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Authors: Acker, Sandra
Feuerverger, Grace

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DOING GOOD AND FEELING BAD: THE WORK OF WOMEN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

ABSTRACT

Drawing on in-depth interviews with 27 women academics in faculties of education in Canada, this article explores some of the consequences of the gendered division of labour in universities. Jean Baker Miller's phrase, 'doing good and feeling bad', characterised the women in the study. They reported working excessively hard, taking responsibility for supporting others, including colleagues and students, and being 'good department citizens'. Yet they seemed disappointed by the results. Their 'feeling bad' is related to the reward system in academic life; a sense that there is an unequal division of labour, with women 'working harder'; and an expectation that women will take greater responsibility for the nurturing and housekeeping side of academic life. The article explores 'individual' and 'structural' explanations for the findings and raises further questions about caring in university teaching, the situation of tokens and outsiders in university departments and the prospects for altering university priorities in these times of cutbacks and retrenchment.

INTRODUCTION

This article will explore certain features of women's work as teachers in higher education. We are particularly interested in the emotions evoked through performing the caring and service aspects of being an academic and how these emotions relate to university reward systems and to cultural prescriptions and perceptions about appropriate work for women. Supporting data will be drawn from an interview-based study of women academics in university departments of education in Canada.

Traditionally, women are associated with the 'caring professions' of nursing, teaching and social work. Persons working in these occupations are expected, in a quasi-maternal manner, to care for, and to care about, others who hold roles such as patients, clients or students. We could call this set of expectations the 'caring script'. The image of individuals following a 'script' permits a notion of social constraint, as well as a certain degree of agency in modifying and performing the script (Davies, 1987; Henry, 1990). In popular conceptions of these occupations the work component becomes naturalised, automatic, habitual, inherent, essentialised and freely chosen, rather than required, learned or performed. The fields themselves are regarded as lower in status than

established professions such as medicine and law. The work is not highly paid: fulfilling a vocation is thought to be reward enough. Within these fields, a gendered division of labour occurs between large numbers of female workers and a smaller, elite cadre of male managers.

In recent years, critiques of commonsense ideas about the caring professions have emerged. One line of critique claims that romanticised narratives about caring as a calling pay insufficient attention to actual work involved in these occupations. School teaching, for example, is work and the school is a workplace for teachers (Connell, 1985; Briskin & Coulter, 1993; Acker, 1995). This reconceptualisation makes sense of the many intimations in the literature that teaching, whatever its pleasures, is excessively fatiguing and guilt-inducing (McPherson, 1972; Steedman, 1987; Grumet, 1988; Hargreaves, 1994). It also allows us to analyse the increased pressures on teachers (imposed, for example, through government mandates such as Britain's National Curriculum and assessment requirements) that amount to work intensification and to understand why (women) workers might exhaust themselves trying to do the intensified job conscientiously (Apple, 1986; Campbell & Neill, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Acker, 1997). The fact that women have been seen as 'naturally' suited to the work has served to disguise its potential for exploitation and to discourage women from expressing 'outlaw emotions' (Jaggat, 1989), such as envy or resentment, that might be at odds with the caring script.

A different line of critique accepts much of the rhetoric about the 'feminine', caring side of occupations like teaching and nursing, but seeks to counter the low status of work with such qualities. The qualities traditionally associated with women, such as caring and connectedness, are to be praised rather than regretted or denied. These arguments derive from what is sometimes called 'relational feminism', a body of work associated with Gilligan (1982), Belenky et al. (1986) and others who identify a certain degree of difference in the ways women and men typically approach ethical decision making, identity development and modes of learning. Nel Noddings (see for example, Noddings, 1992, 1994) is particularly known for the promotion of caring within teaching as a consciously adopted moral basis for practice. The pervasiveness of the caring discourse in teaching and teacher education and the assumptions behind it have not gone unquestioned (see Beach, 1992; Brannon, 1993; Acker, 1995, 1995/ 96). In particular, there is a concern that diversity among women is not sufficiently recognised and that relational feminists may end up celebrating what amounts to a restricted sphere for women.

The arguments about the nature of women's teaching work in schools can be extended to the university context, too. At all levels of schooling, we find expectations that teachers, especially women teachers, will care about their students. In fact, the caring discourse shows up quite strongly at the graduate teaching level, where classes become smaller than in many undergraduate settings and students have to forge a close association with a professor in order to receive enough mentoring to move successfully through the production of a thesis and possibly into an academic job. It is also evident in writing that advocates feminist or other liberatory pedagogies. The expectation that the feminist university teacher will be intellectually inspiring yet endlessly nurturing led Morgan (1987, p. 50) to characterise her as the 'bearded mother'.

But in the university a discourse of teaching as caring is not the dominant one. It has to compete with other discourses about teaching (e.g. one that affirms the importance of transmitting high level knowledge) and discourses about research and service. Research is usually the highest status activity within the university and institutions that want to increase their status typically try to raise their research profiles. On the surface, at least, research productivity appears to be a more accurate and 'objective' measure of worth than teaching quality, for publications can be counted and pegged by their placement in prestigious or less prestigious outlets and research grants represent a tangible asset brought into the university. Prioritising research productivity

begs quite a few questions (Morley, 1995; Park, 1996), a point to which we shall return later in the article, but, nevertheless, research is the coin of the realm for university scholars.

In contrast, service, unless in a very public capacity, such as chairing a high level commission or holding the presidency of a major professional association, tends to be down-graded in the discussion of what counts in the university. There is a sense that service to one's department, institution, profession or community is either a chore or an optional activity. In Park's (1996) excellent and detailed review of literature on gender and academic work in the USA, she noted that women in universities do more teaching, more student advising and more service and that it is not a coincidence that these activities are rewarded less and that doing them diminishes the amount of time available for research work. '[I]nside the university, as outside it, we find a gendered division of labor wherein women assume primary responsibility for nurturing the young and serving men, but receive little credit for doing so' (Park, 1996, p. 55; see also Bagilhole, 1993).

This gendered, but often unremarked, division of labour in universities and the feelings academic women express about their work are the focus of the data analysis to be reported here. There are now many studies of women academics, from a number of countries, that focus on barriers to success or 'chilly climates' (e.g. Sutherland, 1985; Simeone, 1987; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Lie & O'Leary, 1990; Moore & Sagaria, 1991; Bagilhole, 1993; Caplan, 1993; Acker, 1994; Morley, 1994; Morley & Walsh, 1995; Chilly Collective, 1995; Kamau, 1996). From the USA comes an extensive research literature that uses multivariate analysis to explain gender differences in rank and income among academics using independent variables such as publishing productivity (Persell, 1983; Cole & Zuckerman, 1984; Davis & Astin, 1990; Long et al., 1993). This research literature tends to underemphasise subtle features of the political and institutional environment (Kulis & Miller-Loessi, 1992) and to contrast strikingly in tone with the more personalised, often poignant, accounts of individual experience also found in the literature (Hochschild, 1975; Kitzinger, 1989; Bannerji et al., 1991; James & Farmer, 1993; Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993; Heward, 1994), suggesting that valuable information might be gleaned from qualitative work, like the study reported here, that goes beyond individual experience yet retains the emphasis on meanings and emotions experienced by participants.

The narratives used in this article are those of women full and associate professors. Their rank means that they have experienced at least one promotion and some are highly successful in their fields. Looking for expressions of emotion [1], we might have expected these women to be very positive about their situation. Yet the foremost impression we got from reading the transcripts was of a widespread sense of disappointment and disillusionment. On the basis of these narratives, we argue that women's work in the university is very much like women's work in the schools, i.e. tiring work, incorporating caring and service, with responsibilities that are often not regarded as demanding a high level of skill or rewarded as such. Using a phrase from J.B. Miller (1976), we describe the predominant theme in the narratives as 'doing good and feeling bad'. By 'doing good' we mean that the women try to reach exceptionally high standards by working hard, even at personal expense, and that they make efforts to support and care for colleagues and students and to be 'good citizens' in their departments. Instead of feeling fulfilled by their accomplishments and their chances to put caring and service into practice, they 'feel bad', i.e. they have a sense that the academic reward system is out of sync with their preferences, that they are working harder than they should and that they have a disproportionate share of responsibilities for the mundane service side of university work and for the emotional well-being of the students.

The main body of this paper begins with a brief description of the research project from which the data are derived. Next we look specifically at aspects of the work done by women university faculty members in teacher education, as described in interviews. We then consider some possible explanations for our findings. In the

conclusion, we point to the contradictions in the lives of academic women and raise some additional questions generated by this study.

THE STUDY

The research reported here is the first phase of a larger study (in progress) of academics in the four professional fields of education, social work, pharmacy and dentistry. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in 1995 with 27 women full and associate professors in Canadian faculties of education [2]. Canada is an officially bilingual society. Of the 27 interviews, 22 were conducted in English and five in French. Quotations used here from the French interviews have been translated into English. Participants came from five different universities in four provinces.

Readers outside North America should note that 'professor' is the generic name for an academic in North America and does not carry the connotations of 'professor' in Britain, for example. Full professor is the highest rank and associate professor is the middle rank for tenured academics [3]. Thus all of the interviewees here are fairly or very senior in rank. Some also hold or held in the past administrative [management] positions, such as department chair, associate dean, dean or associate vice president. Their ages ranged from late thirties to early sixties, with most in their forties and fifties. Within faculties of education, they represented a number of different curriculum specialties (e.g. French, art, science, language arts), 'foundation' discipline areas (e.g. sociology, history, philosophy) and other fields that stood alone or crossed areas (e.g. special education, counselling psychology). Their work might be slanted towards pre-service teacher preparation or graduate studies (master's and/or doctoral level) or be a mixture of both. They came from a range of class, ethnic and regional backgrounds in Canada or elsewhere and most were white.

The purpose of the larger study is to address the consequences for academic women of the trend towards feminisation of the professions. Numbers of women faculty have risen in recent years, but not to the extent found in the student body. Consequently women academics may be under more pressure to be sponsors and role models, while their own experience remains one of marginality. On the other hand, the increased presence of women, together with the spread of feminist scholarship, may bring about change in the universities and ultimately the professions themselves. Through in-depth interviews with academics (both women and men) in four contrasting professional fields at different levels of feminisation, we are looking for indications of greater equity for women academics, signs of a more welcoming workplace ethos and evidence of feminist impact on scholarship and the curriculum. Participants are asked about experiences with procedures such as hiring, tenure and promotion, feelings of centrality or marginality, any incidents of discrimination or harassment and for details about their teaching, research and other work responsibilities. We also inquire about the ethos or culture of the department and faculty, about the interface of home and work and about future career plans. The study was not specifically intended to explore the emotions associated with teaching, nor the theme of doing good and feeling bad.

Two caveats are in order. First, at present our data do not allow us to comment directly on the experiences of men in academic life. In later stages of our research project, we shall have comparative data that will enable us to explore the similarities and differences between academic women and men. Second, although we generalise here about women, we do not believe that all women are alike nor that they experience the university climate in a precisely identical manner. Yet whatever their differences, they must all come to terms with gendered expectations about women's work in academe. We now turn to our findings on what these 27 women understand and feel about that work.

DOING GOOD

It was evident that the women academics were highly committed to their jobs. Work seeped into all aspects of their lives. They prided themselves on their capacity for hard work. Work, for them, was not only the pursuit of scholarship, but included a range of supportive responses to colleagues and to students. They were doing well (working hard) and doing good by helping others and being good department citizens.

Working Hard

Many of the women expressed the view that they had high standards or were perfectionists or 'workaholics'. Nadine, for example, said: 'I guess I'm just a perfectionist. I work really hard'. Rosanne remarked that in her experience 'some women are such perfectionists that unless the article is just perfect they don't want to submit it'. Terri, an associate professor with children in elementary [primary] school, was one of the self-proclaimed workaholics and perfectionists. She said her children call her the 'hurry mom and the work mom'. Terri was one of those who told us of her strategies for getting work done, such as skipping breakfast at a conference to write a book review or rising early:

Three days a week I come in on the 6:30 bus. I'm up at 5:00 and I usually do my e-mail before I leave the house, so it's like, you know, you're starting to work like immediately, and I work all the way. And I get home at 6:00. ... I [also] work all day Monday and all Friday and I work most weekends and often work in the evenings as well. (Terri)

In order to get the dissertation done, I got up at 3:00 in the morning, every morning. Taught [school] full time while I was finishing my dissertation. So I was out by 7:30 in the morning, and in bed by 9:00 at night. ... And when I was on sabbatical I wrote the outline for the book. ... I got up at 4:00 in the morning every morning to work on that. (Nadine)

Similar statements emphasized how these women worked beyond the call of duty, now or in the past. Like many others, Diana came into university teaching after teaching in schools. She started her university career as a sessional [fixed term contract] instructor but then became pregnant:

At that time, at the university level, there weren't things like maternity leave and they weren't very happy that I was pregnant as a full-time sessional, and needing maternity leave. They gave me two weeks off. ... I came back to teach the eleventh day after my baby was born.

Lucille had a parallel story:

And I had two more children born in those years as well, when there wasn't any such thing as maternity leave. So they were both delivered by Caesarean section, and I was back in teaching within three weeks. ... [I felt] exhausted. But I did it.

After her initial years as a sessional instructor, Diana secured a tenure-track position and then went rapidly through the ranks to become a full professor 9 years later. When the interviewer suggested that she had progressed quickly, Diana replied 'I also worked very hard. I worked very, very hard'. She elaborated:

Once I was tenure-track, I have to tell you I would work through my noon hours. I never took a coffee break. I had no downtime for me, personally, because when I got home and picked up my children from child care, or from school, I had to attend to their needs and get organized for the next day.

Judith spoke about the hard work involved in holding an administrative position:

Often, you work late in the evenings to catch up on stuff you didn't get done during the day. And you're still trying to read and keep up in your areas. But probably, for me, the main thing was the mental stress. ... Always being extra prepared. Knowing that you would have to go the extra mile in order to be heard, to be seen as important, to protect somebody, or be an advocate for someone. And I found that very hard. Very, very, very tiring. And always more and more being expected of you.

Caring for Others

In general, the women expected to care about and help colleagues, students and, sometimes, administrators. Those who were themselves administrators had put policies in place to help women be hired or take on influential roles or in general to increase open communication.

In this quotation, Judith talks about how her leadership style incorporated caring for others:

[As an administrator] I spent more time getting to know the individuals. I think I was more honest with them about why things were being done as they were. I shared more information with them. I encouraged a lot of people to apply for scholarships for different kinds of things. ... I would never say to an individual, you're teaching so and so. ... I would negotiate with them. ... I always tried to read papers that people had written. ... And that was also very, very much appreciated.

Faculty members spoke about helping or mentoring junior colleagues. Several specifically pointed to the way in which untenured professors used them as conduits to have their interests represented:

I've had at least four or five different people over the course of the last year who have sort of used me as an interface. ... Fear may be too strong [a word] but certainly they are cautious ... because they're afraid that it will impact negatively when they come up for assessment. (Katherine)

Some women faculty told of the support they had received from women colleagues and how they in turn supported others:

I did get moral support from some of my female colleagues and that made all the difference. ... And I do it now for the newer faculty members. I look over their applications for grants or papers that they're sending to journals, and such things. I feel it's a debt that I want to pay. It's a question of helping one another, having a collegial climate. (Nicole)

Colleagues were not the only ones to receive support. Many of the academics spoke about the time, energy and nurturing they provided to students:

I guess that grad students that I work with directly, as supervisor, I guess they feel that I mentor them too. Because I do take their work quite seriously. And I guess they end up talking to me about other problems, apart from their academic problems. And I try to be a good listener. (Grace)

I tend to hear all the students' personal hassles and they often are talking to me because they're scared to go to their male supervisors or whatever. So I've got boxes of kleenex, I'm the one that hears about this stuff first I think as a female you tend to be the shoulder to cry on. (Terri)

Many students will show up at my door with a problem and I can't turn them away. This happens often before my teaching even though I tell them to make an appointment. But they're in a crisis; how can I say I'm not available? (Olivette)

It seems clear that these women see caring for colleagues and students as an integral part of their responsibilities at work.

Being Good Citizens

The women also described their responsibilities for service in the department or university. Kay commented: 'I think you'll find that there are more women serving on committees ... all kinds of committees, because they need a woman on the committee'.

Lucille thought that her original appointment years earlier was based on an assumption that she would 'be the housewife', i.e. take departmental committee and student supervision responsibilities. Even now, she is 'the person ... who can be called on to do whatever needs to be done'. Noreen believed that her speaking ability gave her a source of influence in her department. She added: 'I'm very well organized. I chair meetings very well. I think that's why I'm asked to chair committees because I can get things organized and get things done'. Terri stressed the ways in which she took on small jobs, such as being the secretary for a committee or writing up the report and she commented on how she was sometimes the only person to have read the papers to be discussed at a meeting. Echoing the findings of a survey of American academics (Carnegie Foundation, 1990), Terri concluded: 'I think we [women] are just great department citizens'.

FEELING BAD

As may be evident, these women took a certain pride in their capacity for hard work and in their caring and service activities. Yet negative emotions surfaced frequently. In particular, the women expressed anxieties or distress about: (1) a reward system that worked by constant assessment and yet never allowed one to feel 'good enough'; (2) an unequal division of labour that left the women believing they were 'working harder' than many of the men; (3) an expectation that the women would take a large share of responsibility for student nurturing and departmental 'housework'. Each of the three themes is discussed in more detail below.

Academic Rewards

Participants were asked about their experiences with tenure, promotion and other assessment procedures. These questions produced lengthy and heartfelt responses. Promotions were sometimes not granted at the first try [4]. Feedback was frequently inadequate. Each institution had its own procedures and some seemed more mysterious than others. All such procedures involved scrutiny at multiple levels, from the department to the university, with varying amounts of input from outside referees.

Stress and anxiety, even physiological reactions, seemed to accompany the tenure and promotion process more often than not. It was as if the imaginative projection into a refusal of tenure evoked the 'vulnerable self' that Olesen (1992) described as a consequence of experiencing an earthquake. Nicole, now a full professor, recalled her tenure experience:

When I look at my male colleagues on the same level as me and I compare myself to them, I see that it is me who was stressed out; I really wiped myself out. I worked like a madwoman. I did it all: in the last five years, for example, I got major grants, I created two new courses, I was on research teams, I wrote many articles for publication. I did it all; it was crazy. I worked so hard. And when I arrived with my dossier, of course there was no question of not getting tenure. My file was full. ... I had such anxiety about tenure, I was so afraid. It was a visceral, palpable fear inside me.

Solange explained:

The women seem to work harder and they're more anguished than the men. I was so careful to cover all my bases for tenure: publications, research grants, supervising and teaching. I said to myself I can't do more. But I was full of anxiety. I rewrote my tenure dossier ten times; the men only do it once! We [women] have a sorority of anxiety.

Iris found the move from associate to full professor stressful. She was promoted after her second try. She explained how during her career the 'rules got changed'. She had started in a teacher education programme, but as her career progressed the criteria shifted from working with students to getting grants and publishing: 'So I basically had to start from scratch and be qualified for that promotion again'. When asked what one needed to do for full professorship, she replied:

[Y]ou're supposed to have, you know, a huge stack of articles in all the prestigious journals, first author of course on all of them. You're supposed to have x number of grants and graduate students and have this international reputation and be able to choose the people for referees that are going to give you good comments back. So it's tricky and it takes time and sometimes probably people are more concerned with getting promoted than with becoming a good scholar.

Iris was not the only woman to comment on the criteria shifting or being too narrow or being ambiguous. What some of the participants found especially difficult was reaching the standard they imagined was 'good enough': 'Am I good enough? I'm not good enough. Constantly, not good enough. I constantly feel not good enough. ... This job makes one feel not good' (Barbara). It seems that they have to 'do everything':

Nobody else in the real world is saying do everything, in order to be an acceptable professional. Except academe. Academe's saying, you must do scholarship. You must do service. You must do teaching. And they must all be wonderful. A third, a third, a third. It's bizarre! (Ruth)

At the same time, they believed they should set some limits to their efforts:

I just refuse to give myself to my job completely. Even when I was having trouble with tenure, I thought if it means really changing the way I live my life, really changing what I'm doing and what I'm researching and so on, it's not worth it to me. (Zoe)

A few women spoke of positive experiences or consequences and pointed to greater freedom after tenure. Kay said she was now 'viewing the world differently' and any research she was doing was 'for my own fun'. Gisele told a story about how she was belittled by the men for being unprofessional when she wore a 'pretty orange jacket'. But after tenure, 'I wore just what I wanted and they had to learn to accept it, that I can be a woman and as effective as a man, but not a man'.

The participants commented not only on tenure and promotion, but also on merit procedures. Merit systems were in place in most of the institutions. Money made available for rewarding merit depended on an annual review and was often a set amount per department to be shared out among members of that department. The systems could also be very complex, with ratings averaged for several categories and then subject to further adjustments from cross-departmental comparisons.

These merit systems were universally disliked by the women faculty members. They were regarded as divisive and frequently unfair, giving too much power to gatekeepers.

We have to fill out this lengthy form, detailing everything we do. It's the most horrendous evaluation scheme probably in Canada. Then, the department head, without reading any of your stuff, or attending any of your

classes, will give you a grade. (Aline)

We have that yearly merit system very much in place, to where I almost think it is, oh, almost like an albatross around your neck, in that people know they have to have something for this annual merit. So, they're prepared to do small things, less than adequate things, superficial things. (Judith)

Sometimes the complaint was that by concentrating on teaching or working with students, women had less time for the all-important publishing and grant-getting necessary for merit, tenure and promotion. Olivette stated: 'I invest heavily in teaching and supervision and I'm not satisfied by it because that's not what's rewarded in the final analysis. The research is'. Ruth found collaboration not sufficiently acknowledged in the reward system:

I collaborate on everything I do. ... That has been a major issue. [They say] How do we know what you're doing? Why wouldn't you do this independently? How do we know you can be an independent scholar? ... and that's a woman's issue. I think women do collaborate more than men It's questioned, and it doesn't get rewarded.

Working Harder

What came across vividly was not just that the women worked hard, but that they believed they worked harder, especially in comparison with many of their male colleagues. Zoe claimed 'In this faculty, it's been proven over and over again that it's the women who do the bulk of the work'. Asked to explain further, she made a number of points:

Well, partly it's the affirmative action thing. We have to have a woman on every committee and if there are only x number of women around, that means we're serving on many more committees than the men are. Graduate students come to us all the time because we're here, because we're doing work in areas that interest them, because we care about them, because we care about teaching. So we're just here a lot more and we're doing a lot more than the men, who tend to focus their interests in terms of writing a book, which gets you a lot more publicity and a lot more gratification in the end. So they disappear. They come in, they put in their hours for teaching, but they're not around. They're not up here with their office doors open for students to come by. They're not available to supervise graduate students. So, when we look at the statistics out of the graduate office, it's very clear that women are far more active in graduate supervision and all the other areas of graduate work.

Lucille touched on similar issues in response to being asked about stress in academic life:

Oh yes, I think it's probably one of the most stressful jobs in the world--if you're trying to do it. I mean, there are lots of men on campus, and some in my own department, who don't really try to do it. They sort of teach their classes and they maybe write a paper every couple years, and they do almost nothing in terms of service. And they probably have a very soft job, quite frankly.

Olivette did not so much see the men as negligent as see the caring script compelling women to take a greater share of the responsibility for students:

And it [diminishing financial resources] hits women harder because they are expected to 'take care' of the students in a way that men aren't. I don't mean to say that men don't care. But women have to care or they are considered failures. And so with the larger load of students, it's the women who give more of their energy and they become ill.

In some cases, such as Terri's in the present and Diana's in the past, juggling the competing demands of child care, domestic responsibilities and academic work produced extra strain. Interestingly, many of the married women had husbands who were retired or worked from home, allowing the women to lead a relatively work-centred life. There were comments from older women about their younger colleagues and from some of the younger colleagues themselves that suggested that a real, if often hidden, dilemma still existed for women thinking about combining motherhood with academic work:

I work six and a half days out of seven and I can't imagine how other women do this with children. I decided not to have children. ... I don't think I could have done a decent job as a mother and as a professor. (Solange)

The pressure is really great for the newer professors, and it's particularly impossible for those who are starting up their families. They suffer from a stress that I think is truly dangerous. It is a stress and an exhaustion that they keep up for years. Some of the women here are not in good health. They give too much of themselves. (Olivette)

Doing Different Work

In some cases it was the gendered division of labour that was seen as unfair. Women thought they had too much responsibility for caring for students and for doing routine work in the department. Although, as we saw earlier, the women believed that they should be caring for others, the results could be disappointing, or at least mixed. Most of the women who spoke of listening to students' problems or being available for them also referred to problematic consequences. For example, they found that students would become upset when their caring teacher found it necessary to emphasize standards or take a critical stance. Or they might be taken for granted:

Sometimes it's quite insulting. I remember one in particular, this one student who was sort of dry running a thesis proposal, and at one point I said 'You really shouldn't be talking to me, I'm just a [thesis] committee member. You should really be talking to your supervisor about this'. And she said point blank: 'Well ... I wanted to make sure it was good before I went to him'. (Terri)

Zoe pointed out that not all students gave back as much as they got:

Some [graduate] students are great and they just go ahead and do their own thing. ... But then there are other students and it's like pulling teeth. I'm constantly meeting with them, I spend hours with them, and they don't take a single note while I am chatting with them. I lend them books and they come back and they still don't know what they are doing, and it's incredibly frustrating because, you know, they want to be spoon-fed.

And Kay noted laconically 'Students crying in your office don't count for a damn on your CV'.

Sometimes women pointed to specific tasks or expectations that they believed were unfairly allocated to women faculty members. Most common was the expectation that, because of policies intended to promote gender equity, women would have to join more committees. Katherine elaborated:

I think any woman probably that you would ask here would say that they're completely overworked because everyone has to be politically correct. So you're asked to be on twice or three times as many committees as a comparable male would just because they need that female balance. What I didn't discover until I got promoted to full professor was a lot of them need senior professors.

Lucille also had similar experiences: 'They call on me when they need something, or when they have a particularly nasty job they want done'. She gave an example of a case where a student had become delusional

and was at risk of harming himself and she seemed to be the only person who could step in and take charge. Not without humour, she summarised her 'roles':

So, I mean, this is the way that I feel, like I sort of am used: as a departmental resource, like the fire extinguisher. ... And I'm the shoulder for students to cry on. And I'm the person who can be counted on to teach well. Who can be called on to do whatever needs to be done. ... I don't mind, I mean those are things that I would do anyway because they're what one does. But, certainly, as far as recognition for it, or the rest of that goes, forget it.

Terri, too, questioned the cost of women's 'dependability':

They [the women] won't impress anybody with their guts, you know, or their presence, but they'll impress people because they've been putting in, you know, eighty hours a week and taking care of everything [because] they're dependable. And is that a good thing to be? I mean I guess it is, but you know that's what we're known for--not for creativity, not for sheer genius, not for risk taking.

DISCUSSION

It is fair to say that many of the women were enthusiastic about their research or their teaching and were not sorry that they had become academics. Their lived experiences indicated a deep commitment to participation within the academic community as well as an intricate repertoire of devotion to their students and their colleagues. On the other hand, participants reported numerous 'chilly climate' stories--instances where they had been discriminated against or otherwise treated badly--many more than have been reported here. Our purpose has not been to draw up a balance sheet, but to point to certain tendencies in women's experiences of academic life. We showed that the women emphasised over and over again how hard they worked, even at personal cost, and how they believed that they worked harder than other faculty members, especially some of their male colleagues who were not subject to the same sets of pressures the women encountered. We were confronted with professional stories saturated with caring agendas that led to a multiplicity of tensions and failed hopes.

There are, of course, various ways in which we might explain our findings. Johnstud & Des Jarlais (1994) make a helpful distinction between two competing perspectives in the research literature on women and minority faculty. One view focuses on the individual and suggests that as relative newcomers to the university, women and ethnic minority faculty need to learn to cope and succeed. The other view emphasises structure and argues that the university's 'norms and climate are conducive to the values, lives and priorities of white men' (p. 338), thus presenting an inhospitable environment to all others.

Following the first approach, we could, for example, see the responses of our participants as representing individual experience and personality and propose that self-selection brings women into academe who share a particular perspective. These women might be seen as 'whingers' or 'whiners', never satisfied however advantaged. But it is not evident why women with such predispositions would self-select into academic life. It is also likely that the interview situation provided a relatively safe space for the expression of negative views and complaints that might be moderated or hidden in daily interaction with colleagues [5].

A more convincing use of the individual framework would be an argument that women who become academics tend to be perfectionists and workaholics: qualities that would not seem out of place in academic life. The women full professors in Israeli universities that Toren (1991) interviewed claimed that they had to work harder than the men to prove themselves, yet they were not generally bitter about it and did not see themselves as discriminated against. Similarly, in our study, many of the participants saw qualities like being a hard worker as

typical of themselves as persons. They say 'I am a perfectionist', not that the work demands perfectionism. When they complain that they are on too many committees or that they do more than the average share of teaching, they frequently add that they have only, or mostly, themselves to blame. For example: 'I've done more than the average person in the department but I've done it by choice' (Katherine); 'I find the workload heavy at the moment but it's a self-imposed stress' (Iris); 'I have a hard time saying no' (Terri). Similarly, they do not simply see caring for others as thrust upon them; it forms part of their sense of self.

If we assume that most people will want to feel they have some control over their lives, then it is not strange that women academics will take responsibility for their actions in this way. In fact, some feminist writers have advocated that women re-examine their own choices, arguing that by 'focusing on men we avoid facing our own choices, activities and behaviour as women' (Gray, 1994, p. 77). Nevertheless, when we see themes such as hard work and overwork repeated across the sample, it is just as plausible that there are environmental factors that are reinforcing any initial tendencies that the women may have.

If we concentrate on institutional or environmental factors, we cannot avoid noticing that women are in the minority among faculty. One way of explaining the 'hard work' and other findings reported here is to see women as feeling like temporary tenants, rather than legitimate residents of the academic community: 'outsiders in the sacred grove', in Aisenberg & Harrington's (1988) phrase. Women academics are in many cases still socially and psychologically located on the margins of the institution. Despite undoubted gains for academic women over time, they still form only about a fifth of Canadian women academics (Statistics Canada, 1994, p. 182) and they are underrepresented in senior positions. Women's entry into the male dominated structures of academe has been hard won. Even in a field like education with its associations with children and caring, women constitute only a third of the faculty (Statistics Canada, 1993, p. 12).

A consequence of outsider status may be a reluctance to embrace certain features of academic life, those that clash with 'the values that are structured into women's experience--caretaking, nurturance, empathy, connectedness' (Ferguson, 1984, p. 25). Even the caring professions developed with a culture that 'affirmed male-centred values of order, efficiency, and a hierarchical division of labour' (Baines, 1993, p. 55). Many of the comments quoted here suggest that the women valued cooperation and caring and disliked competition and individualised assessment. They particularly disliked the rigidities and competitiveness of the tenure, promotion and merit procedures and thought these procedures failed to reward important types of work, such as helping the 'students crying in your office'. There was also a sense in which this continuous assessment signalled a lack of trust. In the words of one participant:

I think, by and large, we have rewarded overwork or workaholism, and have made that seem like it ought to be the norm. ... I think it's [the university] been a very unhealthy place in the last years; being asked to do more and more, being criticized increasingly, being told we don't trust you, in a number of ways. (Ruth)

Seeing the women as an 'outsider' group inside academe leads us to look at ways in which they arrive at their assessments of their situation. Here we can make some use of reference group theory (Merton & Rossi, 1968), which directs us to see judgements of one's lot in life as relative, depending on the frame of reference or group of comparison. It is immediately apparent that few comparisons are made to 'women in general' or women doing secretarial or other non-academic work in the university. (The exceptions are a very few respondents who, in answering questions about whether academic life is particularly stressful, made it clear that the stresses they experienced could not be as harmful as the stress and insecurity experienced by persons in menial occupations or who were unemployed.) We might have expected these academically successful women, if comparing their lot with women in general, to feel exceptionally privileged. What seems to happen

instead is that the women persistently compare themselves with male colleagues. Their sense of injustice comes from this comparison. Quotations earlier in this article suggested that the women feel they do a disproportionate share of caring and service work required to keep their departments functioning and their students happy. Yet institutional practices do not give credit for alternative ways of being an academic. Tenure, promotion and merit criteria remain narrowly focused on research (Park, 1996).

Thus the only way to be a successful woman academic seems to be to 'work harder' or 'do it all'. A sense of marginality and vulnerability is not a feeling that can easily be shed, especially when the struggle for a truly egalitarian co-existence within many parts of academe is still ongoing in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The anxiety that results for academics like Olivette and Solange over tenure thus appears not individually but socially produced. The result, according to Morley (1995, p. 116), is 'coercive creativity':

Like Scheherazade in the Arabian Nights, life in the academy is prolonged with the production of words that please predominantly male assessors, confusing whether women academics write from anxiety or from desire. (Morley, 1995, p. 117)

Our view is that institutional practices are more to blame for inequities revealed in our study than are personal preferences of the women themselves. What we have tried to give, however, is more than a simple analysis of the university as a patriarchal institution inevitably favouring men. Although the women had stories of discrimination and poor treatment based on gender, many of those stories took place in the past. Contemporary sources of discontent did not always focus on gender per se and there was some suggestion that (for example) being a woman who refused to conform to expectations (e.g. showing respect for administrators) was more problematic than simply being a woman. Moreover, the universities had initiated a number of policies intended to increase equity. For example, there were equity officers and procedures in place for reporting harassment. In some cases the 'tenure clock' could be temporarily stopped for women who had children and maternity leaves were commonplace. The gradual increase in women in administrative positions meant there were women determined to advocate for other women and the women in this study acknowledged the support they had through this means.

Some of the policy measures had unanticipated consequences. The practice of making sure that every university committee had women on it, for example, was often cited as an additional source of extra work for the women, especially those in senior positions. Lighter teaching loads for new faculty (who were often women) and concessions to faculty women who were new mothers seemed to produce some resentment on the part of those, including other women, who were not benefitting from such measures or who had not had concessions made to their needs in the past.

In putting the spotlight on institutional practices, we argue that it is time to go beyond simple accusations of a discriminatory climate. Nor are we saying that men are shirking their share of responsibilities as academics or being selfish in concentrating unduly on their own research. Rather, it is what the university stands for, and what it rewards and what it ignores, that is at issue. The disadvantage women encounter is more systemic than it is intentional--though no less problematic for all that.

CONCLUSION

The 27 women studied here are working hard and doing well. They are, additionally, doing good, as they go beyond the call of duty, living out commitments to others: their colleagues, their departments, their students. Yet they are so often disappointed with the results. They experience a 'bifurcated consciousness' (Smith, 1987) or 'segmented self' (Miller, J.L., 1983) or 'outlaw emotions' (Jaggar, 1989) as they try to live up to contradictory prescriptions for 'caring women' and 'productive academics' [6]. They see themselves working too hard, with

high levels of anxiety, in reward systems that they dislike and without sufficient recognition for the aspects of the work they care about or have to do. Although self-selection may play a part in producing the anxiety and perfectionism demonstrated by many of these women, we have argued that their 'outsider status' in academe, combined with narrow institutional criteria for success, result in a situation where they suffer considerable pain.

In this conclusion, we would like to point to three areas which our findings suggest need further research and analysis. First, we think that Nel Noddings' attractive concept of caring in the educational setting needs rethinking and reworking to apply to students and teachers in universities. In the present study, many of the women believed that they should care for their students, that it was part of what they were like as people, yet they also found that an emphasis on working with students tended to be overlooked in the reward system, that they were left with unreasonable workloads as a result and that students did not necessarily reciprocate the caring. Noddings (1994, p. 174) writes that in a mature relationship, the role of the carer will switch back and forth, but in school teaching, the responsibility for caring must be the teacher's (Noddings, 1992, p. 107). How, then, should we characterise the teacher-student relationship in higher education? The students are old enough to participate in a 'mature relationship', yet they are structurally subordinate. Even when denied reciprocal caring, the academic women in our study could not stop caring for the students, or even doing 'women's work' in their departments, partly because it formed their sense of self, but also because the social expectations were so strong. Olivette's phrase, 'but women have to care or they are considered failures', sums it up well.

Second, we need to return to the notion of minorities, tokens or outsiders (Kanter, 1977; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). Under what circumstances will such groups compare their situation to the majority group in their own workplace for an assessment of their own relative success? In the case we have examined, Faculties of Education, this comparison took place. Yet, while women are still in the minority, they are well enough represented to have a set of others with whom they can share their perceptions and develop a shared discourse of relative deprivation. In other cases where women are in the clear majority, such as nursing, or cases where there are very few women, such as some of the science and technology fields, the same conditions for comparison and sharing may not occur. Thus comparisons across different micro-settings need to take place.

Finally, we also need to take into account the rapid changes taking place in the academic workplace. These changes are a complex result of technological, demographic, economic and political factors and will not be identical from country to country. Yet in many places, academics face retrenchment and cutbacks, requirements for greater accountability, intensification of workloads (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993; Altbach, 1994; Lewis & Altbach, 1994). We should be monitoring differential effects of such trends. For example, as more women and students from traditionally under-represented groups enter academe, the pressures on faculty from those groups to mentor and support these students increases. If those faculty remain in a minority, themselves 'outsiders', they will be severely stretched to fulfill all the expectations placed upon them. Moreover, the chances of the university altering its reward systems in the ways we have suggested may become more remote as competition for limited resources intensifies and full-time, secure jobs become increasingly scarce. The story is not yet over.

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Correspondence: Sandra Acker, Department of Sociology in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1V6.

NOTES

[1] *Hundreds of concepts in the English language refer to emotions, including 'joy, happiness, delight, awe, wonder, fear, grief, sadness, anger, pride, shame, guilt, surprise, envy' (Crawford et al., 1992, p. 33).*

[2] *In Canada, the terminology 'faculty of education' rather than 'school of education' or 'department of education' is conventional. The word 'faculty' is also used to refer to academic staff. Within faculties of education, there may be several departments with names like 'educational psychology' or 'foundations' or 'teaching and instruction'. Sometimes there is a programmatic division between graduate work and teacher training. Initial teacher training is usually called 'pre-service education' or 'teacher preparation'.*

[3] *Together with the lower assistant professor rank, these positions are often referred to as 'tenure-track' or 'tenured and tenure-track' to distinguish them from part-time or temporary positions without the standard career ladder. Managerial responsibilities such as department head, associate dean, dean, associate vice president and so forth are called administrative positions.*

[4] *A relevant point here is that promotions are not competitive, so that it is unusual to try many times. Persons whose credentials are not sufficient for promotion would usually be discouraged from going forward rather than repeatedly turned down. See Acker (1994) for an account of the contrasting situation in Britain.*

[5] *Some interviewees expressed concerns about anonymity and several suggested that the institution had at its disposal a number of punishments for outspoken or non-conforming individuals. Morley (1994, p. 201) notes that silence about one's emotional responses to oppression can pass for good behaviour in academia.*

[6] *Kamau (1996) also found many contradictions in the lives of women academics in Kenya, suggesting that our findings have relevance beyond the Canadian scene.*

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By SANDRA ACKER and GRACE FEUERVERGER

SANDRA ACKER, Professor, Department of Sociology in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

GRACE FEUERVERGER, Assistant Professor, Centre for Teacher Development, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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