Chapter 2
The Architecture of Power: Philosophy and Education

2.1 Structures of Dehumanization

In this chapter I want to look at the ways philosophy and ethics structure our experiences and the experiences of our students in the everyday classroom. We will see dehumanization at work and contrast arrangements where humanization is possible. Philosophy and ethics are fields that may at first seem far removed from our experiences in the everyday classroom. Sometimes the idea of philosophy comes up in teaching, as in *what is her teaching philosophy?* Both philosophy and ethics are usually presented as academic subjects *taught*, not lived through relationships. I hope to show how the things we teachers do in our classrooms every day—from the ways we set up our seating arrangements to the tests we administer, from our theories of learning and the ways they are translated into classroom lessons to our use of pre-packaged "teacher-proofed" curriculums—reflect and/or challenge philosophical and ethical arrangements. I wish to show that these are palpable relationships that impact our lives on a daily basis in the classroom.

I put a great deal of thought into the titles of these next two chapters. I wanted to convey a couple of ideas with whatever titles I chose. For starters, I need to communicate clearly that the disciplines examined in these sections are human disciplines, created by people, not preexisting, not "out there" somewhere. I also wanted to express that the way these disciplines are now structured often does a great disservice to the people—students, teachers, administrators, clinicians, community members—whose lives are conduits of and for the power that these disciplines perpetuate.

Some of the titles I mulled over included *the archaeology of oppression*, *the genealogy of dehumanization*, maybe *the archaeology* or *the genealogy of subjugation*. I liked and disliked these titles for various reasons. The terms *dehumanization*, *oppression,* and *subjugation* describe how humans are kept from being completely human, a recurring theme of this book. *Archaeology* and *genealogy* convey a sense of history, of an on-going project. However, these are both weighted terms both. Weighted not only because Foucault used them in specific ways that are both inclusive and beyond my scope here, but also because these words convey passivity. Archaeology connotes a science concerned with uncovering a static past; genealogy

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connotes a descent, a lineage, a certain sense of inevitability, of just uncovering connections that have always been.

I chose the term *architecture* in the title of this chapter because it is a word I hope expresses the sense that the structures of schooling and the structures schools are nested within are human constructions. They were planned and erected. They are maintained. These structures reflect human agency, albeit the agency of some persons and not others. *Power* is another major theme running throughout this book. An architecture of power is meant to give a sense that, yes, here is an example of a discipline that exerts power over our lives, but this doesn't have to be power in the negative sense. If I show how I think a discipline dehumanizes us I will also attempt to show its obverse, suggesting ways it can be restructured to promote humanization. An "architecture of power" also straddles the dangerous position of sounding good but lacking substance, of being specious. It is my hope that I can show the substance at play behind the philosophy in general and ethics in particular of our classrooms.

2.2 Education and Myth

I choose to start this chapter with a discussion of morals and proceed from there for good reason. It's not that I think all other realms of life boil down to the ethical one. Such reductionism is one of the things I will argue against throughout this book. But I do believe that if I am able to uncover the flaws in our contemporary models of ethical thinking, you will begin to see that upholding institutions—be they schools or economic systems—built on these flaws is untenable. I believe that teachers are, whether they know it or not, primarily moral agents in their classrooms. Often the subject matter is just a cover for the ethical work we do within schools. I further believe that I can present an alternate ethical model that can and *should* form the basis for all of our human interactions and institutions. It's an alternate ethical model with roots in feminist thought of the last 25 years. Further, I believe that ours is a deeply moral species, that a sense of morality underlies our natures, and that the alternative ethical basis I will discuss here makes more sense to us as social animals and our evolution. By and large, human beings want to live good lives, and we look to ethics and morality for guidance in achieving such.

A quest for guidance, for suggestion upon which we can reflect and decide ourselves, all too often gives way to a desire for something more. A yearning for certainty and truth is extremely important to us human beings but such desire may lead us to places where, in retrospect, we'd wish we had not gone. (Chapter 6 will discuss the authoritarian personality in depth.) The perceived loss of certainty and truth is the main idea expressed in Nietzsche's parable of the madman who comes down into a village and asks where God is. The townsfolk, seemingly nonbelievers to a woman, laugh at him. "God is dead," the madman answers his own question, and God is dead, he recognizes, because "*We have killed him*—you and I" (Nietzsche, 1974: 181).

The madman ponders the significance of the death of God. It is more than the disappearance of a parent figure in the cosmos watching over us. It is a larger loss of certainty in a world revealed to be uncertain. A god in heaven provided assurance, guidance, and organization to those scrambling around on the hard rock that is Earth below. Nietzsche charges that we have done away with this without having thought it through. “How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun?” his madman asks (Nietzsche, 1974: 182). The madman looks upon a populace that has uprooted and cast off a certainty and resolution that structured their lives, a people who have extirpated the ordering principle of their existence and have no alternate to put in its place. He shudders from the implications of this, but he shudders alone, for the villagers lack understanding of what they have done. “This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—*and yet they have done it themselves,*” he laments (Ibid.). The ramifications of their act elude them, although the consequences hover over their heads, ready to come crashing down.

Nietzsche rues the disappearance of myth in human societies. He saw religion as myth and myth as necessity. “The Greeks were keenly aware of the terrors and horrors of existence,” he explains, “in order to be able to live at all they had to place before them the shining fantasy of the Olympians” (Nietzsche, 1956: 29–30). Myths provide human beings with ordering principles, with mores and norms, with reasons where none are forthcoming, with purpose. Myth, for Nietzsche is essential, and “every culture that has lost myth has lost, by the same token, its natural, healthy creativity” (1956: 136).

Less we think otherwise, education is rife with myths. For example, we are often told that education is necessary for future employment. American high schools prepare all students for college, the idea being that the more of the right kind of education one gets ensures one access to better jobs and a better life. Like most myths, this one is partially true. However, only 21% of American jobs projected through 2012 will require a Bachelor’s degree or higher (Redovich, 2005: 1). Further, no more than 5% of all US jobs will require higher math or science skills (Ibid.). Despite this, despite the facts that only 35% of Americans aged 18–24 are enrolled in college; that 17 of 100 Americans in college actually *graduate* college; in short, despite the fact that college attendance and graduation are minority phenomenon in the United States, the idea of college and the desirability of attending and graduating such are hegemonic (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2006).

High scores on the SAT are bandied about as a way of predicting performance in one’s freshman year of college. This is another myth of American education. In fact, one’s grades in their junior and senior years of high school are better indicators of one’s performance in their college freshman year. Standardized exams like the SAT (which is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5 below) are accurate measures of how well student do on standardized tests like the SAT. Once known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, then as the Scholastic Achievement Test, today’s SAT measures neither possible scholastic aptitude nor potential scholastic achievement (Sacks, 1999: 209). Further, the SAT is class- and culturally biased, with white students from affluent families faring better on it than non-white students and children from less affluent families (Owen & Doerr, 1999: 209–215).

In graduate school I learned about “6 hour retarded” students, children who appeared completely “normal” outside of school but who for 6 hours a day are incapable of functioning academically (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997). In fact, schools value and reward certain forms of knowledge, certain cultural capitals over others. In schools that recognize Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory but continue to only reward students’ logical–mathematical and linguistic intelligences, students growing up in homes where books and magazines are available and students who enjoy mathematics and have an aptitude for it will outperform other students no matter how much spatial, bodily kinesthetic, or personal intelligences other students possess. Others may find themselves referred to as “retarded” for part of their day.

These “myths” surrounding education did not materialize out of thin air. They were crafted, created to justify and rationalize the benefits some accrued at the expense of others. Critical pedagogy looks to uncover the making of these myths and to institute new ones in their place. The myths critical pedagogy champions hold that education is capable of making human beings *more* human, that all students have the ability and human right to education, that schooling should help mold informed democratic citizens and not produce compliant workers and dogmatic nationalists.

I agree with Nietzsche that laying bare myths and not offering alternative myths, not working to create meaning in our lives, is the path of nihilism and damnation for both the individual and her culture. That is why, in the following chapters, as I lay bare philosophy and psychology, I offer alternatives to the way these are practiced and structured currently. Though we do well to wield Nietzsche’s metaphorical hammer as we sound out educational idols, we err should we use that hammer only to destroy. Ruthless criticism is not enough. The hammer must also be used to build, erecting architectures of power that promote humanization. Destruction must be followed by construction.

2.3 The Truths We Hold Dear

Philosophy is a word and a field passed down to us from the ancient Greeks, although as an endeavor it existed before the Greeks. For as long as humans have had consciousness we have been capable of philosophizing, although we have not all borne the title of philosopher—neither, for that matter, do all thinking people today. Societies are selective on whom they bestow the title philosopher, and looking at who these people are is often a telling indictment of the society considered. For their part, the Greeks recorded their history in written form, which was preserved and passed down to us, hence the connections we can draw between the Greeks and philosophy.

The word *philosophy* derives from the Greek words for *friend* or *lover* and *wisdom*. A philosopher is a lover of wisdom. Wisdom is the state of being wise, of knowing what is true and right and acting justly. Some problems immediately arise. What is wisdom? What is considered wise? Was Einstein wise? Is a Native American shaman wise? Is one wiser than the other? What is true and right? What does it mean to act justly? If you could go back in time and assassinate Hitler in 1938, would this be justified because of the millions of lives it would save? Or would Hitler's death be unjust because murder is wrong? Are justice, wisdom, and truth—human concepts—open to revision and reformulation or are they immutable, unchanging, eternal norms? Plato's theory of the forms held that concepts such as "truth" originated outside the three pounds of grey matter housed between our two human ears, though those three pounds—if properly educated—could apprehend the truth.

Never denying the underlying genetic component constituting certain parts of human morality (discussed below), critical pedagogy holds that knowledge—including truth—is a social construction. In other words, a good deal of what we "know" to be "true" was created *by* human beings *for* human beings. For example, many people claim to "know" that democracy is good, but how do they *know* this? Why is democracy any better than aristocracy, monarchy, or Fascism for that matter? (For further discussion see Chapter 6).

What is this thing called truth that we value so highly? Does it exist? Why do we place such importance in it? In ethics, the field of metaethics considers questions of what concepts like truth, goodness, and justice are in and of themselves. A social construction of knowledge holds that truth, goodness, and justice cannot be isolated, cannot be separated from the human interactions that give these ideas meaning. Divorced from their human contexts, these terms lose all meaning and risk meaning anything to anybody or nothing to no one. We ascribe meaning to these words when they are grounded in human relations. For example, although Michael constantly rubs Mrs. Lynch the wrong way, she grades him no more severely than the rest of her students, putting aside any personal disdain she may occasionally harbor for the brat. Most of us consider this fairness. When Mr. O'Gorman grades Caitlin more on her effort and less on her ability, resulting in a passing grade, many consider the teacher's actions a good.

Let us set aside metaethical considerations. Normative ethics is the concern of critical pedagogy in general and this book in particular. Normative ethics describes *what* is good and right and the way good and right are made. Although not always stated overtly—indeed, proponents of specific normative ethics often try to assume or prove universalizability for their ethics—implicit in normative ethics is the fact that these are people's *opinions* of what are good and right. We often take for granted certain normative ethical positions—for example, many think it's just wrong that the American economy lacks fairness, that not all hard-working people are rewarded for their hard work—because often these positions serve, have served, and continue to serve our communities and societies. But normative ethics can change and have; what is considered good and right, for example, isn't the same in every culture at all times. Slavery, the subjection of women, the prosecution of ethnic and religious minorities, these were all tolerated at one time or another and in some parts of the world still are. Not everyone in societies where these injustices flourished championed them, but these inequities usually served those with power (directly or indirectly) and therefore continued until their utility diminished or the downtrodden rose up and demanded recourse.

2.4 Magic That Works

To claim that knowledge is socially constructed opens a can of worms in some quarters. Richard Dawkins, for one, takes "cultural relativism" to task, inviting us to

> Show me a cultural relativist at 30,000 feet and I'll show you a hypocrite.... If you are flying to an international congress of anthropologists or literary critics, the reason you will probably get there—the reason you don't plummet into a ploughed field—is that a lot of Western scientifically trained engineers have got their sums right. (2003: 15)

Dawkins is criticizing the way some people—including, unfortunately, some progressives and some involved with critical pedagogy—challenge "scientific truth" with, as he lists them, "Trobriand truth, Kikuyu truth, Maori truth, Inuit truth, Navajo truth, Yanomamo truth, !Kung San truth, feminist truth, Islamic truth, Hindu truth" and other supposed "truths" (Ibid.). There is a sense in which Western science is a story, a work in progress, a construction that emerges at a very specific juncture in the history of humankind. "Science is magic that *works*," a character in Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* puts it. Science, in this sense, is a story that has been used not only for great good but also for great evil in our world. As a story, the only legitimacy science bears in relation to other stories from other cultures and other times is whether or not it works and to what uses it has been put.

But isn't science "true"? Dawkins states unequivocally, "It is simply true that the Sun is hotter than the Earth, true that the desk on which I am writing is made of wood. These are not hypotheses awaiting falsification; not temporary approximations to an ever-elusive truth; not local truths that might be denied in another culture" (2003: 17). Dawkins is certainly correct in the sense that, thanks to gravity, if I jump out of a 40th story window in China in 1960 I am just as assured of bouncing off the cement below as if I'd jumped out of a 40th story window in Venezuela in 2006. But perhaps there is a different sense in which what we take to be true in the natural sciences is *true* compared to what we hold true in the social sciences.

I suspect that facts in the natural sciences, once attained, are less open to interpretation than facts in the social sciences. There are regularities in our physical world we have evolved with, regularities that are seemingly unchanging and therefore predictable. In this way the proximity to truth in the natural sciences is more possible than in any social science which deals with the complexities and uncertainties of human minds and human behaviors. Our biological makeup, including our sensori-motor systems which put us "in touch" with the world outside our bodies, has developed one way while our capacity for imagination and innovation appears less constrained in certain aspects. But even in science our grasp of "the truth," of what *is,* isn't as far or as deep as we might expect. Although appearances—such as a 1000-page biology or chemistry book—may hint otherwise, our knowledge in the natural sciences lacks in scope what it achieves in depth. Chomsky (2002: 361) explains that with our "biological specialization," that is "our intellectual capacities," we build rich theories on limited data, that

> we are subject to biological limitations with respect to the theories we can devise and comprehend, and we are fortunate to have these limitations, for otherwise we could not construct

> rich systems of knowledge and understanding at all. But these limitations may well exclude domains about which we would like very much to know something (1906: 122)

In other words, though we may be able to pick apart and have some understanding of atoms, though we may be able to understand and predict the parenting behavior of emperor penguins, our understanding of ourselves as a species may be limited. Science, notes Chomsky, "can only answer very simple questions—when things get complicated, you just guess" (2002: 215). Because human biology may be easier to understand than human psychology, we may never understand certain aspects of our psyches. The human mind, with its millions of interacting neurons and synapses, responding to genes and environments alike, is extremely complicated, and "when you start moving to complicated systems, scientific knowledge declines very fast" (Chomsky, 2002: 215). Hence "human behavior might be beyond our inquiry, that's possible . . . " (Chomsky, 2002: 220).

If apprehending "truth" in the natural sciences is more readily done than in the social sciences, does this make science any less a story, a human construction? Story connotes fiction, fantasy, a flight of fancy, a suspension of disbelief. But you can tell a story of factual events. Just because something is a story or a myth does not mean it is any less true. Stories and myths provide explanatory powers and they can be factual. Scientific theories and hypothesis can and do "work," and in this sense they are "true." At the same time, stories and myths—even in science—are not monolithic, not impervious to change over time.

Thomas Kuhn invites us to understand scientific paradigms that "provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research" (1996: 10). In learning a paradigm, the scientist "acquires theory, methods, and standards together, usually in an inextricable mixture," therefore Kuhn's contention that "paradigms provide scientists not only with a map but also with some of the directions essential for map-making" (1996: 109). Among others, Gazzaniga concurs, noting that "for the scientist, scientific rules and codes become part of the beliefs one must uphold upon joining the ranks of the particular science" (2006: 146). A commitment to the same rules and standards of scientific practice "are prerequisites for normal science" (Gazzaniga, 2006: 11). The concepts, laws, and theories scientists learn "are from the start encountered in a historically and pedagogically prior unit that displays them with and through their applications" (Kuhn, 1996: 46). Kuhn warns that all too often science becomes "puzzle-solving" as scientists try to "force nature into the preformed and relatively inflexible box that the paradigm supplies," which can have the adverse effect of insulating science from "socially important problems" that "cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies" (1996: 24 & 37).

Paradigms are not eternal. They shift and change. Thus Ptolemaic astronomy gives way to Copernican astronomy and corpuscular optics to wave optics (Kuhn, 1996: 9). As in many other endeavors, change in scientific paradigms is met with resistance. Novelty in science, explains Kuhn, "emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance against a background provided by expectation" (1996: 64). Kuhn compares the scientist embracing a new paradigm, a new scientific viewpoint, to the "man wearing inverting lenses" in that "[c]onfronting the same constellation of objects as before and knowing that he does so, he nevertheless finds them transformed through and through in many of their details" (1996: 122). He calls the shift from one paradigm to another a "conversion experience" (1996: 151).

The "hard" sciences, the "natural" sciences, are not immune to change. That, in part, is what lends science its legitimacy. A scientific theory is only as strong as the empirical evidence it provides for replication. The scientific method allows for scientific knowledge to be put to the test, repeatedly, potentially endlessly. Knowledge in the natural sciences is deemed true because it "works," because challenges to it have either failed or resulted in new scientific truths that have been accepted and adopted. At the same time, the natural sciences are concerned with very specific, very narrow categories of the physical and biological realms. The questions that keep us up at night staring at our ceilings, the questions pertaining to human psychology, morals, and morality, the questions whose answers will provide the guidance and reassurance Nietzsche's "death of god" rescinded, these are the very questions we may never be able to answer with the degree of certainty we can questions of phenomena in the natural sciences. The kicker, again of course, is that these are the questions "we would like *most* to understand" (Chomsky, 2002: 28). To borrow a line from Shakespeare, ay, there's the rub.

2.5 The Abuse of Data

Political scientists, historians, philosophers, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, educators, all, to a greater or lesser degree, look to the natural sciences for guidance. The scientific method, its reliance on reason and rationality, the apparent objectivity and neutrality of the researcher in the natural sciences, all hold out promise to those who study human beings, the ways we treat one another, the ways we *should* treat each other. But social science errs in fetishizing the methods of the natural sciences (sometimes termed "physics envy"), in attempting to apply them to a domain of study—human beings—where they may not readily fit.

An abuse of science occurs when some social scientists and social sciences rely on positivism. Positivism is an epistemology, a knowledge theory, holding that true knowledge, things we can really know (positively know), is scientific knowledge, based on natural phenomena, their properties, and relations, and is empirically verifiable (Kincheloe, 2005: 16). Positivism holds that the methods of studying the physical world can be used to study the social and educational worlds (Ibid.). Positivism in the social sciences has been called a form of scientific ideology. I hope to show that positivism's imprimatur on education is exactly that, dogma. Positivism's ugly stamp is all over the everyday classroom.

One example of positivism at work in our classrooms is the abuse of data. Here's an example of data's misuse that springs in part from the individuals' parts in the institutional structure. Certain higher ups in my school district make a big deal out of data, but the data they mean is quantitative data, numbers. The chief imperative of administrators in a district's central office is to save money, to show the local board of education and community that the district's schools and programs are "fiscally responsible." In my district a renewed call for fiscal responsibility led to a cutback in special education programs mentioned earlier with a reappraisal of who the district was sending out of district to be educated.

That's where Harold comes in. Before we met Harold, my colleagues and I were told that he was schizophrenic and on the higher end of the autism spectrum, probably an Asperger's kid. Harold's family had moved into our district and central office was eager to get him into a district school instead of paying the tens of thousands of dollars it would have cost to continue his former placement. We were told Harold would start visiting our program to determine his eligibility for it and our high school. My fellow teachers and mental health workers knew this meant that central was set on sending us this kid, that determining eligibility really meant transitioning him into the life of our school. No problem, we take kids in all the time, and most fit in well.

But then we met Harold. A nice enough boy in his own way, this kid had issues. *Serious* issues. Harold viewed the world through perpetually half-lidded eyes. He had an intense fear of transitions and moving through hallways, coming from a program where all his classes were held in two rooms, and was now expected to move between nine different locations amongst hundreds of students in crowded hallways when the bells rang. Moving among those classrooms proved time consuming, as Harold shuffled slowly along, refusing to walk beside me, trailing two or three steps behind, and mumbling to himself the whole way. The administrator from central office facilitating his transition recommended we wait until *after* the bell to escort Harold to class. Of course this would mean Harold would be late for every class and would bring attention to him as he shuffled into class late every day, but... One teacher took me on the side later and asked me about the kid doing the "thorazine shuffle." Out of Harold's earshot and out of mine—or so they thought—kids wondered who "Frankenstein" was, meaning the monster, not the doctor, meaning Harold.

When Harold talked he mumbled so it was difficult to understand what he was saying. One time myself and a teacher's aide were in a classroom with Harold where another teacher was talking to the class about the universe and space. "I'm from space," said Harold. I looked at the aide and she looked at me. I had to contain myself from laughing, the comment was so funny, so out of place. Was Harold trying to amuse himself or us? "I'm sorry, Harold," the aide said, "*what* did you just say?" Harold mumbled something. "Come again?" I prodded. "I like space," is what we *think* he said the second time (but had we been wrong about what he said the first?).

It quickly became apparent that our school and our program with its emphasis on mainstreaming special education kids wasn't the right place for Harold. If this kid came to our school he would be in over his head. Academically he would sink, not swim, no matter how much teachers' individualized their lessons for him. Socially he was in danger of being torn apart by verbal abuse and mean-spiriting joking if staff members weren't with him at all times. A building level administrator confided to me, "I don't know who that kid you're walking around with is, but I can tell this isn't the place for him."

My colleagues and I—the people who worked closest with Harold as he visited us several days over those many weeks—kept detailed notes, observations of what we saw and heard when he was with us. This was data, qualitative data, and it spoke to Harold's experiences and actions in our school better than any numbers could. When we met with our supervisor—an administrator from central office—to discuss Harold we were told our data was inconclusive. "I don't know," he told us, "for me to go back and argue that this kid cannot be successful here the data really have to show..." Our supervisor was one of those central office types who, at meetings, could be counted on to throw in a "the data show" or "there's research on this that shows" when it supported some point he was trying to make.

Thing was, this time around our data wasn't showing him what he wanted to see. It wasn't that our supervisor is a bad person; he's a nice person who we got along well with. It's that he represented central office and their charge, the bottom line, the dollar. It's because he had to answer to administrators higher on the food chain than himself, administrators who would hold *his* feet to the fire. I still believe we teachers and mental health workers had the child's best interests at heart. Of course, a few times it was implied that our not wanting Harold was a ploy to save ourselves work. But we feared for this boy should he enter our school; why take him from a placement where he was enjoying some form of success and watch him crash? Further, if experience has taught me anything it is that certain kids I truthfully didn't look forward to working with, for whatever reasons, often turn out to be among my favorites.

An administrator reading this might claim that you can serve the child's best interests at the same time you keep an eye on the bottom line. From my experience, there are too many administrators who say they're doing what's best for the kids while they do what's best for the district's purse. There are too many higher ups who will embrace data when it serves their purposes and write it off when it doesn't. Too many who discount front line staff to a point that borders insult at times; discrediting the input from teachers, aides, mental health professionals, and other staff who interact with the kids on a daily basis when this input isn't what they want to hear. And, sadly, from my experience, the administrators I met who really do seem to care about the kids are outnumbered by those who took their position to get out of the classroom or to pursue power and higher salaries. And all too often these administrators who care are eaten alive by the piranhas.

2.6 Positivism and NCLB

In the United States a reductionistic positivism fuels *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). For years Americans have had it hammered into our heads that our public school system is failing our kids. Newspaper articles shame us by reporting that 63% of fourth graders asked cannot identify correctly—from amongst four multiple choice answers—the first permanent English settlement in North America (Dillon, 2007e). But where in the mainstream media does anyone stop and ask what the ability or inability to answer such trivial pursuit questions actually tells us about our children and their educations? We're warned that our students don't measure up those in other industrial countries. What this exactly means, how it is measured, and whether it is even true are questions seldom given much attention in the public eye. Voices challenging such contentions don't get wide circulation (Bracey, 2004).

What we need more of, we are told, is accountability and evidence of progress. How do you argue against that? No sane person, no person who really cares about children and education, is going to argue against responsibility or champion regress. But the problem with saying, yes, what public education needs is answerability, is proof of progress, is in having your very reasonable concerns subsumed as fodder for a very pointed ideological agenda.

NCLB was sold as a means of addressing and rectifying the education gap between minorities and white students, between students from low-income families and students from affluent homes. The people behind NCLB never miss an opportunity to talk about standards, accountability, and the supposedly "scientifically proven." "Childrens do learns," President Bush noted upon hearing that New York City school children's math test scores had gone up, "When standards are high and results are measured" (2007b: A18). NCLB offered a panacea to all our education woes: testing. Where, 2000 years ago, high priests assured people that auguring was best accomplished through throwing bones or reading the entrails of small animals, today's mandarins promise divination via test scores.

Standardized tests in the field of education were introduced to uncover and address deficits but quickly became means of punishing some while privileging others. Standardized tests under NCLB promise to penalize, with NCLB ratcheting up an era of "high-stakes" testing. States, looking to comply with federal law, make more and more decisions based on test scores, from student grade promotion and graduation, to a teacher's or administrator's merit, to a public school's continued local autonomy and existence.

NCLB doesn't deign to speak softly and isn't shy about brazenly wielding a big stick. Schools will be judged in so far as they make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) based on the results of test scores. If your school doesn't make AYP it gets labeled "In Need of Improvement." This carries with it various penalties, some more draconian than others. Schools deemed in need of improvement may have to fork over cash for vouchers to send students to more successful schools *within* that district. Schools in need of improvement may have to pay for remediation (tutoring) by outside agencies for their students. Building administrators and staff may be fired if their school continues to fail to make AYP. Schools can be taken over by the state, shut down, or handed over to educational management organizations. Public education takes a beating while the public is told its failing because of grades on test scores.

How achievable is AYP? If you listen to the business and political interests behind NCLB, if schools and "highly qualified" teachers would just do their jobs, relying on "scientifically proven" methods, it's easy as pie. Reality is much different. A more assured recipe for failure does not exist. Students are divided into subgroups with test scores for these groups disaggregated; 100% passing rates are expected for all student groups on state tests by 2014 (Meier & Wood, 2004). There are upwards of 30 subgroups in some schools. A school can be judged as failing to make AYP if every subgroup in the school achieves proficiency levels *except* the special education or English language learners subgroups. Linda Darling-Hammond (2007) describes the Catch-22 facing schools that serve these students. Since disabled students and students lacking facility with the English language don't meet proficiency standards, they're assigned to special subgroups. Once they've met proficiency levels, they exit the particular subgroup, meaning these subgroups will *never* test 100% proficient. Afraid their test scores will decline, some school districts have kept immigrant children—even some born in America—from taking state exams (Berger, 2006a). Because the more subgroups a school serves the more likely it will fail to meet proficiency standards; Alfie Kohn charges NCLB with containing a "diversity penalty" (in Meier, 2004). What does it bode for democracy when diversity is punished? What does it augur for community when difference is scapegoated?

The testing process and the tests themselves take on a legitimacy they do not deserve. Schools wait with baited breath for the results of test scores that may make or break them (Bosman, 2007a). Students, parents, teachers, administrators, communities, all breathe sighs of relief when test scores improve. But what is improving here? Are students learning more? Are they becoming informed citizens? More moral people? Better human beings? Or are they just becoming better test takers?

The testing and the data itself are reified, divorced from reality but shaping reality. We scratch our heads when scores come back and we learn that, according to these standardized tests, "African-American and Hispanic students in high school can read and do arithmetic at only the average level of whites in junior high school" (Dillon, 2006c). A single-minded focus on test scores diverts attention from deeper structural issues that result in such disparities. Of course such an emphasis on tests and test scores is a convenient focus when no one really wants to address the underlying issues.

Schools spend more and more time teaching to the test, coaching kids to pass exams. There are classes in my high school that spend nearly the whole of the last 10-week marking period preparing kids to pass Regents exams. Schools jettison recess, electives, gym, music and art classes in order to prep students for tests (Dillon, 2006b). Clara Hemphill notes that "playtime in kindergarten is giving way to worksheets, math drills and fill-in-the-bubble standardized tests" (2006). School districts embrace longer school days, school years, and school on weekends (Schemo, 2007c).

State standards are aligned with tests and tests with standards. Curriculums are rewritten to reflect material that may appear on standardized exams (Dillon, 2006e). "There are superintendents who want to avoid teaching to the test," says Alfred Lodovico, superintendent of New York's Mount Pleasant School District. But, "I say, we're going to provide the kind of instruction that the state standards want us to provide. If that is teaching to the tests, so be it" (Fessenden, 2007). Schools are defining student academic progress by test scores, implementing "growth models" that track individual students and their test scores over the course of their academic careers (Hu, 2007a).

Many students in schools in affluent districts like the one I teach do well on standardized exams. When test scores come out there is rejoicing, congratulatory emails from the higher ups, nice editorials in the local papers. Yet, again, what are we celebrating? Are we *wrong* to celebrate? Are we wrong to spend the last quarter of class helping kids pass an exam that may be the gatekeeper to their graduation and future life chances? No, we're not wrong, but we're all of us caught up in an institutional arrangement that seemingly forces us to do what we do.

What effects are these exams having on children? The exams come to be things students dread. They produce anxiety as they perpetually loom on our children's educational horizons. Students are coached in viewing the tests as foes, monsters to be vanquished (Herszenhorn, 2006e). Reactions of students to the news that they have failed high-stakes exams range from kids increasing the amount of time spent studying, decreasing extracurricular activities, feeling depressed, worried, and embarrassed, and even dropping out of school (Cornell, et al., 2006). Children are losing good teachers and principals as schools are labeled low-performing and staff head for the hills (Dillon, 2007a).

The emphasis on testing and raising test scores brings out the worst in kids and educators. New York City has adopted a program where students can earn money if they do well on these exams (Medina, 2007a). Schools in Dallas pay students for reading books while schools in Massachusetts pay kids for perfect attendance (Bosman, 2007b). Other schools offer iPods, rent money, and even cars to improve student attendance (Belluck, 2006). In case you're wondering, student attendance is factored into *NCLB*'s evaluations of individual schools.

When test scores fail to increase, instead of Nietzsche's madman visiting to tell us god is dead, we get chicken little running around bleating at the top of his lungs, blathering about the sky falling. Is the decline of Western civilization the next logical step? Or is it already as bad as some have it, that declining test scores are indicative of an on-going decline? Less we next fear barbarians at the gate, better we fear the barbarians in our midst. They come and go through the revolving door between big business and government, armed with a science they misuse and abuse. *NCLB* is best viewed as a tool, an instrument meant not to ensure equitable educational attainment, but the promotion of a particular ideological agenda, the privatization of American public education (see, for example, Kohn in Meier, et al., 2004).

Like the ocean, education is one of those things that has always been there for us. Like the ocean, its depths long unexplored, education has gone unmined for profit. Now the clarion call has been sounded. Education is seen as one of the last untapped bonanzas; there's money to be made in them thar' hills. Businesses grow rich from *NCLB* (Pepper, 2006). Demand for standardized exams outstrips supply, with the standardized testing industry enjoying a financial bonanza at the same time that repeated errors on the tests raise eyebrows and concerns (Arenson, 2006a; Herszenhorn, 2006d; Winerip, 2006b). Remediation becomes a cash cow.

Experts employed by the government say science proves the efficacy of phonics-based reading instruction over other methods, the same experts with demonstrable ties to phonics-based approaches (Allington, 2002; Coles, 2003; Smith, 2003). "[C]onflicts of interest, cronyism and bias" mar the $6 billion reading plan—Reading First—that the government touts as "scientifically proven," with "[a] half-dozen experts setting guidelines for which reading textbooks and tests could be purchased by schools . . . also the authors of textbooks and tests that ended up being used" (Schemo, 2007b; Berger, 2006b).

Educational management organizations look to *NCLB* as their foot in the door to managing schools for profit. Meanwhile there is nothing but ideological faith that running schools like businesses will benefit students; if anything the opposite has been shown (Howard & Preisman, 2007). Accountability is part of the mantra that helps privatizers encroach upon public education, but charter schools and other private educational institutions themselves lack accountability as they're not regulated by the government (Freedman, 2006c).

In the meantime, nary a word that scores on these exams continue to reflect economic inequality (Herszenhorn, 2006b). Nary a word that "the education gospel," the misguided belief that education and more of it will solve America's economic problems, has it ass-backwards (Lazerson, 2005). Education isn't the answer to inequality, but inequality is a huge part of the reason education has the problems it does (Krugman, 2006). To claim that education makes all the difference makes a scapegoat of schools and the most vulnerable within them, students, teachers, and administrators (Schemo, 2006b).

Nary a word over the human cost of all this. More than 20 states have protested *NCLB*. Connecticut has sued the federal government because Washington will not fully fund that state's testing program. Interestingly enough, Connecticut employs a standardized test regime that involves multiple choice questions *and* essays and questions that require students to explain their answers and thought processes. Scoring tests such as these, as opposed to sticking multiple choice Scan Tron sheets through a computer, are time consuming and costly. That's why Connecticut is suing the government, to make Uncle Sam kick in the cash necessary to pay for such grading (Winerip, 2006b).

Upwards of 90% of America's public schools will fail to show NCLB's required adequate yearly progress as measured by tests scores within the next few years (Darling-Hammond, 2007: 14). Of California's 9,500 public schools, over 1,000 are considered chronic failures and by 2014 all 6,063 schools serving the poor will be labeled such (Schemo, 2007c). States are allowed to set their own standards and thus the substance of standards varies widely from state to state (Lewin, 2007). Not a word that nations deemed "higher-achieving" than the United States in education outcomes "focus their curriculums on critical thinking and problem solving, using exams that require students to conduct research and scientific investigations, solve complex-real world problems and defend their ideas orally and in writing," in short, exams similar to those used in Connecticut, while *NCLB* promotes the exact opposite of these (Darling-Hammond, 2007: 14).

2.7 Positivism and the Perfect Paragraph

The social studies department in my high school has devised a heuristic, "the perfect paragraph." "The perfect paragraph" is meant as a guide, an outline of what a "perfect paragraph" should be, should look like, and should contain. Thing is, there is no such thing as a perfect paragraph. It doesn't exist. Maybe it's the name I object to, with its message to students that there is *one* and *only one* acceptable format constituting an acceptable paragraph. That's not how life or writing works. Writing is a process, a process always open to revision. Cormac McCarthy has been lauded as one of America and the world's greatest fiction writers, and I find his novels very entertaining, thought-provoking, and his use of the English language nothing short of beautiful. But what would happen if McCarthy was a high school student in my school or any other writing the way he does? Would his prose be recognized as the art it is or would returned essays chide him in red ink for run-on sentences, not using quotation marks, and not capitalizing the *s* in Spanish? Would any paragraph McCarthy has ever written in any one of his award-winning novels constitute a "perfect paragraph"?

Part of the problem is that the "perfect paragraph" heuristic addresses a very real need. Some students get to high school and they don't know how to write. They cannot express themselves with written language. A heuristic like the "perfect paragraph" provides a model for what constitutes the nuts and bolts of an acceptable paragraph. The problem isn't the student who can't write picking up the "perfect paragraph" rubric and saying, "Oh, this will help me!" The problem is when students are penalized for not following the rubric, even if the paragraph or essay they write adequately addresses the task at hand. The problem is seeing one and only one way of doing things and foisting that on others, on not acknowledging that this way is a *choice* people made no matter what lofty title is attached to it. It's like comparing the "arts" (i.e., movies, television) section of the *New York Times* to the "fine arts" (i.e., painting, drama) section of the same paper and really thinking there is something intrinsically finer about a leisurely stroll through a museum than an afternoon at the cinema beyond a human determination that one constitutes "fine" art and the other does not.

The abuse of science isn't only in education. In the American ante-bellum South medical doctors diagnosed slaves with maladies that made them more likely to try to run away and more likely to misbehave (Finkelman, 2003: 36). During World War II, Japan's Unit 731 experimented on prisoners of war, amputating limbs to study blood loss, performing vivisections without anesthesia, removing arms and legs and reattaching them to the opposite side of the body, testing grenades, gas, flame throwers and other weapons on human beings (see, for example, the gruesome Chinese-government-subsidized exploitation film, *Men Behind The Sun*, d. Tun Fei Mou, 1989; see also Barenblatt, 2004; Gold, 2004; Rees, 2002). Again, extreme examples, but nonetheless real, nonetheless abuses of science.

Unfortunately some people point to the abuse of science to validate their own whacked out ideas and desires. By equating its misuse and abuse *as* science, some critics do champion a form of relativism that does not warrant legitimacy. Their reasoning is this: science has been used in the mistreatment and oppression of countless human beings; "faith" in science in the West, dating from the Enlightenment, represents the imposition of an instrumental cultural imperialism on the rest of the world; because science has been used for these ill purposes, science is bad; therefore, "ways of knowing the world" that challenge this dominant Western conception are, ipso facto, good.

People with these ideas scare me because they often claim to be progressives, of the left. These are the types of people who claim to be fighting oppression while they are actively engaging in it, like Robespierre presiding over the Terror or when Lenin and Trotsky crushed the Kronstadt sailors, all to "save" their respective revolutions. The types guilty of D.H. Lawrence's criticism of Bertrand Russell. Lawrence accused the pacifist Russell of harboring "a perverted mental blood-lust," saying "it isn't in the least true that you, your basic self, want ultimate peace" but that Russell was "satisfying in an indirect, false way your lust to jab and strike." Lawrence challenged Russell to "satisfy it in a direct and honorable way, saying 'I hate you all, liars and swine, and am out to set upon you,' or stick to mathematics, where you can be true" (2002: 392).

The idea isn't to bash science, to ignore or marginalize its potential, or to fetishize non-Western forms of science or ways of knowing either. The idea is to hold science up to its promise, to wield science for humanistic endeavors. We need to use science to make our lives and futures more enjoyable and fulfilling, in our classrooms, in our societies. We can appreciate the intricacies of Incan engineering in their suspension bridges just as we can value the uncovering of the double helix (Wilford, 2007a). Where possible we should learn from the non-Western world, from the ancient world, and appreciate the contributions made toward human progress from whatever quarter.

2.8 Nothing but the Truth

What began as a differentiation between metaethics and normative ethics gave way to an apparent digression on the nature of truth in the natural versus the social sciences. Believe me when I say it was a purposeful departure from the subject. The social construction of knowledge has more meaning in the social sciences because the social sciences deal with subjects—human beings, our psychologies, and interactions—that are much more complicated than anything found in the natural sciences. Nietzsche shared a similar view on the difference between "truth" in the natural sciences versus the social. He chalks up the "great certainty of the natural sciences in comparison with psychology and the critique of the elements of consciousness—one might almost say, with the *unnatural* sciences" to the idea that the natural sciences "choose for their object what is *strange*, while it is almost contradictory and absurd to even *try* to choose for an object what is not strange" (1974: 301–302). Nietzsche posits that human psychology, the nature of human beings, is things familiar to us in the sense that we live with them, that, however incomplete our understandings of them, they touch on our lives daily. "What is familiar is what we are used to," he explains, "and what we are used to is most difficult to 'know'—that is, to see as a problem; that is, to see as strange, as distant, as 'outside us'" (Nietzsche, 1974: 301). Again, the idea that we may never have a satisfactory understanding of what we most want to know, because it is part and parcel of our lived experiences. If "truth," as certainty of fact, isn't floating around out there somewhere and isn't immutable, then it becomes what we want it to be and what we can justify it as.

For we human beings, this is a great possibility but also a tremendous responsibility. Epistemic sovereignty, "the standpoint above disputes among competing truth claims," does not exist (Rouse, 1993: 103). Despite Archimedes' claim that he could lift the Earth from its foundation with a lever if only for a solid place to stand, no such Archimedean point exists, metaphorically or otherwise. If "truth" exists in the sense of a Platonic form, and my whole argument up to this point is that it does not, it may be inaccessible to the human intellect, one of those things Chomsky says "we would *most* like to understand" but can't (2006: 28).

So where does that leave us? One question worth pondering is why this human hankering after truth? "I think that, instead of trying to find out what truth, as opposed to error, is, it might be more interesting to [ask]... how is it that, in our societies, 'the truth' has been given this value, thus placing us absolutely under its thrall?" wonders Foucault (1988: 107). What does this longing after "truth" tell us about ourselves?

Nietzsche posited one answer that may have more *truth* to it than we are comfortable with. "Look, isn't our need for knowledge precisely the need for the familiar, the will to uncover under everything strange, unusual, and questionable something that no longer disturbs us?" he asks (Nietzsche, 1974: 300). Nietzsche sees the *"instinct of fear"* feeding the human hunger for knowledge, for truth. It is an insatiable hunger and if Nietzsche is correct then perhaps the fear compelling it is also never ending. Is not "the jubilation of those who attain knowledge not the jubilation over the restoration of a sense of security?" he challenges (Nietzsche, 1974: 301). Truth bespeaks certainty bespeaks meaning. Our existential well-being as a species seemingly demands purpose, and we forge purpose from our understanding of what life and our existence mean.

Nietzsche knew what he was talking about when he identified as "a basic trait of the human will, its fear of the void," when he noted that "man would sooner have the void for his purpose than be void of purpose..." (1956: 231 & 299).What does it say about human beings that we spend more time pining for some ethereal form than working *together* to *make* our truths? If we have some handle on the truth, we feel we can proceed, set a course. Thing is, we proceed anyway, in spite of our lack of knowledge and certainty, sometimes making it up as we go, laying down our path by walking. Truths are being constructed and maintained everyday, all around us. We're part of this process whether we recognize it or not; either we actively participate in truths' construction or we passively accept the truths given reality by others.

2.9 We Are the Stories We Tell

As teachers, one of the many hopes we hold for our students is that they emerge from their time with us as better people, as moral human beings. Where does morality come from? Some conflate morality with religious belief, but this is incorrect.

Sure, religions provide their followers with moral do's-and-don'ts, but atheists also have morals. Morality—in the form of ethics—suffuses everything we do in our classrooms, so it's important that we grasp from where it springs.

Today science and philosophy are showing us points of moral intersection, where people from different cultures and different time periods can agree on certain moral norms. One way we see how we agree is in how we detest individuals who violate unspoken but accepted moral norms. Consider Holden, known as "the judge," one of the scariest characters in literature, a terrifying nightmare brought to the page by Cormac McCarthy. *Blood Meridian. Blood Meridian* is the story of "the kid," a 14-year-old run away who joins up with the historic Glanton Gang, a posse of vicious Indian-killers doing their part to fulfill America's Manifest Destiny, wreaking havoc along the Texas–Mexican border in 1849–1850. The Glanton Gang contracts out to territorial governors and are paid for each scalp they bring back.

John Joel Glanton, the eponymous leader of the hired guns, is what most of us would consider crazy. But he pales in comparison to the judge Holden. A bald, hairless 7 foot tall, 336 pound serial child rapist-and-murderer, the judge, like James Bond, is good at everything he does: an expert dancer, fiddle-player, trail cutter, rifleman, horse rider, deer tracker, geologist, artist, and magician. He speaks numerous languages and is fond of quoting Latin. Immensely strong, he can toss a meteor 11 feet and pick a man up by his head, crushing the life out of his skull.

Most of us would consider the judge a sociopath, yet he has a code of morals he is intent on living up to and that he seeks to compel every other creature on earth to follow. Throughout the novel the judge holds court bare-chested around camp fires, smoking his cigars, members of the gang asking him questions, listening with a skeptical ear, but the judge is clear, explaining to the kid, "I spoke in the desert for you and for you only . . ." (1985: 307).

During these talks the judge lays out his eschatology. "War is god," he explains, a patient deity that bided its time awaiting its greatest practitioners—human beings (1985: 248). Humans "are born for games" and "nothing else," the game measured by the worth of that wagered (Ibid.). Hence war, according to the judge, with the greatest wager — life or death, in a word, existence—is the ultimate game. As the Glanton crew massacres, scalps, and "lay coupled to the bludgeoned bodies of young women dead or dying . . .," the judge approves, for in surviving this game they prove their superiority. "The secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment," opines Nietzsche, "is—to *live dangerously*! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into unchartered seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors as long as you cannot be rulers and possessors . . . " (1974: 283). A similar lesson the judge would impart to the kid. But the kid—despite the fact that he harbors within himself "a taste for mindless violence" *before* he hooks up with the Judge and Glanton—is not made of the same stuff as Holden. When the opportunity arrives, he cannot kill the judge. Though the kid's inability to act decisively coupled with his refusal to accept the judge's morality may reaffirm his humanity for we readers, by the end of the novel his inaction costs him dearly.

Is morality something we just make up? If so, why do the judge's words and deeds repulse us? Why do we feel disgust when the judge sits with an orphaned Apache boy, "dandling it on one knee" and not 10 minutes later kills and scalps the child (1985: 164)? If the old man on the mount, Hassan-I Sabbah, is correct that "northing is true, everything is permitted," why do some acts foster revulsion in almost all human beings? The moral realm is one we need to be concerned with. It shadows all other human relationships. While shedding light on human psychology, economics, politics, and history, exploration of the moral may even be able to tell us more about ourselves, to illuminate deep-rooted facets of our human nature.

Friedrich Nietzsche offered one interpretation of morality's genesis. Although I find his tale entertaining and imaginative and will recount it in some detail in the following paragraphs, I don't put much credence in it as an accurate source of the origins of contemporary morality. Nor do I accept Nietzsche as a moral compass. A salient issue in Nietzsche's genealogy of morals is what it tells us *about Nietzsche* himself, the times he lived in, and people who are attracted to his view, a view I think McCarthy's judge Holden exemplifies. "The question concerning the origin of moral values is for me a question of the very first rank," explains Nietzsche, "because it is crucial for the future of humanity." I agree that human morality, its origins, and its possibilities are of the utmost importance for the future of the human race. But I take issue with the tale Nietzsche tells and its implications. For he proposes a future predicated on a revaluation of existing values. To do so he looks to a past where one such revaluation has already usurped humanity's previous moral position. In looking to this past Nietzsche dismisses today's "good" person as a sham. "What if the 'good' man represents not merely a retrogression but even a danger, a temptation, a narcotic drug enabling the present to live at the expense of the future?" he wonders. "What if morality should turn out to be the danger of dangers?" (Nietzsche, 1956: 155).

Imagine a time in human history past, Nietzsche invites, where a race of superior beings went about their business, doing what they wanted to do when they wished to do so without any second thoughts to their actions. The acts of these "noble" beings were "good," by dint of the nobles doing them. "[T]he noble type of men experience *itself* as determining values," opines Nietzsche, "it does not need approval; it judges, 'what is harmful to me is harmful in itself'; it knows itself to be that which first accords honor to things; it is *value-creating*" (1989: 205). "But that man who sets himself the task of singling out the thread of order from the tapestry," says McCarthy's judge, "will by the decision alone have taken charge of the world and it is only by such taking charge that he will effect a way to dictate the terms of his own fate" (1985: 199). Nietzsche posits that the noble's strength of will and resoluteness of action in fulfilling their urges constitutes a "master morality." The judge Holden is an example of Nietzsche's master morality.

Nietzsche's genealogy of morals, like his broader philosophy, takes a human pecking order for granted. Not everyone is or can be noble. Nietzsche discerns an "instinct for rank" in human beings, an instinct that doesn't trouble him, in fact it is one he wishes to encourage (1989: 212). A noble is noble because he *recognizes* this hierarchy of rank and *his* superior position within it. "There is an *instinct for* *rank* which, more than anything else, is a sign of *high* rank," Nietzsche remarks. Judge Holden speaks of "culling" the human race, that children "should be put in a pit with wild dogs. They should be set to puzzle out from their proper clues the one of three doors that does not harbor wild lions. They should be made to run naked in the desert until . . . " (1985: 146).

For Nietzsche, the noble recognize *himself* as such, "it is the *faith* that is decisive here, that determines the order of rank"; further, these noble individuals share "some fundamental certainty" that they are noble, "*The noble soul has reverence for itself*" (1989: 228). The judge Holden never questions his "suzerainty" over the earth and its creatures. He carries around a leather-bound ledger into which he sketches his finds, from pot shards to bone tools to flowers. The judge is adjudicator of all things on earth, determining value, acting of his own accord. "This is my claim," says the judge, laying his palms on the ground. "Whatever in creation exists without my knowledge exists without my consent" (McCarthy, 1985: 199). He records in his book to stake his claim. "In order for it to be mine nothing must be permitted to occur upon it save by my dispensation," he remarks. Hence "the freedom of birds is an insult to me. I'd have them all in zoos" (McCarthy, 1985: 199). When asked why he chooses the term "suzerain" and not "keeper" or "overlord," the judge clarifies, "A suzerain rules even where there are other rulers. His authority countermands local judgments" (McCarthy, 1985: 198). "What's he a judge of?" the kid asks the ex-priest, Tobin, a question the other repeats as a statement but does not dare answer aloud (McCarthy, 1985: 135).

The nobility "regarded themselves as possessing the highest moral rank," Nietzsche explains (1956: 163). Indeed, "it was the 'good' themselves, that is to say the noble, mighty, highly placed, and high-minded who decreed themselves and their actions to be good, i.e., belonging to the highest rank, in contradistinction to all that was base, low-minded and plebeian" (Nietzsche, 1956: 160). The noble's sense of "good" depended on and demanded action. The noble "really felt that they were also the 'happy'" explains Nietzsche, "being fully active, energetic people they were incapable of divorcing happiness from action" (1956: 172). Action was "a necessary part of happiness" for this segment of humanity (Ibid.). Noble morality was enacted, lived, not theorized.

Of what did the nobles' urges and the actions that fulfilled them consist? Seemingly everything and anything that came to mind, including some pretty nasty activities. "We can imagine them returning from an orgy of murder, arson, rape, and torture," Nietzsche lists them as if they're all the fun things in life, "jubilant and at peace with themselves as though they had committed a fraternity prank" (1956: 174). When the kid first lays eyes on the Glanton Gang riding into town he sees men "bearded, barbarous, clad in the skins of animals stitched with thews and armed with weapons of every description," their horses adorned with coverings "fashioned out of human skin and their bridles woven up from human hair and decorated with human teeth," the men "wearing scapulars or necklaces of dried and blackened human ears" (McCarthy, 1985: 78).

Nietzsche likens the nobles to "wild animals," for "[d]eep within all these noble races there lurks the beast of prey, bent on spoil and conquest" (1956: 174). Their "hidden urge has to be satisfied from time to time, the beast let loose in the wilderness" (Nietzsche, 1956: 174). Judge Holden's belief that "war is the truest form of divination" is right up Nietzsche's alley (McCarthy, 1985: 249). Nietzsche opened his arms to the prospect that "a more virile, warlike age is about to begin" (1974: 283). The noble races, Nietzsche offers, have always been "headstrong, absurd, incalculable, sudden, improbable," showing an "utter indifference to safety and comfort," taking "pleasure in destruction, their taste for cruelty" (1956: 175). Not the type of guys—and nowhere does Nietzsche mention women as part of this nobility—you'd want to date your daughter.

Nietzsche explains that, because of its seemingly uncivilized actions, the noble caste began as a barbarian caste (1989: 202). When asked what is best in life, *Conan the Barbarian* answers, "To crush your enemies, to see them driven before you, and to hear the lamentation of the women" (d. Milius, 1982). When the Glanton Gang rides into Tucson, the American lieutenant in charge of the garrison is faced with something the likes of which he has never before seen. "Save for their guns and buckles and a few pieces of metal in the harness of the animals there was nothing about these arrivals to suggest even the discovery of the wheel" (McCarthy, 1985: 232).

Nietzsche's valuation of humans and their morals place the nobles and their *deeds*, their lived morality, at the top. Yet the noble, outnumbered, has always found himself the object of the envy and opprobrium of the masses, the "herd" as Nietzsche calls us. "[A]s long as there have been human beings," he opines, "there have also been herds of men and always a great many people who obeyed . . . " (Nietzsche, 1989: 110). These herd men and women are the ones being killed, burned, raped, and tortured when the nobles go out on their barbarian-on-parade jaunts, and we're none of us too happy about it. Where the noble's life is marked by action, the life of the masses is marked by *inaction*. The noble *does*, the masses have things *done* to them, often quite nasty things. Because he is too busy acting, the noble doesn't spend his time *thinking* as the herd man and woman do. The masses busy themselves planning, plotting, and scheming.

Having to live in constant fear that the noble will attack, will visit violence upon the lives of the masses whenever he feels the urge, resentment breeds among the herd. Nietzsche imagines conversation between the downtrodden masses. "'I don't like him.'—Why?—'I am not equal to him.'" and asks, "Has any human being ever answered that way?" (Nietzsche, 1989: 94). Resentment is a feeling alien to the noble mentality. Wronged, the noble does not bare a grudge. He does not brood. He *acts*, absorbing the perceived wrongdoing in an "instantaneous reaction" (Nietzsche, 1956: 173). "You either shoot or you take that away," the judge tells the earless Toadvine. The later, shocked and disgusted by the judge's murder of a child, has pressed the muzzle of his pistol to Holden's head. "Do it now," the judge orders. Toadvine puts his pistol away. Yet the judge doesn't act against Toadvine, even later in the novel when he has the chance (McCarthy, 1985: 164). Nietzsche asks us to listen and the disdain in his voice is clear: "We can hear the oppressed, downtrodden, violated whispering among themselves with the wily vengefulness of the impotent, 'Let us be unlike these evil ones. Let us be good. And the good shall be he who does not do violence, does not attack or retaliate, who leaves vengeance to God . . . ” (1956: 179).

A “slave rebellion in morals” follows, carried out by the masses through their spokesmen, priests, and philosophers (Nietzsche, 1956: 266). Everything the noble does is now considered evil; everything the masses have been forced to suffer is good (Nietzsche, 1989: 207). “Moral law is an invention of mankind for the disenfranchisement of the powerful in favor of the weak,” states the judge (McCarthy, 1985: 250). “[T]he herd man,” Nietzsche’s contempt is obvious, “gives himself the appearance of being the only permissible kind of man, and glorifies his attributes, which make him tame, easy to get along with, and useful to the herd, as if they were the truly human virtues: namely, public spirit, benevolence, consideration, industriousness, moderation, modesty, indulgence, and pity” (1989: 111). “But what good is the pity of those who suffer,” it is not a question, “Or those who, worse, *preach* pity” (Nietzsche, 1989: 230). The slave rebellion in morals has succeeded to an extent that it masks that “[a]ll good things have at one time been considered evil; every original sin, has, at some point, turned into an original virtue” (Nietzsche, 1956: 249).

We might think Nietzsche would approve of the masses’ *acting* to invert the values of the nobles. To a limited degree he does, but Nietzsche ultimately condemns “slave morality” because it emerges from *weakness*, not strength. “The slave revolt in morals begins by rancor turning creative and giving birth to values . . . ” (Nietzsche, 1956: 170). It does not develop independently but in *reaction to* noble morality. Lacking creativity, slave morality is derivative, looking “outward instead of inward,” with its action mere *reaction* against the nobles and their values (Nietzsche, 1956: 171). Slave morality is delusional, the product of “the rancor of beings who, deprived of the direct outlet of action, compensate by an imaginary vengeance” (Ibid.). Slave morality is compromised from its beginning. “Slave ethics . . . begins by saying *no* to an ‘outside,’ an ‘other,’ a non-self, and that *no* is its creative act” (Ibid.). Slave morality seeks to stifle and condemn noble morality and replace it with a morality of wimps, as “everything that elevates an individual above the herd and intimidates the neighbor is henceforth called *evil*; and the fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the *mediocrity* of desires attains moral designations and honors” (Nietzsche, 1956: 114). It is what Nietzsche calls a “morality of decadence” (1956: 328).

Slave morality has triumphed, and this, Nietzsche feels, is a terrible thing for humanity. Fear is no longer bestowed on the noble from the masses, but pity and distrust. “[A]ny high and hard nobility and self-reliance is almost felt to be an insult and arouses mistrust; the ‘lamb,’ even more the ‘sheep,’ gains in respect” (Nietzsche, 1956: 114). The slave revolt in morals prevails. Indeed, “we have lost sight of [it] today simply because it has triumphed so completely” (Nietzsche, 1956: 168). As *Blood Meridian* unfolds the Glanton Gang finds itself an anachronism. Staring out at a city from their campsite one night, “they sat like beings from an older age watching the distant lamps dim out one by one . . . ” (McCarthy, 1985: 176).

Nietzsche rails against Christianity, socialism, and democracy, which he sees as direct outgrowths of this slave morality and its leveling tendencies (1956: 168). Today’s triumphant “[m]orality trains the individual to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only as a function" (Nietzsche, 1974: 174). He laments, "everything is rapidly becoming Judaized, or Christianized, or mob-ized—the word makes no difference" (Nietzsche, 1956: 170). Organized religion, liberalism, democracy, these may allow for humans to live together peacefully, but Nietzsche bemoans that "the enduring advantage of society must be given precedence, unconditionally, over the advantage of the individual . . ." (1956: 174). Less we think otherwise, "it should be clearly understood that in the days when people were unashamed of their cruelty life was a great deal more enjoyable than it is now . . ." (Nietzsche, 1956: 199).

2.10 Nietzsche's Vision

Nietzsche arrived at his genealogy of morals through his studies of language, intrigued when he found out that "the etymology of 'good' is always *noble* in the hierarchical, class sense" (1956: 162). What are the implications for human society of Nietzsche's genealogy? Nietzsche wants a society that exists "*not* for society's sake but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of *being*" (1989: 202). Society, for Nietzsche, should exit to allow this noble type to fully develop. The masses in such a society are mere stepping stones, disposable, with the noble type accepting "with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings, who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments" (Ibid.). Indeed, a "human being who strives for something great considers everyone he meets on his way either as a means or as a delay and obstacle—or as a temporary resting place" (Ibid.). This sacrifice of the many to enhance the few is a product of the "egoism [that] belongs to the nature of a noble soul—I mean that unshakable faith that to a being such as 'we are' other beings must be subordinate by nature and have to sacrifice themselves," justifying its egoism as just that, justice (Nietzsche, 1989: 215). Nietzsche is clear, "To sacrifice humanity as mass to the welfare of a single stronger human species would indeed constitute progress" (1956: 210). Strong words. Scary, huh?

Nietzsche's vision is intensely individualistic and lacks solidarity. "For solitude is a virtue for [the noble type]," he explains, "All community makes men—somehow, somewhere, sometime 'common'" (Nietzsche, 1989: 226). Nietzsche dismisses "all lunatic asylums and nursing homes of culture" (1956: 261). Forget democracy or socialism or Christianity or Judaism, Nietzsche sneers at associated living in general. For the "single stronger human species" he pines after, "it is every bit as natural . . . to disaggregate as for the weak to congregate" (Nietzsche, 1956: 273). The strong, the noble, the powerful are *asocial*. Still, they can come into contact with one another and coexist somewhat peacefully. When they're together, the noble "are so strictly constrained by custom, worship, ritual, gratitude, and by mutual surveillance and jealousy," they are "so resourceful in consideration, tenderness, loyalty, pride and friendship" (Nietzsche, 1956: 174). But always remember, "once they step outside their circle [they] become little better than uncaged beasts of prey" (Ibid.).

There is no rescuing the noble from Nietzsche's vision, of hoping he will work *with* the common man and woman to make life better for all. Nietzsche is clear that the healthy noble is not to be a physician to these others; if anything, he will isolate himself from them (1956: 261). "The higher must not be made an instrument of the lower," he enjoins (Ibid.). Marauding nobles, raping, pillaging, murdering are *not* what threatens humanity. "It is the diseased who imperil mankind, and not the 'beasts of prey'" (Nietzsche, 1956: 258).

To Nietzsche's favored ranking of values and human beings we must ask, by *whose* right? *Who* ranks? Nietzsche is ranking Judaism and Christianity "slave morals" against "master morality." Nietzsche is an individual. Does the individual assign rank? Do all individuals enjoy the possibility of assigning rank? Nietzsche certainly did not. His books did not sell well during his lifetime, one of several frustrations he faced while he lived. Only after he collapsed and spent the last decade of his life insane did his ideas start to catch on, and then often enough they were misinterpreted and used by groups to which Nietzsche would have vehemently denied them, such as the Nazis.

Nietzsche's genealogy of morals was his attempt at myth, of providing an understanding and a meaning to his life and the lives of others. Nietzsche the man was something quite different than the ideas he championed. Nietzsche was polite and affable, showing concern for family and friends. When he suffered the mental breakdown that preceded the confinement of his last 10 years of life, he collapsed coming to the aide of a horse that was being whipped by its owner, wrapping his arms around the animal. Nietzsche's tough guy philosophy came from a man who wasn't conventionally tough. Illness, vision problems, and personal frustrations stemming from unrequited love and disappointment over poor book sales plagued Nietzsche his whole life. Perhaps his philosophy has its genesis in his own perceived shortcomings. Whatever the case, except for its misappropriation in part by the Nazis, Nietzsche's philosophy in general and his genealogy of morals in particular didn't catch on.

2.11 Ethics and Education

The accepted moral positions that Nietzsche challenged in his own day continue to be felt in much of our own lives. I speak here specifically of the moral philosophies championed by Immanuel Kant in the 18th century and John Stuart Mill in the 19th century. Despite their differences, these moral philosophies, what Margaret Urban Walker (1997) classes as "theoretical-juridical models" and I will refer to throughout as the traditional Western ethical models, have much in common. Above all, their presence and influence is felt in our classrooms today.

Both the traditional Western ethical models both take as their starting points a conception of the individual as independent, autonomous, and rational (Held, 1993; Held, 2006). This is an individual who is interested, first and foremost, in herself and her life. The relationships this individual actor enters are secondary to her existence and self-interest. Individuals in the traditional Western ethical models work together only when it will benefit them to do so or when conjoint action is perceived to be in accord with universal laws that their reason grants them access to.

In our classrooms, students usually work *alone*. They often sit isolated at individual desks in rows with space separating them from their neighbors. Even when they sit at tables or in small clusters, their attention is expected to be focused on the teacher, who may be in the front of the room or circulating around. Sometimes group work is assigned but when it is it is often one group in competition against another. Tests are administered and grades allotted to individuals.

The traditional Western ethical models have often denigrated women. Separating the public and private realms, these models historically looked to the private sphere as the sphere of the household (Held, 2006: 13). In these male-headed households, women (and, once, slaves) engaged in the reproduction and nurturing of children. In these models the public sphere is the realm of action, where men busy themselves in politics and economics, the supposed important things in life.

The traditional Western ethical models knock emotion in favor of reason, also often at the expense of women. Being *reasonable* is preferable to being *emotional*. Reason grants one access to universal moral principals, whether Kant's categorical imperative or Mill's principle of utility. These principals are disembodied, out there, capable of being tapped into by you and me using abstract reasoning. Emotion has to be kept in check. Think of what it means to be reasonable. Being reasonable conjures images of being rational, clear-headed, sensible. Reason and emotion are portrayed as polar opposites. Emotions are associated with the body in general and the female body in particular, the "female and dark forces of unreason, passion, emotion, and bodily need" (Held, 2006: 59). Emotion stands in contradistinction to reason, taking away from reason, sullying it. Men are reasonable, women emotional.

The field of education today continues to privilege the male over the female (Kelly & Nihor, in Apple, 2007). Although women swell the ranks of elementary school teachers, the higher up the education totem pole one goes the less female teachers you find. Throughout schooling, from kindergarten to college, more males are in positions of authority, more females in subordinate positions. In high schools, certain subjects (e.g., language arts, foreign languages) are more heavily female staffed than are other subjects (e.g., science and math). Higher paying jobs in education, the more cushy positions, the jobs in universities and administrative offices are disproportionately filled by males.

Emotions are given short shrift to reason in education too. Students are labeled "emotionally disabled" but there is no similar designation for one who is too reasonable. Too reasonable? Is such a thing even possible? Weren't Hoss, Eichmann, and Mengele perfectly reasonable when they carried out their atrocities in Nazi Germany? *Emotionally handicapped* or *emotionally disabled* sounds a lot worse than *learning disabled* or *other health impaired*. Reason is ultimately privileged, even when and where it shouldn't be. For example, if you ever want to win an argument with someone, just stay calm. When the other person "loses their head," keep yours. ("Losing one's head" is a funny phrase, because it connotes the loss of the ability to reason, a capacity of the mind.) Even if you have the weaker argument, I guarantee you, in the estimation of outsiders you will be seen to prevail. That's the hold reason has on us.

Disembodied, reason and rationality find their home in the mind, not in the body; in thought, not in physical work. A similar rift privileges mind work over hand work in education. Since I've been a kid vocational education has been seen as something the "smart kids" *don't* do. Who would want to learn to be a mechanic or a carpenter or a chef or a cosmetologist when they "have the intelligence" to write essays, simplify radicals, or make heads or tails of the three formulations of Kant's moral philosophy? We lose sight that the privileging of "book learning" over manual labor or street smarts is a human convention. The work we do with our hands doesn't have to pay less or receive less respect. We lose sight of the fact that the industrial revolution did not have to proceed the way it did, that its consequences for workers, work, and work education could have been different (see, for example, Kincheloe, 1995).

2.12 The Historicity of Ethical Models

Positivism locates knowledge "out there," as something definite, as knowable, denying a human role in knowledge production. In much the same way the traditional Western ethical models assume certain irrefutable points, namely the suzerainty of reason, the universalizability of moral judgments, the notion of human beings as autonomous individuals. This is not a coincidence. Positivism and these ethical models sprang from the same historical circumstances.

In a nutshell: up until a certain point in European history, if you weren't royalty, clergy, or kith and kin to royalty and clergy, you were screwed. First the clergy, then the crown had a monopoly on political and economic power. Aspired to be ruling class? If you weren't born into it, tough luck. Economic avenues were similarly blocked to all but friends and relatives of the crown and church. This was not necessarily a worldwide phenomena, but keep in mind that Europe served as the development model for other civilizations, usually by imposition, less frequently through emulation.

For their monopoly over economic and political power, the nobility and clergy were a minority of the population. An emerging "middle class"—middle in the sense that they were positioned between the upper classes and the majority of landless peasants—sought economic and political power and found their routes to such blocked. Something had to give, and it did. Wars were fought in and off the battlefield as this rising middle class, the bourgeoisie, scrabbled to secure power.

It is in this sense that what Virginia Held (1993) refers to as the "bourgeois self" developed. The characteristics of this individual self (isolated, egoistic, guided by reason), which we have been looking at, are well known to us today because this self is the default model that largely informs our ontologies, our ideas of who and what we are and how we should be. It is a self predicated on the market model for all human interactions (Held, 1993: 70–71). A self forged at a time when the market impetus was a revolutionary, even democratizing force. Like so much we've looked at and will look at in this book, there was nothing inevitable about this self's development. Joan Tronto (1993), for one, shows that countervailing tendencies in the Scottish Enlightenment, tendencies favoring the moral elements of sympathy, benevolence, and propriety, existed. These tendencies suffused the theories of David Hume, Adam Smith, and Francis Hutchenson but lost out. If they hadn't, how might we view ourselves today? What would our relationships and institutions look like?

Much was ignored in the creation of an individual suited for market conditions and the economic, political, and ethical ideology necessary to justify such. Much else was reshaped to fit in and justify these arrangements. Whatever it means to be what we are as a species, theorists and ideologues plumbed "human nature," a process that involved the downplaying of qualities that didn't serve their models while seizing and emphasizing those that did.

Proponents of what I persist (in echoing Held) in calling the "bourgeois self" here often argue that capitalism has been as successful as it has been because it appeals to deep-seated features of our natures. It has been hammered into our heads that we are competitive individuals and always have been. Perhaps we are, or *can be*, ultimately depending on the circumstances, situations, and institutional structures we find ourselves in. But there is at least equal chance that cooperation and solidarity are as much parts of our makeup as competition. Suspecting and hoping such, Alfie Kohn (1992) wonders why, if competition is something supposedly inhering within us, we humans need to be socialized into being competitive from childhood.

The "bourgeois self" and its emphasis on reason emerged at a specific time and place in human history. What are now viewed as the traditional Western ethical models made this sense of self possible, just as this sense of self made and continues to make these ethical models viable. The intersection of ethics, economics, and politics birthed this bourgeois self, as it reinforces these relationships to this day. Historically and ontologically, it did not have to be this way and need not continue in this direction. Conscious decisions were made by some while others followed obediently. Those who did question were ignored, marginalized. The human species has moved on, but our ethical underpinnings remain mired, reflecting the needs of a time hundreds of years old.

2.13 Different Voices

The past's outdated imprint on the present is all too real. Our most influential notions of moral development owe much to these models. Lawrence Kohlberg's "cognitive-developmental theory of moralization" is considered the authoritative model of how we make moral judgments. Kohlberg's influence on contemporary moral thinking is enormous, spanning ethics to political theory to education. There are those who want to see his theories adapted and taught as best as they can be in school settings (for example, Hersch, et al., 1979). Despite Kohlberg's enormous and undeniable influence on the field of moral reasoning, his reliance on deontological Kantian notions of morality, stemming in part from his indebtedness to Piaget, places his theory of moralization at odds with critical pedagogy.

It is worth considering Kohlberg's model in some detail to contextualize various criticisms of it. The cognitive-developmental theory of moralization is a cognitive, sequential, hierarchical model. Kohlberg lays out six stages that he holds correspond to a child's moral development and age. Kohlberg's methodology involves his "Moral Judgment Interview," a series of dilemmas one is read, followed by questions that ask what the solution to each dilemmas is and why that is the solution. One's position along the moral stages continuum is determined by the form one's reasoning takes when providing answers to moral dilemmas.

Perhaps the best known of Kohlberg's moral dilemmas is the third, involving the fictitious Heinz and his wife (1965). Imagine the life of Heinz's wife threatened by cancer. Imagine a drug exists that doctors think can save her. The druggist who created the medicine is charging ten times its worth, pricing it well out of Heinz's reach. Heinz goes to the druggist and pleads with him to no avail, at which point he considers breaking into the drug store at night and taking the drug for his sick wife. After presenting Heinz's dilemma to participants, Kohlberg would ask them a series of questions beginning with whether or not Heinz should steal the drug and why. Subsequent questions delved into the reasoning behind participants' answers, questions like: if Heinz does not love his wife should he steal the drug for her? or if it wasn't his wife but a stranger or even a pet animal he loves should he still steal the drug? or being as it is against the law to steal, if Heinz steals the drug is his action morally wrong?

The reasoning behind one's answer to this and other dilemmas allowed Kohlberg to locate a participant in one of his moral stages. For example, stage two (preconventional reasoning) tends to hold that if Heinz can get away with it, it's fair for him to steal the drug his wife needs. Kohlberg found that participants at this stage of reasoning think stealing the medication fair because Heinz is pursuing his own self-interest. The idea that Heinz's wife as a human being distinct from her husband needs the medication was not a part of their justification. Stage five reasoning (one of the two postconventional or principled stages) sees Heinz taking the drug as permissible because if Heinz universalized his action more good than harm would result.

As predominant as Kohlberg's moral reasoning model has been, challenges to it have arisen from feminist-inspired political theory and more recently neurobiology. Carol Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg is widely considered the genesis of what is called the ethic of care. Here we will look at Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg and the reaction of Kohlberg and his associates to her, which I think we will find instructive when we consider the hierarchical, all-encompassing nature of Kohlberg's six stage model.

An associate of Kohlberg's, Gilligan studied his work for gender bias and found it. The subjects in Kohlberg's original study, which formed the basis for his dissertation and the source of his longest longitudinal data sample, were all prep-school males. Both Piaget and Kohlberg, Gilligan charged, dismissed females, with Piaget relegating girls to "an aside, a curiosity" and Kohlberg not even mentioning "boys" in his original index because he assumed the children he studied were male (Gilligan, 1982: 18). No need to worry, Kohlberg and his associates rejoined, girls are capable of justice reasoning and can reason *just as well* as boys (1983: 130).

But Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg was more than methodological. Substantively, Gilligan felt Kohlberg got it all wrong. She argued that boys and girls and males and females reason *differently*, that there are "two ways of speaking about moral problems" (Gilligan, 1982: 1). To males Gilligan attributes a reasoning predicated on a morality of justice and rights made possible through formal, abstract thought by disinterested, detached actors. In contrast she argued that the experiences of women are guided by "a different voice," a mode of thinking contextual and narrative, centered on responsibility and relationships (1982). Criticisms of Gilligan's methodology, such that much of her early work involved only girls and that her "different voice" morality are themselves gendered, ensued (Tronto, 1993: 82–85). Kohlberg and his associates, admitting that their early studies' centering on males deserved the criticism it got, claimed that girls were just as capable of justice reasoning as boys.

As for Gilligan's different voice, Kohlberg et al. (1983) revised the moral stages model, refusing to accept the existence of two dueling moral orientations, proposing instead "a dimension along which various moral dilemmas and orientations can be placed," from the "standard hypothetical justice dilemmas" and justice orientations to the personal moral dilemmas and care orientation. In fact, Kohlberg et al. reassure us, with not the least bit of chutzpah, that stage six justice reasoning is *inclusive* of a care ethic (1983: 137–138). Attempting to subsume Gilligan's perceived different voice only hammers home the hierarchical nature of Kohlberg's six-stage model.

Though he claims universalizability for his model, Kohlberg is clear that it be "understood as a hierarchy based upon successive structural integrations" (1983: 39). A normative element accompanies this hierarchical organization, hence a stage six moral thinker is a *better* moral thinker than one at stage two. A neo-colonialist mentality suffuses Kohlberg's model as non-urban; traditionally oriented peoples rarely reach the higher levels of moral reasoning in his design. Kohlberg never asks but his implication begs, if such moral reasoning is universal, then what's wrong with these non-white, backwards peasants that they can't reason the way their cosmopolitan progressive metrosexual cousins can? Kohlberg's theory is elitist in more ways than one because in fact *very few* people reach the higher stages. Tronto posits Kohlberg's cachet to the fact that he tells people in power what they want to hear, how wonderful and moral they are, as "being relatively well off and well schooled seems to be a necessary, if not sufficient condition, to achieve the highest forms of morality" (1993: 76). One wonders if, deliberately or not, this was Kohlberg's goal in making room for care thinking in his sixth stage, buying off the mostly highly educated feminist-academics with whom theorizing on care began, offering them inclusion in his moral cream of the crop.

"For Piaget and ourselves," Kohlberg and colleagues write, "justice is the structure of interpersonal interaction" (1983: 93). The ability to role-play is a central element of Kohlberg's model and thought, a facet that exemplifies what he means by interpersonal interactions. Kohlberg's role-taking ability is the ability "to react to the other as someone like the self and to react to the self's behavior in the role of the other" (in Hersch, et al., 1979: 49). In the argument that follows below, I will be favoring an ethic of care based, in part, on relationships, empathy, and attentiveness over the Western ethical models and their reliance on abstract reason and atomistic individualism. So it might seem a bit disingenuous here to criticize Kohlberg's notion of role-playing, which would seem to lend itself to empathy and relating to other people. But bear with me.

Kohlberg stresses "reversibility as the ultimate criterion of justice," reversibility being the "property of a justice structure of moral operations which enables the structure to construct solutions to dilemmas in such a way that these solutions can be considered acceptable or just from the points of view of all relevant parties" (1983: 95). Kohlberg explains that at the highest stages of moral reasoning, "reversibility implies a conception of justice as moral musical chairs, a conception which requires each person to systematically take the position of everyone else in the situation" (Ibid.). Reversibility is exercised through role-playing.

The problem with Kohlberg's role-playing ability and any reversibility emanating from it is that such role-playing takes as its starting point an individual self that is interchangeable with any other individual self, one that "can assume the role of anyone in a given moral dilemma" (Tronto, 1993: 70). Hersch et al. (1979: 49) give as an example of the importance of role-playing the 3-year old who cannot put himself in the place of his headache-ridden mother, a 3-year old who then gets impatient and angry when his beleaguered mom can't amuse him; at a later age and moral reasoning stage, the kid can put himself in his mother's shoes and understand something of what she might feel returning home from a day's work with a headache, such understanding informing his subsequent behavior. Fine example up to a point, but role-playing from Kohlberg's stage four onwards involves group commitment and concomitant *exclusion* of others from the fold. Tronto (1993) explains that new role-taking opportunities may not be available to non-group members.

Further, non-group members may experience opportunities differently than group members. This is perfectly illustrated in Frederick Douglass' *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July* speech. When Douglass' neighbors in Rochester, New York, asked him to say a few words on Monday, July 5th, 1852, to commemorate United States' independence from Great Britain, I wonder if they were shocked by his words. Instead of glorifying the American democratic experiment and freedom won from the British, Douglass, a former slave, spoke of "the mournful wail of millions! Whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, today, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them" (1997: 124). Escaped from his own bondage, Douglass did not cling to any illusions about the fourth of July's meaning for his person or millions of others still enslaved. He asked his audience,

> What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour. (Douglass, 1997: 127)

Objectified, the other as non-group member may not be able to see himself in the other person's position. She may only be able to see herself and her position as the other person sees her and it (Tronto, 1993: 73). Objectification is followed by assimilation, group members deigning to reintegrate the formerly excluded others, assuming those originally banned similar to themselves. Assuming such "presumes that all of the harms of racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism, etc., can simply be forgotten by morally mature persons" (Ibid.). If those previously excluded can't "get over their hang-ups," they are viewed as lesser morally, incapable of forgiving and forgetting harms done, harms that may have granted group members their membership to begin with. Hence Kohlberg's theory is hegemonic, telling "the story of moral development from the standpoint of those who have remained on top throughout the entire process" (Ibid.).

Kohlberg is quite clear regarding his indebtedness to the traditional Western ethical models, particularly Kant's notion of morality as deontological justice (1983: 73). From Piaget, Kohlberg accepted the centrality of justice and his Kantian heritage (1983: 18). Like Kant, Piaget and Kohlberg hold that conscious, deliberate reasoning leads to informed moral judgment. For Kohlberg, moral judgment "involves reasoning from and to principles" through role-playing and reversibility (1983: 79). Hence Marc Hauser's claim that "Kohlberg out-Kanted Kant in his view that our moral psychology is a rational and highly reasoned psychology based on clearly articulated principles" (2006: 16). Noting they "presuppose[d] a general factor of justice in defining" the moral dilemmas of their moral judgment interview methodology and the stage structures of their model, Kohlberg and his colleagues, as per Kant, err on the side of philosophical idealism.

And all of this would be fine and good if it served to humanize everyone involved, but we have seen the othering, the objectifying, and the thumbing of moral noses implicit and explicit in Kohlberg's moral theorizing. There's another major problem with Kohlberg's theory of how we reach the moral judgments we do: *most of the time, things just don't work that way*. The reasoned, intentional analyses and decision-making called for by the dominant ethical models sound good. Theorizing on these models, by those educated in the ethical jargon with time enough to do so, can be mentally stimulating or, at the very least, self-aggrandizing. It all looks good in paper, maybe even intimidating in journals. Tronto points out that Kohlberg's theory rewards those with "a quickness of mind, an ability to deal with and to speak abstractly," attributes the possessors of pleasantly find just so happens to indicate "progress toward higher moral thought" (1993: 75). Well, well, well . . .

2.14 Immediacy Precedes Deliberation

If you think about it you will realize we make most of our decisions in life, including our moral ones, on the spot, on the fly. Francisco Varela calls this ability "immediate coping" (1992: 18). Imagine a discussion in your classroom between students where you can see one student is potentially embarrassed by the turn the discussion is taking. Perhaps the talk centers on something too personal or uncomfortable for him. You immediately steer the conversation in another direction, sparing the student any discomfort. How'd you *know* to do that? Did you sit there and reason it out, process the possibilities, tap into disembodied universal principals? Did you rely on a utilitarian calculus of the potential good versus the bad? No, as a caring teacher and a good human being, you just *knew* what to do. If asked to explain how you did it, you probably wouldn't be able to.

Hersch et al. contend that "[t]he exercise of moral judgment is a cognitive process that allows us to reflect on our values and order them in a logical hierarchy" (1979: 47). In fact, as Nietzsche recognized, the exercise of moral judgment is *activity*; it is immediate coping. Life doesn't often operate in such a way that disconcerting moral conundrums present themselves well ahead of time, allowing us to mull them over. Kohlberg presented moral dilemmas to study subjects and then allowed them time to answer and explain their answers. But that's not how most moral dilemmas usually work. Moral dilemmas pop up and we deal with them often without second thought and only reflect on them *after* the fact if then. Hauser opines that Kohlberg, Piaget, and others err in leaping from correlation to causation. Just because we can reason and deliberate about our moral decisions *after* the decisions have been made doesn't mean they were made after deliberation and reasoning. As Varela succinctly puts it, "immediacy precedes deliberation" (1992: 33).

Further, "[w]e *always* operate in some kind of immediacy in a given situation," explains Varela. "Our lived world is so ready-at-hand that we have no deliberateness about what it is and how we inhabit it" (1992: 9). Is it such a bizarre idea that much of the time we live our lives and live them well *without* contemplating them moment to moment? At first it may appear so, but consider all the things we do and do capably without thinking about what we're doing. Many times I have made the 40-minute commute to work and when I arrive I cannot recall the details of the drive there for the life of me. This doesn't mean I was spaced out on the ride over. I may have been listening to the radio, but my eyes were still on the road. There was a certain form of "emptiness" involved in my drive, a non-deliberation. Varela reminds us that "athletes, artists, and craftsmen have always insisted that self-consciousness interferes with optimal performance" (1992: 35). For instance, when a reporter asked embattled San Francisco Giants slugger Barry Bonds what he *hears* when he's in the batter's box, Bonds (then only nine homeruns away from Hank Aaron's career record) replied "Nothing" (Barry, 2007). New tasks usually require our awareness and attention to detail; old tasks, old hat, habit takes over. Why should making on-the-spot moral decisions be any different? "[W]e're finding that we have these unconscious behavioral guidance systems that are continually furnishing suggestions through the day about what to do next," says Yale psychology professor John Bargh, "and the brain is considering and often acting on those, all before conscious awareness" (Carey, 2007b: 6 & 7).

Varela contrasts immediate coping to the forms of moral reasoning common today. "Immediate coping," he explains, is "the real 'hard work,' since it took the longest evolutionary time to develop" whereas "[t]he ability to make intentional, rational analyses during breakdowns appeared only recently and very rapidly in evolutionary terms" with the development in humans of language and consciousness (1992: 18). Immediate coping involves split-second, immediate decision-making, even when we're not conscious of making such decisions. Immediate coping could emanate from the subcortical areas of the brain, regions that evolved early on in human development and are responsible for our fight or flight response (Carey, 2007b). On what does our immediate coping ability rest? What do our immediate coping decisions reflect?

Science is showing us that one thing we human beings are is moral. Skeptical eyebrows should go up at this point. Is it outlandish that I claim human beings *moral* beings, if I proffer morality a part of our human natures? What of the substance of the claim—in what ways are we moral? As we've said before in this chapter, there are some things we know about human nature, other things we hope and hope to know, and still others we are learning. We know that humans are born with the capacity to learn a language, even more than one, when surrounded by adults speaking that language (Chomsky, 2002). "Our expressed languages differ," explains Hauser, "but we generate each one on the basis of a universal set of principles. Our artistic expressions vary wildly, but the biology that underpins our aesthetics generates universal preferences for symmetry in the visual arts and consonance in music" (2006: 419).

Philosophers and scientists are now starting to show us that a "universal moral grammar" that informs our moral lives is just as plausible as a universal generative grammar that informs language acquisition. "Social morality begins in the brain," claims Lawrence Tancredi (2005: ix). Morality itself may reside in the left hemisphere of the brain (Gazzaniga, 2005: 147). Marc Hauser argues that "we evolved a moral instinct, a capacity that naturally grows within each child, designed to generate rapid judgments about what is morally right or wrong based on an unconscious grammar of action" (2006: xvii). Ours are *moral minds*, and we should understand "our moral psychology as an instinct—an evolved capacity of all human minds that unconsciously and automatically generates judgments of right and wrong" (Hauser, 2006: 2).

Could a moral instinct exist? "[S]ome fixed properties of mind come with us from the baby factory," notes Gazzaniga (2005: 165), like language or an appreciation of symmetry, so why not morality? Chomsky points out that confronting unique moral situations, we are nonetheless able to make decisions. In fact,

> we're constantly making all kinds of judgments, including moral judgments . . . about new things and new situations. Well, either it's being done just randomly, sort of like pulling something out of a hat . . . or else we're doing it on the basis of some moral system that we have built into our minds somehow, which gives answers, or at least partial answers, to a whole range of new situations (2002: 359).

As Hauser stresses, despite finite and limited experiences, we make moral decisions in novel cases (2006: 66).

Furthermore, even when we do things we feel are wrong, things we know society views as bad, we tend to seek justifications for our actions. "We all do bad things in our lives," notes Chomsky, "and if you think back, it's very rare that you've said, 'I'm doing this just because I feel like it'—people reinterpret things in order to fit them into a basic framework of moral values, which in fact we all share" (2002: 361). The husband cheating on his wife doesn't say, "I want to have sex with other women." If asked he'd probably answer that cheating on one's spouse *isn't* a good thing to do. Maybe he says, "Monogamy is too constraining. Just because I have sex with another woman doesn't mean I *don't* love my wife," and maybe there is truth to that, but here our husband is over-intellectualizing the fact that he made a promise to his wife and broke it. Maybe it was a promise he shouldn't have made to begin with, a promise he felt enormous societal pressure to make, but it doesn't change the fact that he gave another his word and then reneged on it. Usually the philanderer justifies his actions by painting himself as the victim. His wife "just doesn't understand" him, treats him wrong, maybe denies him sex, or "is a bitch." Individuals justify their societal transgressions this way, as do societies. Thus Athens goes to war with the Peloponnesian League to "defend" itself, much the same justification given by the United States thousands of years later when it attacked Iraq a second time. If morality was not, on some fundamentally human level, important to us, we would not seek to justify our actions, to show how even our societal transgressions conform to moral norms.

Primatologist Frans de Waal makes the case for an evolutionary origin to cooperation. Human beings, he holds, have always been social animals, because life in groups was and is a "survival strategy" (de Waal 2006: 4). Species relying on cooperation "show group loyalty and helping tendencies. These tendencies," de Waal posits, "evolved in the context of a close-knit social life in which they benefited relatives and companions able to repay the favor" (2006: 15). More often than not, the closer the relationship is, the more likely people are to lend a literal or metaphorical hand to one another. Thus parents tend to look out for children, families for family members, community members for their societies, and so on. De Waal posits that "[i]n the course of human evolution, out-group hostility enhanced in-group solidarity to the point that morality emerged," which perhaps lends some credence to Freud's contention that "[i]t is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness" (De Waal, 2006: 54; Freud, 1989: 751).

There are scientists who argue that the three basic principles of evolution are mutation, selection, and cooperation (Zimmer, 2007). Social living brings no advantages if selfishness is not kept in check (Wade, 2007b). The field of social neuroscience encourages us to look at how distinct human beings' physiologies interact, with research showing that people "with rich personal networks—who are married, have close family and friends, are active in social and religious groups—recover more quickly from disease and live longer" than people who don't (Goleman, 2006). Primatologists have found that for distant relatives of human beings like baboons those with the best social skills leave the most offspring (Wade, 2007b).

"The fact that morality in humans evolved from other primates and depends on the brain for its universality and stability," notes Laurence Tancredi, "does not negate the importance of social forces in its creation, or the role of 'free will' in its execution" (2005: 8). Different societies and different times have different moral norms. We should not view any moral instinct as deterministic. Instead, any such universal moral grammar is best viewed, as Hauser describes it, as "a toolkit for building specific moral systems." He explains, "Once we have acquired our culture's specific moral norms—a process that is more like growing a limb than sitting in Sunday school and learning about vices and virtues—we judge whether actions are permissible, obligatory, or forbidden, without conscious reasoning and without explicit access to the underlying principles" (2006: xviii).

Still, there appear to be morals that bind humans—all humans—together. An example of a moral trait universal to human beings is caring for children. "Within and across cultures," Hauser explains, "torturing infants as amusement or sport is forbidden" (2006: 44). We would all *feel* disgust at an adult kicking an infant, Hauser says. Even Toadvine, the Glanton Gang's cold-blooded ear-less killer in *Blood Meridian* feels disgust when the judge slaughters the Indian child. Note the conjunction of feeling with moral disapprobation in such examples. I have already pointed out how the dominant ethical models impugn emotion, seeing it as impeding reason and rational moral judgments. In Hauser's example, as in so many others, "emotions are our compass" (de Waal, 2006: 56).

2.15 An Ethic of Care

In the realm of theory, nothing short of a complete ethical overhaul is long overdue. We must adopt a morality more consonant with our natures as social beings, not fabricated to support the necessities of market models. Fortunately such an ethic is already being developed, an ethic that informs our lives though it is devalued, marginalized by much of mainstream society and intellectual life, an ethic I think at the heart of all critical pedagogies, even when not explicitly stated so.

I am talking about an ethic of care. Originating in the works of Carol Gilligan and her criticism of Lawrence Kohlberg, care emerged as "feminist ethics," though care theorists recognize care as an ethic men and women can subscribe to. Care is defined differently by various theorists. The definition I have found most useful is that offered by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher, that caring "*includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible*. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (1993: 103). Of course, not all care theorists agree with Tronto and Fisher. Bubeck, for example, sees care as "fundamentally other directed and beneficial to others" (1995: 9). So, for example, she doesn't feel we can care for inanimate objects or the environment (1995: 138). Bowden, on the other hand, is explicit that she will not even try to define care (1997: 17). But how important is agreeing on a definition of care? Care is something we do and have had done for us. A definition of care may help set parameters and boundaries but is primarily of theoretical importance. In the following discussion, as I draw upon the work of care theorists I feel relevant for our classrooms and critical pedagogy, some of their disagreements with each other and mine with them will be teased out.

Care resonates with me as a teacher and student, father and son, friend and neighbor. In a very elementary sense, because my mom and dad cared for me I am able to get up in the morning, go to work and teach, care for my family, and write this to get up in the morning, go to work and tech, care for my family, and write this book. Without care, everything else is superfluous, even unattainable. And I am not the only person for whom care has meaning and in whose life care plays a continual part. Care is a "truly universal experience" (Held, 2006: 3). Contrasted to the dominant ethical models and the market imperatives they support, Bubeck views care as "more basic than production, exchange, or contracting, or engaging in one's life projects: in suitable conditions, humans can exist without any of these, but we cannot even survive the first days of our life without being cared for by others" (1995: 12). Hence Virginia Held's contention that care "is probably the most deeply fundamental value" (2006: 17).

Care teaches us that relationships between human beings are not optional; relationships are not forms of attachment rational actors *choose*. At the very beginning of our lives, we are born into relationships with people we depend upon, and these are relationships we depend on, relationships that matter. We are reared to be able to stand on our own two feet, literally and figuratively. Even when we are capable of walking through life by ourselves we seldom do so, surrounding ourselves with people we appreciate and people who appreciate us. Further, each of us faces what Eva Kittay calls *inevitable dependencies*, "times in our lives when we are utterly dependent" on other people (1998: 76). From birth to death, from illness to injury—and that's not counting the happy times—we need others. Particular relations between particular individuals may be options, but relationships in general are not.

A care ethic is "thoroughly relational" (Noddings, 2002: 14). Caring is "other-directed and heteronomous" (Bubeck, 1995: 144). Care views individuals as "relational and interdependent, morally and epistemologically" (Held, 2006: 11). Morality isn't *out there* somewhere. Moralities are "collective works" between human beings, by human beings, for human beings (Urban Walker, 1997: 203). Morality is interpersonal and collaborative, involving "moral understandings" between people (Ibid.: 26).

Care theorists are not the only ones making these arguments. de Waal, for one, gives the lie to traditional ethical models with their emphasis on an autonomous individual capable of existing outside social relationships, explaining that "we have been group-living forever. Free and equal people never existed. Humans started out . . . as interdependent, bonded, and unequal" (2006: 4). One look at our primate cousins helps us understand this.

"To be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world," says Freire (2005: 3). No individual is an island unto herself, and to propose such a model as something worth emulating is encouraging a morally and psychologically unhealthy, unsound model. After all, "a good illustration of the thoroughly social nature of our species" is that "solitary confinement is the most extreme punishment we can think of" outside the death penalty (de Waal, 2006: 5).

What Bubeck refers to as "heteronomy" Held calls "mutual autonomy" (2006: 55). Autonomy, ruling one's own life, making decisions for oneself, is important. We don't want to see the individual stifled by the group, but if the individual engages in behavior harmful to the group, he must not be allowed to do so. Further, there will be times when the individual engages in behaviors that are risky only to herself but must not be allowed to do so. Held sees care as proffering an autonomy with the "capacity to reshape and cultivate new relations, not to ever more closely resemble the unencumbered abstract rational self of liberal political models and moral theories" (2006: 11). Autonomy as usually construed is a fantasy, fiction. A point made earlier: the individual realizes himself in community, in relations with others, a theme of this book and a fact of life, despite those who would deny such.

What started in European liberal political theory to justify greater economic and political opportunity was elevated to an art form in the American psyche. From the frontier settler to the transient gunfighter, from the mountain man to the private detective, the lone, rugged individual—usually a male—resonates in American mythology, literature, and film. An examination of the genres and the historical record unmasks this fabrication. American Manifest Destiny was born on the backs of the men who moved west with their families, their wives and children (see, for example, Bellah, et al. 2007). Grizzly Adams had his bear, Ben, as well as his human companions Nakoma, and Mad Jack the Mountain Man.

2.16 The Values of Care

Care as an ethical system values people, and this valuation is reflected in the values care theorists support. Among the values of care, theorists identify attentiveness, responsibility, obligation, nurturance, compassion, confirmation, meeting the needs of others, and engagement (Tronto, 1993: 3; Bubeck, 1995: 10; Noddings, 2002: 13 & 28; Held, 2006: 39). Not all care theorists hold all these values in common. However, the values that each theorist appeals to are relationship-dependent and realized in "a context-sensitive mode of deliberation that resists abstract formulations of moral problems" (Bowden, 1997: 6). I think care as an ethical system underlies critical pedagogies and is particularly suitable for our classrooms. Later I will discuss the ways society downplays and marginalizes care, but here I'd like to look at the values of care we already see in our classrooms.

Before we can address the needs of others, we have to be attentive to what it is they need (Tronto, 1993: 127). Every teacher worth his salt lives this daily. You're meeting a child for the first time in September, what are her strengths and needs? There are kids who come to us with IEPs and M.A.P. plans, and we should familiarize ourselves with these, but good teachers learn to "read" their kids academically and socially. Attentiveness encompasses subject matter—does Juanita lack basic computation skills, better to allow her the use of a calculator?—but it goes deeper than this. Who needs to be handled with kids' gloves versus who just needs the occasional deserved ego-stoke? If April answers a question incorrectly and you tell her she's wrong, she handles it fine, but how will Darius take being told he's wrong? Better with him perhaps if you say, "I like how you're thinking on this, but that isn't the answer we're looking for here." It's not coddling, it's keeping that kid from checking out, encouraging him to stay engaged, to take risks and learn from failure, not to fear it and seek its avoidance.

Attentiveness to another, whether to a sick person one is caring for or to a child one is teaching, requires putting aside *your* ego long enough to understand the other person, to empathize with them and feel their situation as best you can from their point of view. Noddings refers to attentiveness of this sort as *engrossment* (2002: 28). Tronto opines that we need a certain sense of passivity, an "absence of will," the ability "to suspend one's own goals, ambitions, plans of life, and concerns, in order to recognize and to be attentive to others" (1993: 128). Consider something so everyday, so human, as a conversation. We all know adults and children who engage in a perpetual game of one-upmanship. An 11th grader is excited about her performance at the basketball game last weekend and *you* use it as a point of departure to tell her and the class about *your* glory days in high school or college sports; a friend or colleague mentions that his infant son has just learned to roll over into a seated position and *you* launch into a revere about *your* own child and how they came to sitting up (probably at an earlier age than your co-worker's kid). This one-upmanship applies equally to fears and lamentations as to accomplishments. We're all guilty of it at one time or another. The important point is when someone trusts you enough to share something with you, you must *listen* to them, *not* try to outdo them. This doesn't mean you shouldn't feel free to share, to model your understanding of a situation someone is presenting to you with an episode from your own life, but there are people who constantly employ this me-me-me mentality, often in an attempt to impress upon the other how great *they* themselves are, an indication of their insecurity.

Responsibility is another core value of care readily (we hope!) seen in classrooms. The children we come into contact with in our schools are our wards; the law speaks of our relationship with them as teachers as *in loco parentis*, in the position of a parent. We have responsibilities to our students to do our best to help them access a district's curriculum or pass mandatory high-stakes tests, no matter what our personal views of such are. At the same time, we have the responsibility to help our students question the validity of such curriculums and exams and, if the interest is there, to explore the options available in the pursuit of change. This entire chapter is predicated on the notion that we have a responsibility to help our children become moral, to become *better* people. Remember, you're not just a math or English teacher. You're a moral agent.

Responsibility extends further than the kids in our classrooms and our school. We have a responsibility *to our profession*, to keep up as best we can on developments in our field. We are not the guardians of arcane dead arts, but participants in ever-expanding, constantly evolving fields. Teachers should not be middle men between students and academic "experts"; *teachers should be* these "experts" as much as possible, scholars active in and beyond their disciplines. We have a responsibility to better our schools, through actions inside and outside the building. Being a club advisor, a coach, circulating petitions, attending crucial board of education meetings, being politically active in our schools' community, in our neighborhoods, in our countries, these are all responsibilities that don't end at 3:30 and aren't confined to our classrooms.

A third value of care is confirmation. "To confirm others is to bring out the best in them," says Noddings (2002: 20). Noddings explains that we should respond to students who commit uncaring, unethical acts "by attributing the best possible motive consonant with reality. By starting this way, we draw the cared-for's attention to his or her better self" (Ibid.). Although I agree with Noddings in spirit here, I disagree with her in fact. Sometimes people, including students, do terrible things to each other and seem to get off on it. One student I worked with had a terrible relationship with his mother, who was mentally abusive to him. This played itself out in school as the kid exhibited serious issues with female staff members of similar age to his mom. On the one hand, I could understand where his behaviors came from, like remarking that he "hated" Mrs. so-and-so and talking back to his teachers, but I never excused his actions just because I understood his motivations. Nor did I "attribute the best possible motive consonant with reality" to this boy. As much as I liked him and saw the good in him, he was a jerk to particular female teachers and these were teachers I knew good at their jobs and decent human beings.

Noddings continues, "We confirm the other by showing that we believe the act in question is not a full reflection of the one who committed it" (2002: 20). With this I couldn't agree more wholeheartedly. One thing I always tried to do with my mommy-issues boy was couch my criticism of his actions by saying, "You know, I see a side of you that is warm and friendly and engaging, but then I see you show yourself to Mrs. so-and-so as rude, obnoxious, and mean." I'm not lying to this student when I tell him this, those better qualities are really there; if they weren't I wouldn't make them up. I let him know I disapprove of the way he behaves with this teacher, at the same time letting him know that *I* know he has the capacity to act differently. Furthermore, I impress as best I can on the kid that he can control his behavior, that he doesn't have to be impudent and unruly. In this way I confirm the behaviors I know the child is capable of, the behavior I'd like to see.

2.17 Emotions and Care

Where traditional ethical models champion reason, often viewing emotion as little more than a stumbling block, an ethic of care recognizes emotion's rightful place. Our classrooms and our lives would be bleak places indeed without sympathy and empathy, without sensitivity and responsiveness. Social animals, emotions such as empathy developed early in us with good reason. Empathy allows us to appraise the emotional states of others and respond to them (de Waal, 2006: 27). Just as you see someone yawn and you yawn, when those around you are in good moods chances are you'll be in a good mood. There is such a thing as emotional contagion, and its effects are actively sought out or avoided. For example, there are people who complain to let off steam, and then there are people who complain because that seems to be what they like doing. I have worked in academic departments and other places where the vibe is extremely negative, where some complain about anything and everything, including things no one would think to complain about. Because I fear getting sucked into this funk, I'd take my lunch by myself at my desk and my colleagues probably thought I was being asocial but I just didn't want to surround myself with the negativity. I work with other people who, as soon as I see them coming, I know they're up to something mirthful, and they know I know, and we all break out into smiles and snickers. But unfortunately all too often, as de Waal remarks, things like "[t]ool use and numerical competence . . . are seen as hallmarks of intelligence, whereas appropriately dealing with others is not" (2006: 27).

Bubeck points out that carers often derive the emotion of joy from caring for others (1995: 149). As I write the words of this chapter another academic year is ending. I think of the students I've had the privilege to work with these last 187 school days, of the fun times we've had, as recently for example as last week when I walked into class, said "it smells like gas in here" and one of my kids thought I said it smelled "like ass," all of us breaking out into uncontrollable laughter. Critics often try and paint teachers as lazy people who go into teaching for the summers off, when in fact most teachers I know start off—and many manage to remain—people who genuinely enjoy interacting with the young, with others. Teaching can be emotionally rewarding, even in sub-prime conditions.

Reasoning and emotion are related as both are parts of our moral repertoires. Champions of disembodied reason warn of emotions clouding our judgments. The Scottish Enlightenment thinker David Hume saw things the other way around, opining that "[r]eason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions . . . to serve and obey them" (in Hauser, 2006: 24). Although they're usually juxtaposed as opposites, reasoning and emotion *inform* one another. With Nietzsche's rumination I agree, that "to eliminate the will, to suspend the emotions altogether, provided it could be done—surely this would be to castrate the intellect, would it not?" (1956: 256). If we stop and think about this we realize it, though dominant theories try to tell us otherwise.

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned Hauser's example of the general revulsion with which almost all human beings hold the torturing of infants. Hauser's point is that when we think of this type of harm being done on the smallest and most vulnerable, we *feel* our revulsion. Our first impulse isn't a reasoned calculus coherently explaining why torturing infants is wrong. It's a gut reaction and it's felt by almost all humans. "All members of the human species," notes Gazzaniga, "tend to fell and to react in predictable ways to situations that create the background for a moral choice" (2005: 152). Tancredi explains that "the brain becomes activated before one becomes conscious of what is happening" (2005: 27). Reasoning enters the picture to provide post hoc justifications for why and how we feel. The way in which reason follows emotion in this example, and in many other examples, doesn't belittle emotion *or* reason. Both are necessary and compliment one another, in our lives, in our relationships, in an ethic of care. We care about infants because they are vulnerable, because they are dependent on us. We despise those who would harm our wards and with good reason. Without the littlest ones, we could not continue as a species. Noddings holds that "[w]hen we care, we must employ reasoning to decide what to do and how to do it" (2002: 14).

As the example above makes clear, a care ethic isn't all about the feel-good emotions. Virginia Held posits that "anger may be a component of the moral indignation that should be felt when people are treated unjustly and inhumanely . . . " (2006: 10). Anger can be constructive and instructive. There are students in our classes, who, no matter what we do, no matter how humanely we treat them, these students are disruptive, they treat others inhumanely. We must be stern with them when they ignore the choices we provide, choices aimed at steering them toward decent behavior. Consequences must follow, be it verbal chastisement, punishment, or, if need be, removal from our classrooms. Everyone learns in these situations. The student at fault learns that certain behaviors will not be tolerated and what behaviors are expected. Other students in the class learn that their classrooms are safe places where disruptive, bullying, and violent behaviors have no place. We learn as we balance authority against authoritarianism, as we express our anger in an appropriate manner. Anger can be an act of confirmation for all involved. Noddings (2003: 247) notes that "decent, nonharmful behavior may have to be compelled in the interests of keeping all students safe and helping those who do harmful things to develop better moral selves," something Ira Shor refers to as protecting the process of pedagogy.

2.18 Relational Ontologies

Care recognizes that *who* we are, our ways of feeling about ourselves, our being and existence—in a word, our ontologies—depend on our relationships with others. Different relationships, different selves, different conceptions of self. For example, when I am at work I feel the competent, capable professional (and even when I don't I've found it best to act like I do). When I visit my mom and dad there is still a part of me that, despite anything I have accomplished in my life, despite my own wife and child, continues to feel me a boy to my parents. I don't mean I feel infantilized or my parents condescend to me, I just sit in a different relationship with my parents than I do with my wife or my friends and colleagues and peers, and I often even feel different in these various contexts.

Consider our senses of humor. The same joke told to us by a student, co-worker, or family member may elicit different responses. A student tells us the joke and we have to explain to the student that it's not an appropriate joke for her to be telling her teacher. A co-worker tells the joke and we don't think it an appropriate joke for a colleague to be telling in the workplace. But at a family gathering we may laugh at the very same joke when some relative tells it. Contexts, meaning our place in relation to another person or another place, carry with them specifics of what is allowable and what is not, of what is acceptable and what isn't. Our ontologies are temporally and historically grounded. Consider the different ways a Christian, an atheist, or a Jew looks at a cross, what they feel when they contemplate such. Or, as Kincheloe asks us, to "consider how a classroom is perceived by a class clown, a traditionally good student, a burnt-out teacher, a standardized test maker, an anti-standards activist, a bureaucratic supervisor, a disgruntled parent, a nostalgic alumnus or a student with feelings" similar to the Columbine High School shooters (2005: 9).

Ours are relational ontologies. We are not just who we think we are, for *who* we think we are is itself conditioned by the relationships we're in. In the next chapter when we discuss the theories and methodology of Vygotsky, we will look at just how much we are creatures existentially constituted through our interactions with others of our species. Here we will focus on the ways in which power plays out in our relational ontologies.

Several years back when I was an untenured teacher in my district, I was observed by an administrator. He's a nice enough guy and we work well with one another to this day. When we had our post-observation he explained to me what he saw as the strengths and needs of my lesson. I sat there and listened, piping up when it was appropriate. At one point he said, "How do you feel about this, Tony? You're not nervous are you?" I told him I felt good about the lesson he'd observed, told him I felt comfortable *with him* but also explained that ours was a relationship marked by a power disparity, with he being an administrator and my being an untenured teacher. So, yeah, maybe I was a bit uncomfortable or on edge but nervous may not be the correct word to describe how I was feeling. I don't know if "power disparity" were my exact words to him but I do remember he looked like he was hearing this for the first time, though not in a negative way. I had a job in a really good school district and it was important for me to keep it.

In power relationships there are those who pretend (or are not aware) that the power relationship *isn't* there. This is a power evasion. The power relationship is very real. For example, a negative review from that administrator could have wrecked havoc with my tenure track. We hope those above us on whatever totem poles we find ourselves do not act arbitrarily, that they judge us by our mettle and the quality of our performances.

There's more to the story. At the time I felt a little unwarranted hostility toward administrators in general. Not toward this guy as a flesh and blood human being, but toward him as the embodiment of one in a power position over me. This was a man—a good man, a decent, fine man let me be clear, and he still is—who'd worked his way up to an administrative position from the guidance department. Although he'd spent years of valuable service in the district providing advice and direction to the district's children, he'd never stepped foot in a classroom as a teacher. That bugged me. I kind of had the attitude, who is this guy to be able to judge me? Part of that was my own immaturity and insecurity; after all, sometimes the best coaches in a sport never played the game professionally.

The evaluation forms our district used had a section for recommendations. There is nothing wrong with getting things written about you in this section. In fact, I suspect administrators are *encouraged* to write something here, to look like they are providing advisement drawn from their administrative wisdom. Thing was, I often felt through all those observations with all the various administrators that there were some who put things in that section because they felt they had to, not because there was anything legitimate to constructively criticize. I'm not bragging or trying to sound like an ego-maniac when I say I'm on point in a classroom, that teaching is one thing I am lucky enough to do well. I'll admit when I've had an off-day or an off-lesson, when something could have-should have played out another way. Further, when I have a scheduled observation I put everything together before hand and run through it several times in my mind. There were times I felt things went as well as they could, and then there were these people observing me who I felt *they* felt they *had* to put something in that suggestions for future growth box so they looked like they were doing *their* jobs, and that bothered me. Of course, and this is where the power differential of this particular relational ontology comes in, I never said anything to these folks.

"Human identities," Kincheloe explains, "are shaped by entanglements in the webs that power weaves" (2005: 22). Perhaps if I had expressed these thoughts to the higher ups they would have mulled them over, agreed or disagreed. But I couldn't chance alienating or angering them, which could have disastrous consequences for my future. With other teachers I would discuss these dynamics occasionally, but that was because we were pretty much in the same boat, all in positions to be judged.

Relational ontologies are central to an ethic of care. Noddings posits "the fact that 'I' am defined in relation, that none of us could be considered an 'individual' or a 'person,' or an entity recognizably human if we were not in relation" (2002: 15). Consider those interesting cases of the wolf-girl or wolf-boy, the child who is discovered having been raised by a pack of feral four-legged animals. When these children are brought back into human society, they often have difficulty adjusting and never really fit in. To be human is to be *amongst* humans, which goes a long way toward explaining why even Robinson Crusoe stranded alone on his island went about his afternoon tea and the other ceremonies of a civilized Englishman.

Our relational ontologies, our relational selves are formed with and through other people. The types of relationships an ethic of care attempts to foster are human relationships, humane relationships. A useful way of understanding the relationships an ethic of care and critical pedagogy both seek to encourage is to contrast "mothering" relationships with the market relationships of the traditional ethical models. "Mothering" here is not meant in a gendered sense, just as "feminist" does not only pertain to females. Men and women can engage in "mothering," just as men can be feminists (Held, 1993: 80). Mothering is a form of parenting but a specific form of parenting, usually discernable in put-downs of mothering or of children accused of "too much" mothering (which usually means a child was spoiled or not allowed to take risks and grow from them).

2.19 Mothering

At a basic level mothering involves nurturing others. We usually associate mothering with parenting and hence with the nurturance of the young. But when we are aware of and responsive to the needs of those around us, adults as well as children, we are mothering. We all know adults of whom it is said we must "handle that one with kids gloves." This is almost always meant in a derogatory sense, that someone is overly sensitive or needy. Yet it also speaks to the fact that whenever we act to humanize another we are engaged in mothering, just as when others act to humanize us they are mothering as well.

There is a form of mothering that occurs in any mentoring, whether it's the mentoring of a student by a teacher, a teacher by an administrator, a player by a coach, or Jedi Knight Obi Wan Kenobi by Qui-Gon Jinn. A good veteran teacher asked to mentor someone new to the field will act to draw out the strengths of the new teacher. Needs should not be ignored but they must be addressed in a constructive way. The veteran teacher does not want to come across as nagging, but as offering guidance and advice.

Sometimes new teachers do things they just should not do, and veteran teachers need to step up and explain to the newbie why what he is doing is impermissible. For example, some teachers assume a haughty attitude with their students. Because teachers often did well in school, because they were usually "good" students, and because they choose to teach a subject near and dear to their hearts, they often expect similar enthusiasm and performance from their students. When students don't perform as expected and hoped, these teachers can get frustrated, annoyed, maybe even disgusted. These may all be normal reactions. The thing a veteran teacher needs to impart to her mentee is that these feelings be expressed *appropriately* should they be expressed at all.

Remember, *you* asked to be an English teacher. You made a decision to go to school and study literature and grammar and you probably enjoyed a good deal of it. But some of the students in your English class may be there only because they have to be there, because the class is required. They may come to you hating English class, perhaps because of past failures in the subject, a lack of facility with the content, or just a lack of interest in the subject the way you may not be interested in the Olympic sport of curling.

Teachers are guides in their classrooms. Some of our students we will lead to a genuine interest and love for a topic or subject, and these students will continue to pursue these paths on their own. Other students come to us seeking a journey as short and pain-free as possible. While we strive to challenge these students as well, we should never do so at the expense of their humanity. A condescending attitude or disdainful comments on the part of a teacher has no place in a caring classroom. A mentor should act to dispel such an outlook and approach in a new teacher. What we're doing when we engage in mentoring is mothering, is nurturing, is grooming.

The problem facing an ethic of care and critical pedagogy is that the market model is hegemonic. No matter where we are, we are human beings, beings made human. We always have been, and so long as there are human beings, we always shall be. Sometimes we are buyer or seller, but we are not always either buyer or seller, nor have we always been. The individual called for by market models, by contractual economic, political, and moral theories, is an individual who may have a time and place, but it is a time and place limited in scope. Unfortunately much of contemporary ethics, economics, and politics has lost sight of the limitations inherent in the market model of the human being. In market models connections between human beings are instrumental. Mothering, care, and critical pedagogy all recognize connections between humans as what makes us human.

The importance of mothering cannot be underestimated. Held explains that "mothering persons and children . . . turn biological entities into human social entities through their interactions" (1993: 70). Nurturing children, mothering *creates* persons who go on capable of transforming themselves and their environments. Unfortunately not all persons put in a position of "mothering" are up to the task, and it is the human beings who emerge from these relationships and us who suffer for it.

Our formative years can be formidable years. Here's something that's not popular to say but I really believe there is a lot of truth to it: kids with problems usually come from families with problems. I think back on the kids I've taught over the years I've been teaching. There was something I liked about every kid I worked with, even when they exhibited some behaviors that were detestable, self-destructive, or downright mean. Meeting the parents of these children usually goes pretty far in explaining why they are the way they are. The fruit doesn't fall far from the tree. I need to be clear that I'm not talking about students with legitimate learning issues, like some kid who struggles to read or increase processing speed. I'm talking about kids with bad attitudes and unsavory behaviors. They often come from families with bad attitudes where unsavory behaviors are lived daily. Understanding this and the part socio-historical conditions like poverty and ignorance can play in it does not excuse any of it.

When we recognize the centrality of relationships to an ethic of care, it should come as no surprise that this is an ethic encompassing more than the self, perhaps even more than the human animal. Care theorists themselves argue over *who* and *what* is encompassed in an ethic of care. For example, Bubeck (1995) views care as other-directed, not something encompassing the self, whereas Tronto (1993) sees care including care of and for the self. Care theorists differ in whether or not they feel a care ethic includes other animals, objects, the environment. The important point about an ethic of care that all care theorists uphold one way or another is that care recognizes what Kincheloe calls "the relational embeddedness of [the] self" (2005: 100).

A couple of years ago some kids in my school thought it would be funny to release some white mice they'd purchased from a pet store in the halls of the school. What they didn't realize is that these white mice are pretty docile, raised in cramped conditions as nothing more than snake food. Instead of scurrying around the halls between staff and students legs and provoking a hilarious bedlam, these mice huddled together in a corner of a hallway. Some girls came over shrieking. One started stomping on the mice. She didn't *accidentally* step on one of them. She *purposefully* went out of her way to come over and crush as many of them as she could under her foot with repeated blows before other students and staff stopped her. It was sick, and hearing about it I envisioned Robert DeNiro and Joe Pesci beating Frank Vincent's character to death in *Goodfellas*.

Almost all of the students who heard about this or were there *understood* that it is wrong to mash little mice into the hallway tile. Many also wondered what kind of person could do such a thing. That's pretty disgusting behavior, and this kid is on her way to being a disgusting human being. Want to guess what her home life is like? What the people she lives with are like, how they treat her? Want to guess how she does in school? My hope is that it's not too late for her, that our malleability as human beings and our own agency will allow her to change her ways and work toward becoming a decent human being who respects life, even non-human life.

My condemnation of this girl and her actions may strike some as strong. My own disgust with this child's actions no doubt stands out. Bad behavior is bad behavior. To ignore it or downplay it is to risk excusing it. Such an example confirms the humanity of the children who witnessed what they did, were disgusted, and *stopped* the other. It confirms the idea that care extends *beyond* our own species, that savagery to non-human animals is wrong. That those who engage in such acts demean *themselves* as human beings at the same time that they physically damage or kill another creature.

2.20 Care Contained

Where the traditional Western ethical models relegate care to the private sphere and economics and politics to the public sphere, care recognizes the absurdity of such assignments. Plain and simple, without care none of us would be capable of partaking in economic and political life. The human animal doesn't emerge from the womb fully human, capable of staggering off on its own. Because of our comparatively large cranial capacity, we emerge from the womb at 9 months, incapable of fending for ourselves. We depend on others to meet *all* of our needs, to feed us, protect us from the elements, to clean and love us. We are in this position for quite some time and even when we are old enough to enjoy some relative semblance of autonomy we often are guilty of sitting back and letting someone else "mother" us on occasion because to do so is pleasurable.

With their conception of human beings as indifferent, independent, and autonomous individuals assumed equal, traditional Western ethical thinking found itself forced to separate the private and public spheres at the private realm's detriment. How, after all, do you go about imagining the individual in mothering and caring relations in the private realm in this manner? What kind of emotionally and psychically misshapen human beings would be produced by a private realm that relied solely on contractual models of human relationships?

Though an ethic of care might seem to make a lot of sense, much of our modern day lives is aimed at marginalizing care itself. We've discussed the "ideological agenda of individualism, autonomy and self-made men" which downplays care, wherein Clint Eastwood's "man with no name" character from the spaghetti Westerns is seen as "the ideal Western male way of being—the ontological norm" (Tronto, 1993: 112; Kincheloe, 05: 100). We've seen how theorists like Kohlberg relegate care to second class status in the field of morality and ethics (see also Bubeck, 1995: 7–8).

Care is more than a theory of ethics. Care is a praxis, theory and practice. Held opines that care is value and practice (Held, 2006: 9). Care "involves both thought and action," Tronto explains us, noting "that thought and action are interrelated, and that they are directed toward some end" (1993: 108). Care is dialectically reinforcing. We learn to care as we learn to be cared for (Noddings, 2002: 32). "To develop the capacity to care," explains Noddings, "one must engage in care giving activities" (2002: 19). Care "implicitly suggests that it will lead to some type of action," notes Tronto (1993: 102). In this vein, she points out that the word care itself "connotes some kind of engagement" (1993: 102).

Care isn't care if it isn't being practiced. To be a caring person, posits Held, "requires the ability to engage in the practice of care, and the *exercise* of this ability." Care "is *work* as well as an emotion or motive or intention" (Held, 2006: 51). Historically the work of care has been yoked to women's shoulders, but today we live in a world where 56% of the world's women labor outside the home and 930 million children under the age of 15 are raised in households where all the adults work (Heymann, 2003). So there are less adults at home to care for children and others who need it. To boot, care has been relegated a "service" whose providers get short shrift in remuneration and renown. If care is so central and important to our existence, how can this be?

"The dependence of dependent persons obligates dependency workers in ways that situate them unequally with respect to others who are not similarly obligated," explains Kittay (1998: 76). (*Whew*—try repeating that three times fast!). Bubeck thinks it *inevitable* that care workers will be exploited. Carers "will always give considerations of care more weight than considerations of justice if the two conflict, and this, in turn, implies that they will continue to care even in situations which are clearly exploitative" (Bubeck, 1995: 13). In a nod to Marx, Bubeck views non-carers as extracting surplus labor from carers (1995: 182).

Tronto doesn't mention surplus labor but notes that care is "privileged irresponsibility," meaning "those who are relatively privileged are granted by that privilege the opportunity simply to ignore certain forms of hardships that they do not face" (1993:120–121). If you're not in a position of needing care or needing to care for someone, you don't notice that your *not needing* care or *not needing to provide* care allows you more opportunities than someone caring or receiving care. Again, a power evasion, purposeful or not.

Although "dependency work forms the most fundamental of social relations," much care labor is unpaid or underpaid (Kittay, 1998: 109). Every teacher I know (including this one here) works a second job (see Moulthrop, et al., 2006). If you're a stay-at-home mom, you don't get paid for staying at home, raising the children, and caring for the family. However, if one considered the cost of paying for day-care, a chef, a housekeeper, a psychologist, a driver, and all the other roles a stay-at-home mom plays, she'd earn roughly $138,000 a year (Wulfhorst, 2007).

The fact that care has long been considered women's work and relegated to the private sphere has effects on the male and female psyche as well. "Women are more likely to feel powerful when involved in caring for others," explains Bubeck, "while men tend to see giving to others or even co-operating with those who are supposed to care for and service them as opposed to their self-interest and their own life plans or even as a loss" (1995: 167–168). Bubeck's point is that, because we've had it shoved down our throats that care is something *women* do, caring tends to be more fulfilling for women but emasculating for men. Further, because care goes unsung, unrewarded, and at the expense of another, the care we receive may leave us with a sense of shame and guilt (Kittay, 1998: 103).

A common refrain throughout this book: things need not be the way they are. The fact that they are indicates that someone is benefiting. We can restructure our societies and institutions to recognize and reward care. As one example of how this could be possible, Eva Feder Kittay discusses the concept of *doulia*, "an arrangement by which service is passed on so that those who become needy by virtue of tending to those in need can be cared for as well" (1998: 107). If your parent takes ill and you need to be there to care for him for the remainder of his life, why should you have to worry about missing work or losing your job and being able to care for your own family? Societies and their governments should act to provide you with the resources necessary to allow you to care for your ill parent without economic and personal hardships accruing from such.

Welfare systems are supposed to exist to allow families to do just this. However, welfare recipients are often stigmatized, scapegoated for wider ills in their societies, and forced to labor when they could be caring for their families. Welfare isn't looked upon as *a right*, as something government, which is supposed to be responsive to the needs of the people who created it, *should* provide, but as a crutch, as something shameful to be avoided, a vehicle for lazy free-riding individuals to pull one over on the rest of us hard-working people. John F. Kennedy's injunction that we ask what we can do for our government sounded nice and was motivational, but truthfully governments are supposed to be formed by the people, *for* the people, responsive to *the needs* of the people. Not a word in all this, of course, about corporate welfare, whose financial expenditures leave the cost of social welfare in the dust with the mites.

Our main concern in this book is the everyday classroom, and it is a sad but undeniable indictment that care is marginalized there as well. The denial of care in schools occurs in various ways. The structure of schooling puts a damper on caring relationships. For one, much of schooling is based on a competition that fosters individualism above cooperation. The power relationship is nowhere more apparent than in the issuance of grades and report cards. No matter how well a teacher and student get along the grading process presents itself as an intrusion upon this caring relationship (Noddings, 1984: 191).

The problem isn't so much a teacher giving his or her impression of a student's abilities and performance. I refer to grading as a teacher's "impression" because no matter how much we might like to think otherwise, teachers have to realize that grading is a very subjective exercise. The problem is the emphasis we place on grading, an emphasis that goes so far as to essentialize and categorize human beings into abstract letters of the alphabet as in "she's an 'A' student" and if you don't know what an “A” student is just compare her to Johnny, a “D” student, and I think you’ll catch my drift. Grading and its import foster adversarial relationships between students and teachers and students and students.

I remember one teacher I had in graduate school, I worked as hard as I could in his class and handed in what I thought well-researched, original papers. I was disappointed with the B he gave me for the class. I took another course with him the next year. He remembered me and seemed to think well of me which was obvious in the way he addressed me in class. I remember thinking I’d get a better grade this time around no matter what I did. And sure enough, I received an A in this second class with him. Now, to this day I am convinced the work I did in that later class was not qualitatively better than any of the work I did in the first. The arbitrariness of grading was driven home for me. Because of grading, students come to see other students as adversaries. If grades are scarce commodities, and we all “know” not everyone can receive an A, then your success is potentially predicated on my failure and vice versa.

We could better foster caring relationships in schools but the structure of schooling inhibits our ability to do so. For example, at the middle and high school levels, students come to school and shuttle between four to nine different classrooms and teachers throughout the day. When our only exposure to a kid is a 40-minute time period five times a week, it’s more difficult to foster a caring relationship with that child than if we spent an entire day with the student. Further, caring relationships might better be cultivated if subject matter specialists stuck with their students throughout the kids’ 4-year high school career (Noddings, 2002: 27). As it is now, students have different teachers for different subjects across grades. Such structural arrangements make it nearly impossible for teachers to provide students with the level of attention caring relationships necessitate. Further, when there is that connection or potential for that connection between teacher and student, the structure of the day breaks it. Care providers, be they teachers, parents, or relatives, are not interchangeable. Because of the affective bonds that unite one who provides care to one who receives care, care providers are necessarily nonfungible (Kittay, 1998: 111).

Another way an ethic of care and caring relationships are denied in schools is the cookie-cutter conformity that is enforced for each student. In the name of high expectations, standards, and equity but flying in the face of reality, every student is to be prepared for college. Schools do not help students recognize and build upon their own talents, unless those talents are predominantly logico-mathematical or verbal-linguistic or can be confined to one period of art, music, or drama a day that does not interfere with the core academic courses. Then we impose the same expectations and high-stakes exams on all our students, forgetting that *differences* are what make individuals *unique*. This first became clear to me in my field of special education, where we talk the talk about individualized education but then expect all kids to pass the same end-of-year exams. Such a model is self-serving, all the talk of individualizing nothing more than lip service and a way for teachers, schools, boards of education, and communities to feel better about themselves while they ignore the true needs and abilities of large segments of their students and avoid lawsuits.

Noddings (2003) goes so far as to proffer that maybe tracking per se isn't the problem, but the hierarchical values placed on the various tracks. The English classes in my high school track students within a class into a scholars and academics groups. Scholars are expected to do more work. Academic tracks are more often viewed positively than vocational ones. The academic track is held up as the model de rigueur. But "if by equity we mean providing an appropriate education for every child, it is dead wrong to expect the same performance from each child," explains Noddings. "[W]e act as though all children are academically equal and can be held to the same standard" (2003: 90).

Care can be explicitly taught in schools but is not. Noddings favors the creation of caring apprenticeships in our schools (1984: 188). There are some who will protest that explicitly teaching care constitutes an imposition of values on a captive audience. There is some truth to this, but we kid ourselves if we think students in schools aren't being inundated with value-laden messages on a daily basis. Although the absence of care in schools may not be explicitly discussed, its absence is felt, lived, palpable. Schools teach a lot of things that aren't explicitly dictated in the curriculum. We have no problems teaching algebra or grammar for their own sakes, but some will balk when it comes to teaching secular values aimed at making better human beings of us all. Our students learn that care labor, be it teaching, nursing, babysitting, or other forms, is something bringing financial remuneration. Instead, as Noddings (1984) and others point out, we should make it a point to teach our students that much care labor is *unpaid* labor, that when it is paid it is usually *underpaid*, and that without this labor none of us would be where we are today.

There is a relationship between care and justice that the absence of care in schools and the absence of justice in care labor bespeaks. Despite Kohlberg and Gilligan's assessments, it is never a situation of one or the other, of justice versus care. The two, care and justice, stand one to another linked. Theirs is a reciprocal connection in that care informs justice and justice care the same way emotion informs reason and reason emotion. Theirs is a dialectical relationship in that care makes justice possible while without justice care is severely limited.

"Though justice is surely among the most important moral values," Held explains, "much life has gone on without it, and much of that life has had moderately good aspects" (1906: 71). In the absence of justice there will still be care, though the opposite is not true. Without care and caring relationships, the human species would cease. That said, care can only be fully realized in just societies, which are democratic societies.

Consider that much care labor is not adequately compensated or respected. A just society would take steps to make sure such work was financially rewarded and that care providers were held in high regard. Bubeck (1995: 13) opines that a just society would prevent the vulnerability of care providers "through suitable social institutions" (Ibid.), perhaps in a manner similar to that Kittay's *doulia* concept stresses. An ethic of care need "concern itself with the justice (or lack of it) of the ways the tasks of caring are distributed in society" (Held, 2006: 16).

Care has been conceived here as an ethical norm, but our ethical norms are realized in action. Tronto posits that we must understand care as a political idea, as "[o]nly if we understand care as a political idea will we be able to change its status and the status of those who do caring work in our culture" (1993: 157). Held concurs, opining that the availability of care "to those who need it should be a central political concern, not one imagined to be a solely private responsibility of families and charities" (2006: 69).

Ethics and human nature are not irreconcilable. Just as institutions play a part in structuring our choices, making some easier than others, making some appear more feasible than others, our potential ethical options may be limited by our natures. That said, we need to recognize that biology is not destiny. de Waal speaks of the "Beethoven error," namely that "since natural selection is a cruel, pitiless process of elimination, it can only have produced cruel and pitiless creatures" (2006: 58). Natural selection isn't cruel, pitiless, or anything; such are human judgments affixed to an impersonal, ungoverned process. Although we all have the potential to stomp on infants and mice and commit other great evils, most of us choose not to. "Our evolved moral instincts do not make moral judgments inevitable," explains Hauser. "Rather, they color our perceptions, constrain our moral options, and leave us dumbfounded because the guiding principles are inaccessible, tucked away in the mind's library of unconscious knowledge" (2006: 2).

A universal moral grammar is a "signature of the species," not something irrevocably stamped into our DNA (Hauser, 2006: 53). The characteristics of the traditional Western ethical models were conceived at a distinct moment in human history and have to be taught. Although we are told that competition and egoism are parts of what we are to be human, there is much evidence contradicting these assertions. Further, even if these are parts of what we are, they are *only parts*, and parts we can choose to downplay or ignore. Noddings favors "an ethical ideal constituted from memories of caring and being cared for" (2002: 15). Schools can *teach* such an ideal, most powerfully through an institutional restructuring that brings caring relationships front and center in our lives. "It is not suggested that a three-year-old is fully ethical," explains Noddings, "but, rather, that he can become ethical only if the sympathy and tender awareness of which he is already capable are encouraged and enhanced, and, eventually, confirmed with reflection and commitment" (1984: 191). Once again the problem is systemic, institutional, and structural, as is the solution.