the minds of her students. She muses,

> Jenn, I don't teach a lot of music. I mean, I teach music, but I teach a lot of other stuff too. I said the other day, 'Okay, basically, you're a kid and you're supposed to enjoy this. I just want you to know that. Quit trying to do all this other stuff. Right now. And the girls—I go, no. No, no. You don't want to do that. Cause if you do that, you have to get a job. You don't want to have a baby. So stop it right now.' The girls are so funny. They really are. They're all trying to be so grown up. I'm like, 'Okay, we're done.'

The lessons Ella has learned throughout her experience as an adult have taught her that life is hard, that good does not always triumph over evil and "the right thing to do" is not always evident. She believes that caring for her students means helping them to learn similar lessons so that they might be better prepared for life than she has been. For Ella, lessons in music and lessons in life went together. She reflects on a fourth grader in one of her classes,

> I need to call her mother and say, take that dress off the moment she gets home. I watch her walk in this dress, and she's got a great ass and you can see that somebody has already taught her too soon. This girl is going to be in trouble in two years. She's got the attitude, she's got the makeup, she has already been caught drinking. So that has absolutely nothing to do with music, except they're coupled. They really are.

Openness and dialogue are central to Ella's efforts to care for and about her students. That her classroom is a place for "real discussion" is a source of pride for her as a teacher. She enjoys working more with the older elementary students, who seem in particular need of an outlet for talk. She says,

> I like the older ones, mostly because we can talk about a lot of stuff—and
> we do! You can do things on a different level with them and I like that
> level. I'm not sure I'd like middle school, but the conversation, I would. I
> like the girls. I like to tell them what a pain in the ass they are. 'Cause
> they are.

The relationships that resulted from Ella's teaching carry on beyond the classroom. She tells of a former student who called her from California after graduating from high school:

> I'm like, 'Girlfriend, what are you doing calling me from California?'
> Well she lives out there and she's just living the high life… and she was in
> a PINK video and I'm like, 'That's pretty cool.' And this new guy…
> 'Are you using protection, Carrie Beth?' 'Yes, I am,' she says. 'Yes, I
> am.'

Ella's construct of care seems to reflect an understanding that she needs to get to know her students in order to care for them. She spends a great deal of time talking with and listening to her students. The content of these conversations sometimes focuses on music, but often includes issues that are present in students' lives outside of the classroom. Ella does, however, have particular lessons that she believes her students need to learn. Ella's views of the world in which she and her students lived are clear: "I

look at [the students] and think, society's cruel. My Hispanic girls, you know this, I just want to take them, put them in a room and let me just talk some life to these girls."   Ella believes that her female students, in particular, need reason to believe that they will do more than get pregnant and married at an early age and be confined to the life their mothers lead. She recalls a discussion she held in class about a piece of historical fiction that raised this issue:

> The stuff they were coming up with in class! I read about this one girl who married at 15. I can't tell you how many children's hands went up and said, my mom married at 15. And I was like, oh, here's a discussion I didn't know we were going to have. And we did discuss. And all these girls are like, why shouldn't we get married at 15? All the Hispanic girls were questioning, why shouldn't we get married at 15? I go, because you're going to college. You don't have time for marriage, you're going to college. And they looked at me and they go, I am? I go, absolutely. Why wouldn't you think you're going to college? Well, nobody in my family did. I go, so? And this is the stuff I do with the kids most of the time and the discussions are incredible.

Ella admits that she could just as easily let the students come in and play on the computers everyday. In fact, she says, "there's value in just sitting there and pooping around, a lot of us get our best stuff that way, and I'd have an easy job." But, she says, "Unfortunately, God didn't make me that way."

To some extent, these lessons have evolved from Ella's own life experience. But Ella also seems to feel that the lessons she teaches are meeting students' needs as well, by helping them prepare to face the challenges that lie ahead. Influencing Ella's pedagogy

of care are both her life experience and her understandings of what students need from her as a teacher.

Ava Tsadik: "Kids need to be kids. They need to have fun."

Ava describes herself as a teacher who usually grows quite close to her students. She shared a recent experience where she was invited to go to a family wedding of a former student, explaining that these sorts of opportunities were not unusual. As a full-time ESOL teacher, Ava typically spent each half of her day with a different class of students in an intensive setting where they learned English together. Because these classes were significantly smaller than regular grade-level classrooms, Ava had ample opportunity to get to know her students personally and for her students to know each other. She spoke fondly of the community she was able to construct in such settings.

This year, however, Ava moved into a part-time ESOL position so that she can spend more time at home with her family. In her new role, she picks up four different groups of students for an hour each and then does some one-on-one work with students in between her group meetings. As such, she has less time to "get to know" her students. She says, "I don't have time like I did before, one group for two and a half hours, where I could really bond with and get to know them. I don't feel the personal involvement like I have in other years." Ava describes the structure of her new job as "frustrating" as it prevents her from building the relationships with her students as she did in the past. On the other hand, she says, "This year isn't pulling at me as much. My new position requires less of me time-wise." As a part-time ESOL teacher, Ava no longer has to fill out report cards or attend team meetings, relieving her from the burden of extra

professional reading for her grade-wide study group and a great deal of paperwork. "It has its advantages and disadvantages," she says.

Ava struggles with the many demands on her time inside and outside of school. Being a part-time faculty member helps to alleviate some of the pressure she feels to be at home and care for her family. At the same time, the reduced amount of time she spends at school often leaves her feeling as if she is not caring for her students as well as she did in the past. For Ava, caring for her students involves a multitude of things from teaching them English, to helping them build community together, to helping them assert themselves in the community, to talking and listening to them in ways that helped to build relationships with them. She recognizes that each of her students comes to her with an individual story, with varied cultural experience and different familial expectations. What they share, however, is the experience of learning English as a second language and living in a foreign land. She sees in her students many of the same struggles she lived through as a girl. Unlike their English-speaking counterparts, when their parents come for conferences each year, they translate for their teachers. They are responsible for communicating with school officials about lunch money, field trips, registration forms and medicines. Because they speak more English than their parents, they often assume roles not assumed by their English-speaking peers until much later in life.

Many of her students also share her experience of having moved from upper- or middle-class life circumstances to living at or below the poverty line. The community surrounding Amarette is filled with public housing, apartments filled with large extended families. Many of the adults work multiple jobs in an effort to pay for housing and

support their families. Like Ava's parents, many of her students' parents have gone from being professional people in their own countries to menial laborers here in America.

Ava's students also share her experience of living in a bi-cultural, bilingual world where two cultures and languages competed for prominence. Like her own parents, many of her students' parents resist learning English or assimilating into American culture for fear of losing their own heritage and identity. Some families push their children to learn English and reject their home culture in hopes of making their way in this new country. Others try very hard to raise their children in ways that are congruent with their own cultural upbringing. The tension posed by these competing efforts to assimilate and maintain a strong cultural heritage is one Ava knew well. Throughout her life she has lived in the midst of such tension, trying to make sense of her identity, which is at once informed by a multitude of cultural and familial norms and expectations.

Ava recognizes the many ways that her own experience paralleled that of her students, yet still is cognizant of the differences between them. Her students hail from many different countries and speak dozens of languages. She seems to believe that they see in her, however, someone who can relate to them on a personal level, someone who understands the difficulty of their transition from one world to another. And Ava believes that this is a strength of her teaching. Caring for her students means empathizing with them in a way she knew only she can—as someone who had followed a similar life path.

When I visited Ava at school to observe her with students, she was always on the move. The first time I went to visit her, she was in her classroom preparing for the day, organizing materials to take with her on her rounds. We spoke there and I watched as she

interacted with a couple students she met with before school began. She had a quiet tone

and encouraged them to make themselves comfortable in the room. Her base classroom

was in a portable outside the school and it was overrun with materials as she shared the

space with another half-time teacher. Though Ava spent a good deal of her time here, I

got the sense that the physical space she inhabited was of less importance to her than to

the other teachers I studied. Because Ava spent so much of her day moving from place to

place, her classroom was wherever she happened to be. She carried her things with her

and she often plopped down at desks, on the floor, in the hallway or in reading corners,

working with students on the spot.

Another time I visited Ava she was doing some one-on-one assessment of

students in another teacher's classroom. That particular day Ava was helping the regular

classroom teacher with some grade-level reading assessment and so was not working

with students as she usually did. She was reading with students and taking notes on their

performance, asking them questions about the structure and content of the text. She sat

away from the rest of the class, on the floor, whispering to her students, laughing and

smiling. She looked very at ease and her students did too. Though they were sitting

midst many other children, many of whom were busy attending to other tasks, Ava had a

powerful way of creating a calm space for herself and her students. It was clear to me

that despite the fact that Ava felt she had not developed close relationships with her

students as she had in the past, her students were very attached to her. When they saw

her walk into the room, a handful of them ran to her to see who would get to read with

her first, and those who were waiting their turn were anxiously doing so—their eyes

never leaving her!

Ava had limited time to work with each student and yet she took a few moments with each to ask how he or she was doing, to check in with them on a personal level. She then turned her attention to introducing the book for the day and talking about how they would proceed. What struck me as I watched Ava with her students was the way they related to her. Though they showed her an enormous amount of respect, they also shared a familiarity with her that they did not seem to have with the classroom teacher. They looked almost relieved when she came in the room, as if a good friend had just entered an otherwise more formal space. I didn't get the sense from observing Ava or talking with her that much of her caring for students included explicitly talking about the experience they shared as second-language learners and as immigrants. Rather, she and her students seemed to both understand that they had a shared story that bound them in important ways. And while I witnessed them talking about their lives outside of school, there was not anything extraordinary about their dialogue. It was the level of comfort between them that stood out as extraordinary. Never having observed Ava while she was teaching fulltime, it is hard to say whether I agree that she formed closer relationships in that role. What I can say is that she has managed to form close relationships with students in her current role and that it is clear that building relationships with her students is central to her definition of what it means to care as a teacher.

Also important to Ava as a teacher is allowing her students to be kids. In our conversation, she drew on her own experience as a child who "grew up too fast" because she was called on to serve as the voice of her family, saying that her students were serving similar roles. As such, she strives to provide opportunities for them to enjoy childhood and be kids when they are with her. She strives to make learning fun, creating

games and songs that encourage play as a means for learning. She knows that learning English is hard work and that her students put forth an incredible amount of energy and attention all day long in their efforts to keep up with their English-speaking peers. While she believes that learning English is very important, she wants this learning to be couched in fun.

Like the other women in this study, Ava's pedagogy of care reflects understandings she has gained outside of her life as a teacher. Ava has learned the importance of listening and talking in her many roles outside of school and so does both in her efforts to care for students. She has also learned important lessons about the pressure non-English speaking parents can put on their English-speaking children. She empathizes with her students and strives to counter the pressure of that responsibility by making learning light and fun.

Sarah Rodriguez: "It is essential that students feel safe and loved."

Sarah is a dual-language kindergarten teacher at Amarette. This means that she works primarily with native Spanish speakers in a full-day program. She explains that she has been given a great deal of freedom to design the program herself, as it is the first of its kind at the school. Having taught in a bi-literacy program in California, Sarah's experience tells her that students need to move from an environment where the majority of learning takes place in their native language and then gradually includes more and more of the second-language. Though the county seems to want its dual-language teachers to split their time evenly between the two languages, Sarah feels this is not respectful of her students' needs. She explains,

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What I've been trying to do is give literacy instruction in both languages, separately. But initially I combine both languages for all of our daily routine and I give a lot of support. If I were teaching a lesson in English, I gave support in the native language so that nobody would be scared. The last thing I wanted was for kindergartners to not want to go to school… I don't think any child at any age should feel so stressed that they need to cry because they can't understand what is happening in their classroom. I absolutely don't want that to happen to my babies.

Sarah's ideas of what makes for good teaching are in many ways reflective of her experience as a student. As Lortie (1970) suggests, our twelve to sixteen years of "apprenticing by observation" can leave us with some powerful impressions about teaching and learning. The same is definitely true for Sarah. She recalled to me two distinct experiences she had with teachers that taught her valuable lessons about who she wanted to be as a teacher. She says, "I had some real challenges and learned what teachers shouldn't do. On the other hand, I learned what a really good teacher could do."

Sarah remembers having an English teacher in high school who made her feel incapable, as if no amount of hard work would ever be enough to attain success. Having always been an A/B student, Sarah was surprised when she could get nothing higher than a C in Mrs. Hogan's class. No matter how hard she worked, Sarah could not raise her grade. She says,

She was very critical and didn't help you get to where you needed to be. I remember working so hard to try to please her all the time, I really wanted her to think I was doing a good job. I was working harder than I had ever worked,

trying my very best, and getting nowhere. And she wasn't giving me anything, wasn't helping me see what it was she was looking for, the expectation.

Sarah wrestled with understanding why a teacher would keep expectations so hidden and not try to help her students succeed. She describes being a student in her class as very "frustrating." In fact, she remembers crying out of frustration on more than one occasion. "And that's probably why I decided that it would never happen in my classroom." Sarah is determined to make sure her students feel supported and successful in her room. Something she did not feel in Mrs. Hogan's room.

Mr. Smith, Sarah's junior high science teacher, taught her other important lessons about effective teaching. She recalls,

He was an excellent science teacher. There were so many opportunities for hands-on learning in his classroom. Just amazing stuff, we had animals coming out of every cabinet and on every flat surface. So we all got to take care of the animals, we all had responsibilities in his classroom, and the way he taught us was very interactive. He related to us in a way that was very respectful, we were responsible for our own learning, we all wanted to do whatever it took to get good grades in his class. It was an excellent learning environment. His classroom smelled horrible, but it was a great place to be!

Sarah's belief that students should be held accountable for their own learning is reflected here in her description of Mr. Smith's teaching, but, she admits, teachers have an important role to play in helping students understand and assume that responsibility. That Mr. Smith shared responsibility with his students for caring for the animals and keeping up the classroom, she remembers, taught them valuable lessons about shared

accountability and the importance of doing one's part to maintain the community. It is not the experience she had as a college freshman, where she felt left to her own devices to make her way in a completely new situation. Rather, it is learning to be independent and responsible through support and encouragement, teaching life skills and having high expectations for one's students.

These understandings are ever-present in Sarah's interactions with her own students. As she says, "We can teach responsibility in a lot of ways." In her own classroom, students share responsibility for community jobs. When I visited Sarah's class, I was surprised at how much her students seemed to be invested in the maintenance and activity in the room. For five-year-olds, the students were very aware of one another in the room and willing to work together to keep the room in order. They seemed to look to Sarah as a "mother hen," I thought—following her direction, but then busying themselves with activity when she trusted them to be more independent. It was clear that they had an enormous amount of respect and fondness for her.

One day while I was visiting Sarah's class, she took her students outside to do some research on cicadas. We were in the midst of the seven-year revival of cicadas that was to last about two weeks in our area. Cicadas were everywhere and Sarah thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to do some hands-on learning. I walked outside with the students and they walked around with magnifying glasses, reporting back what they were seeing to Sarah and her instructional assistant so that the adults could take notes. At one point, a little girl picked up a cicada and started turning it over in her hand so that she could determine if it was male or female. I remember that my initial reaction was to direct her to put the insect down—that it was dirty. Before I could say anything,

however, Sarah walked over with a cicada in her own hand and the two sat together talking about what they were seeing. Sarah was thrilled that her students were so willing to interact with nature. She loved their curiosity. The class stayed outside for well over thirty minutes observing and talking, then returned inside to share what they'd found. It was a refreshing experience as I watched every member of the community contribute to the shared learning of the group and revel in the excitement of being real, hands-on scientists. Certainly the lessons Sarah learned from Mr. Smith about hands-on learning had stayed with her.

When I asked Sarah to tell me about her job, she responded,

There is not a day I wake up and say, oh God I don't want to go to work. I love to go to work. I love to be with these kids. That doesn't mean that every minute is a pleasure, because often it's not. And I have a lot of testosterone in my classroom. Kids can be a bitch sometimes. But I like those challenges. I love the energy of kindergarten; I love how genuine they are.

Sarah seems to be truly happy in her work. She has created for herself and her students an environment where, first and foremost, students seem to feel safe. She is sensitive to their needs as second-language learners and as young people who are new to school. She strives to provide support for them as they acquire language proficiency in English and adjust to being in a school setting fulltime. She has high expectations for them as learners, communicating to them her strong belief that they can be producers of knowledge, such as they were in studying cicadas as budding scientists. And she provides lots of opportunities for them to learn hands-on, alongside their peers in engaging and meaningful ways. Above all, though, Sarah says, "It is essential that

students feel safe and loved." And that is indeed how she strives to care for her students in this place.

Kathy Dressler: "It's all about being a thinker."

When Kathy arrived at Amarette, she began working as a Reading Recovery teacher and then as an art teacher. At the time of our interviews, she was also involved in an Arts Integration program sponsored by the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. She worked part time as an art teacher and part time helping regular classroom teachers find innovative and meaningful ways to integrate art throughout the curriculum.

Kathy has particular understandings of how and why she cares as a teacher that have evolved out of her life experience. Kathy's construct of care emphasizes helping prepare students for the world. She wants her students to learn to think critically about the world around them and to be able to take care of themselves. She explains,

> I care about helping [students] become more of a whole thinker. I'm more
> of a cognitive person that works with them and thinks about their abilities
> and considers their thoughts and feelings. I try to look at it bigger than
> just, okay here is what I am going to teach today. But I try to talk about
> tomorrow because it is their life.

Like Ella, Kathy talked often about the need for her students to learn to navigate the difficult world that awaits them. For her, this entails learning to think critically as well as recognizing their own abilities to create and communicate. She says,

> I want them to be thoughtful people who take advantage of things in the
> every day world. I just try to teach them to look at everything around

them and consider everything and… you know, like if I am teaching them

about this or learning about markers, it is not just that you need to learn

how to use a marker, but maybe the marker can help you to be creative in

your thinking and help you communicate.

Kathy sees her teaching as a means to help students empower themselves. By helping

them learn to think critically, she feels she is helping to keep them from being passive

consumers of other people's knowledge:

It's about being a communicator, being a thinker. But not just like taking in

information and remembering it and then spitting it out, I think it gives them more

power in their world. Not so much power like in powerful, but they have the

power to control their own destiny. They are thoughtful people and they can go

out in the world and not just take what is given to them, but go about their

business.

She also emphasizes problem solving as a critical skill that she hoped to help her students

build. She says,

[Students] have to learn to solve problems on their own and there might be times

when I am like, oh, well what are you going to do about it? Really? Well what

are you going to do about that? How are you going to solve that problem? You

know, whether it is getting along with each other and sharing the art materials or

making projects together…

Kathy's efforts to help her students learn to be self-sufficient are reminiscent of

the lessons she has learned throughout her life. Her art instruction emphasizes teaching

students communication, problem solving and thinking skills that will allow them to take

care of themselves and not rely on others. These are things Kathy tries to do for herself in her own life.

Kathy also shares Ella's belief that students need to be forgiving of themselves as artists and as people. She reflected on times in the classroom when she tried to make explicit for her students her own difficulties with artistic expression and communication. It is important for her that student saw her as a work-in-progress. She says,

> If a student asks me, Ms. Dressler, what if you've got a picture in your head and you can't get it on to the paper? I tell them, I don't know. I struggle with that all of the time. That is a good question. You know? And it is just kind of like it is okay to ask a question and I don't have to have an answer for you. It is like that with everything, you know as a writer, how often do you say, I just want to explain that and I am not explaining it right or when speaking to somebody too. It is about struggling with the problem of communicating. I want students to realize it is okay not to be able to do it the first time.

Kathy sees herself caring for her students by helping them build skills as problem solvers, thinkers and communicators. Unlike others in this study, her efforts do not emphasize talking or listening as students try to make sense of their own lives outside of the classroom. She says,

> I think less about the family than [other teachers]. And not that I do not care, but I think I don't tend to think as much about this. You know, like there are some teachers that go, okay, I want to meet all of the families. They want to know about everything. I don't think I do that. I think I tend to look at the kids

isolated. You are a kid, you are here, so lets think about that and not the whole family as much.

In this passage, Kathy notes the disparity between her pedagogy of care and that of her colleagues. She recognizes that others around her emphasize "getting to know" their students in much more personal ways. Kathy seems to believe that she can identify her students' needs without "knowing" them outside of their roles as artists. For me, this understanding is problematic. I believe that it suggests that Kathy comes to her teaching with purposes that are too narrow, as they are seemingly uninformed by students' experience outside of her classroom. Embedded in her language seems to be the understanding that she knows what "kids" are, that all kids are the same and thus need the same things from her as a teacher.

Within the relationships that Kathy and her students share, the roles of teacher and student appear to be clearly defined. There is little emphasis on getting to know each other on a personal level. Rather, Kathy focuses on getting to know her students as artists. Lessons that she teaches are intended to help students make connections across disciplines and transfer to life. Students' lives, however, are not the content first and foremost. Art is. Students' experience is welcome into the classroom in so far as it is expressed as art. Unlike other teachers in this study, talk is not a major means of care. Kathy says,

> You know if there were kids in my class that were over here going *na na na na*, I
> would just be like, zip it and work. Another teacher might be like, well, what's
> wrong? Why is he making you feel this way? Okay, let's discuss it, let's work it
> out.

Kathy has come to understand her role as teacher differently than the other women in this study. As a result, the way that she has come to enact her pedagogy of care is different as well. Whereas others emphasize talk and building relationships as a means of getting to know their students, Kathy works to have students learn critical life skills via their study of art. All teachers have created relationships with their students in the context of the classroom, but the nature of those relationships differ.

What contributes to these varying modes of enacting care? It seems as though one could point to the role of relationships in each of these women's lives as one means of influence. Referring again to Gilligan's work, the first relationship that girls make is generally with their mothers and this relationship can set the stage for the understandings girls will form of the nature of reciprocal caring relationships. For instance, Ella, a product of a very tight-knit family, had not just one mother, but two, and siblings as well—all of whom were very close. The women in her life had decided to make raising their children their focus. For Kathy, the members of her immediate family all assumed multiple roles inside and outside of the home. When she talked about the relationship she had with her parents, she said, "I was afraid of my parents. My mom on a more daily basis. I was spanked occasionally. They had really high expectations of me." The extent to which these early relationships helped frame the relationships Kathy and Ella would have in the context of teaching is unclear, but literature suggests there may be a strong connection.

Discussion

The women in this study agree that caring as teachers involves meeting students' needs. For the most part, all also agree that in order to identify those needs, they must get

to know their students. Yet, as they get to know their students and talk about students' needs, there are a great many differences among their interpretations. Elizabeth points to her students' need for love and connection with adults. Mary emphasizes students' need for social and emotional rearing. Ella talks about her students' need for space to talk and learn lessons about the reality of life outside of school. Ava believes her students need room to be children, to have fun and learn English in a comfortable environment. Sarah's understanding reflects her belief that students need structure and stability, a safe place to take risks. Finally, Kathy sees her students' needs as involving learning thinking skills that will allow them to be self-sufficient in the future. The degree to which the students in these teachers' classrooms actually need the things their teachers claim they do is beyond the scope of this study. What I can say is that, despite these teachers working with the same population of students in the same school building, they have identified those same students' needs very differently. These differences, in part, seem to reflect the teachers' own needs to care in particular ways. Teachers' life experiences have taught them that caring means specific things and so they strive to care for others in these ways. This raises the question, however, whose needs are being met?

Whose Needs?

While teachers claim to be meeting the needs of their students, I argue here that they view these needs through their individual lenses and thus have difficulty getting outside of their own experience in order to identify the needs of others. In fact, I believe each of the women in this study enacts care in ways that meet her own needs as a carer. For example, Elizabeth desperately wants to form a genuine relationship with her own

child. In the absence of biological offspring, she seeks to care for her students in the same ways she would care for her own children. She emphasizes their emotional and physical wellbeing, their need to connect with adults and feel provided for. She points to the fact that many of her students are without adult supervision at home as her reason for offering that connection at school. But what of the assumptions she makes about her students' lack of adult participation in their lives? She seems to believe that she is filling a void in their personal lives through her role as teacher. Elizabeth's pedagogy, however, raises questions about the relationship between her own need to be a biological mother and the needs she identifies in her students.

In the same vein, Mary needs very much to care for others unconditionally and receive their unconditional love in return. This is something she has not found in her relationship with her mother throughout her life. As a teacher, her construct of care emphasizes relationship building with students and a focus on building a sense of community that allows all students to feel cherished and celebrated. She has this need to connect with others in meaningful ways. She identifies her students' needs as involving social and emotional rearing to include community building and social skills. She focuses on making her classroom feel like a "family." It is the family she claims her students are missing outside of the school setting, but it is also the family for which she has longed.

Ella says that her students "need to know what's comin'" in life, that life is bound to disappoint and surprise them, so she wants to help prepare them for that eventuality. She recognizes that their lives outside of school are difficult and that they are likely to follow in their parents' path, working as menial laborers, having babies early in life,

perhaps getting into trouble or living in poverty. Though these circumstances do not reflect Ella's own life experience, her understanding that life is hard is certainly present here. She strives to instill in her students that they need to have faith in themselves to exceed even their own expectations. She wants them to be ready for difficult times and know how to surpass them. These are lessons Ella wishes she had learned at an earlier age rather than through the trying years she spent in court and suffering abusive relationships. In her efforts to care for her students, she meets her own need, which is to pass on important life lessons and try to prevent her own life experience from falling on her students.

Kathy shares Ella's desire to prepare students for their futures. She also shares many of the same ideas about the difficult circumstances surrounding her students' lives, but reacts to them differently. Rather than addressing them and opening her classroom to discussions of them, she focuses on her students as artists. She invites their life experience into the classroom only in so far as it relates to expressions through art. As such, she strives to protect them, providing a safe place for them to escape life as they know it. Kathy is also meeting her own needs as she teaches students to be self-sufficient, independent thinkers. These are lessons she has learned throughout her life that she wants to pass on to her students. She cares for them in ways she has been cared for by her parents.

Helping Students Overcome Life Circumstances

One commonality among Elizabeth, Mary, Ella and Kathy is the language they use to talk about students' lives outside of school. There is a shared understanding

among Elizabeth, Mary, Ella and Kathy that their students' lives are somehow lacking essential relationships and structures outside of school. Elizabeth says she needs to give students one-on-one attention, "because they are not getting it at home." Similarly, Mary attributes her students' struggles to maintain positive relationships with friends to their lack of adult supervision and attention at home. She shares that students resort to aggressive behavior because either they see such behavior at home or they have no one at home to help them develop healthy means of conflict resolution. Ella and Kathy both talk about the fact that their students' lives outside of school are "difficult." Though they respond to their students differently, they have similar understandings about how their students' lives are shaped by socio-economic and cultural factors.

I believe that the understandings shared by these four teachers reflect a "deficit model" of thinking about their students' experience that is well documented in the literature on teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994, Lareau, 2000, Oakes, 1985, Rist, 1970, Valdes, 1996, 2001, Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela and Valdes, in their respective work with Latino youth in schools, suggest that there are fundamental misunderstandings between schools and families about the purpose and process of education that lie at the heart of deficit thinking. Valdes (1996), in his book *Con Respeto* discusses the glaring mismatch between the culture of Latino students (which many students at Amarette are) and American schools. He writes about how parents of Latino students and white teachers essentially speak two different languages altogether, leaving a gorge of misunderstanding between them:

Both the schools and the families made assumptions about each other. Schools expected a 'standard' family, a family whose members were educated, who were

familiar with how schools worked, and who saw their role as complementing the teacher's in developing children's academic abilities. It did not occur to school personnel that parents might not know the appropriate ways to communicate with the teachers,… that they might not even understand how to interpret their children's report cards. When children came to school without certain skills that their families, in good faith, believed the teachers should teach (e.g., the alphabet, the colors, the numbers), school personnel assumed parental indifference, troubled homes, and little interest in education (p. 167).

Valdes calls for greater efforts to tear down the misunderstandings between families and schools and critical reflection on the assumptions embedded in our efforts to "fix" families whose children are not succeeding in school. His ethnographic study has important implications for teachers like those in this study whose experience may leave them ill-prepared to identify and meet the needs of students unlike themselves.

Similarly, Annette Lareau (2000) explores how teachers and some families have very different understandings about the roles each is to play in helping to educate their children. She writes,

…teachers and administrators I spoke with viewed educating children as a process which extended beyond the walls of the classroom. They saw parents as having a responsibility to help in the educational process, particularly by reading to their children at home and by supporting the actions of teachers at school. (p. 24)

Parents, on the other hand, saw a clearer division of responsibility between school and home. Lareau explains that parents saw teachers as the experts on teaching and learning, and were afraid that any intervention on their part would be interfering with the education

of their children. Here, Lareau points to the differing understandings of the process of schooling and the roles various parties play.

Valenzuela's interpretation of these misunderstandings is rooted in the belief that schools and families have fundamentally different ideas about the purposes of education. Contrary to the formal and technical construct of education shaped by the institution of American schooling, the Latino families she studied defined educacion as "competence in the social world, wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others." Such discrepancy, she suggests, gets at the heart of immigrant students' experiences of feeling "invisible" despite the well-intentioned efforts of their teachers to care for them.

Misunderstandings about the perspectives and experiences of immigrant families contribute to the belief that "immigrant students fail in school in spite of the best efforts of their schools and their teachers" (Valdes, 1990, p. 4); that there is something fundamentally failing about students who come from poor, immigrant families. Because the experiences of these students and families are scripted differently than those of the teachers with whom they work, they are deemed lacking in some important ways. Often, families and parents are seen to not sufficiently care about the education of their children because they are not playing the parts teachers expect them to play. Ladson-Billings (1994) writes about assimilationist teaching that invalidates culture and experience that stands outside the dominant frame of reference, calling for teaching that is more culturally relevant to the life experience of students. Though she writes about the experiences of African-American children, she speaks to a greater need on behalf of educators to authentically know the children in their classrooms outside of their roles as students.

Caring in Isolation

One danger of this disparity in perspectives on the purposes and processes of schooling is the increased isolation of teachers' efforts to care for students. Another common thread across these first four women's narratives is the idea that caring for students is something that is done within the confines of their classrooms between themselves as teachers and the individual children they teach; care that is, in essence, void of connection with parents, families or communities. What I find to be strikingly absent from these teachers' discussions of care is a sense of collective agency. Outside of occasional references to vertical team planning and team meetings, these teachers do not speak of the need to join efforts with others in order to meet their students' needs. In part, because these women view their students' lives outside of school as lacking in significant ways, they look to their roles as teachers as a means of "rescuing" students from their own lives. The idea that families and communities could support their efforts to care for students is negated by the deficit thinking inherent in their understandings of students' needs.

Ella talks about shutting her door and talking with students about real life issues, about "waking students up" to the harsh realities of the world. She suggests that students have been fooled into believing that they can only follow in their parents' footsteps as menial laborers and young mothers. And yet, embedded in her language is the notion that they *should* do something better than their parents have done, they should break out of their prescribed paths--and that she has the key to unlocking that door. Similarly, Mary and Elizabeth talk about providing safe, loving environments for their students that

are free of violence and neglect. They define their students' world as riddled with danger and fear, and see themselves as providing an avenue of escape. I am reminded here of Nussbaum's argument of experiencing other ways of being. It could be argued that these teachers are providing their students opportunities to know other ways of being in the world so that they can then choose their own paths. Yet, embedded in their understandings, I think, is the deficit thinking that likely also serves to shame their students and further exacerbate the misunderstandings between school and home contexts.

Rather, I wonder about the extent to which these isolated acts send messages to students about their powerlessness to change their lives. Though one may argue that these teachers are striving to empower students by allowing them to experience other ways of being in the world, it could also be said that these teachers are replacing one means of oppression with another. By putting themselves in the role of savior, they assign themselves the power to rescue students from their lives. Suggesting that they can do what their students' parents cannot, these teachers not only invalidate their students' familial experience, but put themselves in positions of power over students. So, rather than these students' lives being defined by poverty and cultural-deficiency (as viewed by these teachers), they are defined by the expectations and norms of the teacher. Sadly, research suggests that students are quick to identify the disparity between the way they script reality and the way reality is scripted by teachers and schools, leading to hopelessness about the promise of schooling (Wertsch, 1998).

Of further concern here is the isolation of the teachers themselves. It is likely that the factory-model of schools contributes to the way these teachers define themselves as

carers. Teachers are placed in classrooms, assigned 20-30 students to teach, given curricular materials and a schedule. The majority of their day is spent working alone with students. Though Amarette strives to provide its teachers with numerous opportunities to share ideas, these occasions are relegated to times before and after school, over lunch and during weekly one-hour team meetings. Thus, any effort teachers might make to work collectively with colleagues, families or community members is done outside of their contractual day. It is not surprising, then, that isolation has come to be such a defining factor of their pedagogies of care. These women have come to understand care as central to their identity as gendered-beings, they see their students as in desperate need of their protecting and nurturing, and they are alone with students all day. It makes logical sense that they would come to understand their roles as requiring caring in isolation.

And yet the consequences are steep. Working in isolation does not allow these women much opportunity to share their knowledge as teachers, to validate their experience, to see themselves as experts or authorities. As I will show in the next chapter, all six women put extraordinary faith in the authority of others for judging their worth and validating their experience. Though they are in positions of power over their students, they lack the ability to see themselves as having expertise or the ability to produce knowledge of teaching and learning; something, I assert is necessary if they want to have agency in their own lives as women and as teachers.

Empathy through Parallel Experience

The other two women in this study, Ava and Sarah, have different ideas about what their students need. Nowhere in our discussions did either Ava or Sarah talk about students' need to escape from their lives or find families at school. They did, however, point to specific challenges they believed students were having based on their own life experience as women. Ava, for instance, grew up learning English as a second language in Chicago. As a young girl, she served as a translator and advisor to her parents, whose first language was Spanish, and assumed a great deal of responsibility at a young age. Throughout her life she has lived at the intersection of many cultures—first as a Cuban immigrant, now as a Muslim woman of Cuban descent living in a middle-class American world. She is keenly aware of the challenges involved in growing up in a foreign land, trying to negotiate multiple cultural traditions. As such, she empathizes with her students. She works solely with second language learners, and although many do not speak Spanish, they are experiencing similar challenges to those she faced. The fact that Ava's life story parallels that of her students in these important ways means that she has a unique perspective on how to care for them.

Likewise, Sarah grew up in a military family, meaning that she traveled throughout her life and was constantly having to readjust to new places, make new friends, and recreate connections. It is not surprising that her pedagogy of care as a woman includes providing security and stability in her daughters' lives. As the wife of a foreign service officer, she tries very hard to maintain structure in her family's life so as to thwart some of the insecurity that breeds in constant transition. As a dual-language teacher of kindergarten, Sarah works primarily with neighborhood children who speak

Spanish as a first language. Because so many of her students are in transition themselves, she has the ability to relate to their feelings of insecurity and fear. Her goal as a teacher is to provide a space for them where they feel comfortable and safe, willing to take risks and have fun. Because she has in some ways walked in her students' shoes, she is more able than some of the other participants to empathize with them. She, like Ava, does not subscribe to a deficit mode of thinking about her students' lives outside of school.

Ava and Sarah have lived lives that, in some important ways, parallel the experiences of their students. Although, again, I cannot speak to the needs of their students (because I did not interview students or families as part of this study), it seems to me that these two women might be better suited to identify their students' needs than their colleagues. The mere fact that they have lived through similar circumstances means that they can relate to their students in ways Elizabeth, Mary, Kathy and Ella cannot. Does this mean that they care for them better? It may mean that they are more capable of creating a more reciprocal caring relationship in Noddings' sense of the term.

Summary

For me, the fact that Ava and Sarah can relate to their students on the basis of their life experience suggests a number of things. First, it says to me that we need very much to diversify our teaching force and encourage men and women of all backgrounds to enter our profession. I believe students deserve to have the opportunity to see others like themselves in the role of teacher. With more diverse experience represented in our schools, the culture of schooling might very well become more diverse, more representative of our students, and more responsive to their needs. It also points to the

importance of reflective, critical autobiographical work on the part of teachers. If, as I suggest, we are limited by our own lens in the degree to which we can identify and meet others' needs, then we owe it to our students to recognize this fact and try to deal with it. I suggest here that teachers have great difficulty stepping outside of their experience to see what their students need. For Ava and Sarah, living within their experience, perhaps, serves them well. Yet for others, like Elizabeth and Ella, care is constructed through a lens that is foreign to the experience of their students. Taking the time to critically reflect on our own life experience and the understandings we bring to our teaching can help deconstruct some of the ungrounded assumptions we make about our students and, perhaps, allow us to better see who they are and what they need from us.

It may also mean that, as teachers, we need to strive harder to "get to know" not just our students, but their families and the communities within which we work as well. Knowing our students as learners and artists, as musicians and writers is not enough. The learners in our classrooms are individuals whose identities include much more than what we see on reading and math tasks. Just as the identities of teachers in this study are shaped and influenced by their life experience, by socio- and cultural norms, so are the students in their classrooms. In order to teach our students, we must take the time to know them. One way to do this is to recognize the wealth of resources in the families and communities that surround us. This, however, will require us to think about our work as more than something that we do within the walls of the classroom.

CHAPTER SIX

Caring in Context

As discussed in the previous chapter, the teachers in this study strive to enact care in various ways, as reflect their life experiences as socio-cultural-gendered beings. The contexts in which they find themselves influence their efforts to care in various ways. As I have argued, these women's pedagogies of care are in dynamic relation with the larger context of societal norms informing their sense of gendered-identity. So too are their understandings of care shaped by the more immediate context in which they live and work as teachers: the school itself. In this chapter, I discuss three aspects of the school context most underscored by these teachers as impacting their efforts to care: relationships with administrators; a shared vision among faculty and staff about what teaching and learning should emphasize; and the professional climate of the school.

Relationships with Administrators

Throughout our conversations of care in the school context, the women with whom I spoke pointed to the administrators as playing an important role in defining their experiences at Amarette. Dawn's presence as principal, in particular, seems to be significant. All six women pointed to Dawn as impacting their efforts to care in this place. Many, though not all, spoke of Dawn as a source of support for them as members of her faculty. I met with Dawn a couple months into my data collection to ask her about her conceptions of care. In particular, I was interested in knowing how she saw herself

trying to care for teachers, if indeed she did, and how she saw her teachers caring for themselves and others. Dawn started by saying that she tried very hard to be approachable and understanding. She said, "I'm willing to work with a teacher who is having a crisis in her life. It, you know life, happens and so we do what we can to support them to make it easier to help them get through whatever the crisis is so that they aren't worrying about school while they're having to deal with something else."

Elizabeth draws on Dawn's understanding and acceptance of her desire to have children as a source of strength and support. Though she had been hesitant to approach Dawn about her personal struggles, she eventually did so, and found her openness refreshing. She feels as though the principal was "empathetic" to her feelings and her desire to become a mother. Whether because Dawn has children of her own or because she has worked with so many other women and mothers over the years, she seems to understand that Elizabeth is going through a difficult time. In fact, Elizabeth explained that before having told Dawn what was going on with her outside of school, their relationship had been a bit strained. The year prior, Elizabeth had a confrontation with an art teacher, which resulted in a letter of reprimand going into Elizabeth's file. At the time, Elizabeth was undergoing intense hormone therapy and was feeling emotionally fragile. She remembers the incident as having been rather uncharacteristic of her. During the year that we met, Elizabeth finally talked to Dawn about it.   She recalls,

I was horrified that I had done it and that it was in my file… I felt really bad about it. I said, 'Do you remember that day last May when I came down and bitched about the art teacher and you reprimanded me for it?' And she said, 'Yes?' And I

said, 'Well, this is what happened…' And she was just like, 'I will throw the letter away,' like it was no big deal.

The fact that Dawn was willing to listen made a big difference for Elizabeth, as did her ability to understand that she was not just a teacher, but a woman who had things going on for her outside of school. Mary, too, seems to appreciate Dawn's understanding and acceptance of who she is as a whole person. The year before, when Mary had went through the difficulty of losing her friend's mother, breaking her leg and beginning counseling to unearth some of her pain, Dawn stood by her. Indeed, Dawn was the one who told Mary to take a leave of absence to better care for herself. "She's my hero," Mary says, and goes on,

> [Dawn's] like, 'You need to take time for yourself. I want you to go home and eat ten chocolate sundaes and get a manicure… and get a massage and…' I was sitting there bawling and I was like, I can't do that! And she said, 'Yes, you will.' And she ended up calling me at home and saying, 'You're not coming in. Period. That's it.'

In Mary's case, Dawn offers a warm and safe place for her to share her difficulties and seems to keep a watchful eye on Mary much like a nurturing mother would over her children. In fact, from time to time she would call her Mom-Dawn or Boss-Dawn to differentiate between the hats she saw Dawn wearing. At times like this, when it seemed Dawn was caring for her personally, Mary called her Mom-Dawn. When Dawn wears this hat, Mary feels more comfortable arguing with her and speaking her mind. She says, "I argued with her, 'cause now it was Mom-Dawn instead of Boss-Dawn, and I was like, I don't need to stay home. Just me, being stubborn. And she's like, 'No, I really think

you need to do this for you.'" Interestingly, Dawn fulfills the role of mother in a way Mary's own mother seemingly does not. Despite the fact that she is Mary's principal, she recognizes and takes the time to care for her in ways that supercede their professional relationship.

Ava, too, speaks of Dawn as a positive force in her life as a teacher, but for different reasons. For Ava, it is Dawn's willingness to let her go part-time and stay on staff at Amarette that makes her feel cared for. She is grateful that Dawn respects and understands her decision to spend more time at home with her family. She says, "So many teachers have gotten creative with their schedules and Dawn is supportive of that. It's wonderful." Ava has created a schedule whereby she puts in two and a half days a week, leaving her two days to stay home with her family. She has been given ample leeway to organize her time and meets with students when it works for her. This kind of flexibility means that Ava can do all of the things that are important to her. She is thankful to work in a place where the administration values its teachers enough to try to keep them even when life calls on them to do other things as well.

Dawn explained that "letting [teachers] play around and create jobs," is another important way that she striving to care for them. By creating part-time and half-time positions, she has been able to keep teachers she feels are very strong and still allow them to give themselves to other areas of their lives when needed. It seems Dawn strives to embrace the many roles the women on her faculty choose for themselves. Ava is one of many teachers who benefits from this flexibility and creativity. She seems to feel valued as a teacher because Dawn is willing to work with her to keep her. She also appears to feel that Dawn truly respected her decision to attend to her family.

Finally, Dawn explained that the most important thing she tried to do was be "very respectful of teachers in their work." As she puts it, "They're in the trenches; they're doing the important work." According to Dawn, she tries to lead with a "loose" leadership style, but is "tight" if she needs to be. All of this she does with the understanding that if her teachers are content in their work, they will be better able to care for their students.

Some of the women did indeed talk about Dawn's "loose" leadership style with reference to their day-to-day instruction. That they are free to do as they pleased means they generally feel trusted as professionals. Yet, whether this made them feel more cared for as members of the faculty is not clear. Ella humors, "Nobody checks on what I do. They don't care what I do up here. They don't. I mean, they find it interesting and they're glad that I'm a team player, you know, but quite honestly, they don't care." Throughout our conversation, Ella repeatedly said that others in the building, administrators included, did not "care" about what she did as a teacher. They strive to keep her happy by purchasing new equipment each year and providing her with the space she needed to do her job, but she shared feeling very much like an island unto herself. Her classroom is located on the second floor amid the first grade classrooms, far removed from other "specialists" and from much of the business of the school. While she likes having her own space, she doesn't seem to wholly believe that Dawn's "loose" leadership style is a means of caring. Caring, here, seems to imply taking a personal interest in what Ella is doing in her classroom.

Others echoed this disappointment. That Sarah is given unlimited freedom to design her dual-language program is both a source of pride and frustration for her.

While, on the one hand she likes that she isn't given "any rules," Sarah also says the amount of freedom is, at times, intimidating. "I trust you, I trust you, Dawn keeps saying," Sarah explained, "But it is daunting, especially when you have eyes watching. A lot of people are watching a lot of people with opinions." Despite the fact that Sarah has had ample experience in teaching second-language learners before coming to Amarette, she seems to feel somewhat insecure about creating the program without more guidance. For Sarah, she believes that the principal's unending trust in her is rooted in her own discomfort with second-language programs. She noted repeatedly throughout our conversations that Dawn never came into her classroom and so had absolutely no idea what was going on there. She says,

> I think Dawn is a very intelligent woman who knows a lot about education. The
> thing that makes me uncomfortable is that she never comes to my classroom,
> ever. She doesn't come to the classrooms of any of the immersion classes, none
> of them. How can you speak for a program if you don't know what goes on
> there? I think she's intimidated by Spanish.

Sarah wrestles with the fact that Dawn has what seems to be very little interest or investment in her work. She is disappointed in the fact that Dawn never comes to see her teach and frustrated that she cloaks what Sarah believes is her insecurity in praise and unconditional faith in Sarah's ability as a teacher. Because Sarah is new to Amarette, she would welcome more guidance and support. And she doubts whether it really would be difficult for Dawn to offer useful feedback to her, regardless of her inability to speak Spanish. She says,

I think you know good teaching whether or not you understand the language. You know what it looks like. You know what it feels like to be in a classroom where the teacher is a good teacher. In Japan I went to demonstration lessons all the time and I certainly didn't have enough vocabulary to understand the lesson, but I knew when I was watching a good teacher and I knew when I was watching a bad teacher. You can see it on the children's faces, I could feel it in that emotionally charged atmosphere.

Sarah believes that as principal, Dawn has a responsibility to know what was going on and to be involved in every aspect of the school. She explains,

I think Dawn has a responsibility to be in those classrooms because she is representing that program. How can she present it well to parents if she's not there? She's there everywhere else. I think she needs to be here as well. She keeps telling me, do what you know is right. I trust what you say. What you've told me makes sense. What you said in your interview makes sense. I trust you. But it can't simply be trust. It also needs to be, I need to be accountable to her. And I can't be accountable to her if she doesn't know what I'm doing.

Caring, for Sarah, then, includes holding her accountable for her work. She wishes that Dawn was more invested in her work as a teacher, suggesting that her praise would be worth much more if it came from knowledge and experience of what goes on in her classroom. Sarah's belief that "she's there everywhere else" suggests that she feels somewhat singled out as a teacher of Spanish. Yet, Ella's experience tells us that "everywhere else" does not include her room either. Dawn's explanation that she "respects" her teachers and leads with a "loose" reign is reflected in these teachers'

experiences. But it seems that the care Dawn is trying to enact is not being received as such at least for these two women.

It seems as though there are contradictory conceptions of leadership at work here, and hence different ways of thinking about the role of administrator in caring for teachers. Whereas Dawn believes she is caring for her faculty by providing them with ample room to learn and grow on their own terms, Ella and Sarah see Dawn as failing in her responsibility to be present in their daily lives as teachers. This raises the question of how well Dawn is able to identify and meet the individual needs of the teachers in her building. Just as with the teachers themselves, Dawn has interpreted the needs of her faculty and set a tone for their professional environment based on her own life experiences and beliefs about professional development and leadership. The fact that at least two of the teachers in this context claim Dawn "does not care" enough about their work suggests that there may be limits to Dawn's ability to meet the needs of all members of the faculty.

Some even suggested that Dawn's loose-tight leadership style was a way of masking that she had "favorites" within the school building, a "political chosen few" that received more attention and better treatment from her. Some of the women with whom I spoke admitted that they felt they were part of this "chosen few," while others wondered why they weren't. Regardless of whether they feel "chosen," there seems to be a sense of insecurity about staying in Dawn's good graces that pervaded all women's conversation, suggesting that the power inherent in Dawn's role is ever-present in their thinking.

Kathy is one who figured she is probably on Dawn's good side. She believes that Dawn is particularly interested in her CETA participation and in the integration of the

arts into instruction. Because of this shared interest, she seems to feel as if she has a special bond with her. She offers,

> I feel supported in my job and what I am trying to get done because I think that Dawn likes what I do. I know she wishes she had more money to make it a full time job. Plus what I do happens to be a personal interest to her. So I feel supported in that. But I know other people where I do not feel that she has been supportive of them. I think it is when it's something that causes her stress, something that would be too much effort.

Kathy believes that she and Dawn share a passion for arts integration, which works in her favor. This shared interest between her and the principal means that money is secured for her position even when budget constraints effect other positions. It also means that Kathy is given lots of substitute coverage to attend professional development outside of the school and leniency in her schedule. All of these things help to make her feel supported and more able to do her job as she believes she should.

Ella also admits she is likely part of the "chosen few." She is always receiving more funds to put towards her growing music program, making her feel that she has somehow won Dawn's favor. She is also a member of the planning committee, an elite group of teachers who have been at Bailey's for some time. This committee is in charge of designing important documents such as the school mission and vision statement, organizing professional development efforts and defining school goals each year.

Kathy and Ella both discuss their good fortune at having favorable relationships with Dawn, but they recognize that not all members of the faculty reap the same benefits. Both pointed to examples of teachers who have been "pushed out" of the school because

their ideas about teaching were not in alignment with that of the principal and of other teachers. Neither Kathy nor Ella said that they felt particularly scared that they would lose Dawn's support, but there was a sense, at least for Kathy, that she ought to stay out of her way. She talked about events the prior year when colleagues were not getting along, saying, "That kind of thing got on Dawn's nerves. Dawn is like, shut up! I was very much like, okay, I know that I better keep my mouth shut and not bring anything up." When asked if she had a good relationship with her administrators, she replied, "Good enough. I feel like I stay out of their hair." These comments by Kathy suggest to me that, though she feels supported by Dawn in her work, she does not feel as if they are equals in this context. The power dynamic between them complicates their relationship. It is clear that Kathy does not feel she has the freedom to voice concerns or raise questions, particularly if the topics are ones that would "get on Dawn's nerves."

Kathy believes that part of the reason Dawn did not want to be bothered by conflicts among the faculty was because she is primarily concerned with the image outsiders held of the school. She says,

> Administrative wise, I think Dawn cares a lot about what the parents think and making sure we are making a good impression on them and making sure that the greater public thinks positively of us. I can see the reason that she has to focus on all of that. She has to keep the school going, you know. But sometimes she has the attitude, when there are problems, that 'I don't want there to be problems, so stop it.' 'Happy family, happy family.'

What is particularly interesting about Kathy's relationship with Dawn is that it, in some ways, betrays her less traditional construct of gendered identity. In the previous chapter,

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I described Kathy as being more able to care for herself than others, less concerned with others' impressions of her, and less willing to sacrifice herself than the other women in this study. Yet, in this example, Kathy is very concerned about Dawn's approval of her. So much so, in fact, that she refuses to speak up in the school context for fear of upsetting Dawn and falling out of her good graces. She does this by silencing herself, sacrificing her own voice in order to maintain an illusion of peace and tranquility. Kathy suggested that her affiliation with the arts made her a high-profile member of the Amarette staff, and yet her position is not secure. The power dynamics of Kathy's relationship with Dawn further influence her pedagogy of care in this context.

Mary, whose relationship with Dawn is very close for reasons mentioned earlier, is clearly seen as one of the "chosen few" by those around her. In fact, this "special relationship" draws heavy criticism from her teammates. Mary recalled hearing on more than one occasion that she was "in with the right people," and that she "got special treatment because she talked with Dawn." And though she has a close relationship with her principal, Mary does not feel as though she has won the unconditional acceptance and approval of the administration that others describe. Mary spent a great deal of time talking not just about Dawn, but about one of the assistant principals, Loretta, who was serving as her evaluator during the time of this study. It seems that these two administrators feel very differently about Mary as a teacher, which has important implications for her as she strives to define herself in this place.

Because the messages she receives from Dawn and Loretta are weighted with greater authority than others she receives, Mary puts greater emphasis on trying to discern what is expected of her from both her principal and her assistant principal. The

year that I worked with Mary was her third year at Amarette. For two years prior she had worked on refining her craft as a teacher, attending numerous professional development opportunities, reading professionally and working with colleagues. Despite turbulent times on her third grade team over this two-year period, Mary felt confident that she was in the process of becoming the teacher she strove to be. Her evaluations had always been strong and her mentors praised her work. Mary felt as thought she had a strong sense of the shared vision at Amarette and that it reflected her own commitments to supporting students' emotional and social growth above all else.

This year was different. Mary was assigned a new evaluator, her assistant principal, Loretta. By the time of our third interview, Mary was quite distraught over the reviews she was receiving from Loretta. Of the two times she had been in to observe, Loretta had offered only negative feedback, including comments that she had not seen Mary engaged in any meaningful instruction. Mary says,

> The areas that I was marked 'failed to meet' every other year I was marked 'exceeds'… I even told Dawn, if you gave me an evaluation like this last spring, I easily would have accepted it and said you're right. I haven't been doing my job. But this year I'm doubly on top of what I'm doing to make sure nothing is like it was last year. And after two meetings in my classroom, twenty minutes each, that's what's being taken away. And one of them was a lesson that I took to the National Council of Teachers of English and spoke about! So I can't really… it smacked right in my face. Loretta's like, 'You're not teaching. I never see kids with books in their hands or writing.' I'm like, 'What are you talking about? That's the essence of what I do!'

"My perception of good has turned out to be not so great," she said repeatedly. Adding,

> Now I just don't know. It makes my view of what I thought was going on here quite different. Maybe I was living in some happy land where Amarette was just so child-centered and I still think it is, but… I mean, we talk about it all the time as a staff. I just don't know.

Areas of Mary's teaching that she had grown to believe were strong were suddenly being criticized—and not just by an outsider, but by someone of authority in the workplace. She explains,

> [Loretta] noted in the memo part [of the evaluation form] that there isn't a lot of instruction or reading, writing going on. She's not seeing that. But that's hard. Because if anything, I would think she'd say, you've got too much free writing time, too much free reading time, you need to instruct more. So that caught me off guard. And then the stuff checked on the evaluation line are things that I've always gotten 'exceeds' in, like classroom atmosphere, being positive with the students, encouraging them. I even said, like you could have checked over here. Organization skills as a teacher. I could definitely use some improvement there. I showed them where I would say, 'does not meet expectations,' but Loretta did not back down. She sat there stone cold. So, alright. Clearly… there's no use in my speaking about it.

In trying to discern Loretta's vision of the ideal teacher, Mary used phrases such as "by the book," "traditional," "getting back to reading, writing, and math," "teacher up at the board, students listening, direct teaching," and "about controlling the kids." All of this,

however, stands in stark contrast to Mary's understanding of good teaching and to what she perceives to be valued by others at Amarette.

What made the situation even more difficult for Mary to navigate was that her principal seemed to disagree with Loretta's assessment of Mary's teaching. "I think there's a difference of opinion between Dawn and Loretta on my teaching," she says, "I don't know. I'm still very blown away by Loretta. It's really shocking." To begin with, Dawn had placed a student intern in Mary's room. Mary could not reconcile the fact that Dawn would put a novice in her classroom to learn from her if she was a poor example of a teacher. At one point in the year, Mary went to the principal to share that she'd not heard any feedback after Loretta's last observation. Her response was that Loretta had returned from the observation saying, "There was nothing worth writing up." Clearly upset, Mary told Dawn, "I don't know what to say. I know what was going on in there, and I, again, thought it was a perfect opportunity for her to see where these kids have come, what I'd done with them. I had everything that Loretta had said 'you're not doing' going on… I can't do this. It's ruining me. At that point, Dawn agreed to come in and do an observation herself.

Mary described Dawn's write-up this way, "Everything she wrote down was like—that's how I perceive myself too. It was this whole thing like, you involve all the kids, you had higher level thinking questions, you brought in the ESOL kids who were struggling with vocabulary. All this stuff." When Mary asked Dawn what to do with these two very different reads on her teaching, Dawn responded, "Why are you so caught up in what Loretta thinks?" Mary explained that Loretta was her evaluator and

everything she wrote down ended up in her permanent file. To which, Dawn replied, "Remember who your evaluator's evaluator is."

Left at the crossroads between her principal and assistant principal, Mary felt very confused. What, she imagined, were meant to be comforting words from Dawn, did little to settle her fears and frustrations over her year-long evaluation process. She remained angry that her file would be tarnished by Loretta's comments and disappointed in the recourse she had tried and failed. She explains,

> Loretta represents a different perspective. I think you need different perspectives. I just don't think it's fairly represented to the staff. I needed to know that she wanted more traditional teaching. Which is fine. I don't see Amarette as a truly traditional school, which is why I'm here. That makes it tough.

Here, Dawn's efforts to care for Mary seem to include offering her positive feedback on her teaching and telling her not to worry about Loretta's evaluation. Yet, Mary knows that these evaluations will be in her file. Regardless of how Dawn tries to make light of them, Mary is left wondering how she will ultimately be judged. This unknown leaves her feeling insecure. Her life experience had taught Mary to doubt her own abilities and value as a woman. Though she is beginning to think about some of the destructive messages she had received throughout her life, she still places incredible trust in others to judge her worth as a person, and more specifically as a teacher. This fact makes Amarette an incredibly difficult place to work. Mary, it seems, feels cared for by Dawn in personal ways, but perhaps not as well professionally. She might have expected Dawn to protect her in some ways from the Loretta's criticism, but she did not. Her statement, "Remember who your evaluator's evaluator is" does little to calm her fears. Rather, it

makes her feel as if she will never quite understand what is expected of her. As such, I come to understand care as quite complicated when placed in the context of institutions and influenced by power relationships.

Discussion

The relationships these teachers have with their administrators, particularly with Dawn, play an important role in shaping the context in which they strive to enact their pedagogies of care. Dawn tries to promote a particular version of care for the teachers in her building, which emphasizes a loose leadership style, flexibility to define their schedules and providing an understanding ear when crises occur. This version of care is situated in relationships of power between Dawn and the teachers. For Mary, it is further complicated by the power relationship she shares with Loretta and the one Loretta shares with Dawn. Who has power over whom? And so whose version of care is held in highest esteem? It seems as though when the version of care promoted by those in power reflects the conceptions of leadership and care held by the teachers, it is understood as care by all those involved. For example, Ava and Elizabeth receive Dawn's efforts to care for them as positive and successful. Ava feels respected and supported by Dawn because she has been given the opportunity to go part-time and focus more of her energy at home. Elizabeth has come to see Dawn as a source of acceptance and understanding while she goes through a difficult time personally. These two women point to one of the very things Dawn claims to do as a principal: to support her teachers when "[life] happens." Ava and Elizabeth feel that Dawn's willingness to care in these important ways means that they are better able to care for others and for themselves.

Others, however, are less clear about the benign nature of Dawn's efforts to care for them. When Dawn's construct of care comes into contrast with teachers' own understandings of how their principal should care for them, it causes tensions that are exacerbated by the power dynamics at work. Ella and Sarah point to Dawn's efforts to lead with "loose" reigns as leaving them isolated and uncared for. While Dawn claims to care for her teachers by "respecting" them as professionals and allowing them ample room to do what they know is best, her absence from their classrooms seems to have instilled in them a feeling that she isn't truly invested in their work. Sarah claims that Dawn appears "intimidated by the Spanish" and Ella says others clearly did not "care" about what she does. Here again we are confronted with the complicated nature of caring amid relationships of power. Dawn has identified what it is she thinks her teachers need in order to feel cared for. Yet, her teachers perceive this effort as non-caring. The fact that Dawn is in a position of power within this context makes her teachers feel as if they cannot express to her what they need. Rather, they expect her to identify what it is they need in order to feel cared for and to care for them appropriately. When their expectations are not met, they feel devalued as teachers.

I wonder, however, what degree of investment and presence would be considered "caring" by these teachers. If Dawn was involved in every aspect of their work, demanding lesson plans each week, inserting herself into parent conferences and offering feedback on every lesson, would they then feel cared for? Or would she have betrayed the trust she claims to give her teachers by staying away? What level of involvement and investment means caring? I suggest that this question would likely be answered differently by different teachers, making Dawn's job a difficult one. Perhaps caring in

context is inherently contradictory, not only because of the different relationships and expectations at play but also because individuals' needs and desires shift from time to time as identities are not static. As such, caring as a principal may require taking the time to authentically "know" each teacher and striving to identify their needs individually. As with teachers, this would likely require a level of critical autobiographical inquiry on the part of the principal in order to determine the extent to which her own lens is impacting her ability to identify the needs of others.

There was also much talk among these narratives of a "political chosen few" within the school, favorites that garnered more support from Dawn than others. For some, Ella and Kathy, their being "chosen" seems to have something to do with their roles as arts teachers. For Mary, it seems to be related to the intimacy Dawn and Mary share that extend beyond their professional relationship. Regardless of why some teachers are "chosen" over others (I cannot say, as Dawn did not address this point in our conversations), the understanding that Dawn has "favorites" complicates her efforts to care for her faculty. The fact that she spent time with Mary, for example, while Mary was dealing with difficult times, led others to believe Mary was part of the "chosen few," and led to much criticism of Mary by her colleagues. So while she feels cared for by Dawn personally, she recognizes that her relationship brings with it negative consequences that greatly impact her efforts to care and feel validated as a teacher. When viewed within the context of the school, Mary's personal relationship with Dawn is impacted by the power relationships at work between them as teacher and principal. This influences the way this relationship is viewed by others in this context and complicates Mary's efforts to name who Dawn is to her. As with the other women in this study,

Mary's construct of care cannot be divorced from the relationships of power within which it is understood and enacted.

Shared Vision

The notion that Amarette is shaped, in part, by a shared vision of teaching and learning pervaded much of my dialogue with all women. Regardless of how that vision is understood, the illusion of its existence plays an important role in shaping these teachers' pedagogies of care in this place. Despite the fluid and relational dynamics of this and other contexts in which they work, all six women point to the shared vision as a static construct of caring as teachers that either reinforces their own efforts to care for students in particular ways or makes them feel marginalized because their own understandings are not reflected in the work around them. For one teacher, Mary, she seems to feel constantly befuddled by mixed messages about what the shared vision is although she agrees that there was excessive talk of one.

Dawn agreed that there was a vision she tries very much to foster among her faculty. When I asked Dawn to talk about her vision for the school, she responded,

> I care that the kids get the best education possible, that we take them as far as we can take them; and that we engage them mentally, socially, that we build a good foundation before we turn them loose on the world. And then I care that the teachers are excited and that they are growing professionally, that we truly, now the words 'professional learning community' have become a catch phrase for many things lately, but I think Amarette has had a learning community for a long time and I care about preserving that a whole lot, that it stays here. And that the

teachers here keep on learning because that kind of excitement transfers to the kids. They feel it, they know it.

Dawn is very open about her intent to promote her vision among faculty. In fact, she explains that in the year prior, she worked with the planning committee to write a school mission and vision statement that captured what it was the faculty valued as a whole. Within this document are phrases such as, "foster a supportive environment where students can become independent, literate, and self-directed learners," "develop a sense of responsibility, integrity, cooperation, and an understanding of cultural differences," "work to make families and community-members partners in teaching our students," and "respecting different styles of learning and teaching so that we can achieve our goals more effectively."

When asked what efforts Dawn makes toward promoting her vision among faculty, she pointed to a variety of things. First, she stated that "hiring people with the same feel" is one important way she ensures the vision will be shared. She says she looks for people who "have a passion for teaching, that it isn't just a job they go to, but a calling to them." Elsewhere in our talks, she explained, "They have to sing to you… there has to be a sense that they will find a niche here and that they will contribute and that they will learn and grow too." In order to grow the vision of Amarette as a "learning community for students and teachers," Dawn shared that she needs to recruit teachers who already firmly believe in the importance of their continued professional development, and who will take some responsibility for contributing to their own professional growth.

Dawn also explained that she tried to "live [the vision]." She stated that she always maintained "high standards for what [teachers] are doing in their classrooms,… through staff development," continuously sending the message that their growth as teachers is vital to the success of the school. (This particular aspect of the vision was recognized by all six women as particularly significant and so I address it separately in the next section.)

Interestingly, despite Dawn's best efforts to promote a shared vision among her faculty, that vision has been interpreted in a variety of ways by the women in this study. The first four women discussed here, Ella, Kathy, Ava and Sarah, agree that there is, indeed, a shared vision at Amarette about what constitutes good teaching. Though they understand that vision in slightly different ways, they each point to its existence as a source of strength and support in their efforts to care as teachers.

Ella's interpretation of Amarette's shared vision is that she and her colleagues share a commitment to students' development as whole people, as lifelong learners and thinkers. She also explained that teachers at Amarette often gave of themselves in very personalways that lie outside of the curriculum—sacrificing their time, energy, and emotional selves to care for their students. This belief reflects her own determination to put students' experience and needs first. In order to illuminate this point, Ella shared with me two examples where individual students and families were in great need and the school community pulled together to support them. She describes a time just a few years before when a third grade girl was dying of leukemia. Ella recalls,

> I was with Kayla for about twelve hours just before she died. It was amazing. I
> remember holding the phone for her, the nurses came to me and they go, do you

think she needs more morphine? I go, I'm a teacher. And this one nurse who was good, looked at me and said, do you think she… I go, I think she needs much more. I mean, I was with her, my job ended up that day pretty much to get her to the toilet and it hurt her if you touched her arm. She was done. I mean this girl was that far gone. She had enough dignity that she was going to sit on the toilet. And I thought, now does this happen at other schools? Because her mom, her mom was there for a little, but got back just before she died. But Ann was there, I was there, when I went out to eat, Ed was there. We traded off. And Rita was there, and Jack… (all teachers at Amarette)

Another time, Ella remembers teachers pulling together after a fatal accident in the community lake where two boys drowned. "We were all learning the appropriate way to cover our heads and respect the culture so we could attend the funeral," she says. These are just two examples from the history Ella shares with her colleagues as they've participated in the lives of their students. She believes that others in her context feel as she does about building relationships with students, reflecting her pedagogy of care. As a result of this shared vision, Ella feels that few of her colleagues would criticize her efforts to care for students in the way she does. "A lot of these kids are in need," she says, and suggests that by ignoring students' needs, teachers miss out on opportunities for real teaching. Ella points to this shared understanding as a source of support for her as a teacher.

Nowhere in the school vision statement does it mention that teachers should care in the ways Ella describes. "Building strong home, school and community partnerships" is as close as it comes, which suggests much less than these teachers are doing in these

examples. Even Ella recognizes the extraordinary efforts she and her colleagues put forth to care for their students when she says, "Does this happen at other schools?" Are teachers in other school contexts building such intimate relationships with students and families as the ones described here? Ella's belief that others around her share this commitment makes her feel supported in her efforts to care as she does.

Kathy, too, believes the shared vision of the school is a source of strength and support. Yet, she interprets the vision in a slightly different way. Kathy believes that teachers at Amarette share the belief that children should be critical thinkers and so tailor their instruction accordingly. She finds that in her conversations and planning with other specialists and with regular classroom teachers, there was always a focus on making connections across disciplines and helping students construct meaning. Teachers at Amarette, she believes, share her commitment to teaching children about the power of their own communication and thinking. They resist trends in education that say students should be passive consumers of other people's knowledge.

This understanding is reflected in the school vision statement and in Dawn's language of the vision. According to the school vision statement, "Our vision is to foster a supportive environment where students can become independent, literate, self-directed learners." Dawn, too, talks about fostering a community of "lifelong learners of students and teachers." This language directly mirrors Kathy's language about caring as a teacher. Her desire to help students become independent and self-sufficient, critical thinkers and communicators is delineated clearly in this document. For Kathy, like Ella, the fact that others shared her beliefs made her job easier. She says,

It would be really hard to do what you know is good if you don't feel like that is

what everybody else is doing. It is a lot of work. You know, teaching is a whole

lot of work and if you feel like people are looking at you going, Oh my gosh what

is she doing in there? I don't know how you would keep going with it. I think

you'd slowly start to conform and do things the way you didn't really want to or

something.

Yet, embedded in the vision statement are also many other aspects of care that Kathy

does not discuss. Things like understanding cultural differences and working with

families and community members, for example, are absent from her discussions of care.

Though both Ella and Kathy point to the shared vision as a source of support in

their efforts to care for their students, the shared vision each describes more closely

resembles their own philosophies of teaching and learning as individuals than they

resemble each other. Ella believes all teachers at Amarette emphasize knowing and

teaching the whole child, putting academics second to real life. Kathy thinks that others

in the building focus primarily on teaching students to think critically and learn valuable

communication skills. Kathy's interpretation is represented in the school mission and

vision statement more clearly, but Ella's understanding includes important pieces of the

principal's construct of care, which she purposefully strives to promote among faculty.

Both of the elements Kathy and Ella discuss are seemingly present in the "shared vision"

of the school to some degree. Regardless of whether their exact interpretations are shared

by everyone around them, the belief that they are seems to be enough to make Ella and

Kathy feel supported in their work.

Ava, too, has a unique interpretation of this shared vision. She sees in her colleagues a shared commitment to understanding and respecting students' cultural heritage. She explains that one thing that has served to keep Ava connected to her colleagues and former students is her participation in the school's *Heritage Language Literacy Club*, an after-school program for Spanish-speaking students. The mission of this program is "to support development of the native language, to ease the learning of English and ensure that students are fully bilingual when they graduate" (Interview with Stephanie Fillman, Director). Since the club's inception, Ava had been a lead teacher, working with students one day a week after school from 3:30-4:30 in the afternoon. Together they engage in many of the same literacy activities students do during the school day, but with Spanish texts. 100% of the students in this program speak Spanish as a first language, which stands in stark contrast to the makeup of the Spanish Immersion classes at the school. (Spanish Immersion classes are offered almost strictly to English-speaking students as a benefit for attending the magnet school and serving as English-speaking role models for neighborhood children.)

Ava's participation in this program is a source of great pride for her as she is able to work with students in an informal setting, get to know their families through various club activities and engage in the important work of helping them become truly bilingual and proud of their heritage. Though many of her ESOL students are Spanish speaking, the philosophy of the county and school is to immerse learners in English as a means of helping them acquire the second language. She is not encouraged to teach in Spanish, although she often speaks informally with students in Spanish throughout her day. The Club provides her with an opportunity to use her own bilingual skills as a tool to help

develop her students' literacy skills in both languages and to share with parents the importance of doing so.

Ava pointed to the HLLC as one example of Amarette's commitment to celebrate students' native language and culture. To her, it is this commitment that makes Amarette such a unique learning environment for students and teachers alike. There is shared respect among people of different backgrounds and an effort to understand and appreciate difference. This understanding reflects Ava's construct of care that emphasizes knowing students as individuals and celebrating their heritage. It is, however, different again than Ella and Kathy's interpretations of the shared vision.

Ava's interpretation, like Kathy's, is mentioned in the school vision statement. It says there that faculty is committed to developing an "understanding of cultural differences." It is the only place, however, that students' diverse backgrounds are mentioned explicitly, and the language in the statement is fairly neutral. Understanding difference seems to imply something less than "celebrating" or "fostering respect and appreciation for" cultural difference as Ava describes.

Yet another interpretation of Amarette's "shared vision" came from Sarah. Like others, Sarah spoke very highly of her colleagues and their commitment to the students with whom they worked. She says,

> People here want to be here. They are here because they love their kids. They want to do something better for those kids and they like who they're with. We like who we're teaching with, we respect each other. We treat each other professionally.

For Sarah, the shared vision includes a common level of commitment to teaching and to students. It is not specific pedagogical decisions or aspects of relationships teachers make with students. Rather, it is that teachers all seem to share a love of their work, of the children in their classrooms and of each other.

Another aspect of her interpretation draws on a sense of having shared experience with her colleagues. Sarah seems to feel supported by the fact that there are other foreign-service and military families at Amarette who share her experience of moving from place to place. She says,

> It's nice that who I am and what I've experienced is also common to some other people because for some folks the very fact that I've been to another country or speak another language is often taken as name dropping or bragging or something. But in this environment, everyone says, 'Oh yeah, I understand exactly what you mean.' Most everyone at Amarette has had some kind of international experience, they've been some place, they've done something…
>
> And they have the respect for other cultures as a result. I love that.

That so many of her colleagues share her international experience, have been exposed to other ways of living, seems to be a source of comfort to Sarah. She feels there are others who understood the struggles she has experienced and share her experience of having sacrificed personally for their families. She feels she can talk about her experience and not be judged.

The shared vision Sarah sees at Amarette is derived from a perceived shared experience. Sarah believes that her colleagues share her experience as someone who had experienced a variety of other cultures and thus also her appreciation for difference. She

also believes that their shared experience means they understand her, which comforts her. Of the six women in this study, however, only half had done any extensive traveling in their lives and one of those was Ava, whose major experience with other cultures was growing up as a second language learner in the United States. Again, this raises the question about how "shared" the shared vision really is.

Despite the differences among the interpretations offered by these four women, there are commonalities as well. Ava and Sarah both emphasize the importance of respecting students' culture and heritage, trying to empathize with their experience as immigrants and second-language learners. Ella, too, to some degree includes in this shared vision the importance of caring for students as whole people, not just as learners of specific content. She believes teachers at Amarette share an understanding of their learners that is holistic. Kathy's interpretation focuses much less on knowing students in these personal ways; instead she thinks that others at Amarette share her commitment to developing critical thinkers and lifelong learners. It seems they are all right. Within the context of the school, the common language of care (as is evidenced by these six women, the principal and school vision statement), includes all of these things to varying degrees. I suggest that it is the individual lens brought to bear on these messages that has led to the various interpretations represented here. Some women, like Kathy, have grasped onto the academic message about critical thinking because it resonates with her own script about how best to care as a teacher. Others, such as Ava, have associated themselves with the cultural piece for the same reason.

Within a large school setting (over 100 faculty strong), it is not surprising that each of the women in the study has sought out others whose experiences reflect their

own, whose lenses on teaching and learning, and perhaps life in general, are similar to theirs. In so doing, they have created for themselves smaller communities within the broader community. The shared visions they believe exist, then, are perhaps representative of shared understandings in subgroups of the larger faculty. Interestingly, however, this is not how they talked about the shared vision. All insisted that their understandings were shared throughout the school, and that working alongside others who shared their commitments made their work a good bit easier.

Struggling with the Shared Vision

Not all agreed, however, that the shared vision at Amarette was a source of strength and support for them as teachers. Elizabeth was one teacher who did not see eye to eye with the majority of her colleagues about what "best practices" entailed and struggled with how to reconcile her difference of opinion with those around her. Though Elizabeth agrees that other teachers at Amarette share her concern for students' wellbeing outside of the academic realm, she does not think they share her beliefs about how to meet students' intellectual and academic needs. In fact, there are times when Elizabeth has felt as if her understandings stand outside of what is acceptable practice at Amarette.

Elizabeth communicated to me that there seems to be a strong attachment to certain approaches, in particular in the teaching of writing, to which teachers around her subscribe. For the most part, these reflect the work of Lucy Calkins and Grant Wiggins, which focus on using writers' workshop as a means for instruction. By teaching students the writing process, conferencing with students and allowing them the freedom of choice on topics, the idea is that students will come to see themselves as writers who have

something to say in their own right, rather than just being passive consumers of other people's stories and information (echoing, to some degree, Kathy's interpretation of the "vision.") And while Elizabeth can see merit in this approach, she doesn't seem to believe that it work for all of her students. She says,

> We are doing all we can, we are using the best practices that we have researched and that have worked other places, but it is not reaching every child… Maybe there are things we can adopt from other schools that are working for them, with the same type of population that we have that would better reach those kids who are not getting the Lucy Calkins stuff. What can we do for *those* kids?

Writers' workshop presents a number of challenges for Elizabeth as a teacher of writing. For one thing, she struggles with the notion that all students should be given freedom to choose their own topics for writing. While, ideally, Elizabeth likes this idea, she believes that it is not practical for all of her students. Some of the children in her classroom struggle to come up with topics on their own and get started. Because of this, she feels that a great deal of time is wasted helping them search for ideas. She wants to be able to offer at least some of her students the option of using story prompts and questions to get them writing, but holds back because she knows others would not approve.

Because her students come to her with a wide array of abilities, Elizabeth struggles to find what works for each of them. Spelling, in particular, is something that she wants students to learn more efficiently. Yet, she believes that the current practice of referring students to the list of 100 most used words posted in each classroom is not sufficient. Elizabeth knows that her students' spelling is far behind what it should be by

second grade and strives to teach it more explicitly. The idea of the spelling list is one she rather likes. She says,

> There's a feeling against memorization that I have a tough time with because I think… there is so much that you have to memorize in life. You memorize phone numbers, social security numbers, stuff for tests. Maybe you don't remember it all, but the whole exercise of memorizing is valuable, I think. Yet, you tell [other teachers] that [students] are going to memorize words, learn ten a week and they frown on it and say, ahh, memorization. Students will not actually apply that.

Because the emphasis is always on learning aspects of reading and writing (such as spelling, grammar) in the context of authentic reading and writing experiences, the use of spelling lists is frowned upon by those around her. She says, "They say to do things in context, well yeah, but there are patterns and there are rules that would be useful to just know."

Elizabeth is well-versed in the work of Lucy Calkins and others whose research on writing is so esteemed at Amarette. Yet, she feels as though teachers there are too extreme in their application of those ideas. She seems to think that there needs to be more of a balance between the mechanics of reading and writing and the context and meaning they make of it. If nothing else, Elizabeth believes that, as a teacher, she owes it to her students to try to come up with some acceptable medium. She says, "Every year we talk about what we are going to do about spelling. It is just so hard that a lot of people would love to do something a little bit more structured, but we really do not know how to do that without the whole list thing." She seems to feel that teachers at Amarette have abandoned one practice for another without truly considering the merit of each and

how students might benefit from both. As a result, she is torn between what she believes her students need academically and what she feels she has the freedom to do as a teacher in this place.

Elizabeth wants to speak her mind and work with other teachers to tackle these and other instructional issues. And in years past, she has. Yet, due to her ongoing medical procedures, surgeries, and trials with new medications, she spends a great deal of physical and emotional energy on her personal life. Between this and her efforts to know and care for her students individually, she seems to feel as if there was little energy left to spend elsewhere. As a result, she describes herself as trying to "fly under the radar screen." Though she feels strongly about her approaches to teaching, she is unwilling to confront others or get into heady debates about good instruction. She says, "I am not going to make any waves, I am not going to bring up any of these concerns because I have something else going on in my life."

For Elizabeth, the shared vision at Amarette seems to be two-pronged. On the one hand, she believes her colleagues share her commitment to knowing students as people, not just as learners. On the other hand, when it came to the teaching of reading and writing, Elizabeth feels as if the shared vision for instruction is one that stands in conflict to her own philosophy. She sees this as a challenge for her as a teacher as she is constantly wondering what others will think of her instruction and refraining from some practices in order to "not make waves." As such, Elizabeth seems to feel somewhat marginalized as a teacher because her ideas are not reflected in the talk and practice of others around her.

Elizabeth's interpretation of the shared vision at Amarette includes particular instructional approaches in writing. She believes that the teachers around her are all in agreement that there is a "right" way to teach writing to elementary students. As such, she feels that her suggestions to the contrary have and would continue to bring harsh criticism. This is particularly interesting in light of the school vision statement's claim that "We collaborate with one another and our students, respecting different styles of learning and teaching so that we can achieve our goals more effectively." If this statement were true of all faculty within Amarette, than why is it Elizabeth feels the way she does? It seems that this is part of the vision statement that does not aptly reflect the vision as it is understood by people like Elizabeth.

Of the six women in the study, these first five agree that there is a shared vision at Amarette, though they have different understandings of what that vision is. And while Elizabeth sees this vision, at least in part, as a challenge to her efforts to care, others draw on this sense of shared commitment as a source of support in their efforts to care for students as they see fit. Mary, on the other hand, wonders whether there was a shared vision at all. Like others in the study, Mary has a strong sense of her ideal teacher and what is important to her as an educator, and she believed that, at one point, Amarette was a place that reflected her vision and ideals. Yet, as time wore on, she found that there were indeed different opinions about what made for good teaching, and she struggled to make sense of these differences. She seemed to be comforted by those who supported her beliefs about her teaching, but not to the extent that she could let criticism go. The disapproval of some has made Mary's experience an emotionally difficult one as she has strived to win the recognition of others and define herself in this place. She often spoke

of her struggles as a professional who needed the expectations clearly defined for her and as a colleague and friend who was hurt by her teammates' quick criticism and insults. As a result, she has often felt lost in a sea of praise and condemnation and isolated in her classroom. She says,

> I get horrible rating from [Loretta, the assistant principal] and then other teachers and people who are in here, say, wow, they really make me feel good about my teaching, so it leaves me at this place where here's the official evaluator saying you gotta clean things up and then others saying there's magic in your room. Those are two very different…

Mary talked about the many contradictory messages she received from colleagues and teammates about what made for good teaching. Some teachers in the school pointed to Mary as an example of exemplary teaching. The fifth grade ESOL teacher, who also worked part time as an ESOL consultant for the county, repeatedly brought teachers from other schools to come observe Mary in her classroom. At one point, he brought a principal from another school in to observe. Mary remembers her saying, "I'd like to come back a second time, if that's okay. I want to bring some more of my teachers. I just love being in your classroom."

Yet another source of positive feedback was Amarette's former principal, who was then serving in the role of university supervisor for Mary's intern. Mary remembers that she was in her room a great deal throughout the fall when her intern was with her and always had positive things to say. Mary had also been asked by the reading specialists in her building to present with them at a regional conference on literacy, drawing from her teaching of language arts. The interactions she had with these colleagues served to

reinforce Mary's notion that she was on the "right track" with regards to becoming a strong teacher who models best practices and builds a positive classroom community. Yet, there were others whose criticism—both overt and subtle—serves to undermine and contradict these messages. As mentioned in this previous section, some of these mixed messages came from the administration. Yet, it is the daily interaction with her colleagues that seemed to impact her most. As a relatively new teacher in this context, Mary wants very much to belong, and she looks to the shared vision as a means of defining what it is to be an Amarette teacher. The more this understanding slipps from her fingertips, the more she feels like an outsider in her immediate context.

Mary commented often on the unstable and negative relationship she had with teammates in the third grade. She seems to feel misunderstood and alienated from the team because of assumptions that have been made about her relationship with the principal and the questions she has raised about the purpose and magnitude of the team-wide museum project. From early on, Mary described her team as "horrible" and "negative." Turned off by the team's constant negativity, Mary has chosen to refrain from socializing with them. She explains,

> I didn't eat in the teacher lunchroom because I hated the complaining and I was always criticized. And then if I did go in, they were like, "Oh, you're gracing us with your presence? …They just complain about the kids and the schedule and this and that. And I was like, you are what gives teachers such a bad name. That's not the Amarette I want to know.

A second source of antagonism between Mary and her teammates seems to be the grade-level museum project. As is tradition at Amarette, each grade chooses a month

during the year to put up a "museum" in the school to display a unit of study. Mary had

participated in this for two years and knows that it requires an exorbitant amount of time

and energy to pull it off. She worried about the newer members of her team (of which

there were many) who were already struggling on many fronts. She shared her concern

and suggested the team scale down the museum. She also shared her thoughts about how

to make the museum more "authentic," actually reflecting students' work at all stages of

their development, rather than having the pressure to make everything look "polished."

Her teammates responded that she was not a "team player" and that it was clear she

"hated the museum." Later, when the museum was up and running, she overheard two of

her teammates commenting on various aspects of the children's work. She recalls, "They

were saying, 'oh this isn't done? It must be Mary's class. If it's incomplete, it must be

Mary's.'"

At another time during the museum planning stages, Mary recalls a discussion

about when they would get together to set up prior to opening. The entire team agreed

that a Wednesday afternoon was best, but that was the day when Mary routinely met with

her counselor. "I vowed to myself that I would never change that appointment for

anything," she explained in our interview. Yet, when she told her team that she couldn't

make it, she was again labeled as a poor "team player." These comments made Mary

angry and left her feeling unheard and misunderstood. She comments that it was months

of such berating that caused her to withdraw from team activities inside and outside of

school in an effort to protect herself.

Finally, Mary recalls that she has been often criticized for focusing too much on

her students. The emphasis Mary places on students' emotional and social wellbeing is

something that, for the most part, she believes to be reflected in the teaching and beliefs of those around her. She spoke of the counselors, Travis and Janet, who go above and beyond in their call to help the students and their families. She also talked about Dawn's efforts to support the families in extraordinary ways. She says,

> Dawn has fought for the families here. The best she can, I mean she's the principal of over 850 kids, but seeing how she pushed for these kids that I had two years in a row… They're practically homeless and wherever they move to, she employs this bus—it's called the McKinney Law—and if you're homeless, the only stable thing for the kids is the school and so they can be bussed in from wherever they go as long as its in the county. So in seeing that depth, yeah I want to be a part of that staff.

There are those, however, who have mocked Mary's unending devotion to her students. She recalls colleagues the year before saying to her, "We know all about your classroom, Mary. It's all about the kids." In particular, her practices of having students eat lunch in the classroom with her, celebrating birthdays, and holding cast parties have drawn heavy criticism from her teammates. Mary has difficulty reconciling the criticism she receives with what she believes good teaching is about. She has come to understand that building community and getting to know her students are important and worthwhile endeavors. Has she gotten it all wrong? Are other teachers angry that Mary spends so much time with her students because they feel guilty for not doing the same? Or is this just one more way for them to display their disgust for her resistance to the museum project? Mary has often wondered about the impetus for her teammates' criticism and, over time has grown increasingly less willing to socialize or work with them.

As a relatively new teacher who is still undergoing the evaluation process at Amarette, Mary is subject to a great deal of scrutiny. She has a lot of difficulty in understanding what is expected of her as a teacher. Confronted by a myriad of mixed messages from those around her, she works to define herself in this place. While the messages she receives came from varying levels of authority, all seem to play an integral part in how she sees her success as a professional in her community.

Discussion

Mary is searching for the shared vision by which to compare and validate her pedagogy of care. So far, she has been unable to identify it. Yet, she keeps hearing that there is one. Others in the study feel they have a handle on it and have either accepted it as it reflects their own visions or struggle with it because it does not. The descriptions of the shared vision include references to instructional approaches, relationships with students, and a greater educational mission, as well as expectations about what it means to be a professional. All of these elements are present in the language of the teachers and the principal interviewed for this study. Yet, even among this select group, there are counter-scripts (Elizabeth in particular) informed by professional experience and study that are seemingly marginalized by a dominant will to conform. Interestingly, Mary and Elizabeth are the two who feel most compelled to conform to the shared vision. Elizabeth, lacking the energy to assert her alternate views on instruction, goes along begrudgingly. Mary feels clear about who she is as a teacher, yet insecure in her inability to identify with the "shared vision" for which she keeps searching. This difficulty has made her feel increasingly isolated and undervalued as a colleague and teammate.

Amarette is a large school with a very large faculty. And as the principal, Dawn, so aptly explained, "you bring your own lens to everything." Despite her best efforts to foster a truly shared vision among her faculty, she understands that that vision will be interpreted and enacted in various ways. Yet, she also recognizes that, as principal, she has an enormous influence on the culture and climate of the school. In her words, she explained, "I try not to think about the influence I might have [on teachers here]. It's very scary some days when it does cross my mind." Some of Dawn's understandings of care that she shared with me—that teachers should assume enormous responsibility, press themselves to grow professionally and mother their students—although not explicitly stated in the school vision statement, are nonetheless present in the shared vision and common language of Amarette teachers as is evidenced here. It seems that the school mission and vision statement, although developed in part to foster a specific vision among faculty and staff, is only as influential as its strongest proponents. Because Dawn, in all of her authority as principal, for example, believes that caring involves extraordinary effort on the part of her teachers, we see this reflected in their dialogue. Dawn says,

The teachers at this school go above and beyond; they do more than just teach curriculum kinds of things. They're often mothers to these kids or at least second mothers because they're teaching them socialization skills, survival skills and things that in many homes we take for granted that they get… so I see our teachers being surrogate parents to these kids.

While Dawn admits that it isn't just the students at Amarette that are in need of parenting, she recognizes that teachers at her school have many opportunities to care in ways that

are not delineated in the curriculum. And they take it upon themselves to care in these important ways. She says,

> They take [responsibility], and they also put enormous pressure on themselves to be really excellent teachers, and *that's caring*. That's probably they care more than any other collective staff I've ever seen. When I get here at 7:30 the parking lot is full and when I'm leaving at 6:00, 6:30 there's still a good number of people in the parking lot… and I worry that they are going to burn themselves out because they care so much about their work here and they put enormous energy not just physical energy but they put a lot of emotional and intellectual energy into what they do (emphasis added).

Dawn's comments here point to other expectations that are implicitly part of the shared vision. Though the school mission and vision statement does not state that teachers need to parent students or stay until 6:00 at night, many of them do. And caring, for this principal, means doing so. Though she says that she worries about them "burning out," she also says that true caring means "putting enormous pressure on themselves to be really excellent teachers." Dawn's expectations about what "excellent teaching" entails have been spelled out in the vision statement to some degree, but there are also unspoken expectations that seem to define teaching in her view. The extent to which these expectations are impacting teachers' daily efforts to care is particularly striking with regards to pushing themselves as professionals. It is to this aspect of the school culture that I now turn.

Professional Climate

Of the six women in this study, Ella, Kathy, Mary and Sarah spoke a great deal about the professional climate of Amarette. Whether talking about the "shared vision" of the school, what it was that drew them to Amarette when looking for work, or talking about their specific efforts to care in this place, the fact that Amarette Elementary is a "learning community" for teachers has been paramount to their experience there. And this was, indeed, a significant part of the vision Dawn shared with me. She repeatedly made reference to teachers "growing professionally," maintaining a "professional learning community," "keeping on learning." She seems to pride herself on this element of the school culture. It is interesting, then, to note the various ways such a climate is perceived by these four members of the Amarette faculty.

Ella seems to feel that this pressure to learn and grow suffocates her efforts to care for her students and herself in important ways. She describes the school as "an overachieving school full of overachievers." She says,

> If there's a bandwagon, we'll be on it. Each year there's a new thing to study…It's hard to keep up with. I think Amarette does too much and we need to look at what we're doing and reevaluate and decide if we need every bloody thing that comes down the pike. I'm not sure that the expectations for teachers are realistic. I really don't think they are.

"This school will make you old, I know that. It will do you in," Ella says. When asked what about the school seems to foster this drive to achieve, she responded, "There's political pressure to succeed. So there's professional development pressure.

There's test pressure. Title I funds are now gone, so they're cutting positions. So that's out there." But Ella also pointed to the pressure that teachers place on themselves, saying,

> I don't think teachers would be here if they weren't overachievers to begin with. It's not easy to get here. You know it. And then because we're teachers, we believe we should learn for the rest of our lives nonstop… every cell should be soaked with information. So a lot of it comes from us. We put it on us. But I think we put it on us because somebody taught us this is good. I think we should be having a lot more fun.

Ella points to a culture of teaching that exists outside of Amarette Elementary, but that teachers at Amarette have, to some extent, internalized. They come to see themselves as being good teachers only if they are always learning, always studying their practice, always striving to meet the needs of students inside and outside of the classroom—needs, sometimes, that are unable to be met. And, it seems, that these are the very teachers Dawn tries most to attract. Remember that Dawn said that she looks for people who "have a passion for teaching," who see teaching as "a calling."

On the one hand, Ella worries that the drive to overachieve and be everything to everyone sets a bad example for students. She says,

> I'm concerned that kids are going to live what they learn. I'm toast. Are we putting that on the kids and instilling that in them? If you're not doing everything, jumping through every hoop then you're not cutting it? Well, we're setting them up for years of therapy.

These messages contradict what she is trying to teach her students, that it is okay to be imperfect, that life is hard and they need to give themselves a chance.

On the other hand, she notes that working at an overachieving school means there's little room to really take care of herself. She says that the principal is good about putting in the staff memo, "Be good to yourself, rest," but wonders when she's supposed to do that. Even as a music teacher, working generally outside of the weight of standardized tests, Ella feels pressure to go above and beyond what is stated in her teaching contract. She tells of preparing for the end-of-year choral concert,

> It's a nice thought that we should take care of ourselves, but the reality of it is I'd like to, but I've been working nights and weekends because of this chorus concert. I look at the kids and think, I'll be with you for two solid hours on Monday. And then I'm going to rehearse the fourth grade chorus. Three hours, thank you very much.

As she talked about the chorus concert she was putting together, she said, "I don't have to put so much into it, but if I don't we don't have the quality. I could make it campy, but… (shakes her head)." And when discussing her teaching on a daily basis, she says she could just as easily let the students play on computers and have a lot less preparation to do. "There's value in just sitting there and pooping around, a lot of us get our best stuff that way, and I'd have an easy job," she says, "Unfortunately, God didn't make me that way." It seems that Ella has also internalized messages about womanhood and about teaching.

Outside of school, Ella is a single mom and grandmother to a new baby who resides with her. As such, she is struggling every day to make time for herself. Ella tries

to make time for singing at local coffee houses and other venues, something she wishes she were able to do more. Ella admits that there are responsibilities she has as a mother, as a teacher, that limit the amount of care she can do for herself. But she also talks of her own internal drive to succeed. Both in her personal and her professional life, she reflects on never feeling truly accomplished. She says, "I keep telling myself, if you're not going to PhD then the [compact disc] needs to come out. You need to do the CD, and I do. Because I need to prove myself, you know. For me the CD is the PhD."

Ella speaks to something greater that influences her desire to achieve too. Outside of the school, beyond the staff meetings and memos, the teachers at Amarette are learning to be the overachievers they are. Ella says, "I think a lot of its cultural and societal, but I think we've been taught to do it to ourselves. Somebody taught me to do it. It's like being obsessive compulsive." Ella often commented that if she were a man, her life as a teacher and as a parent would be different, even easier. "I don't think men are as detail-oriented in their jobs and at home and with the kids," she says. Throughout our interviews, she repeatedly lamented, "I don't know why I work so hard, I really don't know. I need to stop, really. I need to stop being so conscientious and stop caring so much."

Ella points to various aspects of her identity that she feels contribute to her struggles to find time for the things she wants most in her life. She says,

I do think as a woman it's much harder. I think as a single parent, it's hideous. And I think that I'm in the norm in that. Let's be real, it's 50% for single parents in here. So I think the expectation is high. I don't know if other jobs are like this. I don't know, but I know we hit the floor running here and we go all day. We

don't go out to lunch—So I wonder whether its my age. Maybe I'm like, the things that are important to me—quality of life—but it's not realistic because if I had to leave this position, what am I going to do? Go start in some county and have three schools again? …We should be having a lot more fun in here. A lot more fun.

There are many things at work in Ella's life that influence her ability to enact her pedagogy of care. It is clear that constructs of gender and of teaching are two aspects of Ella's identity that have developed over time, in response to her life experience, but also within a societal and cultural context that have particular understandings of and expectations for her in each of these roles. And, as Ella suggests, Amarette is a place where these expectations are amplified. Driven teachers come to Amarette because it is challenging and because it offers the opportunity to work with children in need. What this means for those who work there, however, is that they do not simply put in eight hours a day and go home. They are constantly pushed to succeed and do better than they did the day before.

Throughout our time together, Ella spent a great deal of time discussing the negative, even dangerous, consequences of the professional climate at Amarette. To her, the drive to learn and grow as teachers has reached an unhealthy level that pushes teachers to give too much of themselves to their work. But, she recognizes that the faculty at Amarette were, in part, hired because they displayed these qualities. And it is likely that they chose Amarette because they knew could continue to grow there. She points to something greater than the school—something within the culture of teaching or of womanhood—that pushes the women teachers at her school to work so hard. Though

she isn't able to identify its exact origin, she is suspicious that these messages about self-sacrifice and always striving to get better have been present in her life for many years.

Interestingly, others with whom I spoke had very different feelings about this professional climate and the impact it has on their efforts to care. For Kathy, the professional climate of Amarette is a source of pride and strength, one that she relishes as a teacher. In fact, it is one of the reasons Kathy came to Amarette to work. She says,

> I like that it is very professional. Peoples' attitude overall is always trying to improve. Let's see what the next thing we can try is. Let's keep reading about the next thing we can try or what we are going to accomplish. So we just keep that positive attitude. This constantly growing attitude is what makes [Amarette] so great to me.

Another time, she reflected, "We have high expectations for everybody. We do everything we can to help them work towards that." Nowhere in our conversation does Kathy suggest that the professional development and drive to be lifelong learners work against her efforts to care for herself or others. On the contrary, she talks about all of the opportunities she has for learning as contributing to her efforts to care for herself. She says, "I like it. It's like big city versus small town. There are more opportunities, more to do."

Kathy is aware of her internal drive to grow, to be busy, to always be learning. But unlike Ella, she does not think of this drive as something negative that society or the culture of teaching has taught her. She sees this part of her identity as a means to fulfilling her goals as a teacher and as a woman. The professional development offered at Amarette has helped her grow in her knowledge as a teacher, and so she feels she is better

able to meet her students' needs as she has defined them. This, to Kathy, is an essential element of her efforts to care.

One reason that Kathy may be less overwhelmed by the drive to achieve at Amarette is that she assumes fewer responsibilities outside of the school context. Whereas Ella is a single mother raising four children and a grandchild, Kathy is single and living on her own. It seems that Ella cares for so many others throughout the course of her day, there is little time left to care for herself and chase her dreams, something she laments repeatedly. On the contrary, Kathy has ample time to enjoy the company of friends, exercise, work on art projects and various other self-caring activities. Though both have internalized a similar need to achieve, Kathy is more able to meet this need for herself because she is not pulled in as many other directions. Perhaps it is Ella's fear that she cannot achieve in all the ways she wants to personally that contributes to her sense of despair.

The messages Mary has received throughout her life about needing to work harder and achieve more have become an integral part of her identity as a teacher as they have with Kathy and Ella. And like Kathy, Mary speaks of being attracted to the professional climate of Amarette because she knew it would push her and challenge her to always learn more. She says,

> It's just incredible. You feel this sort of academic climate for the teachers, not just the kids. And I am like, God you're constantly learning here. Like, there's no such thing as 'This is my classroom. Okay, go home.' I mean, you want to push yourself and I love that.

The image of Amarette as an academic setting where teachers push themselves to continually learn and grow is shared by many of the women in this study. Some also spoke about this image being carried outside of the school itself. Mary comments, "People are like, it's so challenging there. Why do you want to work that hard?" And yet, Mary does want to work at Amarette for all the reasons other teachers think Amarette would be too grueling a place to teach. What is it about Mary and other teachers at Amarette that draw them to this context? For Mary it seems she has always had an internal drive to succeed and to do better. The fact that there are so many opportunities for professional development and growth at Amarette is appealing to her in that it allows her to try to overcome her feelings of inadequacy and try to prove herself.

Like Kathy, Mary generally talks about this pressure to succeed in a positive light, suggesting that she does not see the dangers it presents in reinforcing destructive messages about her own self worth. She says,

> I wanted to teach here because there's constant pressure and whether you choose to accept it or not, you could push yourself to unhealthy extremes, but there's pressure to keep reading and keep up with stuff and push things around and not get stuck in a rut and that's why I wanted to go here.

Though she often receives praise for her teaching from colleagues and from Dawn, she also is constantly being asked to read more, to join study groups, do more for her students inside and outside of school, present at local conferences, and other professional activities. For Mary and many teachers at Amarette, this reflects her understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Teaching in her eyes means always learning and being in love with new ideas. Yet, this constant call for professional

development also sends the message that she still has lots of learning to do. This, muddled with mixed messages from administration and colleagues, leaves Mary wondering about her strengths as a teacher.

Also embedded in Mary's language is an implicit reliance on the expertise and knowledge of others. Phrases like, "if I could just read more, get more, I could meet this student's needs better," suggest that Mary puts a great deal of faith in texts and other professional resources to help her do her job. Rarely if ever does she acknowledge herself as a source of knowledge except when her practice is validated by others. This understanding is represented in others language as well. Sarah, who shares Kathy and Ella's belief that the professional climate at Amarette is a source of strength and support for her, says,

> We're given opportunities to grow; we're given chances to go learn more things.
> When we want to know something, we're given the opportunity to go watch
> somebody else do it. I like that. I like that I'm encouraged to do all of those
> things.

Like Mary, Sarah seems to believe that in order to learn something new about teaching, in order to grow, she must watch others (experts) do what it is she wants to do. As such, she can gain the knowledge she needs to achieve more as a teacher. What is more, all of these teachers talk about learning as a constructive process that requires an active, critical learner. Yet, as learners themselves, they seem to be quite satisfied to play a rather passive role.

Like Mary, Sarah seems to seek outside approval and knowledge from authorities. Whether it is from her principal, who offers her little in return, or from professional

developers, texts or colleagues, Sarah yearns for that praise she so often sought as a student. Though she is given leeway in her instruction and often told that she is trusted by her principal, she doesn't feel as if her principal knows enough about what she does to offer meaningful feedback on her work. She seems to have faith that she is doing what she knows best and caring for her students, but is disappointed in not having others recognize these things.

Discussion

The professional climate of Amarette is an essential component of the shared vision Dawn strives to foster among the faculty. As a source of power in this place, Dawn clearly communicates the expectation that teachers will continue to learn and grow as professionals via the professional development she requires, the vision and mission statement she helped to create, and the language she uses to talk about good teaching. As discussed in chapter three, there are many forms of professional development continuously taking place at Amarette, some of which require mandatory participation from teachers. Among these are Wednesday Workshops, grade-level team study groups, vertical team study-groups, and faculty-wide meetings and in-services. Other forms of professional development, such as Tuesday Tidbits, Teachers as Readers/Writers, the Action Research Group and other inquiry groups are not required, but strongly encouraged. Dawn states that she looks to hire teachers she believes will embrace these opportunities for professional growth and constantly tries to foster the idea that such endeavors are crucial to the continued betterment of Amarette as a place for learning.

For the most part, the teachers with whom I spoke enthusiastically embrace opportunities for professional development as an important source of support for their efforts to enact care in this place. Kathy says, "This constantly growing attitude is what makes Amarette so great to me." Mary echoes this sentiment when she says, "It's just incredible… you want to push yourself and I love that." Sarah offers, "We're given opportunities to grow… I like that. I like that I'm encouraged to do all of those things."

Only Ella raised questions about the possible consequences of always looking to others for expertise. I found her comments quite insightful when she suggested that in always looking outwardly at what others can offer them, the teachers at Amarette rarely had time to reflect on their own achievements, to name their own expertise and make contributions to the knowledge base of teaching themselves. Ella is critical of her colleagues' drive to "over achieve," suggesting that they are pushed by some internal fear of inadequacy. She wonders whether this fear is embedded in their constructs of teaching or constructs of gender, but admits that she, too, feels in some ways defined by it. She feels as if she must always do more, be more than she is.

Others in the study share the internal drive described by Ella, but much less critically. Mary, for instance, talks about her need to always "read more, get more" from books and other sources of expertise in order to help her better meet her students' needs. What she does not acknowledge is that by putting so much faith in the authority of others, she is complicit in reinforcing the messages she has received her entire life about her own inability to define herself and answer her own questions. Mary calls the professional climate at Amarette a source of support as she strives to care for her students because it reflects her need to rely on the expertise and authority of others to validate her experience

as a teacher. That Dawn encourages Mary and others to continually study sends yet another complicated message to Mary about her worth as a teacher. She is being told that in order to become the teacher Dawn wants her to become, she must keep reading, keep getting more expertise, reinforcing her belief that she is not good enough as she is.

Mary's case exemplifies the complicated way pedagogies of care are developed and sustained by relationships of power. The context in which Mary works is filled with contradictory messages about who she is becoming as a teacher. These messages come from people with varying degrees of authority in relation to Mary. The message about the importance of professional growth seems particularly powerful in shaping Mary's construct of care because it comes from Dawn, the principal, and because it resonates with her own understandings of who she is as a woman and as a teacher. While others point to the importance of the professional climate as influencing their efforts to care as teachers, this thread seems particularly dangerous for Mary as it reinforces destructive messages about her identity.

For Kathy and Sarah, the pressure to grow as professionals reinforces their feelings that they must look to others for expertise and validation of their experiences as teachers. As such, I argue that for these women too, this element of the school context serves to buttress their marginalization as women and as teachers. The constant pressure to "study" leaves these teachers little time to reflect and publish, develop or share their own expertise as teachers. In this way, their experiences and voices as professionals are negated. This is only made worse by the fact that these teachers work in isolation where they have few opportunities to share knowledge or work together to build and disseminate knowledge to others.

Summary

The school context in which these teachers work contributes to their evolving constructs of care in complex, and often contradictory ways. Because the various elements discussed here--relationships with administrators, a shared vision about good teaching and the professional climate of the school--are negotiated in the midst of power dynamics, they are interpreted by these women differently. In some important ways, the interpretations these women have of their context reflect their lenses as persons bearing unique life experiences. For example, Ella and Sarah have different understandings of Dawn's efforts to care for them via her "loose" leadership style than do their colleagues. Similarly, the shared visions described by the women here more closely resemble their own philosophies of care than they do one another. These discrepancies reveal the power of life experience in shaping the way we understand the world around us.

Also at work here is the complex interaction of various dimensions of identity as they are negotiated among various contexts. That Mary, for instance, invests herself in her own professional growth reflects both her faith in the authority of Dawn and others in positions of power as well as her internalized notion that she is never good enough as a woman. Mary is struggling to define herself, to find validation for herself amid various levels of competing messages about her worth. Mary's case makes clear the fact that understanding how pedagogies of care are understood and enacted requires a critical exploration of the contexts in which they exist.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Care in the Lives of Women Teachers

This is a study of how six women elementary school teachers understand what it means to care. I began by exploring how their constructs of care are entangled in their constructs of gender. I then discussed how their constructs of care manifest themselves in their lives as teachers. Finally, I turned to a conversation about how various aspects of the school context influence their efforts to enact these pedagogies of care. Threaded throughout this dissertation are questions about power, knowledge and identity as they are related to questions of caring as women and as teachers. The research questions that shaped this inquiry focused on how these women's understandings evolve from their life experiences and how the contexts in which they find themselves work to shape those experiences. These contexts include various regimes of truth about what it means to be a woman and a teacher, the institutional setting of the school, and the power relationships that are inherent in both. As I have shown, it is amid this dynamic interplay of contexts and meanings that these six women struggle to negotiate their identities.

Marginalization as Women

In this study, a central theme evolved across all women's stories: a struggle to name themselves as gendered and caring beings. Maxine Greene (1973) writes, "Freedom is the freedom to decide what sort of person you ought to be" (p. 284). In looking back over the narratives shared here, there are multiple examples of how the

contexts in which these women live influence who they will be—as women, as mothers, as daughters, as teachers. Amid the dynamic interplay of these contexts they struggle to negotiate their identities. And yet even as they struggle, they internalize messages about their roles as women and as teachers that serve to further marginalize their voices and experiences. In this section, I highlight three aspects of the women's pedagogies of care, offering examples of their struggles to "decide what sort of person[s]" they might be.

Sacrificing Self

In chapter four, I show how the constructs of care shared by these women, in many ways, reflect dominant patriarchal discourses about care as central to the lives of women. These include care as both nurturing and self-sacrificing. Throughout the stories told by these women, we see these elements resurface time and again. Mary seems to be practically absent from her classroom, leaving no space for herself as the teacher. She gives of herself in extraordinary ways in order to make sure that her students' feel comfortable and loved. Elizabeth, too, lets her students come to school up to two hours early, sacrificing her own reflection and preparation time, time when she could be conversing with colleagues. Ella talks about the impossibility of being able to care for herself when she feels such a drive to "overachieve" as a teacher.

As I explore the narratives of these six women, I am reminded of Freire (1998), who writes, "[The oppressed] are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized" (p. 49). So, in as far as these women have internalized the regimes of truth and power that shape their life experience, they adopt what Jennifer Gore calls the "technologies of self," through which they enact their own

oppression. Mary sees herself as "the bad child," as "asking for too much," because she has spent her life trying to make sense of messages about her inadequacy. In trying to overcome these messages, she sacrifices herself physically and emotionally. She remembers Ann who, even on her deathbed, continued to put others' needs over her own. She continues to live within a difficult relationship with her mother, which continues to make her feel inadequate and unfinished. Mary has internalized constructs of womanhood and caring that include self-sacrifice to an unhealthy degree.

As a teacher, Mary seems to be complicit in her own dehumanization as she rarely acknowledges her own needs. Teaching offers her a unique place to enact this version of care. Because she is constantly being asked to learn more, because the structure of schooling leaves little time for her to care for herself, Mary feels at home enacting a pedagogy of care in which she is absent as a subject. Her pedagogy of care puts students' needs over her own, making her practically nonexistent in her own classroom. However, as I have argued before, she has not completely "emptied her soul" in order to meet her students' needs because the needs she identifies reflect her own needs as a carer. Mary needs to care in a self-sacrificing way as doing so allows her to feel she is fulfilling the role of "woman."

Sarah verbalizes this contradictory relationship between caring for self and others when she says, "I would argue that doing what needs to be done [for others] ultimately is good for me." Like Mary, Sarah appears to need to care in ways that include sacrificing herself for others, in order to fulfill the version of womanhood to which she aspires. Sacrificing self for others is a crucial aspect of these women's pedagogies of care, which contribute to their own evolving sense of gendered self. They are closer to becoming

"women" because they care in particular ways. And yet, the constructs of women they are fulfilling marginalize them as persons who seemingly struggle to determine their own identities. In making their own needs dependent on fulfilling the needs of others, it appears they accomplish two things: first, they make it so that their happiness and fulfillment rests in the hands of others (namely students, whose wealth of needs cannot possibly be met by a single teacher); and second, they negate any needs of their own that lie outside of the roles they assign themselves as women. Internalizing and enacting these pedagogies of care work against their freedom to care for themselves.

Caring in Isolation

I believe that the seeming lack of freedom these women have to name themselves as gendered, caring beings is further exacerbated by the isolated conditions in which they work. On the one hand, these women's pedagogies of care reflect their own needs as carers to care for students in ways congruent with their life experience as women. As such, many do not spend much time trying to "know" their students as much more than as learners, as artists, as musicians. Their efforts to meet their students' needs are made isolated because their pedagogies of care are individual, reflecting their own needs as carers. Some of these teachers even go so far as to renounce the contexts outside of the classroom, believing they will be better able to focus on students' needs. Kathy says, "You're a kid. You're here. Let's think about that." Others, such as Mary, Ella and Elizabeth, talk about their students' need to escape from dangerous, neglectful and sometimes unloving conditions at home. They offer the classroom, and the caring relationships they establish with their students, as a safe haven from the outside world.

This "deficit thinking" further adds to the isolation of their efforts to care for students, seemingly fed by ignorance and fear of students' familial and socio-cultural life experiences.

Ava, whose life experience seems to more closely parallel that of her students, tends to view her students as members of a broader context. For Ava, her students represent for her the experience of growing up as a second-language learner in America. She sees in them the struggles she herself experienced; making sense of alternate cultural traditions, speaking for her parents and assuming a great deal of responsibility at an early age. Because she has life experiences that more closely resemble that of her students than her colleagues, I have argued here that she may be more likely to meet her students' needs. I also believe that Ava thinks of her efforts to care as less isolated than do others. She strives to participate in their familial and cultural experiences outside of school. And yet, still embedded in her language is a desire to provide a "safe haven" from the outside world. While Ava has different understandings of her students' experience outside of school (she does not see it as dangerous, but as loaded with responsibility), she nonetheless wants to offer them an alternate experience at school. She wants her students to "just be kids" because she believes they have little opportunity to do so outside of school.

That these women work in isolating conditions also adds to the individuality of their efforts to care. They rely on themselves to identify and meet the needs of students, in part because they have little opportunity to work with others in an effort to do so. The culture of schools reflects a factory-model that emphasizes efficiency—one teacher to a room full of students. Despite Amarette's focus on professional development, these

women spend an exorbitant amount of time alone in their classrooms with their students. They come to their work with visions of care as an isolated act, and the context in which they work serves to reinforce this notion.

I believe that the more isolated these teachers' enactments of care become, the more marginalized their voices and experiences become as well. In striving to meet students' needs alone, these women are not likely to have many opportunities to share their experience, to see their pedagogies of care reflected in the experience of others, or to develop a sense of expertise about their work. Their voices and experiences as teachers and as women become increasingly marginalized by the contexts in which they work and by the understandings they bring to teaching.

Looking to Experts

Another important way I see these women's pedagogies of care contributing to their marginalization is through the faith they put in the authority of others to validate their experience and offer expertise about teaching. Mary says, "If I can just read more, get more…" as she talks about trying to meet the needs of her students. Kathy describes an in-service where she learned important lessons about how to teach problem solving, something she sees as helping her meet the needs of her artists. Sarah talks about watching others so that she can learn from them. She says,

> We're given opportunities to grow; we're given chances to go learn more things. When we want to know something, we're given the opportunity to go watch somebody else do it. I like that. I like that I'm encouraged to do all of those things.

Within the school, there is great emphasis put on the professional development of teachers—study groups, shared reading, expert visitors—where teachers are expected to invest themselves in an effort to grow. For the most part, these women relish in the professional climate of the school. Kathy says, "This constantly growing attitude is what makes [Amarette] so great to me." Similarly, Mary reflects, "It's just incredible. You feel this sort of academic climate for the teachers, not just the kids. And I am like, God you're constantly learning here… I mean, you want to push yourself and I love that."

Ella, however, disagrees, saying, "there's no time to think, reflect…" Ella's insight is significant. She points to the fact that these teachers are constantly pressured (by themselves and others) to "get" expertise from others, to validate their experience and understanding by comparing it to the experience and understanding of experts in the field. As a result, there are few opportunities for teachers to share their expertise, to construct and disseminate knowledge about teaching derived from their own experience. A pressure to learn from others marginalizes their voices and experience as teachers. The irony here is that these six teachers talk about the importance of helping students construct knowledge while the teachers, themselves, look to the expertise of others. Kathy talks about teaching and learning this way:

> It's about being a communicator, being a thinker. But not just like taking in information and remembering it and then spitting it out, I think it gives them more power in their world. Not so much power like in powerful, but they have the power to control their own destiny. They are thoughtful people and they can go out in the world and not just take what is given to them, but go about their business.

Kathy is incredibly insightful here as she points to the relationship between constructing one's own knowledge about the world and having power to self-determine. And yet, she and others seem to refrain from constructing knowledge about teaching and learning themselves. In part because of the school context in which they work and because of messages they have received about the value of their personal knowledge and experience from broader societal contexts, it appears these teachers relinquish this power to self-determine they want so much to help students attain.

Such an emphasis on learning from the authority of others reinforces messages some of these women have been internalizing for years. Mary, for instance, has lived her entire life feeling inadequate and unfinished. As a teacher, she comes to school each day where others tell her she needs to read and study in order to do a better job. This experience seems to reinforce Mary's feelings of inadequacy.

Not only do these women look to others for expertise about teaching, many appear look to authority figures for approval and validation. Dawn seems to want to trust her teachers to do what they know is best—removing herself from their immediate contexts—a way she sees herself as caring for them as professionals. Ironically, Dawn appears to be signifying that her teachers have an incredible amount of expertise. And yet, Ella and Sarah claim to be neglected and uncared for as a result. Sarah craves Dawn's presence in her classroom as a source of validation of her work. Ella repeatedly says, "They don't care what I do up here" when talking about her relationship with others in the school. Both women seek investment from authority figures in their work, highlighting the fact that even among the women in this building, there are power

relationships at work. Ella and Sarah seem to feel as if their work as teachers needs the validation and approval of the principal.

I believe that in seeking outside approval and validation of their knowledge and experience, these women participate in their own marginalization. They act on their own feelings of inadequacy, and when they do not receive the investment they want from others, they feel further devalued. The school context in which they work contributes to this dynamic in complex ways. On the one hand, teachers are pressured to learn from others and given little time to construct their own knowledge. As such, they seem to have little faith in themselves as experts in their work, and so seek approval from the administration. On the other hand, the principal claims to place a great deal of trust in them as professionals to do their work and so refrains from encroaching on their classroom territory or interfering too much in their daily work with students. Thus, some teachers are left feeling devalued because they doubt their own expertise and cannot garner the approval from the principal that they seek.

I believe that the pedagogies of care held by these six women reflect their needs to care in particular ways: They see themselves as self-sacrificing and they see care as an isolated act, and they believe they need to look to the authority of others. I believe that these women have internalized dominant discourses about womanhood and caring that contribute to their enactments of care as teachers. Through these enactments, they are complicit in the marginalization of their voices and experiences as women and as teachers. The culture of the school contributes to these understandings in complex ways.

What seems to be strikingly absent from these teachers' pedagogies of care is a critical lens about their participation in their own processes of becoming. As William Ayers (1998) says, "Only beings who can think about the ways they are determined can free themselves" (p. 5). So what would it take to create pedagogies of care that work towards freedom as an end?

Recasting Pedagogies of Care

In chapter two, I lay out seven aspects of students' growth for which teachers strive to care—intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, moral, spiritual, physical—that were drawn from literature on teaching and learning (see Table 3, p. 93). My work here has supported this literature, suggesting that, indeed, teachers care in varying degrees about these various aspects of students' growth. As with the scholars who write about these aspects of growth, however, each teacher emphasizes some aspects over others, reflecting her life experience and how she has come to construct her pedagogy of care.

What is important to note is that the aspects of students' development that these teachers emphasize have been identified through the lens of their own experiences. I have made the case that teachers are, to some extent, unable to identify students' needs because they cannot "empty [their] souls" as Weil (1951) would have them do to "see the needs of another." Rather, I suggest that these teachers care in ways they need to care. This is a complicated framework because, on the one hand, I am arguing that these women are meeting their own needs as carers who need to care in particular ways. Elizabeth, for instance needs to nurture her students because she does not have a child of her own to nurture. On the other, I argue that the pedagogies of care enacted by these

women further reinforce their marginalization as women. That they continuously isolate themselves, cast themselves in traditional roles as self-sacrificing and place authority in others for their validation seems to work against their abilities to name themselves as gendered beings. These women are limited in their abilities to self-define because of the multiple contexts they inhabit. This is what is so complicated about care in the lives of these teachers. They are at once claiming to meet the needs of their students, caring in ways that more closely reflect their own needs than those of their students, and limiting their own ability to define themselves, as they are complicit in the marginalization of their own voice and experience.

I see a dynamic relationship between these teachers' ability to free themselves from the determination of others (and thus care for themselves as gendered beings) and their ability to care for students. Based on the discussions shared here, I believe that if these teachers are to achieve what they claim they are trying to achieve, namely meeting the needs of students, and at the same time empower themselves as women who can name themselves as gendered beings, their pedagogies of care will need to be more *authentic, critical, collective* and *inclusive* than those explored here.

Caring as authentic

The women in this study claim to "know" their students and thus to "know" what their students need. For Kathy, this means "knowing" her students' strengths and weaknesses as artists. For Mary, it means "knowing" that her students are in need of social and emotional nurturing. Ella "knows" that her students need to talk about difficult issues in life. Ava "knows" that her students need an opportunity to "just be

kids" because the demands on them outside of school are steep. These teachers have various ways of getting to know their students, including staying after school to help them with homework, visiting with them over lunch, inviting them to write and talk about their experiences in class—and yet I wonder how well they really know them at all. Given that all of these women work with the same population of students in one school setting—some even work with the same students—how is that they have defined those students' needs so differently?

I call here for a more authentic pedagogy of care; one that is critically aware of teachers' inability to care without "knowing" students in more authentic ways. Drawing on the multicultural literature cited earlier, I point to the need for teachers to teach in ways that are more relevant to their students' lives. (Ladson Billings, 1994, Lareau, 2000 Valdes, 1996, 2001, Valenzuela, 1999) By authentic, then, I mean taking the time to know parents, families, and communities in ways that inform us about students' life experiences—their interests, racial and cultural identities, coming into real contact with students' worlds outside of school—so that we can strive to connect school and home contexts in meaningful ways.

Sadly, the majority of references to students' lives in these women's stories point to what is lacking at home—sufficient love, attention, physical and emotional nurturance, support with school—all of which I believe evolve from teachers' need to provide these things and the deficit model of thinking discussed earlier. I believe that the assumptions these teachers make about their students' lives raise questions about cultural, racial and socio-economic biases embedded in their thinking; biases that research has shown can have powerful implications for students' learning (Rist, 1970). In order to engage in

authentic pedagogies of care, I believe, teachers must also attend to the other dimensions of care addressed here: caring as critical, collective and inclusive.

Caring as critical

In order to authentically care for students, as teachers we must become aware of our own lenses—identifying how our life experiences shape our identities and worldviews. Only through critical autobiographical inquiry can we begin to deconstruct the meanings we bring to our relationships, our work, and our lives in ways that will free us to name our own becoming. In naming ourselves, we become better able to name others—in this case, to identify and meet the needs of students.

The literature on teacher education suggests that if teachers are going to meet the needs of our students we need to engage in reflective practice—usually including thoughtfulness about instructional decision making and student achievement (Zeichner, 1987). However, I don't believe the research on reflective practice goes far enough in recognizing the complex relationship between teachers' life experience, identity development and pedagogy. Often conversations of reflective practice focus on one aspect of teacher identity development—racial lens, for instance—calling on teachers to plumb their racial identity in search of assumptions or biases that might impact their pedagogical decision making (Landsman, 2001). There perhaps needs to be more attention paid to teachers as gendered and caring beings who negotiate their identities amid institutional, familial, cultural and societal contexts, each bearing its own regime of truth about what it means to be a woman.

Pinar and Grumet (1976), Krall (1988), Grumet (1992), Connelly (1993), and Butt (1995) speak to the value of autobiographical inquiry as a means for professional development. They understand education as the sum of life experience, and critical awareness of that experience: "We are educated to the extent that we are conscious of our experience and to the degree that we are freed by this knowledge to act in the world" (Grumet, 1992, p. 33). Such an approach attempts to "help us see the ordinary as strange and in need of some explanation" (Roche, 1973, p. 27). This literature explores meanings that individuals bring to educational experience as defined above and pushes for systematic inquiry into that experience, or the process of *currere*.

This particular body of research, while intimately personal and reflective, is tangential to most discussions of professional development and evaluation with regards to teaching. Perhaps because of its abstract and theoretical nature, it speaks solely to the individual and makes no attempt to address how such a process might be applied at the school or district level. This is both the beauty and the weakness of its contributions. Recognizing teaching as a very personal and individual endeavor, the method of *currere* allows for incredibly hard, emotional reflection for the purposes of better understanding who we are becoming as teachers. There is little research, however, on what this type of inquiry might look like as a form of professional development, how it might be managed or evaluated. It is the closest we have come to tackling the personal dimensions of teacher biography, but has not been applied to the study of teacher identity development in ways that have helped teacher educators better understand this process. Such an application would prove useful in making sense of the interplay between individual biographies and how such life experience defines who we become as teachers.

Caring as collective

Another means for achieving authentic pedagogies of care relies in our ability to work collectively to meet our own and students' needs. This will allow us to overcome the isolation of our work with students. This is important for a number of reasons. First, as argued here, isolation leads to ignorance of student's life experience making it difficult for teachers to know students authentically. Secondly, isolation serves to further marginalize the voices and experiences of teachers by keeping us from engaging in dialogue about our work. Thus, the isolation that defines teaching works against the interests of teachers and students alike. Within the four walls of the classroom, teachers and students are left to fend for themselves—teachers struggle to make sense of their students' needs without sufficient information and support, and at the same time feel marginalized and uncared for themselves.

Fisher (2001) writes about the process of consciousness-raising as a collective and collaborative activity (p. 38). She explains that in order for women to deconstruct our own life experience, we need opportunities for sharing and analysis of ideas:

> Sharing experiences and feelings requires others to listen and in some fashion respond to them. Analysis demands an exchange of ideas through which different interpretations can be compared and assessed. Judgments about how to act in the face of oppression depend on such interactions to acquire a solid basis. Thus, consciousness-raising does not merely provide a platform for individuals to describe their experiences, feelings and ideas. It provides a *collaborative process through which individuals are constituted and supported as political speakers and actors* (pp. 38-39).

The idea of collective agency here empowering teachers to act politically opens the door to discussions of fundamental change in the structure of schools with regards to the organization of teachers' time, the allocation of resources, the nature of professional development and so on. But such change will come about only as teachers begin to see themselves in positions of power, as agents with voice and knowledge.

A collective pedagogy of care must also include families and communities as partners in driving change. Valdes (1996, 2001) and others tell us that Latino cultures have different conceptions of education. This does not mean that they do not want to participate in the education of their children. We need to take the time to better understand how each member of the community can contribute to meeting the needs of students and work together to do so. Working with colleagues, with families and communities will help break down some of the deficit thinking embedded in teachers' pedagogies of care adding to the authenticity of our work.

I feel that the notion that each teacher should try to touch "one child" and be content with this achievement is not good enough. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience held by teachers all over the nation that is essentially trapped within the four walls of our classrooms. Reaching out to others, inside and outside of the teaching profession creates opportunity for teachers to assert our voices, validate our experience and work together to construct and refine our expertise.

Caring as inclusive

Finally, as some of these women allude, teachers themselves need to be better cared for. Gilligan (1994) writes about an "inclusive solution" through which women are able to balance caring for others and caring for self. I assert here that we cannot rely on principals to assume this responsibility just as we cannot entrust care of students to a single teacher in isolation. Pedagogies of care that are inclusive include self as a subject of care. Teachers need to take time to care for themselves in authentic ways. The reciprocity Noddings suggests is implicit in the teacher-student relationship is not enough. It is not reciprocal or caring when teachers give of themselves to unhealthy extremes as Mary has done and in return are left feeling as if they still haven't done enough because not every student in the room has achieved. There must be limits to the sacrificing we do for others—limits that include stopping when we are not cared for ourselves.

Creating a pedagogy that is inclusive will require significant changes in the culture of teaching and learning; the culture of schools. Administrators must be aware of how each teacher is giving herself to her work and encourage a healthy balance between caring for self and others. Teachers must work collectively to support one another as we try to include ourselves as subjects of care. What makes this incredibly difficult is the fact that, as I have discussed in this dissertation, women internalize dominant discourses of our roles and our worth. As such, we are seemingly complicit in our own oppression and the oppression of other women. When Mary's colleagues grow angry with her for prioritizing her therapy appointment over working on the team museum, they reinforce

her feeling that she shouldn't be taking time for herself when others are in need. These messages work against Mary's efforts to care for herself.

An inclusive pedagogy of care would also be aware of who the subjects of care are and how their needs differ. Through critical self-analysis of our life experience, we may grow more capable of identifying our own needs and thus separate them from the needs of our students. As Fisher (2001) states, "Only under conditions of genuine self-care—that is, freedom—can [teacher and students] give care to each other" (p. 126).

Implications

In chapter one of this dissertation, I laid out three goals for this study: to challenge dominant constructs of care, to raise critical questions about how the contexts in which these women work influence their understandings and enactments of care, and to draw on the life experience of these women as sources of knowledge and understanding. In this final section, I address each of these in greater depth.

Challenging Dominant Constructs of Care

I believe that a strength of this work is that it complicates care as an aspect of life experience. It brings into question the obvious nature of care as an outward act of nurturing by asserting that these women have distinctly different understandings of care that are informed their life experience, their identities as gendered beings and the various contexts in which they live and work. The aspects of students' needs outlined in Table 3 (p. 93) of this work point to various elements of students' identities and experience that are cared for by teachers. Scholars have addressed the need for teachers to care for

students' intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, moral, spiritual, and physical growth. And yet, embedded in each of these arguments is the notion that caring is a simple relationship through which teachers identify and meet students' needs. In this dissertation, I assert that caring relationships are messy. They are complicated by the lens of life experience through which teachers view their students' needs and influenced by the contexts in which teachers and students live.

Raising Critical Questions

In this work, I raise important questions about the institution of schooling and the relationships that define schooling contexts. I point to the organization and culture of schools, which places teachers in isolation as they strive to meet the needs of their students. I suggest that this system serves to further reinforce their isolation as teachers in that it prevents necessary exchange of ideas, and thus the validation of personal knowledge and experience. I also believe that it contributes to teachers' mercenary personas, the belief that they need to "save" students and that their efforts to do so are confined to the classroom. Among my arguments is the point that schools further exacerbate tensions in pedagogies of care by focusing on the technical, academic side of schooling and not acknowledging the life experience of students. Education that invalidates or neglects students' lives outside of school further pushes teachers to view their students in isolation.

Learning from Life experience

This study is informed by the voice and experience of teachers currently at work negotiating their identities within dynamic contexts. It is significant in that the meanings I construct about care in the lives of these women are drawn from the stories they tell of their life experience. And yet, the meanings we make of life experience are complex and contradictory—influenced by dominant societal discourses, familial and experiential discourses, socio-cultural discourses, discourses of schools. I suggest here that part of learning from these women's life experience is critically examining the contexts in which they construct meaning of their experience. In so doing, I begin to understand the nature of Gore's technologies of self. I make the claim here that these women are, in many ways, complicit in their own marginalization to the extent that they live uncritically. And yet, I provide examples where individuals begin to explore alternate ways of being as they resist dominant constructs. This work strives to make sense of life experience and yet recognizes that doing so requires putting such experience squarely within larger contexts of gendered understanding and the complicated, ongoing process of negotiating one's identity.

Conclusion

This study significantly contributes toward conversations at the intersection of pedagogy and gendered identities. As such, it raises critical questions about how contexts shape our life experience and the meanings we make of that experience as women. It points to the power relationships inherent in all contexts and the ways in which dominant discourses are internalized and then directed at self. Our "freedom to

determine the sort of person[s] we ought to be" as women and as teachers is limited by our inability to engage critically with these contexts and explore other ways of being. By constructing pedagogies of care that are more authentic, critical, collective and inclusive in nature, we may begin to rename care as a central tenet of teaching, as Kreisberg (1972) suggests; one that is congruent with our life experiences as women and as teachers. Thus, renaming ourselves as gendered, caring beings who engage critically with our world. In the absence of such critical engagement, we not only limit our own freedom to name ourselves but the freedom of our students to determine their paths as well. For we cannot engage our students in the difficult process of struggling for freedom if we have not first engaged the struggle ourselves.

APPENDICES

A: Consent Form for Participating Teachers

B: Consent Form for Principals

C: Consent Form for Professional Development Leaders

D: Interview Protocol for Initial Interview with Teachers

E: Interview Protocol for Monthly Interviews with Teachers

F: Interview Protocol for Post-Observation Interviews with Teachers

G: Interview Protocol for Principal Interview

H: Interview Protocol for Professional Development Leader Interview

J: Example of Concept Web (Inspiration Software)

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form for Participating Teachers

Project Title	Care in the Lives of Women Teachers
Statement of Age of Subject	I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research conducted by Jennifer James, a graduate student at the University of Maryland in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
Purpose	I understand that the purpose of this research is to understand the meanings and experiences of care that I have as they relate to my teaching.
Procedures	I understand that I will respond to an initial interview, lasting approximately 90 minutes. During this interview, I will be asked questions about my life history and how it is I've come to understand my role as a teacher. Next, I will respond to an interview on a monthly basis beginning in November, 2003 and ending in April, 2004. Each interview will last approximately 30 minutes. These interviews will provide information about my ongoing identity development as a teacher, in particular focusing on aspects of care that are relevant and important to my work. Finally, I understand that I will be observed a minimum of five times during an agreed upon two-week period as I instruct, meet with colleagues and attend professional development opportunities. Jennifer James will observe my classroom environment, the relationships I form with students and colleagues, and discourse patterns. Following each day of observation, it may be necessary to conduct a post-interview to clarify questions about the observation.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential and my name will not be identified at any time. Because my identity will not be revealed, I consent to have my comments used in descriptions or publication of this research.
Risks and Benefits	Classroom observations can produce performance anxiety and the process of interviewing can be time consuming. However, I understand that the results of this study will contribute to the development of a doctoral dissertation that focuses on the development of an ethic of care for teachers in the context of

	their work. Therefore, data resulting from observations and interviews will be used to provide insights into creating contexts that nurture and support teachers. I also understand that pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity, the identity of my school and the identity of my students.
Freedom to Withdraw and Ability to Ask Questions	I understand that I am free to ask questions about the research study, and I am free to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty to me. If I choose to withdraw, I can have the results of my participation, to the extent that it is identifiable as mine, returned to me, removed or destroyed.
Name, Address, Email and Phone Number of Faculty Advisor	Dr. Jeremy Price, Department of Curriculum and Instruction 2229 Benjamin, University of Maryland College Park, MD 21742-1175 jp189@umail.umd.edu (301) 405-0410
Name, Address, Email and Phone Number of Researcher	Jennifer James 4209 Ann Fitz Hugh Drive Annandale, VA 22003 jennifer@james.net (703) 503-2011
Voluntary Consent	I certify that I read this form and I understand its contents. I will be provided a copy of this signed document. My signature below indicates that I have freely agreed to participate in this study.

I have read all of the above information concerning this research project, and I,

_____

(name printed)

_____ agree to participate in this research project

_____ do not agree to participate in this research project

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form for Principals

Project Title	Care in the Lives of Women Teachers (Formerly "Care in the Lives of Beginning Teachers")
Statement of Age of Subject	I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research conducted by Jennifer James, a graduate student at the University of Maryland in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
Purpose	I understand that the purpose of this research is to understand how teachers understand and experience care in the context of their teaching.
Procedures	I understand that I will respond to one interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes. During this interview, I will be asked questions about my philosophy of teaching and leadership, my constructs of care, and logistical questions about how the experience of teachers is structured and supported. I understand that six teachers and the professional development leader from my school will participate in this six-month study. I have read and understand the conditions of their participation.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential and my name will not be identified at any time. Because my identity will not be revealed, I consent to have my comments used in descriptions or publication of this research.
Risks and Benefits	The process of interviewing can be time consuming. However, I understand that the results of this study will contribute to the development of a doctoral dissertation that focuses on the development of an ethic of care for teachers in the context of their work. Therefore, data resulting from observations and interviews will be used to provide insights into creating contexts that nurture and support teachers. I also understand that pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity, the identity of my school and the identity of our students.
Freedom to Withdraw and Ability to Ask Questions	I understand that I am free to ask questions about the research study, and I am free to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty to me. If I choose to withdraw, I can have the results of my participation, to the extent that it is identifiable as

	mine, returned to me, removed or destroyed.
Name, Address, Email and Phone Number of Faculty Advisor	Dr. Jeremy Price, Department of Curriculum and Instruction 2229 Benjamin, University of Maryland College Park, MD 21742-1175 Jp189@umail.umd.edu (301) 405-0410
Name, Address, Email and Phone Number of Researcher	Jennifer James 4209 Ann Fitz Hugh Drive Annandale, VA 22003 Jennifer@james.net (703) 503-2011
Voluntary Consent	I certify that I read this form and I understand its contents. I will be provided a copy of this signed document. My signature below indicates that I have freely agreed to participate in this study.

I have read all of the above information concerning this research project, and I,

_____

(name printed)

_____ agree to participate in this research project

_____ do not agree to participate in this research project

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form for Professional Development Leaders

Project Title	Care in the Lives of Women Teachers (Formerly "Care in the Lives of Beginning Teachers")
Statement of Age of Subject	I state that I am over 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research conducted by Jennifer James, a graduate student at the University of Maryland in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
Purpose	I understand that the purpose of this research is to understand how teachers understand and experience care in the context of their teaching.
Procedures	I understand that I will respond to one interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes. During this interview, I will be asked questions about my philosophy of teaching and leadership, my constructs of care, and logistical questions about how the experience of teachers is structured and supported.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential and my name will not be identified at any time. Because my identity will not be revealed, I consent to have my comments used in descriptions or publication of this research.
Risks and Benefits	The process of interviewing can be time consuming. However, I understand that the results of this study will contribute to the development of a doctoral dissertation that focuses on the development of an ethic of care for teachers in the context of their work. Therefore, data resulting from observations and interviews will be used to provide insights into creating contexts that nurture and support teachers. I also understand that pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity, the identity of my school and the identity of our students.
Freedom to Withdraw and Ability to Ask Questions	I understand that I am free to ask questions about the research study, and I am free to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty to me. If I choose to withdraw, I can have the results of my participation, to the extent that it is identifiable as mine, returned to me, removed or destroyed.

Name, Address, Email and Phone Number of Faculty Advisor	Dr. Jeremy Price, Department of Curriculum and Instruction 2229 Benjamin, University of Maryland College Park, MD 21742-1175 jp189@umail.umd.edu (301) 405-0410
Name, Address, Email and Phone Number of Researcher	Jennifer James 4209 Ann Fitz Hugh Drive Annandale, VA 22003 Jennifer@james.net (703) 503-2011
Voluntary Consent	I certify that I read this form and I understand its contents. I will be provided a copy of this signed document. My signature below indicates that I have freely agreed to participate in this study.

I have read all of the above information concerning this research project, and I,

_____

(name printed)

_____ agree to participate in this research project

_____ do not agree to participate in this research project

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix D

Interview Protocol: Initial Interview with Teachers
Adapted from Paul Thompson's (1978) Life-Story Interview (p309-323)

- To start, can you tell me when and where you were born? How many years did you live there? Where did you move then? Can you remember why your family made those moves?
- What can you tell me about your family? Grandparents? Parents? What did they do for a living? How would you describe their character? Did they raise you to consider certain things important in your life? What sorts of relationships did you have with your parents and grandparents? How about their relationships with one another? What about your siblings?
- What was your daily life like as a child? Can you describe your home to me? What roles did people take on in your home? What did you enjoy as a child? Can you describe your childhood neighborhood to me? How were you disciplined? What was your community like?
- When did you start school? What schools did you go to? What did you think of these schools? How well did you do in school? What do you remember about the teachers in your schools? How about your fellow students? What can you tell me about the socio-cultural makeup of your schools?
- How is it you decided to go into teaching? Can you tell me about your journey through teacher preparation and your foray into teaching? Where have you taught? What have you thought of those contexts? What are some things you considered as you decided where to begin your career in teaching? What is it about this school that was appealing to you?
- What educational experiences have most impacted your philosophy of teaching and learning (inside or outside of formal schooling experience)? How would you define yourself as a teacher? How would you describe the teacher you hope to be? What do you think are some of the primary responsibilities of teachers? What role, if any, does "care" play in the lives of teachers? What role does it play for you?
- Can we now talk about your leisure activities? How do you choose to spend your time outside of work? What sorts of things do you enjoy? What things are important to you?
- Do you have a family of your own? Would you mind telling me a bit about them? How would you describe the home you have with your immediate family? The relationships you have with each of them? What can you tell me about the way you've raised your children? Have you modeled this after your own experience growing up? How has your children's education gone?
- How would you describe yourself now (example as middle class, white woman, Lutheran)... Has this identity changed since your childhood? How? What stands out to you as the best thing in your life? The worst? What would you most like to do in the time ahead?

Appendix E

Interview Protocol--Monthly Interviews with Teachers

- How are things going? How are you thinking about yourself as a caring professional?

- What challenges have you met in enacting care since our last meeting? What has contributed to those challenges? How have you overcome those challenges or how are you striving to overcome them? How are you feeling about these struggles?

- What successes have you had in caring for yourself and others since our last meeting? What has contributed to those successes for you? How are you feeling about these successes?

- What relationships, if any, have played an important part of your efforts to care since our last meeting?

- How are you spending what free time you have?

- Is there anything in particular that you are feeling anxious or excited about with regards to your teaching?

Appendix F

Interview Protocol--Post-Observation Interview with Teachers

- How are you feeling at the close of this lesson?

- What challenges or successes did you meet in striving to care here? What might have contributed to these challenges and successes? How are you feeling about them?

- How did your interactions with others contribute to your efforts to care?

(Plus any additional questions necessary to clarify any confusion during observation.)

Appendix G

Interview Protocol--Principal Interview

- Please describe your philosophy of leadership and how you think this helps to shape the culture and climate of your school.

- How would you describe the ideal teacher?

- How do you understand what it means to "care" in the context of education?

- For whom do you care? How do you care?

- What do you believe are the greatest struggles for teachers as they strive to care in this context?

- In what ways do members of your school community work to support teachers as they work to overcome these struggles?

- What factors do you believe contribute most to teachers' ability to successfully deal with these struggles of teaching?

Appendix H

Interview Protocol--Professional Development Leader Interview

- Please describe your philosophy of teaching and learning.

- How have you come to understand your role as a professional development leader in your school?

- How do you understand what it means to "care" in the context of education?

- What do you believe are the greatest struggles for teachers as they strive to care in this context?

- In what ways do members of your school community work to support teachers as they work to overcome these struggles?

- How would you define your specific role here at school?

- What factors do you believe contribute most to teachers' ability to develop as professionals?

Example of Concept Web (Inspiration Software)

Mary's mom said she shouldn't be--"Why are you here?"

has since put in "safety nets"--others ro look after her

principal as "mom"

didn't recognize need herself

went up to care for her friend every weekend (10 hour drive)

"Even as she lay dying she asked how I was doing"

Mary sees principal as lenient and understanding, trusting, having created a family atmosphere that reaches out to families in community

Mom said she'd probably be fired

hadn't allowed herself to grieve

asked to take a leave of absence to take care of herself (by principal)

best friend's mom died of cancer

Mary's role model-- example of a self-sacrificing woman who cared so much for others

VP (evaluator)-- not enough instruction; too much talk

started seeing a counselor

broke her leg

MIXED MESSAGES ABOUT TEACHING

principal--"remember who your evaluator's evaluator is"

RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM

Mary

colleagues

not a team player

never good enough

Mary as "drama queen"

"its not always about you, Mary"

FRIENDS

lifelong-- always there

care too much for kids

CARING FOR STUDENTS

BUT didn't tell her friend when Mary broke her leg and left work on leave of absense

"I didn't want to be a burden"

feels supported by counselors, friends on staff (outside team) who share her philosophy

classroom is very child centered-- lots of kids work, photos of kids, kids writing

says she cares for students' emotional, academic and social well being

emphasis on community building; making classroom a safe place

says some teachers don't seem to value the whole student

challenges to ability to care

pressure to stick to curriculum

SOL tests, pressure of being labeled a failing school

gang stuff-- pressure on kids, intimidation

when she doesn't have parental support for efforts

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