MYTHS OF MENTORING: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Myths of Mentoring: A Feminist Analysis

Doctor of Philosophy

1999

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I attempt to provide a feminist analysis of theories and practices of mentoring as they pertain to teacher development. In examining the term "mentoring" in educational research, confusion seems to exist about its definition and purposes. Consequently, I return to mentoring's literary and linguistic roots in Greek mythology to better understand its origins and hence our current interest in the conception. I suggest that the notion of mentoring often leads to imprecision in definition and to its unexamined acceptance in whatever guise and however practised.

A rereading of the Mentor story in Homer's Odyssey lays the ground for my use of gender as an analytic category. The goddess Athena must become a man in order to be guardian to Odysseus's son while the youth's father is fighting in the Trojan War. I use this sex change to question the absence of gender considerations in educational research on mentoring.

I continue to trace the recurrence of the Mentor myth by examining Daniel Levinson's The Seasons of a Man's Life and its impact on research in education. I establish that Levinson's work reproduces the mythic male heroic quest, and that educational researchers continue to fashion
their studies in this tradition. Gender is subsumed in researchers' apparent belief in mentoring's effectiveness.

Because so little of the research on mentoring directly addresses the experiences of women, I designed a questionnaire and examined seventeen women's responses to see whether there might be a women's perspective which differed from the norm mentoring seemed to have established. I suggest that gender blindness in educational research ignores women's different experiences of "helping" arrangements to women's detriment. I argue that we need to continue the struggle to produce new understandings of these arrangements and new language to express them.

Finally, while mentoring in many guises is likely to continue, even flourish, in educational systems and in the wider society, I plead not only for increasing exactitude in definition but also for a consideration of friendship as a disposition (Friedman 1993) which might serve as a more appropriate foundation to describe women's working relationships in teaching.
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PREFACE

ORIGINS

[Donald Fleming] was implacable in his insistence that one become committed to one's work, not just professionally but emotionally....I told him I had decided to do my research on one of America's most Progressive women reformers, Jane Addams. When I said I wanted to study how she had led a generation of women to solve the problem of gaining access to higher education at a time when society had no expectation that women would use it in any way but a decorative sense, he was approving. We both knew that experience had been my own personal dilemma in Australia. "One's research should always involve some element of therapy," he said, smiling. "It only counts if it's really close to the bone."

Jill Ker Conway, True North: A Memoir.

It is always radical to ask citizens to look searchingly into their own hearts with the suspicion that some of their most deeply rooted motivations may be deformed by a legacy of injustice.

Martha C. Nussbaum, Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education.

We live in a time when change is in the air. This is not a startling revelation. Our institutions are pressed to change in the face of our transformation from an industrial to an information society. Advertising, one of our most expressive markers of cultural shifts, both illustrates and reinforces the seemingly inexorable nature of change: Greek fishermen use IBM computers to locate their catches; mbanx commercials for Bank of Montreal's electronic financial services, densely populated by children skipping through bucolic settings to the strains of Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-changing," tell us that even the very young seem ready to accept the necessity of change. Education, as part of the same social fabric, is not immune to these currents.

One of the consequences of this emphasis on change is to demand that teachers stay up-to-date with educational reforms and initiatives. This has always been the case, but the rate of change, along with the
pace of keeping up with it, has accelerated. Statistics Canada has reported that

teachers are exposed "to virtually permanent tensions from a number of sources—such as discipline and relations with students; the not-always-realistic expectations of principals, parents and students; and the workload, all of which require greater than average ability to adapt" (Galt 1997, A12).

The demands on teachers are legion, and the context in which they work is one which both restricts and enables. It is within this framework that calls for help seem to reverberate from all sides. Is mentoring the best response to these appeals?

When I imagine anyone being a mentor, I think of an older more experienced person offering assistance and advice to someone younger who has less experience. I think of care, of a human connection which implies attention and solicitude. As I began to see a growing literature on the need for mentoring in education I thought back to my own teaching career where I could not recall anyone being my mentor. Two episodes acted as originating inspirations for my consideration of mentoring as an aspect of teacher development.

The timetable at the school where I was first hired in 1975 was complex. Each school day was divided into eight forty-seven minute periods in a six-day cycle. Another free-floating slot designated as period nine "bumped" a different period every day from Day 2 through Day 6, but never on Day 1, and never during any of the three lunch periods. Teachers would see their classes five times over six days. Those who taught classes during any of the lunch periods saw these groups six times out of six.
The weekly staff bulletin outlining procedures for the opening of school informed teachers that Tuesday would be Day 1, that all classes would meet, and that periods would be shortened from their usual forty-seven-minute length. I followed my instructions, as I understood them, and appeared in all my classes on the Day 1 schedule. The last period was my assigned preparation time, and I remained in the staff room putting my lesson plans in order. I had survived, and everything seemed to have run smoothly. The following day was again Day 1, with all periods lasting their full forty-seven minutes. Once more I followed the designated schedule. I still had no idea that anything was amiss as I began teaching my classes. The next day, however, a Day 2, was to tell a different story.

Period nine replaced period eight, and I prepared to meet the class for the first time. It had seemed a bit odd that this was only happening on the third day of classes, but I had not had time to give it more than a passing thought as I planned lessons, devised seating plans, set up class lists in my record book, found the rooms where I taught, and distributed textbooks. Imagine my surprise, then, when thirty-five grade nine English students greeted my entrance with a raucous, "Where were you on Tuesday? We waited, but you never came!" My stomach muscles cramped at the thought of this many thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds having been left unsupervised for half an hour. I prayed fervently for this to remain our secret. What had happened? Evidently I had not understood that period nine was included in the opening day schedule. Here, finally, was the reason for the periods being shortened—to fit in all nine on the first day so teachers could meet all their classes. No one
came forward to help me with the day-to-day aspects of being a beginning teacher. Whether out of reticence or reluctance, or a combination of both these factors, it also never occurred to me to ask for help. Had I needed a mentor?

Sixteen years after the wobbly start at my first school, I was entering a new one. In 1991 I had been appointed English department head in another secondary school. Once again I had to learn the rhythms of a different place: it was my first experience with a school year divided into two semesters, each representing a full year's work. Though no neophyte teacher, I felt like one, trying to avoid the "sink-or-swim" syndrome as I trod water as furiously, yet unobtrusively, as possible.

However, there was an important difference from my first teaching experiences: I did think to ask for help in adjusting to my new role as department head and in teaching a particularly difficult grade 9 English class. Even so, my appeals were tactfully deflected. I was reassured that I would be "all right" because I had excellent interpersonal and teaching skills. People's reactions could be best described as perplexed and unbelieving, perhaps because I made my petitions with an outward show of confidence and did not look as though I were in imminent danger of sinking beneath the waves. Had I needed a mentor?

Would things have turned out differently for me if there had been a mentor in each of these cases? What role would the mentor have played? What impact, if any, would the mentor have had? I can neither answer these questions nor know differently than I do now. I went on to have what would be considered a successful teaching career, accomplished, it seemed, without recognizable mentors.
Researchers in teacher development have put forward that beginning teachers need support to make the transition from student to teacher (Aitken 1994; Aitken and Mildon 1991; Andrews 1987; Fullan 1991; Fullan and Connelly 1990; Lortie 1975). One reason for this recommendation is the apparently persistent tradition of teachers working autonomously from one another in their classrooms. In the face of this phenomenon, neophytes often find it hard to ask for help (Aitken and Mildon 1991; Little 1990; Lortie 1975). This teacher autonomy can inadvertently become a powerful silencing mechanism: to request aid may be perceived as a lack of competence. As a result, new teachers often rely on each other to deduce working norms by watching and listening to other teachers (Semeniuk with Worrall, in press). An antidote sometimes recommended to remedy this predicament is what is often known as "mentoring."

Mentoring appears to have been strangely resistant to adverse criticism. In her article "Role Models, Mentors, and Sponsors: The Elusive Concepts" (1981), Speizer noted that "The idea that a role model, mentor, or sponsor is a prerequisite for success has achieved a sudden recognition that makes it appear self-evident" (p. 693). Referring to this same work, Fisher (1988) states: "This overview reveals the total contradictory nature of much empirical research on this topic and, to me, indicates the complete lack of theoretical, let alone political, criticism of these basic concepts" (n 4, p. 214). Fisher's language is strong, yet it points to the apparent dearth of close scrutiny of concepts of mentoring. Indeed, we seem to have taken our shared understanding of mentoring too much for granted. Perhaps mentoring has become so
overdetermined that any considerations other than positive ones seem to have been neutralized.

I plan to engage in a careful examination of the theories and practices of mentoring through an approach which might restore mentoring to its mythological and linguistic roots. This approach will include literature—what we frequently term fiction—as well as the more traditionally recognized social science research, itself an invented literature:

...we ought not to limit inquiry only to those forms for which a literal conception of truth is a relevant criterion. A novel as well as a statistical mean can enlarge human understanding. Fields like history, anthropology, sociology, and political science, fields that depend upon interpretation and imagination, are themselves literally fictions—things made (Geertz 1973). They are the results of a framework-defined world transacting with a framework-dependent mind. The facts never speak for themselves. What they say depends on the questions we ask (Elisner 1992, p. 14).

I propose to treat the body of literature on mentoring as a text which tells a narrative of our hopes for those starting out in teaching or moving into administrative ranks. By thinking of the research as a unified story, we might be better able to look differently at the mythology and language used to persuade us to believe in the mentoring myth and to examine critically the power the myth possesses to shape human action in particular ways for particular purposes.

Furthermore literature was the only place where I encountered a more sinister picture of mentoring to contest its benevolent representation in the educational research. Literature fulfilled a criterion Martha Nussbaum (1995) identifies for its use as an adjunct to the study of other disciplines:

...good literature is disturbing in a way that history and social science writing frequently are not. Because it
summons powerful emotions, it disconcerts and puzzles. It inspires distrust of conventional pieties and exacts a frequently painful confrontation with one's own thoughts and intentions (p. 5).

A long-lost novel by Louisa May Alcott, written in 1877, gave shape to my scepticism about mentoring's unrelenting goodness as I saw it depicted in the educational research.

In *A Modern Mephistopheles* Felix Canaris, a 19-year-old poet, is near starvation. Jason Helwyze, an older and mysterious man, offers Felix the prospect of literary success if he will subject himself completely to his elder. The following passage presents Jasper talking with his female accomplice Olivia about what being a mentor means to him:

"... Do you know, Olivia, that the accidental reading of my favorite tragedy, at a certain moment, gave me a hint which has afforded amusement for a year."

"You mean your fancy for playing Mentor to that boy [Felix]. A dangerous task for you, Jasper."

"The danger is the charm. I crave excitement, occupation, and what but something of this sort is left to me? Much saving grace in charity, we are told, and who needs it more than I? Surely I have been kinder to Felix than the Providence which left him to die of destitution and despair?"

"Perhaps not. The love of power is strong in men like you, and grows by what it feeds on. If I am not mistaken, this whim of a moment has already hardened into a purpose which will mold his life in spite of him. It is an occupation that suits your taste, for you enjoy his beauty and his promise. You like to praise and pamper him till vanity and love of pleasure wax strong, then you check him with an equal satisfaction, and find excitement in curbing his high spirit, his wayward will. By what tie you hold him I cannot tell, but I know it must be something stronger than gratitude, for, though he chafes against the bond, he dares not break it."

"Ah, that is my secret! What would you not give if I would teach you the art of taming men as I once taught you to train a restive horse?"—and Helwyze looked out at her with eyes full of malicious merriment (1995, pp. 32-3, emphasis in the original).
Alcott's depiction turns mentoring on its head, showing us that this relationship may be more sinister than it appears. Helwyze's delight and pleasure in the power he wields over Felix illustrates a number of points researchers on mentoring seem to evade: the purposes of mentoring may be for ill; mentors may be ambitious for themselves at the expense of those they have committed themselves in some way to protect (their protégés, from the French verb to protect—protéger); mentoring may have unpredictable consequences; the dynamic of power in the unequal relationship of mentoring's participants ought not to be disregarded.

Speizer (1981) also notes: "The findings related to male business executives have been the foundation upon which to recommend to women that they acquire mentors" (p. 709). This situation seems not to have changed appreciably in our time, and gender as a possible factor in conceptions of mentoring appears to have been rarely addressed. The monolithic representation of mentoring as a mechanism of help may have driven considerations about gender underground. I propose, then, to use gender as an analytic category (Scott 1988) in my study to ascertain whether conceptions of mentoring are sexist. Looking at the old data through the prism of gender allows me to ask new questions (Nussbaum 1997).

An examination of Daniel Levinson's work in the 1970s on the life cycles of men will form a major contextual component for my analysis of conceptions of mentoring in education. The Seasons of a Man's Life, appearing in 1978, seems to have set the stage for our apparent ongoing desire for mentoring (Speizer 1981). In a fortunate twist of fate, 1996 saw the posthumous release of his parallel work The Seasons of a Woman's
Life. I make use of that material also to see whether Levinson's depiction of mentoring among women differs from the one in The Seasons of a Man's Life. Other details for my study will come from an analysis of the research on mentoring as it pertains to teacher development. By using gender as a specific focus of my study, data will come from a questionnaire (Appendix A) I devised and distributed to women teachers. A necessary beginning for my analysis will be to bring to light the roots of our apparently common understanding of mentoring in Western culture. This will include a close reading of mentoring's mythological origins and of their continuing resonance into our time.

Prominent among mentoring's mythological touchstones is a section of Homer's Odyssey. The requirement that the goddess Athena physically change herself not only into a mortal but specifically the male mortal Mentor in order for her counsel to be accepted by Odysseus's heir Telemachus highlights gender as a focus for analysis. What might this transformation tell us about the relationship of women to the theories and practices of mentoring?
CHAPTER 1

METHOD, LANGUAGE, AND MYTH: THE SOCIAL USE OF WORDS

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?
Hamlet: Words, words, words.

William Shakespeare, Hamlet.

There is no such thing as the isolated mythical event, just as there is no such thing as the isolated word. Myth, like language, gives all of itself in each of its fragments.

Roberto Calasso, The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony.

It was Aristotle who set out the first written framework for narrative: drama or epic required an arrangement of events which, in their representation, were to have a beginning, middle, and end. The narrative unity he described called for a structure which not only helped the author fashion a story but was useful to the audience to understand and, perhaps, sympathize with the characters involved. Coherence in a story, whether real or imaginary, makes it more readily apprehended.

Terry Eagleton (1983) claims that what we know is not knowledge of the world but stories about the world. In a similar vein, Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) reminds us that lives do not serve as models, only stories about people do. Northrop Frye (1990) states: "Our actions...are chosen by a certain kind of social vision, and if we are sufficiently conscious of our social vision to describe it, we should find it taking on the outlines of a story and a body of imagery" (p. 121). We may discern an organizing structure because we can trace a narrative tradition: the art of the story possesses certain conventions which we perceive through recurring images communicated in texts over time (Frye 1973; Ricoeur 1981).

Narrative has been extended beyond literary theory as writers in the humanities and social sciences take it up as an approach to their work
Yet the need for plot is just as pressing for philosophers and social scientists who use a narrative methodology in their research as it is for novelists and dramatists. Paul Ricoeur (1981) echoes Aristotle's model in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*:

...to follow a story is to understand the successive actions, thoughts and feelings as displaying a particular directedness. By this I mean that we are pushed along by the development and that we respond to this thrust with expectations concerning the outcome and culmination of the process. In this sense, the 'conclusion' of the story is the pole attraction of the whole process. But a narrative conclusion can be neither deduced nor predicted...we must follow the story to its conclusion. So rather than being predictable, a conclusion must be acceptable (p. 277, emphases in the original).

Narrative bestows order on reality. In this way we come to realize that if we exist it is always in context or in relation to something or someone.

To use narrative as a mode of analysis is to recognize that conflict propels people on particular courses of action, that "...our attention is held in suspense by a thousand contingencies" (Ricoeur 1981, p. 277) and that "a dramatic narrative can reveal that an epistemological crisis is always a crisis in human relationships" (MacIntyre in Code 1991, p. 171). We not only see the characters in the narrative but discern the roles they play in the predicaments (or events) in which they find themselves: it is in conflict that changes in people's thinking and actions frequently occur.

The next step in a narrative analysis is to ascribe meanings to the events which make up the conflict. What values are being offered up in the story? Answering this question requires interpretation of a
narrative's particularities, contexts, and nuances. Within this framework it is important to note that interpretation is a search for meaning and not for truth. There is an element of risk: telling the story invites responses which might cast a person's perspective in another light. Point of view, after all, is not a feature only reserved for the narrator: the "reader" also brings one to the story which colours her responses to it. So, while the narrative proper may have been concluded, it acquires other lives through interpretation and the search for meaning. Through the process of reflection we might identify significant moments or turning points in the narrator's life and, at the same time, be witness to uncertainty, change, and variation.

The characteristics of narrative of which I have spoken—plot, point of view, character, and meaning—are evident in the definition Connelly and Clandinin (1987) put forth for using a narrative approach in the study of teaching:

Narrative is concerned with specific, concrete events in a person's life and is concerned to give an account of a person. Furthermore, through the construction of personal philosophies, images and narrativeunities, narrative method offers an interpretive reconstruction of parts of a person's life. It is a study which is historical, personal, factual, causal in an interpretive sense, and designed to reveal what is meaningful in a person's history for purposes of understanding classroom actions (p. 134).

Therefore to investigate teaching through narrative is to acknowledge that "...inquiry—both moral and epistemological—needs narrative to supply the particulars upon which analysis has to be based" (Code 1991, p. 168). Just as a story (I mean fiction here) gives us a sense of time, place, perspective, and person, so research which values these same things can provide a complex and textured picture of what people do.
Narrative allows for the revelation of the events of a person's life to play out against the backdrop of historical circumstance and social context.

It is through narrative that we can more readily, though not necessarily unproblematically, discern that there are no discrete categories of theory and practice. Our language might make it seem otherwise: "...the conventional nature of language makes it a clumsy tool for the expression of delicate and fleeting thoughts and feelings" (Scholes 1989). Narrative, through language, can mute this stricture somewhat to reveal that practice and theory are connected:

Practice and theory are mutually implicated, linked in a reciprocity which precludes granting primacy to either. Practices can attest to the strengths and inadequacies in theories just as readily as theories can generate or legitimate certain practices and forestall others; and neither practices nor theories are singly self-explanatory (Code 1995, p. 158). Robert Scholes (1989) makes an interesting observation in asserting that practice and theory are not separate spheres: "Theory is not the superego of practice but its self-consciousness. The role of theory is not to lay down laws but to force us to be aware of what we are doing and why we are doing it" (p. 88). The notion of self-consciousness is an important one to note. Telling a story is, in great measure, a self-conscious act: we are willing to be vulnerable to another person by recounting something of ourselves. We reveal our "theory" by relating our "practice."

To frame research as narrative suggests that a structure might be found which makes for spatial, temporal, internal, and external unity. Invoking narrative creates different expectations from the texts of research. We might more advantageously question one of the prevailing stories from the nineteenth century carried through to the present—that of our inevitable progress—embedded in the research on mentoring: Are
we really moving ahead? Or do we rather construct our forward movement by cobbling selected life episodes into a sequence which gives coherence to our lives?

Reading study after study may sometimes seem like wading through an endless parade of data; but to ask to what story they might all contribute allows us to consider why some narratives persist or reappear at certain times. In interpreting conceptions of mentoring as smaller narratives, which, when considered together, are revelatory of a larger context, it is useful, I think, to examine the methodological story which emerges from a close reading of the pertinent research. Unravelling the narrative thread of how this research is conducted, and why it proceeds in a particular way, contributes to my critique of theories and practices of mentoring.

A NARRATIVE OF METHOD

We have put great stock in science's capacity to explain our world: "A little learning of science often breeds the notion that there are equally assured facts and arguments in every area of knowledge, if only we knew what they were" (Frye 1959, p. 10). This stance has led us to perceive that human development moves in linear fashion over time and always toward improvement. Therefore, whether in scientific or historical research, we can identify a tendency toward cause-and-effect explanations: the theory of evolution reaches its apotheosis with the appearance of the erect hominoid; the history of civilization traces our increasing sophistication from the Neanderthal to the rational human. This depiction of our "progress" is reassuring in its orderliness. If nothing else, science promises to show us the underlying organization of our lives. Even the increasing emphasis on relativity cannot shake us of the
notion that there must be some transcendent and abstract truth about our existence on this planet:

In its purest form, this paradigm's ascendancy was quite short, but its residues are still tenacious in shaping problems and epistemological puzzles. And its popular and intellectual appeal is indisputable for the promises of clarity and certainty that it advances (Code 1995, p. 161).

How has the belief in science's authoritative explanatory powers come about? Adriana Cavarero's *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy* (1995) illuminates this question through a consideration of Greek thought where philosophers elevated the conception of the abstract to the status of "real."

Since early times philosophers have been interested in where reality, meaning, and truth might lie. Thales, the earliest Greek philosopher (c. 624 BCE-545 BCE), is said to have been an expert on heavenly affairs, able to predict eclipses and foretell seasonal harvests. It is no trivial matter that he casts his gaze upward. Cavarero explains:

> Up above, one finds the regular movements of the stars which know neither birth nor death, individual experiences and evanescent forms. These are passing manifestations of a deeper principle. They are appearances caught between birth and death, toiling to sustain the brief life of a dissolving moment. The meaning of these mere appearances lies elsewhere, and is accessible to those capable of transcending appearance without being misled by the deception of the surface of things. Their being is real, precisely because it lies elsewhere (pp. 34-5).

Thales opens up the space for the consideration of two worlds, one real, the other apparent. The former relies on the ability to detach oneself from the deceptive experience of the senses which inform the latter. Other dichotomies, reality and appearance, mind and body, abstract and concrete, are soon identified, and we see the explanatory power of dualism emerging. Plato (428-7 BCE-348-7 BCE) later distinguishes
these worlds easily: what is close to hand—in the world below—is superficial appearance; the world of philosophy is made up of the things that are real and true—in the heavens. Cavarero concludes that

This distinction has brought about the philosophically tenacious dualism between being and appearance. More importantly, it has turned our sense of reality upside down, so that the world of the living becomes the phenomenal shell of a kind of truth that is removed from the realm of the senses and is accessible only through thought (p. 35).

To be able to observe the heavens and see the stars' recurring passage creates an intense desire in the philosophers, according to Cavarero, to have the events of daily life as orderly and predictable as the movements of celestial bodies. Indeed, when reality is perceived as not in the world, then the superimposition of a heavenly order onto the earthly domain appears to provide a structure into which humans might meaningfully fit. Thales and his successors would have us think ourselves out of the world. This move toward abstraction and away from the daily experiences of life is a harbinger of essentialism—another ordering principle for the chaos of everyday living.

Between Thales and Plato sits Parmenides (born c. 515 BCE) who believed that he could become wiser by detaching himself from the world of mortals. He arrived at this idea by way of a dream: accompanied through the gates of Day and Night by the daughters of the Sun, a goddess greets him and sets him on the path of truth where "'being is and cannot not-be, while not-being is not and must not be' (Fragments B2, 3-5)" (Cavarero 1995, p. 37). Continuing to work on the goddess's precept (which, it is interesting to note, came from above where deities reside), Parmenides surmises the superiority of pure thought located in the heavens and away from the muddle of the everyday world. The here-
and-now is illusory and deceptive, and abstract perception surpasses sensory experiences. With Parmenides, being becomes the site of truth. It also assumes the features of eternal, unchanging duration, immutable like the movement of the stars Thales observed so closely. On a metaphorical level the dichotomy of heaven's superiority and earth's superficiality is further reinforced. On a literal level we are encouraged to strive ever upward and shake off this mortal coil.

In a departure from his philosophical predecessor, Plato reinstates not-being as a category of the different, thereby making it not only a major type of thought but also a source of knowledge. Little else, though, changes. Cavarero elaborates:

...the reappropriation of not-being does not impinge on the dualistic structure that cuts off the locus of truth from the world of life, the eternal from the ephemeral, thought from the body, the universal from the contingent, science from mere appearance (p. 43).

Plato allows for the naming of parts—the obstacles and burdens to the attainment of pure thought. Reality and meaning, however, are still to be found elsewhere, outside our life's experiences. The everyday, truly, is of no consequence. It is an impediment.

The narrative I have picked out from the fabric of philosophy sets the stage in many ways for René Descartes. I was sent back to the Greeks because I was not completely satisfied with arguments that the ills of the twentieth century could be traced back to him and philosophers of the Enlightenment (Bordo 1986; Poerksen 1995). That period seems to be a lightning rod for our discontent about how and why we have arrived at where we are today. Descartes, however, picks up a number of strands of thought from the Greeks which, as an educated man of the wealthy classes, he was bound to have encountered. These, in their turn, would
have had some impact on his response to the dreams which triggered his *Meditations* and *Discourse on Method*. His originality resides in formulating a *mathematical* system to resolve the conundrums his dreams presented. It is this particular system, with its origins in Greek thinking, which has significantly coloured our approach to research in virtually every academic field.

Perturbed by the prospect that the thinking life might be chaotic, discontinuous, and fragmented, Descartes devised a mathematical system which, to his mind, assured coherence and continuity. Central to his thinking was detachment from anything which might taint objectivity—from emotions, from the singularities of time and place, from personal idiosyncrasies, prejudices, and sympathies, and most centrally, from the object itself. Echoing the philosophy of the Greeks I have described above, Descartes paved the way for an experimental method which shaped the work of Enlightenment scientists such as Newton. Both the method and the research contributed to the ongoing process of our separation from the world near at hand.

The "scientific method," as a means to conduct research, has remained a *force majeure* since the Enlightenment. It has flourished within a climate of ideas which has valued systemization and generalization. Some of the most prominent features of this way of working are apparent rationality, neutrality, and objectivity. Investigations are shaped by these factors and acquire the patina of authority in relation to their adherence to the "accepted standards" of inquiry. Yet why should the method used to investigate the life cycle of a paramecium be the same or the only one to examine the life cycle of the human?
Where a method such as the scientific one holds sway, another fundamental premise arises which, once again, repeats Greek thought: meaning exists outside us and can be discovered by us. This position also presupposes that meaning will not change over time—or at best not over months, perhaps years. Dominant myths such as our existence outside nature and the certainty in our progress take hold. However, people and things are plucked out of time and space. With no sense of the temporal, ideas become freefloating, not merely transcending everyday life but making us lose our very sense of the present. The disciplines of science and mathematics acquire power proportional to their capacity to make some clearer sense of the workings of our universe.

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND MENTORING

The broad outlines of the scientific method are evident in the research on mentoring. One of the features in both is instrumentality. In relation to mentoring, how might it be used and to what purpose? In this context mentoring takes on the appearance of the best remedy to the persistent problem of new teacher "shell shock." Much research also presents it as a utilitarian process which might socialize teachers to the norms of the profession. Utility, however, can have as much to do with social cohesion as with coercion. Are the norms of teaching fixed and unassailable? Are we as interested in change as we claim? Or are we disguising a more deep-rooted need for the maintenance of coherent, traditional structures in the face of the quickening pace of change? If the answer to these questions is "yes," then we are caught in a tension between what we say and do and what, in our heart of hearts, we really desire.

The method used to examine mentoring—itself derived from the scientific method—presupposes that mentoring's meaning lies outside
the people who engage in it. This situation arises because researchers, perhaps unconsciously, base their work on the myth's received meaning. Mentoring, grounded in this particular understanding, has a transcendent and stable signification to which, as I shall argue, many researchers fit their work, leaving them unaware of or oblivious to other potential explanations. If, as Frye (1990) suggests, "A method involves a use of language" (p. 157), then these researchers have not only accepted the language of the myth uncritically but, through the dissemination of their reports and writing, reproduced and reinforced mentoring's apparently conventional meaning. The sheer volume of their work has the effect of commanding our attention and urging our acquiescence to their view of things.

When an informal activity such as mentoring is theorized as a formal operation it is dislocated from its narrative and mythic origins and reinstalled in science, thereby dismissing the storied aspects of our lives. Thus the Athena/Mentor myth is cut adrift from its roots only to be transformed into a process which can be scrutinized for its component parts, its applicability to an array of situations, and its ramifications for future use. Taken out of its time and place, mentoring becomes an abstraction which might then be applied in our pursuit of progress in teacher development: "The name achieves the inertia of an established institution" (Poerksen 1995, p. 6). The myth remains a touchstone—mentoring has a past which we in Western societies presumably know and understand—but it has been overshadowed by an oversimplified view that mentoring means a process by which someone more experienced helps another less experienced person.
Accelerating changes in technology in many countries have propelled us toward a seeming proximity with one another: electronic networking would bring us together through cultural and economic globalization. However, whether it is because of an acceleration of time or an escalation of millennial angst, we no longer seem quite so sure about our prospects. If change is the only certainty, how can we feel any security about our future as a species? Our faith in science and a few other things has been severely shaken. Even as we continue to venture into outer space, we are still faced with the consequences of our global environmental deterioration, brought on by the belief in our continuing development as well as our separateness from the rest of nature. Bound up in the project of modernity, where society triumphs over nature, we find ourselves at an impasse.

Institutional structures seem to be falling about our ears, and we are left living in the rubble of our own making. The premise that society develops in accordance with a universal and transcendent rationalism seems more and more suspect. Reason cannot adequately provide reasons why we seem to be in such a mess. There can no longer be a "scientific" discourse, broadly conceived, which guarantees objectivity, impartiality, and, by a dubious logic, authoritativeness. It becomes more difficult to use science's methodology, derivatively and with assurance, in the social sciences. How might we then approach the prevailing mentoring narrative to better understand and then challenge its predominance?

**POSTMODERNISM**

If postmodernism's origins in architecture are any indication—simply put, what was on the inside of a building now appeared on the outside
and vice versa—then it represents the turning inside out of our faith in progress and advancement:

...postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges—be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography (Hutcheon 1988, p. 3).

Furthermore:

...it seems reasonable to say that the postmodern's initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as 'natural' (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact 'cultural'; made by us, not given to us. Even nature, postmodernism might point out, doesn't grow on trees (Hutcheon 1989, p. 2).

Terms such as postmodernism itself, poststructuralism, dislocation, decentring, and indeterminacy, suggest that the past is inextricably wound up with the present—prefixes have been added to existing concepts rather than neologisms formed—even as they are being contested (Hutcheon 1988). Perhaps this negative rhetoric has arisen as a consequence of our growing scepticism about modernity's promise of our inevitable progress. Oil spills, nuclear reactor meltdowns, chemical poisoning, changes in the nature of work, burgeoning homelessness, the widening gap between rich and poor—all these factors have brought us up against the unimaginable, if not even our worst nightmares. Things do not seem to be getting better. Like Descartes, we appear to be faced with the prospect of fragmentation, irrationality, and discontinuity in our physical world.

Moreover postmodernism challenges the notion of ahistoricity. It brings historical—temporal—context to studies of language, discourse,
and texts. As a result, a poststructuralist writer such as Foucault becomes a postmodern critic through his "archeological" and "genealogical" analyses of institutions and social conventions (1972; 1979; 1990). Investigations such as his "...do not, in fact, reveal a rational necessity in the development of world views and the evolution of theories. Rather, they show that such processes are less rational, more random, than the putatively monolithic western tradition pretends" (Code 1991, p. 49). History is revealed to us through records which have been constructed by human minds, hearts, and hands. Therefore an archive is recast as "the textualized remains of history" (Hutcheon 1988 p. 128):

...[history's] accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality. We cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts. Even the institutions of the past, its social structures and practices, could be seen, in one sense, as social texts (Hutcheon 1988, p. 16, emphasis in the original).

As a result, history no longer has the status of a science capable of revealing any sure "truth." Indeed, the word "history" is itself ambiguous in most European languages: it means "both what really happens and the narrative of those events" (Ricoeur 1981, p. 288). In a postmodern sense it exemplifies the paradox of being simultaneously temporally constrained and transcendentally conceived.

**POSTSTRUCTURALISM AND TEXT WITHIN THE POSTMODERN**

Like postmodernism, poststructuralism is intimately tied to its progenitor. One of the significant features of poststructuralism is its focus on the fluidity of words' meanings and linguistic constructs. Bound up with this conception is the notion of "text," now expanded beyond the written word to include discourse, social practices, and
institutions. Anything capable of having meaning is, consequently, open to interpretation and critique: "the emphasis on semiotic indeterminacy, the critique of unified conceptions of subjectivity, fascination with the instabilities of systems, and the tendency to focus on cultural resistance rather than dominant forms" (Bordo 1993, p. 38) are all marks of poststructuralism.

It was structuralist thinking which raised the text to such an abstract level as to bestow on it a life of its own, disassociating it from its social, cultural, and temporal referents. For many structuralists, meaning, and more precisely definitive meaning, resided in the text and could be discovered through its close reading. Poststructuralism challenges this notion: texts come out of historical times, places, and prejudices and, over time, do not remain stable. We are constantly in the process of reassessing the past in relation to our present. In this way, texts, both old and new, are enmeshed with one another. Acknowledging this intertextuality—the relation of texts to other texts—makes for analyses which confront the past and situate human actions in time and place: "Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context" (Hutcheon 1988, p. 118). This work of reshaping takes place as we go about textual deconstruction, defined by Derrida as a "question of...being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation of the language which we use (in Macksey and Donato 1970, 1972, 271)" (Hutcheon 1988, p. 100). No text, then, can be considered timeless. Rather it is a timely artifact whose meanings change even as our understandings are reshaped in the context of new knowledges.
Once instability and subjectivity enter the picture, we can no longer completely accept our ability to claim certainty, objectivity, and permanence. Moreover, all poststructuralism's characteristics challenge the notion of centres as depicted in one of the dominant stories of our time—our inevitable historical progress through a belief in science:

...first, the "grand narratives" of historical progress initiated by the Enlightenment are discredited; and second, any political grounding of these ideas in "history" and "reality" is no longer possible, since both these have been "textualised" in the world of images and simulations which characterise the contemporary age of mass consumption and advanced technologies (Selden and Widdowson 1993, p. 174).

Unity, coherence, and meaning no longer reside in the world or in the self, but if at all, it seems in an interrelationship between them.

It might be tempting to think that poststructuralism can be a substitute theory for structuralism. In these postmodern times, though, when grand theories are being challenged, it might be best to recognize that "Much poststructuralist thought...is best understood...as offering interpretive tools and historical critique rather than theoretical frameworks for wholesale adoption" (Bordo 1993, n 3, p. 336, emphasis in the original). If we accept this notion we might avoid methodological essentialism (Martin 1994) whereby poststructuralism might become the required replacement for the scientific method. To think that we are coming up with the theory may be counterproductive and constraining.

Following Hutcheon (1988) these questions arise in relation to mentoring: To which discursive context could the language of mentoring belong? To which prior texts and representations must we refer when examining theories and practices of mentoring? References to the myth of Athena/Mentor highlight the intertextuality of the conception of mentoring, that any current analysis is tied to something about
mentoring which has already appeared in our past. In the light of this connection I propose to examine how the conventions of mentoring have been established and how these have become sedimented in our culture. I intend, therefore, to concentrate on three questions for my textual analysis of mentoring. In this chapter I shall direct my attention to a question of language and a question of mythology. In the following I shall address a question of gender.

A QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

Over the time I have been working on this project I have come across many synonyms for "mentor." The volume of verbiage is astonishing, as I will show later in my study. Are the researchers as certain as they seem that "mentor" means all the things they claim? What happens to mentoring when the language to describe it is made a focus for analysis? We may raise other questions: "How do meanings change? How have some meanings emerged as normative and others have been eclipsed or disappeared? What do the processes reveal about how power is constituted and operates?" (Scott 1988, p. 35). A closer look at some of the history of the English language itself may provide clues to understanding why the vocabulary for "mentor" is expanding.

Changes in language often reflect the emergence of new knowledge whose vocabulary somehow needs to be accommodated and organized. An example of this type of situation arises in the 1600s in England. Scientific investigations of our relationships with and in the world, exemplified by the work of such thinkers as Isaac Newton, along with political unrest, such as the triumph of the people through Parliament in removing James II from the throne in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, created fertile ground for the introduction of unfamiliar words. Until this
time there seemed little reason for standardization in spelling or grammar. Writers as disparate as Aphra Behn and William Shakespeare were able to make themselves understood despite what we might now call their inability to adhere to conventions of standard English which, in their time, did not exist. However, geographic and personal linguistic idiosyncrasies gave way to standardization as science flourished; uniformity was also a necessary factor for the development of mathematics with its use of tables and graphs (Spender 1996).

The model for organizing English was Latin, the language of mathematics and theology: its regular grammar, spelling conventions, and systematic style were the authority and inspiration for the creation of a prescriptive grammar. A linguistic separation of classes begins to occur here, one that sees the language of the scientist and scholar acquire more authority than the vulgar tongue spoken by *hōt pōlot*. Furthermore the discourses of science and mathematics are spread through the medium of print. When thousands of identical copies of texts can be printed, it becomes more apparent how regularity and repeatability, the basis for scientific investigation, are embedded in our culture. As Dale Spender (1996) reminds us:

> Print has allowed us to develop static and unchanging benchmarks. These have been of enormous assistance in promoting the scientific and industrial revolutions, but they have distorted and damaged many of our understandings and practices about language and its use (p. 9).

Our own times bear witness to our dependence upon science and technology for changes in language: "It is perhaps no accident that a society dominated and controlled by science and technology should express itself in a science-inspired jargon, loaded with Greek and Latin suffixes...and loaded with hyphenated compounds" (McCrum, Cran, and
MacNell 1986, p. 345). Yet this is a deceptively benign occurrence. That we value scientific and technological language over poetic language suggests that we have separated our thinking on a profound level, giving prominence to one form of expression over another. We seem eager to accept usages in the vernacular such as "downloading" electronic texts and reluctant to endorse "deconstructing" texts. This phenomenon seems to reinforce, once again, our reliance on binary distinctions, in this case rational and useful as opposed to irrational and useless: one speaks to technological progress and, by implication, our social improvement; the latter seems an esoteric notion from literary criticism, an area that holds dubious promise of social relevance. The language of science implies action; poetic expression, by comparison, seems passive. Our language choices bear out the prevalence of science in our communications.

Even as we embrace this new language, however, we experience the anxiety that change may be happening too quickly. This disquiet, for example, manifests itself in the public's outrage about the perceived illiteracy of our young: elementary school children seem incapable of reading fluently by the end of grade one; secondary school students seem incapable of writing well-argued and supported essay answers by the end of grade nine. Standards are declining. In a leap of logic which accentuates the grip in which technology and science has us, we demand more mathematics, science, and computer education in the curriculum so our young may become literate. That literacy is confined to a certain type of language is emblematic of which forms of expression have power and authority in our society.

Joan Scott (1988) states: "Without attention to language and the processes by which meaning and categories are constituted, one only
imposes oversimplified models of the world, models that perpetuate conventional understanding rather than open up new interpretive possibilities" (p. 35). My ongoing reading of the research on mentoring made me uneasy about the seeming consensus among the researchers in depicting a standard, conventional, and indeed, oversimplified picture of mentoring.

Abundance is a hallmark of English: "The richness of English in synonyms is largely due to the happy mingling of Latin, French, and native elements. It has been said that we have a synonym at each level—popular, literary, and learned" (Baugh 1957, p. 225). Vocabulary can be enlarged from within a language by using an old word in a new sense; for instance, "broadcast," initially meaning the dispersion of seeds over the ground, was expanded to mean the transmission of a program over the radio (Baugh 1957). Another way linguistic change occurs is through a process of extension of meaning which may then be followed by narrowing (or restriction), degeneration, and regeneration (Baugh 1957). Was it possible, I thought, that "mentor" was metamorphosing into something else through a degeneration which "...may take the form of the gradual extension to so many senses that any particular meaning which a word may have had is completely lost" (Baugh 1957, p. 375)?

By raising the question of language I intend to show that our conceptions of mentoring are socially constructed and contextualized for the present times. Following Scott (1988): Have currently accepted meanings of "mentor" become normative? If so, how? What, if anything, has been removed from or added to conceptions of "mentor?" What do researchers' construction of "mentor" reveal about how power is
constituted and operates to shape a particular type of teacher
development?

CAN A POSTMODERNIST ARGUE FOR LINGUISTIC PRECISION?

Thus far I have outlined a framework to examine theories and
practices of mentoring which takes into account history and language. At
the same time I have argued that linguistic instability is an inescapable
feature of postmodernism. Perhaps the burgeoning nomenclature of
mentoring is an example of this particular phenomenon. Therefore it may
seem that I am taking a contradictory position by advocating greater
linguistic precision. Why not accept that there may be as many ways to
be a mentor as there are ways to dance?

"Precision" conjures up its opposite "imprecision," both words used
descriptively and, like all language, subjectively. Personal appraisal is
required to determine what is or is not precise. But how might we judge
precision? Can there be tests for it? Can these tests themselves be
precise? Is beginning with the dictionary definition an appropriate way to
test for precision? If, as Polyani (1958) asserts, "only a speaker or listener
can mean something by a word, and a word in itself can mean nothing"
(p. 252), can we ever hope for linguistic precision?

In speaking, writing, and reading we are linked psychically and tacitly
in a consensual process where we try to make ourselves understood to
one another. Recognizing that our prejudices are constantly in an
interplay with any text we encounter should not compel us, however, to
abandon the search for precision. Furthermore, to look for precision is
not to be a linguistic fundamentalist. Rather it is to insist that
linguistic sloppiness will not do, that to be fluent in language is not
necessarily to be articulate in it. I hope for the possibility of
reconciliation between the constant and the inconstant. This may be an illusory wish but one, I think, worth pursuing. Though language can only be defined by language, it seems to be the most reliable tool we have for communicating with one another.

At the risk of seeming to be a linguistic relativist, I would venture to claim that precision is a kind of rigour. The notion of rigour is clearly elucidated by Robert Scholes (1989) in his analysis of Jacques Derrida's use of the word *rigour* throughout his, Derrida's, *œuvre*. It struck me in reading Scholes that here was a concept which could encompass precision: rigour and precision, it seemed to me, had similar roots. On the pervasiveness of the notion of rigour in Derrida's writing, Scholes contends:

First of all, we can say that rigor is what Derrida uses to oppose the notion of truth as presence, truth as revelation; so that rigor, in this perspective, is the dark shadow of truth.... It is a virtue of method, of process, rather than of result, of product....Rigor is, par excellence, a philosopher's virtue...a virtue acquired by study and emulation, by socialization into a discourse. It belongs neither to theory nor to practice, exclusively, but to both (p. 85).

Therefore my quest for the closest thing to precision permits me to examine the social use of words and to interrogate the discourse of mentoring in its theories and practices. Constrained but not confounded by language, I return to my initial question: Can a postmodernist argue for linguistic precision? Only imperfectly.

**A QUESTION OF MYTHOLOGY**

For some, myths are fantastic tales about godlike creatures performing strange and impossible tasks. Because these stories cannot be verified, myths have come to be equated with falsehood: "We tend to think of such words as myth, fable or fiction as meaning something not
really true. This is partly because they are literary words, and literature is often thought of as a form of socially acceptable lying" (Frye 1990, p. 161). Yet "...myths...like fiction...can tell the truth even while they're making it all up" (Warner 1994, p. 19). Myths reveal "truth" in a different and imaginative way which can be just as factual as any report.

Myth is a type of narrative, and similar to literary narrative, a "recurrent act of symbolic communication" (Frye 1973, p. 105). Its structure organizes many different phenomena into a form we can more readily apprehend and expresses our desires which otherwise might remain amorphous. Mythology, then, is one way we construct the world out of words (Frye 1990). Myth seems inescapable, as Calasso (1994) reminds us: "discourse is draped in myth" (p. 297). We work with the entire corpus of language available to us, and against its ground, we articulate the systems which organize our actions. Myths, then, "tell stories which give shape and substance to practical, social measures" (Warner 1994, p. 36).

Myths are integrating ideas (Frye 1967) which convey to posterity a sense of shared reference. At the same time, they affect us in the present: we use them in the closest we might come to a "common" language to get ideas across to one another. The characters in myths, especially those whose names have become allusive in our language—Pandora's box, Priapus complex—have the capacity to draw together a host of traits in one term:

...the mythic figure has the power to express in a concentrated way the symbolic order that shapes it. Indeed it is with the symbolic order that the figure takes on a signifying name (a proper name). It does this with a kind of immediate, story-like allusiveness, coming to life in a vital, paradigmatic way...the mythic figure is incomparable both in
its communicative force and in its capacity to stir up a sense of self-recognition (Cavarero 1995, p. 1).

To speak of Mentor—the proper name now equated with the process—is to conjure up an image of the concern of the elders for the young and of the passing on of useful knowledge which might help the next generation live life. Reference to the myth implies that there is something to be learned from the past. This may very well be true but whether this is wishful thinking or a cautionary tale is open to interpretation given the frequency with which we perpetrate horrors on one another. However, it is a sustaining myth which tells us how we ought to live.

In a broader context the story of Athena/Mentor is one example within the myth or structure of concern (Frye 1967; 1990) which offers up a social vision of our beliefs and principles. Perhaps we should ask ourselves whether we have ever believed in mentoring as an article of faith. I cannot find evidence for mentoring in this particular light though it may differ little from the Christian precept that we help one another. The recurrent emphasis on caring reminds us that our sense of personal relationship may not be nearly as strong as the zeal with which we pursue such abstractions as freedom and equality. It seems to me that there is an anxiety submerged beneath our profuse praise of mentoring: "The anxiety of continuity is really an anxiety of hoping never to meet a situation in which there is a dialectical conflict" (Frye 1990, p. 144). Perhaps, as Adam Phillips (1998) claims, "Fear of the unknown is cured through flight into the intelligible" (p. 110). This anxiety can be harnessed into mentoring programs which purport to offer support for people as they enter new professions or other phases on what is popularly known as a career path. Mentoring programs which claim to
ease beginning teachers into teaching cannot revitalize it. Revivification comes with conflict, with the clash between what we encounter and what we think a situation could be. I am in no way suggesting that the visitations of Job are necessary requirements for change and growth. However, what are our motives for programming care? We may, actually, not believe much in mentoring projects. We do, however, believe in the social necessity of espousing them. The emphasis, as I will show later, on passing on the traditions of teaching may have little to do with revitalizing the profession and much to do with maintaining a reassuring structure into which beginning teachers can fit without too much disquiet. The myth of Athena/Mentor, then, has served as a justification for the creation and existence of mentoring programs.

When researchers refer to the myth of Athena/Mentor they seem eager to evoke continuity and tradition, that through time immemorial something like mentoring has occurred. It is a backhanded acknowledgment to mentoring's past which, once made, is dropped. What might this tendency suggest? I think it is indicative of a paradox. The concept as Homer presented it meant something to the Greeks. Given the amount of space it occupies in The Odyssey it does not seem to be a terribly significant thing. We seem to have transformed it into something of a fetish, making more of it than its origins imply. Yet we seem unaware of the hyperbole in which we indulge. We have wrenched the concept from its classical moorings. As a result, mentoring has taken on the status of an idol, erected to be admired but not integrated meaningfully into our personal experience. We have made little attempt to bridge the historical and contemporary contexts in order to reshape the notion for our time. Perhaps what we construe as mentoring needs to
be revised and renamed. Perhaps the linguistic confusion I note earlier is
a manifestation of the potential to reinterpret the concept. These are
tentative musings, and I still am inclined to remain sceptical. All the
evidence seems to point to our psychological need to aver that, indeed,
we should help one another. Civilization itself moves in this way "to
make the desirable and the moral coincide" (Frye 1973, p. 156). The
Athena/Mentor myth is one way of expressing this requirement without
appearing too didactic about our failure to do so on a consistent basis.
Mentoring is in the bedrock of our understanding, to follow on the
notion of sedimentation articulated by both Ricoeur and Derrida, and its
strength is in its recurrence.

To what purposes do we really put myth when we refer to it in relation
to mentoring? What social vision do we have in mind for teachers when
we call on the myth? These questions, along with language, are further
complicated when gender is added to the mix.
CHAPTER 2

A QUESTION OF GENDER

Athene has nothing of sex except gender, nothing of the woman except the form.

W.E. Gladstone 1878 in Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History.

The meaning of the Mentor story has become sedimented as a narrative about the passing on of tradition. As a result, the necessity of continuity which it seems to herald obscures Athena's sex change. Though some might argue that the tale of Athena/Mentor is a fiction, that her shapeshifting is a manifestation of magical powers, an episode of deities consorting with humans, of symbolic not literal value, not to look for the possible meanings of Athena's transformation only serves to sustain "the tacit underpinnings of gender" (Smith 1997, p. 395). A feminist perspective can contribute to a rereading of the myth: "Through the questions that feminism poses and the absences it locates, feminism argues the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions as well as in the distribution of power and privilege" (Lather 1991, p. 71). What else could the Mentor story signify if we were to resurrect the erased goddess?

Consideration of sex and gender in research across different disciplines is of recent provenance:

Concern with gender as an analytic category has emerged only in the late twentieth century. It is absent from the major bodies of social theory articulated from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century. To be sure, some of those theories built their logic on analogies to the opposition of male and female, others acknowledged a "woman question," still others addressed the formation of subjective sexual identity, but gender as a way of talking about systems of social or sexual relations did not appear (Scott 1988, p. 41).
Feminist scholars in various academic fields—from literature to sociology, from science to music—have closely scrutinized how the status quo, historically shaped by men in positions of power and authority, has constrained women's lives and proscribed the ways and places in which they might act (Bordo 1986; Cavarero 1995; Code 1991; Grumet 1988; Harding 1991; Hellbrun 1988; Hufton 1996; Lerner 1986; McClary 1991; Scott 1988; Smith 1987; Smith 1990; Spender 1980; Weiler 1992).

"Historically, feminists have had to confront problems which are central to the ideological organization of their societies, and which are therefore not meant to be seen or even considered as problems" (Scott 1996, p. 175). They have brought to the foreground that the construction of gender is socially, historically, and culturally embedded.

"Gender" was originally a grammatical term which, before the late 1960s, referred to the difference between feminine and masculine forms within the English language (Nicholson 1994). When the move to standardize English began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, grammarians assumed that the language possessed a natural gender, that nouns referring to humans and animals could be classified by their sex. This gender coding contrasts with French and German which have grammatical gender: inanimate objects, places, and concepts are gendered as well as living beings. In the late twentieth century "gender" has slipped outside its grammatical boundaries to distinguish it from "sex," where the latter refers to humans' biological characteristics and the former "to any social construction having to do with the male/female distinction, including those constructions that separate 'female' bodies from 'male' bodies" (Nicholson 1994, p. 79). Research which specifically includes gender as an analytic category has provided the space for the
description of women's experiences without their being subsumed in
studies of "mankind" and "humanity" (Read "male" in these last two
terms. I shall have more to say about this linguistic phenomenon
below.).

An important distinction needs to be made between a woman's
perspective and a feminist one. Though a feminist standpoint may be
said to concentrate on women, an emphasis on women does not
necessarily guarantee a feminist analysis:

A feminist standpoint is distinct from a "women's
standpoint" because of its achieved feminist consciousness,
and hence is more than just another perspective on the
world. It is a hard-won product of consciousness-raising and
social-political engagement, designed to reveal the false
presuppositions that patriarchal hierarchies and
androcentred epistemologies are built upon, and to counter
the forms of alienation they produce (Code 1995, p. 41).

Two examples from recent work in Jungian psychology serve to illustrate
this assertion. I have chosen them because they are instances where
mythology crosses into the popular consciousness.

Jean Shinoda Bolen and Maureen Murdock have analyzed the myth of
Athena for today's women. Bolen (1984) identifies Athena as the
prototypical father's daughter and argues that the goddess is a self-
sufficient deity who possesses characteristics women might profitably
incorporate into their behaviour. Bolen adds that Athena-type women
gravitate toward older men as mentors. Murdock (1994), also
characterizing Athena as a father's daughter, suggests that women who
are close to their fathers can only realize their talents by separating from
them, the Oedipal plot for women. Both psychoanalysts arrive at their
conclusions through a similar reading of the Athena mythology: she is a
warrior goddess who consorts more with men than with women. Neither
Bolen nor Murdock look beyond this particular reading of the goddess's character. By not considering the strange circumstances of Athena's birth—she is motherless and springs full-grown from the head of her father Zeus—they dislodge her from her literary and historical context, making her into a stand-alone figure who can be used, in these circumstances, as a psychological snapshot. Despite their focus on women Bolen and Murdock fail to address the injustice of women's unequal positions in many fields. Their analysis maintains the timelessness and fertility of myth. The research on mentoring reflects similar tendencies.

A feminist perspective is enhanced by a synthesis with poststructuralism, enabling me to reread the story of Athena/Mentor for its meaning in relation to gender, to reread it both intertextually (What other texts come to mind when Athena/Mentor is invoked?) and historically (What other representations of Athena exist throughout time and space?). Indeed, history and literature are themselves intertextual: "They are both part of the signifying systems of our culture, and therein lies their meaning and their value" (Hutcheon 1988, p. 140). As I shall demonstrate in the following chapter, Athena has not always been depicted as we see her in her Homeric incarnation nor in the Greek mythology we have inherited. We may conclude, with some justification, that, if the texts of literature have the power to teach us something about the human condition, then Athena's sex change tells us explicitly that women may consider themselves excluded from any sphere of action unless they become men. This literary interpretation of Athena carries over into other disciplines—psychological, educational, philosophical, social.
The poststructuralist strategy of deconstruction is useful in looking for other meanings of received knowledge. It helps in analyzing binary oppositions prevalent in the Western philosophical tradition—presence/absence, theory/practice, and objectivity/subjectivity are a few examples—and in challenging the claim that these oppositions are independent of one another:

The leading terms are accorded primacy; their partners are represented as weaker or derivative. Yet the first terms depend on and derive their meaning from the second to such an extent that the secondary terms can be seen as generative of the definition of the first terms (Scott 1988, p. 37).

Furthermore, the fundamental distinction beneath binary oppositions is the male/female dichotomy. As a result, the Athena/Mentor opposition seems to lend itself readily to a deconstructive approach allowing me to engage in what Mary Poovey (1988) has called "the project of demystification" (p. 58):

[In its demystifying mode, deconstruction...problematises and opens to scrutiny the very nature of identity and oppositional logic and therefore makes visible the artifice necessary to establish, legislate, and maintain hierarchical thinking (p. 58).]

In the Athena/Mentor story, then, we are faced with the maintenance of a traditional hierarchy of value where the male is placed above the female. That this interpretation of the mentoring tale can be overlooked attests to the tenacity with which gender has, over time, been buried from our view.

Deconstruction "...has also come to mean more generally any exposure of a concept as ideological or culturally constructed rather than natural or a simple reflection of reality" (Alcoff 1988, n 24, p. 305). To deconstruct the mentoring story is to question whether it is only about
the passing on of tradition. Adding gender to the mix allows us to see that the tradition is unequivocally male. Deconstruction, therefore, contributes to a deeper understanding of "the figurative nature of all ideology" (Poovey 1988, p. 58), in this case the maintenance of patriarchal structures and norms.

A feminist perspective also includes an active political agenda for change:

The many feminist social agendas demand a theory of agency, but such a theory is visibly lacking in postmodernism, caught as it is in a certain negativity that may be inherent in any critique of cultural dominants. It has no theory of positive action on a social level; all feminist positions do (Hutcheon 1989, p. 22).

The act of identifying how gender constructions constrain women's participation in the everyday world is a necessary step toward social change. Since these understandings involve language—the social use of words to which I referred extensively in the previous chapter—it is important to examine how we simultaneously enable and restrict ourselves through our use of words. This is not to be taken as merely a game of semantics: "To clarify the meaning of a word where ambiguity exists and where diverse consequences follow from diverse clarifications is itself a political act" (Nicholson 1994, p. 102). Mary Hawkesworth (1997) states: "Gender as an analytic category frames questions for investigation that are literally inconceivable within traditional disciplines" (p. 708). A tendency to ignore gender still exists despite the prominence it has received since the second wave of feminism. Issues of "humanity" tend to overtake those dealing with women's unequal social position (Blair et al 1997), attesting to the strength of the tacit belief that to debate gendered arrangements is to
manifest a hatred of men. Although by many this is considered a postfeminist age, gender issues remain unresolved. Therefore I intend to explore what the concept of mentoring might mean for women when gender is joined to the questions of language and mythology.

THE QUESTIONS OF GENDER AND LANGUAGE

In her introduction to The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader (1990), Deborah Cameron asks why language is a feminist issue. Her question is not a frivolous one, especially in the light of her ongoing work in linguistics and language practices (1985; 1989; 1992). Part of the answer to Cameron's question may lie in the understanding that language is a means of manipulating reality and that this manipulation takes place over time and in social contexts.

There is a longstanding history of language excluding women from representation: "The story of the universal masculine is quite old....In Homer's poems humankind is already named in the masculine plural" (Cavarero 1995, p. 69). Virtue, technically, can only apply to men because it is derived from the Latin word *vir* denoting "man." Further in history, the force of rules and laws ensconced the view that "man" would be the standard form in English to denote humanity. Richard Kirby established this concept in his 1746 work Eighty-eight Grammatical Rules: Rule Number 21 stated that, because men were more comprehensive by nature and in character than women, they were entitled to be more important. "Man" represented more than himself, certainly much more than "woman", and, thereby, could stand for all of humanity (Spender 1996). Similarly, and with the added weight of actual legislation, a British Act of Parliament decreed in 1850 that "man" should be the standard form, and that by law it would encompass woman" (Spender
1996, p. 19). Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, published in English in 1952, further attests to the inequality between women and men in language and how the binary construction which emerges reinforces the disparity:

In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electric poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity (p. xxi, emphasis in the original).

More recent feminist work on language has pointed out that *man* cannot encompass *woman*:

Casey Miller and Kate Swift show how ridiculous it becomes if we do take man at his word, and include a female image in the "man as humanity" term: "One may be saddened but not surprised at the statement 'man is the only primate that commits rape', they explain, because even though *man* refers to only half of mankind, there is no conflict between man as a species, and man as the agent of this act; Man is man. "But 'man being a mammal breastfeeds his young' is taken as a joke": and it shows just how far removed from the meaning of man, as well as mankind, woman is (Spender 1996, p. 21).

Naomi Scheman (1993) explains the effect the notion of generic "man" can have on women:

As has been argued by many feminist theorists, masculine nouns and pronouns do not, in fact, have genuinely generic senses. Rather, in designating the masculine as generic, they designate the feminine as different, thereby requiring an act of self-estrangement on the part of female readers who would take themselves to be included in their scope (p. 146, emphasis in the original).

As a consequence of the ongoing feminist project of examining the extent to which linguistic structures underpin our perceptions of the world, work on non-sexist, more inclusive, even so-called gender-neutral
language has proceeded over the last three decades. However, this has had mixed and even unexpected results.

It is in usage that non-sexist language has not completely escaped gender encoding: "true generics such as chairperson and spokesperson, introduced to replace masculine generics such as chairman and spokesman, seem to have lost their neutrality in that they are often only used for women" (Ehrlich 1995, p. 53). Ehrlich substantiates her claim by citing Betty Lou Dubois and Isabel Crouch's review of announcements in the academic publication *Chronicle of Higher Education*: a woman in charge of a university department was referred to as chairperson and a man in a similar position was called chairman. Ehrlich concludes:

Rather than ridding the language of a masculine generic, the introduction of neutral generic forms such as chairperson or chair has led to a gender-based distinction between forms such as chairperson or chair (used to designate females) vs. chairman (used to designate males). Thus...these true generics are used in ways that maintain distinctions that the terms were intended to eliminate—distinctions clearly important to the speech community in question (p. 53).

Despite efforts to eliminate gender marking, little seems to have changed since Spender's (1980) claim that sex-neutrality is not a meaningful category in our society. Our need to make sense of the world still revolves around the masculine/feminine distinction. Two other comments, historically bracketing Spender's, suggest that, indeed, gender differentiation is an ongoing issue: "Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores" (de Beauvoir 1952, p. xxvi); and "Our linguistic habits often reflect and perpetuate ideas about things which are no longer embodied in law, but which continue to have covert significance in the culture" (Cameron 1990, p. 16). Language, then, as a structure for
the articulation of experience, orders reality and continues to demarcate gendered spaces. Like Athena's sublimation into Mentor, generic language seems to erase woman while leaving man visible and intact.

Naming, as another aspect of language, is another feminist issue warranting serious consideration: "Perhaps women have been more aware of naming in relation to reference because they have traditionally been designated by paternal and spousal surnames" (Hutcheon 1988, p. 151). Who, after all, is named in the Athena/Mentor myth? If there can be no reality without reference, then is it not possible that mentoring may be a concept biased in favour of men because reference to woman is erased? As in marriage in Western culture, where the woman frequently takes her spouse's name (often also being referred to by her husband's first name as well as surname after the title Mrs.), Athena's presence is effaced in her renaming. The name "Mentor" seems to become, consequently, a rigid designator of reality (Hutcheon 1988) which, at its core, apparently excludes women. Looking for the gender of/in the narrative permits a rereading of the literature on mentoring. This process may yield up different, or even contrary, explanations of mentoring which may be as valid as previous accounts.

It is important to understand that reference applies equally to the social sciences as it does to literature: a significant aspect of the research on mentoring relies on reference to the Mentor myth as it appears in The Odyssey. Whereas modernist verbal or visual art claimed that it was separate from language and had autonomous status as art first, the postmodernist response has been to challenge this position. All representation springs from a material context which comprises discourse; therefore, whether a work be fiction or non-fiction, it may be
said to be better understood through the other texts it evokes. Contrary to the modernist view—which, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, had pretensions to aping the transcendence the physical sciences claimed for themselves from society and culture—no work stands apart from its social and cultural milieus (Hutcheon 1988).

To extend this notion to literature, then, "words refer, not to things, but to systems of signs that are 'ready-made textual units'' (Riffaterre in Hutcheon 1988, p. 143). I think a similar position may be taken in relation to the research literature on mentoring: when researchers refer to mentoring, they are calling on a whole system of meaning which subsequently frames their research questions within that identical context, one which comprises a presumed shared and fixed understanding of mentoring. It also seems to imply that there is a direct correspondence between Homer's story and the process of mentoring as we know it today. But we might pause and reflect on the seeming certainty this reliance on reference and correspondence implies. Echoing Eco, Hutcheon reminds us that "reference is not correspondence, after all" (p. 144). To invoke/evoke Mentor is immediately to make intertextual reference to the myth: "mentor" is not a freestanding term no matter how much researchers may evade explicit reference to the Homeric tale.

Even the decision to disregard Athena's sex change is a social one: "Dominant groups have more interests than those they dominate in not formulating and in excluding questions about how social relations and nature 'really work'' (Harding 1997, pp. 384-5). Therefore when the real gender of Mentor (Athena) is reinstated, the illusory smooth surface of correspondence, which seems to pervade the research on mentoring, is
further cracked open. The resulting fissure allows us not only to reread the Athena/Mentor myth but also to propose other meanings.

Perhaps the reason gender frequently eludes analysis is because we believe that there is political equality between women and men and, therefore, equality in all aspects of existence. Yet on a psychological level the relationship between men and women is far from being an equal one. I would suggest that almost any examination of programs or initiatives to recruit more women into the sciences and Mathematics makes this clear. It is difficult to argue against these affirmative action strategies on a literal level: those who engage in them usefully identify discriminatory barriers which combine with female socialization for identity and behaviour to keep women out of fields previously seen as men's domains. At the same time, however, these attempts at making workplace change have limited impact: they do not in any concerted way address how the division of labour in the larger society, coupled with the gender symbolism in which virtually every field participates, are equally responsible for the small number of women who might enter these milieus, let alone *contemplate* entering them at earlier stages in their lives:

Until both the "emotional labor" and the "intellectual and manual labor" of housework and child care are perceived as desirable for all men, the "intellectual and manual labor" of science and public life will not be perceived as potentially desirable activities for all women. The equity recommendations, moreover, *ask women to exchange aspects of their gender identity for the masculine version—without prescribing a similar "degendering" for men* (Harding 1986, p. 53, emphasis added).

Gender conceptions operate in insidious ways, all the while reinforcing masculine norms.
Things have changed little. In Closing the Gap, a report on female executives' progress in Canada, researchers Judith McBride-King and Sheila Wellington found that "Women in the study reported that to get ahead they had to...develop a style with which male managers were comfortable" (Gibb-Clark 1997, A4). The implication seems to be that masculine patterns of behaviour still prevail in the workplace, and, in order for women to succeed, they must present themselves in ways which virtually extinguish their femininity. Furthermore, in an International Labour Organization study of women's job prospects, Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management, Linda Wirth's findings show that "ambitious women are thwarted by the structure of workplaces, a surfeit of male colleagues and beliefs about what skills and values are considered desirable in presidents and chief executive officers" (Knox 1997, A20). What hope can there be, then, for mentoring being anything other than a process which supports the masculine status quo and one which seems to force women to be like men? I cite these recent works extensively to mark that teacher development is not immune to similar tendencies when it embraces mentoring as an effective means for helping teachers.

By examining language and how gender is constructed through it, we can begin to see that our use of language simultaneously "sets boundaries and contains the possibility of negation, resistance, reinterpretation, the play of metaphoric invention and imagination" (Scott 1988, p. 42). The questions of gender and language, along with a concomitant emphasis on a literary model of analysis, allow for an examination of mentoring theories and practices between and across many contexts.
THE QUESTIONS OF GENDER AND MYTHOLOGY

The stark outlines of gender relations seem more readily discernible in mythology:

...because ancient Greece was a society not structured by market relations, a society in which public life did not center on production and exchange, the significance of arguing that power carries gender...can be seen with greater clarity (Hartsock 1983, p. 187).

Simply put, Homer's primary focus in *The Odyssey* is men's exploits. The women *maintain* order around hearth and home while the men *impose* order on the greater world. If we look more carefully at the women, though, what might we discern about concepts of femininity? Have those concepts been carried over into our time? Perhaps the best way to approach the questions of gender and mythology in this instance, then, is to contrast Athena and Penelope, Telemachus's mother and the only other woman of power in the first part of *The Odyssey*. In this way I can situate mentoring both historically and literarily to better query whether it is as inclusive and gender neutral a process as educational researchers would have us believe.

Penelope and Athena seem to be paradoxical images of femininity. In *The Second Sex* (1952) Simone de Beauvoir argues how representations of women have been limited by socially constructed conceptions of femininity:

> In actuality, of course, women appear under various aspects; but each of the myths built up around the subject of woman is intended to sum her up *in toto*; each aspires to be unique. In consequence, a number of incompatible myths exist, and men tarry musing before the strange incoherencies manifested by the idea of Femininity*" (pp. 253-4).

These seeming incompatibilities have stood in the way of acknowledging the full range of women's natures and subsumed it under the rubric of
"femininity," a term which carries meanings of socially proscribed behaviours which make a woman recognizably feminine. Myth can become the bulwark of ideology which, in its turn, commands absolute assent. Is it possible, then, that theories and practices of mentoring might fall into the category of ideology, and of a gendered one at that?

Homer's tale occurs against the backdrop of an historical event: a war was waged by the Greeks against the Trojans. The story provides an early reference point from which we can trace the narrative form which has established the Western convention that only men can achieve heroism and that women may not actively participate in that world. Yet it is precisely at this juncture that the question of gender may be most usefully raised. In the patriarchal world Homer describes women are, for the most part, impediments. De Beauvoir notes:

> It is natural for her to use the power she has, not to spread through the community of men and into the future the bold emprise of transcendence, but, being apart, opposed, to drag the males into the solitude of separation, into the shades of immanence....The perverse sorceress arrays passion against duty, the present moment against all time to come; she detains the traveler far from home, she pours him the drink of forgetfulness (p. 165).

Odysseus, in true heroic fashion, resists the Sirens' call and flees Circe's grasp to continue on his trek. His "escapes," however, paint woman as distraction and further marks her as the Other, making her that part of the male/female binary opposition where she is everything that man is not. In this manifestation woman can be painted as a threat to the unity of the warrior community (Hartsock 1983).

Unlike Athena, Penelope cannot transport herself beyond her palace precincts. Apparently patiently awaiting Odysseus's return, she weaves and unweaves her tapestry that she may keep the horde of suitors on her
doorstep at bay. The action around her household comes about because Penelope has been without a husband for so long: the only thing she possesses is Odysseus's property and the status conferred on her by her marriage to him, thereby attracting these men to her. However, we are told that her predicament is more important to Telemachus than to Penelope because his inability to quell the rabble puts his masculinity in question. (I shall discuss this aspect in more detail in the next chapter. It is important to note this feature now, though, since it precipitates the Mentor portion of the story).

We have come to accept this conventional Penelope, the wife who is rewarded for being faithful to her husband and for understanding that it is not only necessity but duty too which impels him to leave her and their home in Ithaca. Whilst this interpretation may be comforting to men—no matter what they do, women will willingly remain in a state of suspended animation, only to be revivified by men's reappearance—it affords none to women. In this context women can have no existence outside men and are effectively denied the capacity to be the subjects of their own lives: they are transformed into the Other. Thus Penelope can be cast in the traditional role of "privileged judge" (de Beauvoir 1952, p. 182):

Man dreams of an Other not only to posses her but to be ratified by her; to be ratified by other men, his peers, demands a constant tension; hence he wishes consideration from outside to confer an absolute value upon his life....Being the Other, she remains exterior to man's world and can view it objectively; and being close to man and dominated by him, she does not establish values foreign to his nature. She it is who in each particular case will report the presence or absence of courage, strength, beauty, while giving outside confirmation of their universal value....Woman is outside the fray: her whole situation
destines her to play this role of concerned spectator (pp. 182-3).

And Homer's text seems to bear this assertion out. On Odysseus's return the reunited spouses tell one another their stories:

She, shining among women, told of all she had endured in the palace, as she watched the suitors, a ravenous company, who on her account were slaughtering many oxen and fat sheep, and much wine was being drawn from the wine jars. But shining Odysseus told of all the cares he inflicted on other men, and told too of all that in his misery he had toiled through (Lattimore 1991, p. 343, ll 302-308, emphases added).

There is a subtle inflection in the use of the word "But" in this text: it gives greater weight to Odysseus's experiences than to Penelope's. She, after all, has only had to endure; she has been the object around whom the action has swirled. Odysseus, on the other hand, has put upon others; he has been the subject who has set things in motion. Therefore his sufferings are of a greater magnitude than hers. To parody Gladstone's observation at the head of this chapter, Penelope has everything of sex including gender, everything of the woman including the form. By ending her story at this juncture Homer leaves us with a seemingly enduring model of acceptable femininity, one which vividly puts woman in her place in the home. Yet this femininity has been fashioned by men: it reveals what they want women to be and not necessarily how women see themselves.

In this standard reading, Penelope seems to exemplify all of society's expectations for femininity. Can there be more, though, to her than the long-suffering wife? Of the many women in The Odyssey she seems unique. Though her father gives her in marriage to Odysseus he is so distressed at this event that he pursues her on the journey to her husband's home in Ithaca. Odysseus, rather than just taking what is
"rightfully" his, tells Penelope that she may remain with her father or go with him. She decides to begin a new life with Odysseus. Similarly Penelope chooses to remain faithful to her long-absent husband, using her weaving and unweaving as stalling tactics against her boisterous suitors. Might her actions mean something else besides only being typical women's activities in which she engages to while away the time?

Carolyn Heilbrun (1990) suggests that Penelope is weaving a new woman's narrative for which there is no template: "What she must do is to live her life without a story to guide her: no woman before has been in this position" (p. 107). It was the practice for Greek women to weave stories of men's heroic actions into their tapestries: Helen of Troy does just that while the Trojan war rages around her; Penelope weaves her father-in-law's death shroud as the conflict continues. However, when the war ends and there is no further need to weave the tales of men's heroism, what could Penelope be doing? Heilbrun continues:

During the years between the Trojan War and the suitors' discovery of her unweaving, Penelope has been trying out stories on her loom. She unravels each night what she has woven that day, not only for delay, but also, metaphorically, because unlike the other weavers, she is not writing a story of male violence, but the story of a woman's free choice, and there is no narrative to guide her (p. 107).

Heilbrun puts Penelope forward as an exemplar of femininity who uses traditional woman's work with subversive intent. Yet this is, I think, only a partial explanation. Too many other questions remain. Does Penelope's perseverance really differentiate her from other Greek women because she is able to choose a spouse? Did she really have a choice given the Greeks' belief that human life was at the mercy and whim of the gods? Could the story of her marriage—separation from the parent—be an extension to women of the male Oedipal plot?
Perhaps Adriana Cavarero's (1995) interpretation of Penelope, taking its inspiration from a fleeting reference to her in Plato's *Phaedo*, may elucidate and expand Heilbrun's. Cavarero recognizes a point which Heilbrun seems to miss to the detriment of her otherwise useful argument:

Snatched from their context, Demeter, Penelope, Diotima, and the young woman from Thrace literally stand before us, *surrounded by the male code of ancient cast that has imprisoned them in its tenacious metaphysical web*. The nostalgic pathos for an improbable long-lost glory will not help restore these ancient mothers to a meaningful life as female figures. They are brought back to life in the sober gestures of a thousand daughters weaving together in their mother's home (p. 9, emphasis added).

Cavarero suggests that Homer has inadvertently sown the seeds of a dissident reading of Penelope's actions which she, Cavarero, wishes to reclaim. She, like Heilbrun, sees Penelope's unweaving as a subversive act. Yet where Heilbrun posits a new narrative Cavarero contends that Penelope actually creates her own world:

For the events from which Penelope retreats with her endless work are the great events of history—the history of men, of heroes. Therefore, they are inroads onto a history that is not hers, where she will not take up a space, but only a place in an alien symbolic order (p. 13).

Penelope achieves a solitude and independence which depend on no man, confident in herself and apparently wily enough to paralyze a whole host of men.

The act of weaving sets up female rhythms and spaces, making way for a female symbolic order (Cavarero 1995). Whereas Penelope would seem to be acquiescing to her duties as a woman by working with her maidservants, the undoing of her daily work, in reality, nullifies the role ascribed to her by the patriarchal symbolic order: "in this room Penelope
contradicts and renders vain the work of the loom, tailoring for herself an unpredictable and impenetrable time and space" (Cavarero 1995, p. 16). The room which Penelope creates is women's space away from men, away from the exigencies of domesticity. Yet in the male mind this space is a green room where women await the return of the conquering heroes. They often cannot imagine anything happening in the company of women, hence, perhaps, Homer's silence about what may be going on onstage. However, there seems nothing contradictory nor suspicious in men coming together. This is, after all, a "natural" phenomenon of their lives where they can plan to make things happen.

Taken together, Heilbrun's and Cavarero's readings of Penelope look beyond her uxorial fidelity to reinstate her resourcefulness in the face of an unwanted siege of suitors and of Telemachus's attempts to assert his manhood. She demonstrates a clarity of thought and habit of mind which subvert the existing male order. Under the guise of marriage and domesticity—two markers of femininity—she nonetheless remains true to herself even as she appears as the uncomplaining wife. Interpreters of her actions and character have been, I think, deceived by Penelope's tractability. The gap in this story, though, is the want of the woman's narrative. We must wait for other occasions to actually write what Penelope may have thought and said during her long wait, in the same way that many female authors have taken up silenced mythological women and given them voice (Atwood, Bogan, Raine, Sarton in Gilbert and Gubar 1985).

Heilbrun's and Cavarero's alternate readings of Penelope serve to guide me in my consideration of Athena. It is because her change from female to male seems not to have raised questions that I am interested
in addressing the ramifications of her deed. Her incarnation in Greek mythology serves me well as it stands behind any of the research on mentoring. To look at her femininity, as contrasted with Penelope's, has the potential to strip away our easy acceptance of mentoring as it is currently construed.

Athena emerges from Zeus's head. He had been told that any son he might have with Metis would surpass him. So, in what amounts to a preemptive strike, Zeus swallows the pregnant Metis hoping to avoid his fate. Zeus's plight is similar to his father Cronus's who devoured his children so as not to be usurped by them. However, Zeus's act is far more sinister. As de Beauvoir (1952) reminds us: "Man does not wish to be woman, but he dreams of enfolding within him all that exists, including therefore this woman, whom he is not;...he endeavors to take possession of her strange wealth" (p. 172). Zeus commandeers the maternal by devouring the mother of his child. Yet it is not sufficient to consider his deed as an example of man's acquisition of wisdom (both Metis and Athena symbolize it) (Walker 1983). This position only reinforces binary distinctions at the expense of addressing the complexity behind gender representation. Ultimately it also flies in the face of Zeus's capricious nature throughout Greek mythology: he hardly seems possessed of sober thought, especially in his relations with women. Zeus's appropriation of the mothering role relieves him of any obligations to Metis as the mother of his child.

This tale implies that woman is a burden. She is a constant reminder to man of the present, of the demands of the body, of the passage of time. In contrast, man's pursuit of glory and immortality is premised on transcending the here-and-now to locate life everlasting in the heavens.
Therefore, to die for immortality does not seem paradoxical. Man's consideration of life begins with a death wish, not with birth. If, however, the function could be arrogated, would man then not be able to have the best of all worlds: immortality through death and memory, and physical continuity of the species without the necessity of a woman? Swallowing Metis removes her from sight and silences any inconvenient demands she might morally make on the father of her child:

A masculine symbolic horizon thus opens up. This horizon feeds on dualisms: woman/birth and man/death, body and thought. But these are uneasy dualisms. They are not bipolar opposites based on equality. For the masculine pole controls the other one; that is, the universalization of one sex reduces the other to a function, and throws all the negative categories upon it (Cavarero 1995, p. 70).

What better way to remove what is not man than to devour her? Zeus's act works, then, on literal and symbolic levels: the actual feat of devouring the woman also symbolizes patriarchy bolting her down.

Athena's emergence as an adult, with no history of a childhood, allows Homer to use her as an example of a woman fashioned by man. The story also serves to ground the tradition of women, literally or metaphorically, changing themselves into men. Indeed the women who fight alongside men garner praise: "Heroines in armor, not Amazons, but soldiers among soldiers, will populate the epic imagination of future poets!" (Cavarero 1995, p. 22). This is evident in Athena: bedecked in clothing which keeps her from injury, yet equally encases her femininity, the goddess is the model for an acceptable assertiveness because her energies are devoted to maintaining patriarchy. It is not too great a stretch of the imagination, in turn, to transform Athena into a man: she can be a "self-destructive propitiator" (Cavarero 1995, p. 49), one of a number of women who support patriarchy in Greek thought at the
expense of their own identity. There can be no ambivalence about whose values are being championed; and it is only in resurrecting the woman that those very values may be questioned. Two other examples of Athena's support of patriarchy, which go beyond the Homeric text, reinforce the ambiguous position she occupies as an exemplar of femininity.

In a weaving contest between Athena and Arachne, the latter not only surpassed the goddess's skills but also had the temerity to depict crimes the gods had committed against women. According to Ovid the goddess tore up the tapestry and then beat Arachne over the head with her shuttle. In trying to avoid this brutal assault Arachne ended up hanging herself. Athena subsequently turned her into a spider who could weave webs but could no longer bear witness, either pictorially or vocally, to male violence (Heilbrun 1990).

In The Oresteia Athena once again supports patriarchy. Orestes had slain his mother Clytemnestra who had killed her husband Agamemnon in revenge for his sacrifice of their daughter Iphegenia for good winds and victory in battle. The Furies, the avengers of matricide, pursue Orestes, but he is promised deliverance from them if he goes to Athens to stand trial. Athena calls the city's jurors into session, and Orestes' case is heard. His defence counsel is the god of light, Apollo, who had urged Orestes to kill his mother in the first place. Arguing that Agamemnon was killed by a woman who was his wife and not by an Amazon (who would have killed him in honourable battle, not in an ignominious domestic dispute), Apollo continues by claiming that the mother is not the real parent of the child but merely the nurse who tends to the tender boy's growth from the seed planted by the true parent, the male. Apollo
uses Athena's birth as proof positive that the mother is unnecessary and expendable. The jury is deadlocked. It is Athena who casts the deciding vote which absolves Orestes and frees him to continue his life. To placate the Furies Athena promises them a room of their own:

Their task will be to dispose of all mortal ways and to help households prosper. That is, they are to concern themselves with daily life, with the household realm of production, with tasks traditionally within the sphere of women. They are not to concern themselves with issues of immortality, philosophy, or war—the sphere of men and divine virgins in the new state (Hartsock 1983, p. 191, emphases in the original).

Indeed, contrary to Gladstone's epigraph, Athena has everything of sex and gender: she acquiesces to being the Other and she visibly supports patriarchy, remaining silent on the violence men, whether mortal or otherwise, have committed against women. As a result, the rendering of Athena, whether in Homer or Ovid or Aeschylus, maintains conventional gender roles:

Evidently it is not reality that dictates to society or to individuals their choice between the two opposed basic categories; in every period, in each case, society and the individual decide in accordance with their needs. Very often they project into the myth adopted the institutions and values to which they adhere (de Beauvoir 1952, pp. 254-5).

Mythology becomes the mirror of culture used to entrench patriarchal power.

What more might we make, then, of Athena's physical change into Mentor? It would probably be a loss of face for Telemachus to be advised by a woman, no matter how divine. If the Oedipal story continues to be reenacted, then listening to a woman would be tantamount to being unable to separate from the mother. This stance, in many ways, helps to explain Telemachus's callow treatment of Penelope when he orders her
off a stage which is crowded with men jockeying for power (Book I, ll 356-359; Book XXI, ll 350-352). He claims "For mine is the power in this household" (Book I, l 359). It seems necessary for the preservation of his manhood that advice come from a male and that women be out of sight.

Contrasting Penelope and Athena presupposes significant differences, and these do exist: the spheres in which they move are markedly opposed, making Penelope seem passive and Athena active. Yet this most obvious of disparities may be deceptive. We might think that Penelope would be the woman more constrained in her actions because she is housebound. A closer look at Athena, however, shows that she too is no freer to act than Penelope. Like Penelope, she has no voice outside the company of men. Matrimony silences Penelope. Most crucially Athena has to sacrifice her very physical form to be able to speak and participate in the momentous events of Homer's story. Neither woman has her own narrative. In Athena's transformation gender is hidden under a cloak of masculinity, as subtle a disappearing act as her mother Metis being consumed by Zeus. This covering has remained even up to the present. How can we not be perturbed by the necessity of women turning against themselves still in what seems an endless repetition of old verities about gender roles? By using gender as an analytic category might we not need to "unname" (LeGuin 1990) mentoring? To do so may very well be a difficult task: mentoring is too firmly entrenched in our lexicon and thinking to go away. Or, to quote John Kerrigan (1998) on the difficulties of relinquishing the notion of cosmopolitanism, yet pertinent to conceptions such as mentoring: perhaps mentoring "is so shot through with paradoxes which frustrate any desire wholly to reject it" (p. 8). At the very least I hope we might question the assumptions we make about
mentoring as an efficacious and appropriate means of teacher development for all teachers. In doing so we might (re)discover other helping relationships in teaching and expand the scope of what we think teacher development might be.
CHAPTER 3

RECURRING MYTHS OF MENTOR

I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary...


We can resist personifying sperm or compulsive force, against the grain of the language we have. But we cannot resist the connecting and comparing habit of mind.

A.S. Byatt, *Still Life*.

The Mentor myth speaks of caring, assurance, guidance, and protection, of an idyllic state which contradicts our sense of alienation from the world around us. As we grow older and as the complexities of adulthood press in upon us, we frequently long for what seems like the simplicity of childhood. The desire for a benevolent and vigilant elder to steer us is strong, and, as a result, the myth of Mentor is often invoked.

The chorus now rings out with the song of Mentor. In the summer of 1996 American television commercials for Children First enlisted the aid of stars such as Tim Allen, Jimmy Smits, and Blair Underwood to tell us we just needed to be "good people" to be mentors. IBM has claimed in an advertising campaign to have electronic mentors to help teachers with software problems. Mentor websites exist on the Internet. Mentoring is hailed in business. Similarly educational researchers seem enthusiastic about mentoring's potential to bring teachers of varying experience together. What is really going on when Mentor is called upon so urgently?

WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

Mentor appears in Homer's *Odyssey*. The Trojan War is on, and Odysseus departs Ithaca to join his warrior companions in the fight, leaving behind Penelope, his wife, and his son Telemachus. But a
kingdom seems not to function very well when the king is absent, so he leaves Telemachus in charge. However, he arranges for the wise old man Mentor to look after his son. And who is Mentor? As it turns out, "he" is Athena, goddess of wisdom, arts, and skills, who transforms herself into the sage. In this way Homer establishes her as "guardian spirit of the family" (Lattimore 1991, p. 6). Before her incarnation as Mentor, Athena first appears to Telemachus as Mentes and, through conversation with the young man, emboldens him to confront the suitors who languish about the palace, waiting for Penelope to choose one of them for her next husband. Athena/Mentes also instructs the young man to go in search of his father. Homer writes that

\[\ldots\text{in his heart he knew the immortal goddess (Book I, p. 38, ll. 420–1)}\]

and that

\[\ldots\text{he pondered in his heart the journey that Pallas Athene had counselled (Book I, p. 38, ll. 443–44).}\]

Therefore, even through the disguise, Telemachus is able to apprehend the goddess.

Mentor makes his first appearance in Book Two. Telemachus prays to Athena after not having been able to convince the suitors to leave, and she appears to him in the likeness of Mentor, reiterating Mentes's counsel that he leave Ithaca for news of his father. Then she disguises herself as Telemachus so that she may assemble the crew for his voyage, reverting to Mentor when they all finally do leave.

It is a curious fact that, though Athena makes herself known as the man Mentor, Homer does not refer to her as male: he uses "she" and not
"he," making it hard sometimes to keep track of Mentor in the mind's eye. When asked by Nestor who he is, Athena refers to herself as a male:

For I am the only man among them who can call myself an elder...(Book III, p. 60, ll. 362–3).

Yet everyone around her (him) knows that this is the goddess. Nestor tells Telemachus:

Here is no other of those who have their homes on Olympos but the very daughter of Zeus, most honored Tritogeneia, who always among the Argives favoured your noble father (Book III, p. 61, ll. 377–9).

What are we to make of this gender bending?

Judging by the reactions of the men, it seems the most "natural" thing to them that Athena turns into a man. She can be referred to as female through the use of the pronoun "she" and the possessive adjective "her," but her physical appearance is the opposite of her actual being. The question still remains: if her advice carries no weight because she is a woman, then whose "body" of knowledge do we value (Semeniuk 1991)? "Man" makes woman invisible by literally imposing his form on her. So Athena can give advice as a man, even though everyone realizes that this is a woman.

**GODDESS APPROPRIATED AND RE-SEXED**

The earliest manifestations of Athena are far removed from the representation we see of her in Homer. Originally from North Africa, she was the Libyan triple goddess variously named Neith, Metis, Medusa, Anath, or Ath-enna. Anath appears to be the name most commonly used. Egyptians said her name meant "I have come from myself." Her mother, Tritone, the Third Gorgon Queen, gave birth to her at Lake Tritonis (Three Queens). The epoch from whence she springs, the Neolithic, was one where fatherhood was unknown and unrecognized, and men's blood,
not semen, was considered the substance which transmitted life. Hence men were sacrificed to Anath. She then hung the penises of her victims on her goatskin apron, or *aegis*. When she was moved to Greece this ceremonial apron became Athena's breastplate, and the penises were transformed into serpents (phalli). She wore these on her *aegis*, along with the Gorgon head representing her Destroyer aspect (Walker 1983).

The other change which occurred was in the story of Anath/Athena's birth. No longer did she spring from the uterine waters of her Libyan home, but burst full-grown from Zeus's head. With the Zeus cult in the ascendant no longer could the female narrative of birth without male participation somewhere in the process predominate. So Zeus swallows Athena's mother Metis (Wisdom) and is able to assimilate her wisdom and claim it as his own. In this way, Athena could be born from Zeus's head (Walker 1983). Consequently, woman-centred mythology and spirituality were overtaken by male-dominated ones, and the goddesses were slowly fashioned into more tractable exemplars of feminine behaviour. This applied to Athena, for even though she was powerful on Olympus she became more closely identified not as herself but as her father's daughter who, in *The Odyssey*, must be a man to speak if she would be heard.

Pitch of voice was important to the Greeks, and they went to great lengths to associate it with gender. A high-pitched voice went along with talkativeness, thus signalling the speaker as "deviant from or deficient in the masculine ideal of self-control" (Carson 1995, p. 119). Women obviously fell into this category. When Telemachus berates the suitors one of them, Antinoös, addresses him as "high-spoken intemperate Telemachos" (Book II, p. 4, l. 185, l. 303), in effect insulting his
masculinity by intimating that he is a woman. Think of the Gorgon's
groan, the Furies' shrieks, the Sirens' song, Cassandra's gabble.

Sophocles describes Echo as "the girl with no door on her mouth" (in
Carson 1995, p. 121) because of her loquacity. Anne Carson continues:

Putting a door on the female mouth has been an important
project of patriarchal culture from antiquity to the present
day. Its chief tactic is an ideological association of female
sound with monstrosity, disorder and death (p. 121).

Some means have to be devised to keep the female from speaking out of
turn. In early Greek culture this eventually amounted to restricting the
places and ceremonies where women could utter sound. They were not
allowed to speak in the polis, the proper place for men to discuss weighty
matters of state. Even the funeral rites were eventually regulated to limit
women's keening and wailing. The sound disturbed the men (Carson
1995). Therefore it is not a complete surprise when a goddess of Athena's
stature is subjected to the prevailing patriarchal standards of suitable
feminine behaviour: she has the body of a man and a lower pitched voice.
She will not prate, and her voice will not grate. By virtue of Athena's
magical transformation, then, the myth of Mentor comes down to us in
its masculinist form, keeping women in their place, showing them to be
acceptable only when their physical bodies and behaviour ape men's.

A LINGUISTIC HISTORY OF "MENTOR"

The literary roots of "m(M)entor" begin to establish a conceptual
framework which is twofold: it is hierarchical and, as far as I can see, it
excludes women. To get even further under the skin of the idea, a look at
"mentor's" linguistic origins should prove helpful: "We must analyze the
language we use. All denunciation of individual words, without careful
linguistic analysis, amounts to nothing more than theatrical posturing" (Poerksen 1995, p. 6).

The Oxford English Dictionary (1976) notes that the name "Mentor" signifies "adviser." It is an agent-noun derived from the Greek root *men-* meaning to remember, think, counsel. The dictionary's compilers posit that Homer either invented the word or chose it from the existing language as appropriate to the character he was using in The Odyssey. However, our current use of "mentor" is derived less from Homer than from the French dramatist Fénelon's depiction of Mentor in his 1699 play entitled Aventures de Télémaque. Here Mentor's part as a counsellor is much more prominent, and he stands in his masculine form with no gender equivocation. It is not until 1750 that "mentor" appears in everyday correspondence in English, and its use as a noun for the common understanding of adviser continues into the 1890s.

The first instance of "mentor" being used to personify a thing is recorded by Littré who quotes Rousseau applying the term to a book. Byron uses the word as personification in his 1823 poem The Island (1823). and two other occasions of similar personification in 1869 and 1879 are catalogued.

As a compound to suggest the attributes of a person or thing, "Mentor-like appearance" originates in 1778, "mentor-form" in 1811, and "Mentor style" in 1837. "Mentorial" is an entry in Smart's Dictionary published in 1836. Finally "mentorship" enters the language in 1882, and "Mentorism" emerges in 1889. All these examples are taken from ordinary language—the vernacular—as they have appeared in letters, poetry, and newspaper articles, in public discussion and private conversation. "Mentor," then, acts as a bridge between the literary and everyday worlds,
spanning the two in a way which is at once pictorial and comprehensible. Denotation remains clear and exact.

When "mentor" becomes a topic of research in the social sciences in the 1970s ambiguity and dilution of meaning begin. Its workings are subjected to "laboratory" scrutiny from which it reemerges in the vernacular but cloaked in the mantle of scientific and objective language. At this time it also becomes a verb—to mentor and to be mentored. Transformed from person (noun) to verb, it bears little resemblance to its former human self and becomes an action for which cause and effect may now be postulated.

MENTOR IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY


In his study *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, Levinson interviewed forty men, aged thirty-five to forty-five years, in four diverse occupational groups: hourly waged industrial workers, biologists, business executives, and novelists. He and his research team hoped to find common themes across and within the groups and to "...set forth a systematic conception of the entire life cycle" (p. x). Whether men had mentors was one of the strands in this work.
Building on his belief that there are stages similar to those in childhood and adolescence as claimed, for example, in the work of Erik Erikson, Levinson sets out "...to create a developmental perspective on adulthood in man" (p. x, emphasis in the original). He depicts the man's journey as beginning in the novice adult phase which comprises four major tasks: "...forming a Dream and giving it a place in the life structure; forming mentor relationships; forming an occupation; forming love relationships, marriage and family" (p.91, emphases in the original). The Dream is the focal point from which all else is derived: it is "...a vague sense of self-in-adult world. It has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and possibility" (p. 91).

Levinson next identifies the "mentor" and the "special woman" as the two most important figures in the "drama" of living out the Dream for the novice adult man. Assigning these people the roles of transitional figures, Levinson sees them as foils who draw out the best the novice adult man has to offer as he matures toward eventually becoming a mentor himself. Yet what is mentoring?

Levinson contends that "Mentoring is best understood as a form of love relationship. It is difficult to terminate in a reasonable, civil manner. In this respect, as in others, it is like the intense relationship between parents and grown offspring, or between sexual lovers or spouses" (p. 100). Moreover:

The mentor is ordinarily several years older, a person of greater experience and seniority in the world the young man is entering. No word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here. Words such as "counselor" or "guru" suggest the more subtle meanings, but they have other connotations that would be misleading. The term "mentor" is generally used in a much narrower sense, to mean teacher, adviser or sponsor. As we use the term, it means all of these things, and more (p. 97).
The true mentor, in the meaning intended here, serves as an analogue in adulthood of the "good enough" parent for the child. He fosters the young adult's development by believing in him, sharing the youthful Dream and giving it his blessing, helping to define the newly emerging self in its newly discovered world, and creating a space in which the young man can work on a reasonably satisfactory life structure that contains the Dream (pp. 98-9).

Levinson warns that the mentor is neither a parent nor a "crypto-parent" (p. 99) but someone who facilitates the novice adult male's movement into the next stages of development. The mentor is a hybrid, not quite a parent, not quite a peer, but an entity who somehow functions outside these categories while manifesting some of their best characteristics.

The special woman is also a mentor:

The special woman is like the true mentor: her special quality lies in her connection to the young man's Dream. She helps to animate the part of the self that contains the Dream. She facilitates his entry into the adult world and his pursuit of the Dream. She does this partly through her actual efforts as teacher, guide, host, critic, sponsor. At a deeper psychological level she enables him to project onto her his own internal feminine figure—the "anima," as Jung has depicted it—who generates and supports his heroic strivings. The special woman helps him to shape and live out the Dream: she shares it, believes in him as its hero, gives it her blessing, joins him on the journey and creates a "boundary space" within which his aspirations can be imagined and his hopes nourished (p. 109).

The special woman can foster his adult aspirations while accepting his dependency, his incompleteness and his need to make her into something more than (and less than) she actually is....With further development, he will be more complete in himself and will have less need of the actual and the illusory contributions of the special woman (p. 109).

This woman puts her own desires in abeyance, creating the supportive home environment which will allow the man to leave the marital nest confidently for his destiny in the wider world.
Levinson asserts that all men need mentors and commends mentoring. The men in his study, however, had achieved their successes without such assistance. Levinson bases his conclusions on his desire for mentoring to happen more methodically and on his belief in its presumed benefits:

Many adults give and receive very little mentoring. Despite the frequent emphasis on teamwork and loyalty in business organizations, mentoring relationships are among the exception than the rule for both workers and managers. Our system of higher education, though officially committed to fostering the intellectual and personal development of students, provides mentoring that is generally limited in quantity and poor in quality. Education institutions and work organizations can do much more to assist the development of students and young adult workers. Many middle-aged men never experience the satisfactions and tribulations of mentorhood. This is a waste of talent, a loss to the individuals involved, and an impediment to constructive social change (p. 334).

Levinson's comments here signal his perception of the hard work involved in being a mentor. Few undertake mentoring, perhaps reflecting a structural inability within systems to sustain themselves in a way that does not merely encourage people to "climb the ladder" toward success.

Levinson's concept of mentoring was enthusiastically received. Yet even with the stirrings of feminism's second wave, little was done to question the applicability of his conclusions about men to women. It is interesting to note that, in 1978, Levinson was working on a similar "study" of the woman's developmental cycle (Miller 1995, personal conversation). This work did not appear until 1996 with the posthumous publication of The Seasons of a Woman's Life.

WRITING A WOMAN'S LIFE?

In The Seasons of a Woman's Life (1996) Levinson summarizes responses he obtained from forty-five women ranging in age from thirty-
five to forty-five years. He divided the group into two categories: "homemakers" and "career women," with the latter being further split into "academics" and "businesswomen." He states that "[The Seasons of a Woman's Life] is not a comparative study of women versus men" (p. 4, emphasis in the original). The underlying assumption would appear to be that to draw on similar circumstances would have been antagonistic rather than instructive. Comparisons may very well be odious, but they may be more telling than drawing on disparate categories which allow no common vantage points.

Levinson places a different emphasis on mentoring for women than he does for men. Firstly, none of the women in the homemaker category seems to have had a mentor. Mentors, therefore, are restricted to acting in the world beyond the home. This apparent lack has the unfortunate consequence of reinforcing the inactivity some, even today, see as the "lot" of the woman who is at home: "Obviously the time of action does not belong to the home....Home is a point characterized by the absence of action" (Cavarero 1995, p. 15). Secondly, Levinson was only able to find examples of mentoring among female academics:

The helpful teachers gave support, advice, and sponsorship for graduate or professional school. Some of the good female teachers were "like family:" maternal figures who were caring but not emotionally imposing. Other female faculty and the male faculty were helpful in other ways. Each relationship served a few mentorial functions, enabling the student to realize specific goals, to feel appreciated, to cope with stressful situations. However, very few served the most crucial function of a mentorial relationship, namely, the development and articulation of the young woman's Dream (p. 238).

This falls short of Levinson's belief that male mentors somehow play a necessary part in the creation of the young man's Dream. Women lack
effective mentoring relationships because no one helps them formulate their Dream. The male standard is used to judge the success of women's mentoring relationships. A case in point is Helen Kaplan.

In her early twenties Helen was encouraged to attend graduate school. Besides the urging from male faculty, she also found support, through example, from a woman who was married to one of these men and who was a graduate student and mother. This person confirmed for Helen that married women could indeed do graduate work as well as fulfill their other socially designated roles as wives and mothers. As a result, Helen, also a married woman, started a new life by entering a graduate program.

Levinson depicts Helen's case:

Her relationships with the two male faculty members and the wife/mother/graduate student were mentorial in several respects: they provided guidance, moral support, sponsorship, an example of a woman attempting to combine career and family, and a work situation that fostered her intellectual development. Few young women received mentoring to this degree. At the same time, we should note that there were partial mentoring relationships and that certain qualities were minimal or absent. One ingredient missing in Helen's account was love. I am not referring here to sexual love, which I believe is usually more a hindrance than a help in the evolution of a mentoring relationship. I am referring to the personal character of the relationship, the experience of emotional attachment, involvement, identification. The mentors were helpful primarily in an instrumental sense. They did a lot to foster the mentee's interest in and admission to graduate school, but the relationships seem not to have a highly personal quality (1996, p. 255, emphasis in the original).

Furthermore, these people did not help Helen form her Dream. Neither did they give her their blessing, more vital than support in Levinson's view (p. 255), to pursue whatever path she chose. This does not seem to be the "love relationship" he presumes occurs between men in mentoring.
There is little evidence beyond the speculative for Levinson's claim that love is inherent in men's mentoring relationships. By comparison, women's relationships were said to lack intensity, leaving them not only without purpose but without the benediction love bestows for the pursuit of the Dream. Levinson has assumed that his failed definition of mentoring, as presented in *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, is applicable to women, and this assumption imbues mentoring theories right up to the present.

These, then, are the outlines of the mentoring story for men and women in Levinson's research. He uses numerous analogies to suggest that mentoring, when properly conceived, can be a complex yet rewarding relationship. He assumes that male mentoring is the norm and arrives at a highly questionable view of what mentoring among women might be like. A likely explanation for this is that his conclusions about men's mentoring have set the conceptual standard whose framework he seems unable to escape. Once the life cycle, of which mentoring is a part for Levinson, is identified as a male heroic journey, we begin to perceive more analogies which support the prevailing masculinist narrative of mentoring.

**OF HEROES' JOURNEYS**

As I have already shown earlier in this chapter, Levinson claims that the young adult male embarks on a journey to fulfill his Dream, supported by the special woman who recognizes not only the necessity of the odyssey but also its heroic nature. On reading this description I was struck that Levinson was somehow rewriting Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1973), a work which virtually codified the notion of the hero and his quest through an analysis of the myths and
literature of various cultures. It was also adopted by the psychological community as a complement to the work of Carl Jung who had identified myth as a deep structure of the human psyche which also embarks on a journey of discovery and individuation. This intersection of mythology and psychology is no less evident today, both being narratives advanced to explain our actions as well as provide a history of our thought.

The hero, according to Campbell, answers a call to adventure. He may respond to this summons voluntarily, as when Theseus arrives in Athens and, on hearing the story of the Minotaur's annual feast on the youth of the city, beards the monster in his own maze and slays him, thereby lifting the young's death sentence. Or the bidding may arise by seeming chance, as when Odysseus is set upon a sidetrip on his journey home from the Trojan War after being blown about the Mediterranean by the winds of Poseidon's wrath for blinding the god's son Polyphemus. In the former story there is a "special woman." Ariadne is abandoned after she has provided Theseus with the necessary string to make his way out of the Minotaur's maze; in the latter Penelope is abandoned at home, evidently serving no purpose in Odysseus's quest, except to be the faithful wife who patiently awaits her hero's return.

On many occasions the hero has a supernatural helper. In fairy tales this person might be a small dweller in the woods, wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith. He provides the hero with amulets and advice as he goes on his way. In mythology, a "higher" form of storytelling in Campbell's mind (p. 72), this role takes on a loftier purpose and meaning: the hero now has a guide, teacher, ferryman, or conductor of souls to the afterworld. Hermes is an example of this type of figure in Greek lore: in Egyptian mythology its representation can be found in the
god Thoth; and in literature Virgil plays this part in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Other examples come to mind: Merlin and Arthur; Yahweh and Moses; Yoda and Luke Skywalker.

Campbell sees the guide as the personification of the man's destiny:

What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance—a promise that the peace of Paradise, which was known first within the mother womb, is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past (is omega as well as alpha); that though omnipotence may seem to be endangered by the threshold passages and life awakenings, protective power is always and ever present within the sanctuary of the heart and even immanent within, or just behind, the unfamiliar features of the world. One has only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear (pp. 71–2).

This is a powerful depiction of longing and hope. It is the vision outside the self, transcendent, reaching beyond the limitations of being human and into the very currents of the world's destiny. Never once does Campbell use the word "mentor" as a synonym for this figure.

**OF WOMEN'S JOURNEYS**

The plots of women's journeys, as depicted in myths and fairy tales, vary from those of their male counterparts. Women's odysseys are rarely solitary efforts. They have helpers, protectors, and guides. For Cinderella in the Brothers Grimm story (Zipes 1987), the soul of her dead mother, over whose grave her daughter weeps, is made incarnate in a small white bird which grants whatever she requests. When she is made to sort the lentils her stepmother has thrown into the ashes of the kitchen fire, pigeons, turtledoves, and all the other birds assist the young woman in the task. The Witch of the North, Glinda, sets Dorothy on her way in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1973), yet it is the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion who accompany her and her dog Toto. Nowhere do
we see the powerful and wise man. When we finally do meet the Wizard of Oz he turns out to be an inflation of male ego who is unveiled as an ordinary man by Dorothy and her companions. And what of helpers, protectors, and guides in classical mythology?

The story of Psyche and Eros, as told by Apuleius (Graves trans. in Zipes 1991), complements the fairy tales and is a useful counterpoint to the myth of the hero's journey. Aphrodite, hearing of Psyche's incomparable beauty which rivals the goddess's own, sends her son Eros to earth to make sure Psyche falls in love with the unworthiest man Eros can find. However, Eros falls in love with Psyche and he marries her on condition that she never look at him or ask where he goes during the day. Each night he arrives, leaving before the day dawns.

Psyche's journey is precipitated when, egged on by her sisters who speculate that Psyche's mate may be a snake, she decides she must kill him. Taking a lamp, she beholds Eros's beauty and, after pricking herself accidentally with one of his arrows, falls more deeply in love with him. Awakened by a spilled drop of the burning lamp oil, he reproaches Psyche for her curiosity. After declaring his love for her, he punishes her by leaving. Distraught over the loss of her companion, Psyche throws herself in a river which gently deposits her on dry land. Pan appears and, rather than assisting, advises her to stop crying and do something about her plight. So Psyche sets off. Meanwhile Eros is in the heavens, suffering from his burn and being nursed back to health by his mother, Aphrodite.

Whilst searching for her husband, Psyche comes upon a temple to Demeter where offerings of different grains are untidily strewn about. She begins to put things in order. Demeter, moved by Psyche's industry and plight, warns her that Aphrodite is seeking to revenge herself on the
young woman. Psyche asks for Demeter's protection but is refused: the
goddess says she cannot afford to offend her niece. This is Psyche's first
rejection by a goddess.

Wandering further afield Psyche comes across another temple, this
one dedicated to Hera. She prays to the goddess to rescue her from her
dangers. Hera appears, sympathizes with Psyche, and says that she
cannot help her because "divine etiquette forbids" (trans. Graves in Zipes
1991, p. 19). Aphrodite had married Hera's son Hephaestus, and her
mother-in-law claims to love Aphrodite as though she were her own
daughter. This is Psyche's second rebuff. No supernatural, omnipotent,
transcendent guides for her!

Aphrodite finally finds Psyche and sets her a number of tasks as
punishment for marrying Eros: sorting a jumble of different types of
grain into their separate piles; fetching some golden fleece from untended
sheep in a grove where ferocious rams live; filling a crystal jar with ice
cold water from the middle of the River Styx; and journeying to the
underworld to obtain some of Persephone's beauty to replace what
Aphrodite has lost tending the ailing Eros. In these instances Psyche's
helpers are ants which separate out the grains, river reeds which tell her
how to gather the fleece safely, an eagle which fills the crystal jar for her,
and a tower which instructs her on the best route to the underworld.

Eros, on rediscovering Psyche, takes her to Olympus, and pleads with
Zeus that he remain married to her. Zeus grants Eros's request. Psyche
is given a nectar to drink which makes her immortal and the equal of
Eros.

These tales show that women's journeys and the ways in which they
deal with their trials are different from men's. In the fairy tales the
females do not seek out transcendent figures for help. Birds, animals, and ordinary mortals assist them with their trials. Dorothy finds it within herself to make it back home, just as Glinda told her she would. In the myth Psyche is spurned by both goddesses to whom she turns for assistance. As in the fairy tales, insects, plants, birds, and structures are her helpers. So it is the things close to hand which contribute to the completion of the women's tasks. If the powerful guide is the personification of the man's destiny, what is the meaning of the woman's humbler helpers?

**A NOT SO MODEST PROPOSAL**

The social constructions of the roles of the genders may contribute to man's heavenward gaze and what I shall call women's closer-to-home gaze. This now stereotypical tendency has been used to confine women to domesticity. It allows someone like Angela Carter to conclude: "All mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing reconciling mother, are consolatory nonsense, and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth, anyway" (in Heilbrun 1988, p. 77). Consolatory, that is, to men.

The fairy tale and mythological women I have described do not fall into the category of hapless females needing rescue or vigilant protection. Cinderella is restored to her rightful position. Dorothy finds home. Psyche overcomes the obstacles in her path and is made immortal. Guides and helpers take different forms, as do women's journeys. Over time, masculinist conceptualizing has become inflated, like the outward manifestation of the Wizard of Oz, seeing hope and success as located outside the body. The man, therefore, enters the fray and seeks approval from figures outside himself for his deeds. No matter how closely I read
the myths, no matter how loud the protestations of interpreters of these same myths, I rarely see evidence of men actually being transformed: Theseus does not seem much different from when we first meet him; Odysseus does not appear to have had any kind of epiphany of the soul to turn him into a changed man. Men may wish to be like their guides (gods?). Women, on the other hand, may wish to be like themselves.

I have not used the term "mentor" to describe any of the helpers in the fairy tales and myths to which I refer. My scepticism arises from an overexposure to research which sees mentors everywhere (This will become more evident in Chapter 4). I am not convinced of the appropriateness of the label many researchers affix to any relationship where someone helps another person. I shall continue, however, to catalogue others' utilization of "mentor" to see whether we can come to a clearer understanding of what a mentor might be.

LEVINSON AND THE INTERPRETATION OF MYTH

Setting aside any reservations we might have about the hierarchical and sequential nature of developmental stage theories, we can begin to deconstruct Levinson's belief in the heroic nature of the young man's life. Once the young man's actions are called "strivings," the active nature of men's lives is presented. We may assume, with some certainty then, that men are doers, that they have lofty aims to achieve—the Dream, after all, warrants a capital letter. The myth of the heroic journey, in Levinson's conception, only confirms Angela Carter's pronouncement that myth can be used to maintain unjust and unequal social relations between the genders. Therefore, when the male heroic journey is seen as the norm, everything that does not fit may be found wanting.
It is on the basis of the presumed generalizability of the mythic heroic journey that Levinson can divide his sample of women into homemakers and career women in *The Seasons of a Woman's Life*. From this premise he can make his sample groups appear sharply different (see Figure 3.1). One major weakness in Levinson's "study" is his reinforcement of the notion of men's greater choices of employment. There seems to have been a lack of imagination and energy in not having sought out *female* hourly waged workers, *female* biologists, and *female* novelists. The only parallelism exists in choosing women and men from the business sector; however, the women, unlike the men, are not in positions of authority.

I will not address in any depth Levinson's category of the "homemaker" since it does not fit into the scope of my work on teacher development. Suffice to say that this is one of the images with which even the career woman must, according to Levinson, contend. She must decide whether she will follow the conventional path or strive to blaze her own trail outside the home. (Often, of course, it is not a matter of either/or. She may have a career or job all day and be a homemaker all night). This decision to work outside the home occurs, according to Levinson, somewhere in a woman's mid-twenties. Even in this scheme, though, Levinson presents the woman as being vague in the formation of her Dream and incapable of defining long-term goals for her life. The man's transition at this age is portrayed as active. There is a sense of momentum for him, while the woman's development seems marked by stasis, even when she does choose to have a career. Binary thinking, evident in Levinson's 1978 work even as it reproduced Campbell's depiction of the hero's journey, still obtains in *The Seasons of a Woman's Life*. Men strive, and women are indecisive. And what of mentoring?
Women's mentoring relationships give the impression of being deficient because they apparently do not come up to the male standard Levinson describes. They seem devoid of purpose, instrumental more than caring, and emotionally arid. No one is there for the woman to serve "...the most crucial function of a mentorial relationship, namely, the development and articulation of the young woman's Dream" (p. 238). Part of this difficulty may arise because Levinson himself cannot define what comprises a woman's Dream as specifically as he did the young man's, though the definition remains the same (see Figure 3.1). He states the woman must separate from her family and adds: "The myth of the Successful Career Woman portrayed a heroic woman who could realize 'the incredible joy of having it all'—career, marriage, family, leisure, everything" (p. 370).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in sample</th>
<th>The Seasons of a Man's Life</th>
<th>The Seasons of a Woman's Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups in sample</td>
<td>hourly waged industrial workers, biologists, novelists, business executives</td>
<td>homemakers and career women, the latter further split into academics and businesswomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental tasks in early adulthood</td>
<td>form a Dream; form a mentoring relationship; form an occupation; form love relationships, marriage, and family (p. 91).</td>
<td>separate from family to establish adulthood; otherwise unclear. Framed in terms of not having a highly formed Dream in the early twenties (p. 264).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dream, defined</td>
<td>&quot;...a vague sense of self-in-adult world. It has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality&quot; (p. 91).</td>
<td>&quot;...a vague sense of self-in-world, an imagined possibility of one's adult life that generates excitement and vitality&quot; (p. 238).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Important figures in the fulfillment of the Dream | the mentor and the "special woman" who also acts as a mentor | ????
| Number in sample who had mentors | 0 | 2 |
We may chide Levinson's shade for not having attempted to reconsider his writing from the mid-1970s in light of the realities of the mid-1990s. Though he did not have a crystal ball, he seems to had some difficulty in addressing the gender/sex differences which were becoming apparent even in his own time. Furthermore, we cannot completely overlook the glosses and omissions in his work on the grounds that *The Seasons of a Woman's Life* is a depiction of women *then*, and allows us to use it to compare the lives of women *now*. The "blurb" on the dustjacket dispels any such notion: "*The Seasons of a Woman's Life*...completes and substantiates Levinson's thesis: that all human beings, of whatever sex or culture, go right on developing throughout their lives, in a pattern of amazing predictability." "Every woman will recognize—and find comfort in recognizing—the deep shape of her own life in the pattern it outlines...." Both Levinson and his publisher believe that his inferences have remained stable over time.

However, an inadvertent consequence of the appearance of his book on women is to undermine Levinson's intention of not pitting a woman's life cycle against a man's. Though never *explicitly* comparing the women in his "study" to the men, reading *The Seasons of a Man's Life* and *The Season's of a Woman's Life* together makes this tendency more apparent. In relation to male mentoring, Levinson states:

> During the period of Becoming One's Own Man, *mentor relationships* are likely to be especially stormy and vulnerable. The termination of a close tie with a mentor just now is
often a mutually painful, tortuous process. A man in his late thirties is not only giving up his current mentor, he is outgrowing the readiness to be the protégé of any older person. He must reject the mentoring relationship not because it is intrinsically harmful but because it has served its purpose. It has helped him make a basic developmental advance (1978, p. 147, emphasis in original).

A different picture emerges when Levinson describes mentoring relationships in the period "Becoming One's Own Woman:"

The generation of younger women (roughly age 25 to 35) looked to their seniors for mentorial relationships. However, despite the interest and potential benefit on both sides, very little mentoring occurred. There was a great deal of generational splitting in each group: the relationship between the two generations was conflictful or blocked rather than constructively engaged (1996, p. 342).

By juxtaposing the texts in this way it becomes easier to see that, in this instance, conflict among men leads, in Levinson's view, to further development in maturity (a positive outcome) while that among women proves to be divisive (a negative outcome).

There is a sense of ambiguity in Levinson's writing about women's ability to create a way for themselves in the world. This parallels Campbell's contention that women have no need to make the journey of self-discovery:

In the whole mythological tradition the woman is there. All she has to do is realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to. When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being pseudo-male (Murdock 1990, p. 2, emphasis in the original).

Campbell reconsidered this statement before his death. Levinson seems not to have been sure whether anything could have changed for women from the time of his initial data collection on men.

Levinson's uncertainty about the aspects which comprise women's journeys is manifested in his ambivalence about women's ability to form
mentorial relationships. If their interactions with mentors are to carry any emotional weight they must, it seems, emulate the male standard. This is the implication when it is used as the norm. Gender continues to be deeply buried from sight, particularly when Levinson contends that "Mentoring is best understood as a love relationship" (p. 100).

IS LOVE ALL WE REALLY NEED?

By asserting that love is an element of mentoring Levinson dives into the deep waters of the heart: the same intensity in love is inherent in mentoring. In an effort to render this concept more accessible, he claims that this passion is similar to that between parents and grown offspring or sexual lovers or spouses (p. 100). Are the intimacies of parenting and lovers really the significant features defining mentoring?

Carson (1986) writes: "The reach of desire is defined in action: beautiful (in its object), foiled (in its attempt), endless (in time)" (p. 29). These three aspects are evident in Levinson's work: mentoring is the beautiful object; it does not happen often enough; we must continue to strive for it to occur. Both the myth of Athena/Mentor and Levinson's writing exemplify the desire for someone to guide us through the contradictions and inconsistencies we see in the world around us. We also witness the need for approval: the mentor gives his blessing for the young male's Dream, and this benediction is crucial to the young man's heroic journey to find himself. As I remarked earlier, boxed inside the conventional meaning of mentoring, Levinson promotes a paternalistic model of mentoring as applicable to women.

Levinson intimates throughout his findings that paternalism is benign. This same concept is reiterated uncritically by three other authors who draw upon Levinson's writing. Galvez-Hjornevik (1986)
seems untroubled when citing Shapiro, Haseltime, and Rowe (1979) in her review of literature on mentoring and its potential for teacher development. She summarizes: "The guide function evolves to that of sponsor and eventually 'mentor'—"the most intense and 'paternalistic' of the types of patrons described by the continuum" (p. 8). This continuum charts the progression of helping relationships from lowest to highest: peer pal, guide, sponsor, patron, mentor. Similarly, Daresh and Playko (1992) rely on this same research to bolster their belief in the necessity of mentoring programs for school administrators: "Mentor: An intensive paternalistic relationship in which an individual assumes the role of both teacher and advocate" (p. 113). Jacobi (1991), in writing about mentoring and undergraduate student success, also has no qualms about the use of the word "paternalistic" when citing some of the research. These researchers implicitly maintain that paternalism is marked by concern, solicitude, and benevolence, which it can be; however, feminist analysis has already revealed the gendered nature not only of the language but also of the actions associated with paternalism. Therefore for these researchers not to take notice of this analysis demonstrates the persistence of existing patriarchal conventions which by their very nature exclude women.

Yet what of the opposite—maternalism? No one calls mentoring maternal. I suspect it then might seem less than serious. Levinson (1996) supports this view, however unwittingly, when he describes some women who might have been perceived as mentors as "...maternal figures who were caring but not emotionally imposing" (p. 238). Ultimately the language choices adopted by Levinson and other researchers expose the gendered nature of their conceptualizing. In this incarnation, the desire
for Mentor is a desire for the father. The assumption is that women desire the father just as strongly as men presumably do.

Levinson assumes throughout The Seasons of a Man's Life that love between men springs naturally and spontaneously, bringing to mind its various representations in classical history, literature, and art. Mentoring and love go hand in hand for men (This phenomenon appears even as recently as the 1998 release of the film Wilde). Levinson seems to have trouble imagining what love among women might be; mentoring among women seems similarly difficult for him to apprehend.

Living up to the tenacious tradition of being enigmatic, women are apparently more unfathomable than men and, for all his psychological expertise, Levinson seems no closer to understanding them in the late 1990s than he was in 1978—thus his conception that women's mentoring relationships lack intensity, passion, and, indeed, love (p. 255 cited above). As a result, he sees the vagueness women apparently manifest in the formation of their Dream and of their mentoring relationships as a reflection of gender differentiation which, in many ways, it is; but he is too intent on finding the common factors in women's and men's life cycles to consider that identifying the gendered differences might also be valid in his study. He continues to fit women into stage theories, a fact he acknowledges at the outset of his "study:"

I sought to draw out each woman's life story, as she experienced it, from childhood to the present. I explored the major events, relationships, strivings, and imaginings of her life, with attention to both external realities and subjective meanings. This method, which I initially developed during the research for my book The Seasons of a Man's Life, has proved to be ideally suited to the exploration of the individual life course, without built-in assumptions about gender and gender difference (pp. 4-5).
Levinson is able to diminish women's helping relationships, albeit inadvertently, when placed in the light of men's apparent mentoring bonds.

**THE STRUGGLE FOR LANGUAGE**

Levinson's "research" provides numerous examples of analogy in his ongoing attempts to clarify mentoring:

> He [the mentor] may act as a *teacher* to enhance the young man's skills and intellectual development. Serving as a *sponsor*, he may use his influence to facilitate the young man's entry and advancement. He may be a *host and guide*, welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and acquainting him with its values, customs, resources and cast of characters. Through his own virtues, achievements and way of living, the mentor may be an *exemplar* that the protégé can admire and seek to emulate. He may provide *counsel* and moral support in times of stress (p. 98, emphases in the original).

Whether we are any closer to precision about mentoring remains open to debate.

Perhaps we ought to restrain our enthusiasm for analogy, particularly if it clouds rather than clarifies. If language is as unfixed as some would have us believe, then all the synonyms I have identified thus far are appropriate. However, if we are to be *clear* in our meanings, then fluency for the sake of being all-inclusive may need to be avoided. By restricting our language to be as specific as possible, I am not discouraging the imaginative use of words but asking that we attend to precision. The myth of Athena/Mentor provides a particular insight into one type of relationship. Recognizing this specificity may actually free us to give other helping arrangements their proper names as well as their due.
MENTORS OR ROLE MODELS?

Levinson's keenness for mentoring is commendable. Yet when we compare his studies of women and men it becomes more evident that he confuses mentor with role model.

As cited earlier in this chapter, Levinson thinks that a mentor is a role model: the example of his life, his virtues, and achievements, can inspire the protégé to the extent that he may wish to emulate him. Presumably through imitation the protégé will find his true self and thereby move closer to the fulfillment of his Dream. In the case of Helen Kaplan, she decides to pursue graduate work because of the example of another woman who did so.

Levinson provides us with another story where a similar confusion emerges. Ellen Nagy works in business and has had difficulties many women entering predominantly male groups have encountered: dealing with jokes which belittle and exclude women; being the only woman in a group; not being taken seriously not only because of gender but also because of age. In this case Ellen was much younger than the men with whom she worked. Like many women in the business setting, she had to rely on a man to "teach her the ropes" because of the dearth of females in senior positions. A woman entering a new job either worked for a male boss or in groups where there were few women. By implication Levinson is describing role models. He continues more explicitly:

When [a woman] had a relationship with a senior woman it was, however, often quite negative. She experienced her boss or supervisor, rightly or wrongly, as 'a poor role model:' a woman who had been promoted but was not very professional; an ambitious career woman who was no help to younger women; a manager who seemed harder on female than male subordinates. The problems were more severe in the corporation than the university, but they existed in both (p. 271, emphasis added).
When Levinson looked at the responses from the female academics, he found that the Women's Movement had had an influence on them: "The Women's Movement provided badly needed role models for a different path and supported the young woman's movement out of a too-traditional life and into the world of graduate school" (p. 274). It becomes steadily apparent that role models are the driving force behind Levinson's vision of mentors. This conflation of meanings permeates the research on mentoring as it pertains to education, as will become clearer in the next chapter.

Invariably role models are portrayed as positive: honest, courageous, good, kind. However, this is the list which gets us into trouble. Like "love" and "mentor," the goodness we heap on the role model seems to make it impervious to criticism. As a result, little is done to get at the complexities of being a role model. Is a role model inherently benevolent? Must we identify with a role model in order to learn?

It is interesting to note that the poor role model Levinson describes above is nonetheless a role model. The assumption he and many researchers seem to make is that we can learn nothing from people who may act contrary to our understandings or beliefs. This, though, is not quite true. What the proponents of positive role models appear to miss is the potent example these people are of what we may not want to become. Indeed, they may turn out to be very good role models. A person's cruelty to another may reinforce in us the need for kindness. Someone's brusqueness may remind us to be patient. There is something to be learned from those we might call either good or bad role models.
ROLE MODELS AND WOMEN

I have dealt with role models in the fairly conventional sense of their being actors because the research emphasizes how people act as the principal criterion for designating them as such. This tendency, however, has the effect of separating them from their lives and ours, making them appear larger than life, unbeset by the doubts and insecurities others might experience. Sometimes they seem like self-made individuals, able to take on the world single-handedly, and triumph over any adversity.

Societal restraints on women are maintained, then, by an overweighted emphasis on doing and being active. So role models become our standard, "...encouraging us to look up to 'special women' rather than to look around us for the women with whom we might act" (Fisher 1988, p. 212, emphasis in the original). Female role models, like their male counterparts, become the exceptions to be emulated because they seem to have overcome the inequities against women within organizations. But perhaps we have got it the wrong way around: "What matters is that lives do not serve as models; only stories do that" (Heilbrun 1988, p. 37).

If we take our point of departure from Heilbrun and look to stories as our models, then it becomes more apparent that the hero's quest will not do for women. To say that the mentor is a role model also will not serve us well because that notion too has its origins in the hero's quest.

GENDER DIFFICULTY

Levinson's limited ability to deal with gender difference attests to the complexity it adds to a project when it is made part of the data analysis. His focus is relatively narrow, taking the form of "gender splitting" (1996, p. 6). This encompasses male/female duality and occupational/domestic
divisions. As I shall show in the following chapter, researchers in teacher development since Levinson frequently give little consideration to the role gender might play in theorizing about mentoring. Some mention gender (Galvez-Hjornevik 1986; Jacobi 1991) but do not extend their work to assess what impact gender difference might have on mentoring theories and practices. Still others reiterate that gender makes no difference in mentoring (Pence 1995). As a result, gender remains tacitly ignored, and women seem more often than not expected to model mentoring on an implicit male standard. Mentoring, in its conception and enactment, still has a powerful appeal, as its recurrence attests. It is, however, in its application within a gendered social system that mentoring becomes another monomyth which maintains the dominant male ideology. Education, as I will try to show, is no exception.
CHAPTER 4

MYTHS OF MENTOR IN EDUCATION

...you find that the words are like sand slipping through your fingers, you feel like you're staring through a microscope at a lot of life-forms that suddenly look like great thick snakes curling round and biting each other.

A.S. Byatt, *Babel Tower*.

Research in teacher development has often portrayed teaching as a lonely and solitary profession (Little 1990; Lortie 1975). Teachers are separated from one another by the organization of the school and subject disciplines and by the demands of students, colleagues, administrators, and the community. This tendency toward isolation has its roots not only in faculties of education (Aitken and Mildon 1991; Fullan 1991; Fullan and Connelly 1990) but also in the very memories we carry of our personal experiences as students in schools, witnessing our teachers going about their daily work. Writing on educational reform has detailed the need to dismantle this historical solitude by advocating for collaboration and peer sharing (Fullan 1991; Fullan and Hargreaves 1991; Little 1987). More recently, mentoring has been put forward as an antidote to this disconnection and as a means of bringing together beginning teachers with those who have more years and varied experience in the profession (Little 1990).

Speizer (1981) notes the confusion and the lack of clarity and precision in mentoring theories: "Role models, mentors, and sponsors are concepts which still need to be defined and studied....The first step which researchers must take is to establish accepted definitions for each concept" (p. 712). Since the time of Speizer's assertion, some attempt seems to have been made to clarify the term "mentor." The following is a list of some of the synonyms used by researchers in teacher development:
Several reviews of the research on mentoring have appeared in the last 15 years (Galvez-Hjornevik 1986; Gray and Gray 1985; Jacobi 1991; Little 1990; Merriam 1983). Though their stated purposes may be different (i.e., Merriam assesses mentoring as an element of adult education; Jacobi places her review in the context of undergraduate academic success; and others such as Little speak to teacher induction and development), researchers draw on a similar body of literature in their efforts to determine mentoring's meaning and representation in their particular field.

A REVIEW OF THE REVIEWS

A common feature of many of reviews of literature on mentoring is their unanimity in insisting that more research be done on it (Galvez-
Hjornevik 1986; Jacobi 1991; Little 1990). Other studies (Gray and Gray 1985; Jacobi 1991) use the literature as evidence of the need to create mentorship programs in various educational settings.

Gray and Gray (1985) gather together the research to identify work done on mentoring in nursing, psychology, sociology, science, teaching, educational administration, and business. In this way they hope to demonstrate not only the validity of mentoring but also the seeming consensus across disparate fields about the necessity of mentoring. Gray and Gray then present their Four-Phase Formalized Mentoring Program to Induct Beginning Teachers which incorporates a five-level Helping Relationship model (pp. 40-1). They echo the purposes of similar initiatives in California and other states, namely to develop a system that will "improve the induction of beginning teachers and...provide leadership opportunities for career teachers" (p. 37). In this way, they conclude, both mentor teachers and protégés should acquire a greater sense of satisfaction in their work.

Gray and Gray use the literature on mentoring not only to describe the ideal mentor but also to outline how that person should behave. From this standpoint they conclude that mentor behaviours, once identified, can be taught. In this way some of the difficulties in selecting appropriate mentors can be avoided:

When we train mentors to use [the Mentor/Protégé Helping Relationship model], they are better able to provide important types of help (leadership, role-modeling, instruction, demonstration, motivation, supervision, counseling, and indirect mentoring) in the varied and appropriate ways a protégé needs to...become competent enough to autonomously handle the problems that beginning teachers most frequently encounter (p. 42).
Gray and Gray concur with Schein (1978) that mentors play roles: teacher, confidant, role model, developer of talents, sponsor, door-opener, protector, and successful leader (p. 38). Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) opens her review by stating that induction programs across the United States are proliferating in an "attempt to indoctrinate beginning teachers into the profession with greater support and guidance" (p. 6). Significantly she expresses some reservation at the currency of the term "mentor:" "In light of its historical connotation, the unbounded use of the term 'mentor' for teachers in induction programs is probably incorrect, or at least not totally accurate" (p. 6). The case is strengthened further:

Schein (1978) has resolved that the term, mentor, today has been used loosely to mean teacher, coach, trainer, positive role model, developer of talent, opener of doors, protector, sponsor, and successful leader, but that it ought to apply only to those who play several of these roles (p. 6).

Initially Galvez-Hjornevik questions whether mentoring occurs among elementary and secondary school teachers since, at the time of her writing, few studies existed which described such a phenomenon. She notes a study by Gehrke and Kay (1984) where these researchers attempt to ascertain whether teachers had had mentors on entering teaching. The researchers' cautious use of the terms "mentor" and "protégé" appears to reflect the difficulty in describing what happens when teachers begin in the profession. Notwithstanding these misgivings, Galvez-Hjornevik goes on to reaffirm existing notions of mentoring.

Galvez-Hjornevik recommends that research from other professions be used to help formulate concepts of mentoring in education: "Undeniably the literature on mentoring among teachers is limited, and as educators,
we must look toward other disciplines, such as business and adult development" (p. 7); and "Research and writings on mentoring are adaptable from the adult development discipline and business profession to the school setting" (p. 8). The questions of appropriateness and transferability from one sector to another are not raised. Nor are they identified as possible topics for further study.

Gender does not form a significant component of Galvez-Hjornevik's review. Summarizing Kram (1985), she notes the particular complexities of male-female mentoring relationships: the mentor is often overprotective and socially distant; the woman is uncomfortable being mentored by a man. Moreover, both participants must also deal with the close scrutiny of others, sexual tensions and fears, and the potential for acting out stereotypical male-female roles (Hunt and Michael 1983 in Galvez-Hjornevik 1986). There is no further elaboration in this work on gender's possible impact on the conceptualization and practice of mentoring.

Though Jacobi's work (1991) relates to undergraduate academic success, her statements about the difficulties in defining mentoring are equally applicable to teacher development:

A closer look at the concept of mentoring, however, reveals some troubling issues. Of major concern is the absence of a widely accepted operational definition of mentoring. The literature offers numerous definitions, some of which conflict, so that empirical research about mentoring subsumes several distinct kinds of interpersonal relationships. Further, descriptions of mentoring programs are so diverse that one wonders if they have anything in common beyond a sincere desire to help students succeed. The result of this definitional vagueness is a continued lack of clarity about the antecedents, outcomes, characteristics, and mediators of mentoring relationships despite a growing body of empirical research (p. 505).
These comments support Merriam's (1983) claims that mentoring "appears to mean one thing to developmental psychologists, another thing to business people, and a third thing to those in academic settings" (p. 169). Consequently, "mentoring" as a conception slowly becomes devalued as its understanding is stretched to cover more and more situations.

Gender does not form a significant component of Jacobi's review and is combined with ethnicity. She summarizes:

The management-based literature tends to focus on cross-gender relationships while the educational literature focuses on both cross-gender and cross-race relationships. While none of the literature reviewed for this article flatly declares cross-sex and cross-race pairs to be completely unworkable, the problems of establishing and maintaining such relationships are described on a continuum ranging from mild to severe (p. 511).

Jacobi does not suggest there might be further grounds to investigate gender's potential effect on theories and practices of mentoring.

Mentoring in relation to the social organization of teaching is the focus of Little's (1990) review of literature. She proposes to "examine mentorship as a structural and cultural feature of schools and the teaching occupation" (p. 298). Her work most explicitly presents interrelated categories of mentoring not extensively addressed by other researchers: mentoring as part of teacher induction; mentoring as career incentive for experienced teachers; mentoring and dilemmas of expertise in the teaching profession; and mentoring and educational change. Yet it becomes apparent from her data that the many purposes school systems ascribe to mentoring diffuse its actual meaning and impact.

Little states that mentoring is "irretrievably a social and organizational phenomenon, and as such its utility as an organizational
resource and a career incentive is shaped by social interaction" (p. 313). She also acknowledges that mentor roles are unclear and that mentoring is difficult to define:

Debates about the meaning of mentorship in education derive from a Western cultural legacy in which the name Mentor signifies wisdom, maturity, and a personal investment in the capacities and fortunes of the protégé. And on a more contemporary front, they derive from an implicit comparison to perceived parallels in business and industry, where mentorship is first and foremost a form of sponsorship, a mechanism by which promising candidates are groomed for the ranks of management (p. 344).

Though she recognizes this transference from business and industry to education, she does not propose an examination of the appropriateness of this occurrence for future research. Similar to Galvez-Hjornevik, Little, at least implicitly, appears to concur that educational researchers should look to other fields to bolster mentoring conceptions as they might apply to teaching. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

These reviews of literature reveal that the term "mentor" may very well be so far stretched as to render it almost meaningless. No one seems to make the connection that if there is trouble finding the right words and definitions, then we need to scrutinize language itself. Does greater precision emerge in reports on actual mentoring programs?

**SOME COLLECTED WORKS ON MENTORING**

The literature on mentoring in teacher development can be organized into several categories. Foremost among these is induction, the time when neophytes enter the profession needing assistance to sort through the complexities of their daily existences in schools. At the same time as researchers report the results of various induction programs begun in the 1980s (DeBolt 1992; Odell and Ferraro 1992; Stupiansky and Wolfe
findings have come to include data on the impact of mentoring on experienced teachers (Andrews 1987; Hill and Ragland 1995; Krupp 1985; Sullivan 1992). Understandings about mentoring are expanded to include school improvement projects, links with university/college pre-service programs, retention of personnel, and collaboration among teachers. This is a significant development since the appearance of Little's 1990 review of literature. The consequence has been to make it more difficult to separate conceptions of mentoring into discrete categories of purpose. Two collections of reports exemplify this enlargement.

First Collection: Teacher Induction and Mentoring: School-based Collaborative Programs

DeBolt (1992) gathers reports on a number of mentoring programs in the United States. Setting the themes for his work, Morine-Dershimer asserts in her foreword to this volume that documentation has revealed that "mentoring programs have contributed to improved retention of beginning teachers" (p. xv) as well as "increased collaboration between school districts and universities in the design and implementation of these programs" (p. xv). With the context established, various researchers proceed to describe their participation in mentoring programs in the United States.

Because the chapters in this collection deal with mentoring as a part of teacher induction, Mager (1992) leads off by suggesting that the term induction has taken on another meaning:

While the term induction is not new, the particular meaning that is now taken on is somewhat different from the meanings it has formerly been given. Whereas induction often referred to the informal, often reactionary, and ritualistic socialization of new teachers, its use now refers to more sophisticated and systematic efforts to initiate, shape
and sustain the first experience of prospective career teachers (p. 13).

Not only is it not clear when this new meaning emerged, it is also not apparent what the past informal, often reactionary, and ritualistic aspects of induction are. Nor is it evident how these aspects have become more sophisticated as a result of greater systematization. Mager appears to dismiss previous attempts at mentoring as inadequate and crude. He also does not identify what the shortcomings may have been which have lead him to this conclusion. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

DeBolt (1992) provides his own review of literature to illustrate the theoretical bases for mentoring as a component of induction. Like Gray and Gray, he is persuaded that mentoring models from business might be applicable to education:

The work of Gray and Gray...is revealing because it outlined the transitional nature of the literature in the mentoring of beginning teachers. It, as a field of study, is in transition from adaptation of a concept from other fields such as business to application of this concept of mentoring to the induction of new teachers (p.43).

We might ask whether it is appropriate to transfer a concept from one field to another without taking into account the differences in each system's context. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Odell and Ferraro (1992) describe their work in a mentoring project in New Mexico between Albuquerque Public Schools and the University of New Mexico (APS/UNM). Previously, programs to support beginning teachers had been: a) beginning teacher assistance programs; b) clinical support programs; c) teacher induction programs; d) mentor teacher programs. The shifts in nomenclature, according to the two authors, reflect the current zeitgeist, that names bear out particular social and
cultural preoccupations. However, the investigators do not explore the importance of these linguistic changes. Instead they demonstrate the efficacy of the program in which they are involved: "Whatever the phraseology used, the object of supportive beginning teacher programs is to assist beginning teachers in their professional growth and to ease their transition from student teacher to full-time instructional leader in the classroom" (p. 51).

Part of the raison d'être for the program, beyond the support for new teachers, was to establish collaboration between the university and the surrounding public school system. Also, this project was to provide "excellent veteran teachers" (pp. 57-8) with professional development beyond classroom teaching. "Excellence" was determined when experienced teachers "demonstrated excellence in teaching; demonstrated excellence in working with adults; demonstrated sensitivity to the viewpoints of others; demonstrated competence in social and public relations" (p. 63).

Of the four goals of the program, two relate to supporting beginning teachers, one to encouraging experienced teachers, and one to fostering collaboration between the public school system and the university. In this way, the program designers feel they have broadened the scope of mentoring to embrace collaboration and cooperation among the groups involved.

Odell and Ferraro emphasize that the beginning teacher's point of view needs to be recognized and suggest that this has not always been the case:

A collaborative teacher induction program is obviously challenged first to understand and accept the initial level of development for beginning teachers, and then guide
beginning teachers to achieve more sophisticated stages of concern and cognitive development. The APS/UNM Teacher Induction Program has accepted the further challenge of fostering the social and emotional development of beginning teachers so as to insulate them from the reality of teaching (pp. 54-5, emphases added).

In a previous statement the authors had already concluded that beginning teachers think simplistically and uncreatively about their teaching because their main concern is survival. Conversely, experienced teachers think outside themselves and consider the impact on students of their teaching by drawing on their past experiences (p. 54). It is not clear how an induction program would insulate beginning teachers from the realities of teaching.

The mentors in the APS/UNM program are called clinical support teachers, "comparable to the terms buddy, teacher, guide teacher, or mentor teacher in other support programs for beginning teachers" (p. 60, emphasis in the original). Each of these clinical support teachers has a "client load" (p. 60) of sixteen beginning teachers. These mentors (otherwise known as excellent veteran teachers) are released from their teaching duties for two years and maintain their full pay and benefits. As a result, they are not dividing themselves between their school and mentoring responsibilities.

An unexpected outcome for Odell and Ferraro is the support of school principals for the mentoring program. The administrators claimed to see a ripple effect on other staff in the form of "teacher interactions and collaborations" (p. 69). Principals stated that the information they received from clinical support teachers was useful. In this report the researchers do not investigate whether difficulties related to teacher evaluation and professional ethics in these exchanges might arise. Care
may need to be taken in these areas where unexpected outcomes such as this one emerge.

Principals also reported an additional benefit to Odell and Ferraro about supervision of staff: "the assistance offered by clinical support teachers somewhat relieves them of the burden that they carry when they do not have time to interact as frequently as they would like with beginning teachers" (p. 69). Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Stupiansky and Wolfe (1992) present their data on a mentoring program in rural New York State. This project was initiated when legislation, entitled "Mentor Teacher-Internship Program," was passed in 1986:

> The aim of the legislation was that eventually the funded programs might serve as prototypes for other districts in subsequent years. Thus, a vehicle has been established to capitalize on the informal mentor-intern relationships that often exist in schools by providing the structure and resources to formalize this mentoring process by matching eligible beginning teachers with master teachers (p. 81).

A further development in New York State was later to make participation in the program a requirement for beginning teachers to become certified.

Release time and its funding did not reach the generous proportions of the New Mexico project. Only ten percent of mentors' time was funded along with twenty percent for beginning teachers. Stupiansky and Wolfe do not address how teachers dealt with their teaching responsibilities as they participated in this mentoring program, only raising it as an issue to consider:

> Not only were the attitudes and performance of beginning teachers significantly improved, the program also enhanced and energized the careers of several veteran mentor teachers. The professional growth expressed by the mentors involved
was equivalent to the gains made by the beginning teachers (p. 88).

It is not clear which attitudes in beginning teachers "improved" nor the extent of these changes.

Though Stupiansky and Wolfe report overwhelmingly positive results of the mentoring program, they raise the following concerns: "(a) procurement and preparation of replacement teachers, (b) the problem of release time, (c) the issue of time out of the classroom, and (d) communication and faculty perceptions" (p. 92). These difficulties are not insurmountable but, the researchers state, stimulate growth in making "an exemplary mentoring program" (p. 94). Assertions such as this one unfortunately only serve to reinforce the long-standing belief that teachers can accomplish anything with limited resources because they are dedicated to their profession. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Though not mandated, the Arizona Teacher Residency Program (ATRP) is presented as a way to encourage commitment, collaboration, and collegiality (Enz, Anderson, Weber, and Lawhead 1992): "The underlying belief...is that beginning teachers who are provided support by a mentor—an effective, veteran teacher—will see a positive effect on their developing instructional skills. This development will, in turn, improve the quality of instruction their students receive" (p.97). Schools volunteer to be in the program. Action plans are formulated, outlining requirements, expectations, and financial obligations. Beginning teachers are not formally evaluated for district personnel decisions. Rather data collected by mentors are sent to the project directors without being revealed to local school administrators.
Selection criteria for mentors "include a teacher who (a) is established, effective, and acknowledged as such by peers, (b) is a nurturing and supportive individual, (c) shares ideas and materials willingly but is also able to learn from the newcomer, (d) has time and is willing to mentor, and (e) can communicate easily and is able to describe the details of instructional methods and school policies and procedures as well" (pp. 100-1). Brief mention is made of the complexity of the mentor's role, described as a balancing act between "professional, personal, and instructional advisor and clinical coach" (p. 101). The researchers do not report on the "success" of their venture. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Taharally, Gamble, and Marsa (1992) report on a mentoring program established in East Harlem in New York to support beginning teachers in their first three years in the profession. The main goal was to develop "a collaborative relationship between Hunter College [of the City University of New York] and Community School District Four" (p. 121). Support was needed for these inner-city school teachers with the view to retaining more teachers from minority groups, usually underrepresented in the New York City public school system. Prospective mentors applied directly or were nominated by principals. Selection was then based on qualifications and needs. Mentors were paid for one preparation period per week to visit a new teacher in his or her classroom. Also they were paid for meeting with beginning teachers after school and for attending mentor workshops. The "interns," as the researchers call them, earned six college credits per year for working with mentors. These were applied to the Master of Science in Elementary Education at Hunter College.
Connections and collaboration emerge once again as integral components of this mentoring program:

Principals, mentors, and college personnel also shared a sense of responsibility for the intern. This had a positive impact on the school as a whole. The idea of shared responsibility was especially important at this time because many schools in New York City were beginning to move toward "school-based management and shared decision making" (p. 125).

Evaluations were collected from logs and from mentor, intern, and principal questionnaires.

Taharally, Gamble, and Marsa note from comments by mentors on their own growth that reciprocity is a feature of the mentoring relationship:

They mention feeling more like professionals, and becoming more open with their intern over time and less anxious about their own work. They became more positive about teaching and understood the needs of others better as they engaged in the mentoring process...[M]entors also reported a greater sense of responsibility and security in their jobs (p. 130, p. 132).

The issues of professionalism, anxiety about teaching, attitudes toward teaching, and job security are not taken up further by the researchers.

One of the unforeseen outcomes Taharally, Gamble, and Marsa identify is the confidence mentors developed to apply for other career opportunities by enrolling in programs for certification in supervision and administration. This is a positive outcome attesting to teachers' desire and willingness to learn more. On the other hand, though, the data appear to reinforce that teacher advancement lies outside the classroom and not necessarily in improved teaching. No data are reported about the retention of teachers from minority groups in Community
School District Four, though this is a stated aim of this particular mentoring project. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Jacobsen (1992) presents information about the University of North Colorado's Teacher Induction Partnership (TIP) begun in 1973. Alarmed at the dropout rate of teachers in the United States, the intent of the program was to assist beginning teachers to enter the profession successfully, as well as to create a link between the university and Colorado school districts and provide additional professional development opportunities for experienced teachers. More recently, this program has been blended with those related to site-based management.

Jacobsen describes how the program is a departure from the medical model:

The mentoring component of the TIP program is based on the notion that assistance is more effective than assessment. The model is a departure from more traditional doctor/patient approaches in which the neophyte is diagnosed and prescribed a cure by a seemingly all-knowing master. Rather, the relationship between mentor and partner teacher is collegial (p. 114).

Professional development plans are created, and both the beginning teacher and the "partner teacher" keep portfolios. These last are made up of materials teachers have collected and their descriptions of their importance. In this way, new teachers embark on a process of self-assessment, with the portfolios serving as historical and anecdotal representations of teachers' growth. Maintaining these portfolios provides the foundation for further teacher reflection and goal setting, and the teachers see themselves as learners who work toward an understanding of how they think about teaching. At the end of the year participants present the contents of their portfolios at a conference and comment on the possible differences in their first year of teaching if they
had not had a mentor. The only concern Jacobsen identifies is how to prepare the experienced teacher to act comfortably as a change agent. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

DeBolt (1992) concludes this volume about mentoring programs with some thoughts which echo those of the literature reviews cited previously: a) definitions of mentoring are vague; b) the lack of widely accepted guidelines to help developers of mentoring programs devise strategies to provide training, understanding of the mentoring process, and c) the need to support those teachers interested in acting as mentors. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Only strengths and benefits are reported in all of these programs. There are no negative indications though concerns are raised throughout. The picture of mentoring in many sections of the United States overwhelmingly points to the good. We might ask the question, with the view to answering it later, whether this is a balanced depiction of mentoring.

Second Collection: Mentoring: Contemporary Issues and Principles

Bey and Holmes (1992) also have edited a collection of articles on the purposes, implementation, and outcomes of mentoring programs. They state: "This monograph reflects the aim of the Commission [on the Role and Preparation of Mentor Teachers] to help individuals develop the human potential of others" (p. v). The contributors write primarily about the theoretical need for mentoring programs.

At the outset, Head, Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall define the mentor as "a trusted colleague, developer, symbolizer of experience, coach/supervisor, and anthropologist" (p. 9). Citing research done by Thies-Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1987), the authors of this chapter
concur that systematic mentor training be designed based on adult developmental theory. One of the reasons for this recommendation was the researchers' discovery that experienced teachers were not necessarily more reflective nor more articulate about their work than those with less experience. These researchers maintain that training might guarantee that "purposeful mentoring" (p. 9) did occur. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Neal (1992) continues in another chapter:

Mentoring requires a commitment to actively exert a consistent influence on the professional development of a protege to the extent that necessary experiences are created and activities are promoted that will contribute to the positive growth and competence of the protege. Clearly, this is a role for someone who is an excellent teacher (for modelling), someone who can teach an adult learner (the protege), and someone who can inspire confidence and trust....Mentoring is the essence of formative support for new teachers (p. 38).

Only excellent teachers can fulfill all these requirements and they should be willing to impart their knowledge to the neophyte. Also, this type of support avoids formal evaluation of beginning teachers, allowing them to ease into the profession without worrying excessively about whether their contract will be renewed. They are, presumably, permitted to learn their craft in this unthreatening environment. Neal also stresses that a peer relationship cannot be considered mentoring: "It is driven by the needs of the teacher seeking help rather than being directed by the insight and wisdom of an experienced guide" (p. 39).

Neal places mentoring on a continuum of teacher development activities, suggesting that it is the most formative while evaluation is the most summative. Between these poles are peer relationships, staff development, and instructional supervision (p. 37). Also "the terms
formative-summative are utilized to distinguish among support activities based on trust and collegiality and those which are based on more of a hierarchical arrangement of authority" (p. 37). While the purposes of mentoring are personal, those of evaluation are organizational, relating to the maintenance of the education system rather than personal development. Neal concludes that, in the face of reform mandates in education, formalized mentoring is an opportune way to instigate collaboration for change and school improvement. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

In the final chapter of this collection, Bey states that mentors can support and enhance the growth of beginning teachers who, in turn, learn from their more experienced colleagues. She calls this "the practice of collegial collaboration between an experienced and inexperienced person" (p. 112). The entire mentoring process is both formal and informal, fluctuating with the different goals the participants wish to achieve. At the same time, Bey suggests that mentoring expand to include activities which assist teachers throughout their careers. This is in keeping with one of the principles adopted by the Commission on the Role and Preparation of Mentor Teachers that "Mentoring is bigger than induction" (p. 4).

Bey attempts to enlarge the notion of mentoring further to encompass many other intentional and unintentional interactions:

The preparation and growth of teachers occurs (sic) in teacher education through various means. It happens when mentors: (1) encourage high school students to become interested in the teaching profession, (2) offer assistance to intern teachers, (3) help beginning teachers be successful during the first few years of teaching, or (4) motivate tenured teachers to renew teaching skills. Such occurrences exemplify the reality of mentoring and make it meaningful to the development of teachers (p. 112).
Within this framework of what Bey calls teacher education, four areas of teacher development emerge: the team approach, internship, teacher induction, and teacher improvement. In Bey's model, teachers are identified as being in one of six distinct levels: prospective, student, intern, beginning, career, and master. The underlying belief here is that careers are comprised of recurring stages where teachers enter into positions of so-called greater responsibility. From this premise Bey concludes that teachers need mentors at all times. A brief description of the four areas of teacher development should round out the picture Bey creates.

The team approach brings together the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher (mentor), and the student teacher in an undergraduate teacher education program. Bey implies that the university supervisor and the "mentor" feel a shared responsibility for the student teacher because of their collegiality. It is also evident to Bey that teaching mentoring skills to new and experienced teachers alike is beneficial. There are no examples or descriptions of how this might be accomplished or what these behaviours might be.

Internship requires mentors to assist intern teachers who come to teaching without undergraduate training or formal teaching experience. In this scenario mentors advise interns and work to improve the interns' instructional effectiveness. Mentors may also be involved in preparing interns for state certification and assisting in the development of interns' teaching competencies.

In teacher induction programs, mentors support beginning teachers immediately after the latter complete their pre-service programs. As a result, the new teachers are better equipped to deal with burnout, errors,
and job dissatisfaction. Retention of teachers seems to be higher among beginning teachers where mentoring occurs, according to Bey, though she provides no figures to substantiate this claim.

Finally, mentoring can motivate experienced teachers. Bey refers to a project in Houston, Texas where university faculty members were paired with secondary school Mathematics and science teachers to improve the curriculum in those two subjects. As well as improved information exchange about materials, techniques, equipment, and course content, two other outcomes emerge: the mentors gained respect for the classroom teachers, and, apparently because of the cooperative nature of the enterprise, the mentors became "the guardians of excellence in teaching" (p. 115). Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

The predominant focus in Bey and Holmes's work is the theoretical need for mentoring programs. Complexity of mentors' roles and problems of choosing mentors are two of the issues addressed. The contributors to this monograph attempt to provide conceptual ground for the creation of mentoring programs.

**SOME INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES ON MENTORING**

Gehrke and Kay (1984) see mentoring as being particularly suited to the training and induction phases of teaching. Their investigation of responses from 188 teachers, of whom 41 were interviewed, leads them to conclude that, though not a necessary association for everyone, mentoring's value cannot be overlooked. Where this relationship does occur, it becomes, with time, not only professional but personal: "The relationship was more informal and caring as between two friends, and yet it was more likely to address professional growth questions on instructional, curricular, and classroom management issues" (p. 23).
These researchers hope for "the rational incorporation of the mentor-protege relationship in a teacher education model" (p. 24). They envisage the mentor phenomenon as a way to humanize working environments in the face of burgeoning technology and the resultant effacement of the individual.

Gehrke and Kay also deplore the lack of care in the use of the term "mentor" which, they posit, has occurred for several reasons: mentors perform many roles, levels of intimacy vary, and the frequency of interaction fluctuates. They then proceed to consider the potentially shady nature of mentoring:

By tradition the term mentor has been reserved for those persons who, through positive influence, have taught the young to become the virtuous, mature adults their societies desired. Though some assert that mentors can be negative forces in some proteges' lives, we prefer to continue to reserve the term mentor for those whose relationships are largely positive and healthy, using the more neutral term, sponsor, for those whose relationships are either less comprehensive or include less benign elements (p. 22).

Gehrke and Kay rely on the received understanding of "mentor" and go on to separate the notion of "sponsor" from it in that context. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Gehrke further explores mentoring in a 1988 article entitled "On Preserving the Essence of Mentoring as One Form of Teacher Leadership." While she refers to the classical myth of Mentor as one example of this so-called essence, Gehrke does not explain how mentoring might be a form of teacher leadership. We are left to infer that perhaps it is a form of service which, by virtue of its outreach, makes it a type of leadership by example (see also Daresh and Playko 1992, p. 111). Also, it is difficult to place this article as specifically related to teacher development since Gehrke uses the term "teacher" infrequently.
Like Levinson, and seemingly coincidentally (there are no references), Gehrke calls mentoring a love relationship. Unlike Levinson, though, Gehrke seems able to distinguish to some degree between powerful friendships, romantic love, and parent-child love: "One can differentiate the more platonic mentor-protégé relationships from the other three love relationships on the basis of biology, equity, and passion, although the lines are not always clearly drawn or permanent" (pp. 43-4). However, the mutuality and comprehensiveness Gehrke sees as inherent in mentoring establishes some common ground with these three kinds of love.

Part of what Gehrke calls "classical mentoring" (p. 43) consists of the mentor and protégé being able to choose one another. Time is needed for the relationship to evolve along with the opportunity to negotiate what might be learned. Each participant's uniqueness must be recognized as they work toward the protégé's growth from subordinate to equal. The mentor will assist "the protégé to establish a view of how work fits into a whole life. The helper will invite discussion of the meshing of home and family life, civic responsibilities, and avocational interests" (p. 45). Additionally, the mentor will learn from the protégé. Gehrke concludes that, by recognizing and encouraging love and caring, classical mentoring can reemerge. Reciprocity, according to Gehrke, is inherent in mentoring relationships. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Andrews (1987) situates mentoring within a staff development framework for beginning and experienced teachers. Equating experienced teacher with mentor—someone who can provide collegial support for the new professional—Andrews argues for a formal mentoring process which occurs most profitably at the start of a career. He seems certain of mentoring's benefits: "the experiential component of supervision,
counselling, coaching and data gathering that can be carried out within a mentoring program will enhance the overall staff development activities of all participating teachers: for the experienced teacher to teach is to learn" (pp. 149-50).

Similar to other researchers, Andrews tries to define mentoring: "The mentoring process may be conceptualized as a mentor/protégé or master/apprentice relationship. Essentially a mentor is an experienced teacher who is assigned or, preferably, volunteers to become the immediate supervisor of the beginning teacher" (p. 150). In different countries other terms may be used to specify what a mentor is: tutor or supervising teacher is used in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand; peer supervisor or master teacher may be used elsewhere. These people may act in a supervisory, counselling, and sometimes evaluative capacity. Andrews calls what the mentor does instructional leadership which may include modelling, supervision, coaching, discussion, and curriculum collaboration. Slowly the beginning teacher becomes more autonomous, and both participants learn and grow together.

Reciprocity is, according to Andrews, a feature of the mentoring process, though he is much more tentative here than in his consideration of mentoring's presumed benefits. Interaction with the beginning teacher might provide beneficial feedback on the mentor's pedagogy; teacher isolation might be mitigated in this collegial relationship; both beginning teacher and mentor may contribute ideas for teaching new curriculum materials; action research would be specifically related to each teacher's working context; and the mentor might act in a consultative fashion, suggesting other people with whom the beginning teacher might most fruitfully work. Andrews further
proposes that the mentor may wish to devise a plan for professional growth and communicate it to colleagues in an effort to encourage them to adopt what he calls "a beneficial professional practice" (p. 152).

It is only toward the end of this article that Andrews delineates the mentor's characteristics: an exemplary, yet not necessarily a master, teacher; a person whose teaching philosophy is compatible with that of the beginning teacher; and someone who displays empathy. Incorporating a mentoring program into staff development enriches the beginning teacher's induction experiences. Because of its practical nature, a project such as this one would be seen as do-able and cost effective. It would also have an accountable developmental supervisory process and foster teacher self-direction and self-evaluation. As a result, education reform could be furthered within this context. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Anderson and Shannon (1989) acknowledge the lack of clarity in the research about mentoring. Consequently, in their view, difficulties have arisen for school boards and cooperating schools of education in developing mentor programs which are soundly conceptualized. They claim that "This article establishes a conceptualization of the mentoring process that is rooted in historical reference and serves as a model for use by those who design and implement teacher mentor programs" (p. 38).

Beginning with the myth of the transformation of Athena into Mentor, Anderson and Shannon document the use of the word "mentor" from 1750, concluding that "These uses confirm the historical meaning of mentoring and further imply that a mentor may be a person or a personified thing" (p. 39). It has not been, they claim, until the 1970s
that mentoring as a topic of research has appeared in the literature of different professions. Citing Eng as their source, Anderson and Shannon note that mentoring's appearance seems to have coincided with the Human Resources Development Movement in business, eventually manifesting itself in other sectors, including education.

Anderson and Shannon feel that the lack of clarity about mentoring stems from an inability to specify its functions: "it is difficult from studying the definitions as a group to know whether mentoring involves a set of functions that are conjunctively or disjunctively joined" (p. 39).

Hence their attempt to clarify by way of Anderson's work. Mentoring is a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal growth. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé (1987, p. 40).

This meaning does not differ appreciably from preceding ones.

Anderson's definition allows the authors to identify teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling, and befriending as the five functions of mentoring. They provide the following lists of verbs as clarification:

- teaching: modelling, informing, confirming/disconfirming, prescribing, questioning;
- sponsoring: protecting, supporting, promoting;
- encouraging: affirming, inspiring, challenging;
- counselling: listening, probing, clarifying, advising;
- befriending: accepting, relating (pp. 40-1).
Taking the concept of mentoring another step further, Anderson and Shannon identify essential dispositions mentors should have: being open to their protégés, leading them incrementally over time, and expressing care and concern for them. With these fundamentals in mind, Anderson and Shannon determine that strong mentoring programs can be constructed. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Mentoring in the midst of change is the focus of Sullivan's (1992) monograph. Because of the changing conditions of teaching she proposes that the question of mentoring not be "What is it?" but "What can it be?" Her main interest is to promote mentoring as a means to educational reform.

Sullivan argues that mentors can only begin to act as mentors when they are fit mentally, experientially, physically, and emotionally. Potential mentors are well-adjusted and appear to have achieved a balance between their personal and professional lives. Mentors must always be good teachers who are willing to share their power by providing protégés with the necessary information to teach, thereby assisting protégés to cope with the conflicts which might arise with parents, students, other teachers, and communities. This communication must be clear and fit beginning teachers' preferred learning styles. Mentors' efforts are concentrated on providing protégés with opportunities to succeed.

The mentoring process allows mentors to reflect on what they are doing, ensuring they are not tempted to make mentoring a linear process following an inflexible model. Nor are they likely to act as pseudoparents, Sullivan contends, because of this reflective dimension. Energy, intuition, and consistent critiquing are needed to maintain a vision in a
rapidly changing environment: "No longer can one coast on previous experiences. Now mentoring must involve not only reflecting on and using one's past but also learning with the protégé in the present and keeping an orientation on the future" (p. 30, emphasis in the original). Presumably the vision focuses on change, of which teaching might be said to form a part. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

THE MENTORING NARRATIVE THUS FAR

In compiling the preceding material on mentoring, it became apparent how convinced the researchers were of mentoring's effectiveness. All the investigators are joined in their desire to help teachers make smooth and troublefree transitions into the profession. Programs are described. Implementation plans are itemized. Reported results are generally positive.

Common themes emerge from this unanimity:

   a) mentoring is difficult to define;
   b) mentoring is useful;
   c) mentoring programs assure that new and experienced teachers remain in the profession;
   d) mentoring initiatives "humanize" the system;
   e) mentoring helps mentors and protégés reflect on and improve teaching practice.

Since the work of preparing teachers includes faculties or colleges of education, school boards, and schools, what better way to connect their mutual efforts than through mentoring projects? Apparently mentoring might serve as a bridge to collaboration among these groups to help them harmonize their purpose.
Yet there is little texture, little intricacy in the stories these researchers tell. In looking for balance in mentoring's dominant narrative, we can begin to pick out some troubling elements which arise from these positive aspects: definitional haziness, ambiguity of mentors' roles, and everexpanding purposes of mentoring.

Gender is absent by virtue of its invisibility. When it does appear (Galvez-Hjornevik 1986; Jacobi 1991) the researchers seem reluctant to give it full consideration, perhaps because it may not be wholly apparent to them how mentoring and its conceptualization reflect the larger context of who produces the knowledge we tend to value. This is not an uncommon oversight as feminist theorists have argued (Code 1990; Smith 1987; Smith 1990). What does become visible, though, is the extent to which many researchers still appear to believe in the gender neutrality of word choice and, hence, see conceptualization of any kind as a gender neutral practice also. Add to this belief prevailing notions of success—and surely both women and men want to succeed—and it is not completely surprising, then, that gender is given little attention.

Therefore, unanimous in relating mentoring's benefits and apparently unaware of gender's potential impact on the theories and practices of mentoring, researchers recommend this type of relationship for teachers. Yet is it wise to follow the crowd without examining not only the underlying assumptions, the wide range of meanings clustered under one umbrella word, and the possible dangers inherent in following any educational practice without both criticism and vigilance?

SECOND OPINIONS?

I have been seeking like-minded researchers about mentoring since I wrote what turned out to be the genesis of this current study (Semeniuk
Like the researchers I have cited, I too had previously been convinced of mentoring's efficacy. My scepticism grew as I sought out the meanings of Athena's transformation to a man. Were there other researchers looking to provide a more in-depth depiction of mentoring which would include a consideration of gender?

Certain words act like code, letting readers in from the very beginning on the position a writer might take. This was the case when I came across Margaret Wilkin's title "Initial Training as a Case of Postmodern Development: Some Implications for Mentoring" (1993). I assumed that the use of "postmodern" implied a critique of existing theories and practices of mentoring as an aspect of teacher education. Wilkin uses postmodernism, however, to justify existing mentoring concepts and to suggest that postmodernism has empowered practising teachers to participate in school-based teacher training.

Wilkin maintains that mentoring is a cultural activity within teacher education. She claims that this aspect has been forgotten because teachers in Great Britain have been preoccupied with responding to Conservative government initiatives to reshape teacher education. No government before 1979 had been so intrusive, and teachers' energies had been focused on predicting which facet of teaching would be the next to be attacked. Wilkin considers how "developments in training over the past two or three decades which are usually attributed either to the evolution of the internal professional culture of training or more latterly to government intervention, can be reinterpreted in postmodern terms" (p. 37).

Though, as Wilkin correctly points out, it is difficult to say that postmodernism has a grip on education, she notes three factors which
reflect postmodern thought in initial teacher training: a) students spend more time in schools, and practice has been given preeminent status within training. Disciplines of education feature minimally and in diminished form. Postmodern implication—the fall of disciplines as unifying principles of truth; b) students theorize about teaching by reflecting on their personal experiences, thereby filling the gap left by the dismissal of the disciplines of education. Postmodern implication—personal and idiosyncratic narratives are now more authoritative and need not rely on the disciplines of education for justification; c) students and tutors (the British nomenclature for education professor) have greater equality. Postmodern implication—authority no longer resides solely within institutions of higher learning or with academics. All three elements reflect current postmodern and poststructural scepticism about the universality of truth, the possibility of fixed meaning, and the desirability of objectivity. In the wake of these tendencies, Wilkin implies that mentoring's dominant narrative might be in need of some revision.

Wilkin focuses on Lyotard's (1984) identification of the current scepticism toward metanarratives. These metanarratives, legitimating stories for the pursuit of universal knowledge and universal freedom, have placed science at the forefront because it has offered to free us from ignorance and prejudice. However, with the dissemination of information through expanding networks of communication technology, science's privileged position has been challenged. We are no longer completely certain that it can speak objectively or reveal anything universal to us, and we question the motives and interests of those engaged in scientific research. As a result, though, we have created a void which we have rushed to fill with the newer metanarrative of performance and efficiency.
The implication for teacher development and education is an emphasis on practice since it is suspect whether education theory courses can provide any kind of truth, particularly a utilitarian one, for the prospective or experienced teacher:

Today, public disciplinary theory no longer enjoys superior status over the personal theories of the practitioner in the classroom, and success in training is now less frequently measured by what here might be called 'truth'—that is the student's ability to argue and defend his/her view by reference to the results of research in social science or to philosophical debate—than by competence in the classroom, or as Lyotard would put it, 'performativity' (p. 42).

What has any of this to do with mentoring?

Wilkin's article exemplifies how, as teacher education in Great Britain has changed, the meanings for "mentor" have been expanded. With the focus of teacher training shifting to practice as she describes, it is the practising teacher, to whom the prospective teacher is assigned, who has now been renamed a mentor. I can only assume that this is so because more of the responsibility for training has devolved to the practising teacher from the tutor. Though it is commendable that knowledge about teaching is shared between the teacher in the school and the tutor in the training institute—the college or university is not the ultimate authority—it is interesting that Wilkin does not question whether it is appropriate that practising teachers bear more of the load and responsibility for preparing new teachers. She accepts the current situation, believing that this shared responsibility reflects the postmodern breakdown of boundaries and that no particular source of knowledge has privilege over another. Yet does renaming experienced classroom teachers mentors make them so?
Wilkin briefly refers to a mentoring program called the Oxford Internship Scheme where prospective teachers "start from their own ideas and commitments (to which their personal histories have contributed) and only gradually modify these in the light of experience and as they become acquainted with the ideas of others" (p. 51). The traditional emphasis on the intellectual development of the prospective teacher has been eschewed in favour of this practice-oriented approach. I think it is fair to ask whether the Oxford Scheme might be anti-intellectual, especially since it is not clear what knowledge these prospective teachers bring to their training beyond personal experience and personal history.

Wilkin accepts that teacher training must change and she acquiesces in this transformation, apparently looking for whatever good might come out of the increasing government intrusion in the activities of professionals. As in many other Western countries where there is a belief in excessive government interference in personal life—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States—, few seem aware of the contradictions in the growing external regulation of teachers, doctors, and social workers to name a few groups. Wilkin misses the opportunity to engage in a postmodern critique of the very societal and cultural practices which impose these changes even as she tries to situate teacher training within these same societal and cultural practices.

According to Wilkin, the Oxford Scheme demonstrates its postmodern leanings in the recognition of subjectivity, location, and fluidity of knowledge and meaning. However, she concludes that modernism has not lost its grip: "goals are clearly stated; the roles of tutor and mentor are distinct and rationally defined in accordance with their respective skills; the criteria against which students test their theories are
universal" (p. 51). It is hard to say what form mentoring takes in this plan. A shift in language seems to have occurred which, in its turn, obscures the diminished role of the tutor and the teacher training institution. Ultimately, the financial cost of teacher training is reduced by placing prospective teachers in schools for longer periods of time, eventually leading to the withering of colleges and faculties of education. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

Smith and Alred's (1993) article "The Impersonation of Wisdom" signals a contrary position to Wilkin's. I was struck by the use of "impersonation" and the possibility it held out of a critique of mentoring. These two researchers present a number of good arguments which challenge the language used to describe and justify mentoring in Great Britain.

Not differing significantly from mentoring programs I have already set out in this chapter, similar ones in Great Britain, according to Smith and Alred, also concentrate on identifying the skills and competencies of both mentor and prospective teacher. These researchers see this evolution as a result of "the poverty of thinking in which 'mentoring' becomes simply a label for a new bureaucracy of teacher-training" (p. 104). Furthermore, they are unhappy with the general tendency "to reduce all kinds of quality, capacity, virtue, knowledge and understanding to 'skills'" (p. 104). They argue that the mentor and beginning teacher bring their entire selves to teaching, not merely an assortment of skills. The reductionist, instrumentalist view of mentoring disparages the emotional elements intricately entwined with learning to teach:
This, essentially, is what makes the business of learning to teach different from learning to be a gardener or a carpenter or a welder, and what makes the metaphor of apprenticeship so completely inappropriate for learning to teach (p. 106).

The interplay of sense and sensibility precludes a completely utilitarian and product-oriented approach.

Smith and Alred also see the need for the existence of training institutions as physical locations where prospective teachers can stand back from their experiences in schools to examine the feelings evoked by what has happened to them. They do not embrace, the way Wilkin seems to, the diminution in importance of the training institution's role. With the knowledge acquired through various education courses and contact with tutors, prospective teachers can examine their experiences in the light of the perspectives they have encountered outside the school setting. This in no way invalidates their experiences but rather augments and gives weight to the vulnerabilities and excitement of achievement they have felt.

Smith and Alred note a tendency to denigrate theory. The British Secretary of State pronounced in 1991 that "theory can seriously damage schooling and should be renounced by all right-thinking teachers" (p. 107). To refine the psychological dimension of what I will call "theory bashing," Alred and Smith cite Terry Eagleton: "Hostility to theory usually means an opposition to other people's theories and an oblivion to one's own" (p. 107). This antipathy also demonstrates that many politicians and bureaucrats seem to misconstrue the purposes of institutions of higher learning. Firstly, they apparently believe thatstitutions promulgate theories and that those who attend them come as empty vessels to be filled with useless ideas which cannot be used in the
so-called "real world." Secondly, they appear to believe that such institutions should serve utilitarian purposes. In effect they want teachers only to teach and not to think about teaching. This is another example of the anti-intellectualism which eventually makes its way into mentoring programs.

Smith and Alred reinforced my misgivings about the proliferation of the term "mentoring:"

In this world, where educationalists are being encouraged to use the language of business and the marketplace, the idea of being a 'mentor' risks becoming little more than a label to cover a new model of teacher training in which higher education is notable, like Odysseus, for its absence—a kind of humane gloss, reassuring in its classical origins, for a profoundly unhumane conception of what is involved in learning to be a member of one of the most complex and demanding professions (p. 109).

A mentor's knowledge goes far beyond the utilitarian aspects of conveying pedagogic technique or evaluation strategy.

Is an experienced teacher necessarily a good mentor, ask Smith and Alred. They refer to Nestor in Greek mythology to answer this question. Calling him a poor listener given to telling war stories to anyone who will listen, Smith and Alred compare him to the teacher who has seen and experienced everything and passes these stories on indiscriminately, implying that they all carry equal weight:

But Nestoring, to coin a barbaric word (and 'mentoring' ought to be seen as no less barbaric), will not do. Experience cannot be poured from one person into another, any more than expertise; and if pure experience made good teachers then schools would be full of teachers steadily growing more and more excellent. It is no slur to the profession to point out that this is not so. Where people develop professionally it is because they have the right experience and learn how to acknowledge it, reflect on it and use it (p. 113, emphasis in the original).
 Teachers with fewer years experience may serve as good mentors, according to Smith and Alred, and should not be excluded from consideration because of their perceived lack of length of time in the profession.

Smith and Alred seriously consider the mythological and linguistic facets of mentoring in their argument for the place of theories of teaching alongside practical experiences. They are not willing to "throw out the baby with the bath water" in the pursuit of demonstrated effectiveness and performance. Learning to teach cannot be reduced to activity-based learning (in this case more time to practice teaching) where prospective teachers' successes may be checked off against a list of skills. Training institutions are needed to allow prospective teachers the opportunities to sift through the stories of the Nestors and the Mentors. Gender was not a variable considered in this study.

The question Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995) pose in their article "Mentor and Mentoring: Did Homer have it Right?" seemed promising. Would these researchers go against the grain as the title implied and question mentoring from its mythological origins? On reading their analysis, though, I was led to wonder whether Cochran-Smith and Paris had got it right.

Cochran-Smith and Paris engage in some unsubstantiated literary analysis of the Greek myth to situate their work. They claim that Athena, in the guise of Mentor, "giv[es] authoritative instructions and, when necessary, tak[es] over and do[es] herself what she fears Telemachus will not be able to do" (p. 181, emphasis added). There is no textual evidence of the goddess's doubt in Telemachus's ability to act. The one occasion where she takes matters into her own hands by gathering the
crew and outfitting the ship for Telemachus to sail in search of Odysseus speeds up the action of Homer's narrative. Like many a good teacher, she gets the basics out of the way in order for the real learning to begin. Cochran-Smith and Paris have also ignored Athena's patronage of Odysseus which she extends to his son as further sign of her affection for the young man's father. This fact more than their interpretation explains her motives. Yet Cochran-Smith and Paris use their explication as the example of everything that they believe is bad about hierarchical and, in their mind, authoritarian relationships. Lacking well-grounded insight, they say:

...Homer's 'Mentor', who persuades, directly instructs, and takes over when necessary, is quite unsuitable as an image for working with new and beginning teachers. The very mortal, un-magic and female profession of teaching requires another vision of mentoring....[M]entoring has the greatest potential to contribute to reform in teacher education and in the teaching profession when it is based on teachers' ways of knowing, women's ways of collaborating and social change agendas (p. 182).

Like many researchers, Cochran-Smith and Paris stretch mentoring to cover a whole host of relationships and plans. According to Cochran-Smith and Paris Homer indeed did get it wrong, yet somehow the term "mentor" remains. The researchers then fit their conceptions of mentoring into a framework which encompasses Deweyan pragmatism, feminist essentialism, and critical pedagogy. This last category reveals their real agenda—emancipation for beginning teachers from the oppressive relationships in teaching.

Cochran-Smith and Paris maintain that exchanges between more and less experienced teachers contribute to the development of what Dewey called "habits of mind" (p. 187). The researchers conclude that, in this way, new teachers may begin to understand how they learn about
teaching by reflecting on the events in their classrooms with other teachers. Wishing to shun the traditional, hierarchical, masculinist model of mentoring, Cochran-Smith and Paris nonetheless seem to overlook that the relationship between new and more experienced teacher is, by virtue of its structure, unequal. No amount of collaborative work can make this distinction vanish. How this inequality might be used to best effect, though, ought to be given more serious consideration.

Though intent on extolling difference, Cochran-Smith and Paris fall into the trap of a particular type of feminist essentialism. Since the teaching profession is primarily made up of women, they assert that women's ways of collaborating need to become the models for teacher mentoring: "While acknowledging asymmetry in their relationships, women find it possible at the same time to position themselves differently in relation both to each other and to the knowledge that is the focus of their work together" (p. 189). Cochran-Smith and Paris use this premise of women's ability to deal with asymmetry to reinforce their belief that new teachers can participate equally in the mentoring process: "Mentoring relationships that assume both asymmetry and equal participation in conjoined work not only offer an alternative to the strictly hierarchical positioning of participants but also create social contexts uniquely suited to the construction and critique of knowledge about teaching" (p. 189, emphasis in the original). Like Mary Catherine Bateson whom they cite as support for their view of women's collaboration, Cochran-Smith and Paris believe that language does not exist to convey contrary conceptions. Hence they are apparently comfortable juxtaposing asymmetry and equal participation in their belief that this balancing act might displace hierarchy. I would argue
that by trying to reshape mentoring theories they obscure the real question of whether what they describe is really mentoring.

Cochran-Smith and Paris's position becomes clearer when they propose that the critical tradition, as identified by Zeichner and Gore, provides the best opportunity for challenging the status quo:

*The critical tradition...begins with the assumption that the realities of schooling are both socially constructed and socially maintained and thus has the goal of 'social transformation' and 'increasing justice, equality, freedom, and human dignity.' From this perspective teacher socialization is recognized as a process of contradictions, of beginning teachers' search for voice and identity amidst cultural myths and normative discourses, and possibly their struggle to teach against the grain of institutional habit and outside expertise (p. 191).*

This approach, however, presupposes beginning teachers' willingness to be led by those who claim to understand what the true mission of teaching is. Once more, then, hierarchies appear to be established, and inequality of perspective is reinforced. But what has this to do with mentoring?

Cochran-Smith and Paris are surprised that, since in their thinking teaching should empower and emancipate people, "descriptions of mentoring almost never include roles such as change agent, reformer, restructurer, curriculum creator, critical action researcher or teacher researcher" (p. 192); nor are activities such as "praxis, production (as opposed to reproduction), emancipation, knowledge generation, interrogation of assumptions, development of critical pedagogy, and challenging standard practices and policies" (p. 192) mentioned. These descriptions and activities may not fit the definition of mentoring, particularly since researchers seem unanimous in claiming that
mentoring orients new teachers to the profession. How can change occur if we do not know what it is we want to change?

Cochran-Smith and Paris conclude that the boundaries of what we understand to be mentoring need to be expanded but only as these might fit into a critical pedagogy agenda. Though calling for a more humanistic approach to teacher development and education, they negate their stance by stating that the solutions to the apparent stasis in teaching lie in a critical emancipatory pedagogy. They wish to save teachers from themselves, and in the process seem to diminish whatever individual knowledge teachers bring to the profession. Mentoring seems the loose context for Cochran-Smith and Paris's advancement of critical pedagogy.

What I thought could be contrary views on mentoring turned out to be somewhat muddled. Only Smith and Alred take a bracing view of the language which underscores mentoring's premises. They challenge the use of the conception in redefining how and where teacher training takes place. Perhaps language prevents many of the researchers from seeing that helping relationships in teaching may go under other names than mentoring.

MENTOR UNBOUND

Two themes emerge from the research literature on mentoring as an aspect of teacher development: 1) the need to assist beginning teachers into the profession and 2) the need to mute what has been perceived as "the individualistic traditions of teaching" (Fullan 1991, p. 308). These notions are interrelated. Who better to assist new teachers in their entry to teaching than experienced teachers who can be called mentors? And what better way to break down individualism than through contact
between these experienced teachers and the "new blood" being transfused into the profession?

Though the intent of the research on mentoring may be presumed to be good, researchers nevertheless tend to erase variation and difference in their descriptions of programs. They begin from the premise that entering teaching is hard. Indeed, studies have demonstrated this clearly and poignantly (Aitken 1994; Aitken and Mildon 1991; Lortie 1975). Yet to conclude that mentoring programs will remedy this situation is to disregard the unpredictability of human behaviour. There is something unsettling, perhaps even condescending, in the view that prescribing people's actions will somehow make them better able to care for one another. It reinforces the notion of indoctrination—most explicitly referred to by Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) who sees it as a positive aspect of induction programs. The apparent agreement among researchers about mentoring points to their tacit belief in its capacity to make teachers conform to some agreed upon standard of what teaching should now be.

The most striking feature of the various reviews and articles I have examined is their naiveté. Where researchers claim that only good may come of mentoring programs, it seems virtually unthinkable that the opposite might occur. Because researchers are justifiably committed to the abstraction of mentoring in all its positive ramifications, their results tend to resemble self-fulfilling prophecies which shed little new light on mentoring, let alone on teaching relationships. We are led to believe that all the teachers who have participated in mentoring programs have had only good experiences. In this way the research on mentoring perpetuates a uniformity of perspective which, however inadvertently, deters criticism.
At worst mentoring programs are mechanical and closed attempts having the power to make teachers conform to researchers' interpretations of what teaching might (should?) be. At best teachers might help each other in ways program planners might not anticipate. Yet mentoring's proponents see nothing paradoxical in requiring that we care about each other. We either do or we do not. After all, Christ's exhortation that we love one another was not an invitation to set up a program, for "virtue...cannot be taught; it can only be suggested" (Phillips 1998, p. 70). Caring ought to be a basic component in our relations, whether these are professional or personal.

**TAKING A FEMINIST VIEW**

As I have demonstrated in Chapter 2 feminist analyses have helped to unearth the sexist biases which have framed research, social policy, and especially behaviour. Two strands, among many, emerge from this ongoing feminist critique: the belief in universality and absolute truth and the absence of the experience of gender. Using these as broad and overlapping frameworks, what might a feminist examination of conceptions of mentoring reveal?

*Myth, Language, and Claims of Truth*

There is a tendency among many people to equate myth with some sort of eternal, immutable truth (Barthes 1972). Surely, they say, its staying power is evidence of its stability. As a result, a myth's meaning endures through time, unchanged. A feminist critique questions this stability.

Athena's transformation into Mentor is our first clue that something is amiss. That the necessity for her doing so is not questioned seems indicative of one thing—that a woman act more like a man. So the
goddess's gender shift is not troublesome because she is moving into the dominant male group. But what if we were to turn the tables? What if the myth had told of a god who had to change into the form of a woman? This is somewhat more difficult to imagine. More often than not a man's metamorphosis into a woman is seen as a parody of the female, its so-called humour vividly pointing out the horrors womanhood holds for men. The irony is that, in transformations such as Athena's, the converse of the question does not arise.

Researchers apparently remain content to accept the myth at face value, perpetuating the view that a call to myth, as the safe harbour of tradition and truth, can be a powerful means for maintaining the status quo (Barthes 1972; Carter in Heilbrun 1990; Phillips 1998; Poerksen 1995). Under this circumstance consideration of gender's impact is unlikely to arise. Magical disguises such as Athena's, like the performance of miracles, tend to dazzle and obscure rather than illuminate the current reality. The presumed authoritative interpretation of the Athena/Mentor myth—that it is about care, concern, and the passing on of wisdom to the young—has prevented a closer rereading which incorporates the significance of gender to the rest of the story. Athena's transformation is overtaken by the belief that being a mentor transcends gender concerns because the universal and desirable attribute of care is involved.

The belief that myth can speak over time removes it from history. This type of temporal transcendence has the effect of quashing any interpretations other than the received one(s), thereby more firmly entrenching a particular hierarchical view of the world. In the case of the Athena/Mentor myth, woman has no place unless she dons the mantle
of manhood, which we know will never be quite enough to gain full and equal access to the world of men. In her own incarnation Athena seems to have little authority to say anything. Her sex change silences her. Therefore, Athena's experiences are never fully articulated, and any advice she has only carries weight in her guise as a male. Historically, then, women's inferiority has been affirmed by appeals to myths' presumed universality and truth.

At its most fundamental, even the goddess Athena cannot be part of what seems to be yet another story of male bonding. Perhaps the myth has little to do with care and more to do with maintaining male dominance and hierarchy. The men embark on voyages whereas Penelope, Odysseus's wife, sits and weaves. Would it, then, not be more appropriate to conclude that women have nothing to do with this myth? For whom is mentoring—really? The myth does not apply to half the population of the Western world because it is profoundly gendered and erases women from view.

Language has a role to play in the way claims to truth are made. Feminists have demonstrated that the terms "man" and "men" do not include women. One effect of this analysis has been for some to propose that words beginning with man- and men- might be masculinist. This tactic, however, is often used by those who would belittle efforts to reveal how male-centred language can be. While seriocomic remarks may be made about words such as mandate and mention and show little knowledge of word derivation, they nonetheless display an awareness that language is marked by gender. It was in conversation with another woman that this very issue arose. She said that "mentor" made her think that the concept had been devised by men for men because the word
started with *men-* . That her comment, in this situation, is apt shows that we can claim some gains in understanding the impact gender has in the strangest of places.

There is little that is directly applicable to women in the Athena/Mentor myth. The terms of reference have, historically, been masculinist and, as such, have perpetuated traditional definitions of masculinity. These, in turn, have been extended to women in order to make them conform to established social norms and restrict their participation in male-dominated spheres of power. To say that the myth of Athena/Mentor can guide women is once more to insist that they become men.

*The Absence of the Experience of Gender*

The research I have examined generalizes across gender lines and relegates them to oblivion. The old adage of "out of sight, out of mind" applies. I could speak of the lack of gender differentiation but that would assume that gender is even acknowledged as potentially significant in the conception of mentoring programs. As a result, with no mention of gender, researchers are further encouraged to see teachers as a homogeneous group. Furthermore, when the problems have been broadly defined as those of induction to the profession and revitalization of those in the profession, it is far simpler to present programs of any stripe as the antidotes to these difficulties. Women are caught in a tangled web where invisible gender structures still "keep them in their place" even as they seem to be making inroads into traditionally male-dominated areas.

Since mentoring's framework is derived from a masculinist perspective, gender is bound to be passed over: "In a framework of thought derived from the experience of one sex only, questions of gender
simply do not arise" (Martin 1990, p. 30). As a result, experiences where gender might have been a factor in mentoring do not, for all intents and purposes, appear in the research. The assumption buried deeply here is that males and females are treated in the same way because they are in the same profession. A parallel analogy with so-called co-education elucidates this claim.

Jane Roland Martin (1990) argues that genuine co-education cannot exist because the education girls receive is the one initially intended for boys. They were being prepared to participate in the intellectual and public pursuits which their gender bestowed upon them. When formal education was extended to females, this original model was not altered. Hence young girls are still schooled to acquire the generally accepted male traits of rationality, objectivity, and dispassion. It is also assumed that, because both females and males now "get an education," they all get equal treatment. What is missing from the story is the actual experience of this presumed equal treatment: "even when the treatment is the same, it is frequently experienced differently" (Martin 1990, p. 20).

So it is with mentoring. We have no stories of the different experiences women might have of mentoring as seen through the prism of gender. The myth of M(m)entor seems to have become an overdetermining factor preventing researchers from finding other possibilities for helping relationships in teaching. Once again Martin's comments on co-education raise questions about mentoring:

...But supposing we could readily achieve [identical treatment of males and females], we must ask ourselves if this should be our goal. The hypothesis that the same education for both sexes will yield the same results rests on the assumption that sex or gender is a difference that makes no difference (1990, p. 20, inclusion in italics added).
Will mentoring for both sexes yield the same results? We can assume no equality of treatment solely on the basis of both genders being involved in the same process, be it education or one of its recent component parts, mentoring.

Research into mentoring displays what some might call gender neutrality. Yet what it is maintaining, without uttering the phrase, is the idea of "generic man," that women's experiences are included. There can be no gender neutrality when our society is so openly divided along gender lines. Researchers need to be more aware that not to see gender does not prove that it does not exist. We need a "gender-sensitive philosophy" (Martin 1990, p. 22) which acknowledges our social and educational reality. It takes gender into account when gender makes a difference, as, for example, research shows it does in the way teachers respond to male and female students, and in the amount of space the liberal curriculum devotes to the deeds and works of men and women respectively (p. 22).

It becomes clear that the question of gender should be raised as a matter of course, especially when it seems invisible and, therefore, irrelevant.

Researchers claim that mentoring is valuable for passing on some of the traditions of teaching. We might well ask, though, whose traditions? Since women have been educated within a masculinist framework, it seems almost inevitable that it will take a great deal of work to imagine any other interpretations of the Athena/Mentor myth which might challenge its received meaning. Yet if learning about teaching begins with one's own schooling, what will women ever accomplish if they are to be further inculcated into the prevailing masculinist norms of the profession? We do not yet know otherwise because women have been no more able to speak in their own form than the goddess herself.
CHAPTER 5
WOMEN'S STORIES

[W]e may safely assert that the knowledge men can acquire of women, even as they have been and are, without reference to what they might be, is wretchedly imperfect and superficial, and always will be so, until women themselves have told all they have to tell.

John Stuart Mill. The Subjection of Women.

Ought not education to bring out and fortify the differences rather than the similarities?

Virginia Woolf. A Room of One's Own.

As I have shown in the previous chapter, researchers enthusiastically describe mentoring programs as they might be undertaken in colleges and faculties of education, and in schools. Many researchers, however, appear to have fallen into "the bondage of habit and custom" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 8) in their inability to see beyond mentoring to identify other helping relationships in teaching. Part of the reason for this blindness, I suspect, may be the way in which mentoring has been wrenched from its historical and literary contexts. Without these frameworks mentoring has come to be a code word which tends to homogenize people's experiences. Gender in these circumstances languishes under erasure, and women are deprived of the possibility of articulating a story that may not fit mentoring's conventional script.

Untethered from its mythological context we have lost the memory of the motive (Warner 1998) for the story of Mentor. What might that motive have been? At its most fundamental, the Mentor/Telemachus story forms a very slight portion of The Odyssey. Its function seems little more than a plot device to pry Telemachus away from his mother. The implication, for him as a male, is that to remain in the palace with her is unmanly as the suitor Antinoös makes plain on several occasions.
Therefore Telemachus's search for his father becomes a parallel pursuit, a junior odyssey which speaks of the duties sons have to their fathers and to the community of warriors. Men are bonded/bound to each other because they share in the quest. Women have been categorically excluded. So when we take the original story of mentoring and extend it to woman the ramifications are clear: to participate on an "equal" footing with man she must deny herself. Athena's transformation proves this. Women must live according to the rules men have established.

Language forces women to express themselves in a particular way also. Virginia Woolf (1992) has trenchantly identified this constraint:

'I have the feelings of a woman,' says Bathsheba in Far From the Madding Crowd, 'but I have only the language of men.' From that dilemma arise infinite confusions and complications. Energy has been liberated, but into what form is it to flow? To try the accepted forms, to discard the unfit, to create others which are more fitting, is a task that must be accomplished before there is freedom and achievement (p. 20).

And Jane Miller (1996) remarks:

For the history of men commandeering language is also the only history of language that women have. They cannot easily break free if that has been their history too; and to deny that history and invent another which is not theirs would be feckless and even banal (p. 221)

If the term "mentoring" is in a language not our own, missing the mark of women's experiences, what other words better capture women's teaching relationships? If, as I have already demonstrated in Chapter 2, sex-neutrality is not a meaningful category in language communities (Cameron 1990; de Beauvoir 1952; Ehrlich 1995; Spender 1980), why should sex-neutrality in theorizing about mentoring obtain? If we now realize that "man" does not include "woman," why should we accept as sex-neutral and gender inclusive a notion whose origins require that a
woman change her sex? To emphasize what women have gone through may help to dislodge Mentor's grip and open the way for a more complex consideration of what might go on when teachers work together.

What does mentoring mean to women teachers? This may seem like a curious question. Yet what is "curiouser," to quote Alice, is that issues of gender are not raised more often about a profession whose members are predominantly female: "How obvious women's presence in education is for all of us. Yet how suppressed and ignored and manipulated and finally ambiguous that presence is" (Miller 1996, p. 57). So much of what falls under the rubric of research in teacher education or teacher development or school improvement or educational reform speaks as though the genders were equally represented in the teaching profession. The evenhandedness of discussions about education at large further contributes to this illusion. We should not overlook, for instance, the efforts faculties of education have expended to attract more men into the ranks of the primary and junior divisions in Ontario under the guise of gender equity. To acknowledge this fact without concomitant research on the impact of gender—that children are taught predominantly by women throughout their school lives—is to deprive educational research of a significant focus. Not to address education, in all its forms, from this standpoint is to keep gender invisible, not an uncommon social phenomenon as I have already demonstrated.

I begin this chapter with a dialogue my colleague/friend Alyson Worrall and I wrote about how we helped one another throughout our teaching careers. We thought then that our relationship might be a mentoring one. Looking for more women's stories I follow our personal experiences with a look at seventeen contemporary women teachers'
responses to my questionnaire on mentoring (Appendix A). I wanted to see to what extent, if any, a woman's perspective of mentoring might be evident. Emily's story emerged from this sample. Hers paints a picture I have yet to encounter in the research on mentoring, one where gender and power intersect in their most pernicious forms.

PROFESSIONAL SISTERHOOD

No researchers explicitly address the personal and professional dimensions of mentoring in the material I reviewed. Everything I have outlined to this juncture is situated within institutions of education. Researchers speak to programs and schemes as they might work in colleges and faculties of education and in schools. But what of the work teachers do outside these settings? What impact might more personal attachments have on teachers' professional development?

In 1990 Alyson Worrall and I were part of a group of more experienced teachers invited to join the Section Eleven Project, a longitudinal study begun in 1987 by Johan L. Aitken at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The foci of her investigation were the lives and experiences of teachers from their preservice year through their first five years of teaching:

All teacher/researchers sought the sources of teacher knowledge, confidence, inquiry and development. They were interested in how their personal narratives (about which they all wrote) motivated them to become teachers, and what knowledge and experience from their past could be drawn upon for use in the present (Aitken 1994, p. 357).

Our task, to examine our own preservice programs and time in the profession, was set within these same parameters. A number of the original members of the project had spoken about the importance of friends and spouses at home who had helped them grapple with the
demands of teaching. It was in this context that Alyson and I began considering whether we had been one another's mentors in what we agreed to call our "shared profession" (Semeniuk with Worrall, in press). We wrote our thoughts in the form of a dialogue from which the excerpts in this section are taken.

I had been one of twenty-two teachers in 1975 hired to teach in a large secondary school and was beginning my second year teaching English and French in 1976 when Alyson, as part of a new wave of fifteen teachers, joined the staff to teach Mathematics. This two-year period was a boom time for The Acme Board of Education. Located just outside the boundaries of a large metropolitan centre in Ontario, enrollment in schools was increasing because of the rapid development of new housing and industrial projects.

I remember how at sea I felt my first year in this school: there were over 90 teachers; the school seemed as big as a football field; I taught in four different rooms which were located in such farflung areas that I was rarely able to get to my classes on time. No one had explained to me how the timetable was set up. My other fledgling colleagues experienced similar difficulties. As a result, this state of affairs was a topic for discussion at the last staff meeting of the school year, and the idea for a "buddy system" emerged. More experienced teachers in the school would be "buddies," and one new teacher was to be assigned to each volunteer.

A memorandum listing the pairings was distributed to staff in late August 1976 with the understanding that those teachers named would find one another. No further provisions were made for formal introductions between new teachers and their designated "buddies" as the school year began in September. Alyson did not meet her "buddy"
Ann, a second-year History teacher, until December. At that time she concluded that Alyson must not have any questions or difficulties because she had not sought Ann out. They did not cross paths again for the rest of that academic year.

Alyson and I were thrown together by the vagaries of the school timetable. The vice principal in charge of scheduling tried, as much as possible, to cluster rooms by subject department: for instance, there were the Mathematics classrooms in the third hall, the English classrooms in the second hall, the History classrooms on the second floor, the shops in the Tech wing. However, this system could not always be applied, and some classes had to be booked outside their designated areas. As a second-year teacher I no longer had to travel as extensively as the year previous and had been given my own English classroom. Alyson taught a Mathematics course in one of the periods when I was not there. We crossed paths as I would gather up my materials and she was arriving to set things up for her students. These brief encounters turned into protracted conversations when we discovered that we shared a lunch period.

We would "talk shop" during this time and ask questions, procedural or pedagogical, of our more seasoned colleagues. These queries seemed, however, to elicit war stories from them rather than explanations or clarifications. Our views on what a mentor could have been like are summed up by Alyson:

That we drew together professionally, in order to assist ourselves through the crises that are the first two years of teaching, only served to widen the gap between ourselves and the people who should have become our colleagues and among whom we should have found our mentors. After all, didn't your mental image of a mentor include the detail that a mentor was someone older and wiser and more practised in
the arts to be passed on to the succeeding generations? I know mine did.

Those people, wiser in years and experience in their profession than we were, seemed nowhere to be found. We eventually had to abandon the staff room for an empty classroom to talk. Our discussions continued outside the school, over dinner, over drinks, after having seen a movie or play. Years later, when we decided that we would share living space—we bought a house—the conversations did not abate.

These are the bare bones of the story. Looking back on my first two years and Alyson's initial year in teaching, what factors might have contributed to the rather quick demise of the "buddy" system at the school where we first met? In sum, no formal structures were put in place to permit the program to flourish. Firstly, neither Alyson nor her "buddy" Ann shared preparation time. There was no possibility of their coming together in the same way that we had done. Secondly, Alyson taught Mathematics while Ann worked in the History department. Though this situation may not necessarily impede teachers from different subject areas meeting one another, the size of the school and the timetable did, in this case, hinder interdepartmental contact. Thirdly, it was difficult for new teachers to find their way to their classrooms let alone locate the offices of other subject departments. Seeking out one's "buddy" became another thing which needed to be done on top of, rather than in conjunction with, "learning the ropes." Fourthly, as mentioned above, many courses were timetabled into certain locations in the school. As a result, teachers from different departments rarely crossed paths during class changes. No thought had been given to suggesting that volunteers could be paired with new teachers in the same subject
area. All these elements contributed in some way to the "buddy" system collapsing in upon itself. Good intentions turned out to be no guarantees of success: [the entire "buddy" system endeavour] "was nebulous and ill-defined, and while people thought it was a great idea, they really didn't know what to do."

That Alyson and I fled the staff room and eventually the school to discuss our values and beliefs about teaching reaffirms that teachers may often feel compelled to get away from their peers to talk through the experiences they have in their classrooms and schools (Aitken and Mildon 1992). Though it may be inadvertent on their part, colleagues who carp about administrative inadequacies and the often nervewracking conditions of teaching (the Nestors to whom Smith and Alred refer) may subtly undermine teachers' professional growth. Their talk is less a show of solidarity—we're all in the same boat together—and more a display of a lack of support for those teachers who want to reflect on their practice and not on the inequities of, for example, supervision schedules.

Alyson and I called our mutual support "mentoring" when we surveyed our teaching careers during our involvement in the Section Eleven Project. That it seemed the appropriate word at the time attests to the concept's psychic grip and the paucity of language to put it another way. Yet, over the course of our dialogue, even as we clung to the term "mentoring," we were trying to burst the bonds the name seemed to impose. In calling our relationship "professional sisterhood," we hoped that the juxtaposition of these terms would make clearer the connections, both personal and professional, in our lives. Alyson writes:

In a sense, you became a professional sister. I could talk openly about what I was doing in the classroom without feeling that you would think I was inept. By listening you
gave me support and encouragement that was more valuable to me because I didn't have to censor what I said to you. You had no position of authority over me so I could just be myself instead of what I thought I should be.

What drove us in our attempts to reach outside mentoring's boundaries?

Time as a player rests at the heart of a consideration of this question. If time is of the essence, then that our relationship evolved slowly, even imperceptibly, during the year in which we met reflects the need for teachers to have time to get to know one another. Time allows for trust and friendship to develop, and, indeed, daily contact enabled our relationship to flourish. At the conclusion of our dialogue we state:

Our mentorship has been the only time when we have been able to chart our own course and actively participate in our own professional development. No amount of legislated peer coaching or supervision for growth planning can come close to what we have been able to do for each other informally and spontaneously....We have supported, tolerated, respected, and been open with each other. We have given each other freedom and permission to risk, to admit vulnerabilities, and to create our spaces for choices. We have learned that "Pain is not easier for having been suffered before in the same way, but it is more bearable for having been narrated" (Heilbrun 1990, p.109). We have done all this for each other even when our careers have been near collapse because of our frustration with others who could not (or would not) engage in similar discussions. It has not been until the writing of this article that the label mentorship has been applied to what we have always called friendship. For us, friendship and mentorship have been inextricably connected, and thus, it has been hard to see any difference between them.

Alyson and I seem to have enabled one another to engage more deeply with our shared profession. We did not have any expectations of one another which might have emerged if one of us had been in a position of authority.

It would be easy to say that our experiences prove that mentoring programs ought to be established. Yet this would be to miss the point of
our account. Whether our relationship would have happened as a result of a mentoring program or despite one is something about which we can only speculate. What our account and others in the Section Eleven Project do reveal, though, is that lively, personal interest between and among people provides the space for them—people and relationships—to flourish. Even if designers of mentoring programs advocate that participants choose their own mentors, how much time will they allocate for this to happen? Programs, after all, are usually constrained by timelines and the need to report tangible results. How can relationships be made to happen within timeframes, let alone be mandated? Mentoring programs, ultimately, can rationalize professional associations while diminishing personal ones.

In the next section I move to a larger sample of women teachers to see whether other understandings of mentoring might emerge.

MENTOR ASCENDING

Of the seventeen women teachers who completed the questionnaire for my study (see Appendix A), one had participated in a mentoring program whose primary focus had been students starting secondary school (#2). Another woman had not been involved formally nor informally in mentoring (#14). I have been able to incorporate their remarks nonetheless since they had the opportunity to address mentoring and women in the questionnaire. Respondents' comments demonstrate a range of perceptions about conceptions of mentoring and their applicability to women.

Asked to define mentoring as they understood it, respondents were almost equally divided in stating that the relationship occurred between
a teacher with more experience in the profession and another just beginning to teach or not mentioning this at all:

Mentoring allows a fledgling "anything" to learn on an ongoing basis from the experiences of a more experienced "anything." (#6)

This is the situation where an expert in a certain competence, i.e., teaching, or experienced practitioner with some success attempts to impart this skill, knowledge or competence to another person....The essential idea is the exchange of skill, knowledge or wisdom from the have to the have not yet. (#12)

To me mentoring connotes guidance provided by a more experienced practitioner to a novice practitioner. (#15)

Mentoring involves having an experienced teacher take a less experienced teacher under her wing and showing her the ropes. It involves making one's transition into a new profession easier and less intimidating. (#17)

Of those who did not specify this difference, the views expressed were as follows:

Mentoring involves two people—the mentor and the person being mentored. The reason to set up such a relationship is that the mentor possesses a certain body of knowledge and skills which the other person is motivated to understand and/or learn from. (#1)

A process whereby someone who is interested in you and your learning engages in a type of interaction with you in order to offer guidance. (#7)

Mentoring is the act of guiding, helping, assisting and assuring. (#16)

When asked to explain why a particular relationship was considered a mentoring one later in the questionnaire, some respondents' comments tended to reinforce the standard definition of mentoring:

My mentor clearly had a wealth of experience and ideas which were transferable and usable. (#5)
It is learning from someone else who may have more experience in the field than you. (#13)

My relationship is perceived as an example of mentoring because of the immense emotional, moral support from an experienced practitioner to a novice one. (#15)

I consider this relationship an example of mentoring because I was afforded the opportunity to be guided by someone with more knowledge and experience than myself. (#17)

Some blurring of the boundaries occurred in defining mentoring: one participant asserted that, where two individuals participated as mentors and learners, peer mentoring resulted (#5). The respondent did not clarify this distinction. She may have meant to suggest that the usual older/younger, experienced/less experienced dynamic did not obtain. Another respondent (#8) provided a list of synonyms: wise and trusted guide, teacher, guardian, sentinel, coach, facilitator, mirror, leader.

Ten women in my study stated that they had not participated in a mentoring program. They met the person they now consider in retrospect a mentor in various ways. For some the relationship evolved imperceptibly over time (#5, #12, #15). One woman said that she and her mentor were introduced (#17) while another reported that she chose her mentors, unbeknownst to them, by watching the teachers around her (#9).

When asked what expectations they might have had about this relationship which they now called mentoring, five women replied they had had none (#5, #6, #9, #12, #15). One stated that she expected a friend and a colleague who would provide guidance and advice and would share her experiences. She was not disappointed (#17). Two others, who considered their associate teachers as mentors, wrote:
I expected to learn all the person knew about teaching and assumed a priori that what they had to impart to me was essential to my future employment as a teacher. (#10)

I expected to learn from these persons. I expected them to listen to my ideas and suggestions and answer my questions to the best of their abilities. I expected her to model good/positive teaching, not to be afraid to make mistakes, give me a comfortable environment to learn and make mistakes. (#16)

Another respondent stated that the mentoring relationship required honesty and integrity (#8).

Six women in my study had been involved in a mentoring program at various levels of education: community college (#3, #7), elementary school (#10, #13), administrative track at the elementary level (#4), and consultancy (#5). In two instances (#3, #7) a more experienced colleague observed these women teaching in their classrooms and provided feedback. A peer acted as mentor in one case (#3). As a first-year teacher, another woman felt she primarily received emotional support from her mentor (#13). She goes on to state that "the real person who gave me the help I needed was not my official mentor...I usually had to seek [my assigned mentor] out." Participation in a mentoring program was mandated for one woman (#4). People who are shortlisted for vice principal are required by her board of education to be involved in such a program:

A very organized system is in place to ensure that all candidates experience mentorship.

The curriculum consultant (#5) described her mentor:

This colleague was a source of info, ideas for me. I went to him with questions (big and small) and learned my way into my new role with his help.
Though one woman indicated that she had participated in a mentoring program, she did not describe her experiences (#10).

Of the benefits they may have received from being in a mentoring program, the women's reactions were mixed:

I received support and acknowledgment of my work and constructive criticism. The discussions felt mutual and collaborative. I often felt I gave as much as he gave to me—which was okay. The program was rigorous, so it felt good finishing it—like I achieved something. (#3)

I noted several different administrative and personality styles. Great female role model. Poor leadership from male mentor. (#4)

The best part of being mentored and being a mentor is the longstanding working relationships which developed and endured as a result. (#5)

You got feedback that you otherwise would not have received. (#7)

Most support did not come from the official mentor program. (#13)

Involvement in these programs ceased for many reasons: the program came to an end because it was only meant to last one year (#3, #13); there was no time to continue (#7); the situation was too contrived and led to sexual harassment (#4). I shall provide more detail about this story in the next section of this chapter.

These same women reported that they had also worked in informal mentoring relationships. One woman worked with her boss (#7) while another found two women she considered approachable and sought them out for advice and support. Observation of dealings with children, catching glimpses of teaching style, and going to these people with questions led another woman into an informal mentoring relationship
For one woman the spontaneous nature of mentoring was her most positive experience:

I worked next to a teacher who was quite involved in extracurricular activities. He was particularly interested in my enthusiasm for teaching and encouraged my creative talents. I was asked to work on several Math and Science Committees, design props, sets, and banners, and to participate in arts festivals. (#4)

Two women had no specific expectations from these relationships (#3, #13). Two expressed gratitude for the ways in which their mentor had encouraged them:

I did not have any expectations initially. As time went on, I was encouraged to pursue leadership opportunities as this mentor went on to become a vice principal. I am grateful to this man for encouraging me to take courses, be more creative, and to become more immersed in teaching. (#4)

I like to think that this mentoring relationship is integral to my personal and professional development. Hence I am grateful for her guidance and facilitation. I did not carry a particular set of expectations consciously since the beginning of this relationship has also marked our long-standing friendship. (#13)

One woman (#1) expressed her expectations in this fashion:

To be trusted and to know that when I had a question I would get a thoughtful response (not necessarily positive but truthful). [A mentor should] be able to critique my performance and coach me.

All participants, whether they had worked formally or informally with a mentor, felt that they had benefitted in some way from working with one:

Not on my career—but on me as a person I think I have benefitted. My work place does not acknowledge this kind of development. (#3)

The informal mentorship situation led me into administration. The formal mentorship situation, although contrived, gave me an opportunity to work with a female administrator who exhibited a more collaborative and
collegial approach. [However,] the male principal mentor ruined my career. (#4)

My relationship with my mentor enriched my early professional experiences. From this I realized the power of informal/unofficial mentors and made conscious efforts to act as a mentor for individual new teachers. (#5)

I sure as heck won't do some of the things she's done and yet I've seen how she has handled exceedingly difficult situations that have been ignored or circumvented in my school very successfully. I feel I have an m.o. for the future. (#6).

It has probably made me more willing to take a little time to help others new in the "game." (#7)

Perhaps a list of my accomplishments since the mentoring began will provide an indication of the effect of this relationship—Master of Education (1-1/2 years part-time), consultant position, workshop leader/presenter at regional and national conferences, shortlisted for Ministry of Education position, doctorate program begun, Principal Part I course completed, Principal Part II course begun. (#8)

My mentor is someone who shares my beliefs about how kids learn and has been teaching for 20 years. She gives me more confidence in what I am doing. (#13)

All participants were asked to provide suggestions for how mentoring should occur in education:

Cannot be mandated. (#1)

The mentorship should not be forced or contrived. It should be encouraged. (#4)

Individuals should be encouraged to act as mentors for others. (#5)

Formality is not essential to establishing mentorship. (#6)

Should be voluntary. Have lots of time to meet. Be able to design your own plan and structure and how it should occur. Both be doing it for the same reason—to learn. (#7)

I think mentoring should be an integral part of teacher education, teacher development and for the advancement of teachers. Mentors should be selected based on their wisdom,
mentoring ability and willingness to act in this capacity. Mentors and mentees should receive training in communication, goal setting and goal achievement and reflection. (#8)

In terms of teacher education, I'm not sure in what direction we should move because my experience of mentoring teachers was not terribly useful in my teacher education. (#9)

I think it's a terrific concept whose time has come. It must take place in an atmosphere of cooperation. I think that until teacher education adopts a more progressive orientation toward more cooperative modalities and less competitiveness, mentoring will have less good effect. (#10)

I find it difficult that a mentor can be assigned. That seems very paradoxical. It would be better if school culture would be such that a new teacher would feel comfortable going to anyone to ask for help. The real relationships could be formed. How to do this, I don't know. (#13)

Experienced teachers should be genuinely interested in providing assistance and contributing to a sense of community. Not just for appearance but out of a real sense of caring. (#14)

People who want to be mentors should volunteer and should be cooperative, flexible and openminded individuals who are willing to help others and be involved in team teaching relationships. (#17)

The majority of these responses indicate that mentoring, when it occurs, should arise informally and spontaneously. They also imply that, under the right conditions, mentoring can have positive and longreaching effects to change the teaching profession as it is now constituted. They see that there is still too much emphasis on competition and too little on cooperation to allow mentoring to blossom fully. It is nonetheless difficult to imagine how mentoring might occur in a way which might enhance greater teacher collaboration and the development of a greater sense of community. At the same time, these responses seem to demonstrate that working together in a common enterprise demolishes
any notions of hierarchy. Mentoring may be the most convenient word to use at present, but it strikes me that these teachers are more interested in being able to work together than in any way maintain an artificial separation between those who are more experienced in teaching and those who are starting out. These teachers' optimism reminds us that one of the strengths teachers possess is their hope of creating a better environment for children and adults to learn and work together.

Complexity arises when gender is made part of the analysis of conceptions of mentoring. Of all the participants who had been involved in some way with mentoring thirteen had worked with female mentors, three with male mentors, and two with mentors of both sexes. When asked whether it was important to match mentoring partners by sex, eight women responded in the negative. Where they expanded on their answers, women considered integrity, personality, and relevance of what the mentor had to offer as being more significant than her/his sex (#2, #8, #10).

Comments to the contrary included:

I prefer to work with a woman mentor—openness is heightened with no risk of crossing boundaries between male and female relations. (#3)

Personally, I look to women when searching for experiences and ideas. (#5)

Women should mentor women. How can a woman look up to a man, learn from him and expect to be in his spot one day when their worlds and language are almost completely different? (#6)

I think the humour and the shared experiences of "male dominance" helped us bond and plan how to mediate the male-type structures and rules. (#7)
As I have already indicated, I do think that gender has an impact for the following reasons: gender roles and expectations in a traditional sense and values in relation to this, i.e., male expectations of women/male authority; sexual attraction and the dynamics that may play out in that. (#3)

If the mentor has a prejudicial style of leadership, the mentee is left at his/her mercy. (#4)

Quality teaching is quality teaching regardless of the sex of the individual. There are some strategies which can be modelled and adopted by anyone. However, I realize now that I consciously observed my mentor's actions partly because she was a woman. I knew intuitively that I couldn't emulate a man's characteristics/strategies of male teachers and administrators. I knew her way would be different but more like my own. (#5)

Because the relationship can represent a power differential, then questions of gender may compound these difficult issues of power. (#9)

I don't really know. I think it has more to do with styles than sex. (#13)

I am not certain whether the sex of the mentor would exert a positive or negative influence except the possibility that a certain sex may likely embrace a particular kind of world view, teaching philosophy, interpersonal relationship etc. I also think perhaps the compatibility of the two individuals' personalities and outlooks can be fundamental to a positive mentoring relationship which is egalitarian in nature. (#15)

One respondent made the following comment:

Sex is positive or negative depending on the background of the people involved. (#1)
If the mentor feels threatened in any way by the gender of the mentee, I would guess that other factors are the real reason. Other factors such as personality fit, ability to work cooperatively, experience in the mentor/mentee relationship, level of self-esteem, willingness to learn from others. (#10)

"Gender was not a variable considered in this study" was my refrain in Chapter 4 where I reviewed the literature on mentoring. This conspicuous absence is further exemplified by the difficulty the women in my study had in identifying whether there could be any situations in which gender might be of any significance in mentoring relationships. For eight of the participants gender either made no difference or they could not imagine what possible effect gender might have; the other nine considered working with a female mentor an important factor. That there is an almost even split in the women's assessment about the significance of gender attests to the strength of gender arrangements in society, especially to the depth to which gender is submerged to the prevailing notion of gender neutrality. What might happen to mentoring if gender were seen to matter? Emily's journey of consciousness-raising sheds some light on this question.

**MENTOR'S FALL FROM GRACE: EMILY'S CASE**

Emily was twenty-two when she began teaching at the elementary school level and has been in the profession for the last sixteen years. She is a tall, attractive woman with long dark hair framing her finely chiselled features. To be in her presence is to feel the full force of her enthusiasm for and belief in the power of teaching and education. It is also important to note that Emily is deeply committed to the ideals of her Roman Catholic upbringing which are the moral basis for the separate school system in which she works. This combination of
idealism, intellectual energy, and physical beauty are a magnet for people. She is always dressed in clothing which would be deemed the attire of a professional woman who takes her job seriously. To note Emily’s appearance is not gratuitous. Indeed it will become apparent the extent to which it was an insidious factor in the sexual harassment she endured while participating in a mentoring program. In recounting her experiences Emily took great pains to put the details of her story in context and to emphasize the many positive instances of working with men. She recalled the events of a career which, to any outside observer, would be called successful, one in which she was the beneficiary of the care and kindness of both women and men.

Hired into a school where the parents were very vocal and active, Emily was the junior teacher on a staff where no one had less than ten years experience. Not only did the principal make sure that she did not feel alone or isolated; the school board provided the resources of a consultant who came regularly to help Emily set up her classroom and to follow through on any needs she might have. The superintendent requested the staff to have particular care of Emily so she would not founder in what might be an overwhelming situation for a beginning teacher. As Emily tells it:

And the one teacher, although I didn’t agree with everything that she told me—she was the teacher who had been teaching for forty years—would come in and talk to me and tell me that I had to have all the kids...printing on the lines, you know...the really old-fashioned stuff...but I really wasn’t taught that way in teachers' college...She was a wonderful lady, but very strict and very, you know, very different approach than what I had expected from a primary teacher. Whereas the other teacher, the grade one teacher...she had taught my contemporaries so she had been teaching for at least twenty to twenty-five years and had been teaching grade one for fifteen years. She had lots of materials and she
came and provided support....And I found it really beneficial working with them, that they were all very much older than me and had a very different outlook on teaching.

Emily makes note that the teachers at this school seemed particularly aware of their legal liabilities in relation to the formation of school clubs and the organization of field trips. They made a point of bringing these facts to Emily's attention. As a result, Emily proceeded to familiarize herself with the Education Act and the statutes which governed the teaching profession.

A new principal was appointed as Emily started her second year in this school. He seemed willing and able to draw her out in talk. His attention became the basis for Emily developing a clearer philosophy of education:

So there were things that I would discuss on an intellectual level with the principal...only being twenty-three years old at the time and discussing these things, but he was willing to hear me. And I knew I had a philosophy but I didn't—I wasn't really sure what that philosophy was. I was talking things through but he at least had the interest to be able to encourage me to talk about it....And he was my principal for a couple of years and very supportive through that time, even though I wouldn't always agree with him. And there were several times when I would—we would have these confrontations, not confrontations but discussions and differences of opinion.

Other male staff, one teacher and two vice principals, also encouraged Emily to become involved in extracurricular activities. She felt able to ask questions which people then took the time to answer for her. Being taken seriously by more seasoned professionals seems to have had the effect of building Emily's confidence even to the extent that she felt she could disagree with people's stated positions.

Other initiatives in her board were also happening as Emily entered her third and fourth years of teaching:
At the same time our board was undergoing a change in leadership, in the sense that they wanted to encourage more women in leadership and they wanted to change their process in interviewing and promotional procedures and so on. So they had a whole series called the Exploration Series, and I started attending these workshops, never really intending to be a vice principal, but just sort of curious because people had suggested it to me.

Another male colleague, himself going through the process of applying for a vice principal position, encouraged Emily to participate in activities such as Mathematics and Sciences fairs which would raise her profile if she were contemplating taking the road into administration. In recollecting these events Emily admits she may not have had the political "savvy" needed to understand the full ramifications of what this colleague was imparting to her:

He had given me this wealth of information, but...I didn't understand what he was saying to me because at this point I was only something like twenty-five, twenty-six years old, very young and naïve. But also very much not connected yet, not understanding that he was probably so in tune with what was happening in the system that maybe I wasn't at that height or level of awareness to be able to understand the connections.

During this time Emily also upgraded her undergraduate degree to an honours one and by the age of twenty-nine had completed her Master of Education. She decided at this time, on the basis of what she now knew, that she wanted to become a vice principal.

Emily worked on numerous committees, participated in leadership programs, and did whatever seemed necessary to demonstrate that she had a wide range of classroom and extra-curricular experiences in order to be considered for vice principalship. She then applied to be considered for the interview process. With her increased visibility, one principal (Mr. O) sought her out and, unannounced, appeared at a luncheon at a
Mathematics and Sciences fair Emily had helped to organize. Unbeknownst to her, Emily had become a topic of conversation among some male administrators:

I was now becoming the butt of jokes with some male principals about being a great specimen at the Math/Science fair.

In the most basic sense, male colleagues were assessing Emily as an object rather than a person.

At this point in her career Emily had been teaching for seven years, three of them in her first school and four in another. She felt that, if she were going to be taken seriously as a candidate for vice principal, she should move to another school which was larger and in a different socio-economic community. When requesting her transfer Emily was able to apply to more than one school and rank them in order of preference. She was offered and accepted a placement at her second school of choice where Mr. O was the principal. She was informed by the vice principal at her newly designated school that she would be assigned an intermediate division class of students who had special needs. One teacher expressed some reservations about Emily's proposed move:

One of the French teachers at my school said, "You know, you be very careful going to that school because that man is a womanizer." And I said, "Well, I don't like to base my decisions on rumours." But I said I could handle it because I had been involved in affirmative action. That was another thing that I had been encouraged to do... And it was quite interesting, all these issues, just because my opinion was sought.

It is apparent, once again, how important it is to Emily to be taken seriously by her colleagues and the effect it has on her sense of being able to make a valuable contribution to the school system in which she works. Gender is the last thing on her mind. Her principles, however, are
clearly evident: she puts no stock in hearsay or rumour. On arrival at her
new school Emily eagerly got into the swing of things:

[Mr. O] got me involved in everything and anything....I remember him encouraging me and being very positive, asking me to do different activities. Mind you, some of the things, because I wanted to get involved, I started them up myself. But I think some of them were in conjunction with him, so I really can't recall at this point which ones exactly were my decision and which ones were things that were laid on by him and the school. But I did Blue Jays Day, Terry Fox Run. I coordinated these things. I did the Festival of Language that was part of my practicum for my principal's course.

Mr. O had the reputation for being a prankster. One month he gave Emily the Teacher of the Month award. However, Emily only found this out when a male teacher told her about it having been posted in the washroom. She elaborates:

It was common knowledge in school culture for those two years for him to play jokes. He had thrown a teacher in the men's change room while they were all taking showers. And it was a big joke. And there was a big joke about the size of penises and the size of hands. That was all part of the culture he had created. He liked to tell jokes. And he would say that, you know, he just liked to lighten things up. And my first year working with this particular principal I was pretty intimidated by him. I was actually afraid to speak to him, but by the end of the first year I realized he was a real prankster. And that, you know, he was trying to do these things to be harmless...I had come to realize that he was probably harmless. That he couldn't possibly be doing these things to hurt anyone. And I have this firm belief that in order—in order to judge anyone you really have to walk a few miles in their shoes....I never saw the humour as problematic at that time. I saw it as being—a possibility of being misinterpreted, yes, but never thinking that it was enough to say that this person, this man is sexist.

When Mr. O was away the following year for a planned leave another male administrator arrived. This man (Mr. C) turned out to be more obviously sexist: he made comments and jokes about the female teachers on staff and disparaged the intelligence of the female primary division
teachers to Emily. She also remarks that Mr. C presented himself as openminded yet his actions indicated the opposite. Where he appeared to espouse a certain latitude in student behaviour, he devised a demerit system which, on closer examination, seemed more punitive to the black students than to the white ones. Eventually the parents complained, and he was removed from that school.

While Emily worked here she successfully applied for a vice principal position. Candidates who were placed on the short list were then required to participate in a two-year mentoring program. In the first year Emily had worked with a woman (Ms. M) in another school. Some of her, Emily's, comments (#4) are recorded in the previous section. In her interview with me she added that she had requested a female mentor because

I just felt that if I was going to be a female in a position of responsibility that I should act like one.

One of the difficulties with this match was the distance Emily had to travel to meet with Ms. M at her school. Nor was any time provided during the day for them to come together; therefore they had to arrange to do so after school hours. Emily also remarked that this mentor had been a "great female role model."

During Mr. C's three-year tenure at Emily's school she felt that he was not providing her with the same number of leadership opportunities as Mr. O had, and especially now that she was on the vice principal shortlist. As a result, in the fall she called Mr. O, who had been assigned to another school after his return from leave. He told her to contact him after the Christmas holidays which she did, spurred on by her frustrations with Mr. C. Emily was placed at Mr. O's school as a teacher
of intermediate division gifted students. This was unusual as these particular positions were usually filled through competitive interviews. Somehow Mr. O had circumvented the process to bring about the transfer.

Rumours had begun to circulate that Emily had made it on the shortlist because she had slept with Mr. O. A few years before a similar situation had arisen but Emily had not taken it seriously. Within weeks of arriving at her new placement, though, jokes were being made about her. Some were being made by Mr. O himself. It was at this time that Emily's marriage was also breaking apart. On hearing of her separation one vice principal called Emily for a date which she refused. This man called Mr. O and claimed that he, Mr. O, was keeping Emily for himself. Not only did Mr. O tell this to Emily but another male principal, with whom Emily had previously worked successfully, also insinuated that Mr. O was somehow taking care of her.

Ironically and sadly Mr. F, the vice principal working with Mr. O, had sexually harassed Emily when he had been assigned as her associate teacher during her pre-service training thirteen years before. Emily had reported him for his misconduct. Though on her guard, Emily felt that the experience was in the past and should not colour her present opinion of Mr. F:

And I thought, well, it was thirteen years ago at this point. And I really—as much as I don't have control over what happened thirteen years ago, time has gone by and this person's probably changed. I've changed. You know, we're mature adults. And we are Christians in a Catholic school community and I should deal with it on that level. And I'm a professional now. I'm a teacher. I may even be one of his colleagues. I'd better learn how to deal with it. So I went into that school knowing that, you know, we were human, and that there could be a backlash to what had happened
thirteen years ago. But never thinking that it would actually happen.

It was clear to Emily that Mr. F was not happy to encounter her again and, at one point, he commented to her that the board had been known to make mistakes when selecting people for the vice principal shortlist. Emily never knew whether Mr. F had mentioned their shared past to Mr. O.

When Emily was transferred to Mr. O's school he offered to be her mentor because he knew that Emily and Ms. M did not work in the same school; and, indeed, Mr. O was assigned as Emily's mentor in the second year. Though participation in the mentoring program was optional in the second year, Emily agreed to continue because she felt that she needed to learn more. She believed that it would be a good thing to observe how a man did things so that she had some basis of comparison. When responding to the question of whether there was ever a mentoring situation where gender could make a difference Emily stated:

If the matching is contrived I would give the mentee a choice. However, for me, it was very important to have a positive female role model. It was not until I had the opportunity to work with a female administrator that I could see a clearly notable difference in administrative styles.

In her interview Emily went on to state that whereas her meetings with her female mentor had been informal and had seemed more personal and personable, "more nurturing" as Emily says, the sessions with Mr. O were oriented toward case studies. As a newer vice principal Mr. F was also part of these meetings.

Emily described four case studies to me which were discussed by Mr. O: two dealt with teachers who were having some difficulties with classroom management. Mr. O seemed to make little attempt to disguise
their identities. Emily knew at least one of these teachers personally and found herself in a difficult position. She regarded Mr. O's actions as bordering on a breach of confidentiality but felt incapable of saying anything. However, she was less reticent about the two other scenarios which involved teachers who had engaged in what would be seen in the separate school board as unacceptable sexual conduct:

A male teacher who was married had allegedly been having an affair with another teacher on staff. And he [Mr. O] proceeded to tell us that this teacher had approached him to have an application signed so that he could become a vice principal. That's against our Catholic, Christian values to have an affair and he [Mr. O] wouldn't do it. I asked, "Did you find out that he was having an affair?" And he said that the woman he was having an affair with came in and told him....And I said, "How did you know this?" And he said, "Well, this woman told me and it was common knowledge. I said, "So you based it on rumour....How could you base your administrative decision on rumours and allegations that were provided to you by another teacher?"

Emily's question was not addressed. This instance seems the first time that Emily is not taken as seriously as she had been in the past.

In the same meeting Mr. O presented the case study of another teacher with whom he had worked in the early 1970s. He encountered her sitting alone in the dimly lit staff room, looking depressed. On questioning her she told him that she was pregnant. She was a single teacher and, as he recounted, he was obliged to "handle" the situation. He asked her to resign. Emily was concerned with the personal ramifications of Mr. O's decision:

Even if it is a Catholic school board, we do have a responsibility to provide support to that individual. And then I proceeded to say, "By doing this you take away the woman's income."...And he didn't recognize that. He didn't see that as a problem. He didn't even think of the alternative, that maybe she was raped. In other school boards they've done various things. In another Catholic school board they've transferred the teacher and told her to use Mrs.
Emily believed that it was necessary to show compassion, especially since she and her colleagues worked in a school system which based its operations explicitly on Christian principles.

In this time Mr. O began to make more physical overtures toward Emily, something he had not done in the past. At a meeting of the school's social committee, of which they were both members, Mr. O made Emily sit close to him by insisting that she sit in the chair which he had pulled up next to him. At the staff Christmas party Mr. O persuaded Emily to dance with him and rubbed his hands down her back to her buttocks. Emily continued to think that this was Mr. O's prankster nature coming out and said nothing.

A few months into the school year Mr. O had begun commenting to Emily that she would make a better blonde than a brunette. She had silenced herself, reacting only by laughing. After a number of these remarks, though, Emily began to swear at him and told him to stay away from her. His remarks then took another turn:

After the March Break Mr. O became blatantly obvious with his sexual harassment. I went into his office holding some papers one day and he commented on my breast size, just out of the blue. He said, "I noticed you were wearing a sweater the other day and I realized that you had breasts. I always thought you were flat."

As time went on it became clearer to Emily that Mr. O was pursuing her and was keen to be with her. Emily was further prevented from reacting to Mr. O's antics because they tended to occur in the presence of other teachers. She was effectively constrained here from making a scene.

The culmination of all of Mr. O's actions was to invite Emily to a cottage where there would be only married male teachers. Mr. F, the vice principal, reiterated the invitation:
None of their wives were going to the cottage. I refused to go. There was no question about that. I was particularly offended that I was invited in the first place. But then to know that their wives weren't going to be there, that compounded the issue. And then to know that I was going to be their only source of entertainment...But then to say that if I didn't want to come along I could invite my tall, blue-eyed friend who was well endowed along with me, then I realized what the purpose of our presence was going to be. And I was told to shell out. To put the icing on the cake, to put the cherry on top. That I was much more fun than their wives.

Emily, offended by this proposition and now finding her position more and more untenable, went to Mr. O to ask for a transfer. He advised her that this would not be possible, that the gifted program in which she taught was centre-based and drew students from a wide catchment area. The superintendent was the only one who could bring about a transfer, and Mr. O told Emily not to go to him with her request. Within a couple of days of this conversation Mr. O told the staff that Emily would be made vice principal at the school the following September. The normal procedure of informing a prospective vice principal candidate of a possible placement had not been followed with Emily. So she knew that she was not in line for any such appointment. Mr. O's motives remain unclear to her.

Confused and upset, Emily called Ms. M to ask whether she could find any reason for Mr. O's behaviour. Ms. M felt unable to comment on the conduct of a colleague principal and suggested that Emily contact the vice president of her teaching association. The conversation with this person unexpectedly gave Emily a language for what she had undergone:

She said to me, "Is this sexual harassment?" Now the light bulb did not go off prior to that. I didn't think of it as sexual harassment. All I knew was that a principal in a position of power should not be spreading a rumour about my promotion. He's a professional! So I was concerned more
about professional conduct than about sexual harassment. So when she said, "Is it sexual harassment?" I said, "I don't want to deal with that right now. I want to deal with the fact that he spread a rumour about me. I don't want to focus on sexual harassment." I had read enough about Anita Hill that year. I didn't want to deal with it....I am not one of these women that has to fight this issue.

When Emily did initiate her action against Mr. O she gave professional misconduct and not sexual harassment as grounds for the complaint.

The vice president of the association informed the superintendent, Mr. S, of the grievance being launched against Mr. O. At this point it was incumbent upon the superintendent to work with the association representative to clarify the matter. This did not include telling Mr. O anything about it. However, without betraying the nature of the complaint nor the confidentiality of the complainant, Mr. S nonetheless came to the school to speak with him personally and informed Mr. O of the action pending against him. Mr. O immediately sought Emily out:

He said, "Someone contacted the superintendent and said there's a problem. And he told me that I'll never believe who it was." And I said, "It wasn't me." And it wasn't me. I didn't contact him. It was the vice president of the association. And he kept on insisting. Later on that day he came to see me after school. He said, "The superintendent came in to see me. Did you go to see him?" I said, "No, I didn't." And then he said, "You know, you joked with me too." I said, Excuse me? What are you talking about?" And he said, "Well, I have thirty years experience with the board and, you know, they're going to believe me." I wanted to deal with the rumours. I wasn't thinking sexual harassment. He was thinking sexual harassment. And I hadn't even brought it up. He said, "This is going to make a great case study for a principal's course some day."

At the time of these episodes there were no procedures to deal with allegations of sexual harassment in Emily's school board. There are also no statutes in the Education Act which might act as guides for proceeding in such a matter. Nor do the codes of professional conduct
governing the various teachers' federations contain policies for dealing with sexual harassment. Whether Emily's case could now be presented to the College of Teachers is unknown since the sequence of events in which she was involved occurred prior to its formation. Informal and formal meetings have been held with all parties to no avail. Emily has amassed all her data and made representation to the Human Rights Commission who seem reluctant to act, citing first a backlog and then the difficulty of ruling on actions in a profession which is governed by a specific act of the provincial legislature. Four years later a resolution appears nowhere in sight. That Emily's situation remains in limbo at the date of this writing is even more ironic: the Ontario Human Rights Commission has launched a public awareness campaign calling sexual harassment a crime.

**WHAT WOMEN'S STORIES MAY TELL US**

Recognizing the validity of women's experiences of mentoring should finally bring to light some notion of the conflicts with which women teachers and women as teachers are faced. To look at the research literature and my samples is to see that overt conflict is missing. In analyzing both my own data and that in the research literature nowhere did I come across those instances where personal views might have been challenged, deepened, or even changed. This lack of contention seems built into the very process of mentoring itself and into how we understand it. First and foremost it is a concept which speaks of our hopes for the continuity of the familiar, of tradition. This, in its turn, seems to have the effect of suppressing dissension. Combine these factors with the force of the unanimity about mentoring's potential only for good, and we are left with a normative concept which appears
virtually unassailable. Frye's insight, already noted in Chapter 1, seems even more apt as I examine Emily's story and try to fathom what women's stories may tell us. He claimed that our anxiety about continuity masks our dread that we might encounter a situation full of dialectical conflict. For all our espousal of change we seem not to really want things to be that much different from how we already know them. Mentoring, when its original motive is considered, has nothing to do with bringing in the new and everything to do with keeping the old. Therefore maintaining the traditions of teaching continues to keep gender hidden and conflict at bay.

I had hoped that something slightly against the grain of the conventional mentoring might emerge from the data I collected in my and Alyson's account, in my participants' responses to my questionnaire, and in Emily's interview. Indeed nothing particularly unconventional emerges from the information I have gathered. Without the question of gender, though, it might have been tempting for me to concur with the extant research, pack up my bags, and board the mentoring train. However, on further consideration, the aggregate of these data attests to "the dynamic and incessant productions of ideology" (Gwin 1996, p. 874). Interpreting the data from a feminist perspective provides another view:

To read women's stories with this awareness is not to view these stories as mirror images of ideology but, rather, to experience the workings of ideology, that is, the vast networks and systems of belief which inevitably engender relations of power within the social order (Gwin 1996, p. 875).

Gender and women's ability to address it seems the most salient feature of all the data I have collected. In truth ten of the respondents either did not consider gender at all or thought gender was of little
import in mentoring relationships. As I have already mentioned, gender seems an irrelevant factor when we speak of something as seemingly generic as helping others. Four women claimed that integrity, personal style and compatibility, and relevance of the information being given might matter more than the sex of the mentoring participants. Emily does not wish to cast her situation as sexual harassment: she feels that media exposure of harassers acts as an educative force, overtly defining socially acceptable behaviours. As a result, the evidence of her own case to the contrary is hard to confront. How might this phenomenon be explained?

Even as we make gains in the workplace, and once we get to places where we have not traditionally been allowed entry, we seem keen to erase the very feature—our sex—which was the impediment to our progress in the first place. Perhaps we think our gains are at men's expense. We have been socialized to be inclusive which, on the whole, tends to mean that we are accommodating to men. So while we bury our sex, we maintain the primacy of men's. In these ways we contribute to the erosion of difference in favour of an androgyny which does not exist.

How we perceive ourselves also is called into question. Many of us believe that we are less hierarchical, less authoritarian, less orthodox than men, likelier to be collaborative, and more receptive to new ideas and methods (Miller 1996). However we are told that we are not good enough:

We must also learn from and integrate stereotypically masculine qualities of task orientation and analysis if we are to move collaborative work into the domain of rigorous inquiry and improvement (Fullan and Hargreaves 1991, p. 61).
Though in this context these male researchers speak of women becoming principals, I think their gender distinction warrants discussion. Where women would efface their sex, these men seem ready to invoke it when it suits their arguments. They may well have thought that to do so was to signal their knowledge about the research describing so-called "women's ways of knowing." Their claim, though, falls flat. Set against women's belief that they are more collaborative than men, Fullan and Hargreaves believe collaboration is wanting. The implication, then, is that women are wanting also. Working collaboratively (and therefore the work of women) lacks the so-called male characteristics of rigour, focus, intellect, and organization. It follows that there cannot, then, be improvement.

Following on their assertion Fullan and Hargreaves posit the need for an expanded research agenda on collaboration:

The point is not to fix men and women into stereotypes, but to identify the most powerful and enduring qualities of collaborative leadership, to foster them in teachers and administrators of both sexes, and to build effective leadership teams where these qualities are shared and combined across groups. This is an enormously difficult challenge because we do not yet know how best to develop and sustain collaborative cultures over long periods of time (p. 61), emphasis added).

Numerous questions arise. I shall ask only two. Does not this assertion really say that women, who seem to best exemplify collaborative working relations, are not good enough to be researched as a separate group? Furthermore are men incapable of learning from women?

What happens if we extend similar thinking to mentoring programs? Their existence suggests that the spontaneous relationships which may arise in the everyday world of teaching are not good enough. Like collaboration, they lack sufficient rigour, focus, intellect, and
organization to be considered intrinsically valid, exemplifying perhaps a suspicion about the quality of teachers' (women's?) interactions. Emily echoes to some degree what Fullan and Hargreaves identify above. When she met with Ms. M, her female mentor, their talk often centred on feelings, emotions, and what was going on in their lives. This might be seen as the nurturing, sustaining aspects of women's personalities that emerge from the "women's ways" research (Belenky et al 1986; Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984). Conversely, Emily speaks of all the case studies and administrative details Mr. O provided. As a result, he appears to possess the characteristics of task orientation the researchers identify as necessary for school improvement. In contrast to the interactions between the two women, Mr. O is getting the real job of mentoring done.

An analysis of the importance of gender in Emily's story adds complexity to what we accept as mentoring. It points out even more clearly how the tensions within mentoring programs can be further exacerbated by gender. Sadly it seems that only by looking for what can go awry in mentoring can we get to the root of the gendered nature of our social practices. Both the researchers on, and practitioners of, mentoring have assumed mentoring's moral worth through time. However mentoring for Emily ends up being a mixed curse:

Most of the evils of the world,..., including those of traditional practices, are "mixed curses," to vary a familiar phrase. They are evil in their effects on some persons, beneficial in their effects on others, clearly wrong to some persons, ambiguous or even clearly right to others. Most of the evils of our traditional practices, in other words, involve some uncertainty, ambiguity, or even aspects of positive value...If a traditional practice has elements of moral worth, however, this does not entail that there is nothing seriously wrong with it (Friedman 1993, p. 218).
Not to recognize that harm can be done even within seemingly benevolent structures would render Emily's and any other woman's differing experiences of mentoring both ex-centric and eccentric.

The asymmetrical nature of the power between Emily and Mr. O is an important element in silencing her and dictating her behaviour. She is long-suffering about his "pranks" and gives him the benefit of the doubt when his jokes begin to take on more sexual overtones. To complain, after all, would evoke the question often levelled at women when they object to gender-insensitive jibes: "What, can't you take a joke?" Language rests at the core of this dilemma. Yet, as Maryann Ayim (1997) points out, conversational exchanges seem to have been impervious to moral consideration.

One explanation for this phenomenon might be found in the public/private dichotomy that exists in educational settings. Argument, debate, rhetoric, or public speaking tend to occur in public fora (Ayim 1997). Because these are deemed rational and legitimate kinds of discourse they have been subjected to intellectual analysis. On the other hand, what transpires in more private arrangements, such as small meetings, exchanges in hallways, off-the-record gatherings, is often cast as conversation, an area that has not seen a similar scrutiny: "ordinary parlance still remains in most people's minds outside the boundaries of moral discourse" (Ayim 1997, p. 20). This is the premise behind Mr. O's claim to Emily that his story is more plausible than hers. He assumes he cannot be held accountable for what might have been said in passing conversation. It would be plausible to surmise then that, in the course of the various hearings Mr. O had, he would have claimed that he had not besmirched Emily's character in public. In his mind his public
performance as a principal is the only criterion for judging his behaviour. His participation in the mentoring program is the visible indicator that he is the model of what his board expects from an administrator even as it obscures his sexist behaviour and language. Ms. M, seems just as incapable as Emily of speaking out against Mr. O, and the mentor is transformed into the tormentor.

Emily's story exemplifies how women may be silenced. This is clearly evident in her dealings with Mr. O. Another incident, seemingly less significant, however, should not be overlooked. When Mr. C denigrates primary division teachers' intellectual capacities Emily seems in no position to make any remarks. Her inability to comment is another indication of the estrangement women undergo from one another. To be promoted Emily must be seen to be supportive of the men, and the onus still remains on her to conform to the behavioural norms the men have established. If part of these norms includes sexism then women are put in a double bind. When gender is considered a significant factor in analyzing conceptions of mentoring it becomes more plausible that control of women's actions is built into mentoring's deep structure. Mentoring can turn into another divide-and-conquer mechanism which prevents women from acting together to fight injustices.

Though women are the majority of teachers, they must nonetheless conform to a framework built around "a male way of life and work. Professions have not adapted to the increasing presence within them of women, because their raison d'être has been to support and give shape to a type of male working life" (Miller 1996, p. 107). In professionalizing itself, teaching has not escaped this imprint. Nor do the ranks of educational administrators seem to have adequately adapted to the
increasing presence of women. The refusal to make fundamental changes to the system's infrastructure at the same time as women are encouraged to enter it contributes, I believe, to the continuing presence of situations such as Emily's. Additionally, when women enter a system not of their own making they are likely to encounter "a consequent collision of vocabularies, experiences, and forms of life" (Felski 1997, p. 18). Cannot mentoring then insidiously maintain the male way of life and work Miller identifies? It seems so in Emily's case. In a profession dominated by women, Mr. O's behaviour is tacit proof of an institutional misogyny which tells women that, if they wish to leave their designated place in the classroom, they must play by the men's rules.

Emily's story is another item for the annals of sexual harassment. Though aware of Anita Hill's accusations of sexual harassment against Clarence Thomas in the hearings into his candidacy for the Supreme Court of the United States and the cases of sexual harassment brought against Judge Walter Reyuchuk of the Ontario Court of Appeal, she believes that somehow these very public instances should act as cautionary tales, that these situations can no longer be swept under the rug, that we could all profitably learn from them.

Yet women and sex seem to form a natural equation in some minds. Even when researchers writing about mentoring consider female/male relations in the workplace the emphasis is on how the admission of women sexualizes the workplace (Sheehy 1977; Jeruchim and Shapiro 1992). This position reinforces a long-standing notion that as long as the field is dominated by men then it is gender neutral. Sheehy, for example, claims that sexual attraction is inevitable because there are more men than women in positions of power. Jeruchim and Shapiro advise women
to think of their mentors as father figures in order to neutralize any sexual desire. That men rarely see these women as daughters is exemplified by Emily's case. These researchers put the onus on women to handle the "problem" of their entry into these arenas, and any type of sexual difficulties women encounter, by implication, are of their own making. This attitude encompasses a very subtle blame-the-victim mentality, one which, even in our time, we are still having difficulty shaking, whether in the court room or the board room or the classroom. In its most sinister manifestation mentoring can maintain the asymmetry of relations of power between men and women and can protect men from censure for inappropriate sexual behaviour in the workplace. Are these the values to which women are bound to adhere?

What hope is there of maintaining a feminist perspective when a mentor's primary function seems to be to pass on the prevailing traditions and norms of teaching? Must we wait until there are more women with feminist leanings before we make teaching a more gender sensitive profession? Is it even possible for feminist teachers to remain teachers or become administrators without losing hold of their support for women? Evidently women's position in education will remain ambiguous as Emily Toth (1997), in her guise as Ms. Mentor, demonstrates. Speaking of the academy, but equally applicable to school teaching, she states:

And so, rather than rock throwing..., Ms. Mentor prefers that women learn the fine arts of self-defense—and achieve the fine protection of tenure. A solitary woman, railing against injustice, has no power at all. But a team of women, all tenured, can speak with one voice and make the changes that will stop sexual harassment, achieve equal pay...—and all the other things that are called "women's issues" and should really be human rights, and human responsibilities.
But only tenured professors have the power in academia—and so women need to get tenure. Ms. Mentor can help them, and will.

For only after tenure, can they really do what Ms. Mentor tells them to do (p. xi, emphasis added).

Toth seems to suggest that women must go along with existing injustices until such time as they have are in a real position of power to make changes. She assumes that women will be able to hold on to their ideals all the while. Yet maintaining these might be more difficult than she allows. Virginia Woolf remarks on the toll acquiescence to social norms often takes on women in her novel Orlando, first published in 1928. Her comment seems equally applicable today: "Such is the indomitable nature of the spirit of the age, however, that it batters down anyone who tries to make stand against it far more effectually than those who bend its way" (p. 186). Will the force of the spirit of our age make Emily's fate remain the tacit norm?

Can mentoring ever be in our best interests at all? Certainly it will initiate us more deeply into the status quo, and to know something is to be better able to understand and, if necessary, change it. Yet mentoring, as almost universally understood and practised, reinforces existing power structures and ideologies. Remaining silent about gender inequity, acting like good women while we get a better sense of the landscape, can be disabling, as Emily's story makes all too clear.

We need neither a new language nor an expansion of mentoring's definition (Mullen et al 1997). Surely the moment has arrived for us to exit "this inconvenient story" (Byatt 1994, p. 52), reject Mentor, and unname the concept. No amount of fiddling will remove its gendered and hierarchical underpinnings. Furthermore, the metaphor of "mentor" appears to have diminished our capacity to imagine alternatives to it. It
has the ability to conjure up a specific picture which, once invoked, is hard to shake. What we might more usefully do, however, is reframe the basis for teachers helping one another. The key to escaping Mentor's shadow lies, I think, in the notion of friendship as a relationship which is more open and flexible than mentoring and one that better describes how women teachers work together.
CHAPTER 6
MENTOR NO MORE? A CALL FOR FRIENDSHIP

...but the truth is that when we write of a woman, everything is out of place—culminations and perorations: the accent never falls where it does with a man.

Virginia Woolf, Orlando.

The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women...

Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway.

From being absent in Greek philosophy and literature to denigration and trivialization in later times, women's friendships have not received the attention accorded men's relationships. The Odyssey, as I have already indicated, is undeniably about men's friendships. Though women are partly involved in many of the events which take place, Homer never ventures to imagine what they might be doing or saying among themselves. The best example of this absence is Penelope and her maidservants: we neither see nor hear them when they are sequestered in their quarters. Clearly nothing of any significance can be going on to warrant the poet's attention. Whatever transpires there can have no impact on the public stage; therefore the women may be ignored. Homer can proceed with his men's tale without a backward glance as there is no Siren to lure him away from his purpose.

Even when considered at all, the possibility of women's friendships has been dismissed. Michel de Montaigne has written:

To tell the truth, the ordinary capacity of women is inadequate for that communion and fellowship which is the nurse of this sacred bond; nor does their soul seem firm enough to endure the strain of so tight and durable a knot. And, indeed, but for that, if such a relationship, free and voluntary, could be built up, in which not only the souls have this complete enjoyment, but the bodies would also share in the alliance, so that the entire man would be
engaged, it is certain that the resulting friendship would be fuller and more complete. But this sex [women] in no instance has yet succeeded in attaining it, and by the common agreement of the ancient schools is excluded from it (in Heilbrun 1988, p. 101).

Jonathan Swift has added his voice to the discussion: "I never knew a tolerable woman to be fond of her own sex" (in Raymond 1986, p. 151). Somewhat closer to our own time Sigmund Freud saw women's friendships as being immature. These relationships were transient for, according to him, women would only realize their full potential in heterosexual relationships, particularly in marriage (Dijkstra 1986; Gallop 1982; Heilbrun 1988; Raymond 1986).

It has devolved to women to reveal the passion and importance of friendship in their lives. Yet this has been an uphill battle. Virginia Woolf, in her novel Orlando, notes how negatively women being together was still regarded even in the early decades of the twentieth century. Using Orlando's adventures in the eighteenth century to comment on her own times, she has written:

...for it cannot be denied that when women get together—but hist—they are always careful to see that the doors are shut and that not a word of it gets into print. All they desire is—but hist again—is that not a man's step on the stair? All they desire, we were about to say when the gentleman took the very words out of our mouths. Women have no desires, says this gentleman, coming into Nell's parlour; only affectations. Without desires (she has served him and he is gone) their conversation cannot be of the slightest interest to anyone. 'It is well known', says Mr S.W., 'that when they lack the stimulus of the other sex, women can find nothing to say to each other. When they are alone, they do not talk, they scratch.'...Orlando professed great enjoyment in the society of her own sex, and leave it to the gentlemen to prove, as they are fond of doing, that this is impossible (pp. 168-9).

This passage still has the weight of contemporaneity.
Though work has continued since Woolf's time to reinscribe the meaning and importance of women's friendship on the social consciousness, these depictions have not carried the same weight as the stories of men's friendships. As Heilbrun (1988) reminds us:

If one asks what marks all those male friendships that have been acclaimed "from the days of Homer," the answer is clear: reverberation upon the public sphere....Friendships for men, however intense...affect the world of event....On the other hand, whatever beauty we may find in recorded affection between women, we must call their affectionate relationships, without scorn, societies of consolation (p. 100).

Recent scholarship continues to affirm Heilbrun's assertion. Julia Ward (1996) writes:

One cannot deny that repeated theoretical attempts have been made to cast female-female friendship as adolescent, immature, or homosexual, and thereby to discourage and discount it....Furthermore, cursory observation in contemporary Western cultural representation of female, as opposed to male, friendship reveals a striking difference: while friendship among men is portrayed often and positively, that among women is absent, or worse, is depicted as transitory and instrumental in nature (pp. 156-7).

The instrumentality Ward speaks of was a critique Levinson made when he differentiated men's and women's mentoring relationships: men's were based on love while women's were based on, in his view, utility and, therefore, lacked passion. However, feminists have not been daunted by the seeming indifference toward women's friendships. Indeed, what to many may seem to be solely a personal relationship has been politicized in the ongoing project to demonstrate how women's friendships stand in counterpoint to the ideal of men's camaraderie (Code 1991; Faderman 1981; Friedman 1993; Heilbrun 1988; Homiak 1996; Raymond 1986; Ward 1996). As I concluded in the last chapter friendship might be the way to break out of mentoring's capacity to overdetermine helping
relationships in teaching. How might the notion of friendship recast what we believe mentoring and teacher development to be?

**FRIENDSHIP THEN AND NOW**

Though I shall consider an ideal of friendship I am far from idealizing it; and though the case I present for friendship will emphasize its positive aspects, I am not suggesting that it represses conflict. On the contrary, as Felski (1997) reminds us: "Affiliation...does not preclude disagreement but, rather, provides its necessary precondition; it is only in the context of shared premises, beliefs, and vocabularies that dissent becomes possible" (p. 12). As I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, it is within friendship's embrace that we may be better able to challenge and change beliefs.

I also am not claiming a superior status for women by differentiating their friendships from those of men. I hope through my work to add to the ongoing project of reinscribing women's friendships as they occur in the public sphere. These are no longer just private relationships, particularly since women now work outside domestic and maternal bounds. I am interested in a broader and more textured depiction of helping relationships in teaching, in which friendship means "the enabling bond that not only support[s] risk and danger but also comprehend[s] the details of a public life and the complexities of the pain found there" (Heilbrun 1988, p. 100). By thinking about friendship we might rethink the ground from which we work with one another.

Like mentoring, friendship can conjure up particular images in people's minds. My claim, though, is that instances of friendship are multiple and more varied, not as overtly encumbered by hierarchies as mentoring is. Friendship is not as intimately tied to a particular imagery
as is mentoring. I also acknowledge that not everyone can be or is a friend. The historic fluidity of the English language is evident once again in our distinctions; for example, we consider some people to be our acquaintances and not our friends because they appear in our lives only fleetingly or peripatetically. We may not get to know them in the kind of depth and passion we reserve for those we call our friends. But I am not trying to give language the slip here. What is needed, I think, is to look at friendship in a far wider context than the personal, one which casts the relationship as a disposition which shapes our interactions with others. The foundation for this position is to be found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1976).

Aristotle claims that friendship is necessary to human moral growth: "for it is a kind of virtue, or implies virtue, and is also most necessary for living" (1155a3). It acts as the glue holding communities together. Aristotle then identifies three kinds of friendship, one based on utility, the second based on pleasure, and the third and most to be desired, according to the philosopher, based on goodness (Book VIII, iii).

According to Aristotle "friends must be well-disposed towards each other, and recognized as wishing each other's good....[T]hose who love each other wish for each other's good in respect of the quality for which they love them" (1156a16). Aristotle argues that intention forms a part of friendship, making it a disposition rather than an emotion. This may seem to be a binary distinction, yet closer attention reveals that the two are interconnected. Whereas a feeling can unexpectedly be evoked, a disposition is something we may deliberately choose:

Affection resembles a feeling, but friendship is a state. For affection can be felt equally well for inanimate objects, but mutual affection involves choice, and choice proceeds from a
<moral> state. Also when people wish what is good for those whom they love, for their sake, it is not from a feeling but in accordance with a <moral> state. And in loving a friend they are loving their own good (1157b21).

By recognizing that consciousness is involved in friendship we can further disentangle ourselves from language: Aristotle's argument speaks to our motives, to the very heart of why we act in the ways we do. Friendship, in this context, is not a relationship where people sacrifice themselves for the others' good. Though it might be interpreted as ego fulfillment—we are friends with people because we too get something out of the relationship—Aristotle argues for mutuality and reciprocity in the relationship. If we believe in our friend's goodness then our own is reinforced. We can only love others if we love ourselves.

Though Aristotle wrote about men's friendship feminists have found much that is useful in his work to put forward an ideal of women's friendship (Code 1991; Friedman 1993; Homiak 1996; Ward 1996). Their undertaking has contributed to a growing body of literature which treats women's friendships seriously and demonstrates that it is as significant a relationship for women's moral growth as what has been claimed for men. As women continue to be more actively engaged in the public sphere, it is becoming more evident that friendship has the capacity to sustain them in times of triumph as well as struggle. In particular Marilyn Friedman's writing on the moral ramifications of women's friendships seems useful to me in elaborating a framework which can pertain to teaching.

According to Friedman friendship is "a relationship that is based on approximate equality (at least in some respects) and a mutuality of
affection, interest, and benevolence" (p. 189). Lest the idea of equality evoke some predictable standard, Friedman explains:

The important sort of equality in friendship is not a matter of formal equality in some measurable or quantifiable dimension, such as age or years of schooling. The important sort of equality has to do with personality, attitudes, emotions, and overall character. Friends should be able to respect and take an interest in one another's perspectives. One friend's superiority in one area, for example, in breadth of life experience, need not give that friend a privileged place in the relationship if it is balanced by the other friend's superiority in some other area, for example, in vitality of imagination (p. 189).

Friends may complement one another; however this does not mean that one person supplies what the other might be lacking. This would be a sentimental view of friendship. Rather the different outlooks they bring to their own and each other's experiences strengthen the mutuality and reciprocity in the relationship.

Where there is a lack of balance or mutuality, the relationships can become too hierarchical to be a true friendship:

They would seem, instead, to take on a master-apprentice or mentor-student quality. In those instances in our lives in which the mentor-student relationships and so forth do become genuine friendships, it is likely that the formal inequality of social position is balanced by excellences in the student which inspire the mentor's respect and from which the mentor might even learn something (p. 190).

Friendship, then, seems to disengage the debilitating effects of unequal power arrangements, especially where roles have been defined and assigned. It is outside these structures of roles that friendship can begin to grow.

Where abstract moral guidelines take little account of particular persons or occasions, commitment to a person through friendship "takes as its primary focus the unique concatenation of wants, desires, identity,
history, and so on of a particular person. It is specific to that person and is not generalizable to others" (pp. 190-1). Furthermore our behaviour toward a friend is, in part, dependent on her needs, aspirations, and character. Indeed, if we truly take our friend and what she experiences seriously, our judgements about her behaviour, as well as our principles guiding them, are likely to be suspended to some degree. Our friend's experiences afford us a critical distance we would not always have from which to reexamine our own principles. In this way we have a counterbalance to our abstract moral guidelines: friendship personalizes and humanizes them.

Not unlike Aristotle, Friedman sees affection as a element of friendship. Augmenting Aristotle's thought, she goes further to differentiate affection from respect. The latter need not be felt for any particular person. We may believe, for example, that all humans are owed respect because we are committed to the general principle of everyone's intrinsic moral worth. Others may warrant our respect because their behaviours, virtues, or personalities accord with certain abstract moral guidelines by which we judge these aspects. Affection, on the other hand, "encompasses the fond and tender feelings of liking and love with which we respond to (some) other person" (p. 193). Where respect seems to entail some sort of evaluation or judgement of a person's worth, affection need not do so. It may consist only of our responsiveness to the person we like or love.

Friedman then extends her argument and expands on Aristotle's by identifying sympathy as integral to friendship. She lays claim to our capacity for imagination, in trying to understand, if not even see, from our friend's perspective:
...friendship, that is, a relationship of some degree of mutual intimacy, benevolence, interest, and concern, strongly promotes trust and the sharing of perspectives, a kind of mutuality that, in turn, fosters vicarious participation in the very experience of moral alternatives. (p. 199).

We may see our own experiences differently or have our basic values significantly modified in the light of what our friends tell us has happened to them. Our own potential for moral growth is thereby enhanced as a broader range of conceptual resources becomes available to us to interpret and evaluate what happens to us and to others.

Friendship also provides the setting for a sustained critique of injustices. Our social institutions and practices are not perfect nor do they automatically possess such authority as to render them impervious to challenge and change. Where they harm, oppress, or exploit people we need to engage in critical reflection to transform them. Friedman sees the possibility of friendship affecting change in the public sphere as a vital moral dimension for social and personal growth:

But besides the traditions of critical thought, we also need practices that can inspire people, when necessary, to unconventional or disloyal action. It is here that our voluntary friendship practice makes a distinctive contribution. Friendships can support unconventional values, deviant life-styles, and other forms of disruption of social traditions. The voluntariness of friendship permits friends to evolve idiosyncratic values and life-styles or to find others who support and affirm the idiosyncratic values and life-styles that they have already evolved. As the political theorist Horst Hutter has written, "Every friendship is...a potential culture in miniature and also a potential counterculture" (p. 219, emphasis in the original).

Within friendships women can find support not to conform to arbitrary standards of behaviour. This is especially important as we venture into public domains traditionally dominated by men. Where a profession such as teaching has been one where women are the majority, friendship can
become a foundation from which to argue against the imposition of work norms which have continued to be structured around the notion of the male as the primary wage earner.

The work Friedman has done brings women's friendships into the light. No longer the subversive and subterranean activity described in *Orlando*, she argues that they are more than just private affiliations. They are supportive relationships which, to use Heilbrun's expression above, reverberate on the public sphere. Women too can act on the world stage. To have friends bear witness to our participation in society prevents us from becoming isolated, especially when we do encounter unjust social practices. Friendship as a disposition, as articulated by Aristotle and elucidated by Friedman, has the enormous potential to dismantle the type of power imbalance and its negative effects which Emily encounters.

The notion of friendship has the capacity, I think, to crack the smooth surface of mentoring programs. With friendship in mind we might be better able to seek out the real reason we want care ensconced in bureaucratic and managerial structures. After all, we do not assign people to become friends nor do we set up friendship training courses nor do we fill out checklists about our friends' abilities to be friends. So why do we think we can program relationships in the workplace? The overextended language of mentoring I noted in Chapters 3 and 4 attests to a desire for something more than mentoring can provide. This straining to break the bonds of mentoring seems to exemplify a partial understanding of what friendship as a disposition has to offer in grounding our work relations. I think we might more easily and precisely
call people our friends than our mentors if we better understood the nature of friendship.

Only two women of the seventeen in my study mentioned friendship in their responses to my questionnaire. One stated that the mentoring relationship was the beginning of a long-standing friendship (#13). The second (#17) said that, in acting as a mentor with a new teacher the two of them shared "a very close relationship as friends and colleagues." Such a small number is perhaps indicative of a still pervasive belief that friendship is too personal a relationship to expect in professional settings. It may also suggest that, because women's friendships have been marginalized in the past, women have not been able to envision friendship's transformative potential for relations in the workplace. Yet women, as a group, will need to advocate more vociferously for friendship as a disposition and as the basis for helping relations in teaching. As Miller (1996) forcefully asserts:

Women who teach have to learn how to speak (and write) out of the history of the accommodations they have made to male theories of culture and education....We are learning to work consciously within and against the voices of authority. No research paradigm available to teachers that I know of allows them room to consider how teaching matches and conflicts with other aspects of their lives: how contradictory conceptions of femininity may impede, confuse, distort; but how they may also—once they are confronted and understood—enhance and even illuminate what they do as teachers (p. 274).

Writing and speaking of relationships based on friendship would paint a picture of teaching more of our own making.

More than just pedagogy, teaching is based on the personal encounter. A pertinent medical analogy illuminates this overlooked factor in education:
...while a formal system of advisement and oversight is very important, the most useful lessons of medicine are sometimes learned best in ad hoc encounters, and it is possible that a mentoring relationship may be best arranged by suggesting these roles to interested students and medical faculty and then merely encouraging those of similar interests to work with one another, much as students often work independently in a research setting with a faculty sponsor (Janson 1997, p. 33).

Medicine, like teaching, can be seen as little more than doctors and teachers delivering specific services. Indeed, our current obsession with market-driven arrangements attests to how depersonalized these two most personal professions have become. As Janson suggests for medicine, teaching relationships might be encouraged but not rationalized and objectified as mentoring initiatives do. People are capable, in varying degrees, of finding others with whom they can work. We should allow this to happen spontaneously.

Janson posits, "Reason...cannot verify many of our personal assumptions, which must be validated through human interactions" (p. 34). If this is so, what is validated for Emily? Certainly very little to do with her as a woman. From her experience it should be apparent that formal mentoring is not a benign solution to the perceived problems of career transitions or isolation in teaching. We might extrapolate from Emily's situation that there is more of a commitment to the abstractions of helping and care by the upper ranks of administration in her board than to people in their singularity. The mentoring program has a one-size-fits-all quality, and, as a result, women's experiences are less likely to be addressed. Emily and her many sisters are lost in the process.

Mentoring programs hurt women because they require them to sacrifice themselves to the established norms of the male workplace. Women like Emily become dependent on men to "learn the ropes,"
whether it be of teaching or administration, at the expense of their own personhood. Moreover, there is no one working on Emily's behalf when she begins to be harassed within the very program which supposedly exists to help her. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the closer she advances to administration, the more isolated she becomes from teachers and alienated from women. Without a circle of friends, Emily has no potential moral witnesses (Friedman 1993) to the sexual harassment she endures. To add insult to injury those around her and Mr. O, those who could speak up on her behalf, are silent. As a result, the silence makes everyone complicit in maintaining a sexism which continues to disadvantage Emily and many other women like her. It becomes apparent that mentoring, as it has evolved, can do nothing except maintain the status quo of gender and power inequity. As a type of teacher development it is retrograde and out of touch with the reality of women's experiences of teaching.

Where might we find examples of women teachers working with one another? Where are the accounts of teaching relationships based on friendship? To answer these question we do not need to create new stories. They already exist. It is a matter of "...rereading and remaking for ourselves those traditions of narration which have measured out women's learning and teaching in the past..." (Miller 1996, p. 271). In this way we may re-present our own point of view of our successes and difficulties in teaching. The classroom is a room of our own.

RECLAIMING A PROFESSION: EXAMPLES THEN AND NOW

Whether the stories of women teachers be fictional, biographical, or autobiographical they "...may also be a way of writing [our] submerged histories and knowledge into public debate in order to become visible
players rather than tiresomely irrepresible adjuncts or irritants to that debate" (Miller 1996, p. 253). I present two accounts, then, one fictional and the other from curriculum research, told by women teachers about women teachers helping one another. I offer them as examples of friendship, not mentoring, relationships which are personal, spontaneous, and in no need of managerial structures or benedictions to make them valid and helpful to individual teachers, students, and school communities. These narratives eloquently express that learning to teach is more than the acquisition of survival skills which are practical, foolproof, and childproof. Women's stories can reinstate the complexity in becoming a teacher.

**Villette**

Charlotte Brontë's last novel *Villette* (1853) depicts what can be seen as "the pedagogic relation between an older and younger woman, and the twin postures of teacher and taught" (Miller 1996, p. 223). Lucy Snowe, the novel's narrator, and Madame Beck, her employer at a pensionnat for girls, have a working relationship which is far from ideal by our current standards. Brontë's portrayal of these two women going about their work, drawn to a great degree from her own teaching experiences at the Pensionnat Héger, however, is one story among many we might reclaim where we see how women have helped each other learn to teach.

Lucy begins by recalling her stay with her godmother Mrs. Bretton and her son. She then loses contact with them and, after a period of eight trying years, becomes the companion of the elderly Miss Marchmont. After this woman's death Lucy seeks a new life and crosses the English Channel to France. She ends up at a pensionnat in the town of Villette where she is hired as a governess to the children of the headmistress
Madame Beck. Circumstances one day dictate that Lucy teach a very large English class. Despite initial misgivings, she goes on to become a successful teacher.

There are a number of issues raised regarding the education of young girls throughout this novel which I will not address here. These are for another time. Instead it is the relationship between Lucy and Madame Beck which I wish to examine. The narrative of the governess and teacher, of which *Villette* is one pearl in a long historical strand, merits closer scrutiny for its representation of women and teaching. The pattern of these women's work does not resemble the careers men were fashioning for themselves at this time. As a result, looking at the teaching relationships these women formed, of which Lucy's and Madame Beck's is an example, may force a rereading of the mentoring script in relation to gender.

Observation forms an integral part of Lucy's learning about teaching. She watches Madame Beck running the *pensionnat* from her position as governess to the headmistress's children. What she sees is a woman of formidable organizational abilities who assiduously attends to the welfare of her female wards:

Nothing could be better than all her arrangements for the physical well-being of her scholars. No minds were overtasked; the lessons were well distributed and made incomparably easy to the learner; there was a liberty of amusement, and a provision for exercise which kept the girls healthy; the food was abundant and good: neither pale nor puny faces were anywhere to be seen in the Rue Fossette. She never grudged a holiday; she allowed plenty of time for sleeping, dressing, washing, eating; her method in all these matters was easy, liberal, salutary, and rational: many an austere English school-mistress would do vastly well to imitate it—and I believe many would be glad to do so, if exacting English parents would let them (p. 136).
Lucy also takes the measure of Madame Beck:

I say again, madame was a very great and very capable woman. The school offered for her powers too limited a sphere; she ought to have swayed a nation: she should have been the leader of a turbulent legislative assembly. Nobody could have brow-beaten her, nor irritated her nerves, exhausted her patience, or over-reached her astuteness. In her own single person, she could have comprised the duties of a first minister and a superintendent of police. Wise, firm, faithless; secret, crafty, passionless; watchful and inscrutable; acute and insensate—what more could be desired? (p. 137).

Lucy's remarks tell us that Madame Beck is a complex and human woman, possessed of a mixture of character traits which are channelled into the orderly operation of the pensionnat.

At no time does Madame Beck appear to take Lucy under her wing. No mentor she! Nor does Lucy necessarily see her employer as a role model. What is evident through Lucy's portrayal of Madame Beck is something more like a mutual respect between the two women. Lucy certainly recognizes Madame Beck's capabilities, and the authority she wields is partly derived from their successful deployment. At the same time Madame Beck not only trusts in the rightness of her instincts in hiring Lucy but also seems to have faith in Lucy's intelligence to do what is expected of her. They are both acutely aware of the environment which fashions them even as they create a setting in which they can work to fulfill the expectations of the parents who pay the girls' school fees. Lucy bluntly describes Madame Beck spying on her staff: she drifts silently and unobtrusively about the school, watching from closets and through peepholes. But the acceptance of the headmistress's subterfuge is seen as being in the best interests of her charges and not a matter of distrust. At no time does Lucy accuse Madame Beck of being unfair; any dismissal of
a teacher, female or male, is executed for the most pragmatic of reasons, the benefit of the students.

Lucy's entry into the classroom is effected by Madame Beck. Dissatisfied with the English master, in his lack of punctuality and poor teaching methods, Madame asks Lucy to teach a class of sixty girls. This, we know, is not the most felicitous way to begin a teaching career. Yet even in challenging Lucy, Madame Beck also displays a confidence in her, one which emboldens her:

'But,' pursued she, cooling as I warmed, and continuing the hard look, from very antipathy to which I drew strength and determination, 'can you face the classes, or are you over-excited?'

She sneered slightly in saying this—nervous excitability was not much to madame's taste.

'I am no more excited than this stone,' I said, tapping the flag with my toe: 'or than you,' I added, returning her look (p. 141).

There seems nothing of the set-up for failure which we think might be the culmination of this scene. Lucy has taken great pains to this point to show that Madame Beck does not act spitefully or maliciously. Her girls need a teacher of English; Lucy is there and is fluent in the language to be taught. The practical solution to Madame Beck's problem is to take the person under her nose and see whether she can do the job.

Madame Beck reminds Lucy that this class is a rambunctious one; lesser lights have been extinguished by them, one being Miss Turner who did not survive these students' antics. Lucy is undeterred even though she has yet to master all the intricacies of the French language:

I said: 'I know; and I know, too, that though I have studied French hard since I came here yet I speak it with far too much hesitation—too little accuracy to be able to command their respect: I shall make blunders that will lay me open to the scorn of the most ignorant. Still I mean to give the lesson' (p. 141).
The headmistress then describes the ill-fated teacher. In her words both Lucy and the reader learn what makes for a weak teacher:

Miss Turner had no more command over them than a servant from the kitchen would have had. She was weak and wavering; she had neither tact nor intelligence, decision nor dignity. Miss Turner would not do for these girls at all.... You will not expect aid from me, nor from any one.... That would at once set you down as incompetent for your office (pp. 141-2).

Lucy acquits herself well in her first teaching experience and is hired by Madame Beck who has watched her the entire time from one of her secret hiding places.

At no time does Lucy seem subservient to Madame Beck. Though clearly her employee she nonetheless can stand up for herself, as their encounter before Lucy's entry into the classroom, cited above, shows. Lucy can count on being treated fairly, the best thing anyone could hope for in a relationship between seeming unequals. Nor is Lucy made to feel that she should be pathetically grateful to Madame Beck for her new position. She has taught the class, and Madame Beck is satisfied with her abilities on the basis of that performance. By her actions the headmistress demonstrates that fairness is one of the underpinnings of education. Lucy carries this same message into her daily dealings with her students, and they learn to love and respect her.

The pedagogic relationship between the two women springs out of the shared context of their work. They possess different powers which are used variously. Though Madame Beck runs her school and Lucy teaches her students, their seemingly separate spheres of power intersect, enabling them to do their respective jobs which, in turn, support one another. The hapless Miss Turner to whom Lucy refers seems to have failed because she was somehow incapable of fitting into her role. Lucy
calls her "a poor, friendless English teacher" (p. 141). In the context of what happens in the novel, then, the pensionnat is a place where the teachers and headmistress work communally for the good of their students.

It would be presumptuous, I think, to call Madame Beck Lucy's mentor, even in the light of the concept's present-day currency and our capacity for hindsight. Rather, in her own way, Madame Beck perceives that Lucy has hidden and untapped potential beneath her timid exterior. The headmistress's behaviour toward Lucy displays a level of trust which is enabling. There seems no assumption on Madame Beck's part that Lucy cannot do the job. Putting her in front of a class allows both women to unearth Lucy's buried talents. The ability to share a particular life position with a like-minded friend, who also happens to be a colleague, creates an atmosphere for each woman to flourish. The circle is small, allowing for concentration and intimacy.

**By Chart and Chance and Passion: The Importance of Relational Knowing in Learning to Teach**

"By Chart and Chance and Passion" (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl and Minarik 1993) tells the story of three women teachers who care deeply about what teaching means to them and their students. They recount how the support they provided one another was an important element in their being able, over the long term, to reflect critically on their teaching and change their practice. That they were disposed to help one another attests to the seriousness with which they treated one another and to their disposition to be helpful as they continued to become teachers.

Sandra Hollingsworth, a teacher educator whose interests include how teachers learn to teach and feminist pedagogy, has written with
Mary Dybdahl and Leslie Turner Minarik (1993), two elementary school
teachers, about how the latter two learned to teach literacy. Researcher
and participants met while involved in a six-year longitudinal study at a
research university on the west coast of the United States. As in Aitken's
Section Eleven project, work began as the participants embarked on their
pre-service program. A major factor in helping the associations grow was
the formation of conversational groups which met monthly at informal
social gatherings and over dinner for the duration of the project.
Hollingsworth provides the overall narrative in this article. The main
caracters are Dybdahl, who has a grade 3-4 split class, and Minarik,
who teaches second grade. Their voices are also incorporated in the text.

It is important to note that the freedom these three women came to
experience with each other occurred only after the evaluative aspects of
their program were over. We are immediately confronted with the
inherent tensions of structured arrangements: though a course or a
program may provide the impetus for less formalized relations, it seems
that only after it is over and the evaluative components have ended that
participants can engage in more personal associations. Hollingsworth
notes the liberating effect of no longer being charged with the
responsibility of teaching the students in a course: "Freed from the
traditional expert-novice framework, I learned as much (or more) from
them than they learned from me" (p. 13). The teacher-student
relationship is dismantled. Knowledge is no longer perceived to reside
only with the professor. The participants also have and create it, and, in
the process, the participants learn from one another.
Hollingsworth clearly distinguishes between the informal gatherings and more organized strategies. She establishes that the intentions from which they spring are different:

Selves who come to know in relationship enter a hermeneutic circle as conversational participants or "persons whose paths through life have fallen together" (Rorty 1979) rather than those who have learned about, practiced, and entered a clearly articulated epistemological framework to reach some fixed, consensual goal. The conversation is a continual questioning of received wisdom through hermeneutic dialogue that contains a space for wonder, mystery, uncertainty, and the barely knowable (Beyer 1988) (p. 9).

Hollingsworth states that as Dybahl's and Minarik's stories surfaced within the conversational groups, "we usually responded to each other nonjudgmentally; we also challenged one another's perspectives and offered alternative positions" (p. 21). As Friedman remarks above and as is evidenced in Hollingsworth's text, friendship allows the participants to question their own and each others' values in a safe environment. The implicit criticism seems to be that in more formal groupings the basis of the relationships is not friendship but gain. Within that type of setting there is little if any room to challenge the status quo.

The time and space created in such groups stands as a critique of and contrast to pre-service programs:

...teacher educators with good intentions too often turn prospective teachers' attention to curriculum management, pedagogical tasks and activities, and even to understanding others in a rational, dispassionate manner. Accomplishing the work of such knowledge acquisition at a pace that defies personal reflection is another way that educators avoid the anxiety of coming to know either central beliefs about themselves or the meaning behind their chosen profession as teachers (p. 11).
The implication inherent in this part of the text is that pre-service programs, though they offer the promise of the acquisition of pedagogical skills and techniques to prospective teachers, fail to deliver them:

...these teachers' general mode of teacher preparation, growing out of research that emphasized apolitical, objective, and distanced knowing, left them somewhat surprised, confused, and unprepared. Worse, trying to implement a curriculum based primarily on cognitive and technical knowledge of teaching in classrooms...set up both teachers and children for failure (p. 6).

The clamour for mentoring programs, then, further reinforces how inadequate pre-service programs are. But how can mentoring programs shore up another program meant to accredit and prepare teachers for their work in schools? It seems that it is only in conversational groups such as those we read about in this article, outside organizational structures and strictures, that teachers feel they are adequately supported to engage in personally directed and meaningful learning about their teaching practice. The existence of such groups damn with faint praise indeed inflexible bureaucratic processes, no matter how benevolent their intent.

In the conversational groups Minarik is able to resurrect her belief in relational knowing. As she began to teach "she put her faith in the teacher education program's instrumentalist view of curriculum as a knowledge base from which to draw for cognitively based teaching" (p. 13). Over time and in significant measure because of the discussions in which she was able to engage, Minarik

transformed her educational posture and epistemological stance to regard curriculum not only as scientific-technical (concerned with control and testing of knowledge hypotheses in practice), but as critical theory or praxis (concerned with human interest and emancipation in knowledge formation
and creation) and mythopoetic imagination (concerned with the "so what" of knowledge) (p. 13).

Yet she has had to do this work without recognition or credit:

Self-initiated inquiry was devalued by Leslie's school district. [She states:]

No one gives us credit for the research we do. I conducted systematic research all last year, wrote papers, presented at conference. I applied for professional development credit [for that work] and I was turned down. They will give me credit for mentoring another teacher, or for attending a workshop, but not for critically examining my own teaching (p. 26).

The conversational group allows its members to search for alternative understandings or reinstatement of beliefs about teaching in a supportive and nonjudgemental environment. Hollingsworth offers the observation that "the approach was predicated by teachers' criticism of the support structures offered through traditional formats such as coursework and supervision" (p. 13). Minarik's experience stands as proof of this claim. It seems to become clearer that teachers perceive formal structures as impediments to personal and professional growth, particularly when it comes to understanding their own values in teaching. The conversational group offers opportunity within a safe environment to discover these values and articulate them, something not readily available in pre-service programs where a curriculum needs to be covered in a specific period of time. The same might be said of the curriculum of mentoring programs.

Hollingsworth's understanding of herself as a teacher is reshaped by her relationship with Dybdahl and Minarik. She has changed her own practices as a teacher educator:

I found that to better prepare myself to theoretically understand our work, I needed to read in areas outside of education—in philosophy and feminist theory, for example. I
had to argue administratively for smaller class sizes so that students and I could hold conversational meetings. I had to convince many of my colleagues of the place of the personal in research. I had to rethink the ways curricula became enacted in my own teaching. I had to transform my work as a teacher educator and an academic scholar, and my evolving feminist positions in the world as research (p. 29).

In the process she and the two elementary school teachers, along with others in the conversational group, have developed "close and lifetime friendships" (p. 29). Hollingsworth and her colleagues realize the most radical potential of friendship: they are agents for change whose considered reflection on their teaching has the very real capacity to alter oppressive practices into those which can enable teachers. Teacher education programs may finally be transformed if friendship serves as the basis for helping relations rather than managerial and technical notions of teaching.

Like Madame Beck, Hollingsworth is no mentor to Dybdahl and Minarik. Instead she displays trust and belief in them which is enabling. She takes seriously the stories of their teaching experiences and finds new insights into her own practices. As in Villette, the teachers in this twentieth-century tale share a passion for teaching with like-minded friends, who also happen to be colleagues. Their friendship creates an atmosphere for each woman to extend beyond what she already knows to the unknowable. Once again the circle is small, allowing for concentration and intimacy.

Affection, trust, mutuality, and shared experience—all these features form bridges between Lucy Snowe and Madame Beck, among Sandra Hollingsworth, Mary Dybdahl, and Leslie Turner Minarik. These relationships seem rooted in the type of support which rarely, if ever, leaves the women involved vulnerable to psychological injury and
denigration. The relationships seem to elude the strictures of mentorship and the asymmetry which it apparently implies. There is no question of a power differential where one party may be, literally, brought low, no expectation of conformity to norms which might be dubious as is evident in Emily's case.

Organized care, as exemplified in mentoring programs, is another example of how "skills and knowledge embedded in relations among particular persons have been displaced by externalized forms of formal organization or discourse mediated by text" (Smith 1987, p. 5). Mentoring's utopian vision masks a suspect pragmatism, one hemmed in by the current emphasis on market economies and managerial technique. The personal relations Smith alludes to above are not good enough if they happen haphazardly. Bureaucrats, educational administration being one group among them, seem in need of certainty and predictability and engage in corporate matchmaking to obtain their ends. However, if we were to continue to put forth the stories of how women go about teaching, we might reshape how we think of a profession where its members seem particularly adept at dealing with uncertainty and the unknown. No program or checklist of skills can persuade us how to act if we are not disposed to act that way in the first place. The pedagogic relations I have described above are not about gain in the market sense. Rather they are about the benefits teachers can experience when they are the authors of their working relations and when those relations are based on friendship.

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The cover of the Penguin edition of Aristotle's Ethic shows a relief carving of Athena from the National Museum of Athens. The goddess
wears no armour and, indeed, except for her helmet, her body is draped in fabric that falls in soft folds. Her waist is accentuated by a thin belt. This is not Homer's Athena of the flashing eyes nor Gustav Klimt's steely-eyed and metal-encased goddess. She looks contemplative if not even weary as she leans on her spear. Perhaps being an apologist for men as well as transforming herself into Mentor have finally become too much for her. Many women are tired of playing the men's game by the men's rules. In reclaiming women's place in the teaching profession, we are not separating ourselves from other spheres of work nor from men but emphasizing our talents to create work in a way which reflects more closely how we think of ourselves as teachers and what it means to form a part of this valuable profession.
APPENDIX A  
MENTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please indicate your sex. Female____  Male____

2. Are you currently employed in education? Yes____  No _____. If your answer is no, please go to question 4.

3. Please indicate your position and field of education. Check as many categories as apply to you.

____ Early childhood  ____ Superintendent
____ Elementary  ____ CAAT
____ Secondary  ____ University
____ Teacher  ____ Graduate Assistant
____ Assistant Head  ____ Lecturer
____ Lead Teacher/Department Head  ____ Professor
____ Vice Principal  ____ Other_______________
____ Principal

4. How many years of teaching experience, if any, do you have at the elementary and/or secondary education level? Part-time and occasional (supply teaching) experience counts. Elementary_______  Secondary_______

5. Please define "mentoring" as you understand it.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

6. Have you ever participated in any organized programs in which mentoring among teaching staff was the focus? Yes____  No____. If your answer is no, please go to question 11.
7. Please describe the program and your role in it.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

8. What benefits, if any, do you feel you received from participating in this program?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

9. a) After the program ended, did you continue to work with a mentor?
   Yes ___ No ___

   b) After the program ended, did you act as a mentor? Yes ___ No ___
10. Please explain why you chose to continue/stop working with a mentor or as a mentor.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

11. Have you ever worked informally with someone whom you would consider, in retrospect, to have been your mentor? Yes ___ No ___. If your answer is no, please go to question 20.

12. How did this mentoring relationship begin?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

13. How long did you this relationship last?___________
14. What expectations, if any, did you have of this mentoring relationship? Were they met?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

15. Please explain why you consider this relationship an example of mentoring?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
16. Do you feel that acting as a mentor or working with a mentor has had any effect on your career? Please explain. If you have not participated in any such arrangements, please go to question 21.

17. What sex was your mentor/mentee? Female_____ Male____

18. What importance, if any, do you place on matching the sex of a mentor and a mentee? If your answer is none, please go to question 19.
19. Frequently the sex of the mentor/mentee is not considered to be important in a mentoring relationship. Please describe under what circumstances you think the sex of the mentor/mentee may have a positive or negative influence on the mentoring relationship.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please go to question 21.

20. Compared to colleagues who have worked either informally or formally with mentors, do you feel your career has been hindered in any way by not having worked with a mentor? Explain why or why not.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
21. Do you have any suggestions about how mentoring should be carried out in education?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

21. Please add any other comments about mentoring that may not have been addressed in the preceding questions.
22. Please indicate whether you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to this questionnaire. Yes ___ No ___.

If your answer is yes, please write your name and telephone number where you may be reached. Should you agree to participate in an interview, your anonymity will be maintained, and I will provide a separate consent form to this effect.

Name ___________________ Telephone Number ___________________
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