

## Care as the "Heart" of Prison Teaching

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### Abstract

*Despite the powerful, pervasive institutional imperatives of the prison to control, discipline and house inmates, teachers seem to care deeply for their students. They also intuitively know that caring is very much a part of a successful teaching practice behind bars. This descriptive study contributes to a framework of teacher caring in prison schools using data from questionnaires and conversations with prison teachers. As a result of this preliminary inquiry into teachers' practical knowledge of caring relationships, it is hoped that teachers will be supported in their efforts to exercise sound pedagogical judgement with regard to the relational dynamics of prison life. Also considered is the possibility that caring relationships in prison resist its oppressive characteristics.*

### Introduction: The Study of Care

Despite the institutional imperatives of the prison house which are powerfully felt, everywhere within the prison walls, we should not assume a straightforward "correspondence principle" between schooling and the reproduction of oppressive institutional norms (Kanpol, 1991), as some have suggested (Davidson, 1995, 1996). First we must try to understand how teaching practices are lived out, on their own terms, daily and personally, by teachers in institutional environments, so as to recognize the agency of teachers, before we assume determinating relationships.

Perhaps it is surprising and seemingly incongruous to speak of care and prisons in the same breath. Yet by doing so, we call attention to qualities of human interaction that institutions such as prisons, organizations, and public schools may have forgotten or dismissed. Even among public schools teachers and school administrators, care is "not on the agenda." Care is often a "discounted experience" (Wilde, 1996) because it is easier to find "evidence" of teaching in the results of achievement tests, learning outcomes, performance indicators, accountability contracts, and efficiencies that focus on means and

ends, or technocratic models of education. Because "experiences of care may be less visible than other aspects of teaching, and because caring is nebulous and difficult to define once and for all. . . . these characteristics demand that we take a closer look" (Wilde, 1996, p.36).

I am confident that care plays an important role in prison education, in part because it is the theme that undergirds many prison teacher conversations. Furthermore, as Mageehon, (JCE, in press) has noted, care transforms students. Mageehon concludes her essay by suggesting that there has been "insufficient research" into the "nature of care or compassion within the correctional system." This work coincides and deepens her argument regarding the need for the study and practice of care in prisons. Acknowledging feminist scholarship (Gilligan, 1982; Nodding 1981/1999; Pinar, 1981/1999), it supports a justice and care orientation to correctional education issues. And finally, this paper speculates how caring teacher practices resist the schismatic prison culture that frequently treats prisoners as objects.

### Methodology

I approach this study of care from a phenomenological perspective. Philosophically and methodologically, phenomenology deeply questions the way we experience the world. It attempts to get underneath the theoretical and conceptual frameworks imposed on experience by disciplines such as philosophy, empirical science modelled after the physical sciences, the social sciences, and culture, to appreciate the purer forms or "essences" of teaching. This intense attention to the seemingly "trivial"—even mundane—dimensions of our educational lives (Brown, 1992) enables us to more fully recognize and interpret the taken-for-granted aspects of our teaching. Examining the intuitions and tacit knowledge of teachers in prisons—how they construct "business as usual"—is a potentially critical, reflective activity when these intuitions are subject to critical discourse: discussion, debate, and critique (Habermas, 1984).

In this paper I examine the images of teachers (Elbaz, 1983; Clandinin, 1986) to understand their practical knowledge of teaching in prisons. Teacher images represent "teacher's feelings, values, needs and beliefs about . . . how teaching should be" Images marshal "experience, theoretical knowledge, school folklore, to give substance to these images" (Elbaz, 1983, p. 134). Images pull the teacher toward an ideal, engaging the cognitive, affective and practical content of the teacher's knowledge for its realization.

My conversations with "Holly," a teacher in a minimum security prison in western Canada, alerted me to the importance of care as the "heart" of prison

teaching practices. As a result of our dialogue, I phenomena and conducted a small and by no means a review to develop "theoretic sensitivity" (Strauss) in educational settings. From these readings, I presented some of my findings to Holly then completed. I presented some of my findings to a questionnaire and from these readings to participate in the Correctional Education Conference in Banff (2004). One of the missing gaps in my discussion of care during the session (significantly, all of the participants from this session (significantly, all of the questionnaire completed by Holly, as a follow-up to the questionnaires, our dialogue in the conference was shared with communities by another prison teacher (Dobbins) from the respondents on the draft of this paper. (I am indebted to Dr. Thom Gehring and thoughtful comments on this draft.)

This work only anticipates further research in prisons: It is just the beginning of an education in a curious way, by the fact that all the respondents (this say?) More must be done to better understand and practice care in order to balance the perspective on over-reliance on women's notions of caring (at least, somewhat of a representative sample of those who teach in prison are women. The names of the respondents changed in most cases, to protect the identities of the section, I reproduce several key questions and responses from the questionnaire used to gather data for this paper. Themes that emerged to frame a conception of

### The Interview

#### *What do you mean by care?*

Everywhere, teachers could be heard working on caring for their students. In the delicate balance of teaching, teachers believed they must feel for and help their students at a point that they deprive students of their dignity. One teacher described her role as "doing with" not "doing for" and emphasized this duality to the nature of care work. She emphasized the efforts of the student to realize his goals. Care, for the individual student, believing in him, feeling

teaching practices. As a result of our dialogue, I became intrigued by the phenomena and conducted a small and by no means exhaustive literature review to develop "theoretic sensitivity" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) to caring in educational settings. From these readings, I prepared a questionnaire which Holly then completed. I presented some of my thoughts on the data from this questionnaire and from these readings to participants at the Alberta Correctional Education Conference in Banff (2003). They in turn, filled in many of the missing gaps in my discussion of care during the presentation. Six participants from this session (significantly, all women), agreed to respond to the questionnaire completed by Holly, as a follow-up activity. The responses to the questionnaires, our dialogue in the conference, a short essay on caring communities by another prison teacher (Dobbins, 2002), and the comments from the respondents on the draft of this paper constitute the data for this paper. (I am indebted to Dr. Thom Gehring and Ms. Susan Yantz for their thoughtful comments on this draft.)

This work only anticipates further research into the phenomenon of care in prisons: It is just the beginning of an educational conversation. It is flawed too, in a curious way, by the fact that all the respondents were women. (What does this say?) More must be done to better understand how male teachers in prison practice care in order to balance the perspectives offered here. Nevertheless, an over-reliance on women's notions of caring constitutes, in Canadian prisons at least, somewhat of a representative sample of the population, as most of those who teach in prison are women. The names of the participants have been changed in most cases, to protect the identities of participants. In the next section, I reproduce several key questions and responses from the questionnaire used to gather data for this paper, and identify prominent themes that emerged to frame a conception of caring in schools within prisons.

### **The Interview**

#### ***What do you mean by care?***

Everywhere, teachers could be heard working out the relational tensions of caring for their students. In the delicate balance between self and others, teachers believed they must feel for and help their students, but not to the point that they deprive students of their dignity as individuals. One teacher described her role as "doing with" not "doing for" her students. Holly emphasized this duality to the nature of care which blends her actions with the efforts of the student to realize his goals. Care, for Holly, is "showing concern for the individual student, believing in him, feeling responsibility for his success,

and helping him to develop a sense of self-worth and achieve his goals." Caring in a prison setting truly involves "receiving the other" but not absorbing her/him into myself. It entails becoming a duality of "self-other" (Noddings, 1999, p. 45). Teachers struggle to find a proper relational balance or midpoint between the qualities of autonomy and dependence.

***Can you give me some examples of caring that come to mind, based on your experience?***

Teachers experience the call to care. They experience a feeling of urgency on their part to intervene in "response to hurt"—the hurt they feel as they enter into, empathetically, the experiences of their students. One teacher writes how she felt compelled to ignore the prison protocol and talk to a native elder herself for a temporary pass for her student whose father had just died. She felt compelled to do so, because he "was really hurting." She also felt it necessary to "ease the pain" of a student whose mother was dying of cancer by suggesting to him that he take flowers from the garden to her. In her words:

The philosophy of teachers and the individual education plans that were developed at The Education Centre show caring in action. The caring of the teachers involved them in more than just the education part of the students' lives. For example, one of the classes at the [institution] grew flowers in their garden project, with the intention of creating floral bouquets and distributing them to local senior citizens. While this objective was achieved, the project also gave the teacher the opportunity to really bring caring home to one of her students. The student's mother was dying of cancer, and he had a pass to visit her. The teacher suggested that he pick some flowers from the school garden and take them to her in hospital. Upon his return, the student appeared to be deeply moved by his mother's response to the flowers. This significantly impacted the student because his teacher had cared enough to help ease his pain in this difficult time.

Christmas evoked another caring response from Holly, because it is the "loneliest time in an inmate's experience," the teachers in her school felt it necessary to respond. She says: "Teachers cover the cost of Christmas oranges, baking, etc. Snacks would also include baking from staff and volunteers, demonstrating the time and effort that is given so freely." And when a student was getting married, Holly noticed that "very little had been done in the way of

planning extras" and so to save him from the hurt because his important day was about to go unnoted. Holly's school showed they care by decorating the chapel

Silk flowers, streamers, balloons, and a cake were donated by the school; a wedding cake was baked to have the effect. These "caring actions," transcended the usual, gave the inmate a clear message that his life was valued by the gratitude of the couple.

Gilligan (1982) wrote that caring relationships are the connection between people that "gives rise to a respect for one another, a perception of the need for response to care—the perception of a need for response—was the narrative of the caring relationship. Care, in Holly's words, is an inclusive ethic that brings teachers and students into spheres of connection. To care as she does, is to be involved in the formation and participation of community. On the part of the teacher, for caring involves the care of another. It suggests by deed and thought, that of care for another" (Noddings, 1999, p. 45).

Caring then, is not simply a matter of sympathy or preparedness, a willingness to act and intervene in response to hurt. This nuance of the effort of care is an important one. Teachers who sympathize but never respond to the needs and emotions associated with "pity." Students know that the teacher but "do nothing about it." This is the teacher's disinterest and correctional staff, the teacher identified right care. It differs from care, for care is an expression of hope for the present.

***How do you Think Caring Affects the Teacher?***

Care warms the relationships between teachers and students. A caring relationship makes learning possible. The theme of care is a distinction to situations where care is absent. Teachers' relationships with students as "stilted," "perfunctory," and "distant" with students possible. Care lights a fire, in a metaphorical sense, it "inspires creativity," "spontaneity" and "creativity."

planning extras" and so to save him from the hurt that might have come because his important day was about to go unnoticed, the teachers at the school showed they care by decorating the chapel:

Silk flowers, streamers, balloons, and a decorating crew of students were donated by the school; a wedding cake from the teachers completed the effect. These "caring actions," transcending the learning environment, gave the inmate a clear message that his life was worthwhile, as evidenced by the gratitude of the couple.

Gilligan (1982) wrote that caring relationships are formed through a connection between people that "gives rise to a recognition of responsibility for one another, a perception of the need for response (p.30). This ethic of care—the perception of a need for response—was ever present in Holly's narrative of the caring relationship. Care, in Holly's words, speaks to an inclusive ethic that brings teachers and students together in ever-widening spheres of connection. To care as she does, is to engage teachers and students in the formation and participation of community. But it takes enormous effort on the part of the teacher, for caring involves the effort of being "... present to another. It suggests by deed and thought, that one is ready to spend oneself for another" (Noddings, 1999, p. 45).

Caring then, is not simply a matter of sympathy, but a state or preparedness, a willingness to act and intervene when one is called to respond to hurt. This nuance of the effort of care is an important one in the prison. Teachers who sympathize but never respond to the students' needs express the emotions associated with "pity." Students know teachers who seem concerned but "do nothing about it." This is the teacher disliked by students, other teachers and correctional staff, the teacher identified rightly as a "bleeding heart." Pity differs from care, for care is an expression of hope for the future, but pity dwells in the present.

#### ***How do you Think Caring Affects the Teacher-Student Relationship?***

Care warms the relationships between teachers and students and this relationship makes learning possible. The theme of care as warmth appears in distinction to situations where care is absent. Teachers describe uncaring relationships with students as "stilted," "perfunctory," "cold." Care makes rapport with students possible. Care lights a fire, in a manner of speaking; in their words, it "inspires creativity," "spontaneity" and "the joy of learning." Care has



passed on through modeling and experience. To truly teach effectively, caring must be the foundation.

Care is not something added to teaching (Wilde, 1996); it infuses teaching, and makes it whole. It is embedded in the school philosophy: Students in prison need a safe environment for experimentation, for creativity, and for personal growth. It can be found in Holly's curricular theorizing and design. Literacy, defined by her as "every aspect of daily living, the skills and attitudes the student learns," demands "an element of caring." Care promotes reciprocal relationships of respect and trust, between teacher and student; learning is possible only when caring relationships are present. Caring relationships also shape the goals of the program. Much as teachers must care for their students to be effective in prison, students should be taught to care for others in society and feel the need to respond to the "plight of the poor and the homeless, the abused, the struggles of teen parents. . . ." In this way, caring relations in school rehabilitate, as prisoners become students, persons and citizens who care for others.

There are hints too, in this passage, that caring teachers are trusted by their students. Holly described a situation where one of her students lost his brother during the Christmas break, while the school was closed and the teachers were away and even though he was eligible for a pass to attend the funeral, he waited for Holly's return. He "did not even discuss this tragedy with his case-manager. . . .He placed his faith in me, believing only I could be trusted to help in this very difficult situation." With time of the essence, Holly was able to "accelerate the necessary paperwork, for a pass, with his case-worker, and he did make it to the funeral. He placed his trust in me because I had "cared"; I had shown him that he was a worthwhile person."

#### ***What Might it Mean for a Prison School Where Teachers do Not Care?***

Care is at the heart of teaching; it warms the school, and makes learning possible. Without care, prison schools, Holly wrote,

. . . could not possibly be successful. The 'heart' would be missing from such a place. Caring is the foundation of a school environment. Without nurturing and caring, the school would be quiet and unproductive. Students would not believe in their ability to achieve and would soon be discouraged, revisiting the failures of earlier school experiences. There would be no 'buzz of activity' where students are interacting with each

other, and the feel of the school would be cold. Teacher-student relationships would only be addressing the curriculum at hand, without encouragement to learn concepts and apply them to daily life. The school environment would not foster personal growth. Teachers would work to rule and display no special interest in the student. The classrooms would be empty at breaks, and, at the end of the day, no students would engage in consultation with teachers; no teacher would address issues or care how the inmate is handling his programs, or how the school could help him to apply the principles he is learning.

Other teachers also described how an uncaring school would be "cold," with only a few students attending but not really listening; instead, they would be sleeping and unproductive. Students would be present because they were forced to be in the program. Caring and uncaring schools are contrasted along a continuum of spontaneity and its absence. Uncaring schools "would be regimented, the old school mentality." In caring schools, discipline and classroom management issues are often not the issue; however, in uncaring schools, students "take on an attitude" and "learning would not take place." There would be "poor attendance and less work done." The school atmosphere would be "cold, hostile, indifferent." It would lack "empathy and smiles."

### Can Prisons Care?

For these teachers who work in a minimum security institution, prisons can be caring places. There can be, as one teacher noted, an "overarching ethos" of care in a prison; care can be the "raison d'être" of the prison. Some prisons, teachers acknowledge, lack this ethos. These prisons are "devoted to cruelty, sadism, abuse, neglect." Teachers find evidence of this overarching ethos of care in the interactions between prison and education staff and inmates when there are signs of respectful behavior, and where this behavior is modeled and expected by all. In the institution where many of these teachers work, it is common for prison and teaching staff to hold the door open for inmates and vice versa. Practically speaking, teachers believe that caring institutions provide good health care for inmates, appropriate rehabilitation programs, programs that teach job skills, and opportunities to live on drug-free as well as smoke-free ranges.

Some prisons make it difficult for care to appear. In a short essay titled "Caring for the Community," Martha, a prison teacher in a woman's prison in Western Canada, described the "othering" prison practices that make it difficult

for prison staff to identify with prisoners. Martha generous and caring relationships with others and them and say, "that could be me." And the oppo

We are impatient with or indifferent to identify. If we are hardworking and thrifty, v or money to people living on welfare. If we patience with alcoholics and drug addicts. I the law-breaker punished to the fullest. We say, 'that could never be me.' (Dobbins, 2002

Before she started teaching in prison, Martha relationship with her prisoner-students. Her brief appreciation of the prisoners she teaches as wor into neat, convenient categories.

They are women from good financial backg They are women with little education and w They are childless women and women with separated. Now that I have met the women Institution for Women, I have come to the c (Dobbins, 2002, p.16).

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for prison staff to identify with prisoners. Martha believes that helpful, generous and caring relationships with others arises when we can identify with them and say, "that could be me." And the opposite is also true:

We are impatient with or indifferent to those with whom we cannot identify. If we are hardworking and thrifty, we are not generous in thought or money to people living on welfare. If we are temperate, we have no patience with alcoholics and drug addicts. If we are law-abiding we want the law-breaker punished to the fullest. We are unsympathetic because we say, 'that could never be me.' (Dobbins, 2002, p.16)

Before she started teaching in prison, Martha had not even imagined a relationship with her prisoner-students. Her brief essay reveals her gradual appreciation of the prisoners she teaches as women and persons who do not fit into neat, convenient categories.

They are women from good financial backgrounds and women on welfare; They are women with little education and women with successful careers. They are childless women and women with children; they are married and separated. Now that I have met the women who are incarcerated at the Institution for Women, I have come to the conclusion, 'That could be me.' (Dobbins, 2002, p.16).

The heart of Martha's caring appears, unintentionally perhaps, as a form of resistance to the correctional system. Martha described in her essay, how in prison, "there is little room for explanations, understandings, and second chances. Further, since I have started working at Edmonton Institution for Women the words 'inmate,' 'criminal' and 'prisoner' have come to sound harsh and only the word-'women' seems to fit the persons I have met." This does not mean excusing their behaviors, but it does mean establishing a "deep connection and understanding" that the person inside the walls "could be me."

### **Are There Limits to Caring in Prison?**

Caring teachers underscore the importance of identifying with the students, hearing the call to respond that comes as they feel compassionately, their hurt. Noddings (1999a) believes care is present when one is engrossed in the life of another. Yet we have also heard how care is a matter of dwelling in the duality of self-other, in such a way that recognizes the integrity of each party. Care

presents teachers with ethical dilemmas that surface in the relational waters between caring selves and others. Teachers in prison struggle to care within institutionally prescribed prohibitions on relationships with inmates. Holly knows some of these rules, and as a result, must determine the place of care within these sanctions of behavior. When I asked her if caring relationships with prisoners/students can cause conflict, she described the importance of learning to be close to them and staying far enough away, so that imagined or socially constructed boundaries are not crossed:

Caring can cause conflict for teachers who do not set strict boundaries in their working relationships with students. Often the students we work with have not had the experience of good, male/female working relationships. When a teacher has a caring approach, it can be perceived as personal interest. I have experienced situations where a teacher is the recipient of an inappropriate letter or poem, and have always dealt with this situation immediately and openly. Open, frank discussion with the teacher and the student is usually enough to solve the problem. It is also an excellent opportunity for the teacher to model professional male/female relationships. Again, there is always the danger that inmates who have had little family or friendship support can see caring out of context.

As long as teachers are conscious of, and alert to, their developing relationship with a student, problems can be avoided. As a prison school administrator, I have dealt with several situations where teachers and students became involved in inappropriate relationships.

In one case, a teacher spent time listening to an inmate before his parole hearing. While this was not unusual per se, the amount of time that was spent became an issue, and the teacher was drawn into discussion of the inmate's personal life. He was looking to the teacher to advise him about, and perhaps, even absolve him of, a very serious crime. The discussions he was having with her were inappropriate, and really belonged in sessions with a psychologist. Much of the time the teacher was spending listening to the student should have been spent with her class. The other students noticed the way the relationship was evolving, and rumours started to fly; stories about the teacher and the inmate raised serious security issues. Although I worked with the teacher to put the situation into perspective, she was not willing to take the necessary steps to avoid what was becoming a potentially dangerous situation. Immaturity and lack of experience, and an unwillingness to be counselled, seriously affected the career of a very promising teacher; what began as caring, ultimately resulted in an unfortunate dismissal.

## Discussion and Implications

### *Care and the Relational Midpoint*

This article draws attention to importance of care as an orientation towards others: It is found in care and by a general concern for their well-being. Care that demands effort and accountability on the part of the caregiver, and a knowledge of the delicate balance of self-other in relationships. Caring relations in prison schools or prisons. These relations help students respect themselves and their society.

Care is awakened as prison teachers respond to their attention. Their response is shaped by institutional prescriptions. Teachers do not become totally engrossed in the care, but also know that caring relations have boundaries. Institutional prescriptions on getting close to inmates do not intervene in the relational dynamics of power and control present in prisons. Students realize they are cared for, and are motivated to do their best; they respond to care with positive growth and change. They respect and respond to the care of teachers who act on their behalf (they do not feel motivated to learn).

In their pre-service and in-service training (Allen, 1992), teachers have been warned about the "middle ground" of play and how it is best not to share anything of oneself. Caring teacher relationships, it would seem, are not "middle ground" theoretically, somewhere in the social-psychological "middle ground" between teachers and students. Most problems are dilemmas and conflicts that arise because they are not "middle ground"—students get "close" or "near" enough to them in keeping their emotional and social "distance" from them. Teachers discover and sustain the delicate relationship through practical knowledge (Wright, 2002). Taubman (1992) problem between teachers and students this way.

Absolute distance and the abolition of distance between the master who knows and the subject who is the teacher and I suspect that the answer lies in the middle.

## Discussion and Implications

### *Care and the Relational Midpoint*

This article draws attention to importance of care in prisons. Care is expressed as an orientation towards others: It is found in respectful actions on their behalf and by a general concern for their well-being. Care is a relational commitment that demands effort and accountability on the part of teachers and a sound knowledge of the delicate balance of self-other in helping, educative relationships. Caring relations in prison schools orient students to the future. These relations help students respect themselves, their teachers and others in society.

Care is awakened as prison teachers respond to a "hurt" that demands their attention. Their response is shaped by institutional prescriptions, so teachers do not become totally engrossed in their students. They must learn to care, but also know that caring relations have boundaries. Despite the institutional prescriptions on getting close to inmates, caring relations appear to intervene in the relational dynamics of power and authority that are ever-present in prisons. Students realize they are cared-for and they are internally motivated to do their best; they respond to care, according to teachers, with positive growth and change. They respect and respond to the rational authority of teachers who act on their behalf (they do not give "attitude"). They are motivated to learn.

In their pre-service and in-service training (Allen & Bosta, 2002; Cornelius, 1992), teachers have been warned about the manipulative games criminals play and how it is best not to share anything of consequence with them. Caring teacher relationships, it would seem, are located, practically and theoretically, somewhere in the social-psychological space—of "nearness and farness"—between teachers and students. Most prison teachers face relational dilemmas and conflicts that arise because they must understand their students—get "close" or "near" enough to them in order to teach—while also keeping their emotional and social "distance" from them (Wright, 2002). How teachers discover and sustain the delicate relational midpoint is part of their practical knowledge (Wright, 2002). Taubman (1992, p. 224) framed the problem between teachers and students this way:

Absolute distance and the abolition of all distance. What then is the right distance between the master who knows and the teacher who cares, between the subject who is the teacher and the subject who is the student? I suspect that the answer lies in the middle, at the midpoint.

It is a difficult task to balance on this relational midpoint, because in caring classrooms, affection for students, warmth, cooperation, and respect are evident. Teachers, especially women who care, are empathetic; they respond to the call to care, and these relationships open up possibilities of manipulation.

### Care as Resistance?

Despite the worrisome boundary issues, the voices of women who teach in prison suggest that caring teaching practices resist wide-spread prison norms as their work highlights the importance of connection and community-inclusiveness. These practices flow against the institutionalized "dividing practices" (Roseneau, 1991, p. 50), that separate "Us" from "Them" in prisons. Martha resisted these dividing practices in her work at a prison for women, once she realized that the prisoners she taught, could be her. Care disappears as persons are turned into Others who lose their multidimensional, ambiguous, enigmatic persona. Instead "They" become a category. Through her caring approach, Martha saw her students in their complexity; as rich and poor, childless and as mothers, without careers and with them. For her, there is much about the lives of her students that escapes the overbearing conceptual categories of prison life.

The school is potentially a site of resistance as teachers work through the dynamics of independence and dependence. They immerse themselves and students in future-oriented practices. In caring relationships, there is hope. Holly's comments—oriented as they were to the future—resist the tendency in prisons to focus on the past, the crime, the criminal history and deficits that overshadow the student's present/presence and future. Often, prison staff see prisoners through the rear-view mirror of their crimes. Caring infuses the present with the future.

Caring relations appear to resist the characteristics of the prison as a total institution characterized by the large batch movement of people through the institutional processes (identifying, labeling, segregating, controlling, feeding, clothing, and so on) so that people are easily codified to fit the imperatives of the institution (Goffman, 1970). In practice this may mean providing flowers from the garden for a dying mother, or ensuring the ceremonial trappings for a prison wedding, ignored by other prison staff, and it also means finding alternatives and opportunities to demonstrate care. Caring actions, which focus on the particular, resist the abstractions of prison life where prisoners are treated according to the large batch operations of the administrative machinery. Caring relationships do not make the cared-for into a problem to be solved:

As I convert what I have received from something to be solved, I move away from strip it of complex and bothersome qualities. Other's reality becomes data, stuff to be analyzed. This is to be expected and is entirely appropriate. I move through essential turning points and move back to the receptive. If I care, I must consider the life, needs and desires. I enter into a relational objective thinking to a relational stake that. By this tie, I allow myself to be continually in communication [my emphasis]. If I fail to do of abstraction, moving rapidly away from the objective and impersonal problems upon which structure satisfies it. If I do not turn way from cared-for. Indeed, I lose myself as one-caring problem instead of a person" (Noddings, 19

It is difficult to conceive of prisoners as Others when there is communication between parties. More like "Us" than "Them."). Correctional staff are professional distance from inmates" (Cornelius, operating on a principle of direct communication. Good will of each party, correctional staff are to communicative actions of inmates. They are structured the games criminals play and taught to profit by (1981). This schismatic or divisive institutional correctional officer's warning to new recruits:

... Inmates have a different moral code than law-abiding citizens: they live by a different code. That deception, or manipulation, is important. Manipulative behavior is combined with ty impatience, irresponsibility and a lack of va person who survives by using others (Corn

The article illustrates the various ways inmates use "manipulation" to set up correctional staff, who firm and in control. When you are working a p

As I convert what I have received from the other into a problem, something to be solved, I move away from the other. I clean up his reality, strip it of complex and bothersome qualities, in order to think it. The other's reality becomes data, stuff to be analysed, studied, interpreted. All this is to be expected and is entirely appropriate provided that I see the essential turning points and move back to the concrete, the personal and the receptive. If I care, I must consider the cared-for's nature, his way of life, needs and desires. I enter into a relation with him and tie my objective thinking to a relational stake that stands at the heart of caring. By this tie, I allow myself to be continually pulled back into direct communication [my emphasis]. If I fail to do this, I may climb into clouds of abstraction, moving rapidly away from the cared-for into a domain of objective and impersonal problems upon which I impose whatever structure satisfies it. If I do not turn way from my abstractions, I lose the cared-for. Indeed, I lose myself as one-caring, for I now care about a problem instead of a person" (Noddings, 1999, p. 45).

It is difficult to conceive of prisoners as Other—as distant and different when there is communication between parties. (In Martha's words, they are more like "Us" than "Them."). Correctional staff are told, however, "to keep a professional distance from inmates" (Cornelius, 1992, p. 173). Instead of operating on a principle of direct communication, which assumes the reciprocal good will of each party, correctional staff are taught to be suspicious of the communicative actions of inmates. They are strongly advised to watch out for the games criminals play and taught to profit by knowing them (Allen & Bosta, 1981). This schismatic or divisive institutional culture is underlined by a former correctional officer's warning to new recruits:

. . . Inmates have a different moral code than the code followed by law-abiding citizens: they live by a different set of values. . . . inmates learn that deception, or manipulation, is important for survival. . . . If this manipulative behavior is combined with typical inmate behavior, such as impatience, irresponsibility and a lack of values, the result is an immature person who survives by using others (Cornelius, 1992, p140).

The article illustrates the various ways inmates deploy the "artistry of manipulation" to set up correctional staff, who are warned by the author to: "Be firm and in control. When you are working a post, you are the boss. . . . Set

limits on your availability to inmates. See them on your terms, not theirs. Be firm, but be fair" (Cornelius, 1992, p. 173).

Certainly there is much to be cautious about in prison relationships. Inmates often will and do communicate strategically. Extreme forms of strategic communication on the part of both inmates and correctional staff generate a relationship vacuum of personal distance, and privilege issues of power, authority, strategic control, survival and protection—ensuring a position of moral nihilism that denies any obligation of self to Other. Yet caring teachers express a mode of being together in prison that does not appear to conflict with the good order of the institution, even as it resists the abstractions of a system based on control and the exercise of power. Perhaps there is a third relational way between the dichotomies of freedom and discipline which is revealed in this discussion of caring?

### Justice and Care

This discussion of caring teachers and schools also raises questions about the moral development and ethical stance of prison teachers. As I noted, the study is limited because only women responded to the questionnaire. On the other hand, the gendered nature of these responses supports Gilligan's contention that it is necessary to nourish Kohlberg's theory modeled after morally developed men as highly individualized beings who are fair (a justice model), with a model of moral-cognitive development of women who care (a relationship model). For Gilligan, higher states of moral development appear as caring relations that are "immersed in the details of relationships and narratives. Sensitivity to others, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and peace-making—all reflect interpersonal involvement." (Griffin, 2000, p. 471). Clearly in the data collected for this study, teachers' knowledge and practice are nested—teachers feel, think and act in close relationship with their students. The data presented here confirmed Gilligan's suggestion that women's ethical decisions are situated by "considerations of compassion, loyalty, and a strong sense of responsibility to prevent pain and suffering." (Griffin, 2000, p.471). Caring is a heavily contextualized way on being and acting in concert with others. Justice may be blind, impartial, but care speaks to a "view from somewhere" that is gaining ground, as prisons respond to gender issues and aboriginal recommendations for specific, contextual forms of justice and rationality that exceed abstract notions of fairness (Wright 2000, 2001).

### Suggestions for Further Research: Speculation

The themes that arise in this discussion suggest a theme—teachers who care intuitively are guided by a web of meaningful, respectful, and close, "warm" relationships based on honesty, and accountability. Through this relationship between student and teacher, students find themselves, empowered to accomplish their goals, and become citizens. The traditional, regimented, and disrespectful of the prison culture as a whole, is structured upon the distance. Communication is defined implicitly, by the exercise of power and control.

Prison cultures are stratified, it would seem, by power and separation embodied in theory and practice of justice. But experience suggests that prison life, like any life, is full of conflict and pain. Perhaps we need to re-examine abstract justice.

Gilligan's response to Kohlberg's work on moral development, different, gendered, and complementary models raises questions regarding the moral development of women. To develop morally, she suggested, they assume relationships from others and must work hard to connect with others. Just the opposite is true for women who care. They become so connected that they must work to establish relationships they deem important. The prison is an environment that forces staff to work through relationships. Perhaps the images of web and hierarchy provide a framework where teachers and prison staff are socially and working through this relational dynamic.

The images of hierarchy and web, drawn from women's fantasies and thoughts, convey different relationships and are associated with different meanings. But these images create a problem in understanding the other's representation. As the top of the web and as the center of a network, each is in the middle of a hierarchical progression, each in a place which the other defines as safe [my e

**Suggestions for Further Research: Speculations on Hierarchy and Web**

The themes that arise in this discussion suggest the presence of an overarching theme—teachers who care intuitively are guided by the image of teaching as a web of meaningful, respectful, and close, "warm" relationships (within limits) based on honesty, and accountability. Through the connections between student and teacher, students find themselves, experience their freedom to be, accomplish their goals, and become citizens. They characterize uncaring schools as traditional, regimented, and disrespectful of the uniqueness of others. The prison culture as a whole, is structured upon the principle of keeping one's distance. Communication is defined implicitly, by its strategic uses—for the exercise of power and control.

Prison cultures are strafed, it would seem, by male principles of autonomy and separation embodied in theory and practice, in systems of fairness and justice. But experience suggests that prison life, based only on these principles, is full of conflict and pain. Perhaps we need to rethink some of the premises of abstract justice.

Gilligan's response to Kohlberg's work on moral development, identifies different, gendered, and complementary models of moral development, and raises questions regarding the moral development of prison teachers. As men develop morally, she suggested, they assume relational autonomy or separation from others and must work hard to connect with them in meaningful relationships. Just the opposite is true for women who, as they develop morally, become so connected that they must work to extricate themselves from the relationships they deem important. The prison is a complex social and cultural environment that forces staff to work through relationships with prisoners. Perhaps the images of web and hierarchy provide us with a good sense of where teachers and prison staff are socially and morally, when it comes to working through this relational dynamic.

The images of hierarchy and web, drawn from the texts of men's and women's fantasies and thoughts, convey different ways of structuring relationships and are associated with different views of morality and self. But these images create a problem in understanding because each distorts the other's representation. As the top of the hierarchy becomes the edge of the web and as the center of a network of connection becomes the middle of a hierarchical progression, **each image marks as dangerous the place which the other defines as safe** [my emphasis]. Thus the images of

hierarchy and web inform different modes of assertion and response: The wish to be alone at the top and the consequent fear that others will get too close; the wish to be at the center of connection and the consequent fear of being too far out on the edge. These disparate fears of being stranded and being caught give rise to different portrayals of achievement and affiliation, leading to different modes of action and different ways of assessing the consequences of choice (Gilligan, 1982, p.62).

Gilligan's comment reflects what caring teachers seem to feel about the need for authority in the classroom. In caring schools, the relationship is the key to discipline. This approach confirms too, what Gilligan said about the moral development of women:

"If aggression is tied, as women perceive, to the fracture of human connection, then the activities of care, as [women's] fantasies suggest, are the activities that make the social world safe, by avoiding isolation and preventing aggression rather than by seeking rules to limit its extent" (Gilligan, 1982, p.43).

### Concluding Remarks

This work examines teachers' responses to a questionnaire regarding the nature of conception of care and caring teachers in prison. It focuses on the images teachers use to describe their work. This is a speculative work that began with recognition of the importance of care in the prison school, and with the knowledge that little has been said about the topic in prison teaching practices. It suggests much more should be done to appreciate caring prison teachers and schools.

The study of care illuminates some of the relational dilemmas and conflicts as prison teachers feel they must get close to them in order to teach and also keep their distance because they have been warned in their pre-service and in-service training, about the manipulative games criminals play. It would seem that caring teacher relationships in prisons are located, practically and theoretically speaking, somewhere in the social-psychological relational space—of "nearness and farness"—between teachers and students. How teachers work out these relational distances is part of their practical professional knowledge and also the subject of this essay.

In the future, a research protocol that closely examines the guiding images

of relationships in teacher narratives along a con (or autonomy and connection) as suggested by C might also help us to understand the conflict that they structure their pedagogical world around ne prisons where hierarchy is the norm. We might a moral issues.

We have not heard male voices in this essay, their stories of institutional life? Do we hear stori More research might help us to understand differ relational and hence, teaching style.

Can we examine institutional schools and d and prisons by examining the (gendered?) prohib and practice of relationships along the relational images of hierarchy and web? It would be intere physical data (standing orders, policy statements relational continuum identified in these images s relationships in the official literature, between st school and prison. This might help us articulate cultures, policies and practices.

Can we find examples of caring prisons whi relationships of intimacy (but not quite), transpar compassion? And can we explore the dark side - insistence on intimacy denies diversity, the integ closer relationships between teacher and studen character named Garcin, in Jean-Paul Sartre's No that "hell is other people"? There is much yet, to to caring prison teachers and schools.

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of relationships in teacher narratives along a continuum of hierarchy and web (or autonomy and connection) as suggested by Gilligan, seems worthwhile. This might also help us to understand the conflict that female teachers experience as they structure their pedagogical world around notions of relationship within prisons where hierarchy is the norm. We might ask too, if caring always raises moral issues.

We have not heard male voices in this essay. What is the place of care in their stories of institutional life? Do we hear stories of negotiated hierarchies? More research might help us to understand differences in men and women's relational and hence, teaching style.

Can we examine institutional schools and decipher the culture of schools and prisons by examining the (gendered?) prohibitions, prescriptions, images and practice of relationships along the relational continuum embodied in images of hierarchy and web? It would be interesting to see if we can connect physical data (standing orders, policy statements, wardens' messages) to the relational continuum identified in these images so as to illustrate the implied relationships in the official literature, between staff and student-prisoners in the school and prison. This might help us articulate the different prison and school cultures, policies and practices.

Can we find examples of caring prisons which promote positive relationships of intimacy (but not quite), transparency (but not completely), and compassion? And can we explore the dark side of intimacy – where the insistence on intimacy denies diversity, the integrity of self and Other so that closer relationships between teacher and student sour. So that we, Like a character named Garcin, in Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*, come to know and feel that "hell is other people"? There is much yet, to be said and done with regard to caring prison teachers and schools.

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### Correctional Education Historical

#### Even Saints Can Get Locked Up

As a young man around the year 1200, before Assisi was locked up as a prisoner of war. Assisi was an Italian city. During this period he was shackled in a narrow wooden bed and some straw, eating food through pigs. His merchant father eventually arranged a large ransom (DelPopolo, A., 1988, Francis: Saint of Assisi and the 22-25). St. Francis' subsequent life's work is well known. His experience in prison had an impact on his well known others.

In a 1605 sea voyage between Marseilles and Vincent De Paul was sailing was captured by African prisoner of war to Tunis, and served two years as a prisoner. (1989, Lives of the Saints for Every Day of the Year. 400). No doubt remembering this experience, Vincent De Paul, 1617, and later as an official chaplain, among galley slaves. By 1622 he was given "a mission for the convicts at sea" and helped plan a hospital for galley-slaves in Marseilles. The hospital was completed. During the subsequent wars he collected money and he sent missionaries to ransom over 1,200 Christians. (Butler's Lives of the Saints, 1993. Boston: Butler's Lives of the Saints). Vincent De Paul is associated with charity for the n

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### Biographical Sketch

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## Correctional Education Historical Vignettes

### Even Saints Can Get Locked Up

As a young man around the year 1200, before he became a saint, Francis of Assisi was locked up as a prisoner of war. Assisi was at war with Perugia, another Italian city. During this period he was shackled in a dirty dungeon, sleeping on a narrow wooden bed and some straw, eating food that would not normally be fed to pigs. His merchant father eventually arranged a large ransom, and Francis was freed. (DelPopolo, A., 1988, Francis: Saint of Assisi and the World. McLean, VA: Cavalier, pp. 22-25). St. Francis' subsequent life's work is well known--and it is likely that his experience in prison had an impact on his well known sensitivity for the well being others.

In a 1605 sea voyage between Marseilles and Norbonne, the ship on which Vincent De Paul was sailing was captured by African pirates. He was taken as a prisoner of war to Tunis, and served two years as a slave before escaping (Hoever, H., 1989, Lives of the Saints for Every Day of the Year. NY: Catholic Book Publishing, p. 400). No doubt remembering this experience, Vincent began working voluntarily in 1617, and later as an official chaplain, among galley slaves in Chatillion-les-Dombes. By 1622 he was given "a mission for the convicts at Bordeaux." In the 1630s De Paul helped plan a hospital for galley-slaves in Marseilles, but the project was never completed. During the subsequent wars he collected alms in Paris; with the proceeds he sent missionaries to ransom over 1,200 Christian slaves in North Africa. (Excerpts from Butler's Lives of the Saints, 1993. Boston: Bulfinch, pp. 260-261). Today St. Vincent De Paul is associated with charity for the needy.

— Thom Gehring