An Ethic of Caring and Its Implications for Instructional Arrangements

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Education for moral life has, until recently, been a primary aim of American schooling. In this essay, it is argued that the aim itself is appropriate but that our conception of morality needs revision. Caring is suggested both as a moral orientation to teaching and as an aim of moral education. After a brief discussion of ethics of caring, four components of a model for moral education are described: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Use of this model requires that teachers and students spend more time together so that relations of trust may be established. Finally, the perspective of caring is used to make recommendations on research for teaching.

Until recent years, most Americans seem to have assumed that a fundamental aim of schooling should be the production of a moral citizenry. It could be argued that, although this assumption is sound and still widely held, the hypocrisy inherent in a blend of Christian doctrine and individualist ideology has created opposition to traditional forms of moral education. What is needed, then, is not a new assumption but a more appropriate conception of morality. An ethic of caring arising out of both ancient notions of agapism and contemporary feminism will be suggested as an alternative approach. After describing caring as a moral perspective, I will discuss the vast changes that such an orientation implies in schooling, and one of these will be explored in some depth. In conclusion, I will suggest ways in which educational research might contribute to this important project.

Morality as an Educational Aim

Morality has been a long-standing interest in schools. Indeed, the detachment of schools from explicitly moral aims is a product of the

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last few decades. It would have been unthinkable early in this century—even in programs guided by highly technical lists of specific objectives—to ask such a question as, Must we educate?[1] We sometimes forget that even Franklin Bobbitt and others who were advocates of the technological or factory model of progressivism were nonetheless interested in the development of moral persons, good citizens, adequate parents, and serene spirits. Bobbitt himself said: "The social point of view herein expressed is sometimes characterized as being utilitarian. It may be so; but not in any narrow or undesirable sense. It demands that training be as wide as life itself. It looks to human activities of every type: religious activities; civic activities; the duties of one's calling; one's family duties; one's recreations; one's reading and meditation; and the rest of the things that are done by the complete man or woman" (Bobbitt 1915, p. 20).

Yet, today it seems innovative—even intrusive—to suggest that schools should consciously aim at educating people for moral life and that perhaps the best way to accomplish this aim is to conduct the process in a thoroughly moral way. People who should know better continually claim that schools can do only one thing well—the direct teaching of basic skills. In a recent letter that apparently reflects the position espoused in their book (Gann and Duignan 1986), L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan say, "Above all, we should avoid the temptation to regard the school as an instrument that can cure all social ills. The school's job is to teach basic academic skills" (Gann and Duignan 1987). This statement captures a tiny corner of truth, but it ignores the citadel to which this corner belongs.

An honest appraisal of American traditions of schooling reveals that academic skills have long been thought of as a vehicle for the development of character. This was true in colonial days, it was true throughout the nineteenth century, and it was still true in the first half of the twentieth century. Schools have always been considered as incubators for acceptable citizens, and citizenship has not always been defined in terms of academic achievement scores. The morality stressed by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century schools contained a measure of hypocrisy, to be sure. Drawing on both Christian doctrine and an ideology of individualism, recommendations on moral education emphasized both self-sacrifice and success through determination, ambition,

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and competition. The influential Character Development League, for example, stated in the opening paragraph of its *Character Lessons:* "Character in its primary principle and groundwork is *self-control* and *self-giving,* and the only practical method of enforcing this upon the habit of children is to keep before them *examples* of self-control and self-sacrifice" (Carr 1909). *Character Lessons,* however, is liberally laced with success stories, and, indeed, teachers are urged to credit each child for her or his contributions to a "Golden Deed Book." In the closing paragraphs of his Introduction, Carr suggests, "A small prize for the grade having the best 'Golden Deed Book' and another to the pupil of the grade having the most Deeds to his credit, will arouse a discriminating interest . . . " (Carr 1909). Thus, educators were urged to encourage both Christian charity and American entrepreneurship. In describing a mid-nineteeth-century school's operations, David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot comment: "These mid-century themes suggest how deeply the absolutist morality of the evangelical movement became interwoven with a work ethic and ideology favoring the development of capitalism. Just as Christianity was inseparable from Americanism, so the entrepreneurial economic values seemed so self-evidently correct as to be taken for granted. *The school* gave everyone a chance to become hard-working, literate, temperate, frugal, a good planner" (italics added; Tyack and Hansot 1982, p. 28).

The school was not expected to cure social ills; in this Gann and Duignan are correct. Rather, it was expected to teach vigorously the values of a society that thought it was righteous. The spirit was evangelical at every level from home and school to national and international politics where speakers, writers, and statesmen regularly took the position that the United States had a God-given mission to export its righteous way of life to the rest of the world.[2] However wrong we may now consider this arrogant posture, it is clear that hardly anyone thought that the school's major or only job was to teach academic skills. This we did in the service of moral ends, not as an end in itself.

I am certainly not recommending a return to the self-righteous moralizing of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, I would argue for a strong rejection of this attitude, accompanied by a thorough study of its history and ideology. We cannot overcome a perspective, a worldview, as powerful as this one by ignoring it; we have to explore it both appreciatively and critically. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that proponents of "basic skills only" may really want to maintain the earlier attitude of Christian-American supremacy and that avoidance of moral issues and social ills is the only currently feasible way to accomplish this. The apparent consensus of earlier times has been lost. Further, attempts to restore the values of a diminishing majority

have not been successful. Too many feisty minorities have found their voices and are beginning to suggest alternatives among moral priorities. In such a climate, the only way left for the weakening group in power is to block discussion entirely and hope that hegemonic structures will press things down into the old containers. The need for moral education is apparent to everyone, but concerns about the form it should take induce paralysis. Thus, I suggest that our forbears were right in establishing the education of a moral people as the primary aim of schooling, but they were often shortsighted and arrogant in their description of what it means to be moral.

Caring as a Moral Orientation in Teaching

Although schools and other institutions have in general withdrawn from the task of moral education (some exceptions will be noted), there is a philosophical revival of interest in practical ethics. Several authors have commented on the arrogance and poverty of philosophical views that conceive of ethics solely as a domain for philosophical analysis.[3] Further, there is increased interest in both ethics of virtue (the modeling or biographical approach advocated in *Character Lessons;* see MacIntyre 1984) and in ethics of need and love. Joseph Fletcher contrasts the latter with ethics of law and rights. "As seen from the ethical perspective," he notes, "the legalistic or moralistic temper gives the first-order position to rights, whereas the agapistic temper gives the first place to *needs*" (Fletcher 1975, p. 45). A blend of these views that tries to avoid both the elitism in Aristotle's ethics of virtue and the dogmatism of Christian agapism is found in the current feminist emphasis on ethics of caring, relation, and response (see Noddings 1984; Gilligan 1982).

As an ethical orientation, caring has often been characterized as feminine because it seems to arise more naturally out of woman's experience than man's. When this ethical orientation is reflected on and technically elaborated, we find that it is a form of what may be called *relational ethics.*[4] A relational ethic remains tightly tied to experience because all its deliberations focus on the human beings involved in the situation under consideration and their relations to each other. A relation is here construed as any pairing or connection of individuals characterized by some affective awareness in each. It is an encounter or series of encounters in which the involved parties feel something toward each other. Relations may be characterized by love or hate, anger or sorrow, admiration or envy; or, of course, they may reveal mixed affects—one party feeling, say, love and the other revulsion. One who is concerned with behaving ethically strives always to preserve

or convert a given relation into a caring relation. This does not mean that all relations must approach that of the prototypical mother-child relation in either intensity or intimacy. On the contrary, an appropriate and particular form of caring must be found in every relation, and the behaviors and feelings that mark the mother-child relation are rarely appropriate for other relations; the characteristics of *all* caring relations can be described only at a rather high level of abstraction.

A relational ethic, an ethic of caring, differs dramatically from traditional ethics. The most important difference for our present purpose is that ethics of caring turn the traditional emphasis on duty upside down. Whereas Kant insisted that only those acts performed out of duty (in conformity to principle) should be labeled moral, an ethic of caring prefers acts done out of love and natural inclination. Acting out of caring, one calls on a sense of duty or special obligation only when love or inclination fails. Ethical agents adopting this perspective do not judge their own acts solely by their conformity to rule or principle, nor do they judge them only by the likely production of preassessed nonmoral goods such as happiness. While such agents may certainly consider both principles and utilities, their primary concern is the relation itself—not only what happens physically to others involved in the relation and in connected relations but what they may feel and how they may respond to the act under consideration. From a traditional perspective, it seems very odd to include the response of another in a judgment of our own ethical acts. Indeed, some consider the great achievement of Kantian ethics to be its liberation of the individual from the social complexities that characterized earlier ethics. A supremely lonely and heroic ethical agent marks both Kantian ethics and the age of individualism. An ethic of caring returns us to an earlier orientation—one that is directly concerned with the relations in which we all must live.

A relational ethic is rooted in and dependent on natural caring. Instead of striving away from affection and toward behaving always out of duty as Kant has prescribed, one acting from a perspective of caring moves consciously in the other direction; that is, he or she calls on a sense of obligation in order to stimulate natural caring. The superior state—one far more efficient because it energizes the giver as well as the receiver—is one of natural caring. Ethical caring is its servant. Because natural caring is both the source and the terminus of ethical caring, it is reasonable to use the mother-child relation as its prototype, so long as we keep in mind the caveats mentioned above.

The first member of the relational dyad (the carer or "one caring") responds to the needs, wants, and initiations of the second. Her mode of response is characterized by *engrossment* (nonselective attention or

total presence to the other for the duration of the caring interval) and *displacement of motivation* (her motive energy flows in the direction of the other's needs and projects). She feels with the other and acts in his behalf. The second member (the one cared for) contributes to the relation by recognizing and responding to the caring.[5] In the infant, this response may consist of smiles and wriggles; in the student, it may reveal itself in energetic pursuit of the student's own projects. A mature relationship may, of course, be mutual, and two parties may regularly exchange places in the relation, but the contributions of the one caring (whichever person may hold the position momentarily) remain distinct from those of the cared for. It is clear from this brief description why an ethic of caring is often characterized in terms of responsibility and response.

A view similar in many ways to that of caring may be found in Sara Ruddick's analysis of maternal thinking (Ruddick 1986). A mother, Ruddick says, puts her thinking into the service of three great interests: preserving the life of the child, fostering his growth, and shaping an acceptable child. Similarly, Milton Mayeroff describes caring in terms of fostering the growth of another (Mayeroff 1971). Thus, it is clear that at least some contemporary therorists recognize the thinking, practice, and skill required in the work traditionally done by women—work that has long been considered something anyone with a warm heart and little intellect could undertake. Caring as a rational moral orientation and maternal thinking with its threefold interests are richly applicable to teaching.

Caring and Instructional Arrangements

Even though the emphasis during this half of the twentieth century has been on intellectual goals—first, on advanced or deep structural knowledge of the disciplines and then, more modestly, on the so-called basics—a few educators and theorists have continued to suggest that schools must pay attention to the moral and social growth of their citizens. Ernest Boyer and his colleagues, for example, recommend that high school students engage in community service as part of their school experience (Boyer 1983). Theodore Sizer expresses concern about the impersonal relationships that develop between highly specialized teachers and students with whom they have only fleeting and technical contact, for example, in grading, recording attendance, disciplining (Sizer 1984). Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates concentrate explicitly on the just community that should be both the source and the end of a truly moral education (Kohlberg 1981, 1984). But none

of these concerns has captured either the national interest or that of educators in a way that might bring a mandate for significant change. The current emphasis remains on academic achievement. The influential reports of both the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force, for example, almost entirely ignore the ethical aspects of education (*Tomorrow's Teachers,* 1986; *A Nation Prepared,* 1986). They mention neither the ethical considerations that should enter into teachers' choices of content, methods, and instructional arrangements nor the basic responsibility of schools to contribute to the moral growth of students.

If we were to explore seriously the ideas suggested by an ethic of caring for education, we might suggest changes in almost every aspect of schooling: the current hierarchical structure of management, the rigid mode of allocating time, the kind of relationships encouraged, the size of schools and classes, the goals of instruction, modes of evaluation, patterns of interaction, selection of content. Obviously all of these topics cannot be discussed here. I will therefore confine my analysis to the topic of relationships, which I believe is central to a thorough consideration of most of the other topics.

From the perspective of caring, the growth of those cared for is a matter of central importance. Feminists are certainly not the first to point this out. For John Dewey, for example, the centrality of growth implied major changes in the traditional patterns of schooling. In particular, since a major teaching function is to guide students in a well-informed exploration of areas meaningful to them, learning objectives must be mutually constructed by students and teachers (Dewey [1938] 1963). Dewey was unequivocal in his insistence on the mutuality of this task. Teachers have an obligation to support, anticipate, evaluate, and encourage worthwhile activities, and students have a right to pursue projects mutually constructed and approved. It has long been recognized that Dewey's recommendations require teachers who are superbly well educated, people who know the basic fields of study so well that they can spot naive interests that hold promise for rigorous intellectual activity.

There is, however, more than intellectual growth at stake in the teaching enterprise. Teachers, like mothers, want to produce acceptable persons—persons who will support worthy institutions, live compassionately, work productively but not obsessively, care for older and younger generations, be admired, trusted, and respected. To shape such persons, teachers need not only intellectual capabilities but also a fund of knowledge about the particular persons with whom they are working. In particular, if teachers approach their responsibility for moral education from a caring orientation rather than an ethic of principle, they cannot teach moral education as one might teach ge-

ometry or European history or English; that is, moral education cannot be formulated into a course of study or set of principles to be learned. Rather, each student must be guided toward an ethical life—or, we might say, an ethical ideal—that is relationally constructed.

The relational construction of an ethical ideal demands significant contributions from the growing ethical agent and also from those in relation with this agent. There is, clearly, a large subjective component of such an ideal; modes of behavior must be evaluated as worthy by the person living them. But there is also a significant objective component, and this is contributed by the careful guidance of a host of persons who enter into relation with the developing agent. The teacher, for example, brings his or her own subjectivity into active play in the relation but also takes responsibility for directing the student's attention to the objective conditions of choice and judgment; both teacher and student are influenced by and influence the subjectivity of other agents. Hence, in a basic and crucial sense, each of us is a relationally defined entity and not a totally autonomous agent. Our goodness and our wickedness are both, at least in part, induced, supported, enhanced, or diminished by the interventions and influence of those with whom we are related.

In every human encounter, there arises the possibility of a caring occasion (see Watson 1985). If I bump into you on the street, both of us are affected not only by the physical collision but also by what follows it. It matters whether I say, "Oh, dear, I'm so sorry," or "You fool! Can't you watch where you're going?" In every caring occasion, the parties involved must decide how they will respond to each other. Each such occasion involves negotiation of a sort: an initiation, a response, a decision to elaborate or terminate. Clearly, teaching is filled with caring occasions or, quite often, with attempts to avoid such occasions. Attempts to avoid caring occasions by the overuse of lecture without discussion, of impersonal grading in written, quantitative form, of modes of discipline that respond only to the behavior but refuse to encounter the person all risk losing opportunities for moral education and mutual growth.

Moral education, from the perspective of an ethic of caring, involves modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. These components are not unique to ethics of caring, of course, but their combination and interpretation are central to this view of moral education (see Noddings 1984). Teachers model caring when they steadfastly encourage responsible self-affirmation in their students.[6] Such teachers are, of course, concerned with their students' academic achievement, but, more importantly, they are interested in the development of fully moral persons. This is not a zero-sum game. There is no reason why

excellent mathematics teaching cannot enhance ethical life as well. Because the emphasis in the present discussion is on human relationships, it should be noted that the teacher models not only admirable patterns of intellectual activity but also desirable ways of interacting with people. Such teachers treat students with respect and consideration and encourage them to treat each other in a similar fashion. They use teaching moments as caring occasions.

Dialogue is essential in this approach to moral education. True dialogue is open; that is, conclusions are not held by one or more of the parties at the outset. The search for enlightenment, or responsible choice, or perspective, or means to problem solution is mutual and marked by appropriate signs of reciprocity. This does not mean that participants in dialogue must give up any principles they hold and succumb to relativism. If I firmly believe that an act one of my students has committed is wrong, I do not enter a dialogue with him on whether or not the act is wrong. Such a dialogue could not be genuine. I can, however, engage him in dialogue about the possible justification for our opposing positions, about the likely consequences of such acts to himself and others, about the personal history of my own belief. I can share my reflections with him, and he may exert considerable influence on me by pointing out that I have not suffered the sort of experience that led him to his act. Clearly, time is required for such dialogue. Teacher and student must know each other well enough for trust to develop.

The caring teacher also wants students to have practice in caring. This suggests changes beyond the well-intended inclusion of community service in high school graduation requirements. Service, after all, can be rendered in either caring or noncaring ways. In a classroom dedicated to caring, students are encouraged to support each other; opportunities for peer interaction are provided, and the quality of that interaction is as important (to both teacher and students) as the academic outcomes. Small group work may enhance achievement in mathematics, for example, and can also provide caring occasions. The object is to develop a caring community through modeling, dialogue, and practice.

Although modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation are all important, the component I wish to emphasize here is confirmation. In caring or maternal thinking, we often use caring occasions to confirm the cared for. The idea here is to shape an acceptable child by assisting in the construction of his ethical ideal. He has a picture of a good self, and we, too, have such a picture. But as adults we have experience that enables us to envision and appreciate a great host of wonderful selves—people with all sorts of talents, projects, ethical strengths, and weaknesses kept courageously under control. As we come to understand

what the child wants to be and what we can honestly approve in him, we know what to encourage. We know how to respond to his acts—both those we approve and those we disapprove. When he does something of which we disapprove, we can often impute a worthy motive for an otherwise unworthy act. Indeed, this is a central aspect of confirmation. "When we attribute the best possible motive consonant with reality to the cared-for, we confirm him; that is, we reveal to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts. In an important sense, we embrace him as one with us in devotion to caring. In education, what we reveal to a student about himself as an ethical and intellectual being has the power to nurture the ethical ideal or to destroy it" (Noddings 1984, p. 193).

Confirmation is of such importance in moral education that we must ask about the settings in which it can effectively take place. Educators often come close to recognizing the significance of confirmation in a simplistic way. We talk about the importance of expectations, for example, and urge teachers to have high expectations for all their students. But, taken as a formula, this is an empty exhortation. If, without knowing a student—what he loves, strives for, fears, hopes—I merely expect him to do uniformly well in everything I present to him, I treat him like an unreflective animal. A high expectation can be a mark of respect, but so can a relatively low one. If a mathematics teacher knows, for example, that one of her students, Rose, is talented in art and wants more than anything to be an artist, the teacher may properly lower her expectations for Rose in math. Indeed, she and Rose may consciously work together to construct a mathematical experience for Rose that will honestly satisfy the institution, take as little of Rose's effort as possible, and preserve the teacher's integrity as a mathematics teacher. Teacher and student may chat about art, and the teacher may learn something. They will surely talk about the requirements for the art schools to which Rose intends to apply—their GPA demands, how much math they require, and the like. Teacher and student become partners in fostering the student's growth. The student accepts responsibility for both completion of the work negotiated and the mutually constructed decision to do just this much mathematics. This is illustrative of responsible self-affirmation. The picture painted here is so vastly different from the one pressed on teachers currently that it seems almost alien. To confirm in this relational fashion, teachers need a setting different from those we place them in today.

To be responsible participants in the construction of ethical ideals, teachers need more time with students than we currently allow them. If we cared deeply about fostering growth and shaping both acceptable and caring people, we could surely find ways to extend contact between

teachers and students. There is no good reason why teachers should not stay with one group of students for three years rather than one in the elementary years, and this arrangement can be adapted to high school as well. A mathematics teacher might, for example, take on a group of students when they enter high school and guide them through their entire high school mathematics curriculum. The advantages in such a scheme are obvious and multiple: First, a setting may be established in which moral education is possible—teacher and students can develop a relation that makes confirmation possible. Second, academic and professional benefits may be realized—the teacher may enjoy the stimulation of a variety of mathematical subjects and avoid the deadly boredom of teaching five classes of Algebra I; the teacher may come to understand the whole math curriculum and not just a tiny part of it; the teacher takes on true responsibility for students' mathematical development, in contrast to the narrow accountability of teachers today; the teacher encounters relatively few new students each year and welcomes back many that she already knows well.

Are there disadvantages? Those usually mentioned are artifacts of the present system. Some people ask, for example, what would happen to students who are assigned to poor teachers for three or four years. One answer is that students should not have a demonstrably poor teacher for even one year, but a better answer is to follow out the implications of this fear. My suggestion is that students and teachers stay together by mutual consent and with the approval of parents. Ultimately, really poor teachers would be squeezed out in such a system, and all the fuss and feathers of detailed administrative evaluation would be cut considerably. Supportive and substantial supervision would be required instead, because teachers—now deeply and clearly responsible for a significant chunk of their students' growth—might well seek to foster their own growth and, thus, ensure a steady stream of satisfied clients.

Suggestions like the one above for extended contact—or like Sizer's alternative idea that teachers teach two subjects to 30 students rather than one subject to 60 (Sizer 1984)—are not simplistic, nor are they offered as panaceas. They would require imagination, perseverance, changes in training, and diligence to implement, but they can be accomplished. Indeed, these ideas have been used successfully and deserve wider trials. (I myself had this sort of experience in 12 years of teaching in grades 6–12.)

It sometimes seems to feminists and other radical thinkers that this society, including education as an institution, does not really want to solve its problems. There is too much at stake, too much to be lost by those already in positions of power, to risk genuine attempts at solution.

What must be maintained, it seems, are the *problems,* and the more complex the better, for then all sorts of experts are required, and, as the problems proliferate (proliferation by definition is especially efficient), still more experts are needed. Helpers come to have an investment in the helping system and their own place in it rather than in the empowerment of their clients.[7]

I have discussed here just one major change that can be rather easily accomplished in establishing settings more conducive to caring and, thus, to moral education. Such a change would induce further changes, for, when we begin to think from this perspective, everything we do in teaching comes under reevaluation. In the fifties, the nation moved toward larger high schools, in part because the influential Conant report persuaded us that only sufficiently large schools could supply the sophisticated academic programs that the nation wanted to make its first priority (Conant 1959). Now we might do well to suggest smaller schools that might allow us to embrace older priorities, newly critiqued and defined, and work toward an educational system proudly oriented toward the development of decent, caring, loved, and loving persons.

What Research Can Contribute

If it is not already obvious, let me say explicitly that I think university educators and researchers are part of the problem. Our endless focus on narrow achievement goals, our obsession with sophisticated schemes of evaluation and measurement directed (naturally enough) at things that are relatively easy to measure, our reinforcement of the mad desire to be number one—to compete, to win awards, to acquire more and more of whatever is currently valued—in all these ways we contribute to the proliferation of problems and malaise.

Can researchers play a more constructive role? Consider some possibilities. First, by giving some attention to topics involving affective growth, character, social relations, sharing, and the pursuit of individual projects, researchers can give added legitimacy to educational goals in all these areas. A sign of our neglect is the almost total omission of such topics from the 987 pages of the third *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Wittrock 1986). Second, researchers can purposefully seek out situations in which educators are trying to establish settings more conducive to moral growth and study these attempts at some length, over a broad range of goals, and with constructive appreciation. That last phrase, "with constructive appreciation," suggests a third way in

which researchers might help to solve problems rather than aggravate them. In a recent article on fidelity, I argued:

> In educational research, fidelity to persons counsels us to choose our problems in such a way that the knowledge gained will promote individual growth and maintain the caring community. It is not clear that we are sufficiently concerned with either criterion at present. William Torbert, for example, has noted that educational research has been oddly uneducational and suggests that one reason for this may be the failure of researchers to engage in collaborative inquiry [see Torbert 1981]. There is a pragmatic side to this problem, of course, but from an ethical perspective, the difficulty may be identified as a failure to meet colleagues in genuine mutuality. Researchers have perhaps too often made *persons* (teachers and students) the objects of research. An alternative is to choose *problems* that interest and concern researchers, students, and teachers. . . . [Noddings 1986, p. 506]

Here, again, feminists join thinkers like Torbert to endorse modes of research that are directed at the needs rather than the shortcomings and peculiarities of subjects. Dorothy Smith, a sociologist of knowledge, has called for a science *for* women rather than *about* women; "that is," she says, "a sociology which does not transform those it studies into objects but preserves in its analytic procedures the presence of the subject as actor and experiencer. Subject then is that knower whose grasp of the world may be enlarged by the work of the sociologist" (Smith 1981, p. 1).

Similarly, research *for* teaching would concern itself with the needs, views, and actual experience of teachers rather than with the outcomes produced through various instructional procedures. This is not to say that contrasting methods should not be studied, but, when they are studied, researchers should recognize that the commitment of teachers may significantly affect the results obtained through a given method. Research *for* teaching would not treat teachers as interchangeable parts in instructional procedures, but, rather, as professionals capable of making informed choices among proffered alternatives.

Research *for* teaching would address itself to the needs of teachers—much as pharmaceutical research addresses itself to the needs of practicing physicians. This suggests that research and development should become partners in education, as they have in industry. Instead of bemoaning the apparent fact that few teachers use small group methods, for example, researchers could ask teachers what they need to engage in such work comfortably. One answer to this might be materials. Researchers often assume that the answer is training, because

this answer better fits their own preparation and research timetables. If materials are needed, however, the partnership of research and development becomes crucial.

Qualitative researchers may suppose that their methods are more compatible with research *for* teaching than the usual quantitative methods. Indeed, Margaret Mead said of fieldwork: "Anthropological research does not have subjects. We work with informants in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect" (Mead 1969, p. 371).

But qualitative researchers, too, can forget that they are part of an educational enterprise that should support a caring community. Qualitative studies that portray teachers as stupid, callous, indifferent, ignorant, or dogmatic do little to improve the conditions of teaching or teachers. I am not arguing that no teachers are stupid, callous, indifferent, and so forth. Rather, I am arguing that teachers so described are sometimes betrayed by the very researchers to whom they have generously given access. What should we do when we come upon gross ignorance or incompetence? One of my colleagues argues strongly that it is our duty to expose incompetence. Would you keep silent if you observed child abuse? he asks. The answer to this is, of course, that we cannot remain silent about child abuse, and it is conceivable that some events we observe as researchers are so dangerous or worrisome that we simply must report them. But at that point, I would say, our research ends. We feel compelled to take up our duties as responsible citizens and to relinquish our quest for knowledge. So long as we seek knowledge in classrooms, we are necessarily dependent on the teachers and students who are there engaged in a constitutively ethical enterprise. To intrude on that, to betray the trust that lets us in, to rupture the possibility of developing a caring community, is to forget that we should be doing research *for* teaching.

Does this mean that we cannot report failures in the classrooms we study? Of course not. But just as we ask teachers to treat the success and failure of students with exquisite sensitivity, we should study teacher success and failure generously and report on it constructively. Teachers may be eager to explore their own failures if their successes are also acknowledged and if the failures are thoroughly explored to locate the preconditions and lacks responsible for them. Teachers, too, need confirmation.

Conclusion

I have suggested that moral education has long been and should continue to be a primary concern of educational institutions. To ap-

proach moral education from the perspective of caring, teachers, teacher-educators, students, and researchers need time to engage in modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. This suggests that ways be explored to increase the contact between teachers and students and between researchers and teachers, so that collaborative inquiry may be maintained and so that relationships may develop through which all participants are supported in their quest for better ethical selves.

Notes

1. This is a question that was seriously asked by Carl Bereiter in 1973. See Bereiter 1973.
2. See the vivid and well-documented description of this attitude in Maguire 1978, pp. 424–29.
3. Bernard Williams (1985), e.g., argues that philosophy plays a limited role in the re-creation of ethical life. Alasdair MacIntyre (1984), too, argues that morality and ethics belong primarily to the domain of social experience and that philosophy must proceed from there.
4. Daniel C. Maguire (1978) has also described approaches to relational ethics.
5. For a fuller analysis of the roles of each, see Noddings 1984.
6. Paolo Freire (1970) describes as oppression any situation in which one person hinders another in "his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person."
7. For a discussion of this unhappy result, see Freire 1970; see also Sartre 1949.

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