

Masthead Logo **Via Sapientiae:**
The Institutional Repository at DePaul University

College of Education Theses and Dissertations

College of Education

11-1-2014

An Ethnography of Voice(s) in the School House: Making Sense of Girl World

Julie Devaud

Recommended Citation

Devaud, Julie, "An Ethnography of Voice(s) in the School House: Making Sense of Girl World" (2014). *College of Education Theses and Dissertations*. 123.
https://via.library.depaul.edu/soe_etd/123

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Education at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Education Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact wsulliv6@depaul.edu, c.mcclure@depaul.edu.

DePaul University

College of Education

A Dissertation with a Concentration
in Educational Leadership

**AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF VOICE(S) IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE:
MAKING SENSE OF GIRL WORLD**

by

Julie Alice Devaud

copyright 2014 Julie Alice Devaud

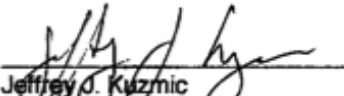
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Doctor of Education


November 2014

We approve the dissertation of Julie A. Devaud.


Date of Signature


Jeffrey J. Kuzmic
Associate Professor of Education
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee

10/22/14


Joseph Gardner
Associate Professor of Education

10/22/14


Amira Proweller
Associate Professor of Education

10/22/14

ABSTRACT

The life of a gifted adolescent girl both in and out of the schoolhouse is dynamic and complicated. This qualitative study, using the methodology of narrative inquiry and multiple interviews, examines how these young women make sense of their lives as they move quickly towards the socialization of womanhood. This study specifically examines which factors lead to their academic success in the schoolhouse and personal success as happy individuals. Using grounded theory and a critical feminist perspective as my framework for analysis, I found the support of family, teachers, and peers was critical. I also discerned four distinct themes among the research subjects. First, they felt a need to break free as individuals within the confines of their persona and school lives; second, they possessed immense psychological resilience; third, the health of their physical bodies was central; and, finally, anger, both internal and external, was the quintessential emotion of gifted adolescent girls. I conclude with a discussion of four recommendations directly parallel to the aforementioned themes of how the American education system can better meet the unique social, psychological, emotional, and physical needs of the gifted adolescent girl to improve her academic and personal life. This, in turn, supports her role as an outstanding contributor as an intelligent member of American civil society.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction.....	1
Four Stories of Adolescent Gifted Girls: Ying, Cindy, Cathy, and Lauren.....	4
Personal Context: My Own Story as an Adolescent Gifted Girl.....	10
The Rationale for Research on Gifted Girls and Achievement.....	13
The Significance of Research on Gifted Girls and Achievement.....	14

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Literature	
Review.....	16
A Brief History of the Concept of Intelligence.....	16
Being Gifted in the School House: A Condensed History of the Development of Gifted Education	
Theory	18
A Brief Analysis of the Impact of Sexism on Girls and Lack of Equity in the Schoolhouse.....	26
Being a Gifted Adolescent Girl in the School House: The Unique Challenges Gifted Girls Face.....	48
A Critique of Gifted Education.....	58
Conclusion.....	61

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction: Need.....	63
Epistemological Rationale.....	69
Research Participants.....	70
A Feminist Framework.....	71
A Critical Ethnographic Approach.....	75
Design and Procedure.....	76

Life Histories as a Tool.....	77
Analysis Plan	79
Research Policies: Ethical Considerations.....	82

Chapter Four

The Gifted Girl as Strategist: Negotiating the School System Successfully

Introduction: Meeting Taylor.....	84
Systemic Issues:	
Understanding, Navigating, and Understanding One's Educational Identity.....	86
Giftedness and the Positive Role of Teachers.....	88
The Gifted Student as a Pragmatic Organizer.....	92
The Dangerous and Cyclic Nature of Gifted Programs.....	95
Giftedness and the Formation of Self-Identity.....	97
A Key Developmental Turning Point at a Young Age.....	100
Successful and Meaningful Collaboration Among Peers.....	102
Summary.....	104
Personal Issues:	
Personal Challenge.....	104
Sophomore Year Meltdown to Success in Crafting an Identity.....	105
Math Anxiety and Societal Expectations.....	109
High Expectations and the Reproduction of Education.....	111
The Importance of Education as a Means to an End.....	114
Defining and Breaking Away: Strong Family, Teacher and Peer Support	116
A Confluence of Personal Events.....	120
Summary.....	121
Conclusion: Saying Goodbye to Taylor.....	121

Chapter Five

The Gifted Girl Overcoming Psychological Barriers

Introduction: Being Rebecca.....	122
Division of this Chapter.....	122
Rebecca, the Student, and Julie, the Researcher.....	123
Systemic Issues:	
Giftedness and the Positive Role of Teachers.....	124
Choosing to Achieve.....	126
Successful and Meaningful Collaboration Among Peers.....	128
The Stigma of Being Gifted.....	129
Differential Treatment and Gender.....	132
Summary.....	135
Personal Issues:	
A Key Developmental Turning Point at a Young Age.....	135
Coping with a Healthy Divided Gifted Identity.....	136
The Demands of High Expectations.....	137
Managing ADHD in an Elite Setting.....	138
Maturity and Eczema.....	145
The Single Uncomfortable Moment.....	148
Summary.....	148

Chapter Six

The Gifted Girl Creating Her Own Identity

Introduction: Toni as a Techno-Song.....	149
A Musician and a Poet: Dabrowski's Theories Applied.....	150
Goffman's Framework: Living Daily with the Stigma of Being Gifted	
Stages of Maturity: Growing Up Gifted.....	156
The Stigma of "the Smart Girl".....	158

A Fearless Identity: “She doesn’t care what anybody thinks”.....	162
Finding Needed Support from Peers and Teachers.....	163
Toni as a Young Woman of Color: Ogbu’s Theories Applied.....	164
Conclusion: Hitting Toni’s Stop Button.....	170
After She Goes:	170

Chapter Seven

The Gifted Girl as a Thinker

Introduction: The Valedictorian.....	172
The Thinker and Intellectual: At What Cost?.....	172
The Political Activist: Making Change Happen.....	175
The Curse of Being a Perfectionist.....	177
Public vs. Private Personas: Living with Duality.....	179
Integrating Intellect and Emotion.....	182
Conclusion: Her Final Speech.....	182
Deborah Disappears into the Dark.....	183

Chapter Eight

The Conclusion

Introduction:	
Prelude.....	184
Findings	
Finding sustenance in their landscapes.....	185
Themes and patterns of similarities and differences among the four girls: The motifs	
Introduction.....	191
Breaking free as individuals: The sociology of the gifted adolescent girl	
Imprisonment.....	192

Freedom: I am a girl on the loose.....	193
Early realization of a unique intelligence: The little smart girls.....	195
Psychological Issues: The psychology of the gifted adolescent girl	
Introduction.....	198
Psychological barriers: We shall overcome.....	199
Balance: Playing in tune.....	202
Dual personas: Singing a solo with two voices	207
The Body as Central: I sing the body electric.....	208
Anger: The quintessential emotion of girls and young women.....	210
Recommendations	
Introduction.....	212
Curriculum and pedagogy: A canon of one's own.	213
The psychology of the classroom: A classroom of one's own	218
The body: A body of one's own.....	223
Anger: The madgirl in the classroom	225
Next Steps.....	229
Next Research.....	230
Conclusion: Finale.....	231
Bibliography.....	232
Appendix A: Informed Consent.....	264
Appendix B: Interview Protocol A.....	268
Appendix C: Interview Protocol B.....	270

List of Figures

Figure 6.1.	Toni's Algebra.....	151
Figure 6.2.	Toni's Equations.....	152
Figure 6.3	Thinking.....	153
Figure 8.1	Deborah's Conflict.....	202

Dedications

to my daughters Marco Antonia and Renee Justice

to the Lakes, Michigan and Butternut

to my gifted students

to my family and friends.

“...it needs a telling as plain

as the prairie, as the tale

of a young girl or an old woman

told by tongues that loved them.”

(Adrienne Rich, 1981, p. 18)

“We are required to walk our own road – and then stop, assess what we have learned, and share it with others. It is only in this way that the next generation can learn from those who have walked before them... We can do no more than tell our story. They must do with it what they will.” (Sisulu, 1995, cited in Ramphele 1995: xi.)

“A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.” Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

“Eat bread and salt and speak the truth.” *Russian Proverb*

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Problem: Gifted Girls and Their Education

Ginger, Lauren, Ying, Becky, Katy, Stephanie, Cindy, Cathy, Lindsay, Lori, Patience, Stevie, Julie, Sue, and Donna. Each of these names represents a distinct and compelling picture of a girl who matured into a young woman. These are pseudonyms of girls I taught over the years. Who are these girls exactly? Why are they considered gifted? How did they live their lives as adolescents in an environment rife with mixed messages about intelligence and gender? The daily lives of adolescent gifted girls are rich, complex, challenging, unique, and relatively unexplored in the psychological and sociological literature in education. Each day a story is lost as these girls grow into gifted young women. In a study entitled “Living Out the Promise of High Potential: Perceptions of 100 Gifted Women,” Noble (1990) explains that gifted girls’ talents remain hidden and often are not recognized by parents, teachers, or society in general, yet this situation does “not reflect a necessary reality, or often any reality at all” (p. 135). Though this word appears to be a philosophical puzzler, this is the crux of the question: what is an intelligent girl when distinguished from society’s perception of her?

Before this intelligent girl grows into adulthood, the question I wish to ask is what is a girl? The gifted adolescent girl is a social construction. Gender is a social construction, adolescence is a psychological and social construction, and giftedness is a relatively recent social construction in the education arena. The challenge for researchers is to cull through theories around gender identity formation and discern the difference between what is biologically female and what are the societal constructions surrounding the art and science of being a girl. Adolescence, a rather peculiar developmental time specific to Western culture, has only been defined as a discrete level of human development in the last one hundred years. Between 1890 and 1920, psychologists led by G. Stanley Hall, urban reformers, educators, youth workers, and counselors began to mold the concept of adolescence as a period of inner turmoil and conflict known as *Sturm und Drang*, “storm and stress” (Muuss, 1988; Santrock, 1993). Gifted studies had its genesis with Sir Francis Galton’s *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* published in 1868 which only focused on “eminent” (p. 9) English men followed by *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* which investigated the impact of the environment on intellectual potential (Galton, 1874). Though the concept of gifted individuals began to be defined in 1868, gifted education as a concept took root only fifty years ago and today remains a controversial area of educational theory, rife with division and significant gaps in research. Simply expressed, the concept of gifted students is merely the social construction of schools and society – both of which offer little clarity around an exact definition of intelligence, how to measure intelligence, and how intelligence can be nurtured in an individual.

The reasons why some of the fourteen girls named in the first sentence of this chapter achieved academic success and developed into a healthy adulthood while some of the others did not need consideration, attention, scrutiny, and research. As amply documented in the research literature presented in the next chapter, the reasons for gifted girls’ depression and varying degrees of maladjustment to society is related to their intellectual, psychological, emotional, and physical development; however, adjusting to the reality of the world is not always preferable for all individuals.

English novelist and feminist theorist Virginia Woolf (1929) said, “The beauty of the world, which is so soon to perish, has two edges, one of laughter, one of anguish, cutting the heart asunder” (p.17). Gifted girls, as they move through different levels of Dabrowski’s moral development stages, explained at length below, see this very clearly. They recognize the beauty and ugliness in the world and wonder at how such extremes can exist simultaneously, an apparent conundrum. This awareness is an excruciating moment when girls need support from

their peers, their families, and their social and educational environment. In order to survive such trying times, gifted adolescent girls need to have a firm commitment to their own goals, personal resilience, and a strong sense of their own identity in the world. Unfortunately, not all girls possess these attributes. When these girls feel powerless in the face of adversity, they retreat into silence, depression, mental illness, substance abuse, or other self-destructive behaviors. In the most dire of circumstances, they attempt or actually succeed in committing suicide. These troubled girls can not find the reason to remain healthy and live in this world.

Clearly, gifted girls have a unique set of strengths, but they also face a unique set of difficulties. What are the challenges that girls and women face in education in general and in schooling in particular? Unfortunately, school systems are slow to change as sociologist Emile Durkheim explains:

As we shall have more than one occasion to note, the evolution of education always lags very substantially behind the general evolution of society as a whole. We shall encounter new ideas spreading throughout the whole of society without palpably affecting the University corporation, without modifying either its course of study or its method of teaching. Educational transformations are always the results and the symptom of the social transformation in terms of which they are to be explained. In order for a people to feel at any particular moment in time the need to change its education system, it is necessary that new ideas and needs have emerged for which the former system is no longer adequate. (Boocock, 1980, p. 309)

Since education reflects the values of society, the gender-specific needs of girls are rarely a top priority. Girls are exposed to almost three times as many stories in which boys are the central character versus girls. Boys are portrayed as clever, brave, creative, and resourceful, while girls are kind, dependent, and docile. Girls read six times more biographies of men than of women. In animal stories, animals are twice as likely to be males. This sad litany is familiar to feminist educators. What effect does this have? Girls do not see themselves reflected in their curriculum. From their earliest years, girls have a troubled relationship with their roles as students in schools.

Girls are more likely than boys to say they are not smart enough for their career goals and emerge from adolescence with a diminished sense of their worth as individuals. Gifted girls suffer particularly and lose 13 IQ points as they become socialized or feminized by cultural expectations. As girls grow older, they grow quieter. In co-educational classes, college women are even less likely to participate in discussions than in elementary or secondary schools. In a typical college classroom, 45 percent of the students do not speak, and the majority of these students are women. These statements are culled from Myra and David Sadker's groundbreaking *Failing at*

Fairness (1974), research by Carol Gilligan and her colleagues (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hamner, 1990), the *AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls* (1992), *Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children* (AAUW, 1999) and *Tech-Savvy: Educating Girls in the New Computer Age* (AAUW Educational Foundation, 2000). These works have brought the issue of gender equity into the public consciousness as a viable educational concern.

As girls mature into adolescence, school systems fail to meet girls' academic needs. Gender affects school performance significantly with lower grade point averages for girls; 40 percent more girls than boys fail a grade (Reinherz, Frost, & Pakiz, 1990). Although the gap is narrowing, women who graduate from high school are frequently less prepared in college-level math and science than men and consequently cannot enroll in math, science, engineering or computer science courses at the same frequencies as men (Fennema & Leder, 1990). Sociologist Ronald Corwin explains "To understand education it is necessary to study broad social forces and overt organizational pressures from outside" (1965, p. 49). Questions that arise from a closer scrutiny of these forces raise the following questions: why are girl-centered stories rare? why do girls tend to avoid math, science, engineering, and technology? why do teachers focus their attention primarily on boys? why do school systems favor a certain and select demographic of student? How does the academic performance of gifted girls fit into an overall psychological, societal, and educational context?

Four Stories of Adolescent Gifted Girls: Ying, Cathy, Cindy, and Lauren

By telling the stories of four adolescent girls, I hope to illustrate the need for more awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness among faculty in schools specifically and school systems as a whole to the needs of this group of students. This specific group of girls has a particularly unique set of academic and developmental needs which most school systems and programs within them are unable to meet because of immensely complicated reasons. Before telling these stories, I must remind the reader that the way individuals in American society perceive a gifted adolescent girl is the result of three complex social constructions. First, adolescence is a period of development laden with social expectations according to Western psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists. Second, being a girl is the result of being socialized to behave in certain ways because of being born a female. Third, the nature of intelligence, and more specifically, giftedness is a social construct. My intent is to explore how researchers define "girl" minus these three constructs.

I will use Ying's story as an illustration of this dilemma. I interviewed Ying several years ago by phone while she was completing her Ph.D. to do a mini-study of an adolescent gifted girl. I met Ying, a pseudonym, when she was 13. She was my student in a Pre-Freshman gifted enrichment summer course. Working together both in school and during extracurricular activities for four and a half years, Ying and I spent hours and hours together in a wide variety of formal and informal school and community settings. After graduating from high school, she attended a local university, and we often met on the street because I lived nearby. When I interviewed her three years ago, she was working on her Ph.D. in economics; she is now an economist working for the federal government. I use this data and my analysis of this interview, in addition to our now seven years of contact, to tell Ying's story.

When I asked how she had stayed so intact over the years, Ying said, "I think it's because I know I'm lucky. I've had a lot more resources at my disposal than most people, and, when I wasn't endowed with them, I could get them by flashing my math ability." These words echo Barbara Kerr's (1985) claim that gifted girls and women minimize their achievements when asked about them directly. Ying attributes her academic success to luck primarily. She overlooks her high intelligence, curiosity, strong internal motivation to learn, and consistently supportive environment. Yet the combination of all these factors has been shown by research to contribute to academic success as a student (Betts & Neihart, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1993; Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995).

As I think back to our interview specifically and informal conversations over the past seven years, I am freshly struck by the contradictions I now detect in many of Ying's statements. Educational and psychological development theorists like Carol Gilligan (1982, 1993), Mary Belenky and her colleagues (1997), and Kazimierz Dabrowski (1964) offer alternative explanations for understanding girls and young women like Ying. Dabrowski's theories of conflict around overexcitabilities (OE), explained later, are particularly relevant to Ying's struggle to understand herself and her role in society. As I reread the transcript of our interview and reassessed our interaction overall, I was surprised by her overall internal confusion and her struggle to move easily through her social world, her strong feelings of alienation and being misunderstood, and her sharp cynicism about people and institutions.

Overall, Ying learned how to negotiate an education system that was not especially receptive or even aware of her needs at times. Her anecdotes were telling in that many addressed both her distress and her triumphs. By traditional academic standards, Ying is a clear success story. From a feminist standpoint and my position as her

caring teacher, Ying suffered a great deal. My research goals are to describe and understand the complexity of gifted girls' lives as they move through their schooling to better illuminate the educational needs of girls like Ying.

When I asked her how society treats smart girls, she responded with this analysis:

The social stigma that smart girls face is in part due to our own construction of the issue; a lot of girls who label themselves as smart also shut themselves off by making too much of a point of it. I feel that a lot of people, regardless of gender, who think of themselves as smart often become so arrogant that they blame their lack of social integration on people disliking them because they're smart, even though the real problem is pomposity.

Despite her clear awareness about her status as a smart girl, Ying revealed an ambivalent attitude discussing her prizes, scholarships, and other awards. She alternated between being modest and earnest, saying "I really wanted to understand stuff and not just chase a Grade Point Average" but later told a story critiquing high school policies around language and appropriate behavior. She said, "Apparently I had written something that was apparently too racy about the ACT being outsourced to a Thai brothel, commenting on the purchasing power parity, outsourcing, and child labor/female trafficking. Is it any wonder I became an economist?" When the piece was banned by administrators because of its unsuitable content for a high school audience, Ying immediately developed a strategy to publicize this censorship. Overall, she worked well within the school system until the decision-makers challenged her sense of judgment.

Ying said, "The school supported me only because I won stuff and got good publicity. Otherwise, I was a nuisance." Her labeling of herself as a nuisance to her teachers ran throughout her discussion of her elementary schooling in Canada. This paradoxical perception of herself continued at the college level when she expressed mystification about the university neglecting to announce her scholarship with adequate publicity. She said, "I'm unaware of why the dean did not publicize my scholarship, which was the only one at [local university] in anyone's memory." Her language is slightly arrogant in her use of the phrase "in anyone's memory." Clearly, Ying sees herself as exceptional.

As a grade-schooler, she recognized she was different:

I guess I was considered gifted; I was given different opportunities than the other students in terms of being able to do work outside of class; in one advanced French class of three students, we wrote plays. I attempted to write a musical in fourth grade in French. My teacher gave me a lot of latitude with that.

She also remembered, however, that her third grade teacher found her annoying because she asked “persistent” questions. Ying mentioned that in high school she no longer felt like “the new kid,” implying that she experienced difficulties with her peers when she was younger. When I asked her directly if she had any challenging times before high school, she talked about her struggle during eighth grade and explained her maladjustment as “having a different set of experiences than my peers.” This spoke to her social adjustment and entry problems upon arriving to live in a primarily Caucasian, conservative, and affluent suburb in the Chicago area. She and her family moved from a highly urban and diverse section of Montreal, Canada.

In both Canada and the Chicago suburbs, Ying felt alienated and misunderstood around socio-economic issues. In Canada, her family appeared more affluent than others in their city environment; here in Illinois, her family lost this status. Ying was shocked by the snobbery and materialism of her peers.

I remember one kid I don’t generally associate with being obtuse, telling me that I “live in a really crappy neighborhood, and I have to, like, move” which shocked me because my parents live in a single family detached home.

In response, she creatively masked her lowered status.

Instead of having store-bought versions of things, I would find a way to recreate a lot of the things other kids had. Also, instead of heading straight for the mall, I’d just find my own clothes, mostly in my parents’ closets from previous eras.

She used her imagination and began to re-design herself into “a more interesting persona” to enter her new social world more confidently.

To contrast this, she told a vivid anecdote from second grade about a pencil which helped her realize the stability of her family’s economic status.

I remember looking around one of my classes in second grade and seeing that I was the only one using a mechanical pencil; everyone else was using the yellow HB2s provided by the school. The pencil incident just made me realize that maybe I did have it easier. The same thing happened when I had friends over, and I realized they were fascinated that my house was detached.

Ying’s realization, as a seven-year-old child, that her classmates could not always afford their school supplies is perceptive and unusual in her precise memory of details like the yellow pencil color with the specific HB2 label.

Thinking back, she stated, “While my peers knew I was strong academically, the bigger division was that I was one of the better off kids.”

Despite her sense of overall comfort in her grade school, some students were hostile. “For example, one of the kids referred to me as ‘genius.’” Her classmate used this word to insult and humiliate her just as her more affluent peers in the U.S. offended her in their negative assessment of her house and personal style. She, in return, dismissed them by saying, “I actually found my peers quite immature and ignorant.”

Though skeptical of the parameters of defining gifted intelligence, Ying is clearly gifted according to current testing standards. Of the 150 top eighth grade students taking the required test for the gifted program, Ying had one of the top three scores. She, however, questioned the entrance criteria. “I think it gave most of the class just another reason to self-aggrandize.” This was a sharp and frank comment made in the safety and trust of our interview as she knew I liked and admired the other students in the program. She continued with this tone and stated, “The group I ended up with had airs of intellectual pretension.” Ying “encountered more jealousy” throughout her high school years yet found friends through classes and extracurricular activities.

When asked directly if she felt comfortable enough to be herself among her friends, she responded, “Yes, and no.” She felt some peer support but only in limited ways. She connected to those she felt were “truly gifted,” trusting her own intuition and her own definition of giftedness.

As Ying matured, she came to understand the importance of hiding her intelligence and unique gifts. She said, “I had a lot of friends at [college] because I didn’t let who I was academically get in the way of who I was as a person.” She perceived herself as one person academically and another as simply herself. How did she separate herself? Was she aware of this duality? As an adolescent girl, she was learning the importance of playing the appropriate role at the appropriate time in order to retain the peer support she needed as both theorists Gilligan (1982; 1993) and Laura Brown (1998) argue in their research. Ying implied that she did not have that skill when younger. When explaining her desire to be different during her high school years, she said, “I really thought, and still do think, that most high school kids are insecure and will gravitate towards anyone who seems confident.” When, however, I conducted the interview, she remained alienated from her peers in her current context. When I asked how she was doing overall, she said she fit in just fine, and that most of her fellow students were foreigners. I expressed surprise, and she quickly reminded me that she was Canadian. She still held on to this identity of being the outsider, which Dabrowski describes in his development theory.

As Ying ages into her twenties, she is able to distance herself and explore her adolescence to a limited degree. When I asked about her intellectual and emotional development, she said:

I was never really pressured to think of myself as being advanced for my age, so it didn't come up much. After meeting and having to deal with the emotional problems of a seventeen year old grad student, I'm really thankful that I never skipped a grade early in life. [I never felt] pressured in the sense of having to develop too quickly academically, particularly mathematically/technically, too fast.

She recognized the wisdom of her parents and teachers in allowing her intellectual development to proceed at an ordinary pace. Offering her own analysis, she stated, "I think that truly gifted kids don't need to be told they're gifted. It's the ones who are borderline intelligent or book smart who need to be reassured."

When I asked Ying if the high school gifted program was helpful, she said, "I don't think it helped that much other than getting the Math Festival off the ground, although it was good to have a period where I didn't have to do much." This statement is immensely interesting to me as her former teacher and a member of the faculty because she did not understand, from my perspective, that her Math Festival, a day long celebration of different kinds of Math held in the school auditorium, was her greatest triumph. Over the course of three years, she negotiated, compromised, re-negotiated, and developed alternative strategic plans in order to appease hostile teachers, particularly the Math Department Chairwoman, to overcome significant institutional barriers to stage this festival.

As her teacher, Ying recognized my role in helping her towards academic success overall and invited me to be her guest at the Academic Honors Banquet hosted by the high school for the top 30 academic performers. Each student chose one teacher deemed most important in her or his high school career. Ying chose me. I was her connection.

Clearly, Ying needed more than a teacher to work with her; she needed an individual invested in her overall well-being. By presenting a few of the stories from Ying's life in her own words, I underline the urgency of collecting more of these stories so that systems can be built to better support and sustain these girls as they step into their challenging academic and social lives.

Ying's story is compelling in its triumph, yet other gifted girls face high school with their own unique constellation of strengths and weaknesses. In this same pool of gifted high school students, I met three 13 year old girls, two of whom were twins, and became a mentor, role model, and sometime confidante to each student. At age

14, one of the twins attempted suicide. In the weeks following, her twin confessed that she felt responsible for her sister's attempt. After many informal meetings with this girl, I had suspected this and immediately alerted her counselor, as I felt she was also a suicide risk at that moment. Taken to a nearby psychiatric facility for her own protection, the staff released her in a few days because she was stable psychologically. After such a trauma in her family, she was grief-stricken and in great pain.

In two months, her twin recovered and returned to school. After hours and hours tutoring this survivor, I came to a more profound understanding of this gifted adolescent girl's life. I also respected the strength, empathy, and resilience of the twin who felt responsible for her sister's suicide attempt.

In contrast, I taught a third girl, a friend of the twins, who personified the image of the driven, successful, and perfectionist gifted child. Despite her close attachment to me over four years, she became distant, aloof, and relatively superficial with me as she neared graduation. Later, through conversations with her mother, I deduced that family dynamics and negative responses around her intelligence and ambition from her peers, starting in kindergarten and continuing into high school, had shaped this student in a unique way. This girl graduated at the top of her class, was admired, albeit grudgingly, by her peers and teachers but at a psychological cost still unknown to me. Thus was my introduction to gifted girls; their stories are with me still today.

Personal Context: My Own Story as an Adolescent Gifted Girl

"Let me listen to me and not to them." To me, Gertrude Stein's statement illustrates the desire of adolescent girls to resist societal expectations and follow their own paths. Once that girl and later that young woman, I screened out social forces and listened to my own voice as often as possible. Simply because of my independence, resilience, and often stubbornness, at times I feel lucky to be alive, having passed through difficult moments of self-doubt. Despite such emotional and psychological uncertainty, I changed careers three times, served in the Peace Corps, and circled the globe twice – the result, I believe, of my mind's restlessness and curiosity.

Despite the outward trappings of success, I have maintained a slow and steady anger at the state of the world today. I keep this anger to myself. Internally, I am not as peaceful and balanced as I appear to the outside world. I am a tenacious survivor.

Not all smart girls are survivors. At age six, my teacher said I was a smart girl. I have been working ever since to understand the definition of the phrase "smart girl." That phrase was the genesis of this research on gifted girls.

Since first grade, I got good grades and had loyal friends along with the unwavering support of my family. In my second grade class, I met Dan. He was the smartest boy in the class. Our teacher treated us differently. As a seven-year old, I did not understand why. Dan fell in with a different group of friends in junior high and high school, and I lost track of him. Recently, I interviewed him to get his perspective on our kindergarten through college years. We both remember having the same tough but encouraging Language Arts teacher in junior high. Because of different social and psychological influences, however, Dan hated high school and graduated early.

Despite his negative feelings about high school, he was a National Merit Scholar and had received information about a prestigious liberal arts college on the East Coast. Dan eventually graduated with his BA and built an investment firm, using the very math skills he had learned at the high school he despised. Quite successful as second in command of an investment firm, he is now retired. Naturally, being a “smart boy” in this society is entirely different from being a “smart girl.” Our interview was fascinating to me. He ended our discussion by saying, “It took me a long long time to be willing to admit that I knew the answer to something” (Interview: 1/15/13). He had been silenced by his own superb intelligence.

His silence is the serious psychological and social toll that being intelligent in an anti-intellectual society has on individuals (Hofstadter, 1963). The mildly competitive dynamic between us began in first grade when we were both cast as the leads in a school play. I was the sun, and I can’t remember Dan’s part. We were only six-years old and already being socialized into our acceptable gender roles.

Returning to my story, I entered high school, tracked since sixth grade into more advanced math, science, and language arts classes. I remember thinking that I was different from the other students in most of my classes because I could think very quickly. This sense of being dissimilar, however, took on a different dimension when I was 17 and fell in love with another girl. This time I lost my group of friends. I had suddenly become an outsider without completely understanding how this occurred. Being labeled a “smart kid” by the school system and by society overall was manageable because other children were smart too. Generally grouped together to learn for pedagogical reasons, academically talented students can form solid friendships and usually find supportive teachers as role models. I had good friends and excellent teachers.

But now I was in trouble. In 1977, being a young lesbian was much more difficult than being a smart girl. At my high school, gay and lesbian students simply did not exist. This context only exaggerated my sense of

abruptly becoming an outsider. This increased my emotional isolation from my peers, and I was marginalized at precisely the developmental point when I needed those friends, their support, and adult role models.

Though my persona of an academically accomplished student remained intact my last year of high school and throughout my undergraduate years, my internal life had shifted significantly. I was full of conflict, insecurity, and uncertainty about how I would live as a lesbian. At age 17, I understood very little about how my sexuality would shape my life's path. Positive images of lesbians and gay men were rare in the late 1970s. Lesbian life was closeted and secretive 20 miles away in Chicago. My sole glimpse of lesbian life came on a television show dramatizing the life of French writer Aurore Dudevant, pen name George Sand. Despite rumors about lesbian teachers at my high school, I found no immediate role models and had no clear ideas about how to live my life on my own terms.

When I was 20 years old, I saw women openly identified as lesbians at a National Women's Music Festival. I was astonished; until that moment, I had thought sexuality was an entirely private matter. Here were lesbians; I had a tribe. This was an important turning point in my psychological and social development; I was now freed from my own confusion to begin to figure out how to live my own life. Paraphrasing Stein's quote, I could begin to listen to myself; I could follow my own visions, dreams, and desires.

As I explain my research interest in adolescent gifted girls and my choice to use a feminist critical methodology to be a viable researcher, I must tell my own story and examine and re-examine the bias I bring to my work. I realize that my own background shapes my interpretation. As feminist theorist Crosby (1992) argues, "To know women one must be a woman, to know the other one must be the other" (p. 132). As I take my position as researcher, I will be clear in explaining how my own interpretation of the data flows from my own personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Feminist philosopher Sandra Harding (1986) explains, "The woman inquirer interpreting, explaining, critically examining women's condition is simultaneously explaining her own condition" (p. 147).

As poet and feminist theorist Adrienne Rich explains, academics must begin "the long process of making visible the experience of women" (1977, p. xiv). This was my experience as a gifted adolescent girl. My goal is to make visible the lives of gifted adolescent girls and bring their experiences and perceptions into research literature. This remains a revolutionary step despite the waves of feminism society has undergone. Hartsock (1983) writes,

“We will have at least the tools with which to begin to construct an account of the world sensitive to the realities of race and gender, as well as class” (p. 206). “[W]e need to sort out who we really are” (p. 204).

Building on the work of Hartsock (1983) and Harding (1986), Haraway argues:

the “integrated circuit” of international late capitalism of the last century, an amazing wonder in a nuclear age that potentially could end with the world’s demise, a system of unending exploitation and fragmentation, is ironically the classic condition of possibility for understanding gender, race, and class, indeed ontology “itself.” There is nothing about “being” a female that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as “being” female, itself a highly complex category constituted in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices. Gender, race or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. (p. 179)

Carrying all this into my analysis, I will develop a critical feminist ethnographic portrait which fully explores the richness and nuances of a gifted girl’s experience in the world in general and her schooling in particular. The education world needs more comprehensive and empirical research data around the lives of these gifted adolescent girls in order to understand how to design programs and create educational environments that better meet their academic and social needs.

The Rationale for Research on Gifted Girls and Achievement

As I have continued to research, I have found that most studies on gifted students focus on both males and females – not specifically on girls. Adolescent girls have their own set of weaknesses and strengths, which need to be investigated separate from boys. Despite the seeming comprehensiveness of a ten volume series published in 2004 by the National Association of Gifted Children, I constantly find gaps as I read and write on this topic. Researchers need access to better, more specific data on educational outcomes and experiences. Currently, the lack of data on educational outcomes broken down by gender slows efforts to establish baselines from which to monitor change and progress (AAUW, 1999).

Despite the vast literature on education, analyses of gender differences within racial/ethnic and income groups are uncommon. The U.S. Department of Education’s latest report of the National Assessment of Education Program’s long-term trend assessment and other key indicators of educational achievement do not disaggregate

scores by gender within family income levels or racial/ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004, 2005).

Returning to the general need for gifted research, eminent scholar on gifted education James Renzulli (2005) states:

The first purpose of gifted education is to provide young people with maximum opportunities for self-fulfillment through the development and expression of one or a combination of performance areas in which superior potential may be present. The second purpose is to increase society's supply of persons who will help to solve the problems of contemporary civilization by becoming producers of knowledge and art rather than mere consumers of existing information. Although there may be some arguments for and against both of these purposes, most people would agree that goals related to self-fulfillment and/or societal contributions are generally consistent with democratic philosophies of education. (p. 246)

These words echo those of Sir Francis Galton from 1868 and Lewis Terman from 1916, both seminal researchers around the nature of intelligence, who believe gifted minds deserve to be nurtured and educated to reach their potential to better serve our society's needs. In order to reach these goals, researchers must have a more comprehensive understanding of the gifted experience. How do gifted individuals live successfully in a world which does not always recognize or appreciate what they can offer?

My commitment is to exploring and illuminating the lives of adolescent gifted girls. Their experiences and perceptions are simply missing from the research literature. As each year passes and more girls grow into womanhood, more stories are lost to us, which underlines the urgency of this research. My research goal is to tell those stories, using the girls' voices, and to catch a glimpse of their lives in all their complexity and capture how exactly they live in their world. My research question focuses on how a gifted adolescent girl makes sense of her life. What is the sociological and psychological landscape of the gifted adolescent girl? Where does she find sustenance, support, and shelter? Where is the danger in her environment? How does she understand and live in her own landscape (Evans-Pritchard, 1972)?

The Significance of Research on Gifted Girls and Achievement

In order to understand how the girls understand their lives, I must understand how they create knowledge in their world. This parallels how women, specifically feminists, have come to understand the construction and nature of knowledge. Feminist philosophers recognize that the merging of the personal and political to create methods that

discover new bodies of knowledge is, quite simply, a revolution (Keller, 1985, p. 8). Feminist theorist Catherine MacKinnon (1983) writes:

The personal as political is not a simile, not a metaphor, and not an analogy. It means that women's distinctive experience as women occurs within that sphere that has been socially lived as the personal – private, emotional, interiorized, particular, individuated, intimate – so that what it is to know the politics of a woman's situation is to know women's personal lives. (p. 534)

Sociologists agree that in order to discover new bodies of knowledge, researchers must “free ourselves from the dead weight of ideological commitments implicitly molding our vision” (Collins, 1975, p. 24). “Reflexive” sociology, similar to critical feminist theory discussed in Chapter Three on this study's methodology, involves a “deepening of the sociologist's own awareness, of who and what he is, in a specific society at any given time, and of how both his social role and his personal praxis affect his work as a sociologist” (Gouldner, 1970, p. 494).

Despite the difficulties of creating new bodies of knowledge, gifted adolescent girls are critically important members of society. Though social and academic barriers are erected to discourage their achievement and healthy personal growth, many girls are splendid academic performers and lead happy and productive lives, meaningful to themselves and by traditional social standards. Unfortunately, not all gifted girls can be successful or are successful. I have so many questions for these girls; their stories, in their own voices with their own words, must be added to the educational canon.

This research is a realistic celebration of gifted girls and their experiences at home and school. Krell (2000) elaborates by declaring this is “an affirmation with no ax to grind, affirmation without mastery or mockery, without outcome or end, affirmation without issue, affirmation without exit” (p. 209, 212). By listening and documenting the details of these lives, this research will contribute to the increasingly popular field of girl's studies.

“To make visible the full meaning of women's experience, to reinterpret knowledge in terms of that experience, is now the most important task of thinking” (Rich, 1977, p. xxiii). Each of these girls led a complicated and extraordinary life as an adolescent gifted girl. Ginger, Lauren, Ying, Katy, Becky, Katy, Stephanie, Cathy, Cindy, Lindsay, Lori, Patience, Stevie, Julie, Sue, and Donna. Let's listen to their stories. In Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven, I will tell the stories of Taylor, Rebecca, Toni, and Deborah. Let's listen to the voices of the girls.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Just as I struggle to understand my ability to be successful amidst the challenges of my life, many factors contribute to a gifted adolescent girl regarding herself as a success. However, other forces can debilitate her or drive her towards compromising her potential for achievement and satisfaction in her life. Often girls are overwhelmed by their environment, both in and outside of school, and find their sense of identity compromised or even erased (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hamner, 1990). Many gifted girls, however, view themselves as successful and achieve brilliantly by academic standards. In this Chapter, first I will present a brief history of the concept of intelligence; second, I will discuss the current theory and practice surrounding gifted students in the school house. Next, I will review the literature discussing the challenges girls face in schools. This chapter continues a narrower discussion focusing on specific aspects of being a gifted adolescent girl in the schoolhouse today. As all educators know, gifted education is quite controversial and smacks of elitism. Chapter Two concludes with a critique of gifted education overall.

A Brief History of the Concept of Intelligence

Doctors Binet and Simon, the creators of the original IQ test, do not present a definition of intelligence in their seminal work *The Development of Intelligence in Children*, calling this “a problem of fearful complexity” (Binet & Simon, 1916/1983, p. 253). Plato was the first philosopher to notice intellectual difference and labeled certain individuals as “men of gold” (Baldwin, 1999). Sir Francis Galton, who I discuss extensively below, first looked at ideas around unique intelligence in the 1860s (1868/1952; 1874). He viewed giftedness as a positive trait, positing that intelligence was genetic. Lombroso (1891) took a darker perspective and theorized that genius and insanity were linked. Hence, these gifts were regarded with distrust and unusually gifted individuals were discouraged from developing their talents.

Fifteen years later, the first contribution of Doctors Binet and Simon to the problem of measuring intelligence appeared in *L'Annee Psychologique* in 1905 (Binet & Simon, 1916/1983, p. 5). First designed for “subnormals,” the doctors created a test for “defective children” as a way to ensure that only children suspected of retardation were barred from school and given special classes (Binet & Simon, 1916/1983, p. 9). The tests distinguished between idiot, the lowest rung, imbecile, intermediate, and moron, the nearest mentality to normal (Binet & Simon, 1916/1983, p. 10). Their psychological method established what is called a measuring scale of intelligence (Binet & Simon, 1916/1983, p. 40).

Assigning a level of intelligence a single number was controversial from the beginning. Binet and Simon (1916/1983) consulted with French teachers who stated the following:

We believe that we can judge of the intelligence of a child and two months after having begun the class, we imagine that we can give to each child a mark expressing the degree of his intelligence; but the paradoxical fact remains, that the more we study him, the less we are sure of our judgment (p. 297).

The most famous study of expert’s conceptions of the scope of intelligent behavior was done by the editors of the *Journal of Educational Psychology* in 1921. Fourteen experts gave their views with definitions. They are as follows:

1. the power of good responses from the point of truth or fact (Thorndike);
2. the ability to carry on abstract thinking (Terman);
3. having learned or ability to learn to adjust oneself to the environment (Colvin);
4. the ability to adapt oneself to relatively new situations in life (Pintner);
5. the capacity for knowledge and knowledge possessed (Henmon);
6. a biological mechanism by the effects of a complexity of stimuli are brought together and given a somewhat unified effect of behavior (Peterson);
7. the capacity to inhibit an instinctive adjustment in the light of imaginably experienced trial and error, and the volitional capacity to realize the modified instinctive adjustment into overt behavior to the advantage of the individual as a social animal (Thurstone);
8. the capacity to acquire capacity (Woodrow);
9. the capacity to learn or to profit by experience (Dearborn) (Sternberg, 1985, p. 32).

Currently, two theories, explicit and implicit, rule the debate about intelligence. Explicit theory extrapolates from data collected from people performing tasks presumed to measure intelligent functioning. Theories focusing on differentiating and cognitive abilities dominate this area. Critiquing the differential theories we

find they all share common metatheoretical assumptions in the Binet tradition, they are mathematically equivalent, and differences are based on emphasis rather than substance (Sternberg, 1985, p. 8). Looking at cognitive theory, which emphasizes speed and information-processing, with a critical eye, we find an emphasis on the speed of processing and too much empirical support from “canned” laboratory tests (Sternberg, 1985, p. 15).

Implicit theories of intelligence are based on people’s ideas around the conceptions of intelligence. The goal is to discern the form and context of people’s informal theories and reconstruct existing theories not construct new ones (Sternberg, 1985, p. 31). The weaknesses of these theories lies in their lack of specificity, the gap between what intelligence is and what people think it is, the normative group is not clearly defined, and the theories provide a framework for, rather than an account of, intelligence (Sternberg, 1985, p. 37).

Despite this careful framework of types of intelligence theories, Sternberg (1985) himself argues that no theory does justice to the concept of intelligence. He explains:

But theory construction has to start somewhere, and in the course of scientific evolution, it seems that implicit theories of experts give rise to the explicit theories of these experts, which are in turn tested on objective behavioral data. Explicit theories may thus be seen as formalizations of experts’ implicit theories. Ideally, these formalizations should allow empirical tests of their validity. Because of this developmental relationship between implicit and explicit theories, there will almost certainly be considerable overlap between them. I believe that a study of this overlap, as well as the overlap among theories of each of the two kinds, can inform and strengthen both kinds of theories and research. (p. 39)

Being Gifted in the Schoolhouse: A Condensed History of the Development of Gifted Education Theory

Today, the state of gifted education is so confused, with dated theoretical applications so poorly applied and understood, that quite often students do not know how or why they have been designated as a gifted student. When I taught a gifted enrichment class at the high school freshmen level, I opened the semester with the journal question “Why do you think you are in this class?” Some students wrote, “I have no idea.” Others explained they had been in gifted classes since second grade. They knew they were different from their peers but were not quite sure how or why. A few wrote, “I am a good thinker” or “I am very good in math.” As young and quite intelligent students, they remained mildly confused about their label of gifted. Unfortunately, this only reflects the state of the discipline today.

Examining the brief history of gifted education explains the overall tumultuous state of this field. Just as the history of women's education is relatively brief, the story of gifted education is even more abbreviated. After over a century of research on the phenomena of giftedness, there is no commonly accepted definition or conception of giftedness (Feldhusen & Heller, 1985; Hoge, 1988; Reis, 1989). Giftedness is a social construction which began to be defined in 1868 with Sir Francis Galton's *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (1868/1952). The concept of gifted intelligence is socially constructed because educators, scientists, and philosophers like Galton have set their own scientific parameters identifying and clearly defining what constitutes an unusually intelligent individual. Scholars in gifted studies view Galton's work as the first to address extraordinary intelligence, talent, and accomplishment. Galton wrote a second book *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* (1874) which focuses primarily on the key characteristics of scientific men. Limited by his position in the British aristocracy and reflecting a nineteenth century socially privileged worldview, these books are full of the classist, sexist, and racist assumptions, clearly reflecting the limitations of this era.

Nonetheless, scholar Lewis Terman, the American leader in this field working in the 1920s, states that Galton's work "marks the beginning of a new era" (1968, p. v). In less than 150 years, the image of gifted individuals has shifted from the narrow confines of "the modern statesmen, commanders, literary men, men of science, poets, musicians, painters, divines, senior classics of Cambridge, and oarsmen" of Galton's book (1868/1952) to the gifted individuals living today who shine out their intellectual brilliance from every segment of society. I intentionally include oarsmen in Galton's men of genius list to highlight how he reflects the values of his time in naming powerful oarsmen as geniuses. This reflected, I surmise, his time as a student at Oxford or Cambridge University, where rowing is a revered and popular student past time.

Despite the limitations of these two books, Galton (1868/1952; 1874) offers insight into the current goals of effective gifted education:

In conclusion I wish again to emphasize the fact that the improvement of the natural gifts of future generations of the human race is largely, though indirectly, under our control. We may not be able to originate, but we can guide. It is earnestly to be hoped that inquiries will be increasingly directed into historical facts, with the view of estimating the possible effects of reasonable political action in the future, in gradually raising the present miserably low standard of the human race to one in which the Utopias in the dreamland of philanthropists may become practical possibilities. (p. xxvii)

Terman echoes this statement in his work with “intellectually superior children” (1968, p. vi) in the 1920s. With a variety of scholars, he documents the lives of academically gifted children from kindergarten until mid-life in a five volume series often cited in gifted education theory. “It should go without saying that a nation’s resources of intellectual talent are among the most precious it will ever have” (Terman, 1968, p. v). Galton and Terman argue that educating the most intellectually gifted citizens to be productive healthy individuals will contribute to their ability to help improve the lot of humanity overall.

Today, these vigorous and hopeful beliefs in the promise and potential of gifted individuals to uplift society overall remain strong among certain groups in society. Article 14A of the Illinois School Code addresses gifted education directly:

The General Assembly finds the following: (1) that gifted and talented children (i) exhibit high performance capabilities in intellectual, creative, and artistic areas, (ii) possess an exceptional leadership potential, (iii) excel in specific academic fields, and (iv) have the potential to be influential in business, government, healthcare, the arts and other critical sectors of our economic and cultural environment. (Illinois School Board of Education, 2005)

Despite the current crisis around the public’s perception of the success of public schools overall, most stakeholders in education believe intelligent students deserve attention. In 1957 in a direct response to the Soviet space launch of Sputnik, a special program for gifted high school students was designed to train the “Leaders of Tomorrow” (Kerr, 1992, p. iv). This was a direct political response to the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Without a doubt, academically talented students needed to be nurtured and carefully educated to ensure this country was competitive with others across the globe.

But the idea that students demonstrating academic prowess may need a different form of educational attention did not emerge with force until 1972 when the U.S. Office of Education published the Marland Report. School systems continue to use the report’s definition of gifted when planning gifted programming, and gifted literature has alluded to this definition for the past 35 years. The Marland Report (1972) states:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by a professionally qualified person, who by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. (p. ix)

Six years later, gifted education scholar Renzulli (1978) proposed a new definition as more useful to educators and defensible in terms of research findings. He simplified his definition to “giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits – these clusters being above average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity” (p. 261).

In 1991, the University of Iowa held a conference called the National Symposium on Talent Development. This gathered gifted education scholars from the United States and Canada to begin to debate the definition of gifted intelligence (Colangelo, Assouline & Ambrosion, 1992). As this was a mere 23 years ago, scholars are still debating many aspects of this issue, and consensus in this area is rare. Indeed, many of the key presenters are still arguing with each other years later in gifted education journals and conferences around the globe as their own research sharpens in more specific areas (Sapon-Sevin, 1994). This area of education is open to new ideas as this is such a relatively new, undeveloped, under-researched, and untested area of education.

Finding an agreed-upon definition of the giftedness is challenging. In 1986, the leading scholars in this field edited *Conceptions of Giftedness*, which summarizes the state of gifted education in education, psychological, and brain functioning theory. Since then, the field has matured around practical applications of theory, identification issues, instruction, and assessing achievement of gifted individuals, and this seminal volume has been re-issued and updated to reflect current concerns (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005). The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) published a series of ten books exploring specific aspects of gifted education, demonstrating the continuing need for specialization for research. *Culturally Diverse and Underserved Populations of Gifted Students* (Baldwin, 2004), *Social/Emotional Issues, Underachievement, and Counseling of Gifted and Talented Students* (Moon, 2004), *Twice Exceptional and Special Populations of Gifted Students* (Baum, 2004), and *Definitions and Conceptions of Giftedness* (Sternberg, 2004) are all useful in understanding the breadth of research being done in gifted education.

In the continuing debate of what constitutes intelligence and giftedness, the following are several points of general agreement among experts in the field: 1) giftedness involves more than high IQ; 2) giftedness has non-cognitive components along with cognitive ones; 3) environment plays a crucial role in how gifted performance will be realized; and 4) giftedness is not a single aspect of intelligence. Giftedness takes multiple forms, so one-size-fits-all or uniform assessments or programs are likely to be restricting and excessively narrow; 5) new methods for identifying and evaluating gifted individuals need to be found to operationalize theories, which need to be evaluated rather than simply assumed to be valid (Sternberg, 2004, p. xxiv.-xxv). Identification issues around those with

unique and exceptional intelligences remain a trouble spot as assessment tools change and adapt, albeit slowly, to the expanding research on intelligence (Plucker & Runco, 1998).

The importance of identification issues gains weight when considering that schools serve a selection function and continuously sort students into groups of learners. “They are a sorting mechanism that determines access to subsequent educational, occupational, and social positions and opportunities” (Spady, 1974, p. 6-7). Once students are funneled into a gifted program, they have access to different teachers, resources, unique opportunities, high academic expectations, and routes to success. The label of gifted, which was baffling to my young students, can shift students in profound ways in both educational and personal growth. With a series of gifted credits on school transcripts, gifted students have unique academic credentials. My more astute students, and their parents, would fight hard to secure a position in my high school’s very selective gifted program. Educational sociologist Green argues that credentials “are taken seriously as screening devices for access to social roles and to subsequent education” (1969, p. 244-245). To be gifted in some schools is to have a unique positive social panache while to be gifted in others invites misunderstanding and harassment; this depends on a school’s overall climate around student achievement and personal growth.

Theorist and psychiatrist Dabrowski explains why gifted individuals may be misunderstood by those around them. His work focuses specifically on gifted minds and emotional development. Trained as a medical doctor and psychiatrist, Dabrowski worked from 1931 to 1948, except during the Nazi Occupation of Poland, as Director of one of the most influential medical institutes in Poland, the Polish State Mental Hygiene Institute, in Warsaw, Poland (Dabrowski, 1964, p. xi). Despite this stature, his work remains controversial, mostly because many of his key texts have not been translated from Polish and, hence, have been invisible to major Western theoreticians in psychology, sociology, philosophy, and education.

For the past 20 years, however, gifted education scholars have looked to his theory around “positive disintegration” as particularly useful and relevant to explain and illuminate challenges faced by gifted individuals (1964). He posits that positive disintegration appears during “the age of opposition” or adolescence and among those undergoing “severe external stress” (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 18).

Individuals of advanced personality development whose lives are characterized by rich intellectual and emotional activity and a high level of creativity often show symptoms of positive disintegration. Emotional

and psychomotor hyperexcitability and many psychoneurosis are positively correlated with great mental resources, personality development, and creativity. (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 19)

His theory of positive disintegration identifies five levels of emotional or moral development. Level one, called primary integration, is self-serving, primal, and egocentric. Level two, named unilevel disintegration, leads to inner fragmentation and is dominated by group values. Level three, called spontaneous multilevel disintegration, addresses self-examination and moral concerns. Level four, named organized multilevel disintegration, weds ideals and actions to a high level of self-awareness. The fifth and top level, also called secondary integration, is “self-actualization” when the individual’s life is shaped by a powerful ideal. At this point, the individual lives in service to humanity. However, moving from level to level is extremely difficult and often leads to depression and despair among adolescents, especially around level three. This is when many experience existential despair, which creates deep pain and intense struggle (Nelson, 1989). Dabrowski “regards personality as primarily developing through dissatisfaction with, and the fragmentation of, the existing psychic structure – a period of disintegration – and finally a secondary integration at a higher level” (1964, p. xiv).

He argues that Western psychiatry does not see the positive functions of psychoses functioning in gifted individuals moving from one stage of personality development to another.

That anxiety, even psychoneurosis, may have a positive function in personality development is not inconsistent with current attitudes in Western psychiatry, but that psychosis – the persecutory delusions of paranoia, the hallucinations and withdrawal of the schizophrenic and the wild hyperactivity of a manic – may play a positive role in an individual’s maturation falls strangely on our ears. We tend to view psychosis as a *failure* of defense, the surrender at adaptation. (Dabrowski, 1964, p. xxiv, emphasis in original)

His theory emphasizes that developmental crises should be viewed as positive aspects of personality development and offers “a new view of conduct difficulties, school phobias, dyslexia, and nervousness in children. An awareness of the effect of multilevel disintegration on the inner psychic milieu is of basic importance for educators” (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 23). Dabrowski’s theory casts the behavior of gifted children in a new light.

In his theory, overexcitabilities (OE) are an integral part of the makeup of gifted individuals (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 98). OEs are not present in all people and are more likely to appear in highly creative or intellectual individuals. They are a mode of functioning or a dimension of personality through which input is filtered and in

which a person reacts (Daniels, 2003). Dabrowski first introduced this term to describe an expanded and intensified manner of experiencing in the following five areas: (1) psychomotor, heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system; (2) sensual, heightened experience of sensual pleasure or displeasure; (3) intellectual, heightened need to seek understanding and truth, to gain knowledge, analyze, and synthesize; (4) imaginal, heightened play of the imagination; and (5) emotional, heightened, intense positive and negative feelings. The prefix over in overexcitability is meant to convey that this is a very special kind of responding, experiencing, and acting, one that is enhanced and distinguished by forms of expression. These are dimensions of mental functionings in the model for developmental potential. As personal traits, OEs are often not valued socially, being viewed instead as nervousness, hyperactivity, neurotic temperament, excessive emotionality, and emotional intensity most people find uncomfortable at close range (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984).

This is salient issue for gifted students today. Dabrowski (1964) explains:

It seems probable that certain forms of maladaptation to one's self and to reality, hypersensitivity, lability of psychic structure, and even certain symptoms of internal discord such as self-criticism with a strong emotional accent are elements indispensable in man's development. (p. 104)

In expanding the definitions of human intelligence, Dabrowski calls for a broader definition of what exactly constitutes psychological health.

He advocated a shift in the focus of education itself. He believed that authentic education must be focused squarely on the individual (Dabrowski, n.d.; Moyle, 2000; Rankel 2007) and that schools must support students developmentally towards becoming the best persons they could possibly be. He did not want students simply focused on being better producers, consumers, or acquirers of knowledge (Jackson & Moyle, 2009). This is similar to Paulo Freire's theory of education which opposes the "banking notion of consciousness" (1970, p. 76). "It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power" (Freire, 1970, p. 77). Both Dabrowski and Freire see education as a way for individuals to create their own knowledge.

From Dabrowski's perspective, the inner world of the child, the on-going deliberations of the writer, the sensual imagination of the artist, the visions of the dreamer, and the visual-spatial mental mappings of the scientist are each, for their originator, as vital a reality as the solid reality derived from their five senses. If we consider the variety of experiences of all creative persons as viable perspectives and motivations for action, this develops into a

complex view of reality which extends beyond the common one-point perspective as defined by the single individual, or, indeed, a single culture itself (Jackson & Moyle, 2009).

Dabrowski (1973) himself explains:

We may say that the “theoretical reality” which includes the constructs of imagination, fantasy, and thought constitutes one level of reality – one domain that may be “touched” or “seen” in cognition, imagination, fantasy, or emotion. Some individuals frequently feel that this reality is higher than the so-called concrete reality, grasped and perceived by the senses. For a great number of artists and those who strive for self-perfection, the realities of intuitions, dreams, and fantasy are much higher, much more understandable than the reality of the senses. It is easier for them to deal successfully with the problems of this reality than the reality of everyday life. This reality is the center of their concerns and inner experiences. In practical matters, they may perform poorly and be outclassed by the practically minded people. (p. 2-3)

In her studies of Dabrowski’s perspectives of mental health and his comprehensive conceptualization of atypical states, Mika (2007) writes, “We cannot label such experiences as mentally unhealthy without depriving ourselves of what (are) perhaps the most valuable aspects of our existence” (p. 153).

This is an immensely important question for educators, psychologists, and sociologists. “Schools produce individuals equipped with the attitudes, values, and interpersonal skills needed for the performance of adult roles” (Spady, 1974). Since schools serve a socialization function, gifted students may emerge psychologically intact or fragmented. The impact of their peers, their teachers, their families, and the overall school climate as accepting or intolerant of difference has a complex effect on each gifted adolescent. As I explained in the opening paragraph of this section, gifted students view themselves as set apart from their peers because of their intelligence.

To further complicate matters, giftedness is not always demonstrated by high achievement but may also be defined by high potential in the absence of unusual achievement. The definition of giftedness through ability assessments or potential is much more difficult than the determination of giftedness through high achievement. Indeed, children often demonstrate unusual potential in their passions and interests outside schools (Von Karolyi & Winner, 2005). Gifted children stand out in four ways. First, they are precocious in the domain of ability; second, they are passionate about and have a rage to master that area. Third, they think, learn, and solve problems in ways

that are qualitatively different from usual children; fourth, they are aware of being different from others (Von Karolyi & Winner, 2005).

Recently, educators are beginning to question School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Duke (2013) asks, “Are educators addressing the right set of goals when they develop SIPs – all of which have goals calling for the raising achievement of all students and narrowing achievement gaps. And what about goals related to educational excellence? Have efforts to improve schools neglected high achievers? Are contemporary public schools focusing on educational equity to the exclusion of educational excellence?”

(p. 46) Hess argues that NCLB encouraged a “universal and exclusive focus on low-achieving kids that work best for different kinds of students” (2011, p. 3). He continues to observe that Advanced Placement (AP) courses, once the refuge for high achievers seeking more strenuous academic challenges, increasingly have been compelled to admit lower achieving students, citing results from a survey of AP teachers. Fifty six percent of the respondents believed that too many of these students “were in over their heads” (Hess, 2011, p. 4).

Returning to the first point, although researchers are doing a considerable amount of systematic research documenting precocity in gifted children, most evidence is anecdotal. Systematic investigation into the qualitative differences in gifted children’s thinking in specific domains remains to be done. As presented, gifted studies is a new area of education with many theories and little evidence. Narrowing my focus still further, what do educators know about the experience of the gifted adolescent girl in schools?

A Brief Analysis of the Impact of Sexism on Girls and Lack of Equity in the School House

Being a girl in the schoolhouse is not easy. Virginia Woolf reminds her gentlemen readers: “Take the fact of education. Your class has been educated at public schools and universities for five or six hundred years, ours for 60” (1938, p. 17). A history of girls and women in education is relatively short. Despite claims of equal education for narrow demographics of girls during certain eras of American history, the impact of sexism still resounds in school systems today. As school priorities reflect societal priorities, girls have not fared well despite the good intentions of school reformers (Kliebard, 2004; Tyack, 1974).

Even if women were adequately educated, Sir Francis Galton (1868/1952), considered the first scholar to focus on the origins of intelligence, predicts a grim social future for such unusual females.

One portion of them would certainly be of a dogmatic and self-asserting type, and therefore unattractive to men, and others would fail to attract, owing to their having shy, odd manners, often met with in young persons of genius, which are disadvantageous to the matrimonial chances of young women. (p. 318)

Given such pervasive social attitudes against the necessity of educating women and girls even in Galton's more enlightened British circle of the 1860s, the powerful negative legacy of such attitudes is not surprising. Education historian Joel Spring states, "Unfortunately, violence and racism are a basic part of American history and of the history of schools. From colonial times to today, educators have preached equality of opportunity and good citizenship, while engaging in acts of religious intolerance, racial segregation, cultural genocide, and discrimination against immigrants and non-whites" (2007, p. 2).

Despite progressive strides in education reflecting social change in the 1960s and 1970s, conservative forces challenged the progressive movement on university campuses around gender, ethnic, sexuality, and cultural studies. "Conservatives appropriated the term 'politically correct' some time in the 1980s just as critiques of multiculturalism in higher education began to appear. The Right criticized not only curricular innovations and affirmative action in college admissions but also course content that focused on the power of inequalities of race and gender" (Chamberlain, 2007, p. 2-3). This style of aggressive action trickled down from the college campus into the school house, muting and perhaps silencing teachers and administrators attempting innovative change in curriculum and pedagogical techniques. When conservative forces in society and the academy recognized the power of these new disciplines and teaching styles, they doubled their efforts "to realign the curriculum on male, Eurocentric principles" (Chamberlain, 2007, p. 5). As leaders were striving to redesign schools, pedagogical philosophy and techniques, and curriculum to meet the needs of girls, students of different ethnicities and cultures, working-class and poor students, and other students with particular needs, the backlash began with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and its limited vision of an educated student being a test score and no more.

Scholar Sophia McClennen argues that conservative forces are especially skilled at intimidating individuals in a McCarthyian fashion and swaying the public to see the veracity of their argument. Because of this, the 1960s progressive academics have been increasingly hesitant to advocate a coherent political vision. "To place the educational policy of the Bush administration and its right-wing sympathizers alongside the 'political tyranny' and 'proto-fascism' of our government is to unmask the real targets of the current assault: dissent, critical thinking, social engagement, political activism, ethical commitment, and civic responsibility are depicted as threats to national

security” (McClenen, 2007, p. 15). Leading to a stultifying effect on education activists, administrators and teachers are slowed in their work toward equitable classroom practices.

Sociologists Cave and Chesler (1974) highlight the contradictory approach of schools in recognizing the importance of plurality.

Ours is a society that has prided itself on the rhetoric of pluralism. But we have constantly opted for assimilation. And control of our major economic and political institutions rests in the hands of monocultural elites, not in any mass-based populations that are ethnically or racially diverse in origin and practice. For the school to deal productively with the possibilities of differences, for the school to utilize conflict creatively, would require a resource base and a mission markedly different from those of current operations. It would require a staff and a support system experienced with pluralism and differences and willing to take risks in order to achieve progress. And it would require an institutional commitment to remake our social order. (p. 163)

I would argue that some progressive educators are attempting to remake our social order in their efforts to serve their students equitably. In the past 30 years, girls and their advocates have made some strides in making education fit their needs. The continuing influence and strict enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 along with the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1986 have served women and girls well in terms of securing access to federal funding and being protected from bias in federally funded institutions. Certainly in 2014, women and girls must be closer to equal education than in 1814 or 1914 because of immense social, historical, political, and economic changes.

Clearly, the social forces of a classroom affect girls as profoundly as the psychological. “Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends” (Dewey, 1928). Girls are struggling to define themselves in a social context, so examining the social worlds of girls is crucial to understanding how girls construct their sense of identity. How do girls see themselves in relation to those around them? How important are peers? Family? Teachers?

If social problems continue to be framed using psychological terms like “maladjustment” and “poor motivation” which focus on particular deficiencies, scholars perceive problems as rooted “in individuals rather than

in the overall social order” (Morton & Watson, 1971). With this perspective, the social order remains unchallenged and unchanged. Systemic bias is ignored. Cave and Chesler (1974) state:

The major priorities and patterns of American society are reflected in the nature of its schools. But it is not enough to know that this is the case; we must identify the procedures responsible for this congruence and the mechanics in the nature of schools as social institutions. (p. 151).

Clearly, the sociology of the classroom will reflect how individuals perceive themselves psychologically. Psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934) explains how social forces and psychology intersect:

The unity and structure of the complete self reflects the unity and structure of the social processes as a whole; and each of the elementary selves of which it is composed reflects the unity and structure of one of the various aspects of that process in which the individual is implicated. In other words, the various elementary selves which constitute, or are organized into, a complete self are the various aspects of the structure of that complete self answering to the various aspects of the structure of the social process as a whole; the structure of the complete self is thus a reflection of the complete social process. The organization and unification of a social group is identical with the organization and unification of any one of the selves arising within the social process in which that group is engaged, or which it is carrying on. (p. 31)

These social and psychological forces blend together in a unique constellation for girls. How do these social and political forces affect girls specifically in school systems?

In *Where the Girls Are: The Facts about Gender Equity in Education* (AAUW, 2008), researchers report that from standardized tests in elementary and secondary school to college entrance examinations, average test scores have risen or remained the same for girls, which reflects gains among both low and high-achieving students (p. 9). Girls’ performance in high school and college has also improved with the number and percentage of both women and men attending and graduating from college being higher than ever before (AAUW, 2008, p. 10). This indicates that the educational environment is improving for girls overall. The challenge lies in the close relationship between family income level and race/ethnicity and academic performance. On standardized tests such as the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP), SAT, and ACT, children from the lowest income families have the lowest average test scores. African American and Hispanic children score lower than White and Asian American children (AAUW, 2008, p. 10). Gender differences in academic achievement vary by race/ethnicity and

family income also. In the main 2007 NAEP math assessment for the eighth grade, boys outperformed girls by two points. After a race/ethnicity breakdown, a three-point gap favored boys among White students while no significant gender gap appeared among Hispanic students. Among African American students, girls outscored boys by one point (AAUW, 2008, p. 11). The report clearly demonstrates, however, that “neither girls nor boys are unilaterally succeeding or failing. The true crisis is that American schoolchildren are deeply divided across race/ethnicity and family income level, and improvement has been too slow and unsteady” (AAUW, 2008, p. 11).

Such work like AAUW’s *Where the Girls Are: The Facts about Gender Equity in Education* is strengthened by Gilligan’s theory on moral development and gender presented in her 1982 book *In a Different Voice* which challenges traditional thinking in educational psychology. She grounds her work in Chodorow’s 1974 essay around family structure and personality. Chodorow attributes differences in masculine and feminine roles to socialization – not anatomy. Because of differing social environments, personality differences between girls and boys are pronounced at an early age. Because of this, the feminine identity defines itself by relationships and connections to others (Chodorow, 1989). She cites Barry, Bacon, and Child’s well-known study (1957), which demonstrates “that the socialization of boys tends to be oriented towards achievement and self-reliance” while that of girls is towards “nurturance and responsibility” (Chodorow, 1974, p. 55). Chodorow questions whether this personality structure is “functional” for society overall. She argues “that satisfactory mothering, which does not reproduce particular psychological problems in boys and girls, comes from a person with a firm sense of self and of her own value, whose care is a freely chosen activity rather than a reflection of the conscious and unconscious sense of inescapable connection to and responsibility to her children” (1974, p. 60). She underlines the importance of the mother-child bond and its differing impact on sons and daughters. “The quality of a mother’s relationship to her children and maternal self-esteem, on the one hand, and the nature of a daughter’s developing identification with her mother, on the other, make crucial differences in female development” (Chodorow, 1974, p. 62-63).

Feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray claims that the subject, understood as a fantasy of autogenesis, is masculine at the start. Psychoanalytically, such a version of the subject is constituted through a disavowal or through the primary repression of its dependency on the maternal. “And to become the *subject* on this model is surely not a feminist goal” (Butler, 1992, p. 9, emphasis in original).

In light of such difference, Gilligan argues that two theories are needed to describe both sexes accurately and fairly. She views her theory and Lawrence Kohlberg’s (Muuss, 1988) as complementary – not as higher, lower,

better, or worse. Kohlberg's theory is based on a voice of morality and justice while Gilligan focuses on relationship and connection. She explains that if a woman's judgment is influenced by her feelings for the individual, this should be regarded as a positive and valuable moral quality – not a deficit. Gilligan argues that the process of moral development for women and girls is distinctly different from men and boys. Moral development for females is based on intimacy and caring rather than on the more abstract principles of fairness and justice, which often characterize male moral decision-making. In Gilligan's later work with psychologists and educators in *Making Connections* (1990) and *Meeting at the Crossroads* (1992), she documents how the alternative priorities of girls affect their work in classrooms, which remain organized around the more traditional male values of competition and personal achievement.

Gilligan argues that two different voices speak in moral decision-making. The voice traditionally recognized by society is masculine and speaks of justice, logic, rights, and rules. The second voice is concerned with connectedness to others, sensitivity, and responsibility for relationships. This voice, more associated with women, is care-oriented. Gilligan maintains that only the justice-oriented voice is valued by society. Thus, this masculine standard is used to evaluate both females and males. Hence, the feminine voice is not only lost but devalued.

Educator Nel Noddings (1984) echoes the importance of the caring ethic claiming “women are somewhat better equipped for caring than men are. This is partly the result of the construction of psychological deep structures in the mother-child relationship” (p. 47), reinforcing Chodorow's theory. Noddings argues that teachers should shift emphasis from teaching curriculum to teaching individuals; “her commitment is to him, the cared for, and he is – through that commitment - set free to pursue his legitimate projects” (1984, p. 177). Grading and evaluation negates the positive caring nature of the healthy student-teacher relationship. She recommends school leaders find objective outsiders for this task (Noddings, 1984, p. 194). Noddings (1984) argues schools should shift structurally from being program-based to embrace a system based on “the establishment and evaluation of chains and circles of caring” (p. 180). She cites education theorist Madeleine Grumet's suggestion that “the excessive efforts at abstraction, objectivity, and detachment in our schools are a manifestation of the father's psychological need to take possession of the child” (Noddings, 1984, p. 182). Listening, dialogues, sharing, and responding should all be integral in

pedagogy along with integrating caring practical experiences into the curriculum such as work in hospitals, nursing homes, animal shelters, parks, and botanical gardens (Noddings, 1984, p. 187).

Moral reasoning begins with an individual, but expressions of morality are understood within a social context. Since Gilligan presented her theory, researchers have done many studies around gender and moral reasoning. Because of widely disparate findings regarding gender differences in the use of justice and care reasoning, Jaffee and Hyde (2000) undertook a meta-analysis to determine whether Gilligan's claims are supported by empirical evidence. After examining 113 studies of moral reasoning (160 independent samples measuring care and 95 measuring justice), the magnitude of the effect size for gender differences in care reasoning was $-.28$, indicating a small difference favoring females. Among adolescents, the effect was moderate ($-.53$). The magnitude of the effect size for gender differences in justice reasoning was $+.19$, indicating a small difference favoring males. The small magnitude of these effects, combined with the finding that 73 percent of the studies measuring care reasoning and 72 percent of the studies measuring justice reasoning failed to find significant gender differences, led to the conclusion that, although distinct moral orientations may exist, these orientations are not strongly associated with gender. Jaffee and Hyde found little evidence to support the ideas that individuals use a particular moral orientation consistently over time and situations. They discovered the type of moral reasoning an individual uses is highly sensitive to the context and contents of the dilemma.

Moderately large gender differences, however, were found for both care and justice reasoning among measures that did not include a dilemma. These measuring instruments presented participants with descriptions of care or justice reasoning and asked them how much these might characterize their own thinking about moral dilemmas or how important such considerations are in resolving moral problems. In these cases, the participant determines whether or not she or he is a justice or care-oriented person.

Quantitative researchers argue that Gilligan's conclusions are not falsifiable because the care and justice constructs are insufficiently well-defined and thus impossible to operationalize. Jaffee and Hyde argue that this simply becomes a debate about epistemology. Researchers who develop psychometrically valid and reliable measures of moral orientation would satisfy Gilligan's critics but would fail to capture the construct of moral orientation that Gilligan and her colleagues have developed and refined over the years.

Returning to an adolescent focus, current psychology around girls' development argues that girls feel a different set of internal expectations from boys as they move through adolescence. Gilligan (1998) explains:

Adolescent girls resisting detachment generally have appeared in the literature on adolescence to illustrate the problems that arise when childhood forms of relationship are not changed. But by drawing attention to the problem of loyalty and to a transformation of attachment that resists the move toward disengagement, the experience of girls in adolescence may help to define an image of self in relationship that leads to a different vision of progress and civilization. (p. 13-14)

Gilligan's word choice of progress and civilization are grandly deliberate. Listening carefully and conducting exhaustive psychological studies in this specific area of adolescent development could revolutionize perceptions about relationships as did Belenky's, which is described later in more detail. Both studies examine groups which have been historically understudied and marginalized by mainstream researchers. Simply collecting their stories expands knowledge around the psychological and sociological dynamics affecting the way women and girls perceive their relationships.

Girls trying to remain connected are committing "acts of resistance and courage" which can lead to psychological distress or get the girls into trouble.

Frequently, political resistance or outspokenness leads to retaliation, which may take the form of isolation (ostracism, exclusion, not being listened to, not being heard), or may involve various forms of betrayal, violation, and violence. In this case, the same portion of the text may be marked as an example of psychological health (political resistance) and psychological distress. (Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995, p. 34)

Girls are in a difficult and demanding situation as they work to understand the forces shaping their lives both inside and outside their classrooms. The psychology directing a girl's identity development is often revealed in a sociological context. In Gilligan's theoretical construct, women and girls feel constantly compromised and confused in their decision-making, being caught between these two perspectives. Gilligan explains that adolescent girls learn to use the justice perspective because their own moral voice is ignored. Indeed, this conflict can often erode their sense of confidence until they become reluctant to even take a moral stand. Girls begin to question their right to make moral statements and worry about the toll this judgment might take on themselves and those they care about (Gilligan, 1982, p. 66).

The Gilligan research team found that when girls arrive at the brink of adolescence they become aware that society does not share their values, their prizing of relationships and intimacy. They face a conflict between

adapting to a societal vision of a successful person, who is independent and self-sufficient, or continuing to give primary attention to their relationships. Girls struggle with the mixed message that women must be supportive and caring yet watch society devalue these very qualities. They become confused, ambivalent, and silent. Adolescence is “a time when girls are in danger of losing their voices and thus losing their connections with others, and also a time when girls, gaining voice and knowledge, are in danger of knowing the unseen and speaking the unspoken and thus losing connection with what is commonly taken to be ‘reality’” (Gilligan, 1990, p. 25). Girls teetering on adolescence face a crisis; if they speak of what they know through their own experience, they will create social problems such as disagreeing with or defying authorities or disrupting relationships. If they remain silent, they are confused and compromised completely. At the same time, the social consequences of speaking out can be lonely, isolating, and depressing. In a study with adolescent girls, Niobe Way describes Gabriela who talks openly with her mother, father, friends, and teachers about her overall anger and frustration about her life yet still feels distance. She says “ ‘a lot of people say [to me], ‘Oh, you got courage,’ it’s not courage, it’s just that I don’t care’” (Way, 1998, p. 86-87). She expresses her anger because she is apathetic to the consequences. Gabriela (Way, 1998) says:

‘Cause the thing about me is like life to me means nothing. You know what I’m saying? Like I don’t know, when they’re saying, like, I’m very negative about things now. Like I don’t care about nothing no more. (p. 87)

This may be a statement to protect herself from caring or caring too much or her psychological well-being may be seriously compromised. Girls like Gabriela are in danger of losing their own unique and valuable vision of the world.

A vision, however, requires a voice, defined as “a powerful psychological instrument and channel, connecting inner and outer worlds” (Gilligan, 1993, p. xvi). The broad concept of voice is essential to understanding its relevance in the educational and social context of girls’ lives. “Voice is power, power to express ideas and convictions, power to direct and shape an individual life towards a productive and positive fulfillment for self, family, community, nation, and the world” (McElroy-Johnson, 1993, p. 107). Voices need listeners. In 1986, Belenky and her colleagues understood this seemingly basic concept in their decision to use a groundbreaking methodology presented in *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (1997). Their careful and repeated analysis of data from interviews with women from many demographics demonstrates the high value they placed on each woman’s individual story and voice.

The very process of recopying the women's words, reading them with our eyes, typing them with our fingers, remembering the sounds of the voices when the words were first spoken helped us to hear meanings in the words that had previously gone unattended. We moved back and forth between these excerpts and the unabridged interviews. This enabled us to maintain a dual perspective, hearing the statements as exemplars of a particular epistemological position but hearing them also in the context of the women's whole story. Slowly we were able to record how differently each of them was construed by women with different ways of knowing. (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1997, p. 14)

Gilligan's research teams (1988; 1990; 1992) employ a similar methodology of open-ended questions, interviewing subjects intermittently over several years to trace changes in ideas and attitudes in addition to detecting more subtle changes in speech patterns and use of silence, among other behavioral shifts. These research teams understood that girls' voices deserve listening to with this same degree of attention, compassion, and scrutiny. In Way's study consisting of African American, Dominican, Puerto Rican, West Indian, and Irish American adolescent girls, they specifically state that they are "outspoken" or emphasize their ability to be honest about anger and affection in their relationships (1998, p. 78). "Speaking one's mind, expressing one's opinions, daring to disagree, and speaking the truth in relationships" are important values to the girls. They believe that discussions around conflict and honesty were a necessity in their lives; if they were silent, they would "explode" (Way, 1998, p. 79). Clearly, these girls are not silenced by societal expectations but view their ability to express themselves as essential to healthy relationships. According to the results of Way's study, however, boys and girls receive very different messages from their teachers and parents about being outspoken. Boys were encouraged to be leaders and given a sense that they had promising futures, whereas this type of encouragement was absent from the girls' experience. In fact, if girls were outspoken, this was most likely to be understood by others and themselves as having "an attitude" (Way, 1998, p. 103).

Because adolescence is such a vulnerable stage of human development, girls are particularly aware of the smallest nuance or gesture of a peer, teacher, or parent. In psychologist Erik Erikson's framework of human development, the fifth of seven stages of development from childhood to age 65, which is identity versus role confusion, coincides with puberty and adolescence.

It is an ideological mind – and indeed, it is the ideological outlook of a society that speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programs which at the same time define what is evil, uncanny, and inimical. (Erikson, 1963, p. 263)

This need for affirmation from peers can lead in both positive and negative directions. Erikson (1963) explains:

Young people can also be remarkably clannish, and cruel in their exclusion of all those who are “different,” in skin color or cultural background, in tastes, and gifts, and often in such petty aspects of dress and gesture as have been temporarily selected as the signs of an in-grouper or out-grouper. (p. 262)

Adolescents are notorious for labeling each other and running in tight groups. In addition to this need for group cohesion and identification, sociologist Ronald Corwin argues that schools are pervaded by a “we” feeling (1965, p. 3). Eminent school sociologist Willard Waller states, “They have a culture that is definitely their own” (1932, p. 6-7).

Plainly, the sociology of the classroom determines its overall environment and how students will respond to one another, their teacher, and the school system as a whole. Within each classroom is a microcosm of the world outside the schoolhouse walls. The quality of this environment will determine the overall social and learning dynamics of the class. As effective teachers strive to create safe, open, and trusting classrooms, the impact of this data could radically change the structure of classrooms, and, hopefully, schools, based on girls’ visions of connection and care. When girls ask challenging questions, this requires women to look at their own lives. “Girls learn from women: fake women, amalgamated women, real women” (Angier, 2000, p. 205). Women are well aware of their impact on girls looking for role models as they grown into adulthood. Because of this opportunity, Taylor argues that “women must allow themselves more vulnerability and risk relationships with girls” (1995, p. 172). Way’s study of urban adolescent girls revealed that girls placed great importance on their close relationships with their mothers. Often, these relationships resembled those with their close female friends; the girls explained that they expressed their “real” thoughts and feelings in both relationships (Way, 1998, p. 263). This, however, is in the home; schools can be more complicated. This dynamic of vulnerability and risk places teachers, especially women teachers, in a difficult position in schools, which are not designed to foster such student/teacher connectedness (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 172).

This is an issue of both political and psychological resistance. Gilligan (1993) clarifies:

Girls' desire for relationships and for knowledge comes up against the wall of Western culture, and a resistance, a break out that is, I will claim, of great human value. Girls' questions about who wants to be with whom are to them among the most important questions, as revealed through nuance, and gesture, voice and glances, seating arrangements, choices of partners, the responses of adult women and men, and the attitudes of the authorities in the world. (p. 144-45)

At this point, girls begin to disassociate from what they understand as truths in the world and begin to rehearse their socially acceptable voice (Debold, Wilson, & Malave, 1993). A socially welcomed identity, carefully constructed from what they understand of societal expectations, follows.

When the psychological development of girls clashes with these expectations, the disconnect begins. The idea of the girl is socially constructed, and a girl's view of a girl may be quite different from the world's definition of a girl. Philosopher and feminist theorist Simone de Beauvoir denies the reality of Sigmund Freud's phrase "Anatomy is destiny" when she argues, "It is not nature that defines women; it is she who defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life" (1974, p. 42). Adolescent girls are struggling to define their own vision of the world. Gilligan (1993) states:

Feeling the mesmerizing presence of the perfect girl, girls have entered the world of the hero legend and experience the imposition of a framework that seemingly comes out of nowhere – a worldview superimposed on girls but grounded in the psychology of men. (p. 158).

By creating a second identity, they are able to adjust to daily pressures to conform to certain acceptable behaviors.

Gilligan (1993) explains society's role forcing girls to construct multiple identities:

This taking-on of an androcentric point of view is the central lesson girls coming of age are taught by more or less well-meaning men and women both at home and at school as well as through the various media for transmitting cultural norms and values; and if girls learn to make what seems a simple connection . . . then they can tune their voices and align their visions with androcentric cultural traditions and enter without changing what has been called "the human conversation."

(p. 158)

Once this correction is made, however, the cultural framework becomes invisible, and then, as one wise twelve-year-old girl observed, "you don't have to think" (p. 148).

Some girls actively resist being pushed towards becoming socially designed girls and decide “to live on the margin” (hooks, 1990). Girls do push back, however, and frame their outspoken voices as having “an attitude” (Way, 1998, p. 89). Particularly in junior and senior years of high school, the girls in Way’s study take a stance and forcefully express themselves. “While it may be considered inappropriate, ineffective, or rude at times, such confident articulations force people to listen and take their thoughts and feelings seriously” (Way, 1998, p. 89). Florence, an African American adolescent, explains, “It lets people know that I’m serious, that I’m not playing and it’s a good way for, you know, for people to listen, to know that I’m trying to get a point across” (Way, 1998, p. 89). In a junior year interview, Gabriela says, “I have an attitude with people sometimes. You have to have an attitude nowadays, you know what I’m saying? Like somebody says something [bad], I snap back at them” (Way, 1998, p. 89). While many of the girls stated they needed to “change their attitude,” when asked if they like having an “attitude,” most stated they found “something positive” about this stance. Though they recognized that adults and many of their peers found this problematic, they believed that this posture was “sometimes necessary” (Way, 1998, p. 89). This resistance helps them protect themselves at some level.

Feminist theorist bell hooks argues that this choice can enable individuals to resist taking on their traditional role in society. Theorist Honig (1992) argues that living at the margin dates back to Hannah Arendt’s (1977) theories around the underground politics of occupied France during World War II. She admires the proliferation of the sites of resistance and its system of subversive political action. Occupation is not a bad term for what Arendt describes as the “rise of the social” and the displacement of the political by routinized, bureaucratic, and administrative regimes. Honig (1992) claims:

In the absence of institutional sites, a feminist politics might well go underground, looking to locate itself in the rifts and fractures of identities, both personal and institutional, and doing so performatively, agonistically, and creatively, with the hope of establishing new relations and realities. (p. 225)

The margin is a place to “push against the oppressive boundaries set by race, sex, and class domination” (hooks, 1990, p. 145) and is “the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance” (hooks, 1990, p. 145). Taking this position nurtures a capacity to resist traditional expectations and offers the possibility of imagining alternative worlds and alternative ways to live in these worlds. hooks (1990) explains:

I am located in the margin. We come to know this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfills desire. We are transformed, individually,

collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world. (p. 153)

Even in the work of George Sand, feminist French writer, literary critic Vareille summarizes how women live on the fringes of marginality:

Far from confirming and consolidating an unjust system by aspiring to be a part of it, women must then preciously cling to their marginality, which thus becomes the visible sign of an inevitable change, the index of the necessity of creating a society founded on new principles. It's as though by refusing to endorse the most apparently radical claims of contemporary feminists, Sand was intent, on the level of mythical imagination if not that of rational reflection, on ensuring

[conserver a] for female marginality a function of radical interrogation of existing society. (Schor, 1992, p. 50)

This intensely aware protest and response to the world closely parallels Kazimierz Dabrowski's work, discussed in detail earlier, around the unique emotional and moral development of gifted individuals. Stepping away from the mainstream and into the margin could offer girls a chance to take a more active role in shaping a more unconventional world of their own which better meets their needs. In Way's study, adolescents were neither hopeless nor optimistic about their futures; they took both perspectives at the same time, embracing this contradictory perspective (1998, p. 165). Clearly, an adolescent's view of the future is difficult to categorize.

Thus far, feminist scholarship has only begun to listen to the voices of girls. "Feminist scholars have forgotten to take notice of how firmly young women resist – alone and sometimes together" (Fine, 1992, p. 178). When girls challenge the societal norm, this "creates anxiety, not only because they are disrupting conventional sex-role socialization, but because they are disturbing the dominant cultures' polarized construction of social reality" (Brown, 1998, p. 8). In some learning contexts, such as single-sex schools where girls feel freed from the pressure of male attention, they perceive themselves as being "more in control of who they are and less a reflection of who they have been made up/out to be as girls in social and cultural context" (Proweller, 1998, p. 52-53). This is a safe environment to begin defining their own identities.

As adolescent girls protest their prescribed roles, philosopher Elizabeth Grosz adds a more profound dimension to their resistance. She shifts her perspective from mind to body, which she sees as a surface of societal marking "on which social law, morality and values are inscribed" (Grosz, 1993, p. 197). She focuses her analysis

on “how the body is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon by the various regimes of institutional” powers in Western society (Grosz, 1993, p. 197). Bodies reveal social markers and are also sites of “struggle and resistance” (Grosz, 1993, p. 199). Bodies themselves, being infiltrated with knowledge, power, and subtle meanings, reveal social markers, and “clothing, jewelry, incision, binding individuals to systems of significance in which they become signs to be read (by others and themselves)” (Grosz, 1993, p. 199). This resonates deeply around girls’ psychological, emotional, and physical development as they struggle to retain both their sense of identity and their bodies. I would argue that the bodies of these girls have “become sites of struggle and resistance, actively inscribing themselves on social practices” (Grosz, 1993, p. 199). She writes that “bodies *speak*, without necessarily talking, because they become coded with and as signs. They speak social codes. They become *intextuated*, narrativised; simultaneously, social codes, laws, norms, and ideals become *incarnated*” (Grosz, 1993, p. 199, emphasis in original). Irigaray (1987) presents this same argument:

Woman is to be nude, since she cannot be situated in her place. She attempts to envelope herself in clothes, make-up, and jewelry. She cannot use the envelope that she is, and so must create artificial ones. (p. 122)

The heroine of Sherley Anne Williams’ (1986) disturbing novel *Dessa Rose* illustrates this concept perfectly. Dessa Rose, a former slave, is marked literally by her cruel slave master. Henderson (1992) explains:

What interests me here is the literal inscription of Dessa’s body, signified by whip marks and more specifically, the branded R, as well as the white male writer-cum-reader’s attempt to exercise discursive domination over Dessa. Seeking to inscribe black female subjectivity, the white male, in effect, relegates the black woman to the status of discursive object, or spoken subject. The location of the inscriptions – in the area of the genitalia- moreover, signals an attempt to inscribe the sign slave in an area that marks her as woman. The effect is to attempt to deprive the slave woman of her femininity and render the surface of her skin a parchment upon which meaning is etched by the whip (pen) of white patriarchal authority and sealed by the firebrand. Together, these inscriptions produce the meaning of black female subjectivity in the discursive domain of slavery. (p. 152-53)

The idea of women being merely their physical bodies sans minds goes back to Freud. Jacques Derrida and Irigaray write about men being the pen and women being the text itself. Derrida (1979) says, “If the style were (just as the penis would be according to Freud ‘the normal prototype of the fetish’) the man, the writing would be the woman” (p. 57). Gayatri Spivak (1992) argues that if Derrida agrees that Freud was right, “the writing of the

woman called Luce Irigaray is written like writing and should be read that way (p. 74). She has wrestled the pen from Freud and Derrida and begun writing herself. Her body is no longer the text written by the male.

As girls begin to understand that they can express themselves and begin to articulate their previously unconscious anger, educators face a potentially explosive situation. Overtly expressed anger is threatening to the powerful because this signals seriousness. “They [the angry] believe they have the capacity as well as the right to be judges of those around them, even of those who are said to be their ‘superiors’” (Spelman, 1989, p. 264). Women interviewed in the Belenky study discussed earlier report their feelings of rage as they come to distrust authorities as a stage on their journeys to understand how the world works from their own perspective. “They nurtured a strong sense of defiance and a trust in their subjective truth to which they sometimes gave voice in diaries or poetry” (Belenky et al., 1997, p. 67). Way’s study revealed that being outspoken about anger enhanced rather than threatened relationships among adolescent girls (1998, p. 261).

Because anger is tied to self-respect, entitlement, and clarity of thinking around wrong-doing, anger is “the essential political emotion” (Lyman, 1981, p. 61). Anger leads to action. Because anger is linked to self-respect, girls must lose this rage if they are to move easily into mainstream culture. Conscious anger and conventional femininity do not mix; hence, the pressure girls feel to split from their anger is immense, and their rewards are clear. Educational psychologist Lyn Mikel Brown (1998) argues that:

the girls who do so, however, risk losing the capacity to locate the source of their pain and thus to do something about it; they risk losing the potential for a once ordinary, healthy resistance to turn political. Without anger there is no impetus to act against any injustice done to them. If we take away girls’ anger, then, we take away the foundation for women’s political resistance. (p. 12-13)

This period often marks a girl’s most powerful stand against oppression and repression. Their questions and challenges create unexpected openings which may shake the social order. Educators, women in particular, need to listen to and engage girls at this developmental turning point, to appreciate and learn from this outspokenness and their unique and creative forms of resistance (Brown, 1998).

Emile Durkheim reminds educators that schools create and maintain social position. Education is “above all the means by which a society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence” (Durkheim, 1956, p. 123). In this way, schools can maintain and perpetuate inequities around gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation issues. Society has constructed clear ideas, assumptions, and values around these issues. As a result,

teachers and educators in general will have a socialized response to each of these conditions. School sociologists Cave and Chesler (1974) highlight the role of schools as socializing agents and challenge school officials who claim that schools are unbiased and do not reflect any particular ideology:

The issue, then, is not whether America's schools have a "point of view" and aggressively pursue it, but why that point of view is clothed in a masquerade of neutral or nonpolitical curricula, activities, events, and special codes all designed to deny its existence. The subtleties involved in transmitting an ideology and orienting one to a social structure may be partially explained by the reluctance of those in control to admit that schools are not impartial, that they are not prone to examine all points of view, and that, in fact, they do indoctrinate their students in partisan ways. There do exist a central code of values and a set of norms taught by the schools through the socialization process. And there exist unequal access to the social structure that is made available by the schools. (p. 10)

Up until the last 30 years, this bias was reflected in educational research also. Most of the research discussed above has primarily focused on White middle class girls, the daughters of those White middle class women who sparked the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In order to understand more about adolescent development, the research parameters must expand to be more inclusive around race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation issues.

African American, Latina, Native American, and Asian American girls face comparable struggles but within different racial and ethnic cultures. Research indicates that often the most responsible and "psychologically astute" girls choose to drop out of poorly run urban public schools (Fine & Zane, 1991). Adolescents may choose not to participate in studies at all to resist the dominant culture (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 36). "In some instances, students of color willingly silence themselves despite learning environments that appear to legitimate the 'other.' Guarding the borders of race culture, some of these students refuse information in counter-response to having been located as experts" (Proweller, 1998, p. 122).

Adolescent girls from each ethnic minority group have their own specialized strengths and barriers. Latina adolescents face family constrictions very different from their African American counterparts. By tenth grade, many Latina and Portuguese girls appear depressed or self-silenced in connection to familial restrictions around sexuality or balancing conflicts between "cultures of origin and dominant culture" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 41). Straddling two

cultures leads to “intrapyschic or interpersonal stress” (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 63) depending on the degree of the individual’s adaptation. In addition, language barriers may compound the challenges Latinas face. “Teachers and other adults expect very little of them, the limited amount of feedback they receive is discouraging, and their needs as bilingual, bicultural females are not acknowledged or addressed” (Vasquez-Nuttal & Romero-Garcia, 1989, p. 74).

African American girls use a different “resistance for liberation” (Robinson, 1991). These girls are engaged in the process of identity formation and self-creation.

However, African American adolescent girls are making this passage embedded within a family and a community that is most often negatively impacted by a sociopolitical context framed by racial, gender, and economic oppression. We suggest that an African American female can be consciously prepared for the sociopolitical political environment in which she will live by fostering development of a resistance that will provide her with the necessary tools to think critically about herself, the world, and her place in it.

(Robinson, 1991, p. 88-89)

African American adolescent girls may make self-destructive personal decisions around substance abuse, food addictions, early and unplanned pregnancies, and school failure, at the expense of their long term path towards academic success. Robinson urges girls to “engage in resistance for liberation by avoiding these short term solutions as they erode self-confidence, lower self-esteem, and impair positive identity development” (1991, p. 90). Given the centrality of relationships to girls’ sense of identity, African American adolescents are especially “attuned to issues of human interdependence and collective responsibility” (Robinson, 1991, p. 92). Writing about racial identity formation among African American adolescent girls, Janie Ward (1990) explains that one coping strategy includes not “dwelling on” events that challenge one’s self-worth and value. “Thus when messages of white society say, ‘you can’t’, the well-functioning black family and community stand ready to counter such messages with those that say, you can, we have, and we will” (p. 223). This approach may be necessary for African American adolescents as well as others who live under oppressive circumstances and find themselves immersed in a society of negative messages.

“Loud black girls” simply proclaim their existence, which is another form of resistance. “Those loud black girls” is a metaphor “proclaiming African American women’s existence, their collective denial of, and resistance to their socially proclaimed powerlessness or ‘nothingness’” (Fordham, 1993, p. 10). Ironically, this dynamic may

cause isolation and loss of relationship for high achieving African American girls and may discourage them from succeeding in an educational setting (Fordham, 1991).

As girls struggle to construct their own identities around self and language separate from social or cultural conventions, they begin to use multiple voices, finding the appropriate voice for the appropriate setting. Incorporating Erikson's theory that adolescents are constantly striving for wholeness in their identity, Munoz (1995) explains that adolescent girls often struggle to "redefine language by reconstructing metaphors, images, stereotypes, and romantic ideals" (p. 68). Girls are trying to translate society's message, sometimes literally from another language, into some way for them to live that does not compromise or silence their own ideas about their lives. As the education world grapples with concepts around ethnicity, race, and class, many students become hyphenated in some way, representing multiple allegiances. Schools must affirm these students and their struggles to understand themselves in an increasingly fractured society.

In order to be effective, teachers need to "know the culture and social structure of their community" in order to understand student background as a source of richness and beauty. This requires "fundamental changes in teachers' professional commitments and ideology" (Morton & Watson, 1971). School systems as a whole and administration and faculty specifically need to have an increased awareness around class background and use of language. Though Morton and Watson began calling for this shift in 1971, these ideas are still resisted and often non-existent in school systems. "Redistribution of power, in a direction favoring the parents and students, would also serve to guide teachers into such a reorientation" (Morton & Watson, 1971). The sociology of the classroom remains a complex and difficult set of dynamics to reset in a healthy and productive direction.

Most research around girls has been based in the middle class of the dominant American culture. The White middle class girl is the research baseline for normal behavior. This is a disturbing precedent for all the African American, Latina, Native American, Asian American, biracial, working class, and poor girls. Lesbian issues are rarely addressed. These girls, especially those who are gifted, are barely present in research literature. Why these gaps?

Because many school systems continue to display insensitivity to their lives, many girls simply leave school, actively resisting a culture by their absence and refusal to engage. Are they creating alternative coping and survival mechanisms? Why exactly are girls leaving schools? For many, leaving school is an act of defiance, a political statement about the failure of the school system to address their needs (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 56). Gifted

students surviving poverty, dysfunctional homes struggle to graduate from high school (Corwin, 2001). Girls whose parents are working class tend to blame themselves for their academic failure, which “silences any legitimate critique” of schools catering to a White middle class sensibility (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 60). However, urban poor and working class adolescent girls often understand that to survive in an environment continually marginalizing them, they need to speak up. If they feel powerless, this creates a sense of hopelessness. Parents, teachers, and counselors must encourage these students to take action and help educators change policies to create learning environments that are effective and affirming for them (Way, 1998, p. 204). In *And Still We Rise: The Trials and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City Students* (Corwin, 2001), one counselor works tirelessly to help his gifted students find the social services they need to stay in high school.

Students who perform poorly in dysfunctional schools often attribute their failure to themselves. They have been taught through the media, school, and, perhaps, by their families to believe they can succeed in school through hard work and determination. This leads to the belief that those who do not succeed have only themselves to blame. MacLeod (1987/1995) argues:

The achievement ideology [i.e., anyone can achieve with hard work and determination] must be replaced with ways of motivating students that acknowledge rather than deny their social condition. When used to cultivate discipline by highlighting the eventual rewards of educational attainment, the achievement ideology is neither effective at drawing obedience and attentiveness out of students nor conducive to the development of a positive self image among working-class pupils. (p. 262)

Social messages that promote individual responsibility and also ignore or even deny the role of external forces, such as low expectations and inadequate education, do little to change the conditions making it so difficult for poor or working-class students to succeed in school. These messages lead the students to look only to themselves to solve their problems, when, in fact, only a broader strategy will equip them with the tools they need to solve them (Way, 1998, p. 203).

Some communities raise their children to do exactly this. Wade-Gayles (1984) suggests that African American mothers

do not socialize their daughter to be passive. Quite the contrary, they socialize their daughters to be independent, strong, and self-confident. Black mothers are suffocatingly protective and domineering

precisely because they are determined to mold their daughters into whole and self-actualizing persons in a society that devalues black women. (p. 12)

Similar to this study, Puerto Rican girls and women are less passive and more outspoken than commonly portrayed in the social science literature (Torres, 1992). “Urban girls of color must learn how to assert themselves within White, often male-dominated institutions, because they know that these institutions are often not designed to protect them or promote their interests” (Pastor, McCormick, & Fine, 1996, p. 16).

Shifting from emotional and psychological development to physical development, girls face distinctive challenges in this area also. They must cope with additional complications around issues related to sexual development and intimacy. Because of the nature of schools and restrictive social perspectives around girls and sexual development, girls have few safe spaces to discuss these matters. “Adolescent girls’ sexuality has traditionally been viewed by the dominant culture as problematic and needing regulation with stereotypical images of irresponsible, promiscuous girls, oblivious to themselves, and their future, prevailing” (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 114). Sexual matters are not addressed in health and sex education classes. Curriculum rarely addresses girls’ sexual desire and does not reflect “an understanding of how cultural values around sexuality influence decisions girls make” (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 115). This isolation places them at risk and can lead to girls feeling disconnected from themselves, their peers, and their families. In the worse cases, this can become a psychological dissociation, putting girls in danger (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 101).

Indeed, in society’s popular culture, women and girls’ sexuality is distorted and affects their perceptions of themselves in profound ways that are only now beginning to be investigated. This is amply illustrated in a report by the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007). The report presents evidence of the detrimental effect the sexualization of girls has on their well-being (APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007). The widespread sexualization of women and girls in virtually every media form studied by the Task Force demonstrates its pervasive effect on societal attitudes around girls and women and the resulting self-perceptions. The ubiquitous influence of the increasing sexualization, particularly of adolescence, has a negative impact on cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, and sexuality (APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007, p. 2).

The sexualization of girls can also have a negative impact on other groups (i.e. boys, men, and adult women) and on society more broadly. More general societal effects may include an increase in sexism;

fewer girls pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and increased rates of sexual harassment and sexual violence. (APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007, p. 3-4)

Emphasis on appearance has tyrannized girls and young women for years. Carlip (1995) asks:

And what is looking good? Magazines, television, movies, movie videos, billboards, commercials, and ads dictate a “look” that’s deemed acceptable, that most girls and women aren’t even close to achieving.

Fashions are primarily designed for, and modeled by, tall, stick-thin women; makeup and hair products are geared to make all females, no matter their features, fit into an agreed upon definition of beauty. Even televised pageants dictate what our culture perceives as beautiful. This perpetuates judgment and disdain for one’s appearance, especially at an age when a girl feels less self-confident as it is. (p. 320)

Girls questioning their sexuality, bisexuals, and young lesbians face considerable barriers because of general homophobia in society, possible negative reactions of parents and peers to their sexuality, and their own sense of being different and isolated. In a city-funded survey of 400 homeless youth in Chicago, 33 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (Center for Impact Research, 2005). Abusive treatment in schools often leads to declining academic performance, absenteeism, or dropping out. Thirty-five percent of Illinois students report that sexual orientation is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed (Harris Interactive and Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2005). Students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are three times more likely (33 percent versus 11 percent) than their non-gay peers to report missing school because they feel unsafe and are almost two times more likely (32 percent versus 17 percent) to report being in a physical fight at school (Chicago Public Schools, 2003). Rampant homophobia impacts these students disproportionately both emotionally and psychologically. These adolescents are nearly twice as likely (52 percent versus 31 percent) to report suffering from depression and are three times more likely to report attempting suicide (Chicago Public Schools, 2003). Six out of ten lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students (63.5 percent) report feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation. These students feel unsafe in certain school spaces, most commonly locker rooms (39 percent), bathrooms (38.8 percent), and physical education/gym class (32.5 percent). The reported grade point average of students who were harassed more frequently because of their sexual orientation was lower than for students who were harassed less often (2.9 vs. 3.2) (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2011). Despite these grim numbers, “young lesbians and gay men are expected to conform to and take their places in a hostile society” (Borhek, 1988, p. 123).

The active presence of adults who are supportive of LGBT students and families have a positive effect on the school experiences of all students and their psychological happiness (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). Adults must identify themselves in visible ways. Being outspoken on these matters and using signs and posters to indicate that their offices or classrooms are safe is important to students' feeling of safety. Also, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) (2010b), adults often use teachable moments to educate students around sexual orientation, bias, and homophobia. They use this chance to address the wrongful assumptions that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is bad. This reinforces the idea that each student in the classroom deserves respect. Most importantly, they teach LGBT students to be resilient.

Schools are also putting anti-discrimination policies in place. Adults are more willing to stop damaging teasing knowing that the school or district has a firm policy protecting all students (PHAC, 2010a, 2010b). Also, these policies send a strong message to the school community that LGBT individuals are worthy of respect and that the school will not tolerate violence and discrimination (PHAC, 2010a, 2010b).

Irregardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, sexual orientation, or gender, the role of healthy school systems is to respond to the needs of each student. School systems must be designed to assist all students in moving forward with their own development, both academically and as individuals. With able and compassionate adult support and guidance, students can begin to hone their own voices and sense of identity that is so important in reaching psychological and emotional maturity. This is instrumental to a student's academic success.

Being a Gifted Adolescent Girl in the School House: The Unique Challenges Gifted Girls Face

“Those girls who were gifted were told that they had the mind of a boy.” (Roeper, 1995, p. 60)

Annemarie Roeper, one of the eminent scholars in gifted education, explains this statement in relation to the waves of interest in gifted children in the second half of the 1950s, a time of traditional gender roles for men and women. Here is Ginger's story from 2004. I taught a pair of very smart 18 year old boy and girl twins. Since they were in the same class, I watched a family drama play out before me as the year progressed. Equal in ability, the boy and girl had been socialized so powerfully into clear gender roles that the girl had been silenced (over the years, I suspect) by the immaturity and, perhaps, occasional cruelty of her twin brother. Their parents appeared unaware of this dynamic or perhaps felt unable to correct this situation as both children were on the verge of leaving home for college. Ginger rarely spoke in class despite the outstanding academic ability she demonstrated on assessments,

formal papers, and in small group presentations. Her behavior was in stark contrast to her brother who asked questions constantly and was consistently generous with his opinion and analysis of ideas being discussed.

When her brother led a conspiracy of silence in this class, I witnessed her own humiliation at her brother's poor and inappropriate manner of dealing with the authority figure (me). "I've watched this my whole life," she sighed as my back was turned from her when I faced down her brother at the classroom's doorway and reprimanded him for his disrespectful conduct. This painful scenario revealed to me in an instant what this girl had suffered since entering school – being constantly upstaged by her brother's attention-seeking behavior. After I squashed the conspiracy, a new girl emerged. She spoke out; her brother appeared to have learned the rules of appropriate behavior. At last, she was safe. I think of these two often, wondering who they have become – especially who Ginger has become and if she kept speaking out to reclaim her voice and her place in this world.

In 1926, Leta Stetter Hollingworth emerged as the first researcher to study giftedness in girls and women. Throughout her career as a psychologist, she continuously challenged Galton's findings around intelligence and eminent men and worked to demonstrate that the number of intellectually superior females was equal to males, despite the fact that few of the women had managed to establish illustrious careers demonstrating their brilliance. She argued that "eminence and superior mental ability are not identical" (Hollingworth, 1926, p. 14) and that the paltry number of eminent women was due to sociological rather than the biological limitations of women (Silverman, 1996, p. 19).

Hollingworth (1926) also publicized some overlooked findings in Terman's research that indicated that in childhood numbers of gifted males and females are equal. First, in the standardization of the Stanford-Binet IQ test, girls scored two to three points higher than boys for all age groups up to the age of 14. This is a remarkable fact, given that test constructors in that era were recommending different sets of norms for boys and girls to prevent "serious injustice" to the girls (Terman, 1916, p. 70). Second, the highest scores in Terman's longitudinal study of gifted children were girls with IQs above 190.

In 1980, sociology of education texts began to include sections on gender perspectives. Boocock explains that differences in academic achievement result from a combination of physiological, psychological, and sociological factors. Societal expectations around achievement and gender often affect student goals (1980, p. 100). In the classroom, boys are repressed by the need for obedience and conformity and prefer active learning. "For

girls, intellectual interests and potentialities are increasingly repressed as they come to represent unfeminine competitiveness” (Boocock, 1980, p. 101).

Before this, however, theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) believed that each social group spoke its own “social dialect.” This means the discourse had its own unique language which expressed shared values, perspectives, ideology and norms. For Bakhtin, language is an expression of social identity. Subjectivity is constituted as a social entity through the “role of [the] word as medium of consciousness.” Consciousness like language is shaped by the social environment. “Consciousness becomes consciousness only in the process of social interaction” (1981, p. 223).

Because of the intersection between sociology and psychology in schools, gender issues are now discussed in mainstream thinking. Progressive educational sociologists view schools as the mechanism of society elites to maintain the status quo:

The school reinforces the demands and expectations of elite political and economic groups in the ways it channels and instructs various groups of students. Operating as a primary preparation system for the socioeconomic system, the school is largely responsible for perpetuating the myths associated with education, income, and social role and resultant social class and status divisions. (Cave & Chesler, 1974, p. 3)

Clearly, society is interested in continuing to socialize girls into firmly defined though changing roles. Keeping gifted girls under social and psychological constraints is the legacy of years of reluctance to educate girls and women to their intellectual potential.

As is obvious in Ginger’s story, gifted girls face a specialized battery of barricades to their success but also achieve despite extraordinary social conditions. Some girls undermine their own achievement in subtle ways and under-achieve overall. Society’s lower expectations for gifted females seem to hold hard (Reis, 1987). The gap between ability and self-image or self-esteem can manifest itself in different forms, dependent upon each girl’s background and individual characteristics. Gifted girls may be students who (a) achieve well but remain blind to their accomplishments, (b) perform poorly despite high ability and attribute their poor performance to their perceived view that they are not intelligent, and (c) are not interested in academic achievement in school but excel socially, at times assuming popular leadership in negative ways (Sadker and Sadker, 1974). If educators ignore gifted girls, these students will learn to adapt themselves and become silent in order to conform to societal expectations as explained at length in a previous section of this chapter.

One of the first studies to address this issue and receive widespread attention was discussed in a 1969 article “Fail, Bright Women” in *Psychology Today*, a popular magazine published by the American Psychological Association years ago. Horner used a Thematic Apperception Test, which isolates the psychological characteristic of the need to achieve, to “explore the basis for sex differences in achievement motivation” (1969, p. 36). She hypothesized that women wished to avoid success. After testing 90 women and 88 men between the ages of 18-22, she found that “most women will fully explore their intellectual potential only when they do not need to compete – and least of all when they are competing with men” (1969, p. 62). This is the psychological and resulting social legacy girls and women live with and battle to this day.

Research on educational reform and gender shows that a school system’s response, through teacher and administrator attitudes, can influence girls’ behavior and plays an important role in recasting potentially “unfeminine” traits such as intellectual aggressiveness into positive and encouraging behavior (AAUW, 1999). Corwin (1965) emphasizes that the impact of schools as systems of institutionalized sexism, racism, or classism affects student achievement and behavior just as significantly as the daily patterns of behavior between students and teachers:

The educational process is as much a product of organization conveniences, the status of teachers, and the influence of social class, power and institutional change as it is the result of immediate interaction between students and teachers. (p. 66)

When scheduling classes, gifted girls face the preconceptions of their counselors, teachers, and administrators around what subjects are appropriate and welcoming to girls. Gifted girls may have lower career aspirations than their gifted male peers (Kerr, 1983); declining interest in high career aspirations is often accompanied by the tendency to avoid academically challenging courses such as advanced math courses (Fox, Benbow, & Perkins, 1983) and AP courses (Gallagher, 1985). Katy, one of my gifted students, wrote poignantly about the difficulties she faced and surmounted when she took a vocational class. Her counselor discouraged her, the teacher ignored her, and she endured the derision of her male peers for an entire semester as they finished the interior of a newly built house. Surely, enlightened views around women and girls should have prevailed to protect her.

Despite Katy’s discouraging experience, I can see evidence of incremental change. The 1999 AAUW study mentioned earlier equates intellectual aggressiveness with being “unfeminine.” I view intellectual

aggressiveness as a positive trait, and this phrasing from a study ten years ago indicates how much the language around girls and schooling has shifted to adapt to the changing nature of reform and equity in the school house. Unfortunately, this kind of shift has not occurred in gifted education, and many teachers and counselors resent gifted children (Kerr, 1992). Some parents can not cope with nor effectively nurture their children's intellectual and sometimes emotional differences (Mayer, Perkins, Caruso & Salovey, 2001) as emphasized by Dabrowski's theory around OEs explained earlier.

OEs are not age-related but fluid. Researchers examining gender differences in OEs have found relationships in areas where girls and boys have been traditionally socialized (Miller, Silverman, & Falk, 1994). Emotional OE has been higher for females and intellectual and psychomotor OEs higher for males. These findings are consistent with gender socialization, particularly around adolescence, when girls appear to shrink into themselves, and boys become more vocal and active. In a study around giftedness, gender, and OE, findings indicate that young women score higher on emotional and sensual OEs (Bouchet, 2001). This finding appears to support the Gilligan theory around girls being more care-oriented and thus less able to thrive in a traditional competitive classroom, especially in an academically elite setting.

Despite the myth that gifted children can develop academically on their own and need no special help, many become discipline problems at home and in school, suffer from depression, begin self-destructive behaviors, become underachievers, and have difficulty relating to others when this occurs. A child's first world view and experience in role play takes place in the family and affects the way children will act in their student role. Parents of achievers expect more and communicate this. They "teach the behavior needed to fulfill their expectations" (Boocock, 1980, p. 82). If children are not taught how to behave as students, they can not thrive. Children do not fail; they simply do not know how to play the student role.

These problems can often be traced to the failure of schools to provide special classes, training, and guidance for gifted children. When schools do not or can not meet the needs of gifted students, families may seek private schools or decide to home school their child (Illinois Association of Gifted Children, 2007). Parents receive little if any guidance (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000). When gifted children are not challenged academically and find themselves more advanced than their classmates, they may take on an outcast role, conceal or deny their giftedness and underachieve (Whitmore, 1980; Kerr, Colangelo & Gaeth, 1988). Students may redirect their focus from academics and toward more socially lauded activities, such as sports or extracurricular activities (von Karolyi &

Winner, 2005). Gifted children perceive themselves as different from others and feel that they are seen and treated differently by others (Cross, Coleman, & Stewart, 1993; Freeman, 1994; Janos & Robinson, 1985; Janos, Fung, & Robinson, 1985; Robinson, 1990; Subotnik, Kassin, Summers, & Wasser, 1993); even those who are very comfortable with their label of being gifted report that their parents and close friends treat them differently because of their giftedness (Robinson, 1990).

Throughout their school years, gifted individuals experience nagging feelings of dissatisfaction with themselves (Steiner & Carr, 2003), alienation from others (Cross et al., 1993; Coleman & Stewart, 1993), and self-doubt (Kerr, 1992). This feeling of difference is associated with reduced self-concept, feeling unpopular, feeling isolated, believing that being intelligent makes friendships harder, and feeling that one makes others uncomfortable (Cross et al., 1993; Freeman, 1994; Janos et al., 1974; Subotnik et al., 1993). In the extreme, some gifted children deny their giftedness to deny the feeling of being different (Cross et al., 1993; Kerr, Colangelo, & Gaeth, 1988).

Researchers are proposing promising solutions around gifted identification. Performances of understanding give teachers the excellent opportunity to watch students progress toward mastery and can also be used in the assessment and identification of giftedness (von Karolyi, Ford-Ramos, & Gardner, 2003). Schools are also using portfolios (Kingore, 1993) to assess complexity, depth, abstraction, and rate of new learning. This can be used to identify those who may not be identified as gifted using traditional methods. Using this approach significantly improved the proportion of Latino/a students of low socioeconomic status who were identified at a Texas elementary school (Midkiff, Shaver, Murry, Flowers, Chastain, & Kingore, 2002).

On the positive side, 90 per cent of identified gifted students in school programs are successful. These students have learned how to perform well at school by listening closely to their teachers and parents. They learn well and score highly on both intelligence and achievement tests and, as a result, are usually identified for placement in gifted programs. They rarely exhibit behavior problems because they are eager for approval from teachers, parents, and other adults (Betts & Neihart, 1988; Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). Families play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment for gifted students (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000; 2002). A student's motivation to succeed also depends on both parental expectations and their encouragement to be independent (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993). Supportive parents, who value high achievement, independent thought and expression, and engagement in cultural and intellectual pursuits, serve as good role models for their children (Chan, 2005). Also, networks of gifted peers offer specific emotional support to encourage achievement

and sustain their commitment to developing their potential in times of setbacks and difficulties (Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). Students create their own niches of safety among their peers to provide them with support and understanding at difficult times (McAdams, 1987). Admired by their peers and loved by teachers, gifted students build their own confidence and develop a strong resilience when facing serious obstacles or barriers to achieving their goals (Betts & Neihart, 1988).

The importance of gifted students, especially girls in light of the psychological research, feeling attached to someone, a peer, a teacher, a parent, or a mentor is especially significant. Societal, teacher, and parental expectations and pressures can help students balance their academic lives and personal lives in a healthy manner. These expectations, however, can also restrain and, at times, destroy student confidence. Girls are more likely to have negative life events and are more cognitively vulnerable to depression (Hankin & Abramson, 2001).

This is true especially among girls where self-doubt coupled with a penchant for perfectionism can be destructive to their sense of self. Peggy Orenstein's *School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap* (1984) and Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (1994) on adolescent girls offer ample documentation on girls' self-destructive behavior through eating disorders, addictions of all types, depression, and suicide. Severely depressed girls have higher rates of substance abuse than similarly depressed boys. Adolescent girls are four to five times more likely than boys to attempt suicide, and a survey of eighth and tenth graders reports that girls are twice as likely as boys to report feeling sad and hopeless (Gans & Blyth, 1990; Reinherz, Frost, & Pakiz, 1990). By ages 14 and 15, girls are twice as likely to suffer depression (Steese, Dollette, Phillips, Hossfeld, Mathews & Taormina, 2006). The most instructive reading, however, is Sarah Shandler's *Ophelia Speaks: Adolescent Girls Write about Their Sense of Self* (1999). This young author, barely out of adolescence herself when she published, compiled her book in response to Pipher's. She presents the real voices of girls without the adult lens of interpretation and explains, "I am hopeful that this book will help adults understand us, but mostly I am hopeful that other adolescent girls will hear their own voices in these pages" (1999, p. xvi). Through their writings about body image and the media, family issues, substance abuse, relationships with peers, sexuality, and stress and coping strategies, these girls can help themselves and their peers feel less isolated in their troubles.

The importance of the adults as supportive influences is essential. The overall influence of school on adolescent development, moreover, is crucial. From kindergarten to high school graduation, students spend more

time in schools than any other place outside their homes; however, only recently have researchers begun to examine the impact of schools on intellectual and social development. Eccles and Roeser (1999) summarize this research in education, psychology, sociology, and, psychiatry. Each student has a clear place in the overall ecology of school, which is a complicated set of interacting and ever-shifting hierarchical levels of organization. The student's sense of her or his performance in the overall scheme of the school is related to her or his development as both a student and an adolescent (1999, p. 505).

Aspects of this research impact directly on adolescent behavior, particularly around peer culture and influence. Children, who have good social skills and are liked by their peers, are more successful in school and more motivated academically. In contrast, outcasts and aggressive students are at risk for more negative experiences at school (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 539). Being socially adept can help a student weather difficult school transitions from elementary to junior high to high school. Many studies show that children are better able to focus their attention on learning if they feel content and liked by both peers and the adults in their learning environment.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to peer group influences because they are more concerned with acceptance among their friends, and this age group spends a great deal of unsupervised time with their peers in sports and other activities (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 541). Research indicates that children cluster together with those who share their interests and motivation, which only serves to reinforce these interests and further strengthen these individual differences over time. This can be both positive or negative, depending on the group and the activity, and also occurs in an academic settings with ability grouping and tracking. Unfortunately, this too can have negative results with greater segregation of peer groups based on their academic courses (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 542).

Peer interactions, however, also have powerful positive effects, especially in well-run and creative classrooms. Students viewing their peers as co-learners can lead to supportive learning environments as they can help each other with academic material, share resources and insights, model skills, and clarify tasks for each other. This is invaluable to both students and teachers and can offset the anxiety students may feel, particularly at the high school level when academic expectations rise. Where cooperative learning habits are prevalent, students are more accepting and kinder to one another with fewer feeling socially isolated (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 540). This leads to a student's feeling of belonging to a group which, in turn, helps the student in her or his own evolving definition of self.

Shifting focus from the self to group dynamics, educators must remind themselves that “principles of organizations are as responsible for the character of American education as the psychology of the classroom” (Corwin, 1965, p. vii). Being aware of these institutional or school dynamics is crucial in understanding the role gifted students take in their schools and among their peers. Schools play a central role in developing the strengths associated with resiliency by offering programs for gifted students that provide encouragement, mentors and role models, a peer group of other successful students, and special programs such as summer enrichment, community or church-based, and participation in academic or honors programs (AAUW, 1999).

Such students require specialized curriculum programs, with features like increased complexity which is designed to produce greater learning (Robinson & Clinkenbeard, 1998). Over the years, schools have designed a variety of programs incorporating different types of acceleration. These range from curriculum compacting, which modifies curricular content to accommodate advanced learners (Renzulli, Smith, & Reis, 1992), to subject matter acceleration, which entails taking higher grade-level classes, to simply enrolling in high school AP courses or taking college classes for high school credit (Sapon-Sevin, 1994). Studies assessing the effect of these techniques consistently report success in terms of student academic achievement (Kulik & Kulik, 1984). Because gifted students often have asynchronous development, defined as uneven social and emotional internal development which is out-of-sync with their peers and societal perceptions of specific age groups (Silverman, 2002), the effects of acceleration on children’s social and psychological development remains controversial.

Clearly, a number of factors contribute to a gifted girl regarding herself as a success. Teachers respond to boys and girls differently, as has been amply documented, especially influencing girls’ perceptions of themselves as having no aptitude for math, science, or technology. Teachers, themselves socialized in a sexist society, have been shown to initiate more overall interactions and more negative interactions, but not more positive reactions, with male students than with female students (Jones & Dirdia, 2004). Girls drop out of high school gifted tracks at a faster rate than boys (AAUW, 1999; Read, 1991). Girls still suffer from low-esteem, even in the face of their own competence (AAUW, 1992). This history can be traced to Kerr’s explanation (1983) that researchers Terman and Oden found in their intelligence studies begun in the 1920s that gifted women choose from fewer careers overall and very few were in scientific or medical careers (Terman, 1968; Terman & Oden, 1976). Gifted girls suffer particularly in terms of intelligence and sense of identity, losing 13 IQ points as they become socialized or “feminized” by social expectations (Sadker & Sadker, 1974).

This downward spiral continues around the construct of voice. Because of societal and historical reasons, girls' voices, across racial, ethnic, and class lines, have been silenced and are often part of the discursive underground of student knowledge; their voices, needs, and concerns are forced below the discourse of traditional curriculum (Weis & Fine, 1993). hooks states simply, "What is true is that we make choices, that we choose voices to hear and voices to silence" (1989, p. 78). Educators must "listen closely to the words, critiques, dreams, and fantasies of those who have dwelt historically on the margins" (Weis & Fine, 1993, p. 2). Spring speaks for the marginalized groups when he explains that historically "North America acted as a hothouse for the growth of white racism and cultural chauvinism" (2007, p. 5).

Feminist educators have a great deal of work ahead; this is not a post feminist era, despite the popularity of the concept. "The term was (and still is) an insult to the legacy of feminism, an eye-rolling suggestion that we need to get over it and move on, already. But post feminism can only exist in post-sexist world, and we're not there by a long shot" (Zeisler, 2006-07, p. 42). Working to transform schools, curriculum, and the attitudes of educators to better meet the needs of girls and young women is challenging in the most progressive of times. Reform in this divisive society does not bode well for feminist educators trying to remake society for the girls and young women struggling to find their place in this complex and difficult world.

Messages minimizing female achievement begin early and are pervasive; by age 11, many gifted girls do not even know they have talents. Many waste these abilities by adjusting to others' expectations of them, as opposed to developing their potential (Silverman, 1989). This could lead to a conflict between desiring excellence and a need to conform, particularly during adolescence. Rachel Simmons' *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* (2002) followed by *Odd Girl Speaks Out: Girls Write about Bullies, Cliques, Popularity, and Jealousy* (2004) brought a greater awareness of the conflicts girls cause and manage in schools and among their peers. Just as Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* followed by Shandler's *Ophelia Speaks* brought the issues of self-esteem and self-confidence to the fore, these books have helped bring issues around bullying, ostracism, and non-physical aggression among girls into the public arena for discussion and attention. "Rarely the object of research or critical thought, this behavior is seen as a natural phase in girls' development. As a result, schools write off girls' conflicts as a rite of passage, as simply 'what girls do'" (Simmons, 2002, p. 16). Girls' behavior is guided by the immensely complex forces of the sexism, racism, and classicism of the dominant culture. As youngsters, they have had no hand in creating these values despite their momentous impact on the girls' lives.

Given the gifted girls OEs as explained in Dabrowski's theory, these girls, in particular, are affected by sexist attitudes of teachers, peers, and in society in general. They have specific vulnerabilities that researchers have suggested make them more at risk than the average female, being more susceptible to sexism and other types of discrimination that wear away their confidence and sense of well-being (Silverman, 1989). "A society that wastes female brilliance has made it the norm for gifted women to lead an average life, and gifted women have largely adapted to that norm" (Kerr, 1985, p. 171). Gifted women have adapted to "average" standards rather than higher standards (Kerr, 1985). Because of their acute sensitivity to societal judgment of them as unfeminine, pushy, or too aggressive, girls may set up destructive mind games unconsciously. They do this in response to the conflicting expectations they experience from themselves and society.

In *Smart Girls Two: A New Psychology of Girls, Women, and Giftedness* (1985), Kerr explores fear of success and the imposter phenomenon. The first means that girls purposely hold back because of their need to please others rather than compete with them, a need more intense among gifted than average girls. The second dynamic, the imposter phenomenon, occurs when girls explain away their success, maintaining that they perform well because of luck or because of improper evaluation. Girls need support as individuals with specific talents. Instead of being proud and excited about their gifts/talents, many gifted girls go through their adolescence asking themselves what is wrong with them because they either fail to identify with the interests of other girls and live in isolation or sacrifice their abilities for social acceptance by peers whose opinion they value over their own. If girls begin to consciously pull back from doing their best academic work because of fears of social rejection (Horner, 1972; Lavach & Lanier, 1975; Stockard, 1980), proper counseling and support from parents and teachers can change this situation.

A Critique of Gifted Education

The cyclical nature of interest in the gifted is probably unique in American education. No other special group of children has been alternately embraced and repelled with so much vigor by educators and laymen alike. Gardner saw signs of public dilemma rather than fickleness when he commented that "the critical lines of tension in our society are between emphasis on individual performance and restraints on individual performance" (Gardner, 1961). Such conflict would arise logically from a failure to reconcile our commitments to excellence and to equality in public education. Fostering excellence means recognizing the right of gifted children to realize their potential, but it also suggests something uncomfortably close to

encouraging elitism if the ablest are privy to educational experiences that are denied all other children” (Tannenbaum, 1981, p. 20).

Though written 25 years ago, the issues raised in this quote are salient today. In the final section of this chapter, I will critique gifted education from a systemic perspective. The concept came under attack during the school reform movement of the 1990s. Critics claimed that the notion was culturally biased and related to socio-economic opportunities. Giftedness was a social construction to maintain hierarchical power relations (George, 1992; Margolin, 1993, 1994; Sapon-Shevin, 1994). Indeed, giftedness is a social construction as is adolescence and gender as I present earlier in this chapter.

Systemically, gifted education is criticized most vociferously by those parents of the children who do not qualify as gifted in a certain school district in a specific state at that moment in time. As stated earlier, experts can not agree on a universal definition of a gifted student; hence, gifted programs in schools vary tremendously as school districts use a variety of criteria as discussed earlier. In this context, learning is limited to the classroom, and educators or psychologists measure intelligence using only one or two tools.

To examine gifted education pragmatically, let's turn to today's school. This is one example of the limited nature of gifted education around the definition of intelligence. Everyday, I help students of all ages with their homework and understand exactly what students are doing in schools. In reports, I summarize all subjects I teach into only two categories: math and language. Clearly, these are the disciplines that are still valued by our education system. This is reflected in both the SAT and ACT pre-college exams high school students take to assess their readiness for college. The influence of Gardner's *Frames of Mind* (1983), positing the existence of multiple intelligences, has yet to be applied in classrooms nation-wide. According to the theory of multiple intelligences, the mind's problem-solving capacities are multifaceted, exceeding the traditional view of intelligence as being mathematically and verbally talented. Gardner identified five more forms of intelligence beyond logical-mathematical and linguistic. Twelve years later, he added an eighth intelligence, that of the naturalist, one who specializes in recognizing and classifying natural and human-made phenomena. Still later he suggested existential intelligence, which refers to the human desire to understand and pursue the ultimate questions, meanings, and mysteries of life (Campbell & Cambell, 1999, p. 5). To understate it, these would be difficult intelligences to measure in a quantifiable manner. To this day school systems remain focused on math and language skills despite

teacher efforts to vary instruction styles to better meet the needs of students who may have talents in these other intelligences.

In addition, gifted education, with its emphasis on tracking students from kindergarten until high school, does not consider the complexities of asynchronous development (Silverman, 2002). Uneven development is a universal characteristic of giftedness. Gifted children, in any cultural environment, have greater discrepancies among various facets of their development than average children (Silverman, 1993; 1994). The clearest example of this unevenness is the rate at which mental development outstrips the physical. A child's mental age predicts the amount of knowledge she or he has mastered, the rate at which the child learns, sophistication of play, age of peers, maturity of sense of humor, ethical judgment, and awareness of the world. In contrast, chronological age predicts the child's height, handwriting speed, emotional needs, physical coordination, and social skills. The greater the degree to which cognitive development outstrips physical development, the more out of sync the child feels internally, in social relations, and in relation to the school curriculum (Silverman, 2002). Hence, some gifted children may not demonstrate advanced intellectual development until their adolescence by which time those identified in elementary school are comfortably settled in the gifted program with all its advantages. Schools appear to be particularly inflexible around entrance requirements to these programs.

Achievement, particularly individual achievement, is culturally determined. In some cultures, individuals avoid such recognition. Instead, they may value moral courage or group prosperity for future generations. They may see their intelligence as more fitting for the good of the group (Silverman, 2002). This relationship between developmental advancement and moral judgment was recognized by all the early leaders in the study of intelligence and giftedness, such as Binet (1909), Terman (1925), Hollingworth (1926), Piaget (1932), and Wechsler (1950), as well as by Plato and Confucius. Naturally, these cultural disparities come up in American schools which are increasingly diverse.

For example, my daughter was placed in a gifted class at age five before she could barely read. In contrast, I help a six year old immigrant girl who struggles to write the word cat; I believe she is as intelligent as my daughter. This child, because English is not her mother tongue and hails from a different culture, would not test into the gifted track. Eventually if she masters English, she may be placed in gifted classes if her intelligence is identified by an interested teacher. My daughter, should she continue her successful academic performance, will test into the most challenging AP classes at the high school level. Thus her path is set from kindergarten. Because of

curriculum, pedagogical, and identification issues, students rarely break into the gifted track. Once there, they must acclimate quickly to new peers, new teacher expectations, and a new classroom culture.

Conversely, once high expectations are attached to certain students, they may find it challenging to leave the cocoon of gifted education. After all, adolescence is the key period of identity formation (Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1982; 1993; Gilligan & Brown, 1992; Gilligan et al., 1990, Muuss, 1988; Santrock, 1993). Academically talented students may define themselves through their participation in elite classes and leaving to join standard students would compromise their status in their own eyes, their peers, their families, their teachers, and the school system as a whole. They would lose their academic and, possibly, social cachet. As my data will show, often students feel imprisoned within the identity of being labeled gifted. One research participant spoke poignantly of being put in a metaphorical box by her peers in elementary school.

Another area of criticism around gifted education is how it fosters a strong individualistic focus. A teacher is constantly balancing the needs of one student with the needs of the class as a whole. Gifted students already have a sense of privilege around their intellectual gifts. Being in specially developed classes to meet their academic and social needs only enhances their need for individual feedback. Asian and Native American students, in particular, come from cultures with a greater community emphasis (Ford & Harris, 1999; Woo, 1989). Because gifted students have particular emotional and psychological needs, teachers may be more responsive in this rarified atmosphere of achievement. Indeed, because I only taught 14 students, I came to understand the needs of my gifted students with much more depth than my English students in regular classes of 30 students.

Conclusion

Many gifted girls thrive as cheerful, achieving, traditionally successful members of society while others may be compromised by mental illness and other debilitating situations. Still others may no longer be in schools at all. As I think of all the gifted girls who walked into my classroom over my 13 years teaching, I remember many happy, balanced, satisfied, well-adjusted students. What exactly distinguishes these girls from their more troubled classmates? Educators need a clear and detailed answer to this question.

Overall, much more research focused specifically on gifted girls needs to be done. This area is still neglected despite the outcry following Gilligan's work in the 1980s and the ongoing significant work documenting differential treatment of girls in schools since then. In this chapter I presented a brief history of the concept of intelligence and a condensed version of the development of gifted education theory. Next, I discussed the impact of

sexism and the lack of equity for girls in the schoolhouse. I concluded with a discussion of the unique challenges gifted girls and young women face.

As I have continued to research, I have found that most studies on gifted students focus on both males and females – not specifically on girls. Adolescent girls have their own set of weaknesses and strengths, which need to be investigated separate from boys. Despite the seeming comprehensiveness of the ten volume series published by the National Association of Gifted Children, I find gaps constantly as I read and write on this topic. Researchers need access to better more specific data on educational outcomes and experiences. Currently, the lack of data on educational outcomes broken down by gender slows efforts to establish baselines from which to monitor change and progress (AAUW, 1999).

Despite the vast literature on education, analysis of gender differences within racial/ethnic and income groups is uncommon. The U.S. Department of Education's latest report of the NAEP long-term trend assessment and other key indicators of educational achievement do not disaggregate scores by gender within family income levels of racial/ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004, 2005).

Returning to the general need for gifted research, Renzulli (2005) states:

The first purpose of gifted education is to provide young people with maximum opportunities for self-fulfillment through the development and expression of one or a combination of performance areas in which superior potential may be present. The second purpose is to increase society's supply of persons who will help to solve the problems of contemporary civilization by becoming producers of knowledge and art rather than mere consumers of existing information. Although there may be some arguments for and against both of these purposes, most people would agree that goals related to self-fulfillment and/or societal contributions are generally consistent with democratic philosophies of education. (p. 246)

The experiences and perceptions of gifted adolescent girls need to be added to research literature. Based on feminist epistemology and feminist methodology, I will develop a critical feminist ethnographic portrait which more fully explores the richness and nuances of a gifted girl's experience in the world in general and her schooling in particular in order to gather more comprehensive and empirical research data on these subjects.

“A feminist interviewing women is by definition both ‘inside’ the culture and participating in that which she is observing” (Oakley, 1981, p. 57).

Chapter Three

Methodology

Lather (2007) explains:

What gets in the way of social science creation of phenomena is “the illusion that the essence of scientificity lies in the formal properties of their representational systems, their theories” (Latour, 1999, p.12). In a Foucauldian vein, the social sciences have been quite successful if we look at how they have reshaped the ways humans think about themselves, how capacity and possibility are activated. (p. 70)

Introduction: Need

The experiences and perceptions of gifted adolescent girls need to be added to research literature because of the dearth of research on this specific demographic. Based on feminist epistemology and feminist methodology, my research is a critical feminist ethnography which more fully explored the richness and nuances of a gifted girl’s experience in the world in general and her schooling in particular in order to gather more comprehensive and empirical research data on these subjects. I did this by listening to girls tell their stories using their own words at their own pace through open-ended interviews.

In order to understand how the girls understand their lives, I must understand how they create knowledge in their world. This parallels how women, specifically feminists, have come to understand the construction and nature of knowledge. Central to the many waves of feminism, feminist thinkers recognize that the merging of the personal and political to create methods that discover new bodies of knowledge is, quite simply, a revolution (Keller, 1985, p. 8). Feminist philosopher Sandra Harding argues that reconstructing knowledge must be based in the multiple perspectives of women’s lives (1991, p. 13).

Most science, until the last 30 years, has been created by and for primarily White economically advantaged Western men. Physicist and science theorist Evelyn Fox Keller explains, “The fundamental conflict – between my sense of myself as a woman and my identity as a scientist – could only be resolved by transcending all stereotypical definitions of self and success” (1977, p. 89). Keller’s expression of this fundamental conflict epitomizes the

challenges ahead for feminist epistemology. Theorist and poet Adrienne Rich explains that academics must begin “the long process of making visible the experience of women” (1977, p. xiv). Lather (2007) argues:

As feminists, we believe that the meanings of human rights, liberation, community, and social justice cannot be assumed unproblematically anymore. As feminists, our project is not to shun engagement with ideas, but to carry out that engagement in a space women can inhabit without becoming commodities in dominant masculine economies, be they liberal or Marxist. (p.114)

Reasoning that researchers must eschew the artificial binaries of masculine philosophies, Lather (2007) says:

This is about thinking and doing difference differently, outside of binaries and “win-lose” scenarios. It is about difference without opposition and hierarchy; it is about community without elision of difference; it is about seeing ambivalence and difference not as obstacles, but as the very richness of meaning-making and the hope of whatever justice we might work toward. It is about the difficulties of situating emancipatory work in a postfoundational time. (p. 115)

Though, according to Lather, we are living in a postfoundational time, girls continue to grow into young women. These thoughts about breaking down the traditional ideas about science are especially applicable to adolescents in the middle of identity development. They are trying to define for themselves exactly what being a woman in this society means. There is a brave new territory in an area that science has largely ignored; these girls need champions. In earlier work, Harding argues that feminist philosophers must challenge the traditional scientific community’s belief that science is factual, detached, objective, distanced, and absent of all emotion, or shadow of bias of any kind. She poses that this blind spot allows leaders to use “legitimate scientific authority for the purpose of increased social power” (1986, p. 134). Philosopher Lorraine Code (1993) echoes this concern arguing that “through the processes of excluding the attributed and experiences commonly associated with femaleness and underclass social status: emotion, connection, practicality, sensitivity, and idiosyncrasy,” those ruling the dominant paradigms of knowledge merely demonstrate the hegemony of a society in which “quite a small social group, albeit a group that has the power, security and prestige to believe that it can generalize its experiences and normative ideals across the social order” to maintain its power (p. 21-22). According to both these philosophers, adolescent girls have their own reality separate from how society views them.

Feminist historian Joan Scott quotes Denise Riley:

Because of its drive towards a political massing of women, feminism can never wholeheartedly dismantle earlier 'womens' experience,' however much this category conflates the attributed, the imposed, and the lived, and then sanctifies the resulting *mélange* (p. 100). Women and girls are clearly oppressed. The goal of society is "the oppression of women in its 'endless variety and monotonous simplicity.'" (Rubin, 1985, p. 160)

Riley's argument closes down questions into the ways in which female subjectivity is produced, the ways in which agency is made possible, the ways in which race and sexuality intersect with gender, the ways in which politics organize and interpret experience, and the ways in which identity is a contested terrain, the site of multiple and conflicting claims. The concept of identity is central to the lives of adolescent girls.

Groundbreaking feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith (1979) argues that sociological thoughts are part of a patriarchal "ideological structure. Its themes and relevances are organized by and articulate the perspectives of men – not as individuals floating vaguely as sexual beings in a social void, but as persons playing determinate parts in the social relations of this form of society" (p. 142). She (2004) continues:

Beginning in women's experiences told in women's words was and is a vital political moment in the women's movement. Experience is a method of speaking that is not preappropriated by the discourses of the relations of ruling. This is where women began to speak from as the women's movement of our time came into being. When we assembled *as* "women" and spoke together *as* "women," constituting "women" as a category of political mobilization, we discovered dimensions of "our" experience that had no prior discursive definition. In this political context, the category "women" is peculiarly nonexclusive since it was then and has remained open-ended, such that boundaries established at any one point are subject to the disruption of women who enter speaking from a different experience as well as an experience of difference. It is this commitment to the privileges of women to speak *from* experience that opens the women's movement to the critique of white and/or heterosexist hegemony from those it marginalizes and silences. (p. 265, emphasis in original)

Philosopher Elizabeth Potter (1993), reiterating these beliefs, explains:

Feminists, as critical science scholars, need to look and see what assumptions scientists hold to when they decide between conflicting generalizations. The feminist working hypothesis is that the assumptions guiding classificatory decisions may be androcentric or sexist. (p. 167)

Smith explains that this ideology controls and “builds the internal social organization of the ruling class as well as its domination over others” (1979, p. 143). The group in power controls ideas, images, education, and the media, for example. Anyone or anything outside these structures is silent and unacknowledged (Smith, 1979, p. 143). She argues that “knowledge itself is a social accomplishment” when the relation between the knower and the object of her knowledge is a “socially organized practice” (1979, p. 158). Smith (1979) poses her defining question using the problematic originally formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels:

Individuals always started, and always start, from themselves. Their relations are the relations of real life.

How does it happen that their relations assume an independent existence against them? And that the forces of their own life overpower them? (p. 184)

This supports my intent to focus directly on the girls and their own interpretations of their life experience through a variety of methodological tools.

Essentially, the purpose of my research was to explore, describe, and analyze the various factors, such as the family, peers, role models, language, school environment, influence of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to learn, psychological resiliency, healthy sense of self, and social and cultural issues, leading to successful academic achievement and happiness in the lives of adolescent gifted girls. The research was grounded in feminist epistemology and feminist methodology to develop a critical ethnographic portrait illuminating how gifted girls perceive and experience their lives. What was the impact of family, peers, and school programs on student success? How did schools support gifted girls? If girls were given supportive role models and received mentoring when appropriate, what was the impact on their achievement levels? How important was psychological resiliency and maintaining a positive sense of self when undergoing difficulties? Were successful students primarily extrinsically or intrinsically motivated? Or both? What was the impact of language or cultural issues on the gifted mind? How does negative peer pressure or the more destructive elements of society like racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia impact students along with their academic and life goals (See Figure 5.1)?

Psychologist Winner states, “Just as we know more about depression and fear than we do about happiness and courage, we also know far more about retardation and learning profiles than we do about giftedness” (2000, p. 159). The greatest challenge for woman researchers looking at issues in girls’ lives, however, lies in the following questions:

What would it mean for women to suspend the old terms of identity and move beyond the race, class, and gender divisions that cordon women off from one another in familiar ways: women of color/women of no color, women with and without privilege of class, ethnicity, or sexuality? What would lead women to link arms across these categorizations? The political answer is a common vision for economic and political and societal changes. (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 208)

The importance of the need for research on gifted adolescent girls cannot be understated. Only now has the research world begun to understand the impact of science's dismissive approach towards incorporating women and their unique world view as limiting the validity of research in general. Harding declares, "We would have to reinvent both science and technology itself in order to make sense of women's social experience" (1986, p. 251). Though stated 28 years ago, scientists are still reinventing themselves and their fields to incorporate the complexity of the world into its paradigm. Hartsock (1983) first articulated feminist standpoint theory. She writes, "The experience of continuity and relation – with others, with the natural world, of mind and body, provides an ontological base for developing a non-problematic social synthesis" (p. 303). From this understanding, the reality of being a woman emerges as a feminist standpoint, "a mediated rather than immediate understanding" (p. 288).

Haraway further complicates the challenge which lies ahead in working with new methodologies in her argument that "there is no feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for the metaphor to ground our visions" (2003). She acknowledges the immensely complex process of assigning meaning to knowledge. Feminist standpoint theory is a hotly contested idea (Harding, 2004). Lather (2007, p. 124) argues for the rhizome to be the model of postmodern research. Rhizomes are plant systems with stems underground and aerial roots.

To function rhizomatically is to act via relay, circuit, multiple openings, as "crabgrass" in the lawn of academic preconceptions" (Ulmer, 1989, p. 185). Rhizomatics are about the move from hierarchies to networks and the complexities of problematics where any concept, when pulled, is recognized as "connected to a mass of tangled ideas, uprooted, as it were, from the epistemological field (Pefanis, 1991, p. 22). Rather than a linear process, rhizomatics is a journey among intersections, nodes, and regionalizations through a multi-centered complexity. As a metaphor, rhizomes work against the constraints of authority, regularity, and commonsense and open thought up to the creative constructions that arise out of social practices, creativity which marks the ability to transform, to break down present practices in favor of future ones. (Deleuze, 1992, p. 163-64) (p. 124)

Lather (2007) calls for research to turn “away from abstract philosophizing and toward concrete effort to put theory to work” (p. 157). Feminist theorist Judith Butler (1992) views feminism as a freeing agent. She declares:

To deconstruct the subject of feminism is not, then, to censure its usage, but, on the contrary, to release the term into a future of multiple significations, to emancipate it from the maternal or racialist ontologies to which it has been restricted, and to give it play as a site where unanticipated meanings might come to bear. (p. 16)

Yet John Dewey (1910), ever grounding, suggests that “intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions together with both of the alternatives they assume – an abandonment that results from their decreasing vitality and a change of urgent interest. We do not solve them; we get over them” (p. 313). Let’s get over the hegemony of the patriarchy and its resulting oppression of girls and women and move into epistemologies and research methodologies that are based in new, meaningful, and revolutionary visions of a more welcoming world for gifted adolescent girls.

My intent was to focus directly on gifted adolescent girls and their own interpretations of their life experience to develop a critical feminist ethnographic portrait. Very few studies focus on the perspectives and voices of gifted adolescent girls as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two. In order to begin to round out our understanding of the gifted girl, researchers need to focus on her voice and her worldview. Grounded in a feminist theoretical framework, I used interviews as my primary methodological tool. This critical feminist ethnographic portrait of gifted adolescent girls described and explored how they perceive their lives within their particular slice of high school life. I included their friends, their teachers, their classrooms, their extracurricular activities, their school as a culture, and their families in my discussion and analysis. My research materials, design, and procedure were all designed to create this ethnographic portrait of a gifted adolescent girl in a high school. This approach enabled me to explore in depth the complexities and subtleties of the way gifted girls experience their lives both in and outside of the schoolhouse and how this connects to their academic success.

Borrowing Lather’s (2007) concept of Rhizomatic Validity, I have a five item checklist for my research method. First, it unsettles from within and taps the underground. Second, this research generates new locally-determined norms of understanding and encourages open-ended and context-sensitive criteria. The study works against the reinforcement of the current regime and proposes a new systematicity. Third, this research supplements

and exceeds the stable and the perpetual. Fourth, my work proceeds against the bounds of authority via relay, using multiple openings and networks. Finally, this study erases conventional discursive procedures, breaches stale discourses and is critical (p. 128-129).

This methodology chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, I describe my epistemological rationale for using a feminist and critical ethnographic framework. Second, I describe the study participants. Third, I explain and describe my research design and procedure along with my rationale for using life histories through narrative inquiry as my methodological tool. Fourth, I present my plan for analyzing my data using grounded theory. I conclude with my research policies and ethical considerations.

“It is the multiple realities rather than a single reality which concern the qualitative researcher” (Bogdan & Bikler, 2003, p. 38). Using multiple interviews, I illuminate the lives and world views of each of my participants. I represent the reality of the girls’ lives in all their richness and detailed complexity in this feminist critical ethnographic portrait.

Epistemological Rationale

The experiences and perceptions of gifted adolescent girls need to be added to research literature. Based on feminist epistemology and feminist methodology, I developed a critical feminist ethnographic portrait (Cresswell, 1998, p. 148) which more fully explores and captures the richness and nuances of a gifted girl’s experience in the world in general and her schooling in particular in Chapters Four through Seven. “Critical ethnographers describe, analyze, and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Critical scholarship requires that commonsense assumptions be questioned” (Thomas, 1993, p. 3). A key tenet of feminist theory holds that social institutions are based on male hegemony; feminist scholars examine gender’s impact and question societal values about the proper roles for men and women in society. This blends neatly with the philosophy of critical ethnography which calls upon researchers to challenge societal assumptions and clarify society’s impact on how we perceive the world through a gendered and cultured lens.

Gould (1981) notes:

Science, since people must do it, is a socially embedded activity. It progresses by hunch, vision, and intuition. Much of its change through time does not record a closer approach to absolute truth, but the alternative of cultural contexts that influence it so strongly. Facts are not pure and unsullied bits of information; culture also influences what we see and how we see it. (p. 21-22)

Research Participants

I worked with five gifted female adolescents, ages 17-18, representing a cross-section of race and class in order to address a broad spectrum of the social and psychological issues girls manage each day. Though I started with five first interviews, one young woman became impossible to reach. Trying to reach her to schedule our second interview after leaving many messages on her voice mail and receiving no response, I gave up. Though our first interview went quite well, she was, obviously, unwilling to continue as a participant in the study. Just as psychologically astute and intelligent high school girls often drop out of high school (Fine, 1992), perhaps something about this study was too threatening or challenging, so she dropped out and did not want to continue to a second interview.

I found my participants in high schools running gifted programs in the Chicagoland area. I did my research in an elite school district in a suburb bordering Chicago. The school district serves more than 4,800 students from the surrounding area, all middle-class communities with diverse ethnic populations. Both *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report* recently cited [high school] as one of the country's best schools. The U.S. Department of Education has recognized the school district for Excellence in Education. I obtained permission to research from the girls and their parents (see Appendix A) through the kindness of the assistant superintendent of the school district. I worked on my Type 75 Certification in this school district and shared my ideas with the assistant superintendent. She thought the study was so important that she waived the district policy of barring researchers from direct contact with students. She allowed me to interview the girls in the high schools. According to the girls and off the record, an AP European History teacher emphasized the importance of this study because four out of five of my research participants came from her class. The supportive assistant superintendent began scheduling interviews

I conducted comprehensive in-depth open-ended interviews using a narrative inquiry approach to collect the life history of each research participant (see Appendix B for interview guide). In order to capture the richness and complexity of the participant's lives, I also interviewed an individual the girls designated as a key supporter in their quest for success (see Appendix C for interview questions). Those named indicate a great deal about what type of support the girls search for, need, and value; how did this supportive relationship develop? What did this reveal about the research participant's values? I interviewed two peers and a teacher, all of whom played a significant role in the girls' lives. One participant, who has an anxiety disorder, requested I not interview another individual about

her. The idea of someone talking about her, however positively, added to her stress level, so I agreed to interview her.

This third interview broadened and deepened my perspective of the participant by expanding the research to include multiple perspectives on one girl's life and enriched my understanding of each participant. "There are multiple insider views, multiple outsider views. Every view is *a* way of seeing, not *the* way" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 137, emphasis in original).

A Feminist Framework.

Being a feminist in 2014 is fraught with controversy. We are in the Third Wave. Naomi Shor (1987) claims:

Whether or not the "feminine" is a male construct, a product of a phallogentric culture destined to disappear, in the present order of things we cannot afford not to press its claims even as we dismantle the conceptual systems which support it. (p. 97)

Butler (2004) writes simply, "Feminism is a mess" (p. 175). Lather (2007) views feminism as a "fold." I enfold an earlier articulation of feminist methodology within a nascent fold where a fold is distributed and parallel rather than sequential and linear (Martin, 2001, p. 375). Hence, the point is not that feminist research is so much smarter now, but rather that the logic-in-use (Kaplan, 1964) has shifted from an earlier emphasis on countering objectivism, developing "women's ways of knowing" (Belenky et al., 1986), and debating "essentialism/constructivism" to addressing the unintended consequences of such efforts and "respect[ing] the demand for complexity. (McCall, 2005, p. 1786)

The latter particularly refers to a stance toward "categorical complexity" (McCall, 2005, p. 1774) spurred by both the critique of feminism by women of color and the varied "post" movements that have so troubled Western philosophy, history, and language." (McCall, 2005, p. 1774)

Lather continues to address a key feminist question. "How can feminist writers begin to re-imagine the goals of writing and subvert 'persuasion' as an aim for political work?" (Johnson, 1997, p. 2). Rather than

traditional tactics of persuasion, Lather's (2007, p. 142) interest lies in what Kate Lenzo calls "more nuanced authorial constructions that call into question the construction of authority itself" (1995, p. 4). In turn, this creates "a disjunctive space that expands rather than reduces interpretive possibilities" (McCoy, 1997, p. 500). This style of writing and interpretation emphasizes what is to be seen and gathers an audience in such a way as to resist "the ground of traditional persuasion" (Lather, 2007, p. 142).

As I examined the sociological and psychological forces at work in girls' lives, this approach explained and challenged the social assumptions society maintains around gender roles. "Critical ethnography is conventional ethnography with a political purpose" (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). Using a feminist framework brought an explicit focus on how girls are socialized to behave which fits clearly into the methodological philosophy driving critical ethnography. Being adolescent girls on the brink of becoming women and being heavily socialized to behave in a prescribed manner, a feminist analysis is particularly helpful to understanding girls' behavior and beliefs when they are still girls and freer of gender role restrictions.

Because of its collaborative approach, narrative inquiry's philosophical underpinning fits neatly into a feminist perspective. The power of this approach is clearly demonstrated by the impact of the book *Women's Way of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (Belenky et al., 1997) on the feminist research community upon publication in 1986. This book had and continues to have a profound influence expanding the empirical world of human development and offers a more complete understanding of the spectrum of women's psychological development. The four authors used narrative inquiry in a feminist framework most effectively as discussed previously in Chapter Two. This technique yields "a collaborative document, a mutually constructed story out of the lives of both researcher and participant" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004).

In *Between Voice and Silence: Women and Girls, Race and Relationship*, a later important and pioneering book on female psychological development, the authors argue that "voice-centered, relational research" is crucial to reaching girls and urging them to discuss their lives frankly and authentically without fear of judgment (Taylor et al., 1995). She (1995) explains:

When women approach girls as authorities on their own experience and listen to them intently and with respect, girls can speak openly about their thoughts and feelings, at times sharing information they have never shared with anyone else. (p. 128)

Taking girls seriously encourages them to take themselves seriously, perhaps helping them discover knowledge, in the form of thoughts, feelings, and experiences, lost to them (Taylor et al., 1995). Gilligan (2011) explains:

Women teaching girls, however, also may discover that they are harboring inside themselves a girl who lives in her body, who is insistent on speaking, who intensely desires relationships and knowledge, and who, perhaps at the time of adolescence, went underground or was overwhelmed. Girls have picked up this hidden woman. They are looking for her in women, sensing her absence or her silent presence. And although women, in the name of being good women, may be modeling for girls her repudiation, teaching girls the necessity of a loss or renunciation that girls question, girls are teaching women to question their silences. Through girls, then, women can find or strengthen their honest voices and their courage. (p. 160)

Simply the act of listening is empowering for girls. Henderson (1992) cites Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1975) mode of "dialectical model of conversation." In the "I-Thou" relationship proposed by Gadamer, "the important thing is to experience the "Thou" truly as a "Thou," that is, not to overlook [the other's] claim and to listen to what [s/he] has to say to us." The physical act of my presence listening to the girls with my audio device to record their voices was an act of empowerment for them. Indeed, from the intensity and honesty of our interviews, I often felt I was the first adult, outside of their families, to hear these poignant rollicking stories about their lives. I think our interviews left each young woman with a clearer sense of herself as a gifted adolescent girl.

Lather (2007) argues for the value of this intense listening:

This is a nonreductive praxis that calls out a promise, not of a new concept but of practice on a shifting ground that foregrounds the limits of the fixing, locating, defining, and confining that is the work of the concept. This is a praxis that can survive the critique of Marxism, a praxis immanent in practices that helps us think not only *with* but *in* our actions. (p. 111, emphasis in original)

Taylor (1995) continues this argument:

This joining [connecting with girls] constitutes a taking of one another seriously that not only enables women and girls, as Isasi Diaz suggests, to go beyond themselves, but to come back to themselves – to their strengths, experience, questions, and knowledge. (p. 141)

Using a feminist theoretical perspective (Olesen, 2000) in my methodology was crucial to understanding how adolescent girls created meaning in their world. In comprehending how girls understood their own lives, I

needed to understand how they created knowledge in their world. This parallels how women, specifically feminists, have come to understand the construction and nature of knowledge.

Although feminism is, in substance, always attentive to power differences that create inequalities, particularly those that create differential opportunities for women and men (but also those that create racial and ethnic, class-based, or sexuality-based inequalities), feminism is also an epistemological shift away from a history of androcentric bias in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. (Crawley, Lewis, & Mayberry, 2008, p. 2)

From this perspective, feminism is not only about women and girls but a way of orienting to academic work that is aware of power relations in the academic world and within knowledge construction itself. I discussed this in more depth in Chapter Two. Feminist research hopes to correct the “invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position” (Lather, 2003, p. 192). With this goal, “the methodological task becomes that of generating and refining interactive, contextualized methods which search for pattern and meaning rather than for prediction and control” (Reinherz, 1983).

Listening to the voices of girls was key; this act in itself was empowering but also messy. I played the role of “the participant witness” (Gordon, 1995, p. 383). I present these adolescent stories without distorting them to fit my own vision of a gifted girl. By living out present history, I brought an ethical force directed towards “the heart of the present” (Lather, 2007, p. 137). In telling the stories of these girls, I remained true to their voices.

According to Derrida (1976), when I read the transcripts of my interviews I am privileging a certain text. He calls this exorbitant, in which he means “a wandering thought affected by nonknowledge” that reaches a point beyond “the conscious, voluntary, intentional relationship” of a writer to her time and language use (p. 158, 161). He argues that “we must begin *wherever we are* [having learned] that it was impossible to justify the point of departure absolutely. *Wherever we are*: in a text where we already believe ourselves to be” (p. 62; emphasis in original). I began this process by acknowledging my own social, emotional, and psychological biases and set them aside as I read transcripts, did analysis, and wrote up my research.

On the other hand, I must try to be aware of what I am missing as I listen and read the girls’ words. Lather (2007) argues:

We often do not know what we are seeing, how much we are missing, what we are not understanding, or even how to locate those lacks. What is doubly effaced, then, is both the transparency of language in

constructing the referent and “the narrative of the impossibility of narrative” that is “of the same nature as what it works against,” doing again as it undoes (Miller, 1979, pp. 251-252). Eroding privilege and undercutting uncertainty, both the knower’s mastering point of view and the authority of the metastory “of deconstruction in deconstruction” (Derrida, 1979, p. 100) are effaced. Here the obligation becomes to read the unreadability of the impossible event, an aporia that sets things in motion: “What must remain beyond its reach is precisely what revives it at every moment.” (Derrida, 1979, p. 134) (p. 146)

As a researcher, I must be careful not to be seduced by “the mirage of [the] immediacy of speech” (Derrida, 1976, p. 141).

A Critical Ethnographic Approach.

“Conventional ethnography describes what is; critical ethnography asks what could be” (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). This is a particularly poignant statement given the intrinsic sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia of society in general and schools in particular that shape how girls understand themselves and their position in the world. In using this methodological framework I could move “beyond the narrative of the subjects to the broader processes in which the narratives are embedded” (Thomas, 1993, p. 60). When a girl believes that being silent in the classroom is her best choice, this is an example of a convergence of social forces which impact her behavior in combination with her own sense of identity and place in the classroom. Critical research has an “emancipatory potential to free us from existing forms of cultural domination” (Thomas, 1993, p. 69). Wolcott (1999) argues:

With critical ethnography, the effort to understand is cast in a prejudgmental framework; the ethnographer seeks not merely to understand, but to understand what is wrong, and to link the problem to some greater wrong operating at some grander level. (p. 181)

Hence, educators can come to understand that the paucity of girls in math and science classes is not simply a problem schools face, but this situation reflects (incorrect) societal beliefs about girls and their ability to succeed in math and science. This is the grander level of the problem; this problem originates outside the school system yet educators hold themselves responsible for improving the situation for girls. Critical ethnography is a type of reflection that examines culture, knowledge, and action. This method widens a researcher’s experiential capacity to see, hear, and feel. Thomas (1993) argues that critical ethnography deepens and sharpens ethical commitments by forcing researchers to develop and act upon value commitments in the context of political agendas (p. 2).

Educators need this type of research to expand their understanding of the challenges gifted adolescent girls face on a daily basis as they mature into gifted young women. This research is particularly valuable in its ability to embrace the image of girls as academic high achievers. Critical ethnography offers a more comprehensive sociological and political understanding of the lives of these girls and attempts to explain the complexity in the necessary social and political context.

As I worked, I discerned my loyalties. After all, researchers are to be “paragons of objectivity and passionless purveyors of the truth” (Kimmel, 1988, p. 126). As I analyzed, I was aware that I was telling my own story as the chapters about each girl unfolded. Not much is known about the effects of researchers and research participant expectations in a “zeal for scientific objectivity” (Kimmel, 1988, p. 190). What was my obligation to these young women? Did I act in their names or “to a greater responsibility than allegiance to a proper name, something coming about through the telling?” (Spivak, 1994, pp. 41, 46)

Following Lather’s (2007) lead, I worked among “the ruins of a confident social science” (p. 143). My research complicated the issue of ethnographic representation. What was real? “Its insistent move is from voice to inscription, from notions of the intrinsic to ideas of the frame (p. 143).” Here my challenge was to move from a textual rather than a referential notion of representation. This was deconstruction “after the turn,” in what Spivak (1999) calls its “‘setting-to-work’ mode,” which carries a greater emphasis on ethics and politics (p. 429).

Design and Procedures.

In order to explore, describe, and analyze the various factors that impact a gifted girl’s life, I used a range of tools to develop this ethnographic portrait and illuminate their lives in a variety of ways. I collected my primary data from multiple in-depth exploratory interviews (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003) using open-ended questions designed to encourage the participant to discuss her own thoughts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Because I was interested in how the girls understand their world, using open-ended questions emphasizes that I, the interviewer, was “open to any and all relevant responses” (Schensel, Schensel, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 121). Because of the dearth of studies specifically focused on gifted adolescent girls, the details of how they perceive their world is quite unknown to the research community. In my interviews I “explored domains believed to be important to the study and about which little is known (Schensel et al., 1999, p. 121). Pioneering anthropologist Franz Boaz’s intent was “to record the lives of people he studied *as they saw themselves*” (Wolcott, 1999, p. 147, emphasis in original); this concept is absolutely

central to my research approach. I am focusing on how gifted adolescent girls see themselves and their place in the world.

As I was interested in how gifted adolescent girls understand the world and their place in it, most of my initial research questions focused on their own perceptions of themselves and their environment. For example, how comfortable were they when performing in their academic milieu? Did they feel supported and challenged in a positive manner? Did they recognize the value of their intelligence and talents enough to feel comfortable performing in the classroom? Did they perceive their intelligence as an empowering force in their lives? Or did they choose to mask their intelligence and talents, afraid of being ostracized?

Shifting topics slightly, how were they socialized into gender roles as girls standing on the brink of womanhood? What was the socializing impact on their academic and personal goals? If gifted girls have a high level of self-esteem and a strong sense of self-worth, they are unafraid of others mocking or minimizing their achievements and will flourish in an academic setting. Gifted girls often seek support and friendship with those who face similar daily challenges. How did these relationships work to effectively sustain them during both difficult and productive times? Who else did the girls rely upon for inspiration and strength? With the support of their teachers, a healthy school environment, peers, and family, gifted girls can push their performance in order to achieve demanding academic goals. If supportive teachers and mentors are in place for gifted adolescent girls, they will be able to perform at their highest level of potential. What are the destructive elements that damage gifted girls and corrode their self-esteem and confidence in themselves? What kind of impact do these forces have on the girls personally and academically? These types of questions are simply the beginning of framing the ethnographic portrait. Obviously, each girl has her own story and her own unique perspective on her world.

Life Histories as a Tool.

In “Joanna: One Life History and the Universal Woman in Science,” researchers Smith and Butt interview a gifted, accomplished scientist hoping to identify factors leading to her success. They explain that:

To maintain the integrity of Joanna’s life history it was critical to apply the principles of phenomenology; the reason being, as Spiegelberg (1969) states, “(to) give the phenomena a fuller and fairer hearing than traditional empiricism has accorded them . . . [and] to protest against a simplification which claims to supply the only legitimate and the full picture of reality” (p. 656). To honor this philosophy, interviews emphasized introspection and self-reflection . . . Using this style, the interviews operated like a series of

friendly conversations with the overriding purpose to understand the co-investigator's world. (Smith & Butt, 1996, p. 78)

This was an excellent model to follow to encourage girls to describe the complex and rich realities of their lives.

Using narrative inquiry to guide the interview, "the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004), was especially meaningful because this technique enabled me, the researcher, to understand how the participants created meaning in their world just as in the "Joanna" study. Clifford Geertz explains cultural analysis as "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape" (2003, p. 159). The data sources of this technique enabled me to know and understand their lives through narrative knowing, which involves using interview transcripts (Bennett deMarrais, 1998, p. 15).

"Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. Thus the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). My research explored how gifted adolescent girls experienced each day and created meaning in their lives both in and outside of the schoolhouse. Educator Willinsky argued that this comprehensive approach is necessary because "the realization of gifts and talents encompasses the entire fabric of a life, from home to school to work and back home again" (1996, p. 11). The unique vision of the gifted adolescent girl expands beyond the school house into the full spectrum of her life with her family, her peers, and other relationships and places that do not fall easily into the categories of home or school.

Anthropologists Marvin Harris and Orna Johnson define ethnography as "a portrait of the people." Michael Agar describes ethnography as a research form which focuses on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena (1980). As cultures are complex and multi-faceted, to reach even the most rudimentary understanding of the culture as a whole requires an openness to looking and understanding in many different ways (Woods, 1996). Ethnography is "dialectic, not linear" (Agar, 1980, p. 9) and offers "a special approach to understanding the human situation" (Agar, 1980, p. 12).

Observational knowing uses the methodological approaches of ethnography and participatory action research (PAR). PAR dovetails with the critical feminist stance, which requires the researcher to reflect on her own set of biases and values as formed by her personal class, race, and ethnic background to examine how this worldview would affect her ability to collect data in an unbiased and authentic manner. "The role of reflexivity is a

concept that suggests feminist scholars maintain and use constant awareness of one's own place in the power relations that comprise all academic pursuits" (Crawley, Lewis, & Mayberry, 2008, p.3). As the following quote explains, PAR builds such awareness and reflexivity into its methodological philosophy:

Through action research people can come to understand their social and educational practices more richly by locating their practices, as concretely and precisely as possible, in the particular material, social and historical circumstances within which their practices were produced, developed and evolved so that their real practices become accessible to reflection, discussion and reconstruction as products of past circumstances which are capable of being modified in and for present and future circumstances. (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998, p. 25)

Analysis Plan.

The purpose of my research was to document, describe, and analyze the various factors which lead to academic achievement in the lives of adolescent gifted girls by exploring how they perceive and experience their lives. I was especially interested in keeping the unique qualities of their voices intact as I presented my analysis. I took a feminist approach as I analyzed the data and will read for recurrent themes using the Listening Guide technique developed by Lyn Mikel Brown and her colleagues (1988) to systematically analyze interview data. The Listening Guide encourages the reader to pay close attention to both the form and the content of the interviews and to follow one's own process of interpretation. For example, how the story is told is just as important as the story itself. This technique encourages the reader to listen closely to the nuances, contradictions, and continuities within each story. This style encourages the listener to come into relationship with the person telling the story.

Friedrich Nietzsche viewed words as masks. He believed that the road to any "truth" was possible through the unconscious and forgetting. "Every opinion is also a hiding place; every word is also a mask" (quoted in Kofman, 1993, p. 91). For Nietzsche, "unmasking the clothing is not about removing from the text a cloak that veils the truth, but rather showing the clothing which an apparent 'nakedness' conceals" (p. 92). His central question is what does the will want that wants the truth want (Kofman, 1993, p. 24). What were these girls telling me through their anecdotes and life stories? What did each word reveal about each girl?

I also kept the idea of myself as a researcher at the front and center of my analysis. Judith Butler (1993) speaks of a writing "which precedes and mobilizes the one who writes, connecting the one who writes with a language which 'writes' the one" (p. 266). As I wrote, I was not always sure what I was doing as I worked hard to

portray the tenor of these girls' lives filtered through my own very specific psychological, sociological, physical, and emotional experiences as a White well-educated middle class woman.

When reading and rereading the transcripts, Lather (2007) explains that “reading becomes rumination and fosters brooding, a way of reading that produces a reading and then, ‘within the reflective memory of the first reading, read[s] again’” (Babich, 1994, p. 28). I brooded for hours. She views research as a blurring between the researcher and participant. Indeed, as I drive past the Starbucks where I did my second interviews, I think of the young women now at college. Lather (2007) continues to elaborate:

Here, the text turns back on itself, putting the authority of its own affirmations in doubt, an undercutting that causes a doubling of meanings that adds to a sense of multivalence and fluidities. Such a practice makes space for returns, silence, interruptions, and self-criticism and points to its own incapacity. Such a practice gestures beyond the word via a textuality that works at multiple levels to construct an audience with ears to hear. (p. 88)

When interpreting the data, the conversation, and the answers to the questions, I was careful not to “strive for safety, [or] clarity at the expense of voice or vision and thus of oversimplifying or reducing the experience of conflict” (Gilligan, Brown, & Rogers, 1990, p. 107). What was the overall tone of the interview? What types of language did she choose to use? What did this indicate about her? I illustrated, explained, and explored the impact of family, peers, teachers, school programs, environment and society as a whole on academic success based on the interviews. I examined the data to discern its significance in a sociological, emotional, and psychological context.

After data collection, I coded my interviews using a grounded theory approach (Charmers, 2006; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), grouping and regrouping thematic categories to detect patterns and connections to help focus my thinking and analysis. A simple description of grounded theory analysis, as one methodological approach to qualitative research, is in its utility. Grounded theory is the attempt to generate theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This involves a series of steps, both concurrent and reflective, to discover concepts, hypothesis, and eventually substantive themes relevant for a particular area of research (Angel & Angel, 1997). The purpose of grounded theory methodology is “not to provide a perfect description of an area, but to develop a theory that accounts for much of the relevant behavior” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3).

The outcome of grounded theory is to generate an explanatory theory, which may then be compared on a case-by-case basis in confirming or denying the relevance of the theory to particular situations or problems.

Therefore, “accurate” knowledge is less crucial than the knowledge gained from the comparative analysis of selected interviews. The product of the process of grounded theory analysis is never fully formed but continually developing. The written result of a grounded theory study is the theory that relates the conceptual categories of information regarding the topic of interest. These categories, in turn, have properties for both general and specific situations and problems (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose of the comparative process with formal theory is to allow the researcher to remain open to new theory rather than to force previous theories to fit the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 25).

Through linking both previous theories and new theory, the researcher builds new theory in a progressive manner. The purpose of this iterative process is eventually to move toward more inclusive, wide-reaching, and formal theory generation. The object of generating many perspectives or substantive theories prior to advancing inclusive theory is to avoid “premature parsimony” in creating explanatory models for observed sociological phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 26).

Once my data was gathered, I began a line-by-line analysis of the data and then moved forward to larger selections, like sentences, paragraphs, and across the interviews, as themes emerged. Strauss (1987) describes the research steps in grounded theory research as follows: (a) the raising of generative questions that result in possible hypothesis, concepts, and the relationships among them; (b) creating provisional linkages among the created concepts that emerge from the data, so that the beginning of conceptually dense theory ensues; (c) checking out the provisional hypotheses in order to begin verifying linkages with succeeding phases of research; (d) linking the coding and making of linkages to new data; (e) creating the core of the evolving theory through integrating particular dimensions, categories, and linkages; (f) keeping track of theoretical ideas by the means of theoretical memos, which may be sorted at any phase of the research; (g) utilizing the triadic nature of data collection, coding, and memoing to inform theory building by returning to any task, at any time, based on questions related to the emergent theory; and (h) incorporating the need for additional integration of data, which may emerge during the writing phase, as dependent on the audience, clarity of coding, and thoroughness of memoing.

As I worked with the text from the interviews, I used my other data collected through other interviews to fill out the pictures of both the girls and their environment to create a feminist critical ethnographic picture of the girls’ world. Using Keaton’s (2006) work around Muslim adolescent girls in France and Lightfoot’s (1983) portraits of various high schools as models, I present a portrait of the four girls in my study in the next four chapters..

Using the work of theorists I discussed in Chapter Two such as Dorothy Smith, Chodorow, Gilligan, Dabrowski, Grosz, hooks, Noddings, Belenky and colleagues, Erikson, Laura Brown, and Robinson along with the work by gifted studies scholars such as Kerr, Silverman, Sternberg, Colangelo, and Renzulli, I made the connections between the psychology and sociology of education and its relationship to gender, adolescence, giftedness, and identity.

However, I found it impossible to predict the future of these girls, or, indeed, of this study. Lather (2007) elaborates:

The goal is to shape our practice to a future that must remain to come, in excess of our codes but, still, always ready: forces already active in the present. Perhaps a transvaluation of praxis means to find ways to participate in the struggle of these forces as we move toward a future that is unforeseeable from the perspective of what is given or even conceivable within our present conceptual frameworks. (p. 107)

Research Policies: Ethical Considerations.

As a researcher, I know the importance of protecting my participants. Keeping this firmly in mind, I had four risk areas to minimize: anxiety and distress, exploitation, misrepresentation, and confidentiality of the participant in published papers (Schram, 2003). In order to ensure that my research was ethical and my participants were protected, I first obtained consent from the assistant superintendent of the school district, from the participants' legal guardians, and from an adult mentor. If the girls said their key supporter was a peer under the age of 18, I obtained consent from the individual's legal guardians. As we discussed the girls' lives, sensitive issues came up inadvertently during the interviews. This happened with one participant. I immediately redirected my questioning away from the stressful topic. I ensured the confidentiality of data at every stage of the research securing the information in a locked work area (Schram, 2003, p. 137).

In order to ensure that the quality of my data was trustworthy, I considered the posturing and presentation of myself. I needed to balance my research commitments with my need to work authentically with my study participants. This relates to the reflexivity stance of a feminist researcher and my on-going self-analysis work to set aside my own preconceptions and assumptions as I listen to the girls' voices, ask questions, and document their life history thus far. This, however, is a delicate process around the ideas of disclosure and exchange. I decided how much information to share about myself in order to obtain the information I needed from my research participants. I created an atmosphere of trust and caring in order for my participant to feel safe in sharing her personal information

during the interview. Despite trying to set aside my own world view as a conscientious reflexive researcher, I presented myself as a flesh and blood human being, compassionate, interested, and committed to the girls and their progress through the world. As the ultimate goal of the research is analysis presented in a published document, I prepared my research participants to understand that I would use the information shared with me in my dissertation; hence, I took the research from a private to a public situation. In conclusion, I remembered that I would leave the research setting. I built relationships carefully and authentically but with the expectation that I would eventually leave the setting upon concluding my study (Schram, 2003).

As nearly as possible in words (which, even by grace of genius, would not be very near) you try to give the street in *its own terms*: that is to say, either in terms in which you (or an imagined character) see it, or in a reduction and depersonalization into terms which will as nearly as possible be the “private,” singular terms of that asphalt, those neon letters, those and all other items combined, into that alternation, that simultaneity, of flat blank tremendously constructed chords and of immensely elaborate counterpoint which is the street itself (Agee, 1939, p.235).

Chapter Four

The Gifted Girl as Strategist: Negotiating the School System Successfully

Introduction: Meeting Taylor

Each girl I interviewed has a story. As an English teacher turned scholar, I begin my analysis with a narrative. Trained as an anthropologist and writer before becoming an educator, presenting an ethnographic portrait of each girl is the natural culmination of all my years of education. As ethnography “represents both a process and a product” (Agar, 1980, p. 1), painting an accurate portrait of each individual is a complicated business. Agar reminds the reader that ethnography is “dialectic, not linear” (1980, p. 9). Hence, this story does not have a traditional beginning, middle, and an end. The story is a descriptive moment frozen in time. This is a portrait of a girl in transition from high school to college; picture a girl on the brink of womanhood suspended between two stages of her life. Agar (1980) explains, “Ethnography is a perspective that coexists with some important contradictions – humanity and science, involvement and detachment, breadth and depth, subordination and dominance, friend and stranger” (p. 203). In short, my goal is “to understand the world of some human group” (Agar, 1980, p. 203). I hope to understand how gifted adolescent girls create meaning in their own worlds. While studying the Native American Kwakiutl in the Pacific Northwest, the eminent anthropologist Franz Boaz’s intent was “to record the lives of people he studied *as they saw themselves*” (Wolcott, 1999, p. 147, emphasis in original). This is my intent also. How do gifted adolescent girls see themselves or see their place in the world?

The first girl to pose for her ethnographic portrait is Taylor. She is comfortable in her own skin; she is confident, brisk, punctual, and very honest. She wears her identity quite comfortably. In our second summer interview at a local Starbucks, far from her school environment, she cheerfully rejected my offer to buy her some iced tea. Yet at the conclusion of our interview, she bought her own iced tea, waved merrily, and headed towards her car. Taylor is well under control and aware of how relationships work. She did not want to feel obligated to me if I bought her something, yet she was perfectly capable of taking care of her own needs once our interview or relationship was concluded. She demonstrated this easily in one symbolic gesture by buying her own iced tea for herself. The words Taylor chooses and how she phrases her thoughts and ideas are central to this chapter. Belenky

and her colleagues understood this in their data collection for *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1997). Their careful scrutiny of each word of the women they interviewed was a groundbreaking methodology. The simple statement of the importance of a voice having a listener is paramount. As I tell Taylor's story, I, the listener, will be giving Taylor the paintbrush to create her own unique ethnographic portrait. Her words create the portrait we will see just as in the opening Agee quote preceding this chapter.

I will break my analysis into two sections in this chapter. The first is Systemic Issues, which reflects the sociology of the classroom or school system. The second is Personal Issues, which explores the psychology of the student and her own world view. Clearly, Taylor is both a product of her environment and her own intellectual gifts working together. Her high academic performance is the result of the intersection of the social forces governing the structure of a school and her own unique psychology as a gifted student. Our interviews reflect how she makes meaning out of her educational experience and her own life.

In listening to and examining Taylor's story in light of our understanding of how the educational experiences of adolescent girls as both gifted and gendered enables them to navigate the complex patriarchally situated, and often hostile world of education in today's global world, we must understand the interplay between the systemic and the personal in the creation of Taylor's academic and gendered identity. Through Taylor, we begin to see how a system can, but often does not, work in support of healthy identity formation in adolescent girls. Unlike the experiences of many teenage girls in our educational system, the interplay of these aspects of Taylor's world helps her navigate a system which seeks to label and define her on one hand. On the other hand, however, she is able to redefine and rework the system in ways that generally support the development of a healthy identity. By examining this interplay, we begin to see how schools can, but often do not, support the meaningful development of healthy gendered and academic identities for girls through what Gilligan (1982; 1992; 2011) and Noddings (1984) call an ethic of care. In addition, we also see the complex set of personal relationships that exist both inside and outside of schools that support this healthy sense of self. I will draw on theory by Dabrowski (1964) and Erving Goffman (1963) on the theme of Taylor being an outsider despite the fact that she is a superb team player. She is painfully aware of stigma around the title of "gifted" even as a young child.

After reading Patti Lather and Chris Smithies' *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS* (1997), I am hopeful that the unique voice of the girls in this and each of the following three chapters emerges strong and clear. Each girl has her own tale to tell, and I am the privileged listener. Often, I felt I was the first to

hear some of these candid, often hilarious, sometimes poignant, stories of what life is like growing up as a gifted adolescent girl in these challenging times. Just nodding my head with my audio device on the table legitimizes each experience these girls describe so eloquently and exuberantly. Though I have not separated my voice physically on the page from the girls' voices as Lather and Smithies do in their text, I hope my voice will meld with those of the girls I interviewed. As E.M. Forster, the great English novelist says, "Connect; simply connect." I feel, despite the brevity of our interviews, that I connected profoundly with each of the girls I interviewed. Let's meet Taylor first.

Systemic Issues

In the following sections, I will discuss understanding, navigating, and understanding one's education issues, giftedness and positive role of teachers, the gifted student as a pragmatic organizer, the dangerous and cyclic nature of gifted programs, giftedness and the formation of self identity, a key developmental turning point at a young age, and successful and meaningful collaboration among peers. Being a strategist, Taylor intimately understands how schools work, and she has learned to finesse the system to her advantage.

Understanding, navigating, and understanding one's educational identity.

Overt and subtle social forces direct the dynamics of every interaction in a classroom. Teachers, students, and administrators are carefully socialized and educated into playing specific roles in a school system overall. As Emile Durkheim (1956) reminds educators, schools create and maintain social position. Taylor understands this concept intuitively and realizes her natural gifts have given her a considerable advantage. She is my first interviewee and always responds promptly to my follow up e-mails. She is articulate and precise in her responses to my questions. Voted "English Student of the Year," a coveted award among serious English students, she clearly enjoys prestige among her fellow students.

Taylor is aware of her skills and views herself as a natural writer. When other students ask her to critique their English papers, she responds:

In English, I'm on top of the game; I'm on top of the world. I just enjoy it so much. I'm going over it, and I feel smart. It actually tends to be true to some extent. That's a self-fulfilling prophecy especially because then I take an interest in it outside of class. I'll pursue that subject to a greater length. (Interview: 6/11/11)

This is an image of herself that she enjoys; her identity as a writer rings true. In her modest way, Taylor claims her success. This drives her to seek sources outside of class which only increases her expertise, and her confidence has a snowball effect. Clearly, the sociology of the classroom will reflect how individuals perceive

themselves psychologically. If other students ask for Taylor's opinion of their papers, she is the perceived expert. As this is an enormous boost psychologically and sociologically from her peers, she is viewed as a classroom leader in her field. Peer interactions have a powerful impact on positive self-image. When students learn together, they are kinder and more accepting (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 540). By offering to critique papers, Taylor is pro-active in creating her image as a talented writer. In this role, she takes on a voice, defined as a "powerful psychological instrument and channel, connecting inner and outer worlds" (Gilligan, 1993, p. xvi). Instead of losing a sense of self that so often comes at the brink of adolescence (Gilligan, 1990), Taylor gains power as she hones her voice and her skills as a writer, critic, and editor.

As I argued in Chapter Two, the education system in general is, if not hostile, at least not supportive of adolescent girls undergoing identity formation. Taylor's experiences as a gifted student can assist educators in understanding not only the challenges ahead but also give us some sense of the ways in which the system can work effectively to meet the unique needs of these academically talented girls. The social forces coursing through a classroom affect girls as seriously as the psychological. As Dewey (1928) reminds us:

Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. (p. 28)

Briefly, returning to current psychological theory around girls' development, girls feel a different set of internal expectations from boys. To review, Gilligan (1998) clarifies:

Adolescent girls resisting detachment generally have appeared in the literature on adolescence to illustrate the problems that arise when childhood forms of relationship are not changed. But by drawing attention to the problem of loyalty and to a transformation of attachment that resists the move toward disengagement, the experience of girls in adolescence may help to define an image of self in relationship that leads to a different vision of progress and civilization. (p. 13-14)

Girls who remain connected commit "acts of resistance and courage" which can lead to psychological distress or get the girls into trouble. As we learn more about Taylor in the upcoming chapter, she organizes ceaselessly around issues of injustice that concern her. Her act of resistance is to simply and expertly organize her fellow students in the face of injustice. Taylor (1995) argues:

Frequently, political resistance or outspokenness leads to retaliation, which may take the form of isolation (ostracism, exclusion, not being listened to, not being heard), or may involve various forms of betrayal, violation, and violence. In this case, the same portion of the text may be marked as an example of psychological health (political resistance) and psychological distress.

(p. 34)

As Taylor has grown into her adolescence, she has become acutely aware that society does not share her values, her prizing of relationships and intimacy. She faces a conflict between adapting to the societal vision of a successful person, who is independent and self-sufficient, or continuing to give primary attention to her primary relationships. Taylor struggles with the mixed message that women must be supportive and caring yet watches as society devalues these very qualities. Indeed, Taylor credits her Mom with getting her through the challenges of middle school math and her senior economics teacher helps her organize her political actions. Yet Gilligan (1990) warns that adolescence is

a time when girls are in danger of losing their voices and thus losing their connections with others, and also a time when girls, gaining voice and knowledge, are in danger of knowing the unseen and speaking the unspoken and thus losing connection with what is commonly taken to be ‘reality’” (p. 25).

Thanks to firm family, teacher, and peer support, Taylor has a solid grasp of reality.

As a strategist, Taylor makes careful choices. hooks argues that making a choice to live on the margins of society allows individuals to resist taking on a traditional role. This margin is “the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance” (hooks, 1990, p. 145). This intensely aware response to the world underlines Dabrowski’s (1964) work, which I will apply to Taylor further on, which focuses on the unique emotional and moral development of gifted individuals. Stepping away from mainstream student life and into the margin allows Taylor a chance to take a more active role in shaping a more unconventional world of her own which better meets her needs.

Giftedness and the positive role of teachers.

Taylor clearly sees the positive role of teachers who help her become successful academically (Betts & Neihart, 1988). Being identified as gifted, she has a great deal more information and resources at her fingertips than the average student. Being the consummate strategist, she knows how to use the power of her giftedness status to her advantage, and the stigma (Goffman, 1963) of being gifted works in her favor. Goffman (1963) explains society must be sensitive to those who are stigmatized for being different from traditional society:

who are seen as declining voluntarily and openly to accept the social place accorded them, and who act irregularly and somewhat rebelliously in connection with our basic institutions. Those who take this stand on their own and by themselves might be called eccentrics or “characters.” (p. 143)

Though Taylor may not agree to being labeled eccentric, as we will see in the following sections, she is a unique player, or character, in her school’s environment.

She also credits her teachers with helping her towards a greater maturity, or understanding of herself.

Taylor exclaims:

I like my teachers; they really take time for me. If I haven’t gotten something in that 45 minutes of class, I’ll walk up to them after class. They’ll say OK, meet me at this time. If they think there’s something I’d be interested in, they’ll expose me to it. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Unlike many students in schools today, Taylor sees the advantage of the teachers recognizing her as an individual and helping her out when she needs some extra assistance. She is no longer just an ID number in a classroom. She is Taylor, a flesh and blood student, so teachers take extra time with her to help her expand her own horizons.

Being aggressive in a positive manner, she establishes relationships with her teachers. As she matures through her high school years, she recognizes the value of good, caring teachers in her school life. This personal connection can be important in building a student’s self-confidence. This is similar to my connection with Ying, which I described in the Introduction, and was essential to her success staging her Mathfest.

Taylor realizes the power of teachers as she moves through high school. She comes to understand that teachers can be flexible and will adjust deadlines because they know and trust Taylor. Her ability to ask for help and be humble humanizes her. Of course, her teachers respond to this, especially a request for help.

She tells a number of positive teacher stories, but they culminate into the following story of her favorite teacher. This is an excellent example of Taylor as a strategist who respects the system yet still tries to work the system in her favor. She explains:

My favorite teacher freshman year was my Bio teacher, Ms. H. I will never forget this. You always try to outsmart your teachers whenever you have projects. I remember we went to the forest. We were supposed to find evidence of evolution or something that we were talking about. I knew exactly what she wanted us to find, but I couldn’t find it. I fudged some of the evidence. In our little analysis, I put exactly what she wanted us to take from this experience. I wrote it all up and turned that in to her. When she was talking

about the project and we were discussing it in class, she [said], “Yeah, Taylor came up with exactly what I wanted.” I thought I was on the game. I was expecting an A, and she gave it back to me. I got a C because she figured it out. She [said] “Try again next time.” I loved that teacher for that. She really took the time. If you look at the ways students manipulate teachers, I can say this now because I don’t have my teacher here, but we watch to see what the teacher wants and the personality type. We just play into that, so it’s really nice when you have a teacher where if you don’t write exactly what that teacher wants to hear, it’s not geared towards “This is what I want to hear, so I’m going to give you an A.” It’s like “OK, that’s what I wanted to hear, but it wasn’t written well. You don’t deserve the grade.” I loved that teacher for that.

(Interview: 6/11/11)

She respects Ms. H. for her honesty and because Taylor could not fool her with her trumped up “scientific evidence.” Taylor knows how to give teachers exactly what they expect. She plays into “the personality type” of the teacher. This means responding with the appropriate enthusiasm around certain subject matter and learning that subject material in particular ways.

As a former teacher, I understand the psychology Taylor uses completely. I would tell my students at all levels point blank that what I valued most would be on class tests and related assessments. As I prepared my AP students for the important exams in the spring that would enable them to get college credit for high school work, I would emphasize themes I knew AP tests covered. I had stacks of tests from previous years and could analyze the pattern of questions for the students. We read sufficiently difficult literature from a variety of literary periods with challenging themes to ensure my students would be successful on these critical exams. Indeed, I had AP students who were so clever they would locate the source of a quotation used in an AP question on the Internet after they had completed the test in the morning and before the school day ended. They would rush into my classroom with information, breathless with the challenge and excitement of somehow outwitting the AP Testing System. I include this autobiographical material, as I did in my first chapter following the work of Walkerdine (2001). She argues weaving autobiography into research and academic discourse through explicit investigation can lead not only to a richer narrative of the lives of our subjects, but also add crucial aspects to the understanding of classed subjectivities. (p. 89).

In this and the following three chapters, I will meld my own story as a “smart girl” into the narratives of the four girls I interviewed. As a critical feminist researcher, I will minimize the bold line drawn that separates researcher from the research participant. My story is their story.

Returning to the importance of AP tests, school districts, teachers, students, and parents are the primary stakeholders around these tests. Schools list the number of AP classes offered as a measure of academic excellence in order to attract families to move into the school district. These groups are immensely interested in these exams because getting high scores on these tests can save families thousands of dollars on college tuition. I discuss this at length because I reached all my research participants through AP classes and the importance of this elite academic environment continually pervades my interviews with the girls.

In the previous anecdote about her favorite teacher Ms. H, she has been out-maneuvered. Taylor respects that in a good teacher. She is well aware that she is a strategist as indicated in her discussion of how students consciously manipulate teachers. Clearly, this teacher cares enough about Taylor to be honest with her and give her a C thought Taylor is expecting an A. She does not interpret this as a reprimand but instead respects her teacher even more.

To fill out my ethnographic portrait, I asked Taylor who to interview to give me a richer view of how she sees the world. She recommended I talk to her senior economics teacher who is a woman and an excellent role model. Taylor (1995) argues that “women must allow themselves more vulnerability and risk relationships with girls” (p. 172). The bond between Taylor and her teacher also speaks to Gilligan’s (1982) and Noddings’ (1984) theories around the ethic of care.

In the following anecdote, another woman teacher comes to the rescue of her student at a crucial personal moment. One of the girls interviewed in Carlip’s (1995) book lost her brother in a drive-by shooting:

The pain from his death could never be measured from tears alone because his death took a piece of me with him. During this time in my life I felt a blanket of comfort in my life. I felt God’s grace carrying me through with His love and the greatest blessings that I had received from Him. She was my “Earth Angel.” (p. 327)

Her “angel” is a compassionate woman who saw the girl’s anguish and took her care of her. Clearly, woman teachers are able to have a profound effect in supporting their young women students.

Taylor's economics teacher felt secure enough herself as a teacher and a woman to develop a strong and close relationship with Taylor. She is pleased with her collaboration with this teacher her senior year, and the feeling is mutual.

Taylor and I just clicked. We have similar personalities; we find similar things funny. [She'd] send me things outside of class. When she had questions about economics, she'd send me e-mails. She'd send me funny things on the Internet to show the class. She would just show up outside of class talking. We just found a common ground. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Both inside and outside of class, they have built a special rapport.

She proves this in her support of Taylor and her projects at school. She says:

I'm the person in the background that she asks questions. If she's doing something here at school and needs an adult to sponsor her, that's been my role. I really don't do much when she does these things. We sit down, we talk, and I throw out options. I throw out suggestions, and she runs with it. Every once in a while I'll say, "OK, what do you want me to do?" I'll make a couple phone calls, talk to the principal, talk to whatever, but she does it. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Though the teacher minimizes her role, Taylor needs a faculty link for her all-school political actions. She also views her economics teacher as a resource, a problem-solver, and a power broker among the administrators at the school.

The gifted student as a pragmatic organizer.

Taylor organized three political actions at her high school her senior year. She put together a "Peace Fest," "A Walkout," and a "Take Back the Night" March on behalf of battered women. Each of these events is an excellent examples of Taylor taking risks – both politically and psychologically – and refusing to be silenced. She is "speaking the unspoken" (Gilligan, 1990, p.25). With the support of her peers, her teachers, and her administrators, Taylor avoids the possible social consequences of being lonely, isolated, or depressed (Gilligan, 1990). Her action gives her power to change a difficult and complex situation.

Taylor explains "Peace Fest:"

The Westborough Baptist Church came to our school to protest. It was on Rosh Ha Shanah so just [to] protest having Jewish kids at our school and also homosexual teachers. We found that out through the Internet. A bunch of students put together a Facebook page. We ended up creating a counter-protest the

same day. People came to school on Rosh Ha Shanah which is when we don't have school. We just had hundreds. That was cool. (Interview: 6/11/11)

She was also an integral activist around "A Walkout," staged in concert with the actions around collective bargaining rights in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2011. Again, Taylor explains:

Michael Moore was doing that walk-out event. He was encouraging all the high schools to walk-out. We put together a Facebook page, and over two hundred kids walked out of school in the middle of the day. They only walked out for one period. It was amazing how well we worked together. Actually, we decided that it would be more powerful if we walked out, stayed for one period, and then back in as opposed to everybody walking out and leaving. So we walked back out, and then everybody walked back in and went back to class. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Both of these events illustrate Taylor's ability to act quickly and effectively around a cause she supports. This relates to Dabrowski's (1964) theory around positive disintegration. She is hovering between level three, called spontaneous multilevel disintegration, which addresses self-examination and moral concerns and level four, named organized multilevel disintegration, which weds ideals and actions to a high level of self-awareness. She takes immediate action instead of despairing about social and political situations she finds unacceptable. According to Taylor (1995), this is a sign of healthy political and psychological resistance (p. 34).

Her political position as a fearless leader in the school arena also relates to Goffman's (1963) theories around stigma. He posits:

It has been suggested that in smallish groups the in-group deviant can be distinguished from other deviators, for unlike these others he is in a skewed relation to the moral life that is sustained on average by the members. Indeed, if one did want to consider other social roles along with the in-group deviant, it might be useful to turn to those roles whose performers are out of step with ordinary morality. (p. 142)

When Taylor perceives injustice, she acts, often single-handedly, and other students follow her lead. Goffman (1963) continues his description of exceptional persons by explaining that some

individuals are seen as declining voluntarily and openly to accept the social place accorded them and act irregularly and somewhat rebelliously in connection with our basic institutions - the family, the age-grade system, the stereotyped role division between the sexes. These are the "disaffiliates." Those who take this stand on their own and by themselves might be called eccentrics or "characters." (p. 143)

Again, I would not describe Taylor as eccentric or a “character” as Goffman does in today’s definition of these terms, but she is a strong-minded girl with firm convictions.

This becomes absolutely clear in Taylor’s single-handed organization of a “Take Back the Night” March in summer, 2011. She suffered through a confluence of personally painful events, which I will discuss later, that led to organizing the March. Returning to Taylor’s description, she says:

Now I’m working on putting together “Take Back the Night” at school. I’ve been using Facebook, and I’ve sent out over a thousand invitations. I already have two hundred people who have committed to coming. (Interview: 6/11/11)

She is working on this after her graduation from high school which only makes her dedication to her cause even more impressive.

Her economics teacher explains:

She did this March for the battered women, the “Take Back the Night” March. I was supposed to be helping her, but she had everything under control. She’d gotten all the donations. She went to all the restaurants. She’d sent out all the flyers. She talked to everybody that she needed to talk to. There was nothing for me to do. I sat in a meeting with the Principal and the Assistant Principal, and that was it.

(Interview: 9/9/11)

Taylor has done all the work to organize this March, and her teacher has a minimal role.

However, her teacher is much more than simply a bridge to school administrators. She expands her role to be personally supportive. This is a risk for her as schools are not designed to foster such student/teacher connectedness (Taylor et al, 1995, p. 172). The teacher explains, “Taylor came to me. It was just obvious one day that she was upset about something. I [said], “OK, what’s going on, what’s the deal here?” She told me about this incident” (Interview: 9/9/11).

Two personally upsetting events outside her academic life had affected Taylor deeply, and she felt a compelling need to act. Her teacher says:

Those two things went outside of her, outside of her academic life. When she told me she needed to do something, that’s when I [said] “Alright, well, what do you want to do?” She already had it planned out; she’d already looked into it. (Interview: 9/9/11)

This began the “Take Back the Night” March. Because Taylor cared so deeply about justice for those around her and was willing to take a leadership position without the fear of being stigmatized, she stands out as a gifted strategist and pragmatist even among her gifted peers. However, gifted programs often have a darker side as the next section explains.

The dangerous and cyclic nature of gifted programs.

Ever wise to how schools work or do not work to students’ advantages, Taylor understands the systemic problems of gifted programs. Speaking of her fellow students, she says:

They obviously have certain talents. It’s their willingness to expand and put the effort into those talents that makes them gifted. I feel like it’s discluding. It might disclude a whole group of kids who have the ability and just don’t know how to expand it. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Taylor, being the gifted girl, makes up a new vocabulary word “disclude” to make her point. Her response reflects Robert Sternberg’s (2004) awareness that giftedness takes many forms, so uniform assessments or programs are likely to be restricting and excessively narrow. Taylor recognizes the problems facing gifted programs in their lack of recognition of certain talents simply because they fall outside the parameters of what a school district has formally and administratively defined as gifted.

She explains how students are tracked early in their academic paths:

In middle school you take these MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) tests. They’re to identify who’s a gifted student and who’s not a gifted student. I had a certain score that put me in the Honors math class. I had also transferred schools, so it just happened that I was very good at what they were testing me on. People here were learning things that I hadn’t covered. They put me in this program. It was an accelerated program, but I had never covered the basics or the holes. I just kept being pushed. In the future those holes caused a struggle. In the long run, I don’t think I should have been in those math classes. I wasn’t exactly the type of gifted they were looking for. (Interview: 6/11/11)

This last sentence is an immensely intriguing and insightful statement. Suddenly, Taylor does not perceive herself as a particular “type of gifted” because she knows the demands of the program did not accurately reflect her math background and current knowledge. Her luck around the testing material and transferring schools gains her entry, but, by her own admission, her teachers do not teach her adequately. This is an excellent and painful example of well-intentioned educators compromising the success of a gifted middle school math program.

Taylor struggles to fill these gaps in her knowledge through her own initiative. She says:

A lot of it I had to go online and find on YouTube. They have a lot of tutorials. They asked you a question where you had to incorporate something that you should have learned a long time ago. I didn't have the skills to do that because I never learned it. I would realize I'm not as quick as the other kids. That's a bad feeling too. (Interview 6/11/11)

This affects her self-esteem at critical moments of her development as a student and a young girl. These are crucial turning points of psychological and emotional development as amply documented by Orenstein (1984) and Pipher (1994). Indeed, Reinherz et al. (1990) reports that in a survey of eighth- and tenth-graders girls are twice as likely as boys to report feeling sad and hopeless. This could certainly describe Taylor tutoring herself late into the night at age 12. Yet, she perseveres. Indeed, as Taylor states later in the interview, she never liked math. Perhaps her aversion to Math began with this distressing situation.

To manage this situation, her parents hired a tutor, but she is trapped into fooling her tutor in order to maintain her self-image and her status in the gifted program. Reaching out for help backfires because she can not reveal her limitations. She herself admits she has a "hubris" issue. She explains, "I went through all of my student career hating math, which is unfortunate because I think you can enjoy almost any subject if you just have the right mindset about it" (Interview: 6/11/11). In retrospect, Taylor is able to see how her own pride and need to maintain a certain self-image has hurt her studies overall. The situation also plants doubts about the effectiveness of gifted programs in educating its students appropriately. This is a systemic problem – not Taylor's. She learned insights about herself and about school systems from her negative experience with this math program.

Next, Taylor explains the complicated tracking system of her high school and its feeder schools. Essentially, good students are tracked into regular, accelerated, or Honors/AP at age 14 as they enter high school. After graduating from high school, she looks back at her middle school years with a brutal hindsight:

I can say this now because I don't go to school. That program went to hell. It was terrible. It did not work out for a lot of the kids. It was just too much too fast. A lot of the girls, a lot of the boys even, we found that we ended up being worse at math than kids that were in Algebra freshman year. They don't do it anymore. We were the experiment group. It failed really bad. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Administrative and curriculum program designers are trying to meet the distinct needs of their gifted students, but this is a delicate and trying process. The students get caught in a cycle of giftedness both internally and externally.

This can be dangerous for them academically and personally. If a student's sense of self-worth is too intimately tied into her or his academic performance, the youngster will suffer as the success of well-intentioned innovative programs ebbs and flows. The middle school gifted program administrators would certainly be disappointed in Taylor's frank opinion of their program.

Because of the shifting definition of giftedness as discussed in Chapter Two, testing has been controversial for decades. Taylor clearly sees the shortcomings of this program, and the school system's inability to meet her needs. She is candid and honest now that she is a graduate, freed of the school system's failure to meet her expectations. At last, she is able to declare openly that this math program "failed." She is also astute, self-aware, and humble enough to admit her own hubris around dazzling a tutor.

Giftedness and the formation of self-identity.

Riley (1992) says "The question of the politics of identity could be rephrased as a question of rhetoric." Taylor appears to be caught in the "cycle of giftedness." She is trapped in a label of "gifted identity." When asked what she thinks of being labeled as a gifted student, she combines giftedness with having a strong work ethic.

Taylor explains:

It's an ego boost initially. A gifted student is just someone willing to work. They obviously might have certain talents, but their willingness to expand and put the effort into those talents makes them gifted.

(Interview: 3/1/11)

Gifted education experts agree that giftedness requires more than high IQ, that giftedness has non-cognitive components along with cognitive ones, and that environment plays a key role in gifted performance (Sternberg, 2004). Taylor fits this profile; in fact, she creates her own academic and activist environment which pushes her performance still further. She demonstrates this through her three school-wide actions discussed previously. She acts to bring about change, and this action builds her leadership skills and strengthens her sense of identity and confidence in herself as a young woman. She refuses to retreat into silence and resignation (Gilligan, 1982; 2011).

Taylor fights to remain connected to the world around her by committing "acts of resistance and courage" (Taylor et al., 1995, p.34). Her actions are automatic; she sees the problem and immediately wants to find a solution. Taylor moves into hooks' (1990) "site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" (p. 145). She explains that those living on the margin of their traditional role as women or scholars "come to know this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfills desire. We

are transformed, individually” (hooks, 1990, p. 153). Lubiano (1991) urges girls to develop new languages and create new spaces for resistance. They have the power to reconstruct knowledge and power relations (Heckman, 2004). As discussed later, Taylor creates new political, personal, and academic spaces through her organizing around Facebook. In the meantime, Taylor has been transformed into an activist student organizer by challenging the status quo.

Acutely aware of her position as an esteemed gifted student, she is aware of the informal privileges of being in the gifted track. Once more Taylor explains:

When there are opportunities that teachers know about, I will be one of those first kids that they talk to. I went on the German Exchange program. I know that everyone had the opportunity to do it, but Honors kids knew about it first. (Interview: 3/1/11)

This is a good example of how she is able to enrich and broaden her own world. Since she is in the gifted track, teachers open Taylor to new opportunities inaccessible to other students.

Being labeled as gifted has its blatant advantages as she explains:

Obviously everyone wants to feel special. That’s how you get caught up in that gifted track. My eighth grade Honors Lit teacher called us the *crème de la crème*. You get built up a lot, and you start to feel really good about yourself. It’s also a little bit of stress too, that you have to keep up these expectations. The danger in it is that school and these classes become, especially with labels like “special little eighth graders” or “my smart kids,” about appearances and about labels as opposed to learning. It was like a rewards system. Even if I didn’t understand something, I would want to appear to understand it.

(Interview: 6/11/11)

At this point, learning is about the appearance of learning rather than the actual acquisition of knowledge. Though only in eighth grade, she knows she is caught in a cycle of needing praise and support. “I’d be trying to get that praise” (Interview: 6/11/11). Taylor demonstrates her maturity in distinguishing what is actual learning and what is merely the appearance of learning; she knows the difference. Taylor recognizes that only good work deserves praise, not simply the appearance of good work. She states:

I was a proud little kid, so I didn’t want to go ask my teachers for help. There’s that whole stigma that if you need to ask for help, then you must not be smart. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor herself uses the concept of stigma to subtly refer to those surrounding her. She, being such a small child, thankfully is unaware of the stigma of being so intelligent in an anti-intellectual society (Hofstadter, 1963). Since nothing visible distinguishes her from her classmates, the issue of visibility is complicated. Goffman (1963) explains:

Traditionally, the question of passing has raised the issue of the "visibility" of a particular stigma, that is, how well or how badly the stigma is adapted to provide means of communicating and that the individual possesses it. Since it is through our sense of sight that the stigma of others most frequently becomes evident, the term visibility is perhaps not too misleading. Actually, the more general term, "perceptibility" would be more accurate, and "evidentness" more accurate still. (p. 48)

Taylor certainly perceives that she is more intelligent than the average student as is evident in her grades and her high status as "English Student of the Year" among her peers. Taylor, through the strong support of her family, teachers, and peers, weathers the traumas of being such an intelligent girl in a sexist anti-intellectual society. I will discuss this further in the Personal Issues section. She recognizes that maintaining a certain self-image among her those who support her brings on significant personal stress. Again, I will elaborate on this further in the Personal Issues section of this chapter.

Taylor finds that Facebook also reduces her stress through her collaborative work with other students. Her sole definition of media is Facebook, which serves multiple purposes in her life. When I press her about the possible affect of TV, radio, books, newspapers, magazines, and music on her self-image, she responds emphatically:

TV has a reputation for influencing you. TV had the most minimal impact on me. Where media [is concerned], if Facebook is included, it would definitely be Facebook. We started to use Facebook more wisely. You could do those collaborative things outside of class. (Interview: 6/11/11)

I will address Taylor's creative use of Facebook to reduce her stress around academic demands later in this section. Returning to the media's impact on girls and young women, Taylor appears to have emerged unscathed from the media that denigrates girls and their accomplishments. As explained in the Introduction, girls are more likely than boys to say that they are not smart enough for their career goals and move into adolescence with a diminished sense of their worth as individuals (Sadker, 1994; Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hamner, 1990). Despite being educated in a curriculum that does not directly reflect girls' experiences (AAUW, 1992; AAUW,

1999; AAUW, 2008, AAUW Educational Foundation, 2000; APA, Taskforce on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007), Taylor thrives in a media and school environment that is not especially responsive to nor supportive of her specific needs. How has she immunized herself from the negative messages surrounding her about her capabilities? How has she risen above a curriculum not tailored to her needs? I will address these issues in the Personal Issues section of this chapter.

Instead of disempowering her, Taylor uses the media of Facebook to organize her three school-wide political events. This is tremendously empowering and gives her a sense of the power of her own voice (McElroy-Johnson, 1993). Her anger around a socially unjust situation drives her to act. Because anger is a part of self-respect, entitlement, and clarity of thinking around wrong doing, anger is “the essential political emotion” (Lyman, 1981, p. 61). Girls must lose this if they are to move easily into mainstream culture which has specific ideas about a girl’s or woman’s proper role in society despite all the ostensible advances for women in the past fifty years. Taylor holds on to her anger and acts politically. According to Laura Brown (1998), this is a critical developmental point for girls and educators, especially women, who need to listen and learn from this outspokenness and their unique and creative forms of resistance. Taylor has this crucial support in her economics teacher at precisely the right moments, both personally and academically. Again, I will address this more comprehensively in the upcoming personal Issues section.

A key developmental turning point at a young age.

Often, Taylor appears wise beyond her years and is aware of the power of information at an early age. She reached a turning point in second grade around the 9/11 World Trade Center attack. This is similar to Ying’s early realization of her family’s higher socioeconomic status because she had a mechanical pencil while her classmates had the school issued yellow HB-2. This is also reminiscent of my own realization in second grade that Dan, the other smartest student in the class, was treated differently from me, the smartest girl in the class. Though only eight years old at the time, Taylor felt a need to speak out. She explains:

I used to go to a Catholic school. This was right about the time 9/11 happened. As a little kid, that’s a tough thing to understand. At Catholic school you get a very one-sided view because I was being taught by a nun at the time. I remember talking to my Dad about it. He said, “Well, I think the question you have to ask yourself is why did that happen? Why do people do what they do?” He gave me newspaper articles to read, and I started reading Google News. I became addicted to knowing what was happening because I

didn't want to be left in the shadows. One day during school, they were talking about a suicide bomber in the Middle East. My teacher was saying, "A terrible person must've done this." I raised my hand and asked, "But do you know why they did it?" I got to talk for awhile. I felt very smart, and I felt that I might have changed other people's minds. Other kids were talking to me about it. I felt this as liberating. You can't disillusion me because knowledge is power. I want to know everything that's going on. I feel like no one can take advantage of me then. (Interview: 3/11/11)

Taylor wants to discover the truth about current events from reliable news sources in second grade at age eight to understand the world unfiltered through her teacher's lens. This is extraordinary in such a young child. A hallmark of giftedness (Silverman, 1989), this is quite unusual. This was the same age when I noticed my second grade teacher treated me differently from Dan simply because I was a girl. Just as I learned some difficult lessons as a little girl, Taylor came away with some important lessons as an eight-year-old.

She carries this lesson from her second grade class 10 years later into her current study habits. Taylor explains:

You'll read the books in class, but then, you'll get the article every so often that you have to analyze in class. You should go out to the nearest underground bookstore or Google News or Huffington Post. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor is acutely aware of the value of multiple perspectives on one specific issue and recognizes the importance of finding some version of the truth. Reality is simply a social construction. This relates to Dabrowski's (1964) theory around overexcitabilities (OE), a mode of functioning or an aspect of personality through which a person interprets the world (Daniels, 2003). Taylor has an intellectual OE. She has a heightened need to seek truth and understanding, to gain knowledge, analyze, and synthesize information. Though this may appear to be obsessive behavior to the average student doing a simple assignment, this is perfectly natural to Taylor because of her intellectual curiosity. "I feel like no one can take advantage of me" (Interview: 3/11/11). This displays her willingness to question authority and the very system she knows so well. Taylor is happy to do the extra work required to arrive at her version of the truth.

Though not directly discussed in my interviews with Taylor herself, she may also have a psychomotor OE, a heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system. According to her economics teacher, Taylor was a soccer star before she injured both her knees and had to stop competing athletically both at the school and club level.

Though this may seem tangential, psychomotor OEs are more prevalent among boys (Miller et al., 1994) than girls. Once more, Taylor has defied a sexist stereotype about girls not being confident about their ability to handle their bodies. She has proven her success both academically and physically by her reputation and status as an excellent soccer player.

When I asked about the impact her story in second grade had on the other students, Taylor is thoughtful and humble. She says:

I don't want to sound pretentious and say that it had one. I hope it had a certain impact. I hope it had the same impact on them as it had on me. They went home, thought about it, and looked stuff up. Granted, I don't know if they did. (Interview: 6/11/11)

This story is remarkable in its impact on Taylor herself. She woke herself up, at age eight with the help of her father, to the complexities of the world in a very brave way. By confronting her teacher, she was questioning the validity of what she was being taught. Dabrowski (1964) argues, "An awareness of the effect of multilevel disintegration on the inner psychic milieu is of basic importance for educators" (p. 23). At ages seven and eight, gifted children are struggling to make sense of the world around them with the assistance of supportive parents and, unfortunately, flummoxed teachers who are often overwhelmed by the curious minds of their gifted students.

Successful and meaningful collaboration among peers.

Facebook offers advantages academically and personally. Taylor and her peers do massive organizing around the demanding work of AP classes and the volumes of homework the AP teachers assign students to prepare them for the AP tests in the spring of each school year. She finds Facebook helpful academically, and, along with her classmates, organizes collaborative homework events using Facebook. Taylor views Facebook as empowering for both herself and her classmates.

She offers an example of peer editing with one other top English student in her class. Taylor explains:

We get a lot of positive feedback in front of everyone from our teachers. That establishes her credibility as a good student. She's a really talented writer. With that Facebook and collaboration outside of class, I'll send her a paper. She'll send me her paper. We discuss that paper back and forth. We edit it together. I'm not looking at her paper as a friend; I'm looking at it as a colleague. She's looking at my paper the same way. I would rather have her evaluate my paper before I turn it in or send it to college, than find out later

that it could have been better. She's become part of the process of me succeeding. I would rather have her be frank and honest than lie to me about it and tell me it's good. (Interview: 6/11/11)

This interaction, however, is more than academic. She trusts this young woman as a student and also as a friend. Taylor's writing is far too important to her to give her paper to just anyone for feedback. She carefully establishes that in her discussion of how the teachers praise her classmate's work. Positive peer interactions are crucial to a gifted student's performance (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 540).

Next, Taylor explains the complicated process of how teams of students would collaborate around homework in specific classes and in preparation for the AP tests. These homework assignments would create a sense of community and camaraderie, which is essential in high school (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 42). Once more, Taylor describes the organization process:

In U.S. History we used to write out summaries for entire chapters. These would be 30 or 40 pages of an outline. Nobody would want to do that. We would break up the pages and then turn in the outline for him to check. We got a group of 15 or 16 kids together, and we would designate who had to read what portions. In the end, you ended up reading two pages. Sometimes multiple classes worked on the same project.

Everybody would send it to the same place, and you would just edit it. (Interview: 6/11/11)

A tremendously creative use of Facebook to help students cope with the volume of work assigned as they organize themselves behind the scenes of the school day, this also builds a unique rapport among the students. The student belongs to a discrete group. This, in turn, helps the student in her or his own evolving sense of self (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 42).

Taylor, the classic strategist, explains how she and her classmates manipulate the teacher's system. As I mentioned earlier, as a former AP teacher I know how AP testing works and how students can prepare themselves effectively for these college level examinations. She explains:

You would get the AP book. You could just read that. You had your summary that everybody wrote together. Get that out because he wasn't going to teach you on the minute details or wording of the book.

The major points were all there in the outlines, so it usually worked pretty well. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor emphasizes that this approach makes her classes "less overwhelming" (Interview: 6/11/11) and helps her manage her time effectively. Taylor easily admits that technology "was always very helpful because I don't think I could have done that much work by myself (Interview: 6/11/11)." Clearly, Taylor does not fit the stereotype of

girls being intimidated by technology (AAUW, 2008). To her, Facebook is a safe space to organize, to lead, and to learn comfortably from her peers. Contrary to myths about girls and young women underutilizing technology, Taylor and her peers have created a safe space for themselves to cope both academically and personally. Also, Taylor used Facebook most effectively to organize her three school-wide activist events as previously discussed.

Overall, Taylor presents a picture of gifted students devising strategies to overcome heavy work loads. They work together effectively as a team to circumvent heavy homework assignments and AP test preparation. This builds a sense of community and purpose among them, reducing isolation during stressful times (McAdams, 1987). Almost intuitively, these unique students have devised a coping strategy that enables them to be successful academically and a member of an important community of learners outside the parameters of the school house.

Summary.

In this Systemic Issues section, I have focused on six discrete sections that reflect the challenges Taylor faces on an organizational level. Each of the areas represents a sociological issue that must be addressed systemically. I discussed giftedness and the positive role of teachers, the gifted student as a pragmatic organizer, the dangerous and cyclic nature of gifted programs, giftedness and the formation of self identity, a key developmental turning point at a young age, and successful and meaningful collaboration among peers. These discussions all reflect the systemic nature of our schools or the sociology influencing behavior in schools each day. Next, I turn to the Personal Issues section examining the personal or psychological issues which challenge Taylor on a daily basis both inside and outside the school house.

Personal Issues: Understanding and Navigating One's Psychological Identity

Personal challenge.

Turning to the more personal side of Taylor to see what motivates her to be such a high academic achiever, in this section I will examine her sophomore year meltdown to success in crafting an identity, math anxiety and societal expectations, high expectations and the reproduction of education, the importance of education as a means to an end, defining and breaking away, and coping with a confluence of personal events. I will analyze the psychology behind Taylor's academic success, using her own words to retain her strong clear voice. This is critical in that feminist scholarship has only begun to listen to the voices of girls. Young women resist and speak out "alone and sometimes together" (Fine, 1992, p. 178). Challenging the social norm is risky because they

are challenging society's construction of reality (Brown, 1998). Girls like Taylor have another valuable but rare and rich perspective which needs to be added to the research literature. Let us start with Taylor's meltdown.

Sophomore year melt-down to success in crafting an identity.

She has a dreadful realization about how to manage her academic schedule in her AP Chemistry class her sophomore year. Taylor explains:

As a sophomore, I was still struggling with figuring out how to study. I wasn't really getting a grip. In middle school, I had always been smart. I didn't need to study in order to do well. Freshman year it was the same deal. I did study, but I didn't have to study hard. Sophomore year that all changed. I wasn't used to the work load I got in Chemistry. If you missed one part, it was a snowball effect; it just kept going. I had to learn how to prioritize and organize my life. The classes became more independent: I wasn't used to doing independent work.

(Interview: 6/11/11)

Though only 15, Taylor, evidently, has been coasting on her intellect with a minimum of work for several years. The first class that actually challenges her upsets her image of herself as a "smart" student. This class requires a new work ethic and a certain amount of independence which offers her the opportunity to get organized and serious about her academics. She continues her explanation using Freudian terms learned in her AP Psychology class:

I struggled. Balancing that id and superego portion, I wanted to go out and play. Not doing well in school sometimes broke into the emotional part of living. You get stressed, and everything seems to fall apart.

(Interview: 6/11/11)

She freely admits how disturbing and emotionally unsettled she is. When she is talking about this, however, she tells this story quite dispassionately. She is almost another person. Reminiscent of Gilligan's (1982) theory that adolescent girls lose their sense of self and connection to the world by taking on other identities considered socially acceptable, she has created a separate persona in telling this upsetting story. Taylor sets herself the goal of being successful academically and creating a new identity for herself both internally and externally. Earning that C in AP Chemistry teaches Taylor a valuable and unforgettable lesson. She now explains modestly:

I was too proud of a person; I have a hubris issue. I just had to take it down a notch and understand that I can't know everything. It was humbling. I definitely came out with some great information. In the long run, it was good. It taught me just to be comfortable with everything about me. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor comes to understand her limitations at the early age of 15. This is similar to her realization that knowledge is power at age eight when she challenges her teacher around issues concerning the 9/11 World Trade Center attack. A precocious eight year old, she is well aware, perhaps too aware, of the difficult world around her.

Yet as an adolescent, she is suffering and stressed. Since she derives much of her self-image from being a good student, this takes a terrible toll on her confidence. Though seemingly unaware, she is crafting a new identity for herself as an academic achiever. She has trouble organizing her time and balancing what is most important.

Working hard to prioritize, she explains her situation:

Over the years, especially junior and senior year, you get better at that. When you become more comfortable with your agenda and your schedule, becoming more confident as a person, it's just easier to manage school. (Interview: 6/11/11)

She credits her Mom and her junior year teachers for helping her re-build her identity as a high achiever (Boocock, 1980). Taylor simply states, "My Mom encouraged me to go talk to my teachers more" (6/11/11).

In retrospect, she is quite aware of the power in maintaining the image of being a gifted student as discussed in an earlier section. She says:

Junior year I took advantage of my teachers more. I was aggressive in asking them how to help. I had the confidence to say that I needed help. I wasn't ashamed. Overcoming that opened up all these other doors of maturity for me. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor readily admits that she has "a hubris issue" (Interview: 6/11/11). Is this innate or the product of years of being in accelerated classes? This is a difficult question to answer at this point.

During her journey to shape a better academic or gifted identity, she turns to teachers for support (Betts & Neihart, 1988; Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). Taylor believes her teachers see her more as an individual because she has cultivated such healthy relationships with them. She is quite comfortable in her expanded relationship beyond the usual restricted teacher/student dynamic. For Taylor, these relationships are much more fluid. She explains:

If you take the initiative and open yourself up to people, they're going to see you as an individual rather than just another student. I could go find some of my freshman or sophomore teachers, and they might know who I am. Maybe not. Even my middle school teachers. My junior and senior teachers know who I am. We're already Facebook friends after I graduated. (Interview: 6/11/11)

She is clearly an individual in her classes and not merely one more anonymous student sitting at one more anonymous desk. This sense of self in her classes gives her great confidence because her teachers are able to see her as a multi-faceted person with many interests. They think of her well-being both in and outside of the school house as a scholar and a young woman.

As Erikson's (1963) theory posits, identity development is central during adolescence. The importance of education grounds Taylor in her view of herself and her worldview. Her personal identity is intimately wrapped up in being labeled a gifted student. Taylor explains:

I've just grown up in a family where education's always been the number one priority.

Education is always first. Now that I'm in the later years of high school, I've expanded my education beyond the classroom. I've taken classes like economics and psychology. I didn't really start finding out who I was, and I haven't even probably reached the tip of the iceberg yet. When you start to know, understand what you like, what you want, you feel yourself expanding as a person. Education is an extension of who I am. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Once more, education reflects Taylor's identity. She explains still further:

I am satisfied with the work I've done junior and senior year. There's a passion behind it. When I'm doing my homework, I like it. I'm interested as opposed to "Oh, God, I have to do my homework." When it's not an obstacle to your life, it's easier to attack and enjoy. (Interview: 3/11/11)

At this point in her high school career, homework and school are not "obstacles" to Taylor, but something she relishes. This is a crucial turning point for Taylor on several levels. Before her sophomore year, she did well without studying. Now working harder to get good grades, she appreciates hard work and finds this innately satisfying. According to Renzulli (1978), one of the components of being gifted is a high level of task commitment. Despite the steady encouragement of her Mom and junior and senior year teachers, Taylor has come to this realization distinctly on her own.

Revealingly, she is aware of her strengths and as well as her weaknesses. Though Taylor has thought about her good qualities, when I ask for a description of herself, her response is uncharacteristically tenuous. She pauses a great deal:

I feel that my knowledge might be a mile wide. I want to encompass as much as I can. There's no limit to what I need to know. Basically, I don't want to limit myself. I would never want to cut myself off from any option, and that comes from my parents. I'm tenacious. (Interview: 3/1/11)

If her classes aren't going well, she is willing to change her behavior to be successful. Taylor has shed the hubris of her younger self. Speaking again of her C in AP Chemistry sophomore year, she explains, "That's never happening again. I'm flexible. I'm willing to change, to look at myself, and to critically analyze the outcome of my efforts" (Interview: 3/1/11). Her willingness and ability to step outside of her immediate situation and analyze what is wrong or right is critical. To have such self-awareness at 15 is rare. This dovetails with her precociousness at age eight. Like most gifted individuals, Taylor is ahead of the curve of normal intellectual, psychological, and emotional development (Silverman, 1989).

In addition, Taylor is extroverted which works well for her in terms of being a strategist. She knows and likes many different types of classmates at her school. Nonetheless, she views herself as contradictory and indecisive at times. She clarifies:

I'm outgoing. I talk to different people. What I don't like about myself is sometimes I'm a bundle of contradictions. Do I want coffee? Do I not want coffee? Do I want to take that class? I don't want to take that class. Do I want to be a lawyer? Do I want to be a politician? A mathematician? I don't know. I drive myself crazy with a thousand indecisions that run through my head. I want to be more decisive.

(Interview: 3/1/11)

Taylor's sense of identity is still in flux. Her flexibility indicates that she is still mapping out the boundaries of her identity. Despite her wealth of self-knowledge, she remains unsure of herself in certain dimensions. Despite her high intelligence, she remains the prototypical adolescent.

Taylor recognizes that she has matured over her years in high school and has learned to manage the high stress levels associated with AP classes. She reflects:

I used to be very stressed. I couldn't make up my mind. Should I do math homework first? I had so many things that I'd just sit there doing nothing. Junior and senior year I learned to relax. I'll start doing the first thing that comes out of my backpack. I've made more me time, and that's helped me balance. My grades haven't suffered at all; they've probably gotten better. (Interview: 3/1/11)

She goes into a paralysis over all her homework until she has learned to modulate her own stress around her schoolwork. Taylor manages her own stress which leads to positive results. She has found productive studying environments in her immediate community that accommodate her need for long hours of focus and concentration. However, math anxiety still lurks in the minds of American girls.

Math anxiety and societal expectations.

Taylor does have her limitations; she is the first to admit to them. When asked if she might be immune from math anxiety, she responds immediately, "Oh, no! There's definitely an idea, 'Oh, boys are better at math than girls.' When we were trying to find spots to sit in class, I always try to sit next to a guy" (Interview: 6/11/11). But, in contrast to this comment, Taylor immediately offers a positive story of a classmate who is excellent in math. She explains:

I had one girl in my class who was just on top of it. She was incredible and wants to be an engineer. That rule didn't apply to her. It just didn't phase her. Her family is in engineering. That doesn't really apply to girls if you don't want it to. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Returning to the failed math acceleration program at her middle school, Taylor reminds us, "We girls, and most guys even, ended up worse at math than kids that were in Algebra freshman year" (Interview: 6/11/11). She emphasizes that even the boys were overwhelmed by the program's pace, subtly inferring that they should be better than the girls.

Though suffering from the math anxiety miasma still surrounding girls today, Taylor feels spared by the media's (AAUW Educational Foundation, 2000) emphasis on girls' poorer abilities in math by crediting her parents and her school system. She explains:

My parents always said, "You have to be good at math." When we have people come to start signing up for classes in eighth grade, they try to encourage us specifically to take the STEM program, which is Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. They always say girls are few and far between in these sciences. If you want to get money and a job, you have better chances than guys right now. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor believes this strategy is effective because her little sister takes STEM classes. She elaborates about her sister, "She has a couple friends. She says in her engineering class, she's one of two girls (Interview: 6/11/11)."

Boys continue to dominate the class. Despite the earnest and persuasive recruitment by teachers, Taylor believes math anxiety is still effective in crippling girls' ideas about their abilities in math, science, and technology.

She shrewdly links this subject to finding gender appropriate role models and connects the importance of gender in certain disciplines in high school. Taylor explains:

You always have boy teachers in math, and you're looking for role models again. Teachers are huge.

They've probably been more influential than my parents. If you're looking for those little nuggets of praise in high school, you're looking for an adult to connect to. It's always been easier for me as a girl to connect to my girl teachers. (Interview: 6/11/11)

This echoes Forster's adage, "Connect; only connect." Taylor readily connects with her female teachers, as is evident in her bond with her economics teacher. This, however, may not be so easy for these teachers, as schools are not designed to encourage such student/teacher connectedness (Taylor, 1995). Taylor elaborates, "Male professionals in math and science can be intimidating" (Interview: 6/11/11). When Taylor uses the word "intimidating," I am surprised as she appears quite fearless about her academic abilities. I wonder if her "hubris" issue is really a false bravado, a mask she dons to hide her insecurities. Returning to the topic at hand, the importance of women role models for girls, particularly in traditionally male areas such as math, science, and technology, can not be stated strongly enough. Yet Taylor rallies to give this topic a positive spin:

On the other hand, some girls see that as a challenge and an opportunity. Maybe it's just the way it's pitched recently. Again, I've been really lucky to have parents who have encouraged me in almost the opposite direction. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor easily credits her parents with encouraging her to take math classes and being supportive through out her schooling (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000; 2002).

Issues around math anxiety, however, remain unclear. From Taylor's anecdotes, math anxiety appears to be more of a myth floating around social expectations because she feels she receives positive attention from her teachers simply because she is a girl, explaining:

I've been treated differently but not in a negative way. Always in a positive way. If you have a guy teacher in math or science classes, he says, "You guys, this girl's gonna kick your butt." You always get more attention or praise. That can be patronizing, but it felt genuine to me. The school's trying to encourage girls, so I've been lucky in that aspect. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Clearly, Taylor's teachers are working diligently to undo girls' anxiety around math. Yet girls need greater enrollment overall (Fox, Benbow, & Perkins, 1983). Indeed, in the next chapter, Rebecca, who is very good in math and science, is often the only girl in her classroom.

Because Taylor has worked hard in math, she, ever the strategist, has developed a plan to get through high school. The plan, ironically, backfires. She explains:

The big plan was never to take a math class. I went through school hating math. This is unfortunate because you can enjoy almost any subject if you just have the right mindset. I thought I'll just stick these classes out, take post-Calc topics, and never have to take math again. I'm actually going to take math now; I'm going to take Statistics at (University). (Interview: 6/11/11)

One of the first courses of her college academic career will be math. Because of the high expectations Taylor holds for herself, she will perform well academically.

High expectations and the reproduction of education.

Taylor believes her high achievement and positive self-image starts with high expectations. First, those high expectations are externally imposed and, second, gradually become internalized. Taylor explains, "I think it starts off external, but then it again becomes internal. It just builds that sense of self and being and appreciation for learning" (Interview: 6/11/11). These expectations build around the label of being gifted also. I remind her that she and her classmates are constantly told that they are "the crème de la crème." She begins to believe this as an eighth grader; thus, she begins to perform at this higher level. Teachers consistently empower their young students by labeling them "the smart little eighth graders." The prophecy is fulfilled.

Her economics teacher summarizes her as "a pretty unique kid (Interview: 9/9/11)." Her teacher clearly admires Taylor's accomplishments:

She's incredible. I nominated her here for a leadership award, and she didn't get it. When they went through the list of accomplishments that she, the winner, had done, it totally paled in comparison to Taylor's accomplishments. She's just pretty remarkable. It just comes from within. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Though Taylor's parents are well-educated, her senior teacher believes her desire to achieve "comes from her" (Interview: 9/9/11). This intrinsic drive to succeed is central to Taylor's image of herself (Renzulli, 1978).

When asked if she might accomplish more if she chooses, her senior teacher responds easily, "Whatever she decides

to do, she does [laughter]. She doesn't just take opportunities; she makes them" (Interview: 9/9/11). The critical difference between Taylor and other students is her creativity and resourcefulness.

Seeing what is special about Taylor, she concludes, "You see kids that are smart. I've had lots of kids that were smarter than she is, but she is smart with a social conscience and motivation. All three of those make her unique" (Interview: 9/9/11). Meeting Renzulli's (1978) definition of gifted, Taylor clearly fits his profile. Her teacher recognizes Taylor's gifts and appreciates them deeply.

She has faced high expectations most of her academic life. Her Dad has been especially significant in this area. She explains:

My Dad thinks too highly of me, my brother, and sister. I struggle with something, and he says, "You can do this; this is easy for you." He believes in me more than I believe in myself. (Interview: 3/1/11)

In a sense, her father's overconfidence in her abilities move Taylor forward. She considers him one of her important role models. Taylor's Mom also impacted her academic success, but Taylor explains this differently.

She says:

My Mom is the boss of the house, the law-enforcer. As much as I look up to my Dad, he wasn't the one that stayed up with me 'til 11 o'clock at night trying to figure out homework. My Mom would sit there, and we'd go over and over things. I used to hate it. Without it, I would not have done nearly as well, especially in middle school. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Her Mom has done a superb job of conditioning Taylor to do her homework efficiently. Clearly, Taylor's Mom had an immense impact on her study habits.

Shifting from high expectations from her family, Taylor illustrates her high expectations of herself in an anecdote about learning languages. Of course, by now Taylor has internalized these high expectations, and they play out in her academic life. Taylor continues:

I took Spanish in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. I just felt so dumb. I had these great thoughts in my head, and I could not articulate them. I was too ashamed to tell the teacher, so I never spoke up in class. Freshman year I decided I was gonna change that when I took German. They encouraged more speaking up. I was talking to Frau A. about it, and she said "Yah, what do you expect? You have a twenty word vocabulary. Just say what you want in English, and I'll tell you how to say it in German." (Interview: 3/1/11)

This is a revelation for Taylor as she becomes more confident in her interactions with her teachers. As she matures, she approaches her teachers more often for help. They are, of course, pleased to help because Taylor is an excellent student. She is no longer “dumb” or silenced by her inability to speak up. She has literally found a way to voice her thoughts as Gilligan defines the concept as “a powerful psychological instrument and channel, connecting inner and outer worlds (1993, p. xvi). Voice gives her power in shaping her image of herself (McElroy-Johnson, 1993).

Taylor is becoming increasingly comfortable with her image of herself as an academic leader. As Leys (1992) argues in a seminal article about gender and identity “the concept of the self as a multiple of component traits or dispositions lends itself to the common-sense, essentialist idea that there exists a ‘real’ or ‘normal’ self that can be identified” (p. 191). This is a critical developmental moment emotionally and psychologically in her maturity as both a student and a person.

As mentioned earlier, Taylor equates high expectations with praise:

Especially in cases when you have strict parents that are especially hard on you. AP kids just feel their parents are always pushing them. You get praise from your teachers that you wouldn’t normally get at home. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor recognizes that real praise must be earned properly through hard work (AAUW, 1999).

When asked if other’s expectations have influenced her, Taylor is clear with her response:

Most definitely. I think if people expect a lot of you, there’s that pressure to either fulfill or go past those expectations. This can be a lot of stress, but it provides a greater sense of confidence. I ask smart classmates for help. I expect the right answer from them. It’s the same with me in English. When people come to me, they expect that I’m going to have the right answer or at least a good critique. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Taylor is obviously aware of her strengths in academic subjects.

As mentioned earlier, Taylor’s parents are both well-educated. However, her Dad’s side has a family full of high achievers. She explains,

On my Dad’s side, all my cousins are doing the same thing. We were all in AP classes; all my uncles and aunts have done the same things. It’s not anything amazing or astounding; it’s what I should be doing.

There’s a pressure to keep up on my Dad’s side, especially with my older cousins. I know my one cousin got into (Ivy League), so the bar is set high. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Despite all these pressures, Taylor has developed coping skills to manage the high expectations demanded of her. As her economics teacher explained, Taylor's accomplishments are quite unusual, and she has supportive parents who believe in her academically. Taylor clearly fits the description of being an elite student among other elite students. Education is a top priority in Taylor's world.

The importance of education as a means to an end.

Taylor clearly recognizes the importance of education in her life as repeatedly emphasized by her parents (Chan, 2005) and knows the value of education in achieving her goals both long and short term. She also sees the relevance of education in a spontaneous almost immediate sense. Taylor explains:

In particular, I remember sophomore year I took AP Psych. I had these moments where I'd be talking to my friends or listening to my Mom yell at me. I thought we learned about this today. "You're going through some cognitive dissonance right now, aren't you?" It drove my parents nuts because I started analyzing everything they were doing. Definitely, it was cool to learn something in the classroom and, five minutes later, actually experience it. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Taylor is learning to enjoy education for the sheer joy of learning. This is part of her maturation process and the most recent definition of being classified as a gifted student (Sternberg, 2004).

She has a remarkable ability to synthesize everything learned her senior year, reflecting Dabrowski's (1964) OE in the intellectual area. She explains:

I'm taking Post-Calculus Topics, so we're doing Game Theory. I also learned about the basics of this in Economics but not the math. It was cool to see how the math corresponds with the idea. My courses have been over-lapping nicely this year. We were talking about what's environmentally friendly isn't necessarily always economically friendly and negative externalities in Economics. That corresponds too; these classes supplement each other. Since I'm looking into International Relations and development, having those supplements is beneficial because I get a glimpse into what my future might be. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Not only is Taylor easily able to connect concepts she is learning in different courses, but she uses this learning to preview her future studies.

She returns to crediting her parents for instilling in her the value of education (Chan, 2005) and states:

Honestly, it's my Mom and Dad. I remember hating them about it when I was little. "Why do I have to stay at home on a Saturday and do homework?" If you don't go to college and get good grades, then you're shutting yourself off to so many options. "We don't care what you do in life if it makes you happy, but we want you to have the option to do anything." There's been that emphasis which is something I've come to appreciate. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Despite her resentment when she was younger, she is now able to appreciate her parents' priorities and realizes their value supporting her high achievements. This is especially significant because such a large part of Taylor's identity is invested in her view of herself as a very good student as discussed earlier.

Ever the consummate strategist, Taylor has her future education carefully mapped. She explains:

During the application process, I looked for schools that had a strong emphasis in International Relations. I applied to my top three. Hopefully, I'll get into one. I'll go there, and they will teach me. International Relations is a broad topic, so they'll help me find a focus. It might be Economics 'cause I've enjoyed my classes this year. First I'll find that focus. From there it's just about taking initiative. (Interview: 3/1/11)

This echoes her economics teacher's statement about how Taylor creates her own opportunities to take action. This also harkens back to philosopher Hannah Arendt's view "of action as creative of new relations and new realities" (Honig, 1992).

Taylor recognizes that her education has given her a broader perspective about ways to live her life in general. She explains:

I have two perspectives on life: how life can be lived and the value of education. You don't necessarily need to be collegiate to be happy. I spent some time in Germany, and people are OK with not going to college. If you're going to be a business person, you don't need to go to college in Germany. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Her trip overseas to another culture, which values education for different reasons, broadens her own view about the role of education in her life. Taylor recognizes that American society has high societal expectations around who goes to college and why. She sees the simple American equation; college + success = happiness as a fallacy. She is aware of this perspective, and the many ways one can simply live in the world. Taylor steps out of her own culture and views the purpose of education from an entirely different perspective.

Despite the immense influence of her parents, Taylor thinks independently after her experience in Germany (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen, 1993). She is able to stay connected to that reality even though this counters what her parents have taught her so carefully. Taylor explains that, in theory, she could be perfectly happy pumping gas at the nearest gas station (Interview: 6/11/11). Of course, she will not be pumping gas. In reality.

Defining and breaking away: Strong family, teacher, and peer support.

As an adolescent, Taylor is in the difficult position of defining herself (Muuss, 1988; Santrock, 1993). She credits her family with supporting her throughout her academic career (Chan, 2005; Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). When asked about her feelings about school, her immediate response addresses education. Taylor explains, “I’ve just grown up in a family where education’s always been the number one priority. I was raised that way. Education is always first” (Interview: 3/1/11).

Taylor recognizes the value of classroom learning, but she is sophisticated enough in her world view to recognize that education means much more than teachers and students interacting. Intuitively, she understands how social forces shape her daily decisions and add to or detract from her academic achievement and sense of personal growth (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993).

Participating in gifted programs since elementary school, Taylor delineates all her programs from the beginning:

At (elementary school) I was in the Honors Math program. Eventually in eighth grade, I came here for Math to learn Geometry. I was in Honors classes, so Honors English. Anywhere there was an Honors, I was in it. My parents made sure of that. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Her family ensures that she takes advantage of every program the school district offers.

Her economics teacher is well aware of Taylor’s family support. She reports that Taylor’s parents were urging her to consider an Ivy League school. Taylor was so determined to go to a university that better met her needs that her parents let her make her own decision on this crucial matter. After considerable discussion, they acquiesced. Her parents held a certain vision of her attending an Ivy League school, but Taylor was looking for the best school to fit her own interest in International Relations. Taylor remains the negotiator, the strategist, even with the parents who have raised her so carefully to understand that education is her top priority.

As discussed in the Systemic Issues section and earlier parts of this section, Taylor has always had strong teacher support when she approached them as individuals (Betts & Neihart, 1988, Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius,

1997). Lightfoot (1983) argues, “Adolescents in high schools not only tend to seek out comfort by close affiliation with selected peers, they also search out special adults with whom they form close relationships. The high school experience can be totally transformed by a vital relationship with a special adult” (p. 355). She continues her thinking that many students “seem to attach themselves to schools through a profound affection for an individual teacher” (p. 356). Through her relationship with her economics teacher, more aspects of Taylor’s personality emerge. Her ethnographic portrait gains an added depth and color. Taylor explains:

My economics teacher knows that I’m interested in developing nations. This was last semester when we were talking about microeconomics. I had been talking to her about my Model U.N. experience. She recommended I read a book called Half the Sky, which is about the role that women can play in developing nations and the economics in these communities. We read that together outside of class. (Interview: 3/1/11)

As mentioned in the Systemic Issues section, Taylor organized a counter-protest to a local Baptist church picketing the school. Her economics teacher’s response to this is immediate. She says:

When I found out afterward that she was the one that had organized it, I said “This is the same girl I’ve been talking to about all this other stuff!” It just kind of morphed from there. We would just talk and goof around. She was interested in Econ, but she had a great sense of humor. She’s very aware about the world. (Interview: 9/9/11)

This is the same Taylor who has been reading Google News and watching CNN since second grade to hold her own at the dinner table during family discussions.

Her teacher recognizes the unique nature of their relationship and works hard to break down the strict traditional rules around teacher/student boundaries. She explains:

I consider her a friend. I joked with her at the end of the year about how she couldn’t call me Ms. X. anymore. She had to call me T. She said, “I can’t do that.” I said, “But you’re done with school now, and we’ve got all this other stuff going on.” And I started signing my e-mails just T. instead of Ms. X. I could tell that freaked her out. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Though flustered by the intimacy calling her former teacher by her first name implies, Taylor and her teacher continue their work together around the “Take Back the Night” March described earlier.

Her teacher has also established a solid personal rapport with Taylor, so she turns to her for help during a personal crisis. Her teacher explains:

When she was upset about that other stuff, I went and sat with her with the school psychologist. There was one day she was really upset, and so I was in there with her. Again, it's just being around when some of it happened because it was just convenient. It's just a coincidence that I happened to be around. That I happened to be free for the counseling. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Their relationship continues after Taylor graduated as her economics teacher explains, "I still get e-mails from her every once in awhile, not as many because I know she's busy. I'm busy too. I'm not as good at responding now as I should be" (Interview: 9/9/11). She is keenly aware of her role in Taylor's life; Taylor voices her feelings around her teacher. She explains:

She feels safe talking to me, like stuff about her family. There's no judgment that goes along with it. It's different from talking to your friends. She doesn't tell me everything, but I just let her vent basically. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Taylor is able to find and sustain adult support at school in addition to her family.

In addition to these supports, Taylor's friends recognize that academics are her priorities. She has strong support among her peers. She explains:

I have a relatively diverse group of friends, not just racial, but also socioeconomic. I have friends ranging in all kinds of classes. I think what's important is support and understanding from your friends. If you can't go out one night because you have to study for a test on Saturday that you're having on Monday, it's important to have friends that understand why you're doing that. It's easier to relate to them. My group of friends as a whole are really understanding about sacrifices I might have to make to supplement my academics. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Taylor is able to find her own niche of safety among her peers when she is stressed. This is essential to gifted students struggling to balance school demands (McAdams, 1987).

She values honesty and loyalty in her friends. Taylor explains in the following anecdote:

I have two very good friends. One's a girl and one's a boy. We're in the same classes, but we come from different backgrounds. The way we approach the problems that we come across in those classes is very different. We create a really nice complement to each other. The best part of my friends is their honesty;

no matter what, they are completely honest with me. I asked G. to check over my paper one time. I asked, “What do you think of this?” I’ll never forget it. She read it, and she said, “Honestly, you can do better, and I’m not that impressed.” My first reaction was, “Oh, man, I do not like you. How can you say that?” She said, “Look, you can do this.” We talked about it, and it wasn’t the best I could’ve done. She helped me make it the best it could be. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Taylor recognizes the importance of longevity and trust in her friendships and the ability to be simply herself among her friends. She explains:

We’ve been in these classes together. We’ve gone through similar experiences since we met each other, which is four or five years ago. There’s the whole honesty element. I think having a good sense of humor, being able to have intelligent discussions, and also being able to mess around with each other is important. The emotional intimacy that we have for each other is pretty deep. (Interview: 3/1/11)

She also views her friends as a way to protect her parents from unnecessary stress. Taylor is careful as she explains:

I share things with them; all high school kids it might be the same for. I share things with those two that I probably would not share with my parents. Even struggles about school. When I am struggling, I just tend to not want to stress my parents out. I’ll just tell them, “It’s OK, I got it, don’t worry.” I can unload more on my friends. (Interview: 3/1/11)

Taylor takes on a parental role here in shielding her parents from the toll school demands. This is a fascinating role reversal which highlights her maturity as a young woman.

Taylor also sees the importance of her peers, besides her two close friends, in helping her maintain her standards of academic excellence. While organizing through Facebook to take the AP Exams, Taylor clarifies how students manage:

Getting through AP classes, I think the students like just working with other students, too. If someone didn’t write a very good essay, a lot of kids get yelled at. There’s a lot of peer pressure there too. But it’s just one essay. They’d say, “Well, why don’t you try writing it this way?” Junior and senior year is when we started to wise up a little bit, and everyone used to come together and study together all the time. (Interview: 6/11/11)

As the students become more mature and sophisticated in understanding how AP classes work, their style of coping changes to ensure their academic success.

Taylor credits Facebook with facilitating peer to peer support.

It allows for student-run organization or student-organized activities to occur. It's a lot more interaction with your peers. There could be peer pressure, but I've been lucky where I've had a very positive experience with it. It has been a lot of collaboration and a lot of intellect. There's been a lot of good debates through Facebook. (Interview: 6/11/11)

These students have extended their learning beyond the classroom and into another realm entirely. As teachers are absent from this scene, students are creating their own forums for educating themselves. They are schooling themselves. Being so independent and creative in facilitating their own learning is a characteristic of gifted students (Sternberg, 2004). Unfortunately, such independence from parents and teachers can lead to a profound understanding of pain in the world.

A confluence of personal events.

As described earlier, Taylor organized a "Take Back the Night" March. Unfortunately, a confluence of negative events led to her desire to take action. Her economics teacher lays the scene:

Right before Prom, they had an assembly, which they always do every year, about date rape, being aware of your surroundings, and alcohol awareness. She was upset by it. One of her friends walked up to her afterward and said that she was abused as a child. She said, "Oh, my gosh, I grew up with this person, and I never knew this. (Interview: 9/9/11)

The situation is further complicated by a personal crisis when Taylor is studying at Dunkin' Donuts late at night, creating a safe study zone for herself. Her teacher explains, "One time when she was coming out of one of those, she was chased by a homeless person" (Interview: 9/9/11). These three incidents, compounded with a family crisis, led her to act. Her economics teacher summarizes the situation:

Those things went outside of her academic life. She thought, "Alright, we need to do something about this." When she told me she needed to do something about it, I said, "Alright, what do you want to do?" She already had it planned out; she'd already looked into it. It just went. (Interview: 9/9/11)

Taylor's "Take Back the Night" March took place July 30, 2011. The March opened at (high school) "and then they marched down to the Village Hall and back which is three blocks away" (Interview: 9/9/11). Because of Taylor's hard work organizing through Facebook, she had students from the whole area. The March had grown from a high school event to a "consciousness spreading" (Interview: 9/9/11) event throughout the region.

Summary.

In the Personal Issues section, I focused on seven separate areas to examine psychology's impact on Taylor's schooling. I examined her personal challenges, her sophomore year meltdown, math and social expectations, high expectations and the reproduction of education, the importance of education as a means to an end, defining and breaking away, and, finally, a confluence of personal events.

Ever the strategist, Taylor has found ways both systemically and personally to work her schooling distinctly in her favor. Having a strong support system in addition to her outstanding academic abilities enables her to succeed in the elite setting of AP classes in an elite high school.

Before we meet Rebecca, who is distinctly different from Taylor in many ways, we must bid farewell to Taylor.

Conclusion: Saying Goodbye to Taylor

As Taylor walked to her car with her iced tea, I gathered all my materials together at the Starbucks and watched her out the window. Despite spending only three hours talking with this young woman, I knew she was a gifted girl. She was comfortable with her label of being a gifted student. Her teachers believed in her, and her peers trusted and admired her. Her English Department awarded her English Student of the Year. Taylor's large family both challenges and inspires her to move forward. Despite the onslaught of media belittling and denigrating what girls can do in school in particular and society in general, Taylor embraces Facebook as empowering her both as an academic and a social activist. She has the inner resilience she needs and a strong desire to succeed in her studies in International Relations. Indeed, I felt I might have been talking to a future U.S. Secretary of State.

Chapter Five

The Gifted Girl Overcoming Psychological Barriers

Introduction: Being Rebecca

Rebecca is a complicated person. She is strong in Math, Science, and technology, an area traditionally dominated by boys. In fourth grade, her Mom decided she needed to know her multiplication tables before moving onto fifth. Before this, no one had encouraged Rebecca in Math; she just happened to be very talented in Math. When asked if she felt any pressure to perform, she responds that pressure “May be a good thing, may be a bad thing. I never really thought about it” (Interview: 6/15/11). This quote summarizes her whimsical rather paradoxical personality. She is curious, adventurous, generous, and immensely likeable. All these are words she uses to describe herself throughout our two interviews.

Unlike Taylor, who requested I interview her economics teacher as a key supporter to her academic success, Rebecca was very uncomfortable with the idea of a third interview. She was reluctant because she astutely pointed out that I would receive multiple perceptions from the many viewpoints of her family members or her friends. Rebecca has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and has an anxiety disorder also. She has an acute anxiety about being discussed by others. When her Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) changes every three years, “my legs would [start] bouncing, and once I start, it goes on” (Interview: 6/15/11). She says, “I hate it when people talk about me” (Interview: 6/15/11). As a researcher, I made the decision that a third interview would be detrimental to my relationship, brief as it was, with Rebecca. This chapter is based on two interviews; we held one short one at her school in May and a longer more candid interview at a local Starbucks after school in June. I did not want to contribute to Rebecca’s stress levels in any way.

Division of this chapter.

In listening to and examining Rebecca’s story and in light of our understanding of how the educational experiences of adolescent girls as both gifted and gendered enables them to navigate the complex, sexist, and often hostile world of education in today’s world, we must understand the interplay between the systemic and personal in the creation of Rebecca’s academic and gendered life. In this chapter, I will use the same organizational structure with Rebecca as used with Taylor. The sociology of the classroom and the psychology of the individual come together in the body of a single gifted young woman. Through Rebecca, we can begin to see how a system can, but in this case does not, work in support of healthy identity formation in adolescent girls. As already mentioned,

Rebecca is ADHD. She is already managing a great deal of stress as an adolescent. Unlike the experiences of many teenage girls in our educational system, the interplay of these aspects of Rebecca's world help her navigate a system which seeks to label and define her on the one hand and where she is able to redefine and rework the system in ways that generally support the development of a healthy and gendered identity. This is at a great unknown psychological cost to Rebecca. By examining this interplay, we can begin to see how schools can, but often do not, support the meaningful development of healthy academic and gendered identities for girls. In addition, we also see a complex set of personal relationships that exist both inside and outside the schoolhouse that sustain gifted girls like Rebecca. She has the inner strength and resources to overcome significant psychological, emotional, and physical barriers. She becomes the salutatorian of her high school class.

Rebecca, the student, and Julie, the researcher.

Being steeped in feminism and feminist theory for over 30 years, I must keep my own experiences and world view firmly in view as I analyze my findings around these four gifted girls. After all, this is a feminist critical ethnography, each girl being a portrait frozen at age 18. I am 55. These girls could be my daughters.

As my interviews with Rebecca progressed, I realized we had a great deal in common – more than I could ever share with Rebecca herself at the time. This would have made the interviews tangentially focused on me instead of intensely focused on Rebecca, my research participant. I remained silent; my voice, that important physical and psychological instrument, stopped by sipping my cup of coffee. I was muzzling myself for the overall success of my research.

Rebecca and I were both salutatorians of our high school class, and we have both dealt with forms of mental illness. I have struggled with short bouts of depression since I was 29 years old. My high school class was huge with over 800 students graduating. Because this was a very good high school, we had eight students with a perfect grade point average. I got all As with one B in Chemistry, making me the salutatorian receiving absolutely no recognition. I have great empathy for Rebecca coming so close to being the best in her class.

Turning to the second similarity, my story is more complicated. When I was eight years old, I used to climb an elm tree with my favorite book Marguerite Henry's *King of the Wind*, the adventures of an Arabian stallion and his boy who travel to England. I read all afternoon. I was a happy little girl in red tennis shoes. Now that I am older, I pull out Shakespeare or Tolstoy, find a quiet porch, and read. This calms me, lulls me into another world far from this beautiful troubled place we call home. In my late 20s after a few important relationships ended badly, I

was sad about the pattern of losing someone I loved. I dragged around, seeking solace in my work, traveling, and my books. I always have a book nearby.

As a professional woman, as a lesbian, as a gifted woman from a family with a history of depression, the odds that I would find myself fighting depression were high. According to the Final Report of the American Psychological Association's National Taskforce on Women and Depression (1990, p. xii), women are at higher risk for depression due to a number of social, economic, biological, and emotional factors. Their depression is linked to certain cognitive and personality styles. Their characteristics are avoidant, passive dependent behavior styles and pessimistic and negative behavioral styles. Depression comes from focusing too much on depressed feelings and not taking actions to master depressive symptoms. At least seven million women have diagnosable depression, and most will go untreated (American Psychological Association's National Taskforce on Women and Depression, 1990, p. xi). Some evidence suggests a genetic component to depression (Allen, 1976; Klerman & Weissman, 1985).

When Rebecca shared her ADHD and General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) with me so frankly and so easily, I had immense compassion for her. Her ability to persevere in the face of her ADHD and periodic panic attacks was remarkable. Her coping strategies, her family support, her Individual Learning Plan (ILP), and her friends have all been instrumental to her academic success and her happiness.

Just as my friends, my books, my coffee, my bicycle, and my ability to fly to Paris have all been key to keeping me balanced and happy, I am like Rebecca. I struggle to stay intact. Rebecca and I had more in common that she could ever suspect.

Systemic Issues

Giftedness and the positive role of teachers.

Just as Taylor remembers her biology teacher as being crucial to her development as a student, teachers can have a profound effect upon the academic and personal lives of their students. Teachers love their gifted students which allows them to build a strong sense of self-confidence when facing serious obstacles or barriers to achieving their goals (Betts & Neihart, 1988). Rebecca credits her seventh grade middle school teacher with recognizing her math talents. She explains:

Some people have expected a lot of me, and they've made a world of difference. I had this one teacher who suddenly had all these expectations. She said, "You can do better." It meant the world to me. It made

me a better student. Her expectations were well-founded. She pushed me to go into the higher level when I went to high school. She saw past the fact that I make tons of stupid mistakes, especially when I'm not really caring or trying. I knew what was going on behind the actual arithmetic. She's the reason I was salutatorian. She pushed me to go into the higher level. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She generously gives her middle school teacher primary credit for her success, discounting her own role and that of her supportive parents (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000; 2002). Just as Ying credits her good luck for being so successful in her success creating her Mathfest, Rebecca is reluctant to see her own role in her achievement as salutatorian. According to Kerr (1985), brilliant women have adapted themselves to being average in order to be socially acceptable. Though Rebecca certainly does not regard herself as an average student, having the support of her peers, family, and teachers is important to her.

Returning to her teachers, she recognizes the value of the overall school environment as contributing to her academic success. "The environment is very much pro asking questions, but it's the individual teacher's environment. I get more out of some classes because I like the environments more" (Interview: 5/26/11). She sees her teachers as "supportive" and "really smart people" (Interview: 5/26/11). As is her nature, she is generous in her assessment of those she admires. Rebecca understands that she has a unique learning style. She explains:

According to the Math Director who came into our Math class to talk to us about why some kids do better in Math than other classes, he said it's because we're independent learners. I agree with that. Some people just aren't. With certain subjects, I'm not an independent learner. I just need help. I need someone to explain it to me. I just can't learn it from a book. With other subjects I can teach myself the whole thing from just a book. That's why I have done so well in subjects that people have difficulty with. (Interview: 5/26/11)

Being such an astute student, Rebecca is acutely aware of the variability of a teacher's impact on students. "Some teachers are just better for some people. I had a teacher junior year who everyone loved. For me, I didn't get anything out of the class. That's also partially because I just didn't like the subject; it just wasn't for me" (Interview: 6/15/11).

Although her favorite teacher came during her middle school years, Rebecca underlines her designation as an independent learner with an example from her high school years:

I had a teacher who would always assign the homework the day before. You learn what you were supposed to know for the homework the next day. I'd basically teach myself. Then if I didn't get something, he'd explain it the next day. For a lot of people that was horrible because they hadn't been taught this stuff. Suddenly they were expected to do it. A lot of people read the book, and they said, "This is just jibber jabber." For me in Math that year it worked. I had a really good experience. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Once more, because Rebecca is in the best learning environment for her style of learning, she triumphs academically.

In order to be successful, Rebecca feels that her teachers care about her beyond her ability to perform well in the classroom. Noddings (1984, p. 177) argues that teachers should shift emphasis from teaching curriculum to teaching individuals. This is particularly relevant in Rebecca's relationship with her middle school Math teacher. Applying Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care, we see that she remains deeply connected to this teacher despite several years passing. "Given the differences in women's conceptions of self and morality, women bring to the life cycle a different point of view and order human experience in terms of different priorities" (p. 22). To Rebecca's teacher, Rebecca is more important than her actual achievement in Math. She responds to this caring immediately and becomes the excellent Math student she is destined to be.

As I discussed in Chapter One, I was the gifted teacher who helped Ying and her three colleagues stay connected to themselves and the world around them both inside and outside of the school house. In order to keep these girls safe, they must have the support of teachers who recognize and cultivate their unique talents as gifted girls. Often, students simply make a decision in choosing to achieve. Rebecca does just that.

Choosing to achieve.

According to Dabrowski (1964), gifted individuals have an inborn desire to achieve. Indeed, just like Taylor, Rebecca appears to have an intellectual OE, the heightened need to seek understanding and truth, to gain knowledge, and analyze and synthesize. She credits herself for internalizing her need to achieve though she remains loyal to her middle school teacher.

Rebecca knows how important the element of choice is in achieving. "I chose to sign myself up for academic programs over the summer. I choose to bother doing my homework" (Interview: 6/15/11).

Rebecca tells an anecdote about taking an AP European exam. Because of her ADHD condition, she has difficulty keeping dates and events in sequential order which makes history particularly difficult for her. She explains:

I wasn't going to study for my AP Euro exam because I can't really get credit for that unless I get a five. I was talking to my teacher, and she said, "Oh, but, Rebecca, I was expecting you to do really well." She was the sweetest teacher in the whole world, and I just felt so guilty that I studied like crazy. Just because I felt guilty because I was letting her down, I studied like crazy for that test. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She repeats the phrase "crazy" for emphasis. Because she chooses to achieve, Rebecca values high achievement and relishes the challenge of tests.

As class salutatorian, Rebecca has established herself as a high achiever. "I get one B per year [laughter]; this is for all four years" (Interview: 5/26/11). When I ask how satisfied she is with her work in school, she says "[Pause] I mean I couldn't do much better, so I guess I should be satisfied, so yes" (Interview: 5/26/11). Rebecca is well aware of her high achievement. "I have very high reading comprehension. If I can read it and understand it, then I have it" (Interview: 5/26/11).

She enjoys the challenge of tests and even has a favorite from her sophomore year.

I took the AP Computer Science test, and other than the practice problems we did for homework, I did not study for that test. I didn't study at all, and I did amazing. It was totally stress free, and it was the best test I've ever taken to be honest [laughter]. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She likes IQ tests. "I think they're fun; you get to do fun problems for a couple hours" (Interview: 6/15/11).

For Rebecca, tests free her to test her intelligence. She enjoys the challenge of taking on substantial academic challenges. Dabrowski (1964) elucidates:

Increased psychomotor, sensual, imaginative, and intellectual excitability are evidence of positive growth. These states are frequently found in individuals at times of their greatest psychological development, in highly creative persons and those of high moral, social, and intellectual caliber
(p. 14).

Dabrowski also reiterates that the physical changes which accompany the onset of puberty can exacerbate the OE of an individual. Rebecca regards tests of all kinds as opportunities for intellectual growth. She casually and humbly mentions in our second interview that she received a perfect score on her ACT; however, she is uncomfortable talking about this. Rebecca explains, "It's not important to focus on because what I need to focus on is what I do next not what I've done" (Interview: 6/15/11).

Rebecca's creed is strikingly different from Taylor who has battled a touch of "hubris" as she matures into her high school years. As we will see in the Personal Issues section, Rebecca is full of contradictions. This does not appear to worry her in the least; indeed, she is delighted by her complicated personality.

Rebecca ends her discussion about choosing to achieve with an intriguing statement. "I won't study enough just not to fail, I'll study enough to get an A" (Interview: 6/15/11). Clearly, she knows exactly how much time she must spend on her academic work to maintain her high academic standards. She also values her classmates.

Successful and meaningful collaboration among peers.

Just like Taylor, Rebecca also organizes behind classes:

When I can't figure things out in my classes, I actually get very collaborative. Especially in certain classes because there's this idea that if we're in these classes, we have the ability to do it and to figure things out. If you're one of the more apt people in the class, you can figure it out. A lot of times it's easier to work with other people. I really like having such intelligent people in my classes. It's made my high school experience very nice. (Interview: 5/26/11)

Rebecca is reticent to discuss this topic as this is our first interview, which is in her school environment in a small room with an administrator sitting nearby. However, notice how her pronouns change from "I" to "we" to "you." Using "we" in the quote above, she feels part of her peer group struggling to manage their heavy AP class workload. Moving to "you" in the previous quote, she is referring to herself. As salutatorian of her class, she is clearly the student who is "apt" at the coursework. She ungrudgingly credits her peers in her classes with contributing to her positive high school experience. As Perkins explains, people do not learn to play baseball by themselves. "[O]nly Superman could do it, and it wouldn't be much fun" (2010, p. 191).

Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care underlies Rebecca's desire to help her peers. "I'm selfless to a fault sometimes. I like helping other people more than I like helping myself because [pause] I do" (Interview: 6/15/11). Rebecca views her relationship with her peers as essential as learning the material itself. This is a classic conundrum of adolescent girls. "The ideal of care is thus an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 62). This is particularly poignant for Rebecca as she was afraid of being left out as a child because of her intelligence which I will discuss in the Personal Issues section.

Maintaining a positive learning environment among her peers is essential to Rebecca's success both academically and personally. Support from her classmates is crucial in encouraging achievement and sustaining her commitment to developing her potential in difficult times (Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). Rebecca is able to create her own niche of security among her peers to offer her support and understanding at crucial moments (McAdams, 1987). She explains:

When you're around kids who care, you care more so definitely. That is one of the reasons I chose to go to [elite university] because it's not just that they care about grades, but they really care about learning. If I'm in that environment, I'll see other people like that.

(Interview: 6/15/11)

Returning to Gilligan's (1982) web of relationships, Rebecca is caught up in these when she is an effective tutor. "One of the best ways I learn is by teaching other people. I've been in environments where other people around me really do want help. I get a better comprehension because I'm really helping this person" (Interview: 6/15/11). Discussing her success as a tutor, she ends with a characteristically paradoxical statement, "If I stop trying to teach someone else, I don't care much about learning myself, which is weird; I should care more for my own needs, but I don't" (Interview: 6/15/11). Rebecca is full of contradictions as the next section indicates.

The stigma of being gifted.

As stated earlier, Rebecca enjoys IQ tests. Despite her clear intelligence, she is uncomfortable with labels. When I ask her directly how she feels about being labeled a gifted student, her discomfort is palpable:

I would never call myself that. I started going to the Centers for Talent Development (CTD) programs when I was pretty young actually. I wanted to go because I enjoyed learning, and I liked learning over my summer. It made me feel productive. I have a shirt that says that on it, but I refuse to wear that shirt. It's not something I like to shove in other people's faces. I'm not necessarily embarrassed. I just feel it's condescending, and I don't like being titled that way because I feel like people around me then feel ehhhh.

(Interview: 5/26/11)

"Ehhhh" is Rebecca's shorthand for feeling uncomfortable.

She often feels like an outsider (Cross et al., 1993; Coleman & Stewart, 1993; Freeman, 1994; Janos et al., 1974; Subotnik et al., 1993). This is especially true in her Video Programming class; she loves the class but hates

video games. “I just really love programming! Here I am in this class, and they’re all talking about video games, and I felt out of place!” (Interview: 6/15/11). On a college visit:

I went into this classroom. It was all different types of Asian kids. There was a black girl and a Hispanic guy. I was the only Caucasian person in the room, which is weird because I’ve never had that in a classroom before. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Though she is the only White girl in the room in this example, Rebecca appears to be comfortable with self-labeling. “I consider myself a geek, a nerd. I watched Anime [Japanese cartoons] growing up with my brother” (Interview: 6/15/11).

As discussed in Chapter Two, Dabrowski’s theories around adolescent development are particularly relevant around Rebecca. Just to review, he hypothesizes that positive disintegration begins during “the age of opposition” or puberty. This also occurs among those undergoing “severe external stress” (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 18). With Rebecca’s heavy load of AP courses, she is under a great deal of academic and personal stress. Dabrowski (1964) reminds us:

Individuals of advanced personality development whose lives are characterized by rich intellectual and emotional activity and a high level of creativity often show symptoms of positive disintegration. Emotional and psychomotor hyperexcitability and many psychoneurosis are positively correlated with great mental resources, personality development, and creativity. (p. 19)

Rebecca’s OEs, a key component of the makeup of gifted individuals (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 98), may be in four of the five possible areas. He introduced this term to describe an expanded and intensified manner of experiencing the world (Daniels, 2003). Rebecca’s OEs may be in (a) psychomotor, heightened excitability of the neuromuscular system, (b) intellectual, heightened need to seek understanding and truth, to gain knowledge, analyze, and synthesize, (c) imaginal, heightened play of the imagination, and (d) emotional, heightened intense positive and negative feelings. I will discuss all this in much more detail in the Personal Issues section.

As Ying, discussed in Chapter One, often felt like an outsider (Colangelo and Gaeth, 1988; Kerr, 1992; Whitmore, 1980) among her peers, so does Rebecca. She sees negative aspects about being labeled a gifted student:

People don’t think you have to put in the same amount of work. That’s the thing. I know someone putting in as much work as me at a lower level may or may not be getting the same grades as me, but people assume because I’m gifted, “Oh, she just gets it. Rebecca knows what’s going on. You’ve probably

finished the whole test already.” That’s just not true because I have my own struggles. I think sometimes those are ignored, but at the same time, I feel that’s reasonable because I have so many strengths.

Sometimes when I’m stressed out, people don’t understand. They say, “Ehhh, you’ll get through it; you’re so smart.” (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca appears to have complicated and contradictory thoughts about how being gifted affects her school experience. She begins with, “It’s been great. I don’t know; sometimes I give up as a person. I’m a very, very determined person, but sometimes I get very fatalistic” (Interview: 5/26/11). I will discuss this more extensively in the Personal Issues section.

When following up on this question around the effect of being gifted in our second interview, Rebecca explains more comprehensively:

There’s two parts to that. Number one, you get labeled, and then people expect you to act a certain way which I don’t. I’ll just randomly spurt information. Two plus two equals five. It’s the whole pretentious thing. I don’t like the title of gifted. I don’t like talking about what I’ve done well because maybe there’s someone who’s got much better accomplishments than you. That’s great. But if you are really, truly gifted, it’ll come out on its own, and you don’t need to prove that to anyone. It makes other people jealous. I get jealous of people all the time. I deify people. I don’t do it because they talk about themselves and are like “Oh, I’m gifted.” I do it because I see what they do, and I can tell, ”Oh, my God, they’re doing amazing things; they’re so productive and creative.” If I want someone talking about me, I want them talking about me for that reason. Because they see my work and not because they see a title that’s not even really earned. If I’m going to get a title, I’m going to earn it. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Just like Ying, Rebecca is strong in Math, Science, and technology. When I asked Ying how she stayed so intact over the years, she credited her math ability. When I ask Rebecca who is responsible for her rank as salutatorian of her class, she credits her seventh grade math teacher. Both young women echo Kerr’s (1985) claim that gifted girls and young women minimize their achievements when asked about them directly. Rebecca is quite humble about her academic success as I will discuss later. She minimizes her high intelligence, curiosity, strong internal motivation to learn, and consistently supportive environment, both at school and at home. The combination of these components in Rebecca’s life at school and home have brought her considerable success as a student (Betts & Neihart, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathune, & Whalen, 1993; Erikson, 1963; Gilligan, 1993; Subotnik &

Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). Rebecca reaffirms Ying's statement, "I think that truly gifted kids don't need to be told they're gifted."

Feminist scholar hooks reminds us that choices enable people to resist taking on their traditional role in society. A margin is the place to "push against the oppressive boundaries set by race, sex, and class domination" (hooks, 1990, p. 145) and is "the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" (hooks, 1990, p. 145). Living on the margin nurtures the possibility to resist traditional expectations and offers the possibility of imagining alternative worlds and alternative ways to live in these worlds. hooks (1990) reminds us:

I am located in the margin. We come to know this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfills desire. We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world. (p. 153)

Stepping clear of the mainstream world and into the margin offers girls a chance to be more active in shaping a more unconventional world of their own which better meets their needs. I would argue that Rebecca, with all her examples and unique stories from her life, chooses to live in that margin. Despite feeling stigmatized by the label of gifted, Rebecca does not minimize her intelligence. She is especially adamant about maintaining her academic prowess by facing down the sexism of the school house.

Differential treatment and gender.

When I ask Rebecca directly if her teachers ever treat her differently because she is a girl, she appears to be slightly stunned by the question. Her response is characteristically playful and serious simultaneously.

Depends on what class [Laughter]. I always got treated differently just because I act differently. Because I was a girl? [Pause] I've had classes where I've been the only girl, and I don't think I've necessarily been treated horribly differently by the teacher but students a little bit. I've been given more opportunities sometimes, depends on the time. If they were doing a commercial for something, they'd want me in the shot because I'm the only girl [Laughter]. I had major opportunities come because I'm a better speaker than a lot of the guys in those classes. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She views her experience as being a positive one, where she is given special opportunities to perform because she excels her classmates in certain areas.

Despite the best intentions of school reformers, school priorities reflect societal priorities (Kliebard, 2004; Tyack, 1974). Though society is now experiencing the Third Wave of feminism (Donovan, 2012), Rebecca still struggles with aspects of gender in her classroom. She appears to have contradictory feelings about gender and her classroom experiences. She confesses:

I'm terrified of being the only girl in a classroom. I've had two years worth of classes where I've been the only girl. Half my day senior year I was literally the only girl in the room. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Here Rebecca appears to transcend her gender being the only young woman in her class. Gender no longer defines her; she is simply another Math student. She can rework her identity (Erikson, 1968) in this context, defining herself in her own terms. She socially constructs her own world by erasing her gender. Unlike Freud who claimed "Anatomy is destiny" (1912, p. 189), Rebecca has single-handedly disproved his theory. She appears to build her own gender identity as a young woman who excels in Math, Science, and technology which contradicts the myths about girls' ineptitude in these subjects (Way, 1998).

This reflects back to her experiences as a younger girl when she was often outnumbered by boys in camps or programs. At a time when positive self-esteem is crucial to adolescent girls (Orenstein, 1984; Pipher, 1994), Rebecca is struggling to hold on to her sense of self. She is painfully aware of the importance of gender balance in her Math class. Indeed, gender balance among students is a priority for her in her choice of which college to attend. She admits:

My Math class wasn't so bad because my Math class was the one with Euro[pean History] after it, so almost all the girls who were in the top Math class were also in the top Euro[pean History] class. We had a decent female population. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She continues to explain, "In my double period Physics class, my Video Game Programming, and my Digital Electronics class, I was the only girl. I spent literally four to five periods a day being the only girl there" (Interview: 6/15/11). Yet as she has matured over her high school years, she views being the only young woman in very demanding classes as a positive experience. Because of her various systems of support, she feels freed from society's notions of what defines a girl. Rebecca is resilient enough to agree with de Beauvoir's (1974) statement, "It is not nature that defines women; it is she who defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life" (p. 42). Rebecca explains:

Being the only girl there was a good experience. It taught me not to worry so much about standards and stereotypical stuff. I was just more comfortable in what I felt. I used to always judge myself, “Oh, I’m out of place here or I don’t fit in or I’m not dressed appropriately.” When you end up in a class where you’re the only girl and it’s a bunch of guys, you don’t have to worry about that stuff anymore; you just have to accept the fact that you’re the only girl in a class full of guys. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca has the strength and confidence to rise about the negative gendered aspects of classroom life and emerge victorious. She appears to be beyond gender.

Rebecca’s only report of overt sexism is about media. “I haven’t seen Star Wars because no one says, ‘Hey, you’re a little girl; let’s go watch Star Wars’” (Interview: 6/15/11). My daughters love “Star Wars” like I do, and they can recite every character in almost every movie, unlike me. When Rebecca begins to ask me questions about myself and my research, she has an immediate example about gender difference and expectations. In order to prepare herself for her university, she is required to watch anti-sexual assault videos.

It was talking about the different expectations for men versus women. Women put things in less direct ways because they don’t want to offend anyone and are more subtle. Verbally guys are more direct, and therefore they expect direct answers, so you end up clashing. (Interview: 6/15/11)

I remark that this is merely miscommunication based on gender; Rebecca responds, “And that leads to sexual assault” (Interview: 6/15/11).

From Rebecca’s litany of courses, Math, Science, and technology are clearly her strengths. “I knew I was going to do fine on my AP Calc[ulus] test” (Interview: 6/15/11), she says off-handedly. She has a special drive to prove herself in this area, despite the odds stacked against her as the lone girl in many of her courses. Again, she confesses:

In Math and Science, I had this thing where I wanted to prove myself a little bit for awhile, but I never really thought about it like that. I just want to prove myself. The funny thing is I told you I love programming. I was in this Video Game Programming class for two years. I have to tell you a secret; I don’t really like video games, I don’t! (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca, by being brilliant in Math, Science, and technology, has found a way to combat the stereotypes around girls underachieving in this area (Way, 1998). Despite the odds stacked against her socially and systemically, she succeeds academically.

Summary.

In this section examining the Systemic Issues that impact Rebecca's performance in the classroom and society at large, I have discussed giftedness and the positive role of teachers and Rebecca's deliberate decision to achieve. She has also found successful and meaningful collaboration among her peers. In addition, she manages the stigma of being gifted and the differential treatment she receives from both teachers and students because of her gender. Let us now turn to Rebecca as a young woman.

Personal Issues

The second section of this chapter focuses on Rebecca's personal issues as a gifted adolescent girl. These are particularly complicated because of her ADHD condition and anxiety disorder. She also has an extraordinary amount of self-awareness about her strengths and weaknesses and is able to talk about them easily in our interviews. Despite her splendid academic accomplishments, I must remind myself that Rebecca is only 17 and in the middle of her adolescence, such a difficult time for American teen-agers.

A key developmental turning point at a young age.

When I was younger, I had a very early mid-life crisis. I was maybe ten/twelve years old, and I just panicked. "I don't know what I'm going to do with the rest of my life." I spent the next bunch of years trying things out. I went to Aerospace camp with a bunch of kids who were all going to be Aerospace majors except for me. I realized very quickly I didn't want to be an Aerospace major. I did a lot of experimentation very early on. (Interview: 6/15/11)

In her search for ideas that interest her, Rebecca also took a web design class for a week over the summer, which was not a positive experience because of the low percentage of girls in this program (Interview: 6/15/11). Just like second grader Taylor challenging her teacher and Ying's HB-2 pencil moment, Rebecca reflects on a key developmental turning point at a young age. Silverman (1992) defines this as asynchronous development which means gifted children may have uneven social and emotional development which is out-of-sync with their peers and societal perceptions of specific age groups. All three of these girls had an extraordinary awareness of themselves at an early age. This leads to a stronger sense of themselves and who they are in the world. They are struggling with profound ideas at a young age which is a hallmark of the gifted children's awareness of themselves in the world around them (Dabrowski, 1964). Yet Rebecca manages to cope.

Coping with a healthy divided gifted identity.

Like many gifted adolescent girls, Rebecca is caught among different personas. Just like Ying in Chapter One, Rebecca is learning the importance of playing the appropriate role at the appropriate time in order to retain the peer support she needs as both Gilligan (1982; 1993) and Brown (1998) argue in their research. She exclaims, "I'll be honest. When I hang out with my friends who don't go to this school, I act differently. It's my chance to let loose" (Interview: 5/26/11).

Rebecca is able to keep these two personas separate until her senior year when they come into conflict. She explains:

A lot of my friends here go to school with their friends here. I personally don't like that because I like to have a different image of who I am when I'm at school versus who I am when I'm just trying to relax. I kept those two very separate up until senior year, and then they collided a little bit. (Interview: 5/26/11)

This conflict among personas can be dangerous for young adolescent girls. Gilligan (1990) argues that girls are in psychological danger of losing touch with reality as they come to understand that their view of the world as one of care and connection is not particularly valued by society at large. Gilligan (1993) reminds us:

Girls' desire for relationships and for knowledge comes up against the wall of Western culture, and a resistance, a break out that is, I will claim, of great human value. Girls' questions about who wants to be with whom are to them among the most important questions, as revealed through nuance, and gesture, voice and glances, seating arrangements, choices of partners, the responses of adult women and men, and the attitudes of the authorities in the world. (p. 144-145)

Rebecca is very aware of these issues as the sole girl in many of her classes in high school. She has a carefully controlled school persona, a socially acceptable voice (Debold, Wilson, & Malave, 1993). She also is the silly, whimsical, fun-loving Rebecca, her more private persona, who she only reveals to her close friends separate from school.

Rebecca, however, manages to keep her dual identity quite intact. She describes her situation:

I met some of the people I hung out with through my classes, but I met people through them. People always said, "Oh, Rebecca, she's smart." But I never had to be that kid who was the smart aleck or the kid doing well in Bio when no one else is. With my friends I could just be silly. Heck, I act like a ditz a lot. People still know I'm smart, but I can say really, really stupid things. No one judges me because they don't

think "Rebecca, how can you be saying that? You're so good at everything." I don't get that response when I'm with my friends because they don't see me in school. (Interview: 5/26/11)

She is freed from her school persona when she is with her friends and able to be simply her mischievous paradoxical self.

Born with a natural sense of humility, Rebecca insists on keeping her academic achievements to herself.

She rejects the stereotypes society hold about high achievers – especially girls. Once more, Rebecca explains:

At school I showed a side of myself that I don't use when I'm relaxed. Like freshman year, I don't want to have people bugging me about how well I'm doing in a class that everyone's failing when I'm hanging out with my friend. If I want to say something stupid, I don't want someone to be like "Rebecca, you're not allowed to say stupid things; you're too smart." I say stupid things. (Interview: 5/26/11)

Rebecca manages her dual identity in addition to rising to the challenge of high expectations.

The demands of high expectations.

At 17, Rebecca already wonders about all her unexplored potential. "As a girl, my brother never played chess with me. I don't really know chess. Maybe I could have been a great chess player" (Interview: 6/15/11). She appears wistful about this lost opportunity to master such a strategy game. Clearly, with her intellect, chess might have been a way to prove her intelligence to her older brother. Yet Rebecca tends to keep her academic achievements to herself. As I mentioned before, Rebecca is quite modest about all her success. When I ask her directly if she is satisfied with how she does in school, she responds frankly, "I couldn't do much better, so I guess I should be satisfied" (Interview: 5/26/11). She is quite self-aware around issues of intelligence. Rebecca works most efficiently alone. When I ask her about that, she says, "I don't like listening to other people." (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca knows her academic strengths. She declares:

My favorite thing is to break down a problem and solve it which is why I love computer programming. You get a complicated task, you need to do a bunch of different parts, and you break it down into functions, methods, and variables. You just deal with it. So when I do group projects, I just think of it like a giant computer program. I do the same thing. I say, "OK, what do we have to do? How can this be well divided up? Who works together well? Who doesn't? Who will actually get their part done? Who can I trust?"

Who can't I? How much can I take on myself before I explode?" I just divide everything up among everyone, and I bug people about making sure it gets done. Then I don't have to worry. (Interview: 6/15/11)

The interesting aspect of this quote is that Rebecca's language changes, and, despite her ADHD, she becomes very organized in her thinking and her delegating. She is clearly experienced in managing behind the scenes collaborative projects at school as I discussed earlier. "I've done that in Science classes; you have labs." (Interview: 6/15/11).

She remains uncomfortable talking about her academic achievement:

I don't like talking about it. It's not important. If you really want to know, I got a perfect score on my ACT. Technically, I should be bragging about that, but I don't bring it up. I don't like making a big deal out of things because then people expect things. I'd prefer to act like a ditz. When you have such achievements, you feel like nothing's ever going to be quite as good. Instead of focusing on the achievements, you focus on the fact that you can keep going. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca understands the element of choice in her high achievements. If students find lessons relevant to their lives and choose to study hard, they are more intrinsically motivated to learn and use their newfound knowledge and understanding creatively (Czikszentmihalyi, 2008; Sternburg, 2006). Rebecca knows this. "A lot of it came from me, like my transformations over the years, but none of it would have happened if not for that one teacher" (Interview: 6/15/11). She continues to explain:

When teachers present you with opportunities, that's good. Without those opportunities, you don't really do anything. A lot of my development came because I chose to do things. I chose to sign myself up for academic programs over the summer. You choose to bother doing your homework or not bother. That's all a choice. If you have a good teacher, you want to do well. (Interview: 6/15/11)

As she has matured over the years, she has become more self-confident of herself in general. Her greatest challenge, however, is managing her ADHD.

Managing ADHD in an elite setting.

In our first interview in the confines of her school, her level of stress comes up within minutes of our introduction to one another. When I ask her about her feelings for school overall, she is cheerful but slightly evasive in her answer.

Right now, I'm done. [laughter] I don't usually think about school in general; I think about specifics, my day to day, and what I have to do. Right now my day to day is looking pretty nice. I don't mind it.

(Interview: 5/26/11)

But when I press her further and ask if she enjoys school, she is very candid. "It's stressful for me; it's definitely very stressful. It causes me a lot of anxiety" (Interview: 5/26/11). She can be quickly overwhelmed by her demanding academic work load, which brings out a desperate feeling in her. When I investigated anxiety disorders, I concluded that Rebecca may have a General Anxiety Disorder (GAD); this is often coupled with ADHD, which I will discuss later. Dr. Joel Sherrill, Head of the Child and Adolescent Psychosocial Intervention Research Program at the National Institute of Mental Health, explains:

Some youths with generalized anxiety disorder can't get rid of their concerns even though they might realize that the fear is out of proportion. They can't relax, they startle easily – they have difficulty concentrating. Often they have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, and they experience a variety of physical symptoms as well. (2010, para. 3).

In a recent article "Generalized Anxiety Disorder: When Worry Gets Out of Control," the author explains, "People with GAD are extremely worried about health, money, or family problems, but people with GAD are worried about this and more, even when there is little or no reason to worry about them. They are very anxious about just getting through the day. They think things will go badly. At times, worrying keeps people with GAD from doing everyday tasks" (2010, para. 4).

GAD begins slowly, often during adolescence. Symptoms may get better or worse at different times and are often worse during stressful times (Sherrill, 2010). Although research is not conclusive, GAD often runs in families. Several parts of the brain are involved in fear and anxiety. By learning more about this, neurologists may be able to create better treatments. Researchers are also exploring the role stress and environmental factors may play in the brain's functioning (Sherrill, 2010, para, 8).

When I ask Rebecca what she dislikes about school her answer is quick and sure:

Sometimes it feels like everything is coming at once. That love of figuring things out just gets swallowed in too much, just too much. Your brain just shuts down. That's when me and my friends just sit around complaining. That happens every once in awhile. More often towards the end of the year when we all feel like our expectations are broken. We expect to have a little less work towards the end of senior year. We

don't sometimes, especially in certain classes. I don't like that because I do expect to learn; I do expect to be challenged. Sometimes it's just too much at once, and then sometimes, it's not enough. That's really boring. I feel like school's a waste. (Interview: 5/26/11)

This is a strong response from the school's salutatorian. She clearly has mixed feelings about the impact her teachers have upon her, and the toll her heavy class load takes on her own comfort level.

Rebecca discusses the drama and intensity her anxiety brings her when asked what she likes or dislikes about herself:

I don't like that I'm so anxious; I went straight to what I dislike. I don't like that I'm so anxious, I don't like that I think too much sometimes, which is what causes my anxiety. I don't like that I have a fatalistic tendency. It's all or nothing with me; that's the kind of person I am. Usually, it's all, but a lot of the times, it's nothing. I just fall apart. (Interview: 5/26/11)

Again, she confesses this to me within minutes of the beginning of our first interview. This clearly weighs on Rebecca's mind a great deal. Related to anxiety, she has a tendency to worry about her future.

I don't like thinking about the future. In fact, I try to avoid it because then than I start catastrophizing it.

It's better to just live in the moment [laughter] and make plans when necessary. (Interview: 5/26/11)

While on a solo trip across Florida, she has a "full on panic attack in this bus" (Interview 5/26/11). In another anecdote directly related to school, she views her anxiety as having both a positive and negative effect on her academics. Though her experience culminates in a panic attack the night before the project is due, she gets this work done. Rebecca explains:

There's you-stress, and then there's distress. I learned that in Health class. It {the anxiety} was helpful when I'd say, "Oh, my God, it's a 500 point project, and I need to get it done because otherwise..." I'd start the project the day it was given and be freaking out about it. I'd do two thirds of the project. Then I'd say, "Oh, I don't have to be anxious anymore" because my anxiety would all just go away. I'd wait and wait and not do anymore. Then the night before the project was due, I'd still have a third of the project left. It {the anxiety} would be helpful with the starting kick, and then it would not be helpful. And then I'd have a panic attack the night before. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She views her anxiety as positive in certain aspects; {the anxiety} has "always given me the push to actually get things done when I'm not motivated" (Interview: 6/15/11). Rebecca explains:

I have a tendency to procrastinate. When I feel like I'm slightly overwhelmed, I'll say "Oh, I'm not going to be able to finish this all tonight." I get started right away versus some of the worst nights where I say, "Oh, I don't really have that much to do." I put off 'til 9 PM or 10 PM. I say, "Oh, bad word" [Laughter].

(Interview: 6/15/11)

She tells a revealing anecdote about how vulnerable she is to her anxiety when questioned more closely about its affect on her life:

I've always had it, and I've always tried to ignore it, but it's been very difficult to ignore. I was actually just thinking about it the other day because I went to a movie with my sister, and she said, "Remember when you were younger, and you refused to leave the bathroom until after the movie started because you were so anxious because you thought you had to go to the bathroom?" I used to literally stay in the bathroom for twenty minutes before the movie started because I was just terrified that once the movie began, I would have to pee. This is just the most absurd anxiety in the world because I usually missed the beginning of the movie because I was in the bathroom. It's always made me different. (Interview:

6/15/11)

Referring to Goffman's seminal work *Stigma* (1963), Rebecca clearly views herself as an outsider even within her peer group of gifted classmates and friends. "Those who take this stand on their own and by themselves might be called eccentrics or 'characters'" (Goffman, 1963, p. 143). She is painfully aware of her special status among other intelligent people.

Explaining Rebecca's ADHD condition is more complex. According to Dr. Vitiello, an expert in the Child and Adolescent Treatment and Preventive Intervention Research Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health, only five to seven percent of school age children in the United States meet the criteria for having an ADHD condition (2010). The Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) causes dysfunction. The symptoms do not necessarily cause the disorder. If because of inattention or hyperactivity, the youngster has difficulty in school, at home with friends, or with peers, the condition becomes a disorder. Girls may suffer from an inattentive type of attention deficit meaning they do not have much of the hyperactivity component. They are quieter but may have trouble with concentration (Vitiello, 2010, para. 5). ADHD is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and into adulthood. Symptoms are difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty

controlling behavior, and hyperactivity. Indeed, during our second interview, Rebecca kept checking her phone, politely and insistently, for a text message she was expecting to receive during our time together.

A variety of treatments relieve many aspects of ADHD, but thus far researchers have found no cure. With treatment, most people with ADHD can be successful in school and lead productive lives. As I write, researchers are developing more effective treatments and interventions and using new tools like brain imaging to better understand ADHD. Scientists are using these new techniques to find more effective ways to treat and prevent ADHD (Vitiello, 2010, para, 10).

Researchers are unsure about the causes of ADHD. Many studies suggest that genes play a large role though ADHD probably arises from a variety of factors. In addition to genetics, scientists are examining environmental factors and focusing on the role nutrition and the social environment might play in having ADHD.

As genes are “blueprints” for who we are, results from several international studies of twins show ADHD often runs in families (Faraone, Perlis, Doyle, Smoller, Goralnik, Holmgren, & Sklar, 2005). Rebecca’s brother is also ADHD. Several genes increase the likelihood of developing the disorder (Khan & Faraone, 2006). Youngsters with ADHD, who carry a particular version of a certain gene, have thinner brain tissue in the areas of the brain associated with attention. This National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) research showed the difference was not permanent. As the children grew up, the brain developed to a normal level of thickness. Their ADHD symptoms also improved (Shaw, Gornick, Lerch, Addington, Seal, Greenstein, Sharp, Evan, Giedd, Catallanos & Rapoport, 2007).

The idea that refined sugar causes ADHD or makes symptoms worse is popular, but research discounts this. In one study, children who were considered sugar-sensitive by their mothers were given the sugar substitute aspartame, also known as Nutrasweet. Although all the children received aspartame, half their mothers were told their children were given sugar, and the other half were told their children were given aspartame. The mothers who thought their children had gotten sugar rated them as more hyperactive and were more critical of their behavior, compared to mothers who thought their children received aspartame (Hoover & Milich, 1994). Clearly, parents are influenced by their own feelings about the effect of sugar on their children.

As mentioned earlier in this section, anxiety and depression may coexist with ADHD. Treating ADHD effectively may help decrease anxiety or some forms of depression. Though Rebecca said nothing about being depressed during our interviews, many girls do become depressed as they approach the brink of womanhood

(Steese, Dollette, Phillips, Hossfeld, Mathews & Taormina, 2006). Adolescents with ADHD face especially difficult years as transitions are particularly difficult for them to manage. They may continue to be hyperactive and try to do too many activities at once. They struggle with school and other extracurricular activities as they are expected by society, and their parents, to be more self-reliant (Vitiello, 2010).

Let's return to Rebecca's perspective:

For my ILP, my Individualized Learning Plan, which is now a 504 plan because it changes; every three years they [school personnel] have to meet. They have to sit around and talk about you. Every time I'd be like this. My legs would just start shaking, not shaking but bouncing. I could stop it if I really wanted to. But once I start, it just goes because I hate it when people talk about me. I don't mind talking about myself though. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca's conscientious parents, who have seen her struggle through middle school, clearly know that Rebecca can get "free appropriate public education," which is available to all public school children with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

Rebecca is quite aware of her gifts and her limitations:

Personally, I have ADHD, so I have horrible focus. When I'm talking, if you haven't noticed, I go all around. But when I'm listening to someone, I'll be listening and the next second, I'll be drawing and listening. Next five minutes, I'll be drawing, and I won't know what the teacher said. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca illustrates her ADHD by telling me how her mind jumps from one subject to another.

I focus on weird things, so when I'm being taught, certain things I catch up on and I pay attention to. But I'll miss steps or I won't pay attention. If I'm teaching myself, if I stop reading for a second, then I look back. I haven't missed anything. It's more of a challenge. I like that challenge or I'm challenge-oriented. (Interview: 6/15/11)

In her thrice repetition of the word challenge, she appears to relish this perspective of herself. Yet she is astute enough about her condition to see how having ADHD can weaken her academically. She explains:

I had a class that was considered a blow-off class. Honestly, when I took the class, I was spending the most time on it at night, studying and doing my homework just because it was a foreign language class, and I didn't get it. [Whispering] Memorizing things is so difficult for me because I flip things; I flip things. (Interview: 6/15/11)

When I question Rebecca more closely about flipping words and grammatical structures in a language context, she readily explains her problem:

I'd remember hearing the word. But when I'd translate this word into English, I'd remember three different English words. I wouldn't be able to choose which one it was, and then I'd flip it with another word. I'd say "Wait, am I flipping this with the other word?" I'd get all confused and frustrated, and then I'd flip more things because I was frustrated. (Interview: 6/15/11)

As mentioned earlier the combination of anxiety and ADHD can be debilitating for adolescents. Rebecca offers this anecdote about driving around trying to get to a specific neighborhood to see her friends:

I just flip things mentally. I was driving somewhere, and MapQuest gives you a street you're supposed to turn on. I was so focused on making sure I found the right street that I flipped the street I was supposed to turn on with the street beforehand. I was supposed to turn on {street}, and I turned on {different street}. Next thing I know, I'm in, when I'm anxious I flip more, and I'm anxious because I knew I was already going to be late. The next thing I know instead of being in {high school} district, I'm in downtown {suburb}, and [Laughter] I say, "That's not where I'm supposed to be." (Interview: 6/15/11)

She is having a panic attack:

I had to stop, pull over, breath, and say, "It doesn't matter if I'm late, just figure out where I am. I knew where I was, which was fine, but figure out how to get where I'm going because clearly I'm not in the right place. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Over the years, Rebecca has developed coping strategies to manage her anxiety and ADHD condition.

When she realizes she's not paying attention, she "just starts doodling" (Interview: 6/15/11). Rebecca also sings constantly.

I start singing, but that happens all the time. I sing all the time. It's horrible. I'll find myself singing, and I just can't stop. I can't focus on anything else. If I really focus on something else, I can stop it, but then as soon as I let go for a second, I find myself singing again. Then I really try and focus again. (Interview: 6/15/11).

When I question her more closely about singing as a technique to help her focus, she explains that she sings all the time. I ask her if she's been singing since she was small. She explains, "It depends on how stressed I am. If I'm more stressed, I sing more. That's not always true. That's just in general. If I'm stressed, I can't focus because

I'm singing" (Interview: 6/15/11). Now that she is a young woman, she reflects on her behavior at school during her elementary years:

When I was little, I didn't care, so maybe I sang, maybe I didn't. I didn't care either way because I didn't care about school. I didn't care about focusing. I just did what I wanted to do. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Rebecca readily admits that currently her school work "stresses me like crazy" (Interview: 6/15/11). She describes another of her coping mechanisms:

I exercise a lot. When I'm stressed or angry, I usually go to the park. I act like a little kid, and I go on the swing set. I just chill out. That's something very personal that I do. Sometimes it just drives me up a wall. I don't really deal with it. I just push it aside. I just do the best I can. I can't stop thinking about it. It's consciously there and it's consciously being pushed aside because I say, "Rebecca, this is ridiculous, focus, focus." (Interview: 6/15/11)

She also manages her stress through prioritizing her assignments. She calms herself down and asks, "What do I have to do now? What's due tomorrow? What do I have to do today? When do I have to get to sleep tonight in order to wake up tomorrow?" (Interview: 6/15/11) Rebecca is also well aware of her fatalistic temperament. She explains:

When you plan, plans are going to fall apart. What if it doesn't happen or what if I end up miserable despite all my planning? What did I put all this effort into it for? I'm a pessimist. I think of everything that could possibly go wrong, fatal, catastrophising. I catastrophise, so I prefer to try and refocus myself on the here and now. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Maturity and eczema.

Rebecca's most dramatic story involves her problems with eczema and how she overcame this skin problem. In our first interview, I ask her what she would change or keep the same about herself. She briefly alludes to her problem. "I've got some eczema and some skin stuff that gave me a terrible time growing up, and I would love for it to go away" (Interview: 5/26/11). When I follow-up on this question in the second more extensive interview, she explains in a long comfortable anecdote why she has had a better self-image over the years:

If you can't see, right there, I have eczema. No worries, I'm wearing a dress. I didn't wear shorts out of my house until I was nine years old. No, I stopped at nine years old because at nine years old, I started being self-conscious. Between the ages of nine and 16, I did not wear shorts out of my house. I went to

Israel, which is one of the hottest countries in the world. I refused to wear shorts because I used to have cuts and scars all underneath. It made me feel very ugly. I didn't like myself in general. I had skinny shoes. I was four feet tall and skinny. I was the tiniest person ever. My sister tried to teach me basketball once. I couldn't even throw the ball that high because I was just so short. Unless I point it {the eczema} out, sometimes people don't even notice anymore, and it goes away. Now it's actually bad. But there would be months where I wouldn't have any eczema, and I still wouldn't wear shorts because I was just so self-conscious. My legs aren't beautiful like other girls, and that lasted a long time. I basically decided at one point, "Rebecca, this is ridiculous." I just said, "OK, you're going to camp. You're only going to pack shorts and a pair of pants." For that whole summer, I had to wear them no matter how I felt. I don't believe in letting myself get away with being so negative, but that grew over the years. First, I was totally OK with just hiding it. Eventually, I learned you just can't hide it; you have to learn to be comfortable in your own skin. (Interview: 6/15/11)

This is quite a mature and literal realization for a 17 year old senior and also the topic for her college admissions essay. She opened this essay with "When I was nine, I realized I was ugly" (Interview: 6/15/11). This is a brave and vulnerable statement, and I'm sure she wrote a brilliant essay. Rebecca assures me that she was accepted at almost all her chosen colleges. She is also astute enough about her strengths and weaknesses to realize the strong connection between her sense of physical self and emotional/psychological self. When I question her still further about the relationship of her eczema to her self-image, her response is quite candid. "I hate to say this, but maybe {the eczema} symbolized the emotional too because I wasn't comfortable with who I was either. I didn't like myself" (Interview: 6/15/11).

Eczema caused her to hate her own body; this was a way for her to ignore the physicality of her life as her eczema tormented her. She feels short and ugly; she is invisible because society appears to value tall and beautiful. Even a powerful young woman like Rebecca is brought down by the tyranny of Barbie and the pervasiveness of a misogynistic media (APA Taskforce on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007).

She has, however, conquered her eczema and its debilitating effects on her physically, emotionally, and psychologically. She simply states, "I like dresses" (Interview: 6/15/11). She claims her body as her own; she makes her own choices about what to wear in public.

Turning to feminist philosopher Grosz, we can better understand Rebecca's predicament. To briefly review, her analysis focuses on "how the body is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon by the various regimes of institutional" powers in Western society (Grosz, 1993, p. 197). Grosz (1993) views the physical body as a result of social markers and "sites of struggle and resistance" (p. 199). In Chapter Two, I argue that the bodies of adolescent girls have "become sites of struggle and resistance, actively inscribing themselves on social practices" (Grosz, 1993, p. 199). Because Rebecca's eczema is triggered by stress which is related to her anxiety and ADHD condition, her own body is a battleground, even to herself. She easily admits she had to learn to be comfortable in her own skin, literally.

Rebecca's ideas about being unique or "scarred" are also related to Goffman's ideas around stigma and visibility. He (1963) states:

Traditionally, the question of passing has raised the issue of "visibility" of a particular stigma, that is, how well or how badly the stigma is adapted to provide means of communicating that the individual possesses it. Visibility, of course, is a crucial factor. That which can be told about an individual's social identity at all times during his daily round and by all persons he encounters therein will be of great importance to him. The consequence of a presentation that is perforce made to the public at large may be small in particular contacts, but in every contact there will be some consequences, which, taken together, can be immense. (p. 48)

Rebecca can not hide her scars. She chooses to wear pants to cover her cuts and scars on her legs from age nine to 16. For seven years, she hides her legs from the public out of fear of being pronounced ugly. A mere year later, she proudly announces that she likes dresses. This is no simple statement for Rebecca. She has struggled through childhood to adolescence with this negative self-image of herself as this skinny kid with skinny shoes who can't play basketball with her sister.

As explained earlier, Dabrowski's theories apply most aptly to Rebecca. He argues that society must expand its definitions of both human intelligence and psychological health. Dabrowski (1964) theorizes that "it seems probable that certain forms of maladaptation to one's self and to reality, hypersensitivity, lability of psychic structure, and even certain symptoms of internal discord such as self-criticism with a strong emotional accent are elements indispensable in man's development" (p. 104). This pertains to Rebecca in her struggles with anxiety and being ADHD. Yet, despite such psychological, emotional, and physical challenges, Rebecca rose to the top of her

competitive class and became its salutatorian. Clearly, she has fought for and maintains a healthy self-image in the face of considerable adversity (Way, 1998). Now, she wears dresses.

The single uncomfortable moment.

After spending approximately two and a half hours with Rebecca, I feel we have reached an easy rapport and trust for one another. She has told me wonderful stories about her adventures both in and out of the school house. Her anecdotes display courage, kindness, and creativity. When we are discussing her perfect score on the ACT, I struggle for clarity around this issue as she is so humble about her superb academic achievements. Rebecca explains:

It is important to me, but it's not important to be thinking about it. It's not important to focus on because what I need to focus on is what I do next – not what I've done. (Interview: 6/15/11)

This is a particularly significant moment of our interview because this is her single moment of being uncomfortable with me throughout our entire amiable interview process. As is her way, Rebecca laughs this off. “It’s funny because that’s the one thing you’ve brought up that’s made me uncomfortable this entire interview [laughter], and that’s not something I should be uncomfortable about. I know that but I am” (Interview: 6/15/11).

I have unwittingly put a strain on our relationship (Gilligan, 1982) much to our mutual dismay. Rebecca feels comfortable enough to be honest with me, which is a high compliment, and our interview continues for another half an hour. As I have listened carefully to Rebecca, I have focused on “the heart of the present” (Lather, 2007, p. 137). This is quite similar to Rebecca’s own philosophy around herself and her academic work. I have tried to remain true to her voice and be aware of my own pre-conceptions around gifted adolescent girls and academic achievement.

Summary.

In this Personal Issues section, I have focused on six separate issues. First, I discussed Rebecca’s key developmental turning point at a young age. I continued with how she copes with her healthy divided gifted identity. Next, I looked at the demands of high expectations on an excellent student and how Rebecca manages her ADHD in such an elite setting. I discussed her psychological maturity around dealing with eczema and concluded with the single uncomfortable moment of our two interviews.

“The beauty of the world, which is so soon to perish, has two edges, one of laughter, one of anguish, cutting the heart asunder” (Woolf, 1980, p. 17).

“Sometimes paper is the only thing that will listen to you” (Carlip, 1995, p. 343).

“I am weary of starting from scratch each time I speak or write, as if there were no history behind us, of hearing that among women of color, Asian women are the least political, or the least oppressed, or the most polite.” (Yamada in Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981, p. 71)

Chapter Six

Toni: The Gifted Girl Creating Her Own Identity

Introduction: Toni as a Techno-Song

Toni is simultaneously bold and unsure. Like Rebecca, she is full of contradictions yet articulate. Her speech is full of “I mean,” “I guess,” “I think,” and “I don’t know.” Yet she does know. She is merely on the journey of figuring out how she knows what she does. Like any musician or poet, she is immensely intuitive. She talks in fits and starts; Toni thinks out loud as she speaks. She is a born writer and more comfortable with words on a page than words in the air. Since I’ve been writing poetry since I was nine, I felt I was interviewing a kindred spirit.

Because of her experience as Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper, her technological expertise saves our second interview. I am indebted to her, yet she is modest about her technological skills. In the middle of our second interview at a Starbucks in a local shopping mall, my audio device filled up completely. No more room for data! This state-of-the-art high tech device needed to have its data downloaded onto a CD. The audio goes out. Do not panic. Do not panic.

Toni asks politely, “Do you have a phone?”

“Yes, yes, I do.”

“Well, let me set this up, and we’ll do the rest of the interview on your phone.”

“OK!”

Bink. Bing. Zip. Zap. She hits buttons on my Blackberry, and she is telling stories again. Clearly, she has the upper hand technologically over me, and this could have shifted the power dynamic of our interview. Yet she continues talking, honestly, searchingly, without a trace of arrogance around her expertise using my technology. Modesty is one of Toni's most winning personality traits. Did she learn this respect for elders from her Filipino parents? Is this because I am the researcher?

Toni is Filipina-American. Does she identify as Filipina first? This remains unclear to me despite the fact that she is wearing a shirt with the flag of the Philippines during our first interview. I will discuss this further in the chapter.

Using the theoretical work of Dabrowski (1964), Goffman (1963), Ogbu (2008), and Fordham (1985), I will analyze Toni's perceptions about herself and her schooling. Despite her academic success, she is primarily a poet and musician struggling to find a place for words and music in her academically driven world. As Toni differs so greatly from both Taylor and Rebecca, I have changed the organization of this chapter to focus on three primary issues. The first section will focus on Dabrowski (1964) and his theories about OEs with a focus on Toni's musical, writing, and imaginal gifts. Next, I will examine Toni's feelings of being different, using Goffman's (1963) theory around stigma and focus on her tremendous personal growth around her perception of being different from other students. To conclude, I will examine Toni's background and behavior using Ogbu (2008) and Fordham's (1985) controversial theories around "acting White." Let's begin with a focus on Toni's music.

A Musician and a Poet: Dabrowski's Theories Applied

Dabrowski (1964) explains:

Psychoneurotics create works of culture because of their high moral sensitivity, their capacity for introspection. In connection with these remarks, it is pertinent to quote a passage from Proust's novel *Le Cote de Guermantes*: "All that is great we owe to neurotics. They, and no others, have founded religions, created masterpieces. The world will never know how much we owe them, and especially how much they suffered to give all this to the world. We glory in their divine music, their beautiful paintings, and thousands of subtleties, without realizing the innumerable sleepless nights, tears, spasmodic laughter, urticarial, asthma, and - worse of all - fear of death they cost those who created them. (p. 81)

Though Toni would not be comfortable with the label psychoneurotic, she would admit easily that she is creative, dreamy, and full of poetry and music. She explains:

I have a musical partner in crime/soul mate because she understands me emotionally. I'm all over the place as well, and she sees that in me. We also compose music together, so there's a lot of heart opening.

(Interview: 4/6/11)

The irony of this important relationship lies in the fact that boy problems brought the two of them together as friends. Toni continues the story:

I compose music with my friend. I liked music and I liked writing, but I liked them separately. Then junior year, it just came together because my friends and I had planned to perform at a school variety show, but then a lot of drama happened. One of our friends said, "Oh, I like Lia." Lia, my friend, said, "Oh, I like you too." Then he said, "Oh, no, I don't like you anymore." It was tough. It was tough, and the reason why we got into a fight. I wasn't as close to Lia before, but then that situation brought me and Lia closer together. Surprisingly, it was in more of an angry way because we were both annoyed with him. But then it actually came out to something different. Because Lia, to me, Lia is probably the next Beethoven because she can magically pull a melody out of nowhere and transpose any song to any key. She can play almost any instrument. (Interview: 4/6/11)

In elementary school, Toni was a musical prodigy:

Before writing, singing was my passion. Music gives me a lot of things. When I was younger, I was pushed into it by my parents. Take voice lessons. Do this. Do that. I lost interest in it but now it has come back. I stopped after grade school, and I focused more on academics and writing. It came back junior year with just me and my friend. For me now, it's more of a release. I guess now that I'm into writing, I use music as an outlet. It expresses what I can't sometimes in writing or drawing or whatever I'm doing. It's just there. (Interview: 7/12/11)

This is an existentialist approach to the role of music and writing in her life. Essential to her well-being, Toni sees music and writing as both stress relievers and forms of expression. She continues:

Writing used to be a form of stress relief for me but then with newspaper "You have to write," so it's not a form of stress relief. You get away from it a little bit, and you dive into music. Me and my friend write songs together, so it's a form of venting. (Interview: 7/12/11).

See Figure 6.1 to explain Toni's coping strategy.

Figure 6.1. Toni's Algebra.

Music + Word = Expression + Stress

Whereas Taylor had a major emotional turning point at an intellectual level in second grade, Toni has a positive emotional and psychological turning point her junior year of high school. After the boy problem, Toni declares:

We actually composed a song, and it was our first song together. It became a turning point for me where it was like I can take the two things that I love and put it together. It's just a hobby. It has expanded my love for both music and for writing. It's definitely brought me closer to one of my best friends. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Unfortunately, Toni remembers her elementary school unhappily. "I wasn't very happy with myself. I was considered one of the smartest kids in school. In my grade I wasn't very happy with that because people put me in a box" (Interview: 4/6/11). When Toni moved from being isolated as a "dork" and a "nerd" because of her academic success at the elementary school level, she decided to leave music behind and try something new. Freed from the crippling isolation of her intelligence, she blooms at a new all-girls private high school. Toni remembers:

One of the things that stands out for me is on the first day of my journalism class the teacher really emphasized about how words affect people like communication, like the way people perceive things is just a matter of just communication and talking. Especially words. They cause a ripple effect in people's lives, and it really struck home for me. I never really thought of things that way. Things could change just by one word. You probably hear, see it in the back of your mind, but it never came up front that someone was telling me this. If words can change, then people can change. Just being in that class started my love for journalism and for writing. (Interview: 4/6/11).

See Figure 6.2 to explain Toni's personality.

<p>Figure 6.2. Toni's Equations. Words = Power = Toni</p>

In our second interview, I follow up on her journalism story. She remains in awe of the power of the written word. She explains her epiphany:

I didn't realize that what I could write affected people so greatly and that what I know affects other people. They ask for answers, and I give it to them. That affects their lives, but I didn't know that. Who I was as a

person meant people would listen. That played a really important role later in me becoming an editor, the Editor in Chief. Just knowing that my opinions matter, and that other people will be willing to listen that also played into me accepting myself. Journalism really opened my eyes to the world. That I could listen to people, and they could listen to me. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni, with her focus on music, poetry, and writing, appears to fit into Dabrowski's (1964) theory of psychomotor or heightened excitability around the neuromuscular system. Toni "responds far beyond what is appropriate to the stimuli of his environment, occasioning conflicts within himself and with others" (p. 98).

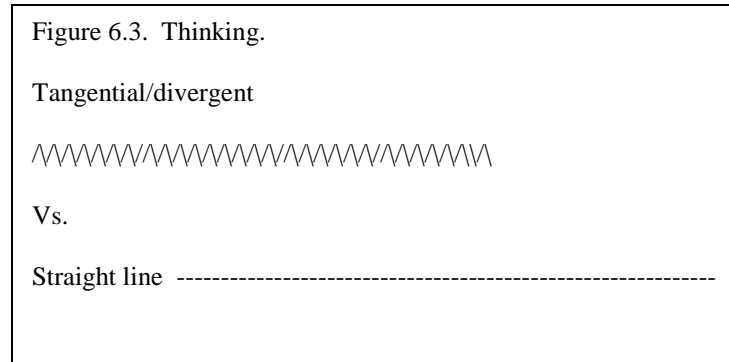
According to her friend Deborah, the subject of the next chapter:

She's so kind hearted and warm; she's so creative. In her free time, she writes stories. She finds the time to do that, and she stays up 'til five, six o'clock in the morning doing her homework. She just loves to have a good time. She'll get all her friends together to have an afternoon of fun at her house; she'll serve all this food. She just loves to bring people together. (Interview: 7/14/11)

This quote transitions my analysis into Toni as being a young woman "with *imaginative* hyperexcitability {who} is not able to agree with his environment; he will often reach out beyond the limits of actual life into a world of dreams and fantasy" (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 98). As I mentioned before, with all Toni's starts and stops in our interview she appears to think as she talks with a dreamy vagueness. With all her stories and poems, she lives in another world far from her high school. She finds peace and fulfillment in her writing and songs. By throwing parties for her friends, she creates her own world of happiness and security. This is in stark contrast to Toni when she was a little girl in elementary school. I will discuss this at length in the second section of this chapter.

In Dabrowski's (1964) analysis of gifted individuals, he says, "The importance of self-objectivity, self-criticism, self-control, and objective evaluation of the social environment has long been recognized" (p. 54). Toni discloses, "I'm very critical. I'm a bit of a pessimist. I'm a bit of a pessimist, but my friends think I'm an optimist which is quite interesting" (Interview: 4/6/11). Her statements are full of self-doubt and contradictions though she appears to be undisturbed by all her inconsistencies. As I listen to her, she makes perfect sense. Only after examining our transcripts and mulling them over for hours do I begin to see the pattern of her paradoxical thinking. She is a contradiction and will not be simplified (Gilligan, Brown, & Rogers, 1990). At this point in her life, she feels no compunction to clear up all the paradoxes in her thinking and how she views the world. Contradictions define her world view.

See Figure 6.3 to explain how Toni thinks.



When I ask her what she would like to change about herself, she immediately says:

Being critical, I suppose. My friends think I'm too modest; my parents think I am too critical. I have low self-esteem, but I think I'm the type of person who doesn't want to put myself out there in a way that's vain or narcissistic. I see a lot of girls my age who flaunt about like "Oh, I can do this, and I can do that."

That's great, but there's a different way to approach it. (Interview: 4/6/11)

The Editor in Chief of this elite high school's newspaper is quite modest in her assessment of her achievements.

Once more, this is the hallmark of the gifted child.

Her friend Deborah declares:

I think she underestimates herself. The fact that she was Editor in Chief of the newspaper is such a huge accomplishment. She does not get the recognition she deserves. She's a brilliant writer; she's so eloquent and articulate. She's so creative; she's one of the editors for [school literary magazine]. (Interview: 7/14/11)

Being a born writer, Toni has worked out self-acceptance through her interactions with great literature. She admits:

I am self-critical, but over the past year, I've also come to accept a lot of things that I am. One of the things that helped me last year was my first class in AP English. A lot of the plots and the discussions we had in class were about self-acceptance. There were all these very dysfunctional characters and the reason why a lot of them met their demise was because they weren't able to accept themselves. Those who step

back and say, “I don’t really care; this is me.” Those were the characters that were able to move on with their lives. It opened my eyes to see that maybe I can’t be everything. I shouldn’t criticize myself too much for it but just accept it and work with it. I’m still working at it [Laughter]. I had my own waking because I didn’t realize that I was like that. I didn’t realize how much I had been confined by other’s expectations, my parent’s expectations, and my own expectations. The biggest problem wasn’t actually them, but it was actually just me. (Interview: 4/6/11)

Like Kate Chopin’s groundbreaking novel *The Awakening* about a woman in nineteenth century New Orleans who comes to realize the social restrictions around her with dire consequences, Toni comes to this realization on her own. Thankfully, Toni does not drown herself in the ocean like the heroine in Chopin’s novel, but she gives credit to literature for helping her understand her own foibles.

For such an accomplished young woman, both creatively and academically, she criticizes herself constantly:

I just never really like to think about myself sometimes because I guess it comes with being a pessimist. I know there are a million ways things could go wrong, and I know all my flaws. I know my weaknesses. I even see that as a writer. Even my teachers say, “Why are you ...?” They give us self-evaluations like “How do you do as a writer?” I always give myself a low score because I know there’s a million things that are wrong with my essay. I’m just very critical as a person. They’re like, “This is actually a good piece of work. Why are you putting yourself down?” I’m like “Because I know there’s a million ways it could go wrong.” It’s just as a person I am self-critical. I know I should look at myself as better just as a person, but I don’t want to put myself out there because I also am critical of others. I don’t want to say nice things about myself because I know I have bad things to say about others. That’s pretty much it. I know there are a lot of people at school who are like, “I’m so great and whatnot.” I’m like “You’re not great.” I want to tell them that, but then I’m like, “Well, I’m not so great myself.” (Interview: 7/12/11)

She is hesitant to tell the truth to others because she fears their criticism. Even in the face of girls’ successes, they still suffer from low self-esteem (AAUW, 1992). Kerr (1985) reminds us, “A society that wastes female brilliance has made it the norm for gifted women to lead an average life, and gifted women have largely adapted to that norm” (p. 171). Because of their acute sensitivity to society’s judgment of them as not feminine, pushy, or too aggressive,

young women and girls unconsciously set up destructive mind games. This is from the conflicting messages they receive from society about how a girl must behave.

One of her turning points arrives at the all-girls private school:

My first year in high school was very, very different. It made me realize that I'm not perfect. I came to accept myself. It made me realize that people will accept me or be my true friend if they accept me for all that I am. I am not just the person who's the academic. It's OK if I always know the answer if I'm always perfect or whatnot. It's OK because I accept myself. Those people who will accept me for who I am are the ones who truly care about me. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni reaches a point of such maturity and self-possession that she no longer cares about the opinions of her peers. Her friend Deborah sums her up with admiration and love:

I love how individualistic she is. She'll wear clothes that only she can pull off. She comes in and just bursts into the room with this. She brings so much positive energy wherever she goes. She doesn't care what other people think of her. If people don't like her than she just says, "I don't have to be their friend." She knows what she wants and she'll go for it. (Interview: 7/14/11)

This is an entirely different person from being an isolated and unhappy little elementary school girl. I will discuss this unique growth trajectory at length in the next section of this chapter.

Goffman's Framework: Living Daily with the Stigma of Being Gifted

Stages of maturity: Growing up gifted.

Toni feels the effects of being gifted musically, academically, and imaginatively. She has a scarlet G for gifted stitched across her chest and has constantly struggled with the tension between being an outsider, an insider, and being simply herself. Goffman (1963) argues:

It has been suggested that the stigmatized individual defines himself as no different from any other human being, while at the same time he and those around him define him as someone set apart. Given this basic self-contradiction of the stigmatized individual it is understandable that he will make some effort to find a way out of his dilemma, if only to make a doctrine which makes consistent sense out of his situation. In contemporary society, this means the individual will attempt on his own to hammer out such a code. (p. 108-109)

She tells sad stories of being isolated and alone at her elementary school after emigrating with her parents from the Philippines at age seven:

In grade school I wasn't very happy with myself. I was considered one of the smartest kids in school. In my grade I wasn't very happy with that because people put me in a box. I told myself, "I, I can't be in a box; there's no way I can be in a box." Hearing people say that, "Oh, she's a certain way" got to me. I didn't realize how unhappy I was, who I was, until I went to my first school, which was an all girls' school in the city. No one knew me and for all they cared I could just be some random person on the street which I was. I can still be intelligent while still being silly, while still being serious. And still be patient while temperamental. (Interview: 4/6/11)

At a new school, she recreates herself after her lonely elementary school experience. She is freed from the restrictive labels of her elementary school classmates. In the last two lines of the above quote she holds her contradictory confusing identity firmly in hand. She is comfortable living with paradoxes.

Toni credits her freshman year as instrumental in the development of her identity. She explains:

I really think that if I didn't go to [private all girls' school] I wouldn't be the person I am today. My self-esteem is low, but I do have to confess that when I was in grade school, I really did not have any self-esteem at all. I, I really was detached from everyone because they already put me in a stereotype that I was not Cuban. They only wanted to talk to me about school work and not anything else. So when I went to [private all girls' school], it had all those morals and ethics and all that jazz. But it was a different place. There were no expectations of me because no one knew me. I tried to act so detached from everyone at first. The environment itself just opened me up and made me realize that I can still try and be the best I can at school. I realized that no man's an island. It's just not fun doing the things that you do unless there's someone there to appreciate it. I think I really gained true friends because I found people who understood me. Not just like at an academic standpoint but an emotional standpoint. It just floored me as a person to realize that I can be so many more things than just what other people tell me I am. My one year at [private all girls' school] got me prepared to realize that I don't have to listen to anybody else but myself. I just formed who I was and who I am today. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni discovers this with the help of her peers and teachers. As a poet, she includes a literary allusion to English poet John Donne in "no man's an island." Most interestingly, she says she is identified as not Cuban. She is

not Latina; she is Filipina. I missed my chance to follow up on this phrase. What are the cultural and social trappings that the dominant society associates with being Cuban? How did not being Cuban affect her sense of herself as a young woman of color? I will address the topic of race in the final section of this chapter.

After a very successful year at this school, she enrolls in her public high school for the last three years of her education. She is terrified of being put “back in the box” as she was as an elementary student. Her confidence: faltered a bit because being the new girl, you’re still unsure about things, and it was the first time I went to a public school. Everyone had their own cliques, and I was terrified. What if people expected me to be in a clique or would put me in a box? I felt very insecure about everything. But then especially last year, I came to terms with who I am with the help of some of my friends from my old school and some of my friends from here; I just came to accept myself. (Interview: 4/6/11)

This is quite a profound statement coming from a gifted adolescent girl. Considering the forces raging against her chance of succeeding, she appears happy and is certainly academically successful. Obviously she has matured immensely through the years to a psychological, physical, and emotional position of self-realization and acceptance. As discussed in the previous section, she has found ways to cope with her stress level around performing at a high standard academically and creatively. She admits, “There were a lot of things that I probably wouldn’t be able to go through like last [pause] year that I’m probably able to go through now stress-wise” (Interview: 4/6/11). She has learned to mitigate her school-related stress levels. “Just waking up in the morning and being like, “I have to do this; I’ll get through it” (Interview: 4/6/11). She reveals a dogged determination to see her way through each demanding day. This brings back Dabrowski’s (1964) point of how artists have “suffered to give all this to the world” (p. 81). Suffering as a young woman, suffering as a young woman of color, suffering as a gifted young woman of color, Toni has an impressive resume of accomplishments by age 18.

The stigma of “the Smart Girl.”

When I am dressed professionally and using my best vocabulary, my friend tells me I intimidate people with my intelligence. I am supposed to dumb down my speech and smile much more. Mrs. Jessler told me I was “a smart girl” in second grade, and “the smart girl” stigma remains with me as a grown woman. A person’s intelligence is only apparent when she speaks or writes. Hence, the brilliance of absolutely silent girls may be continuously overlooked. Many girls take themselves out of school systems because the school curriculum does not

speak to them (Weis & Fine, 1993); many stay but underachieve for a variety of reasons (Corwin, 2005).

Intelligence is invisible and not written on a person's face. Goffman (1963) addresses this in the following:

Traditionally, the question of passing has raised the issue of the "visibility" of a particular stigma, that is how well or how badly the stigma is adapted to provide means of communicating that the individual possesses it. Since it is through our sense of sight that the stigma of others most frequently becomes evident, the term "visibility" is perhaps not too misleading. Actually, the more general term, "perceptibility" would be more accurate, and "evidentness" more accurate still. (p. 48)

Toni uses the word stigma to refer to her intelligence without my prompting.

When you are an AP student, you get the stigma of "Oh, you have to be in the top ten, and you have to not fool around. And you have to do your work." I think students in general should do that, whether or not they're in AP. I took Honors Anatomy; it was a mixed class of Honors and regular students. They knew I was in AP classes, and it's like "Oh, this girl, she's, she's no fun. She, all she does is book work." It's true because AP teachers really load you with book work. You're expected to be the best of the best because you are in the highest possible topic for that subject. It's a burden, but it's also fun too. You learn a lot.

(Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni is painfully aware of her outsider status. "People in regular classes look at me like, "Oh, you know, they probably don't want to talk to us because they're like in their own little group. They're the nerds" (Interview: 7/12/11). Erikson (1968) claims that adolescents tend to be cliqueish and clannish. They create their own groups to ensure psychological, emotional, and physical safety.

When I was in fourth grade, my Dad, a high school art teacher, took our family to Switzerland on a sabbatical. I had French lessons to prepare me, but suddenly I was the only American, except for my younger sister, in a Swiss school. Confused as fourth graders often are, the other students thought I was Italian. As Italians were emigrating into Switzerland, anti-immigrant sentiment ran high. Despite having a protector and a group of loyal Swiss friends, I always felt like an outsider with my American-accented French and American clothes. And I never got a scooter like all the Swiss kids. Returning to the United States for fifth grade, my best friend Jill helped me readjust to American schools again.

Ten years later, I was an American woman "reading" English at University College at Oxford University in England. Book in hand, wandering the medieval streets, I knew how to blend into another culture this time. As

soon as I said a word, however, I revealed my nationality with my accent. My tutor was scandalized by my hitchhiking habit, my English friends loved my energy and interest in English authors, and my American friends missed me when I went on long trips between my weekly tutorials. Once more, I was an outsider.

Still ten years later in 1991, I was a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) teaching high school English in a small town in southeastern Poland. I was the only American for kilometers and kilometers. The closest PCV was two hours away by bus. The only American in my school, the only American in my town, I was the ultimate outsider.

All this revealed, I found that when I returned to the United States to teach, the students, who felt themselves to be outsiders for a myriad of reasons, naturally gravitated towards me. Because of my own long experience in having an outsider role, these students trusted me intuitively. And I understood their situation all too well.

Returning to Toni, she reminds us that intelligent girls do not bring stigmatism on themselves. “At times the stigma of the AP student isn’t just coming from the student but also coming from teachers. They expect you to do this well” (Interview: 7/12/11).

Ironically, in our first interview, Toni does not think of herself as being labeled gifted. She admits that in AP:

the grade weight is higher. You’re definitely in a class where most of the people are at the level where they want to go behind what’s in the textbook. I really do like that, but sometimes as a senior, it also is a bit of a burden [Laughter] because everyone’s like “Oh, you have AP tests.” There’s a lot of responsibility, and you’re expected to be a model student. (Interview: 4/6/11)

As she muses about being gifted, she explains, “You’re generally labeled as obsessed with school work and people think, “Oh, you have no time for friends; you have no time.” But that’s not true actually” (Interview: 4/6/11).

Toni is labeled as “a smart girl” upon entering elementary school, even as an emigrant from the Philippines:

Early on everyone noticed that I got the subject a little bit quicker than they did. I excelled in most of the subjects and people just thought, “Oh, you know, she’s the ...” Everyone in my grade school had nothing better to do than put stereotypes on people. They thought that, “Oh, sure, she’s smart. She gets to be the girl who’s like the nerd, who’s like, you know, she, so all you, she, she’s no fun. She’s a dork.” It was just really frustrating for me because I’m not like that. I didn’t have the guts to tell them that. I just did

homework. That really frustrated me up to the point where I realized that I started almost believing them up 'til eighth grade. I was just like, "Maybe they're right." Especially with low self-esteem, you start realizing that maybe they're right. That maybe there isn't really something about me that's other than being an academic. High school just proved me wrong in all that. That's why whenever I look back in grade school, I realize I was being really stupid because I let other people tell me what I was when I, I realized that maybe I shouldn't. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Even in the face of their own competence, girls still suffer from low self-esteem (AAUW, 1992) as Toni does.

Victims of bullying tend to have lower self-esteem and display more signs of loneliness and depression than students who do not participate in bullying (Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, & Mickelson, 2001). Egan and Perry undertook a 1998 study demonstrating that low self-esteem was related to victimization by peers. By not defending themselves, they are seen as victims. Behaviors such as social withdrawal are visible to peers and create the perception of an easy target for bullying. Repeated victimization leads to decreased self-esteem over time. Many researchers have documented the relationship between peer victimization and low self-worth (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Grills & Ollendick, 2002; Neary & Joseph, 1994; Ross, 1996; Slee & Rigby, 1993). Children who are classified as victims have reported lower self-worth than their bullying and uninvolved peers (Andreou, 2000; Boulton & Underwood, 1992). The passive/submissive victim (Olweus, 1994) is anxious, insecure, not likely to retaliate when attacked, and usually withdraws (Swearer, Grills, & Cary, 2004). Low self-esteem and bullying work together in a vicious cycle. "Children with low self-regard may contribute to their own victimization by failing to assert themselves during the conflict" (Swearer et al, 2004). This situation only exacerbates an already difficult situation. Toni herself admits to her low self-esteem and her inability to fight back. She fits this profile perfectly.

The psychosocial effects of bullying on girls are profound. Bullying is defined as "a person who is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons" (Olweus, 1993). Depression is a common symptom found in both male and female victims (Callagan & Joseph, 1995; Neary & Joseph, 1994) with a higher percentage of depression among girls (Craig, 1998). Relational aggression, which is having lies told about them, being left out on purpose during play-time or doing an activity, is more distressing for girls than for boys (Crick, 1995). This is significantly related to social and psychological adjustment difficulties

which includes depression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996) according to Espelage, Mebane, and Swearer (2004) and psychological stress (Duncan, 1999).

A fearless identity: “She doesn’t care what anybody thinks.”

Just like Taylor, in some ways Toni is a pragmatic realist. She is dreamy and full of creative ideas, but she recognizes the value of personal growth. Maturing over the years, she has changed a great deal in her view of the world as an open and friendly place and garnered many friends and a significant amount of support from peers and adults along the way. She carefully documents her journey:

When I started high school, I started thinking, “OK, if I want to keep up being, if I want to do well, I guess I’m gonna have to sort of shove everyone away and put myself in a bubble, and then let everyone look at me from just this way. There can’t be any flaws because that would just totally ruin the image. I realized that it’s not fun like that. It doesn’t really get you anywhere other than being alone during lunch. Opening up to people made me realize that I can still be smart, but I don’t have to pretend I don’t have flaws. At first it sort of scared me because people were invading my life. And they’re nice people. It’s new to me. My first year in high school was very, very different; it made me realize that it’s OK that I’m not perfect. I came to accept myself. And it made me realize that people will accept me and be my true friend if they accept me for all that I am. Not just the person who is the academic. It’s OK if I always know the answer because I accept myself, and those people who accept me for who I am are the ones who truly care about me. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni views her intelligence as a secret that society discovers; her intelligence is like a spy code that society cracks. She tries to keep her academic gifts to herself because she is fearful of being ostracized. Not successful, she is isolated as an elementary school girl. Goffman (1963) explains:

When his differentness is not immediately apparent, and is not known beforehand (or at least known by him to be known by others), when in fact his is a discreditable, not a discredited, person, then the second main possibility in his life is to be found. The issue is not that of managing tension generated during social contacts, but rather that of managing information about his failing. To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where. (p. 42)

As a writer, Toni chooses her words carefully and reveals her thoughts and attitudes both consciously and unconsciously. Let's look at this revealing language in the following brief quote: "The people in our class were very accepting. When we did group work, you have to talk to people. They realized that we're not an automaton or something" (Interview: 7/12/11). Toni sees herself as an outsider because she is so bright; she must be "accepted" by her less intelligent peers. Her view of herself as an "automaton" is very revealing. Of course, she is a flesh and blood girl, not a test-taking robot. She needs to understand this about herself also.

As she mulls over her changes during our first interview, she is blunt:

I went to my grade school reunion. People didn't expect me to be as laidback or engaged in conversations other than about school. One of my classmates actually made a joke [Laughter]. "This person can't be Toni because she is probably possessed." It opened my eyes to say, "You know, it's OK that you think of that way of me, that I'm definitely not myself." But I think I am more myself than I was back in grade school. I might not be as serious but don't put me on that pedestal anymore; that's OK with me.

(Interview: 4/6/11)

Finding needed support from peers and teachers.

Just like Taylor and Rebecca, she finds a camaraderie and support among her peers (Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). "My friends are in higher level courses; they are gifted students. We bounce off each other and we say, "Hey, ya know, I'm struggling with this too"" (Interview: 4/6/11). She turns to her friends when the stress of her academics and/or extracurricular activities begin to take a physical, emotional, and psychological toll on her. Speaking of her friends at the private girls' school, she affirms: "I know that if I ever need anything, they're like my sisters" (Interview: 4/6/11). Like Taylor, she turns to her teachers for care and understanding (Betts & Neihart, 1988). "They could tell a lot [more] about me than I could probably say about myself. They support me because they've seen my work, and they know me personally" (Interview: 4/6/11). Again like Taylor and Rebecca, Toni is a hard-working individual to her teachers; she is not just a student ID number or a five on an AP test.

In our first interview at school, Toni wears a simple blue shirt with the Filipino flag on her pocket. She wears her flag right over her heart. Knowing she is a poet and sensitive to symbolism, I wonder if she chose this shirt for our interview. In our second interview at a local Starbucks, she is completely dressed in pink, the ultimate girl color. As German poet Goethe says, "What is most difficult for you?/ That which is easiest./ To see what is before your eyes." Toni is Filipina American and a young woman in pink. Goffman (1963) explains:

It is possible for signs which mean one thing to one group to mean something else to another group, the same category being designated but differently characterized. For example, the shoulder patches that prison officials require escape-prone prisoners to wear can come to mean one thing to guards, in general negative, while being a mark of pride for the wearer relative to his fellow prisoners. The uniform of an officer may be a matter of pride to some, to be worn on every possible occasion; for other officers, weekends may represent a time when they can exercise their choice and wear mufti, passing as civilians. (p. 46-47)

Toni makes careful choices to remain balanced academically and emotionally.

She has matured into a healthy young woman, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. According to Goffman (1963) and Dabrowski (1964), however, she has suffered with the label of gifted since she was seven. Though inner resilience, she survived bullying by her peers to emerge into a fearless persona when she entered her sophomore year in high school. Through her own pain as an outsider, she arrives at her womanhood, unafraid of other's opinions of her. Mostly, this is because she is so critical of herself. Returning to Evans-Pritchard's (1972) landscape, Toni knows where danger lies and where to find her sustenance, support, and shelter to be happy and successful.

Toni as a Young Woman of Color: Ogbu's Theories Applied

Feminist philosopher Chow (1992) claims:

For those feminists who have lived outside the First World as "natives" of "indigenous cultures" (for such are the categories in which they are put, regardless of their level of education), the defiance of Cixous is always dubious, suggesting not only the subversiveness of woman but also the more familiar, oppressive discursive prowess of the "First World." The "post-modern" cultural situation in which non-Western feminists now find themselves is a difficult and cynical one. Precisely because of the modernist epistemological mechanism which produced the interest in the Third World, the great number of discourses that surround this "area" are now treated, one feels, as so many Olympians saying "Ah, ah!" to a Western subject demanding repeated uniform messages. For the Third World feminist, the question is never that of asserting power as woman alone, but of showing how the concern for women is inseparable from other types of cultural oppression and negotiation. In a more pronounced, because more

technologized/automatized manner, her status as postmodern automaton is both the subject and object of her critical operations. (p. 111)

How significant that Toni also used the word automaton as the manner in which she was perceived by her classmates. In this third and final analysis of Toni, I turn to educational theorist Ogbu's (2008) theories around students of color "acting White" (p. xvi) to succeed in school academically and personally. The idea of "acting White" has permeated the American consciousness for over a 100 years. In a 1933 book *The Tragedy of Lynching* which traced violence against African-Americans from 1889 to 1929, "trying to act like a white person" was a crime punishable by death (Wilkerson, 2010, p. 39). Returning to Ogbu, however, this is only a sliver of his theoretical work around race and academic performance in American schools. Ogbu (2008) explains the cultural context of a complex issue:

I had learned over decades of studying minorities that they live in what can be described as a set of "dual cultural worlds." The "outer cultural worlds" of different minorities are sometimes similar, and in some respects, similar to the "outer world" of mainstream White Americans. Because of the similarities in their "outer cultural worlds," immigrant minorities (e.g., Chinese), non-immigrant minorities (e.g., Blacks), and White Americans sometimes give similar answers to the same questions. (p. 77)

According to Mickelson (2006, p. xvi.), President Barack Obama and theorist Cornell West are only two of the many luminaries who have drawn from Ogbu's work over the past 30 years. According to Horvat and O'Connor (2006), as many as 158 popular press articles made reference to the "acting White" hypothesis. The *New York Times's* compilation of the Fourth Annual Year in Ideas, described modestly as a digest of the most noteworthy ideas of the past year, mentioned Ogbu's theories. However, Darity, Tyson, and Castellini's research refuted and refined a few aspects of his oppositional cultural framework model (Robinson, 2004).

His work has long been linked to Fordham's because of an article they co-authored entitled, "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the "Burden of 'Acting White'" (1985). Fordham (2004) explains their differences:

His theoretical model . . . emphasized social-structural and historical factors. My approach emphasized expressive as well as adaptive responses to those determinants. I proposed my theory as an addition to his, balancing its structuralism and extending its reach into a dynamic of African American adolescents'

cultural repertoire. I am not sure that Ogbu was ever convinced of the validity of my point of view. (p. 152-153)

Ogbu's (2008) two key theoretical features are comparative in nature. The first theory focuses on comparing minorities with the dominant group and also comparing minorities among themselves. His second theory is a model that delineates the influence of school and family in addition to wider society, the cultural-ecological model (CEM), on the academic performance of students of color (p. xxiv). Ogbu (2008) argues that the status of students of color affects their academic performance in societies filled with racial differences, such as the United States, New Zealand, Canada, and Britain. He maintains that this also occurs in societies without racial differences, such as India, Israel, Japan and Singapore (Ogbu, 1978, 1991; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Ogbu & Stern, 2001).

With Toni's difficulties in elementary school, she is lonely and isolated. "Individuals trying to cross cultural barriers or pass culturally may also experience internal stress, what DeVos (1967) calls 'affective dissonance'" (Fordham & Ogbu, 2008, p. 599). Individuals may experience psychological stress betraying their group if they do, indeed, succeed in "acting White" (Fordham, 1985; Ogbu, 1986). "Subordinate group members may automatically or unconsciously perceive learning some aspects of the culture of their 'oppressors' as harmful to their identity" (DeVos, 1984). Toni's parents, born in the Philippines, naturally set the home rules. She admires her parents and their struggles:

I look up to my parents especially. My parents have sacrificed a lot, gone through a lot. I think the things they've gone through are way different, ahead of their time. It's the different way they see things, but I still admire them because of the fact that when they were my age, they had to go through so much. Seeing them transcend through their problems makes me want to think that in my life, I can transcend through mine.

(Interview: 4/6/11)

Over time she has internalized her parents' high expectations of her academically. She says: They're always telling me, "Oh, you, you should do your best." It's not for their benefit, but it's for mine. They always remind me, so that always sticks with me. If it's something I want to do well, I just have to do it on my own terms. Yes, I'll ask for help from others, but my dedication to something should come from the individual and not from anyone else. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni describes the culture clash between her parents:

It's a very different culture. They expect you to have certain values. You can't be like all the other kids because you have to value your family more, you have to value education more, you can't put your emotions up front, you can't do this, you can't do that. You're a girl. We say girls can't talk to boys on the street. It clashes with some of the things that I learn in school. Everyone at school is like "It's a free country, first amendment." It clashes sometimes, but they're my parents. I did grow up there, so I know that tradition means a lot to them. It means a lot to me too but sometimes they just clash. (Interview: 7/12/11)

She discusses her future college plans:

I will be taking speech pathology. I'm keeping an open mind even though it's not my first choice, of course. There's the Filipino tradition, "You have to be practical with your course." It's more practical than taking journalism or writing or music. I'm keeping an open mind to it, and we'll see how it takes me. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Her close friend Deborah, met in the next chapter, summarizes Toni's family influence with some hostility. "A lot of what holds her back is her family. They have some archaic practices and beliefs. I feel like that's a lot of what's holding her back. It frustrates me because I know how far she could go" (Interview: 7/14/11). Responding to Toni's future plans, Deborah declares, speaking of Toni's parents, "Yeah, they want her to be a speech pathologist and earn all this money. She wants to be a journalist, and she's so born for that. She's such an amazing writer" (Interview: 7/14/11).

Deborah thinks Toni needs to break with her family's Filipino traditions. Her advice is that she should say, "Screw it, I'm just gonna do whatever I want; I'm gonna go for that." If journalism is what she wants, she should go for it" (Interview: 7/14/11). Indeed, Toni knows she needs to break from her family. Deborah explains for her: She knows she should; it's just hard. It'll be a lot easier for her when she's away. That will be so great for her. Her grandmother stays with her during the week, and I know that's hard on her. It puts a lot of pressure on her. Her father went to the equivalent of Harvard in the Philippines. She tells me they came to America for her, for she and her siblings to have a better education, an easier life than they did. Because of that, she has lot of pressure put on herself academically. (Interview: 7/14/11)

In order to simplify the dominant culture's understanding of an ethnic group, many categories are mixed together. Matute-Bianchi (1991) argues that:

The emphasis on one ethnic category versus another, therefore, is best understood as an adaptive strategy; the specific ethnic label serves as a cognitive resource developed in an interactive response that is strategically exploited and manipulated within specific contexts as the various groups compete for scarce resources (material and/or social) within a system of structured inequality. These ethnic categories, which may change over time and be used for different purposes, are emblematic and have meaning both for members of the group and for analysts of situational contexts in which ethnicity emerges as a salient category. (p. 398)

Spicer (1971) theorizes that a helpful way to understand ethnicity is through an interactionist approach. This emphasizes interaction and contact with those who are different. This approach focuses on how contact with, in opposition to isolation from, others increases the ethnic group's sense of identity. Spicer argues that the development of a persistent ethnic identity in opposition to the dominant group has both structural and historical antecedents. Spicer views an oppositional process as the key ingredient of an enduring, collectively developed identity. Turning to theorist Cummins (1986), he argues that the strength of cultural identity is a vital factor in a student's expressive response to schooling. Cummins states:

school failure does not occur in minority groups that are positively oriented towards both their own and the dominant culture, that they do not perceive themselves as inferior to the dominant group, and that they are not alienated by their own cultural values. (p. 22)

Toni's academic and personal success is even more remarkable given the research indicating that students of color devalue academic achievement (Taylor in Ogbu, 2008, p. 481). This phenomenon is attributed to three reasons. First is the desire to protect one's self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989). Second is a response to the perceptions of students of color to perceived barriers to socioeconomic mobility (Ford, 1992; Ogbu, 1997). Third and last is students' lack of achievement as a consequence of their historical and cultural experiences (Ogbu, 1991, 1997). Indeed, Oleneck and Lazerson (1974) argue that social historians have documented racial job ceilings dating back to the mid 1800s. These disturbing patterns apply to all ethnicities (Taylor in Ogbu, 2008, p. 493).

Returning to issues around intelligence, Fordham and Ogbu (1985) describe a disturbing example of how girls dumb themselves down to fit societal expectations about girls and intelligence.

High achieving females use certain gender-specific strategies to cope with the burden of acting White. But, like the males, they camouflage to avoid being perceived as brainiacs. More than the males, the female high achievers work to maintain low profiles in school. (Fordham & Ogbu, 1985, p. 615)

This is not the case with Toni who is a literary star at her high school albeit a modest one; however, this is the case with many of her peers of color.

Weis (in Ogbu, 2008) argues that girls in high school are victims of internalized sexism. She explains one program at a high school in which senior high students attend school part time and work part time in an office:

Taking the office curriculum was perceived as the best of available openings. Openings exist in the clerical area and the work was not seen as derogatory to the students' sense of femininity. Once in the program, the training that students received further marginalized their identities as wage laborers. The identity as workers outside the home was presented as secondary to a home/family identity. "While in some minimal ways the women may have rejected the ideology of male supremacy," Valli (1986) argues, "at a more fundamental level, they affirmed it, granting superiority and legitimacy to the dominance of men in a way that appeared spontaneous and natural." (p. 252) (p. 250)

Ogbu (2008) continues the argument around the stresses of intelligent students of color suffering because they perform well academically:

The accusation of "acting White" was about "fitting in" not about "making good grades" is further illustrated by the treatment of "smart students" in and outside of school. Smart students were defined as those who paid attention during lessons, "raised their hands" to answer questions, "always" got the answers right, and did their schoolwork and homework. These students experienced pressures against "acting White" by answering teachers' questions during lessons or behaving in other "smart" ways in class. (p. 94)

Toni is a voluntary immigrant. Ogbu (1991) argues that this has a tremendous impact on a student's attitude towards schooling (Valenzuela in Ogbu, 2008, p. 503). Other research supports the fact that immigrant youth are better able to transcend cultural boundaries than their U.S. born peers, who develop and maintain sharp boundaries that delineate an oppositional standpoint in respect to the dominant group (Buriel, 1984; Buriel & Cardozo, 1988; Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Ogbu, 1991; Suarez-Orozco, 1991). Foster (in Ogbu, 2008) argues that voluntary minorities actively construct themselves in opposition to involuntary minorities when constructing themselves as high achievers (p. 585).

Like Deborah, White students are aware of the stresses students of color face in a schooling environment: Those who accommodate fully to the language, style, and manner of their privileged White counterparts are regarded by some as bourgeois assimilationists; and those who attempt to shape some sort of minority group are viewed by many as assimilationists. There are simply too few of them to create diversity. There is not the critical mass. A sensitive White student, saddened by the departure of a Black friend, says, “There are just not enough of them to make it natural.” (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 301)

Conclusion: Hitting Toni’s stop button.

I am so sorry when our second interview ends. Toni is so engaging and likeable; she has a winning personality that shines through despite her verbal ticks and her habit of thinking out loud as she speaks. This habit does not detract from her message. With the help of her friends, teachers, and family, Toni has created her own unique identity. Using Dabrowski’s theories, I examined her identity as a musician and a poet focusing on specific hyper sensibilities or ways she views the world around her. Toni knows she is intelligent and has lived with such a stigma her entire life. She grows from being an outcast as a little girl to being unaffected by the opinions of her peers as a high school senior. I concluded this chapter with an analysis using Ogbu’s theories around “acting White” and how that influenced Toni’s behavior as a Filipina American.

I hit the stop button, and Toni, entirely in pink, disappears down a walkway, blending into the crowd at the shopping mall.

After she goes

Toni succeeded in creating her own identity. She managed to stretch herself out beyond the boundaries and expectations around gender, intelligence, and race. When boxed in and labeled as being a particular type of student, she continued to push and grow beyond those labels. Toni created her own box that is unique to her. Indeed, Toni is beyond a box, beyond name calling and self-labeling. She has created her own trajectory of identity and taken herself out of any box. She can write, she can sing, she can be a superb student, and she can have friends. She has learned to live with her contradictions and is comfortable with her multi-dimensional self. Despite living in a Filipino culture at home and a White culture at school, she bridges cultural gaps successfully. Trying to please her parents and herself simultaneously, Toni walks her own line of identity, balancing carefully and thoughtfully, as she moves through each of her days. Over the years with the help of her friends and her own inner resilience, she has

escaped the restrictions society places around girls, intelligence, and race. Against all odds, Toni has emerged from high school as a gifted young woman with her own identity.

Chapter Seven

Deborah: The Gifted Girl as a Thinker

Introduction: The Valedictorian

She has presence. Though small and unassuming, Deborah is articulate and precise in all her answers to my questions. She knows exactly how and what she wants to say; Deborah is authoritative and direct. She is accustomed to an audience; this is evident in her confident demeanor. In our second interview at the local Starbucks, she bursts into emotion only once. This erupts at the very end of the interview and feels like an afterthought, a brief cloudburst. I have a sudden glimpse of the private Deborah, and then the interview ends abruptly because she needs to get home. I will discuss this sudden eruption at length in the fourth section of this chapter.

The organization of this chapter is completely different from the previous three. As each girl is so unique, the structure of the chapter reflects their individuality. This chapter is divided into five sections. Deborah plays two prominent roles at her school. First, she is a thinker and an intellectual. Second, she is a political activist and an agent for social change. Next, Deborah easily admits to being a perfectionist, and this takes a psychological, emotional, and perhaps physical toll on her. The fourth section focuses on her dual persona. She carefully cultivates a public and a private personality. How does she live with this duality? In the fifth and final section of this chapter, I discuss how Deborah integrates her intellect with her emotion through a song. This is her friend Toni's influence, naturally.

The Thinker and Intellectual: At What Cost?

Silverman (1989) argues that gifted girls possess specific vulnerabilities that make them more susceptible to sexism which wears away their confidence and sense of well-being. Kerr (1985) theorizes that because society overall ignores brilliant women, gifted girls and woman have accommodated themselves to that norm and hidden their intelligence. Though Deborah does not hide her intelligence, she appears to paralyze herself at times because she is thinking so hard. Deborah declares, "I don't take advantage of some of the moments I should take advantage of because I'm constantly thinking about what's next instead of being in the moment" (Interview: 3/21/11). She pushes herself even though she knows she will be unable to balance all the demands on her energy and time. "I take on more than I can chew because I'm always trying to push myself. I'm very hard on myself. It ends up being overwhelming, and I give up on the things that are important to me other than academics" (Interview: 7/14/11).

In our second interview, she openly doubts her priorities. She says, “Being able to give the valedictorian speech was just incredible. It didn’t even feel real, but I sometimes wonder was it all even worth it for that 15 seconds of fame” (Interview: 7/14/11). She continues to explain her regrets about giving academics her priority:

This summer I’ve spent a lot of time with my friends. I feel like I missed out on the train of becoming really close friends with people because I was so focused on academics. I feel like I missed out on a lot of social experiences that I should have had through out high school. I have some really close friends now, but I wonder how close they are as friends versus just people to hang out with. I feel like it’s a lot of things to sacrifice. (Interview: 7/14/11)

As Deborah puts some distance between her high school focus on academics and looks towards college, she is not sure she made the right decision about sacrificing her social life and her non-academic interests to achieving the goal of being the class valedictorian. She is aware of the cost of being number one. She explains:

I’ve spent so many nights crying saying, “I don’t want any of this; I don’t care if I’m the valedictorian. I just want to enjoy my senior year ‘cause a lot of my friends all say “I did this over the week-end; I had so much fun. And I’m doing this and this and that.” I’m saying, “Oh, my gosh, I’m stuck doing all this homework while you’re having so much fun.” (Interview: 3/21/11)

Reflecting a classic Gilligan (1982) dilemma of choosing between the ethic of care and her goals around success and high academic achievement, she briefly refers to a competition between herself and Rebecca of Chapter Five. Explaining her desire to be the class valedictorian, she says:

It’s definitely risked one of my close friendships because one of my closest friends, who I’ve known since kindergarten, is the salutatorian. There’s been some conflict recently with that. I don’t want to lose a friendship or risk my happiness in order to be some obscure number that I’m not even going to care about in maybe 50 years from now. (Interview: 3/21/11)

Despite this concern, Deborah is the valedictorian of her class. The emotional fall-out of her situation with Rebecca is unknown to me. Rebecca mentions this situation in our interview but without rancor. Indeed, knowing Rebecca, she probably laughed about this good-naturedly in her easy-going manner.

As a thinker, Deborah continually faces the existential dilemma of “being in the moment.” She admits: I feel like I have a hard time just being in the moment. In my job evaluation, my site directors were saying, “We see that you work really hard, and you want everything to be right. But you need to experiment and

think outside the box because it will make you happier. And it will make your camper happier.” They said eighty percent of your camper’s happiness is based on your happiness. I realized I can’t be thinking so much. (Interview: 7/14/11)

Erikson (1968) explains this adolescent phenomenon:

They are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the ideal prototypes of the day. (p. 128)

This issue of thinking too much spills into her social perceptions of herself:

I get self-conscious in large social situations, and I just don’t know how to be. I’m wrapped up in comparing myself to the other people around me or wondering how I’m going to be perceived rather than just being. When it’s a large social setting, I just wonder what do people think of me when they look at me, how am I being perceived, that sort of thing. (Interview: 7/14/11)

She repeats these words almost verbatim in our interview to ensure I understand the gravity of this situation. She illustrates Erikson’s point perfectly. Like any adolescent, Deborah appears to have some anxiety about her behavior in social situations.

Her boyfriend, Benjamin, is her opposite and oblivious to his peers’ opinions. Deborah exclaims:

I just love how he lives in the moment. He’s such a happy person, and I really aspire to be as happy as he is. He’s been doing Boy Scouts for years and years despite the fact that everybody thought it was a little weird. He didn’t care. Every summer he went to camp with a Mohawk, and we all thought it looked ridiculous. And he still went with that Mohawk. (Interview: 7/14/11)

According to Caputo (1995), Deborah is exactly the opposite of the average teenager. Caputo states, “From the teenager’s perspective, the “now” of her world is more important than that of the future. To conceptualize the teenage world any other way is to render the child as “passive,” as standing idly by awaiting to be filled with adult knowledge” (p. 290). Dabrowski (1964) would argue that Deborah, as a gifted young woman, appears to have an intellectual OE. She must seek understanding and truth. Her goal, with this OE, is to gain knowledge, analyze, and synthesize information surrounding her (Daniels, 2003). This can lead to problems “owing to an exaggerated search for explanations and a tendency to intellectualize problems in everyday life” (Caputo, 1995, p. 99). She thinks so much that she freezes in social situations.

The political activist: Making change happen.

Just like Taylor in Chapter Four, Deborah is a political activist. Arendt argues (1958) that action is born from creativity. Deborah explains, “I am on committees for genocide awareness, Youth United for Darfur, which is a Chicago-based organization run by students, STAND which is a national organization through the Genocide Intervention Network, and Right On for Israel which is an Israel advocacy program” (Interview: 3/21/11). According to Toni, the STAND acronym is not completely accurate because now this group focuses on Burma, other countries in Africa, and also Asia (Interview: 7/12/11).

Deborah has done volunteer work overseas in China, India, and Thailand in three week stints. These trips have become radicalizing experiences for her and helped her develop an internationalist lens on the world. “There’s a lot of work that needs to be done out there, and it really opened my eyes to what the world is like outside of the Westernized world” (Interview: 7/14/11). She remembers this key moment vividly:

We worked with the slum community in Thailand, and [sigh] it just changed my entire outlook of the whole world. I remember we were walking through the slums, and I remember we were delivering rice to the people there. There was this grandmother, and we came to her house. She had been raising all her grandchildren on her own because her son couldn’t and his wife couldn’t. She was so tired. You could just see in her face how tired she was. They were so hungry, and they had nothing in their house. I remember looking down at my tennis shoes and looking at the camera around my neck and thinking, feeling so bad. (Interview: 3/21/11)

She thinks often about the children she cared for at an orphanage called China Lotus Flower. Deborah describes her time there:

We spent three weeks with these kids, and they taught me so much. I’m so grateful I got to know them and experience them. I really want to go back. I remember them all by name, and they were just amazing, their resilience. They had no toys; they wore the same clothes every day. It really opened up my eyes. (Interview: 3/21/11)

This, in turn, has given her a difference perspective on the American sense of community.

Just like Poland in 1991, China, in some areas, is a culture of scarcity. When I served in the Peace Corps in Poland, I asked the school secretary what school supplies were available for teachers. She handed me a little box of pins. When I realized the entire country used the same English book, I was horrified by this uniformity. The book was far too traditional for me, full of drill and kill exercises. I threw out the book and created my own curriculum from scratch.

When my sister, an elementary school teacher, heard about my lack of material resources, she sent markers, post-its, pencils, and pens to supplement my meager supplies. My high school Social Studies teacher sent me a camera to document my experience.

After living in this society for three years, when I returned to the United States I was entirely overwhelmed by the affluence of American schools compared to Polish schools. When I was home, I asked my Chair what school supplies we had. He pointed to two entire file cabinets and said, “Help yourself.” The file cabinets were chock full of pads of paper, file folders, colored markers, colored paper, thumbtacks, and note cards. I almost wept.

Deborah sees how the Thai live in culture of scarcity. Referring back to her experience in Thailand, she says, “They were so kind and warm. It just made me appreciate what we have. It obviously made me a little bit more skeptical of our own, of my own community. I guess that’s something I’m working on” (Interview: 3/21/11).

She explains her skepticism more in an exchange she has with her sister. “My sister feels the same way. She’s like, “I hate being in America. I hate it here; everyone is so selfish” (Interview: 7/14/11). Deborah believes Americans “take things for granted” (Interview: 7/14/11). Coming from a culture of affluence and plenty, Deborah and her sister are shocked at how communities appear to survive with very little. This contributes to Deborah’s desire for social action to help mitigate this poverty she witnessed first hand in China, Thailand, and India. Her sense of helplessness in communities overseas translates into action here in the United States. Just like the Peace Corps’ third goal, she brings her mission home.

This desire for social action springs from watching her grandparents. She describes them:

They’ve done so many great things, especially my grandfather. He’s done so much charity work. He actually sponsored a family of boat people from Vietnam to come here. He’s head of [inaudible] which is an organization which delivers food for the holidays to families that need it. (Interview: 7/14/11)

Just like Taylor, Deborah refuses to be silenced around political issues. She speaks out (Gilligan, 1990; 2011). Deborah eludes the social consequences of being lonely, isolated or depressed in her determination to make

a difference politically with the support of her peers (Gilligan, 1990; 2011). This relates to Dabrowski's (1964) theory around positive disintegration. She is suspended between level three, called spontaneous multilevel disintegration, which addresses self-examination and moral concerns and level four, named organized multilevel disintegration, which blends ideals and actions to a high level of self-awareness. Deborah acts instead of despairing about global injustice. This is a sign of healthy psychological and political resistance.

As a brilliant adolescent, Deborah has goals, yet they remain mysteriously undefined and vague. She readily admits, "I know I want to make a difference somehow. I want to be remembered for doing something really good that helps somebody else. I just don't know what that would be" (Interview: 7/14/11). For such an articulate accomplished young woman, this is a surprising statement. Adolescence is a developmental period filled with contradiction and paradox. By taking on the role of "the participant witness" (Gordon, 1995, p. 383), I present Deborah's statement in all its confusing complexity resisting the urge to present her as my image of an adolescent girl. This is who she is. "What must remain beyond its reach is precisely what revives it at every moment" (Derrida, 1979, p. 134).

The curse of being a perfectionist.

Perfectionism is the striving for flawlessness (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Keeping in mind degrees of perfectionism, "neurotic perfectionism is a tendency to strive for excessively high standards and is motivated by fears of failure and concern about disappointing others" (Fleet & Hewitt, 2002, p. 11). Burns (1980) defines perfectionism as a person "whose standards are high beyond reach or reason who strains compulsively and unremittingly toward impossible goals and who measures his own worth entirely in terms of productivity and accomplishment" (p. 34). Like her friend Toni, Deborah easily admits, "I'm very self-critical. Nothing's really ever good enough for me a lot of the time. It's not really my parents that push me. I'm the one who's self-critical, and I don't get that pressure from my family" (Interview: 3/21/11). She offers an example:

I'm used to being able to try something and getting it right right off the bat. I push myself really hard, and I'm very hard on myself because I want to do things right. I get really frustrated when I can't get it right. Two nights ago, I went swimming with my friend. He was coaching me and pushing me. He's a swimmer, and I'm not. I was trying to get the butterfly stroke, and I just couldn't get it. I was so frustrated with myself, and it was just swimming for fun. I just couldn't get it, and that just shows. I had a moment when I realized, Oh, my God, I'm such a perfectionist; this is terrible [Laughter]. (Interview: 7/14/11)

She remembers that her “parents joke around that when I was younger, I spoke very late and walked very, very late but when I first tried it, it was almost flawless. A lot of the time I process things and then do them. I feel like I take up so much time to do things” (Interview: 3/21/11).

Yet Deborah insists that her drive comes from within; her parents don’t pressure her.

I taught myself to read, it wasn’t my parents who threw a book in my face and said, “Here, learn.” I picked it up and I’ve always been the one; my parents never pressured me. They didn’t come from households that pushed them to really, really work hard. I feel like all of it is just inner-drive, that inner-perfectionism (Interview: 7/14/11).

A study of perfectionism and the relationship between children and parents by Frost, Lahart, and Rosenblate (1991) found a correlation between perfectionism in mothers and daughters. Indeed, Deborah’s goal to be a medical doctor was her mother’s career goal. In a low key manner, Deborah’s mother has had a tremendous influence on her daughter. Interestingly enough, Deborah says her father pushed her academically – not her mother.

Sorotzkin (1998) says certain perfectionists:

have little interest in emotional growth or integration of affect since they had long ago been compelled to abandon natural emotional responsiveness in favor of desirable behaviors. They are really striving to look perfect more than to be perfect because they “know” how bad they really are. But, consistent with their early life experience, how they look to others is what really counts. (p. 91)

This, however, contradicts research by Parker (2002) who argues that research indicates “that among gifted children, perfectionistic strivings are more likely to stimulate healthy achievement needs than to be associated with personal or academic maladjustment” (p. 146).

Of the various types of perfectionism Deborah’s is self-oriented. According to Hewitt and Flett, (2002), this:

is an intraindividual dimension involving perfectionistic behaviors that both derive from the self and are directed toward the self. That is, the person with self-oriented perfectionism derives his or her own perfectionistic expectations and requires only him or herself to be perfect. The important facets of self-oriented perfectionism include strong motivations for the self to be perfect, maintaining unrealistic self-expectations in the face of failure, stringent self-evaluation that focus on one’s own flaws and

shortcomings, and generalization of unrealistic expectations and evaluations across behavioral domains. (p. 256)

Deborah's stress is self-imposed. Beck (1993) calls these internal stressors. These include "the demands that individuals place on themselves, their repetitive self-nagging, and their self-reproaches" (p. 350). She states, "I don't really have a lot of self-confidence. I'm really, really hard on myself a lot of the time. I feel like I spread myself really, really thinly" (Interview: 3/21/11).

Yet Deborah has her support systems firmly in place. She has Toni, Benjamin, other friends, and her family. Thoits (1995) conceptualizes social support as a coping resource, "as a social 'fund' from which people may draw when handling stressors" (p. 64). People with significant coping skills also should have adaptive social skills. This increases the probability that social support is available or increases the perception that a support network is in place (Hewitt and Flett, 2002, p. 294).

Deborah explains, "The problem with being a perfectionist is you're constantly thinking about how to make things better instead of trying and failing and trying and failing" (Interview: 7/14/11). Toni, her close friend, says:

She can accomplish more if she's less critical of herself. She's very critical of herself, and I think she finds so many faults about who she is as a person and her work. She loses faith in herself. She just has to believe in herself, and she'll just blossom. (Interview: 7/12/13)

Public vs. private personas: Living with duality.

Just like Rebecca, Deborah cultivates two distinct personas. She is quite similar to Dickens' character Mr. Wemmick in *Great Expectations* who carefully separates his professional life from his personal life. Gilligan (1998) argues that because adolescent girls view the ethic of care as more important than the ethic of justice "the experience of girls in adolescence may help to define an image of self in relationship that leads to a different vision of progress and civilization" (p. 14). Gilligan (1993) clarifies:

Girls' questions about who wants to be with whom are to them among the most important questions, as revealed through nuance, and gesture, voice and glances, seating arrangements, choices of partners, the responses of adult women and men, and the attitudes of the authorities in the world. (p. 145)

Society as a whole does not value this as the girls do, and hence girls begin to disassociate from what they understand is true about the world. They begin to develop their socially acceptable voice (Debold, Wilson, & Malave, 1993). They recreate themselves in an image deemed socially acceptable. What is a girl before societal

conventions begin to shape her identity? The world view imposed on girls is “grounded in the psychology of men” (Gilligan, 1993, p.158). By creating a second identity, Deborah can conform to the daily pressures and behave in a socially acceptable manner.

One such identity is Deborah, the confident self-assured young woman Toni describes below:

When I first met Deborah, I seriously thought “Wow, this girl’s out of my league” because she was number one at school. She just transferred, and she was extremely sophisticated and very knowledgeable. She was hanging out with this group of people who were just like, “Wow, I’d better stand back.” (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni explains:

One of the things that is unique about her is the way she just presents herself. She is someone that is worth listening to. Once you get into a conversation with her, you know that she’s a person worth listening to and will listen to you as well. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Initially, Toni is intimidated by Deborah’s presence. Over time as they become closer friends, Deborah begins to reveal a more private persona:

Her kindness, her intellect, her creativity, her perseverance. It all just shines above. In the classroom, you can definitely see that she is one of the brightest people in our class just the way she doesn’t even have to answer all the teacher’s questions. But she asks questions herself that are provocative. The way she answers people, and she handles herself around people. I see her as a remarkable individual that everyone else sees in the classroom. But there’s another side to Deborah. The sort wanting to break free with the valedictorian issue. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni hints at this other side of Deborah who she knows so well.

She describes a water party she hosted and Deborah’s response. “She was telling me how it was so nice that she could feel like a kid again” (Interview: 7/12/11). Here is her more private self. “We spent so many nights just crying over essays and homework and complained to each other” (Interview: 7/12/11). Toni speaks of “pep talks in the bathroom [Laughter] after crying our eyes out” (Interview: 7/12/11). Deborah is comfortable showing her fears and worries to her friend Toni.

Deborah appears to recognize her dual identity. “I think I’m a pretty serious person, and I have to be really comfortable with someone before I can be silly or be humorous. It really depends. It depends on my mood and the

setting and who I'm with" (Interview: 7/14/11). She guards her public valedictorian personality carefully. Toni explains:

She wants to relax. Because she's very, very critical of herself. She knows that I've been with her: we've been friends for so long. We support each other; we know each other's flaws. She can cope with that or embrace that when I'm around. (Interview: 7/14/11).

Toni sees this duality and accepts this about Deborah. "I see her as a remarkable individual also as valedictorian but also as my friend who sometimes needs a shoulder to cry on after a long day" (Interview: 7/14/11). Deborah has her social supports Thoits (1995) describes for those difficult moments in the life of a class valedictorian.

In the last moments of our second interview, Deborah makes some telling emotional statements. The influence of the media is important to her vision of the world. She explains:

I feel like I'm bitter about it because I feel like the people who are considered quote unquote beautiful according to the media are those who are skinny and tall and perfect hair and perfect skin and all of that. It just frustrates me. I never see someone like me as a role model in the media. It makes me angry. That's one of things I'm worried about for next year because at {elite university} everybody's smart. I'm worried I'm gonna be comparing myself based on looks which is awful. But it's reality. (Interview: 7/14/11)

She is angry about the image of "the perfect girl" being tall with perfect hair and skin. This is the tyranny of Barbie. Deborah is not tall; she is not blond. She describes an incident when she was in Benjamin's room:

There's a *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition* that's really old. He says he doesn't look at it anymore, but it still makes me very uncomfortable. I hate it, and I get angry. And, yeah, I get very jealous. (Interview: 7/14/11)

Here is the emotional very direct side of Deborah, which she reveals to me literally moments before the interview finishes. I have no opportunity for follow-up questions. If I could, I would schedule a third interview to explore Deborah's feelings. Why does she wait until these last moments to reveal this angry frustrated side? She appears to be reluctant to explore this aspect of her personality. To examine this anger is to risk a great deal politically and personally. Anger is "the essential political emotion" (Lyman, 1981, p. 61). Because anger correlates with self-respect, girls must lose this rage if they are to be a part of mainstream culture. Overt anger and conventional feminism can not exist together. Girls feel pressured to split themselves off from this anger in order to live in society. Educators, especially women, must listen to and engage girls at this developmental moment. This is

an opportunity to appreciate and learn from this outspokenness and foster their unique and creative ideas around resistance (Brown, 1998).

Integrating intellect and emotion.

Though primarily a thinker, Deborah has emotional outlets which she shares with her close friends. With Toni, she is able to integrate the emotional and the intellectual sides of herself through songs and art. Bloustien (2003) asks “In what ways can cultural texts, such as music, sometimes bridge the gap between the ‘sayable’ and the ‘unsayable?’” (p. 18) This relates to Gilligan’s (1982) theory about girls speaking the truth and eventually learning to be silent according to societal expectations around acceptable feminine behavior. Toni remembers:

We got closer together on an emotional level because she told me how wonderful she thinks Benjamin is and how she felt about him. I didn’t really see this side of Deborah. I saw her on a deeper emotional level. I wrote a song with her. She wrote one verse, and I wrote another verse. It was then that we bonded.

(Interview: 7/12/11)

This is a revelation for Deborah. She is able to merge her intellect with her emotion. “Music is concerned with feelings which are primarily individual and rooted in the body, its structural and sensual elements resonate more with an individual’s cognitive and emotional sets than with their cultural sentiments, although its external manner and expression are rooted in historical circumstances” (Blacking, 1987, p. 129). This is healing because Deborah is able to integrate her emotional and intellectual selves into one whole self. Leonard Bernstein says, “Music can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable.”

Conclusion: Her Final Speech.

Deborah says, “I love giving to people, and I love giving of myself. That’s what makes me happier than anything else. I’ve never thought of a career other than one in which I would make the world a better place” (Interview: 7/14/11). The valedictorian speech she worked so hard for was “incredible and didn’t even feel real,” yet even in retrospect she wonders if all her work was worth her “15 seconds of fame” (Interview: 7/14/11). She remains conflicted about the balance between her academic and her social life. Deborah astutely sums up her situation:

I don’t really have a lot of social self-confidence and as much physical self-confidence, so I try to compensate with my academic performance and a lot of the creative things I do. I sometimes neglect

putting myself together in the morning because I'll get up in the morning to do homework and not to look nice. But I'm working on it. (Interview: 3/21/11)

Deborah is a work in progress; she is her final speech, changeable and searching. In one moment she is definite and confident, and in the next breath she is full of insecurity and self-doubt.

In this Chapter, I discussed Deborah as a thinker and an intellectual. She is also a committed political activist at age 18. In the third section, I analyzed Deborah's belief that she is a perfectionist. I also explained the duality of her public and private personas. In conclusion, I briefly discussed how Deborah integrates intellect and emotion in her life at school and at home. She will change the world single-handedly. Let's watch Deborah

Deborah Disappears into the Dark

Deborah needs to get home, and we are on deadline. I also interviewed her about Toni, so the interviews are concise and always to the point. Deborah strikes me as the young woman who always meets the deadline, but at what emotional, psychological, and physical cost? Despite being valedictorian, she doubts all her focus on her academics has been worth the social experiences she has eschewed. She channels her energy through political action and feeds her curiosity by traveling the world to expand her vision of life on this globe. Yet, her travels radicalize her views about the materialism of the West. Still, she has a penchant for being a perfectionist. Deborah is aware of how this constrains her yet she cannot stop herself. She knows her limitations and works within them brilliantly. Like Taylor, she is a strategist who knows how to prioritize and win the academic game. She manages her school persona versus her personality with her close friends quite well, but, again, I wonder at what cost? Maintaining such boundaries requires energy and focus which could be spent in healthier ways. Clearly, being a thinker as a young gifted woman has been a liability for Deborah. Despite her lauded role as class valedictorian, she has earned this honor at a cost still unknown to herself and to me, the researcher.

At what cost? This is the unanswered question moving towards the final chapter. These four girls are accomplished young scholars. But at what cost physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically? Who can answer these questions? Clearly, the education community must demand more research to support these gifted girls.

Lead onward.

“Why must you have such faith in us?” Susan, my gifted student

Chapter Eight

The Conclusion

Introduction: Prelude

What do Taylor, Rebecca, Toni, and Deborah share? How are these four adolescent gifted girls different? What does my data tell me? The similarities around the gendered experience in a patriarchal society and their resilience in the face of racism, sexism, and the anti-intellectualism of the U.S. is astonishing. Thanks to the support adolescent girls receive from their family, peers, and teachers, they have the psychological, social and emotional strength to battle the stereotypical misogynist myths around girls and intelligence along with the tyranny of brainless blond Barbie. Because of their own carefully cultivated resilience, they weather the relentless onslaught of unhealthy body images as unwilling adolescent targets of the media barrage of the uniformity of the perfect girl. Yet, as was evident from each chapter, the girls I interviewed were completely different from one another. Each young woman overcame a constellation of obstacles. Somehow each girl was grounded enough to rise above the danger of eating disorders, substance abuse, anxiety attacks, racism, bullying, classism, and the fear of success. Taylor, Rebecca, Toni, and Deborah have defined success on their own terms and are well on the path towards academic and personal success. They have socially constructed a world that enables them to thrive under trying and difficult circumstances.

In this final chapter, I will present my key finding that adolescent gifted girls succeed both in and out of the schoolhouse because of the support of their family, peers, and teachers. Four themes predominate. First is the sociological trend of the necessity to break free of societal perceptions of the gifted girl. Next is the importance of psychological resilience in the face of tremendous social and personal pressure to succeed by societal standards that may not match their own. Third relates to the overall physical well-being as central to a young woman's healthy sense of identity. The last focuses on anger as the quintessential emotion of girls and young women.

After this discussion, I will make recommendations directly related to the four abovementioned themes. First, I will examine the curricular and pedagogical aspects of education which can be modified to better meet the needs of adolescent girls and young women. Second, I will focus on the psychology of education and pragmatic ideas to help girls create a classroom of their own which is safe for them emotionally and psychologically. Third, I

will discuss the centrality of the body in a girl's healthy development, and, last, I will discuss the usefulness of anger as a positive emotion in assisting girls to grow into emotionally and psychologically whole young women.

As sound school policies are crucial to developing well-rounded accomplished students, I will present my recommendations, both curricular and social, on how best to educate the whole girl. How do we meet the needs of all girls socially, emotionally, psychologically, and physically in the schoolhouse? Who is not in this study and why? I will present my ideas about where key research needs to be done to better meet the needs of all gifted adolescent girls. I will conclude this song of a chapter with a final summary before we leave the girls to live their lives.

Findings

Finding sustenance in their landscapes.

As Evans-Pritchard (1972) declaims in his seminal and early ethnography of the Nuer tribes of Africa, every group of individuals must have a source of sustenance to survive and, indeed, thrive. For the adolescent gifted girl, this is her family, her peers, and her teachers. Ample evidence exists documenting the importance of parents and teachers in the gifted child's physical, social, emotional, and psychological development (Betts & Neihart, 1988; Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). These children are eager for the approval of the adults in their lives. Families especially play a vital role in creating and maintaining a steady supportive environment for their gifted child. Parental expectations around high achievement and independence of thought are decisive in forming the child's will to succeed academically and personally (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993). In addition, supportive parents, often successful who value cultural and intellectual pursuits, are excellent role models for their children (Chan, 2005).

In this portion, I will discuss parents first, siblings second, and conclude with the influence of extended family on these gifted young women. Taylor is clear in crediting her parents with making education the top priority in her home. Her Mom was up night after night helping her with her homework when she was in middle school, and her Dad contributed to her self-esteem by continually overestimating what she could do (Interview: 3/1/11). She declares, "Anywhere there was an honors in it, I was in it. My parents made sure of that" (Interview: 3/1/11). Rebecca is very attached to her Mom; "we talk; we bond" (Interview: 5/26/11). She is proud to have her parents' trust as indicated by their permission for her to travel across Florida solo. Rebecca, the Math/Science whiz, only learned her multiplication tables in fourth grade because of her Mom's insistence (Interview: 6/15/11), and she

admires her Dad for his “determination” and his ability to start an entire business with a Ph.D. in Anthropology, \$300, and a clipboard (Interview: 6/15/11).

Toni’s relationship with her parents is more complicated; “my parents have sacrificed a lot” (Interview: 4/6/11). Yet these very sacrifices restrict Toni in some ways as she manages to live in two cultures, mainstream and Filipina, simultaneously. Her Mother supports her “just by being there,” and her Dad intellectually sustains her. “We have the same thought process” (Interview: 4/6/11). On the other hand, by highly encouraging Toni’s musical ability as a little girl, Toni felt “pushed” by her parents. “Take voice lessons, do this, do that” (Interview: 7/12/11).” Yet Toni realizes she needs to discipline herself around her many gifts. “You have to harness your talents” (Interview: 7/12/11). Her parents, emigrants from the Philippines, have instilled her with deep cultural values. She manages the culture clash of being Filipina in White society every day. “Girls can’t talk to boys on the street;” worlds “just clash” (Interview: 4/6/11).

Deborah’s parents have also had a profound influence on her world view. She says, “My parents have taught me the value of working hard” (Interview: 3/21/11). When she switched from an exclusive homogenous private school in which her parents were heavily socially invested, they were “extremely supportive” of Deborah’s independent decision to attend a highly diverse public high school (Interview: 3/21/11).

Both Rebecca and Deborah are close to their sisters. I am close to my younger sister, so I understand that familial bond intimately. Rebecca admires her older sister for graduating from college in only three years despite having trouble learning to read when she was a child. She views her as a “positive role model” (Interview: 5/26/11). Deborah is “really really close” (Interview: 3/21/11) to her younger sister though they do have conflicts:

We have gone through rough times. Sometimes I definitely get the feeling that she feels pressured to live up to the standards I’ve set academically. I think that’s been really hard for her especially now that she’s in high school. (Interview: 3/21/11)

They appear to have weathered the storms of sibling rivalry as they have both matured.

Taylor, Toni, and Deborah also discuss the effects of having a close extended family. Taylor’s uncles pushed her to think about world events when she was a child and became “addicted to Google News” (Interview: 3/1/11). Taylor competes with her cousins on her Dad’s side and is admired by her cousins on her Mom’s side. This is good for her competitive spirit and bolsters her self-esteem. Toni’s experience, unfortunately, is negative. According to Deborah, her close friend, Toni’s grandmother, a traditional Filipina woman, runs the house while

Toni's parents are away. Deborah calls these Filipina customs "archaic" (Interview: 7/14/11) and is infuriated by Toni's restrictions. In contrast, Deborah has been deeply influenced by the social justice actions of her grandparents. She admires how their lives are grounded in Judaism. "Their family, friends, and community come first" (Interview: 3/21/11). In addition to the faith her parents have in her, Deborah looks to her grandparents for a vision of her life. "I really want to have the kind of life that has the integrity that they do" (Interview: 3/21/11). She is especially proud of her grandfather, who "sponsored a family of boat people from Vietnam" (Interview: 7/14/11).

Shifting from family support to the importance of peers, the influence of a gifted child's friends can not be underestimated. As I will demonstrate through quotes from the four girls, their groups of friends offered crucial support at critical moments when the girls needed bolstering amidst their fear of failure. These informal networks of gifted peers offer badly needed support during times of setbacks and difficulties (Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). Students have created their own pockets of safety, love, and support during trying times (McAdams, 1987). Many studies have shown that students can focus their attention on learning more efficiently if they feel content and liked by both peers and adults in their learning environment. These students, who have good social skills, are more successful and motivated academically in the classroom (Eccles & Roeser, 1999).

As Erikson (1968) has argued, adolescents run in tight groups. Especially vulnerable to peer group influences because of their desire to be accepted among their friends, they need one another. This particular age group spends a great deal of time in activities unsupervised by adults (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 541).

Each of the four girls participated in time-consuming extracurricular activities in and outside the school house. Taylor played soccer, was active in the Model United Nations, and organized three direct action social protests. Rebecca helped start a Chemistry Club with Deborah and socialized with her friends throughout the area. Toni was Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper, contributed to the literary magazine, was the publicist for Chemistry Club, sung in the Chorus, and wrote songs. Deborah, co-founder of the Chemistry Club, constantly helped her friends academically, took international service trips, and was an activist in international social justice groups.

In terms of academics, both Taylor and Rebecca did considerable work with their peers around collaborative learning after the school days ended. Taylor found peer support and edited her papers with her friend on Facebook. Rebecca stated that she loves group projects and "organizing everyone" (Interview: 6/15/11). Indeed,

she claimed, “That’s how you make friends; you work together” (Interview: 6/15/11). Deborah stayed after school to help her friends by balancing chemistry problems on White boards. She and Toni, who are very close friends, commiserated about the pressures of academic life in the girls’ bathroom (Interview: 7/12/11).

All four girls depended heavily on their friends for social, emotional, and psychological support. Taylor had two friends who were especially important to her because they offered “safety and honesty” (Interview: 3/1/11). They had known each other for years and their similarity of experience brought them together during bumpy periods of academic stress. Rebecca, who has many friends outside her high school, made Passover Pie, went ballroom dancing, and led a valiant effort to get black marker off a friend’s white wall at a party (Interview: 5/26/11). All of these fun, creative, and crazy exploits helped her manage her stress and focus on the healthy aspects of being an adolescent. She had no fear about being “ditsy” with her close friends and proudly declared, “I say stupid things” (Interview: 6/15/11) as if in defiance of her gifted self. She declared, “I’m a silly fun person who happens to also really like intellectual pursuits. Just happenstance” (Interview: 6/15/11). Yet Rebecca was deadly serious about supporting her friends when they needed her and spent most of her Florida vacation standing over a friend until she finished writing all her college application essays (Interview: 6/15/11). Gilligan’s (1982; 1990; 1992; 2011) and Noddings’ (1984) ethic of care runs deep for Rebecca. She talked about tutoring other students:

It’s great because I’m helping this other person, and they really want to do well. Then they’re like, “You know what, never mind, I can’t get the grade anyway.” They stop caring, and I’m like, “OK, if you don’t care, I can’t help you.” Then I stop learning as well because I stop trying to teach someone else. I don’t care much about learning myself, which is weird. I should care more for my own needs, but I don’t.
(Interview: 6/15/11)

Toni, as a young woman of color, had an extensive support network to keep her balanced through out all her trials. Her closest friend, who she talks to every week, lives in Guam. She explained, “We’re still going through the same things” (Interview: 4/6/11). She continued, “We’ve been together for so long; I just can’t imagine anyone else being my best friend” (Interview: 7/12/11). She wrote songs with her close friend Lia by putting words and music together. Being a born writer, she explained her attachment to Lia quite well:

She’s the first person I’ve ever opened up to when it comes to feeling. Music is just something that just ties two people together so much. I understand her musically as well as just emotionally as a person.
(Interview: 7/12/11)

Toni, a wordsmith and a singer, was able to bring together her two talents in her friendship with Lia. In addition, Toni thought of the girls at the all-girls school as “sisters” and gained fresh insight through these friendships. “I can be so many more things than just what other people tell me I am” (Interview: 7/12/11). At her current high school, however, Toni learned “those people who will accept me for who I am are the ones who truly care about me” (Interview: 7/12/11). Deborah says, “I have so much faith in her” (Interview: 7/14/11). She saw Toni as a “rock” and as a young woman who “can’t be held back” (Interview: 7/14/11). Deborah surrounded her with her support and admired her “independence, energy, and eccentricity” (Interview: 7/14/11).

Deborah’s main support was her boyfriend Benjamin. She stated, “We’ve really grown up together over the past year. I find in him a lot of things I want to see in myself” (Interview: 3/21/11). She enjoyed his ability to live each moment fully in contrast to her own anxiety in social situations. As already stated, Deborah and Toni are close friends and quite similar in the challenges they faced. They have an “intuitive connection” brought on after Toni and Lia write a song for Deborah and Benjamin. They “got closer on an emotional level” because, until the intimacy of the song, Toni only saw Deborah as an academic achiever. Deborah kept her emotions quite separate from her academic life as I discussed in Chapter Seven. Through this song, the friends were able to bring together words, music, relationships, and emotions.

Finally, Toni and Deborah were supportive of each other emotionally and physically. Both of them described “pep talks in the bathroom after crying our eyes out” (Interview: 7/12/11). They escaped the public domain of the school into the girl only space and wept about their stressful academic and personal lives. Toni described “ranting” to each other about academic pressure (Interview: 7/12/11). At night after the school day was over, “we spent so many nights just crying over essays and homework and complained to each other. I’ll always be there for her no matter what” (Interview: 7/12/11).

Of course, teachers were present for students every Monday through Friday. Teachers also extended their influence beyond the schoolhouse and its rigid schedule. As coaches, tutors, mentors, and sometimes as confidantes, teachers, especially, women teachers, had the opportunity to make a significant impact on a student’s life. Because they are keen on securing the affection of their teachers, gifted children are rarely behavioral problems. Ninety percent of identified gifted students in school programs are resoundingly successful (Betts & Neihart, 1988; Subotnik & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1997). Loved by teachers for their intelligence, creativity, and task commitment

(Renzulli, 1978), gifted children develop a strong resilience and self-confidence when facing significant obstacles or barriers to achieving their goals (Betts & Neihart, 1988).

In a sense, teachers become their curriculum and have an impact on their students both pedagogically and socially. Rebecca, ever precocious and ahead of the learning curve, says, “For Math and Science, my best thing has always been learn it yourself” (Interview: 6/15/11). Rebecca is happiest taking Computer Science, where most assessments were project-based. “That was fantastic, and I just really loved the subject.” She also learned that often she could teach herself Math from the book (Interview: 6/15/11). Deborah believes that “experimental approaches” work best for her. Those teachers who “push you and challenge you, that’s the best teacher” (Interview: 7/14/11).

In this study, teachers offer immense social and emotional support. Taylor views her “girl teachers” as role models for her future career aspirations (Interview: 6/11/13). Each girl has a particular teacher or series of teachers who were “life-changing” (Interview: 5/26/11). Taylor chose her economics teacher as another individual for me to interview to round out my ethnographic portrait. She also credits her biology teacher in middle school for having the sophistication to outmaneuver her in a science project (Interview: 6/11/11). For all her talk of hubris, Taylor has learned to be humble. She enjoys being out-strategized. Just as I was Ying’s champion for four and a half years, Rebecca credits her middle school Math teacher for changing her academic life. This teacher simply said, “You can do better.” As is her way, Rebecca is generous in her demeanor and declares, “She is the reason I was the salutatorian. None of it would have happened if not for that one teacher” (Interview: 6/15/11). In this perspective, Rebecca overlooks the regular patient support of her parents, her endless hours doing school work, and the loyalty of her friends in keeping her steady and well-grounded.

Toni’s course in journalism in her first year at the all-girls high school opens her eyes to brand new possibilities for herself as a writer and a girl:

The first day really just opened my eyes. I didn’t realize that what I could say affected people so greatly. Like people asking for answers, and I give it to them. It was more of my words, as in my opinion, who I was as a person, like I could express it. And people would listen. This played into me accepting myself, and journalism really opened my eyes. (Interview: 7/12/11)

Through this course and its teacher, Toni is able to begin to reclaim herself from being the bullied little elementary student. Erikson (1968) explains this phenomenon using English playwright George Bernard Shaw’s words, “This finding of one’s place may be very puzzling by the fact that there is no place in ordinary society for extraordinary

individuals” (p. 143). As a junior, Toni struggles in her Calculus class and considers dropping the course. She perseveres because the teacher “believed in me. She cared about the subject, and she made me want to care about the subject too” (Interview: 7/12/11). All four girls spoke of the passion of their teachers for their subject matter. Speaking of her high school teachers as a whole, she says admiringly, “I’ve had better teachers here than I’ve had probably in my whole entire learning process. I’ve just had amazing teachers” (Interview: 3/21/11). Students want to connect with their teachers as human beings.

Last of all, each girl felt protected by her teachers, speaking to the importance of Gilligan’s (1982; 1990; 1992; 2011) and Noddings’ (1984) ethic of care. Indeed, in Taylor’s staged “Walk-out,” she declares that the students were “protecting their teachers,” entirely reversing the idea that students do not care for their teachers. Because of Taylor’s personal contact with her teachers, she gets more opportunities. Indeed one of her teacher’s brothers works at the university she is now attending; he will help her make professional contacts (Interview: 6/11/11). “We’re Facebook friends already” (Interview: 6/11/11). Toni is proud that her teachers “know me personally” (Interview: 4/6/11).

Just as I had the unwavering support of my family, a strong cadre of friends who are with me to this day, and outstanding teachers throughout my elementary, middle, high school, and college years, these girls had the constant support of their families, both immediate and extended, and a wide network of peers to ground them during challenging times. The school system gave them committed teachers who look after them both academically and personally as young women poised for college.

Themes and patterns of similarities and differences among the four girls: The motifs.

Introduction.

This section discusses four major themes I found in my data from the four girls. The first, breaking free as individuals, addresses the sociology of schooling and struggling through adolescence as a gifted girl. The second, psychological issues, examines how girls manage themselves individually as they struggle to take their place in the schoolhouse and the world. The third, the body as central, focuses on the adolescent girl’s physicality as she moves through adolescence towards becoming a woman. Indeed, I use girl and young woman interchangeably through out this work to reflect how the bodily image of a girl is in constant flux as she matures. The fourth, and final theme, points to anger as the quintessential emotion defining girls emerging out of adolescence into womanhood. Thus I

have addressed the sociology, psychology, physical, and emotional aspects of being a gifted adolescent girl; I am discussing the whole girl.

Breaking free as individuals: the sociology of the gifted adolescent girl.

Imprisonment.

All four girls suffer from some form of imprisonment. Deborah describes her private high school:

It's a very small school, an affluent community, so a lot of kids were very competitive with one another. It was an incestuous community socially because most of us had been together throughout elementary and middle school. It's the same people. You kind of feel suffocated. (Interview: 5/21/11)

In this same interview, Deborah spoke of not feeling academically challenged until she came to her current high school. Her own excellent intelligence was holding her prisoner; she was unable to work at the appropriate academic level that would satisfy and push her forward. This harkens back to Terman's (1968) research in the 1920s documenting girls' IQ scores as superior to boys'. Deborah is not adequately challenged until she is 15 years old. This is a travesty and a waste of her superb scholarly gifts. Being a gifted girl, she understands this all too clearly.

Rebecca is held back by her eczema as amply discussed in Chapter Five. She imprisons herself into wearing pants in Israel, "which is one of the hottest countries in the world. I refused to wear shorts because I used to have cuts and scars underneath here, and it made me feel very ugly" (Interview: 6/15/11). This physical prison turns into a psychological and emotional prison with her as she wars with her own dissatisfaction with her body (Grosz: 1993). Toni, unfortunately, is imprisoned by her own Filipina culture, both internally and externally. Though she wears the Filipino flag over her heart, she struggles to straddle two worlds. Straddling White dominant culture and her own Filipina world, this precarious balancing act leads to "intrapsychic or interpersonal stress" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 63). She is physically trapped being raised by her traditional grandmother, yet she manages to break free by throwing wonderful extravagant water parties for her friends as Deborah explains (Interview: 7/14/11). Yet Toni hears the voices of her parents in her head consistently, "They always remind me. You should do your best" (Interview: 6/15/11). She has internalized the struggle of her parents to bring their children a better world in the U.S. Toni can not escape these voices, yet she has fashioned creative outlets for herself in order to cope in a healthy manner. She is similar to my student Ying, also Asian-American or Asian-Canadian as she would

hastily but politely correct me, in this coping strategy. She sings, she writes song lyrics, and she writes poetry and stories. Toni escapes her cultural prison through her own creative force.

Last of all, Taylor, escaping from the unhappiness of sudden revelations about her friend's sexual abuse, finds solace in her studying. Finding safe havens to study at local coffee houses like Starbucks or Dunkin' Donuts, she is able to focus on her academics, which are clearly her priority. She is just like me. When faced with trauma, I open my notebook or my laptop and write. Taylor opens her backpack, pulls out an English assignment, and writes an essay. Dabrowski (1964) sees this escape as indicative of positive mental health. With these unwelcome revelations, Taylor may be experiencing:

global disintegration, which occurs with major life experiences which are shocking; it disturbs the entire psychic structure of an individual and changes the personality. Disintegration is described as positive when it enriches life, enlarges the horizon, and brings forth creativity." (Dabrowski, 1964, p. 10)

As Taylor is an academic success story and happy young woman, her "disintegration" is most certainly "positive."

Freedom: I am a girl on the loose.

The flipside of imprisonment is freedom. Taylor finds her freedom in performing academically, organizing protests, and creating projects and a future for herself. She wants to join the Peace Corps, she wants to see the world with her focus on International Relations, and she wants to escape her suburb! Single-handedly, she started a tutoring center at her local library. She explains:

That took over a year. That was long and arduous. I didn't enjoy writing up mission statement after mission statement and arguing over parking spaces. I was losing sight of the bigger picture there. You get excited about getting another laptop. Even when the actual tutoring began, having kids come every once in a while, it was good. But it's not such an overwhelming experience. You have to know in some way that you are making a small difference. It's nice when I got an e-mail from a Mom who said she couldn't wait 'til next year to start. It really helped her kids, so that was nice. But it took a long time to get there, and I could've easily given up. In order for you to continue that realistic step-by-step approach, you have to keep that idealism in your head. It's a dream. It's nice to have those big, immediate impacts because it shows you things can work. It makes you work for the long-term too. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Just like any good Peace Corps Volunteer, Taylor is a pragmatic idealist. She is ready for "the toughest job she'll ever love." "For dreamers who do" is the Peace Corps' current slogan (U. S. Peace Corps, 2013).

As discussed in the previous section, Toni flees her prison through her creativity, one of the characteristics of the gifted mind (Dabrowski, 1964; Renzulli, 1978). She appears to use her imaginational OE to transform her environment into one that nurtures and sustains her (Evans-Pritchard, 1972). Toni lives in her own socially constructed world to move her through high school and into her college years. Through her music, writing, and close network of friends, she has created a sociological and psychological terrain that supports her vision of herself. Through her coping strategies, she has built her own foundation and solid walls to ward off the dangers of sexism and racism which gifted adolescent girls often face.

Despite her psychological issues, Rebecca is a born risk-taker. During her “very early mid-life crisis at ten/twelve years old” (Interview: 6/15/11), she attended many camps exploring her interests. She quickly eliminated aerospace engineer from her career possibilities because of the bizarre behavior of the other children at the camp. She had this compulsion to figure herself out at such an early age. “I figured if I didn’t figure it out right away, I would fail and not be happy and be miserable the rest of my life” (Interview: 6/15/11). In her quest for freedom, “I’m willing to try new things” (Interview: 6/15/11). Rebecca took a solo trip to Florida, with her parent’s permission, crossing Alligator Alley by Greyhound bus while having periodic panic attacks because she is uncertain who will meet her at the bus station. Open to educating herself about the world just as easily as learning Math from a textbook, Rebecca illustrates Dabrowski’s (1964) statement, “Self-education is the process of working out the personality in one’s inner self” (p. 62). She is a free spirit.

Deborah’s break for freedom is any entirely different flight. Unlike Taylor, whose activism stays in her local community, Deborah takes international service trips. She flies off, uncluttered by American trappings, to visit India, Thailand, and China on three week stays. Her time in Bangkok, Thailand, and at an orphanage in China expose her to the abject poverty and injustice of the world. “It opened my eyes to what the world is like outside of the Westernized world” (Interview: 7/14/11). Reflecting on her experience at the Lotus Flower orphanage in China, she says, “I remember them all by name, and they were just amazing, their resilience. They had no toys; they wore the same clothes everyday” (Interview: 3/21/11). As a Caucasian in an Asian world, Deborah is clearly “the other” (Narayan, 2004, p. 223), dropping her American privilege at the door and entering an entirely different culture.

My own break from Western culture occurred in 1984 when, after extensive travel throughout Europe, I went to see my good friend Kathleen who was serving in the Peace Corps in Guatemala during the war between the military and the *indigena* (indigenous) peoples. On a visit to a *finca*, a coffee plantation, I witnessed the merging of

three distinct cultures. The Guatemalan *mestizo*, half European and half *indigena*, owned the plantation. This man's servants, who lived in a shack on a volcanic lake, were *indigena*. The mother had eight children, each two years apart. I ate soup outside with entire little fish floating on top, complete with eyeballs.

Now overlay the complication of two separate Guatemalan cultures with four visiting Americans, three of whom were tall and blond. Guatemalans are short and dark; we were fascinating to them. Because Guatemala is a violent country, formerly ruled by machetes, now ruled by guns, rifles are in most homes. During the fish soup, a rifle went off, the bullet just missing my head. Because of this surprising incident, the Peace Corps Volunteers and their guest (me) decided to sleep outside the house on the lake, despite the pleading of the *finca* owner to house us. At night, the Americans were in sleeping bags in the weeds, the *mestizos* in their stucco house, and the *indigenas* in their shack. The collision of three cultures ended in dispersal.

I had never seen such destitution in my life; how did the mother feed her eight children every day? Since then, I have seen worse poverty, but this initial experience radicalized my view of a just world as Deborah's interaction with the Chinese orphans changed her life.

According to Erikson (1968) by age 25, my identity formation would be close to complete. Many studies, however, show that adolescent brains are still developing at age 22 (NIMH, 2011). Deborah's response to poverty in China at age 17 would be significantly different from my response to poverty in Guatemala at age 25. Her response would be much more life-changing as her identity is still under construction. Erikson (1968) explains, "Youth after youth, bewildered by the incapacity to assume a role forced on him by the inexorable standardization of American adolescence, runs away in one form or another, dropping out of school, leaving jobs, staying out all night, or withdrawing into bizarre and inaccessible moods" (p. 132). Deborah, certainly a non-conformist in her way, fighting the tyranny of Barbie, though paradoxically planning to spend more time on her appearance each morning, is certainly ready to leave the stifling environment of a protected suburban adolescence. With her parent's permission and support, she flees the "standardization" of her life heading to Asia three times. She chooses to open herself to the world, giving her an internationalist lens as an adolescent.

Early realization of unique intelligence: The little smart girls.

I knew I was unusual in second grade when Mrs. Jessler called me a "smart girl" and Dan "a smart boy." When little girls, Taylor, Rebecca, Toni, and Deborah each knew she was intelligent, unique, and gifted in some way. Girls are taught to be quiet and pretty; boys are encouraged to be active and loud. Babies R Us is organized

entirely by gender. Pink to the right for girls; blue to the left for boys. This is the year 2014, and we are in the Third Wave of feminism. How do we know? Because my older daughter, a fifth grader, wants to be a scientist, and my younger, a fourth grader, is excellent in math. The miasma of girls not achieving in STEM has not affected them (AAUW, 1992; AAUW, 1998; AAUW, 2008; AAUW Educational Foundation, 2000; Beck & Catlett, 2004; Gilligan, 2011; Harding, 2004; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Two women graduates from the University of Illinois Engineering School have developed a doll named Miss Possible, which aims to interest girls in science and engineering and related apps that guide them through hands-on experiments. The doll, based on two-time Noble Prize winner Marie Curie-Sklodowska, will resemble the chemist and physicist, complete with a purple dress and lab coat. Future dolls include computer programmer Ada Lovelace and aviator Bessie Coleman (Cohen, 2014).

Linda Silverman (1994), a gifted education expert, explains:

In every culture, there are children who develop at a faster pace from early childhood on, are inquisitive to a greater degree than their agemates, generalize concepts earlier than their peers, demonstrate advanced verbal or special capacities at an early age, have superb memories, grasp abstract concepts, love to learn, have a sophisticated sense of humor, prefer complexity, are extraordinarily insightful, have a passion for justice, are profoundly aware, and experience life with great intensity. (p. 2)

When she was seven, Ying knew she was different from the other elementary students. She still remembers the other students' HB2 yellow pencils in contrast to her own mechanical pencil, a symbol of her family's middle class financial stability. In second or third grade, Taylor confronted her teacher, a nun, about the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. She speaks out in her squeaky girl voice; this is absolutely critical. hooks (2004) says, "Language is a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance" (p. 154). Little Taylor is already a political activist. She spoke out, and her classmates listened.

As a woman and social scientist, I must be careful to preserve their speech, the uniqueness of each girl's voice. hooks (2004) warns:

This "we" is that "us" in the margins, the "we" who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a site of resistance. Enter that space. Often this speech about the "Other" annihilates, erases: "No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in

a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it becomes mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk.” Stop. We greet you as liberators. This “we” is that “us” in the margins, that “we” who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a place of resistance. Enter that space. (p. 158)

As gifted adolescent girls, these four enter hooks’ space of resistance. As a lesbian, I live in a space of resistance. We are all creating our own lives as we go, constructing them on the run. The girls, with that little girl tremor in their voices, need to be heard and recognized in their own right. “To make visible the full meaning of women’s experience, to reinterpret knowledge in terms of that experience, is now the most important task of thinking,” says poet Rich (1977, p. xxiii).

Rebecca’s “mid-life crisis” came as a pre-pubescent girl. Her sense of place in the world, with all her psychological issues, was so tenuous that she tackled her sense of identity before she reached her teen years. She is a solid case of asynchronous development (Silverman, 1989). Her mind and her emotions matured much faster than her body. Toni speaks poignantly of being isolated as a little girl as “one of the smartest kids in the school” and being “put in a box” (Interview: 7/14/11). Her classmates call her “nerd” and “dork;” “I started almost believing them” (Interview: 7/14/11). Toni, a poet, knows the power of words to predict and control. Because of her classmates’ cruel name-calling, Toni begins to believe she is a nerd and a dork. Years later as Editor-in-Chief of her school newspaper, she reclaims her voice (McElroy-Johnson, 1993) and her words now have immense power to influence her high school classmates. She is far from the silenced little girl.

Deborah, also, knows the power of the written word. “I taught myself to read when I was roughly three or four years old, so going into school I knew how to read when the rest of the class did not” (Interview: 7/14/11). Deborah is already the class valedictorian before she enters kindergarten, and her motivation to succeed is intrinsic. When discussing her ability to read before kindergarten, she says, “It wasn’t my parents who threw a book in my face and said, ‘Here, learn.’ I picked it up. I’ve always been the one. My parents have never pressured me. I feel like all of it is just kind of inner drive, that inner perfectionism” (Interview: 7/14/11). Just like her gifted peers, Deborah is a precocious learner, once more demonstrating asynchronous development (Silverman, 1989), with her mind rushing ahead of her emotional, social, and physical development.

Taylor and Toni speak out while Deborah gives the Valedictorian Speech at her high school's graduation ceremony. These three girls give their voice a public venue, committing "acts of resistance and courage." Unfortunately, this can lead to psychological distress or lead the girls into trouble. Taylor (1995) explains: "Frequently, political resistance or outspokenness leads to retaliation, which may take the form of isolation (ostracism, exclusion, not being listened to, not being heard), or may involve various forms of betrayal, violation, and violence. In this case, the same portion of the text may be marked as an example of psychological health (political resistance) and psychological distress" (p. 34). Clearly, Taylor risks a great deal, including her personal safety, when organizing her political actions. Toni, too, opens herself to criticism, which is personally painful to her as she is such a self-critic (Interview: 4/6/11), from her entire school when she writes editorials for the newspaper. Deborah also exposes herself to the school community, including parents, teachers, and school board members, in her speech. Where does this inner resilience originate?

Psychological Issues: The psychology of the gifted adolescent girl.

Introduction.

In this section I will discuss three issues related to the psychology of the gifted adolescent girl. First, each girl has remarkable psychological resilience and an inner drive to succeed academically and personally at all costs. Second, each girl manages, with varying degrees of success, to balance her academic, extracurricular, and her personal life. Often, the girls struggle with maintaining a steady equilibrium between their intellectual, social, and emotional lives. These lives, as they are trudging through the trials of adolescence, tend to come into frequent conflict. Last of all, these girls have developed dual (Gilligan, 1982; 1990; 1993) or even multiple personas (Pels, 2004) to manage all the different roles they play during a 24 hour day.

Poet Audre Lorde (1984) expresses the girls' dilemma:

I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as a meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing for power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definitions. (p. 10)

Psychological barriers: We shall overcome.

As Gilligan explains, adolescence is “a time when girls are in danger of losing their voices and thus losing their connections with others, and also a time when girls, gaining voice and knowledge, are in danger of knowing the unseen and speaking the unspoken and thus losing connection with what is commonly taken to be ‘reality’” (1990, p. 25). In order to maintain their psychological health, girls must continue to speak out and use their voices to describe their view of the world.

Ying’s greatest obstacle to staging her Mathfest was the Chair of the very Math Department she wanted to showcase. Ironically enough, the Chair was a woman, perhaps jealous of Ying’s gifts. Why did she block Ying’s initiative? This is a question that remains unanswered. Despite Toni’s raging success as an academic and a writer, she declares:

I’m a bit of a pessimist, but my friends think I’m an optimist, which is quite interesting. I get easily frustrated but what I do like about myself is that even though I get easily frustrated, I still know that I have the mentality to do it. I can do it; it’s just a matter of the effort. I do like the fact that I’m adaptable to situations. My friends think I’m too modest; my parents think I am [pause] too critical. I have low self-esteem, but I’m the type of person who doesn’t want to put myself out there in a way that’s vain or narcissistic. There’s a different way to approach it, and I just, I don’t know. (Interview: 4/6/11)

Toni copes with her obvious success by creating the coping mechanism of always expecting the worst

I end Toni’s speech with “I don’t know” because this indicates a great deal about the way her mind works.

Gilligan (2011) explains:

At the crossroads of adolescence, girls may bury an honest voice inside themselves for safe-keeping in the face of pressures to cave in and commit what Woolf calls “adultery of the brain,” by which she means betraying your mind. I remember noticing in our interview transcripts that girls were flagging the onset of adolescence with a sharp rise in their use of the phrase “I don’t know,” often coupled with an increase in the phrase, “you know.” At first it made sense that in entering a new terrain, girls would be struck by what in fact they did not know. And “you know” is such a conversational tic among adolescent girls that I found it annoying rather than of interest. But as I began to question what girls seemed not to know, given what they had known previously, I came to a new understanding. In the phrase “I don’t know,” the word “don’t” jumped out as an injunction standing between “I” and “know.” Whose word was that? Parents? Teachers? Preachers? Or something in the air that girls pick up? Wherever it came from, it resided inside, becoming

an inner voice mandating dissociation: don't say this, don't think this, don't feel this. In short, don't know what you know; ignore the promptings of your body and your emotions. Listen instead to the voices that tell you what is happening and what you should feel and think and say. Don't listen to yourself. (p. 63-64)

As discussed in Chapter Six, Toni's interviews are dense with "I don't know," "I guess," and "I mean." Gilligan (2011) concludes, "'I don't know,' 'you know,' along with the repetitive tic 'I mean,' conveyed a struggle around knowing and a search to find words for experiences that elude our vocabulary" (p. 64). This is especially troubling for Toni, who is a writer, a lyricist, and a poet. Surely, she can find the right words to express her life experience.

Shifting to Rebecca with her ADHD, ILP, anxiety disorder and panic attacks, she describes herself in even more dire terms. As amply discussed in Chapter Five, Rebecca displays many of the symptoms listed as indicative of General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) and a type of anxiety disorder called panic disorder (National Institutes of Mental Health, 2010). As the brain is still developing during adolescence (National Institutes of Mental Health, 2011), all these brain disorders have serious consequences for Rebecca's mental health. According to recent research, the brain does not begin to resemble that of an adult until the early twenties. Parts of the brain controlling impulsive behavior and planning ahead, characteristics of adult behavior, are among the last to mature. Hence, this explains Rebecca's impulsive desire to learn ballroom dancing and take the Greyhound bus across Florida through Alligator Alley.

To protect herself from the consequences of this impetuous behavior, she is a fatalist, preparing for the worst to happen. Rebecca explains:

Two things I really dislike about myself is number one, I have a fatalistic tendency which is when I give up. This has to do with the second which is the whole "all or nothing" bit. I put in all this effort on projects. I'm going to finish it all, and then, you know, I'm just like, "Oh, OK, I've gotten enough done." Then I stop working entirely. I have to wait for things to build up before I can deal with it. Because doing something simple, you know, I just can't do it. I can't get myself to do it. Then a lot of times I'll be like, you know, this isn't going to work out anyway, so I just won't do anything. (Interview: 6/15/11)

She "catastrophizes" situations in order to motivate herself to work well under deadline (Interview: 6/15/11).

She echoes Toni and says, "I'm a big pessimist. I don't see things as worthwhile. With me, you know, I think something, and I'm just like, 'Oh, it's going to fail eventually anyway'" (Interview: 6/15/11). This is the salutorian speaking. She continues:

I have all these pessimistic views. Most people say if you set the bar too low then you just lower yourself and you don't try. But what I do is set the bar as low as possible, and then I jump as high as possible.

(Interview: 6/15/11)

She is the first to merrily admit that she is full of contradictions. She ends our first interview, happily eating a chocolate bar, with these paradoxical statements:

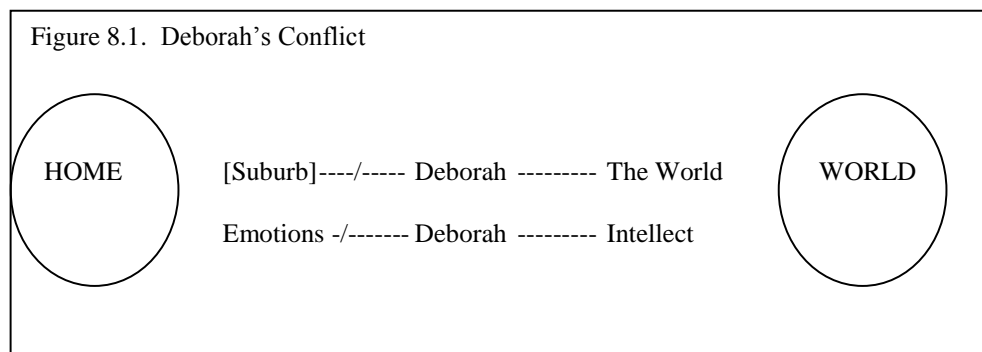
I adjust; I don't adjust. I don't like change; I have a problem with change, but when change occurs, I'm good at adjusting myself. I was playing tic-tac-toe the other day. I was playing X, and then someone made me O. It took me three quarters of the game just to realize, just to stop accidentally writing O. So I'm not so good with change, but I'm adaptable. I figure things out; I'm a problem solver. (Interview: 5/26/11)

Rebecca, overcoming a barrage of psychological issues through her own inner resilience and desire to learn and succeed, floats above all her obstacles, becomes the salutatorian of her class, and will attend a top-tier university.

Taylor, in contrast, seems to take her troubles in stride. After all, she is a strategist and anticipates difficulties. Where Taylor sees injustice, however, she acts immediately and organizes political actions. Her organizing is her social protest. Unexpectedly discovering the trauma of a friend, her ethic of care (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1986; 1990; 1992; 2011; Gilligan et al., 1988; Noddings, 1984) dominates her thinking, and she moves beyond the psychological into the social realm of political activism. Her three political actions testify to the strength of Taylor's convictions around social justice.

Last of all, Deborah musters the courage to jettison herself out of an "incestuous" school environment that is holding her hostage academically. She overcomes considerable social, emotional, and, of course, psychological resistance, to find herself a healthy and challenging high school. Her parents, who take a risk socially being prominent supporters of her previous high school, support her decision whole-heartedly. Unlike Taylor, who tackles immediate injustice in her local community, Deborah, primarily an intellectual and a world traveler, distances herself from Chicago and assesses the world with her internationalist lens. Why such distance? Is this tied to her intellectual detachment? She rarely speaks of her emotions in our interviews and, as previously mentioned, has one angry moment at the second interview's end. Perhaps Deborah is unable to cope with the immediate reality of injustice around her and distances herself emotionally, socially, and psychologically. She disassociates (Belenky et al., 1997; de Beauvoir, 1974; Debold et al., 1993; Gilligan, 1990; 1993; 1998; Taylor et al., 1995; Way, 1998) from

the immediate problems surrounding her and leaps to the safety of the world stage. See Figure 8.1 for an illustration of Deborah's conflict.



By outward appearances, Deborah is both happy and successful. She is valedictorian, has family and friends who support her academically, emotionally, and socially, and is going to a top-tier university. Yet doubts still linger in her mind. She explains:

There's some days when I feel so ambitious, and I want to do this and this and that and that. And other days when I just say, "You know, I would be happy just being a mom and having healthy kids." So I don't know. I feel like I want it all, but then again I don't want the pressure of it. (Interview: 7/14/11)

This is an uncharacteristically ambiguous sentence from Deborah. In her one angry moment of our interviews, she strikes out at the media:

It just frustrates me. I never see someone like myself as a role model in the media, you know. It makes me angry. And that's one of the things I'm worried about for next year because at [top-tier university] everyone's smart. So I'm worried I'm gonna be comparing myself based on looks which is awful. But, I mean, it's kind of like reality. (Interview: 7/14/11)

With that statement, she leaves and disappears into the darkness. Reality check.

Balance: Playing in tune.

All adolescent students struggle to balance their academic, or intellectual lives, with their extracurricular, or their social lives, with their personal, or their emotional lives, both in and outside the schoolhouse. As Erikson (1968) warns, "Young people can be remarkably clannish" (p. 262), and adolescents crave a "we" feeling (Corwin, 1965, p. 3). Girls, especially, are sensitive to "nuance, gesture, voice and glances, seating arrangements, and choices of partners" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 145). Adolescent girls just want to belong. Gifted girls are particularly sensitive to finding their safe "niche" (McAdams, 1987) in the complicated social hierarchy of a high school. Taylor,

Rebecca, Toni, and Deborah all have their particular OEs that distinguish them from other gifted students (Dabrowski, 1964; Hankin & Abramson, 2001) and their painful sense of stigma (Goffman, 1963; Whitmore, 1980) around being labeled as gifted or as “smart girls.” As previously stated, students spend more time in schools than any other place outside their homes. Their sense of accomplishment in the school’s overall environment is directly related to their development as both an academic and an adolescent (Eccles & Roeser, 1999, p. 505).

Taylor, the strategist and initiator, blasts away stereotypes about girls and is an experienced grassroots organizer before she even graduates from high school. With her OEs in the psychomotor and intellectual areas, she is filled with energy and comfortable with herself as a student and a young woman. A former soccer athlete, she has prioritized her academics over her athletics, opting not to risk a soccer injury and compromise her body in any way. Balancing the social and emotional demands of a large family and a diverse group of friends, Taylor is comfortable in her role as a top student and English expert, trading editing comments on papers with her friends on Facebook. She enjoys Model U.N. because:

I like conflict resolution and coming to an agreement that everyone can live with. I just really like the idea of finding a middle way. Yeah, that you don’t have to win or lose for everyone to be happy. (Interview: 6/11/11)

Yet when Taylor sees an urgent need, she does not wait for others. Solo, she starts a tutoring program at her local library and organizes three social justice actions. Her voice (Gilligan, 1993; McElroy-Johnson, 1993) of protest is quite literally her body (Grosz, 1993). Her body walks out of the classroom twice fighting social injustice, and her body walks to City Hall to protest violence against girls and women. After a great deal of tribulation over the years with herself, her family, and the school system as a whole, she finds her peace at local coffee houses and clears space in her life for “me” time (Interview: 6/11/11) before returning to the noise of two smart little siblings at home.

Rebecca, in contrast, finds peace of mind swinging on bars at the playground, being with her friends, taking IQ tests, and exploring new aspects of herself. In typical ADHD fashion, she finds comfort in many different spaces. Rebecca, “the skinny ugly girl” who cannot throw a basketball with her older sister, forges ahead with one adventure after another. She finds emotional and social support through a large network of friends throughout the Chicago driving to meet them, having panic attacks when Mapquest fails her, and breathing deeply to calm herself down. Over the years with the unflagging support of her family, she learns to quietly self-soothe when her anxiety

strikes (Tompkins & Martinez, 2010). A bundle of contradictions herself, the school system works for and against her simultaneously. Even though school systems do not recruit enough female teachers in STEM, she is applauded by her male teachers for her outstanding math ability, like my former student Ying. She appears to transcend gender being the only girl in her classroom for half her school day for two years. She explains:

It taught me, you know, not to worry so much about standards, not stereotypical stuff. Just be more comfortable. I mean, I used to always judge myself. “Oh, I’m out of place here or, oh, I don’t fit in or, oh, I’m not dressed appropriately. I mean, when you end up in a class where you are the only girl, and it’s a bunch of guys, you don’t have to worry about that stuff any more.” (Interview: 6/15/11)

Now, she is confident enough academically to rise above her gender, seemingly oblivious and unimpressed by the power of her own intellect. She is quite humble unlike Taylor with her touch of “hubris.”

A founder of the school’s Chemistry Club, an unlikely initiative for girls battling math/science anxiety, she is a trailblazer and excellent role model for other girls and young women in STEM. A natural leader in academic and social situations, she, paradoxically, only trusts herself academically and rarely accepts the work of fellow students. “They’re teenagers, after all,” (Interview: 6/15/11), she notes wryly. In Dabrowski’s (1964) frame of psychological analysis, Rebecca appears to have four out of five possible OEs. Her four are psychomotor, intellectual, imaginal, and emotional. As only one OE can distinguish a gifted individual, four designates Rebecca as a highly unusual young woman.

Even though she is quite accomplished test-wise and as a scholar, she consciously sets low expectations for herself. Dabrowski (1964) explains:

The majority of very creative, eminent individuals in the moral, artistic, and scientific areas of life show in their dynamics the development of the sentiment of inferiority toward themselves. Self-education does not occur without the presence of inferiority feelings in relation to both the internal and the external environment - especially the former. (p. 50-51)

Clearly, Rebecca endures considerable Sturm und Drang (Muuss, 1988; Santrock, 1993) and emerges victorious as salutarian. She beat a school system designed to be unresponsive and even hostile to her unique needs. She is attending the best engineering university in the U.S.

Toni finds her peace of mind in music and poetry. Give her a laptop or a phone, and she is off into the world of her imagination. Toni, like Alice in Wonderland, can spin yarns from falling into a deep dark hole of

fantasy. As a Filipina, she lives in multiple worlds (Arendt, 1977; hooks, 1990; 2004; Munoz, 1995; Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan et al., 1990; Pels, 2004; Proweller, 1998; Schor, 1992; Way, 1998). She is a good Filipina daughter under her grandmother's care all week at home. In the schoolhouse, she is a cultural ambassador, public relations expert for the Chemistry Club, Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper, intellectual super star, and loyal friend to Deborah, class valedictorian. Though an adventurer in spirit, Toni's parents would never allow her to travel alone to another state as Rebecca's do. Born in the Philippines, Toni carries this social world inside her (Collins, 2004) despite her obvious success in White culture. Because of her race, Toni is "the other." Despite this status, she is a leading intellectual of the school, contributing to the literary magazine and writing editorials as Editor-in-Chief. After she finishes her homework late at night, she writes stories and lyrics to match with the music of her close friend Lia.

Toni's OEs appear to be psychomotor and imaginal. She is a dreamer. Her speech patterns are dotted with "I don't know," "I mean," "I guess," and "you know" and indicate, according to Gilligan (2011), that she does know a great deal. Her Filipina upbringing silences her in an immediate sense. When home, her family's values control her behavior. Dabrowski (1964) would argue that a feeling of shame around these cultural differences trail her to school. He explains:

The feeling of shame is a strong emotion. It arises in a psychic structure sensitive to the reaction of the external world, particularly to environmental disapproval of one's behavior. The presence of this feeling shows that the individual is conscious of the reaction of other people, especially those close to him. Shame is the primary expression of sensitiveness to the judgment of the external world. It expresses disquietude concerning possible disharmony between the moral values of the individual and the values of others around him. (p. 35)

Yet this shame propels her forward to school each day. Her habit of criticizing herself compromises a healthy sense of identity. Her friends describe her as "energetic" (Interview: 4/6/11) though she appears to barely slog through each day, having faith she will finish emotionally intact. She explains, "Just, I don't know, waking up in the morning and being like, "I have to do this; I'll get through it" (Interview: 4/6/11). Because of reading novels in her AP English class over the past year, she has found role models in literary figures who could:

step back and say, "I don't really care; this is me." It opened my eyes to see that maybe, just maybe, I can't be everything. And maybe I shouldn't criticize myself too much for it but just accept it and work with it. I'm still working at it [Laughter]. (Interview: 4/6/11)

Though a self-admitted work-in-progress, she throws great parties, full of food and fun, for her friends (Interview: 7/14/11) to construct her own world of creativity and promise.

Deborah is happiest when helping others; this is where she finds her peace. Her three trips overseas to Asia have opened her eyes to the poverty in the world, and Judaism centers her life goals:

I feel so much of the value of Judaism is about fixing the world and leaving the world better than it was when you came into it. I love giving to people, and I love giving of myself. That's what makes me happier than anything else. I've never thought of a career or anything other than one in which I would make the world a better place. (Interview: 7/14/11)

Reflecting Gilligan's (1982) and Noddings' (1984) ethic of care coupled with Silverman's (1994) belief in the gifted child's passion for justice and extraordinary awareness of the world, Deborah is driven by her conviction that she is destined to help others. Looking to her grandparents, who are also international social activists, as role models, Deborah is clear about the high priority of her academic goals.

Despite her impressive academic accomplishments, however, she harbors doubts about making success in the classroom her priority. She wonders what she has sacrificed for her "15 minutes of fame" (Interview: 7/14/11) making her valedictorian speech. A self-proclaimed perfectionist and realist, she is painfully aware of her shortcomings and judgmental of herself and others. Articulate and honest, she tackles international problems head on and is fearless as she confronts the ugliness of injustice in the world.

Cheerfully self-sacrificing, she always helps her friends with their homework and explains Chemistry problems to Toni after school. A founder of the Chemistry Club, like Rebecca, Deborah is a trail blazer. Despite being such a complex gifted young woman, she has deceptively simple desires and goals for herself. As a struggling adolescent, she is still coming to terms with issues around identity formation (Erickson, 1968; Mead, 1934). A classic case of asynchronous (Silverman, 1989) development, Deborah taught herself to read at three or four. Nervous about heading off to her top-tier university, Deborah plans to be a doctor. Clearly, the ethic of care grounds her and propels her forward at the same time.

In our interviews, Deborah primarily talks about facts and rarely about how she feels. I sensed a very emotional Deborah beneath the veneer of her public persona. I caught a glimpse of the private Deborah in an angry outburst literally seconds before the interview concluded. Which Deborah is real?

Dual personas: Singing a duet with one voice.

As these four young women are steadily constructing their own worlds, they are hit by the myth of the perfect girl or, as I call it, the tyranny of Barbie. They “have entered the world of the hero legend and experience the imposition of a framework that seemingly comes out of nowhere – a worldview imposed on girls but grounded in the psychology of men” (Gilligan, 1993, p. 158). When creating multiple identities, girls can adjust to the daily pressures to conform to certain socially sanctioned behaviors. Girls, carefully taught by well meaning adults both in and outside the home, learn to behave “appropriately” around social expectations for their gender. Now that the cultural framework of a proper girlhood is properly constructed, this framework disappears. As one wise 12 year old remarked, “You don’t have to think” (Gilligan, 1993, p. 148).

Though tempted to enter the brainless world of Barbie, some girls push back and choose “to live on the margin” (hooks, 1990). They are free to design their own worlds free from societal interference. This, however, can be dangerous and lead to psychological disassociation if young women stray too far from the reality of the social expectations governing their lives (Way, 1998). Of the four girls I interviewed, Taylor appears to have the most integrated identity. As discussed in Chapter Four, she is comfortable living in her skin in way that Rebecca is not. With her eczema condition and her psychological challenges, Rebecca keeps her academic self very separate from her silly “ditz” self. She explains, “I like to have a different image of who I am when I’m at school versus who I am when I’m just trying to relax. I kept those two very separate for, up ‘til senior year. And then they kind of collided a little bit but not quite as much” (Interview: 6/15/11). She actively works to be freed of the stereotyped “smart girl” so she can enjoy herself and say “stupid things” (Interview: 6/15/11). Both of these personas are Rebecca. With the focusing techniques she has learned to manage her ADHD (NIMH, 2011; Wender, 2000), she applies these skills to enforcing strong boundaries between these two personas. She easily reconciles the math whiz with the disorganized space cadet, humming to herself constantly (Interview: 6/15/11).

Toni, however, wrestles with multiple personas being the oldest child of immigrants. I count five different personas: Filipina, daughter, poet, singer, and academic. Perhaps that is why her speech is so peppered with “I don’t know” and “I guess” during our interview; she is unsure which role she is playing with me, the researcher. She can simply be the real Toni, unfettered by other’s expectations of her. Driven by her parents to succeed and choose a pragmatic field of study, she explains,

The Filipino tradition is "You have to be practical with your course." So, I mean, I get that. You know, if I take speech pathology, it's more practical than maybe taking journalism or writing or music or what not.

(Interview: 7/12/11).

Deborah is angry about this and believes Toni will break free of her parents' expectations. "If journalism is what she wants, she should go for it. I tell her all the time because I have so much faith in her" (Interview: 7/14/11). The question remains whether Toni can say no to her parents who have sacrificed a great deal to bring their children to the U.S. What kind of psychological toll (Belenky et al., 1986; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Debold et al., 1993; Gilligan, 1982; 1993; Gilligan et al., 1988;) does playing so many roles take on Toni? How does she move through so many worlds each day? These are questions for a third interview.

Deborah keeps her school persona severely separate from her private persona. She is, indeed, like Mr. Wemmick, Mr. Jaggar's intriguing law clerk, in Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Articulate and concise in all her answers to my questions, we do not meander off into discussions of the Civil War like I do with Rebecca or discussions about women's issues with Taylor. Her speech is not enhanced with poetic allusions like Toni's. Deborah knows exactly what she needs and wants to say. I have only a slight glimpse of an emotional jealous unhappy young woman moments before our second interview's conclusion. As I have stated previously, I needed a third interview to understand the emotional side of the illusive Deborah.

The body as central: I sing the body electric.

As women and girls, we are culturally reticent to speak about our bodies; hence, at the risk of making these girls uncomfortable, I did not ask them any direct questions about the physical or sexual aspects of adolescence and growing into young women. The adolescent girl's body is central to her being. This is a deceptively simple statement because, contrary to Freud's famous declaration that "Anatomy is destiny" (1912), de Beauvoir countered his claim with her pithy statement, "It is not nature that defines woman; it is she who defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life" (1974, p. 42). A young girl struggles to define herself as female without society dictating her every move.

To review, Grosz (1993) argues that the body is a place "on which social, law, morality, and values are inscribed" (p. 197). She writes that "bodies *speak*, without necessarily talking, because they become coded with and as signs. They speak social codes. They become *intextuated*, narrativised; simultaneously, social codes, laws, norms, and ideal become *incarnated*" (Grosz, 1993, p. 199, emphasis in original). Girls bodies become the stories

they tell. They mark themselves with tattoos, piercings, hairstyles, shavings, jewelry or certain clothing styles to declare allegiance to certain sub-groups. The feminist philosopher Irigaray (1987) continues:

Woman is to be nude, since she cannot be situated in her place. She attempts to envelope herself in clothes, make-up, and jewelry. She cannot use the envelope that she is, and so must create an artificial one. (p. 122)

With the oversexualization of girls in the media (APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007), researchers discovered that the ubiquitous influence of the increasing sexualization, particularly of adolescents, has a negative impact on cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, and sexuality (APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007, p. 2). Because of the nature of schools and restrictive social perspectives around girls and sexual development, girls have few safe spaces to discuss these matters. Taylor et al. (1995) explains, “Adolescent girls’ sexuality has traditionally been viewed by the dominant culture as problematic and needing regulation with stereotypical images of irresponsible, promiscuous girls, oblivious to themselves, and their future, prevailing” (p. 114). Curriculum rarely addresses sexual desire at a time when their bodies are awash in hormones. This dearth of discussion about physical and sexual issues can, once more, lead to psychological disassociation, putting girls in danger (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 101). Feminist theorist Michelle Fine (1993) follows feminists Irigaray and Helene Cixous. They:

have argued that expressions of the female voice, body, and sexuality are essentially inaudible when the dominant language and ways of viewing are male. Inside the hegemony of what they call The Law of the Father, female desire and pleasure can gain expression only in the terrain already charted by men. (p. 81). Girls’ sexuality is reduced to one question – yes or no -, a question not necessarily their own. If young women can create their own discourse of desire, they must construct their own sexual meanings (Fine, 1993, p. 81). Given that gifted girls tend to be more sensitive overall to this misogynistic culture, what effect does this silence around sexual and physical issues have on Taylor, Rebecca, Toni, and Deborah? How would they construct their discourse of desire?

Both Toni, a singer, and Taylor, an athlete, appear comfortable in their bodies. Thanks to Title IX, girls have equal access to athletic teams in middle and high schools. Taylor, with her soccer years already behind her, has clearly benefitted from years of athletic training. Deborah remarks on Toni’s remarkable energy and her ability to dominate a room with her personality. “She’ll wear clothes that only she can pull off, and she’ll just burst into the

room with this. She brings so much positive energy wherever she goes” (Interview: 7/14/11). Ying, an Asian-Canadian, had a similar joie de vivre, often raiding her parent’s closets for vintage clothing.

Rebecca, with her eczema, appears to have a love/hate relationship with her body. For years her eczema tortured her, and she forced herself to wear pants:

even in Israel, which is one of the hottest countries in the world, I refused to wear shorts because I used to have cuts and scars all underneath. It made me feel very ugly, and I didn’t like myself in general. But, particularly, I had skinny shoes. (Interview: 6/15/11)

Besides coping with her ADHD and panic disorder, Rebecca is traumatized by her own skin. Now she declares, “I wear dresses,” simplifying a very complicated issue. I would argue that using Grosz’ (1993) theory, Rebecca’s eczema is a manifestation of her dissatisfaction with her growing body in distinct contrast to her superior mind. Her anecdote about her anxiety in needing to urinate before a movie starts, which traps her in the bathroom for 20 minutes, is her anxiety controlling her body and her actions once more. Though so intellectually accomplished, Rebecca’s body appears to betray her with its illnesses.

Deborah, who has such presence, is furious with the media’s portrayal of women. Ever astute, she rails against the lack of images matching her body type, which is short and dark. When she stumbles on her boyfriend’s *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition*, she declares heatedly, “It still makes me uncomfortable, and I hate it. And I get angry, and, yeah, I get very jealous” (Interview: 7/14/11). Because our interview ends abruptly after this outburst, I am unable to discover how Deborah feels about her own body.

Anger: The quintessential emotion of girls and young women.

Deborah is jealous and angry. Why is she so angry? Why are girls and young women angry? Returning once more to Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, and his famous question, “What do women want?” we can turn to medieval literature. Chaucer answered this question through the Wife of Bath’s Tale in his work “The Canterbury Tales.” She simply said women want control. In this patriarchal society, women and girls have minimal control over their lives. In simple terms, men turn their anger on others, fire a gun, and fill prisons; women turn their anger on themselves, become mentally ill, and fill asylums (Chesler, 1972).

According to Lyman (1981), anger, “the essential political emotion” (p. 61), is tied to self-respect, entitlement, and clarity of thinking around wrong-doing. Anger begets action. Because anger is tied to self-respect, girls must leave this rage behind in order to move into mainstream culture. Conventional femininity and conscious

anger do not mix; if girls split away from their anger, the social rewards are considerable but at what cost? Brown argues that:

girls who do so, however, risk losing the capacity to locate the source of their pain and thus to do something about it; they risk losing the potential for a once ordinary, healthy resistance to turn political. Without anger there is no impetus to act against any injustice done to them. If we take away girls' anger, then, we take away the foundation for women's political resistance. (p. 12-13)

This period marks a girl's opportunity to take a powerful stand against oppression and repression. Their questions and challenges create unexpected openings and may shake the social order as they speak the unspeakable and ask the unaskable. "What is socially adaptive is psychologically costly and ultimately politically costly as well. The sacrifice of voice and relationships compromises psychological health and also the viability of democratic society" (Gilligan, 2011, p. 37). Educators, especially women, must listen to and engage girls at this developmental turning point. They need to learn and appreciate this outspokenness and girls' unique and creative forms of resistance (Brown, 1998).

When surveying the four girls in this study, Rebecca, who I might anticipate would be the angriest of all because of her disabilities, is strangely devoid of anger. I find no trace of anger in her. I believe I would need to be a trained psychoanalyst or interview Rebecca several more times to understand her more deeply to find traces of anger that I believe fuel all girls and women to some degree, overtly or covertly. Taylor, as often discussed, turns her anger directly into action. Her solidarity with the grassroots protesters in Madison, Wisconsin, her hatred of the bigotry, homophobia, and anti-Semitism of a local Baptist church, and her shock around the sexual abuse of her friend along with disturbing family revelations propel her into organizing action. This is a creative brave way for Taylor to express her outrage at the forces of societal injustice.

Deborah channels her anger about injustice, violence, and poverty in the world by working with international non-profits like Students Together Against Darfur, a group fighting genocide. Through her three week service trips, she directly helps those in need. She brings rice to the hungry in Bangkok, Thailand, and plays with little children in a Chinese orphanage. Her anger makes her productive. As discussed earlier, Deborah harbors a great deal of personal anger, but the limitations of this study prevent me from delving any deeper into Deborah's fury.

Toni speaks about being angry at being stereotyped as smart when she was in elementary school, but she did not stand up for herself. I did not follow up and ask why. She says, “I’m not like that’ but I guess I didn’t have the guts to tell them that” (Interview: 7/12/11). This situation is unclear in that I do not know if her passivity was cultural or personal. As she grows older, Toni funnels her anger at her restrictive life at home into her creative life. She translates all that anger into energy for her music, stories, poetry, and superb academic achievement.

Recommendations

Introduction.

The aim of the new college, the cheap college, should be not to segregate and specialize, but to combine. It should explore ways in which mind and body can be made to co-operate; discover what new combinations make good wholes in human life. The teachers should be drawn from good livers as well as from good thinkers. (Woolf, 1938, p. 34)

As Woolf argues for the necessity of designing a new college in the quote above, we need to build a new schoolhouse to better meet the needs of all students – not just those of adolescent gifted girls. As my data demonstrated, some students are able to rise above the challenge of learning in a patriarchal misogynist anti-intellectual society. Indeed, these four girls appear to thrive in their own manner.

The following recommendations focus on adolescent girls in particular but encompass what will be a good education for all students. In this era of accountability and standardization, two concepts themselves a legacy of patriarchal thinking, educators can too easily dismiss my recommendations as utopian or overambitious. Using a gendered lens is crucial as this reveals the inherent sexism of most educational theory. In a world still run primarily by men, the stories these four girls told revealed how patriarchy rules society and the girls’ thinking. For all students to be successful, girls in particular, we educators must rethink our approach to education, curriculum, and teaching and learning. We must consider the needs of all students.

In this section, I consider four aspects, the social, psychological, physical, and emotional, of girls in the schoolhouse. First, I address the sociology of the classroom in *Curriculum and Pedagogy: A Canon of One’s Own*. Next, I turn to the psychology of the classroom and how schools should be run to address girls’ intellectual and psychological needs. Third, I discuss the need for safety in schools and physical aspects of learning. Finally, I examine the role of emotion in the schoolhouse in the *Mad Girl in the Classroom*. These recommendations address the needs of the whole girl or young woman.

Curriculum and pedagogy: A canon of one's own.

“Curriculum still strives to change children without reordering the world we give them” (Grumet, 1988, p. 154).

Students know what they need to learn to be academically successful. Stanton (1996) argues that educators must “take women seriously as thinkers and knowers” (p. 27). A curriculum needs to focus on teaching students to think (p. 33) and choosing what is “truth ” When developing curriculum, schools should “foster student voices and welcome their experiences into the classroom” (Stanton, 1996, p. 38). Educators validate girls by supporting and encouraging student dialogue and teaching students how to produce as well as reproduce knowledge (Butler, Coyner, Homans, Longenecker, & Musil, 1991, p. 91). When students interview each other, design their own experiments, and gather data, they are active in discovering knowledge (Clinchy, 1995, p. 95).

Curriculum designers must include girls in program development (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 191). Taylor (1995) argues that in order for all girls to be successful “what they need are more opportunities, more connections, and more information to allow them to explore their interests and plan ahead” (p. 199). Girls need information and must be involved with curriculum design from its genesis.

Indeed, Breitburt and Nogueira (2004) argue that girls should create their own media centers. Indymedia, designed in response to the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle 10 years ago, is a promising model for a feminist media system (p. 29). Just as this idea emerged from social activism, theorists argue that education should be designed around the pragmatic problem solving of real life situations. When learning mathematics, the curriculum “is not only experiential but culturally based. The experiences must be meaningful in terms of the daily life and culture of the students” (Moses & Cobb, 2001, p. 120). Students should be working with metaphors, self-reflective journals, and solving math problems in nature. School work must have an element of pragmatism and relevancy to daily life (Clinchy, 1995).

Students and teachers have long understood the importance of the intuitive connection in teaching and learning. Indeed, when I taught, I controlled, the operative word here is controlled, the classroom with my eyes. One look from me and a student froze. Another look from me and a student smiled. The power of my voice entails a whole different discussion. Grumet (1988) explains:

The structure of the look is essentially dialogical. Like speech, the look can be given and received, returned and refused, but in those fleeting moments of fusion, those instants in the lives of lovers, parents and children, teachers and students the look can contain the complete reciprocity of which the poet dreams.

Only in asymmetry is there movement. As the glance moves between parent and child, between teacher and student, it picks up pieces of the world and so enlarges our collective consciousness. (p. 97)

Grumet (1988) turns her own gaze to its affect on classroom dynamics as specifically pertaining to women teachers:

Dreading the objectification of the look, prohibited from extending touch, the female teacher turns to talk to assert her subjectivity. It may be possible that we are sending out waves of words to ward off the look that surges towards us in the stillness of the silent classroom. If teacher talk dominates classrooms in which we hear sound, in quiet classrooms teachers have avoided the student's gaze by immersing him in workbook or "ditto" exercises that grasp the gaze, draws it out, and keeps it anchored until the next assignment is handed out. Avoidance of the gaze of male students may also explain the female teacher's tendency to call on boys more frequently than girls. Although engaging them in classroom discourse may be a form of control, it is also a way of interrupting their gaze by breaking it with the specificity of animation of speech" (p. 113-114).

Michalinos Zembylas (2007) argues that silence between teacher and student can lead to a new style of creativity. Though often perceived in education "as a mark of oppression, denial of self, dependency, or at best immaturity" (Yancey & Spooner, 1994, p. 304), silence can be empowering and expressive (Zembylas, 2007, p. 24). Agreeing with Grumet, theorists argue that a great deal of student emotional communication takes place without talk (Bosaki, 2005). These nonverbal cues include body movements and facial expressions.

Teachers must use their gaze in a positive way to promote teaching and learning. "Dominated by kits and dittos, increasingly mechanized and impersonal, most of our classrooms cannot sustain human relationships of sufficient intimacy to support the risks, the trust, and the expression that learning requires" (Grumet, 1988, p. 56).

Grumet cries for teachers to create classrooms with productive silences for both students and teachers:

I am joining Virginia Woolf, Tillie Olsen, Hawthorne, Melville, Conrad, and Kafka when I call upon teachers to make a place for themselves where they can find the silence that will permit them to draw their experience and understanding into expression. (p. 88)

Progressives in education argue that educators must change the books and shift the focus of the traditional canon to reflect the lives of students. Girls need to read about girls, working class girls need working class heroes, African-Americans need to be represented honestly in history books, the Latina and Native American experience

must be reflected in social studies, and Asians must be present in science texts. Prominent gay and lesbian figures in history, art, music, dance, literature, math, and science must be added to the curriculum. “Essentialist and ‘Great Books’ curricula contradict our immersion in the imagery of contemporary video, our cultural pluralism, and our infatuation with technology” (Grumet, 1988, p. 21). hooks explains that school systems entertain “the fear that any de-centering of Western Civilizations, of the White male canon, is really an act of cultural genocide” (1994, p. 32).

As Taylor mentioned, she identified with her “girl” teachers. Young women need women teachers as role models; the importance of this can not be overemphasized. They allow girls to challenge convention (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 188). But women can also learn valuable lessons from the girls they teach:

Telling an intriguing, interesting story, with passion and political awareness, is an act of resistance that requires no small amount of bravery. In the telling, a girl authorizes her story and a woman, if she can remain in the girl’s presence and, in the terms of Adrienne Rich (1979), be a ‘witness in her defense,’ she may recover a story long forgotten. (Brown, 1991, p. 84)

Literally, girls need to see women in math, science, and technology (Lee, 2004). Lee (2004) argues for the necessity of women of color in these fields. Campbell (2000) declares, “Achievement is necessary but not sufficient.” If girls do not see how technology helps society, which is essential to their world view, they remain unconvinced about its relevance in their lives and to their success.

Girls and their male peers often view after school and mentoring programs to support girls and women in technology as remedial. A young woman engineer maintains:

there is a fear that if you get involved in specialized groups, people will think, Oh, you need extra help. You can’t do it on your own. For example, if you are in a women’s mentoring group and you get promoted, people will say that’s why. (Breitbart & Nogueira, 2004, p. 93)

Support programs can reinforce the stereotypical view that women are not as capable as men in these areas and need help. The programs themselves need not be eliminated but rather people’s erroneous perceptions of them must be erased (Breitbart & Nogueira, 2004, p. 93).

Returning to E.M. Forster’s adage, “Connect, only connect,” women teachers serving as role models give girls their necessary connection. Ying and the sister of my young student who attempted suicide chose me as their connecting adult. According to the groundbreaking study by Garmezy (1987), a “relationship with one person can improve resilience.”

Beyond a connection to one person, educators must expand the classroom dynamic around new ways of thinking. Teachers must encourage “what if” thinking, imagination, intuition, and encourage students to seek “patterns of discovery” (Walters, 1990). Teachers can learn beside students (Stanton, 1996, p. 35) and demonstrate how to “integrate learning across disciplines, reflect on the meaning of education, create new knowledge, and carry knowledge into college” and beyond into the world (Stanton, 1996, p. 37).

Curricular and pedagogical design must build community. Students need to connect to maintain a sense of continuity around their sense of self (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 195). If girls feel that the school system does not recognize their needs, they will simply leave as a political act of defiance (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 56). Working class girls who leave tend to blame themselves which silences any legitimate critique of the school and its bias towards a middle class sensibility (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 60).

Negative features in a school environment like ridicule, discrimination, low expectations, stereotypes, repression, punishment, and isolation, may increase the disassociative quality of the setting and affect the thought processes and social behaviors of students (Epstein & Karweit, 1983). If the school’s climate has a negative impact on a student’s psychosocial development, this affects her peer relations. A distrusting negative environment is commonly associated with distrusting negative peer relations (Epstein & Karweit, 1983, p. 188). Because of this situation, girls who are in crisis, devaluing themselves and feeling worthless, disassociate from the institution which humiliates them. In this case, this is the schoolhouse (Petersen, 1988, p. 14).

In order to correct this worldview, young women need a fresh philosophy. Rich asks, “How can we teach women to move beyond the desire for male approval and getting ‘good grades’ and seek and write their own truths that the culture has not distorted or made taboo” (1979, p. 392). In helping women form a new radical view freed from the constraints of the patriarchy, Rich (1989) declares:

To think like a woman in a man’s world means thinking critically, refusing to accept the givens, making connections between facts and ideas which men have left unconnected. It means remembering that every mind resides in a body, remaining accountable to the female bodies in which we live, constantly retesting given hypotheses against lived experience. It means a constant critique of language, for as Wittgenstein (no feminist) observed, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” (p. 396)

Not only do women and girls live in a patriarchal society, but school systems reflect Western assumptions about an individualized world view. Erikson (1968) emphasizes the White European individual male in his psychological

development theory. The implicit acceptance of this contrasts the world view of other cultures which are group-oriented such as Latino, Hawaiian, and Japanese societies. In many cultures, women and girls are socialized to incorporate a group or family focus (Rotherman-Borus, Dopkins, Sabate., & Lightfoot, 1996, p. 49).

In order to design curriculum and pedagogy that presents a viable alternative to the current patriarchal individualized system, educators must change how they teach girls and young women. Teachers themselves must modify their approach to teaching and learning; students and teachers must build solid communities of learning, shifting their worldview around education. To build new learning communities takes great commitment and passion. Zembylas (2007) argues that pedagogy needs to be driven by desire. Educators must recognize that acts of learning and teaching are acts of desire and passion (Barreca & Morse, 1997). The forces of desire, to teach and learn, are central in teaching and learning and can lead to rewarding or malevolent pedagogical encounters (McWilliams, 1986). Teachers must come to understand the multiple aspects of desire and how they pervade pedagogical relations among students and teachers both individually and socially (Brachau, 1999; 2002).

Desire is tangentially related to the chemistry of a classroom. The non-verbal connection that teachers have with their students is immensely important. Perceptive and connected students, particularly girls, are painfully attuned to the smallest nuance of the body language of their teachers in the classroom:

Every small element matters in these “machinations” (Rose, 1988) of bodies and affects and facial expressions, body movements, use of language, eye contact and other elements that we are not aware of when we teach and learn. We do not know the limits of what is possible for such assemblages to do. (Zembylas, 2007, p. 63)

Unfortunately, societal stereotypes can paralyze a teacher’s view of her students. “Reading the classroom in terms of preestablished identity affiliations reduces the ability to see what bodies can do, reduces, in fact, what bodies do” (Albrecht-Crane & Slack, 2003, p. 201). The pedagogy of desire extends relationships “beyond the limits of what seems reasonable and apparent as it acknowledges variant, multiple, shifting expressions of pleasure and pain, generative memories, possible futures, and buried harsh injustices” (Pignatelli, 1994, p. 340). Such a pedagogy challenges assumptions about “what is (un)sayable or (in)visible in education and creates new landscapes of possibility for political resistance and transformation of oneself and one’s world without being confined in repressive discourses “ (Zembylas, 2007, p. 71). This pedagogy embraces neglected aspects of learning and

teaching such as joy, pleasure, happiness, and transgression; this style educates visionaries, not bureaucrats (Pignatelli, 1999).

Teaching and learning demand material engagement such as the mutual pleasure of the gaze that passes back and forth between teacher and student (McWilliam, 1997). The teacher's role is not understood through the model of transmission of knowledge, but the relationship between teacher and student becomes more ambiguous and complex (Zembylas, 2007, p. 75-76). Every good teacher knows and feels this intuitively. The goal of a politically engaged pedagogy like the pedagogy of desire is not to adopt particular restrictive identities and ideologies but, conversely, to open the space within which teachers and students are able to gain a new sense of interconnection with each other (Zembylas, 2007, p. 77).

The psychology of the classroom: A classroom of one's own.

In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary for each one of us to establish or examine her function in that transformation, and to recognize her role as vital within that transformation. (Bentley, 1999, p. 22)

According to feminists, patriarchy is alive and well. Despite progressive efforts to change the dynamic in the schoolhouse, men, managers of educational policy and practice, control the structuring of teaching and learning, curriculum, and even entire school structures (Kliebard, 2004; Spring, 2007; Tyack, 1974). Feminists of all stripes have been working to combat this for 150 years.

Despite the daunting patriarchal sociological structures firmly in place, girls must be transformed from within to succeed. Woolf argues elegantly in her treatise *A Room of One's Own* that in order for a woman to write fiction she must have five hundred pounds a year and a room of her own. "That five hundred stands for the power to contemplate; that lock on the door means the power to think for oneself" (Woolf, 1929, p. 101). Women and girls need these locks on the doors to control who gets in and out of this room and when. If adolescent girls are to be whole psychologically in this difficult world, they need the physical, psychological, emotional, and social safety that good effective schools can supply by giving girls a classroom of their own.

Often girls are damaged by stereotypes around gender and ethnicity. The formation of exclusive groups can lead to an "us versus them" mentality. For some students at this developmental stage, fitting in, especially at a school where they do not feel comfortable, is far more important than doing well (Ward, 2002, p. 530). Equating school success with acting White is a thoroughly ineffective and maladaptive way to deal with devaluation and

alienation which simply reinforces stereotypes teachers have about students of color. Eventually girls of color will come to believe these misconceptions and internalize the stereotypes of their inferiority. To combat this, educators must teach children to develop a racialized lens in order for them to see themselves as part of a larger political and social struggle (Ward, 2002, p. 535). Adolescents must learn that identity is not to be externally imposed by Whites or other ethnicities but internally defined (Ward, 2002, p. 541).

According to Brown (1991), this point:

appears to mark a potential point of departure from life experience. Adolescence is itself a time when a variety of perspectives can be held and coordinated, a time when the hypothetical and the abstract can be entertained. For girls, adolescence is a time of particular vulnerability, a point where a girl is encouraged to give over or to disregard or devalue what she feels and thinks, what she knows about the world of relationships if she is to enter the dominant views of conventional womanhood. (p. 83)

In order to fight the restrictions of being a woman as defined by patriarchy, girls must banish the perfect girl and free themselves from the tyranny of brainless Barbie. Brown (1992) tells the story of Jesse who wants to tell the truth of what she sees happening in the relationships around her. She is torn between speaking up or remaining silent. She is:

caught between speaking about what she knows about relationships, a knowledge gained from looking and listening, and increased pressure to negate this knowledge for an idealized and fraudulent view of herself and her relationships, the view carried by the image of the perfect girl. (80)

In a world of cliques, the image of the perfect girl is powerful; being her assures Jesse of inclusion, love, and attention. The terrifying or terrorizing nature of this image lies in its power to encourage Jesse to give over the reality of her astute observations of herself and the world around her. She must modulate her voice and not speak out about what she sees and hears, feels and thinks, and therefore knows.

Voice training by adults, especially adult “good women,” reinforces these images of female perfection. “Nice girls” are always calm, controlled, and quiet; they never cause a ruckus, they are never noisy, bossy or aggressive, and they are not anxious and do not cause trouble (Brown, 1992, p. 81).

Nonetheless, women and girls are making slow but steady progress. At my ten year old niece’s birthday party, one of her friends wore a grey, not pink, shirt with “Perfect is boring” emblazoned across the chest. Girls and their families are rebelling despite the obsession with pink I described earlier in the baby girl section of *Babies R Us*.

The apparel industry, ever responsive to buying power, is responding slowly to changing stereotypical ideas about clothing. Indeed, in the late 1890s pink was considered a vibrant, virile color; hence, boys wore pink.

Rebuking Erikson (1968) once more, Pastor and McCormick (1996) argue that girls cannot pursue freedom, autonomy, and independence as theorized because of the interference of racism, sexism, classism, and cultural hegemony. This, however, is not necessarily a deficit because girls “learn to develop critical consciousness” (p. 16) as a coping strategy. They must manage; they cannot go underground like Gilligan’s girls (1982; 1990; 1992; 1993).

Unlike Gilligan’s silenced adolescent girls, women must give girls voice lessons to teach them to speak out to stake a place in the world. Girls must gather their courage to speak and insist on taking up space, in both private and public arenas (Bentley, 1999, p. 220). Poet Audre Lorde (1985) warns girls:

My silence has not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. In the case of silence, each of us draws the face of her own fear, fear of contempt, fear of censure, of some judgment, of recognition, of challenge, of annihilation. But most of all I think, we fear for the very visibility without which we cannot truly live. (p. 20-21)

Modulating voice and learning when and where to speak are strategies to help young women stay psychologically intact and create a “path for nurturing self and increasing opportunities” (Bentley, 1999, p. 221). As girls speak, educators must listen to them as girls are the only authorities on their own lives. Listening to them describe their life experience “has transformed our understanding of resistance as a political strategy” (Gilligan et al., 1991, p. 1). In order to combat cultural backlash, girls and women must recognize that this is most dangerous when experienced internally. “When it lodges inside a woman’s mind and turns her vision inward, until she imagines the pressure is all in her head, she begins to enforce the backlash on herself” (Faludi, 1991, p. xxii).

A backlash can take many forms. Educators must maintain high expectation for all girls. Ward (2002, p. 521-522) offers an anecdote about a smart African American girl who lost her self-confidence because her teacher did not recommend her for an honors course. As a result, she stayed in a course that did not challenge her; this is a waste of her academic time and took a serious toll on her self-esteem. Girls must resist internalizing an attitude of defeat even when key adults contribute to their crisis. Ward (2002) calls on girls to take a more aggressive stance by maintaining that educators must teach youngsters to critically evaluate the education they are receiving rather than blindly submitting to the demands of a system that devalues and underestimates them (p. 524).

In addition to girls being advocates for themselves, women must strengthen their relationships with adolescents. Right now comparatively little psychological theory exists defining the relationship between women and girls (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 116). Because of this dearth of information, girls and women are freed from societal assumptions, distortions, and unrealistic expectations. Studies show that women are key supporters for girls. Eighty five percent of girls indicate that an important relationship or encounter with a woman was key to their psychological health. This harkens back to Garnezy and Tellegen's (1984) groundbreaking study about the importance of a single individual in strengthening the resilience of those in crisis. As advocates, women validated girls and their experiences, fostered girls' sense of self-respect and confidence, and were a source of pleasure to girls. The women created "a place of genuine connection and safe escort into the adult world" (Taylor et al., 1995, p. 119). Conversely, often girls are unaware of their positive effect on adult mentors. Taylor (1995) explains:

For women to join with girls means connecting with passion, a word whose Latin root means suffering, the desire, love, hope, anger, and pain that both girls and women feel. And these feelings, strong and closely held, are sometimes the very feelings women do not want to risk with each other or fully experience themselves. (p. 155)

Emotions in the classroom have the power to transform the learning process. Various analyses have theorized emotions as a site of resistance and transformation (Boler, 1999; Garrison, 1997; Liston & Garrison, 2004; Mirochnik & Sherman, 2002; Zembylas, 2005). Campbell (1997) explains that power is locked in emotional expression, in who represses and who expresses certain emotions. A "politics of passion" is the analysis that challenges the cultural and historical norms with respect to what passion is or should be, how it is or should be expressed, who gets to express their emotions and under what circumstances (Zembylas, 2007, p. 42).

The power of emotion can be explosive and marks the possibility of unknown creativity in the schoolhouse (Heiner, 2003, p. 45). Philosopher Foucault (1998) suggests that to radicalize the classroom "we escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes for us and try to create, in the empty space where we are, new relational possibilities" (p. 160). He (1998) explains:

Affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship are things that our rather sanitized society can't allow a place for without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force. But that individuals are beginning to love one another – there's a problem. The institution is caught in a contradiction. Affective intensities traverse in which at one and the

same time keep it going and shake it up. These relations short-circuit it and introduce love where there's supposed to be only law, rule, or habit. (p. 136-137)

In order to learn, Zembylas believes teacher and students become no longer themselves (2007, p. 53). Leaving the old self behind, learning “shatters normal identity” and allows one “to *invent* one's self differently” (Zembylas, 2007, p.53, emphasis in original). Students become a work of art in progress. Zembylas (2007) explains:

In this sense, teachers and learners would be learning ways to think and feel otherwise through experimentation of the self, “where individuals can participate in on-going production of themselves with and in front of others, and where they can be both witness to and resource for the experiments of other selves” (Infinito, 2003, p. 168). (p. 54)

Educators must reconceptualize the classroom as a space of continuous transformation of the self, “a gymnastics of passionate learning and teaching” (Zembylas, 2007, p. 54).

Foucault (1988) urges teachers and students to “question over and over what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb their mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to reexamine rules and institutions” (p. 265). The point of this ongoing problematization, for example, questioning assumptions about discourses of emotion in educational contexts, is to enable educators to think how “one's own history can free thought and so enable it to think differently” (Foucault, 1990, p. 9). The classroom can be a place where teachers and students are inspired to practice an art of not being themselves, thus being open to learning, where they are no longer imprisoned in their own social identities (Foucault in Miller, 1993).

Pignatelli (1993) argues that the creative disruption of passivity in the schoolhouse is an aesthetic experience as well as political which demands that teacher and learners practice a new relationship. They must devise new ways of seeing and being seen. Through their passion in the classroom, teachers and students are provocative and challenging in their expressions of resistance (Zembylas, 2007, p. 55). Zembylas (2007) explains:

A transformative politics of passion in education is also a profound form of self-expression, including the emotional and spiritual levels, and it requires a new understanding of action as part of the teacher and learner's subjectification. (p. 57)

Turning as always to wise Dewey, he says, “More ‘passions,’ not fewer, is the answer” (Garrison, 1997).

The body: A body of one's own.

Although young women today enjoy greater freedom and more options than their counterparts of a century ago, they are also under more pressure, and at greater risk, because of a unique combination of biological and cultural forces that have made the adolescent female body into a template for much of the social change of the twentieth century. (Brumberg, 1997)

Discussing their own bodies is taboo among women and girls, yet fair game for the rest of society (APA Taskforce on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007). In spring 1993, nearly half of the 40 sexual harassment cases that were being investigated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights involved elementary and secondary schools (Orenstein, 2002, p. 460). According to Brown (2002), principals who want to take decisive action in support of girls are often uncertain how to apply complicated school policies and are intimidated around the possibility of a violent response from the harasser (p. 220). In the wake of a principal's indecisive action, teachers will ignore boys' offensive behavior. To complicate the situation socially and psychologically, girls remain silent and may be "even deferential to some of harrassers who are "popular" boys (Orenstein, 2002, p. 460).

To girls struggling with self-esteem issues, even unwanted threatening attention from 'popular' boys is better than no response at all. This is a devastating fact around girls struggling to define themselves in a boy's world. Middle class and affluent girls in particular tend to accept sexual harassment as inevitable. Sexual teasing, stalking, and grabbing merely reiterizes other more subtle lessons. This reminds girls and young women that they are defined by their bodies; constant harassment underscores their lack of entitlement in the classroom. Ironically, the harassment frequently happens in the classroom itself. Girls accepting boys' sexual harassment simply confirms their belief that boys' sexuality is uncontrollable and their own must remain in check (Lawton, 1993, p. 463). Clearly, schools can be a dangerous place for girls and young women to be authentic.

School systems need to organize extensive athletic programs, outings, and create spaces for girls to excel on their own terms. Girls and young women need an opportunity to see what their changing bodies can do and stop censoring themselves (Bentley, 1999, p. 220). Girls are often reminded that their bodies are:

a public site (gone right or wrong), commented on and monitored by others, male and female. But as often, they remind us, they forcefully reclaim their bodies by talking back and talking feminist. "It'd be harder not to talk," Sophie thinks. "It'd be harder to sit and swallow what people are saying." (Fine & McPherson, 1992, p. 185).

As girls mature physically and psychologically into women, feminist educators must teach girls to view themselves with a critical “I” rather than the “eye” of the male gaze of this patriarchal society. This is crucial as they come to understand that their bodies are ostensibly under their own control. Merskin (1999) explains that in American life, society uses Puritanical ideas around impurity, shame, and fear to physically control women, through the fear of bringing on the anger of a “Puritan ancestor, stiff-necked, dressed in black” (Vonnegut, 1956, p. 75). Bentley (1999) explains:

As their bodies change, so do their identities. For girls, adolescence is not only a time of changes, but a time they are mandated by the culture to change their identities, the essence of who they are and how they take in the world. They are transformed into nice, sweet, pretty, and thin “feminine” girls. These are also the characteristics that make it difficult for girls to be agents on their own behalf as they perpetuate objectivity and passivity. (p. 214)

Their self-esteem drops which is a vital sign of mental health and also a connection to academic achievement, a direct link to career goals, and hopes for the future (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 78-79).

The perfect girl is the thin girl. Fifty per cent of adolescent and young women are dieting. One half are below normal weight (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 1991, p. 215). Studies show that dieting does not change body type but does cause detrimental psychological and physiological effects. The CDC estimates that one third to two thirds of all the weight lost during dieting is regained within one year and almost all is brought back within five years (CDC, 1991, p. 2811). While girls think being thin increases their power, weight fluctuation has negative side effects in normal weight and obese girls which leads to a diminished sense of self-worth (Foreyt, 1995). Even among girls who never develop full-blown eating disorders, psychologists assign a number to the level of a girl’s mental health based on her “body esteem.” Brumberg (1997), author of the ground breaking *The Body Project*, explains, “The increase in anorexia nervosa and bulimia in the past 30 years suggests that in some cases the body becomes an obsession, leading to recalcitrant eating behaviors that can result in death” (p. xxiv).

As central as the body is to one’s sense of self, hooks (1993) reminds educators of the power of the erotic in women’s lives: “We lose sight of the way in which the ability to experience and know pleasure is an essential ingredient of wellness” (p. 269). Unfortunately, trouble follows when girls know, experience, and speak about desire (Tolman, 1991, p. 67). This upsets cultural expectations, which “require that girls and women not be connected to their bodies in general and to their sexual hunger in particular” (Tolman, 1991, p. 67). Tolman (1991)

asks a dangerous question: “If girls know their desires, what else might they begin to know about themselves and their situation in the culture?” (p. 67)

Anger: The madgirl in the classroom.

Girls are filled with anger. In this section I will discuss the negative aspects of anger and its corrosive effect on girls and young women. I conclude with the positive side of anger and how this strong emotion helps girls remain connected to themselves, heals them in their adolescent search for identity, and helps them change the world into a place filled with justice (Zembylas, 2007, p. xii).

Anger is often described as a dangerous emotion that threatens rationality, social order, and constructive dialogue (Jaggar, 1989; Lyman, 2004). Brown (2002) lays this scene in her article examining class differences around how girls express their anger:

Irrespective of class, girls express a good deal of anger, annoyance, and frustration with school, often focusing on teachers who they feel ignore them or attend to unruly students, usually boys, or who abuse their authority in the classroom. Sometimes they complain about school policies that leave them feeling unsafe or uninformed; other times they speak to sexism or stereotyping that seems to pervade school grounds. The middle class and working class girls differ, however, in the intensity of their anger, the issues which arouse the strongest feelings, and the matter in which they express their feelings. Such differences have much to do with class-related definitions and views of appropriate feminine behavior. (p. 204-205)

One girl reads to sublimate her anger while another, realizing the challenge of being a smart girl in an anti-intellectual society, simply states with chilling accuracy, “It’s just cool to be dumb” (Brown, 2002, p. 205).

Some girls express their anger through destructive behavior such as body piercings or shaving their heads. Working class girls often express their anger out loud, getting them into trouble. “Anger is not only more visible but frequently more intense, sustained, and sometimes physical. The level of their anger hinges on their resistance to teachers and other authority figures at school” (Brown, 2002, p. 224). They view their teachers as moody, unpredictable, and inconsistent in their enforcement of classroom behavior policies. These girls are very angry at being ignored and “hollered” at by their teachers. The intensity of these feelings speaks to the sense of longing and loss they experience in relation to their women teachers. Time after time, possibility turns to disappointment and the possibility of being known and understood decreases. Since their teachers live in and appear to understand their

community, the girls feel betrayed that their teachers do not listen or sympathize with them (Brown, 2002, p. 226). The girls feel a deep disappointment around these lost relationships and shared knowledge (Brown, 2002, 227-228).

These teachers seem unable to read their girls. From the girls' perspective, their women teachers allow no space for their style of communicating and interacting. As a result, they feel cut off, literally and figuratively, and pushed out of the classroom. They angrily defend their versions of reality (Brown, 2002, p. 228), and this anger leads to difficulty in academics. Such anger, frustration and hostility is as much about their fear, alienation, and anxiety to succeed in and beyond the schoolhouse as about an active or conscious resistance to authorities or to the middle class ideals around femininity (Brown, 2002, p. 234).

Working class girls see that the differential treatment of boys and girls by their teachers is gender based while middle class girls do not (Brown, 2002, p. 236). Teachers tell girls that anger is not an appropriate emotion to express in the schoolhouse. In their frustration, these girls unify as a group which is a source of power to them (Brown, 2002, p. 240).

Unfortunately, in other social situations the results of anger in girls can be much more dire. Those who experience discrimination and oppression take drastic action to reclaim themselves. These are the girls who resist the tyranny of brainless Barbie and feminine behavior. They are not "sweet;" they are "bad girls" who often consciously reject the feminine by acting out their anger and assuming a male role in order to have some power in this patriarchal society. Fine (1992) describes this strategy after talking with four self-acclaimed "bad girls:"

The behavior, clothing and values associated with such identification with boys and sports suggests both a flight from femininity they collectively described as "wearing pink," "being prissy," "being Barbie," and "reinforcing guys all the time," – and an association of masculinity with fairness (versus cattiness), honesty (versus backstabbing), strength (versus prissiness, a vulnerability whether feigned or real), initiative (versus deference or reactionary comments), and integrity (versus the self-doubt and conflicting loyalties dividing girls). The four's risk-taking behaviors, driving fast, sneaking out at night, reinforce their identities as "one of the guys." Such are "bad girls." (p. 196-197)

This strategy is evidenced by the number of girls who commit violent crimes and the growing number of girls in correction and detention facilities (Bentley, 1999, p. 218).

In contrast to this situation, middle class and affluent girls respond to teachers and the school system quite differently. The angel in the classroom, similar to Woolf's (1929) angel in the house who must be slain if an artist is

to work, has her counter point in the “madgirl.” Like the madwoman in the attic of Victorian literature (think Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*), she is rebellious, subversive, and sometimes outrageous. Unlike Mr. Rochester’s first wife, girls do not have to jump out of burning castles to cope with the unhappiness in their lives (Adams, 1977). Girls know, however, that their thoughts and feelings, especially strong feelings like anger, place them in danger of being called pathological or monstrous. Middle class girls do say what they know, what they feel and want, but only in the privacy of interviews and focus groups. At times they are aware that they are performing or impersonating idealized femininity and that who they present themselves to be is not who they feel they really are (Brown, 2002, p. 239).

In school, a girl silences herself while simultaneously discounting the fact. She says, “It doesn’t really make me mad though; I’m used to it.” She may be accustomed to silencing herself, but psychologically she is infuriated. These girls still trust teachers and school authorities; they believe in meritocracy and are angry when this ideology is disrupted. They see others receive credit or favoritism either because they are popular and wealthy or simply because they demand attention and credit (Brown, 2002, p. 208). Easily recognizing the cost of the double standard for boys and girls during banter in the classroom, they know the hidden cost of being “nice girls.” Winning often has negative consequences for girls. They are unable to speak out and remain “good girls.” Brown (2002) declares, “The role of feminine perfection, silence, and selflessness will become their guiding ideology” (p. 223).

Naturally, girls have creative strategies for dealing with contradictions about gender identity. For feminist educators, the concern is that through these performances, the girls will, over time, become persuasive to the girls themselves, and that the role of “feminine perfection, silence, and selflessness” (Brown, 2002, p. 223) will define who they are. Girls and young women must remain connected to their strong feelings. Brown (2002) explains:

Researchers report that emotional expressiveness relates positively to some measures of well-being, whereas ambivalence about such expression relates to several indexes of psychological distress. A number of studies connect suppressed anger to depression, others find that depression scores related directly to the degree to which women endorsed “care as self-sacrifice.” (p. 223).

Anger is not only a justified response to the sexism and classism girls experience in the schoolhouse but also a necessary protection against depression and other signs of psychological trouble (Brown, 2002, p. 223).

On the other hand, anger can be instrumental in healing around identity development at this crucial social and psychological turning point:

Anger is a source of knowledge and motivation, which points to the heightened regulation of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. It announces their resistance. Although the politics of their anger is only barely discernible to others, much less to themselves, the disruptiveness of their response contests a construction of reality that denigrates, marginalizes or buries their experiences. These girls, in their passion and struggle, hold the potential for deepening our understanding of idealized femininity by clarifying the damages it causes and alluding to the social and psychological forces holding it in place. Should we pay close attention to their anger, as well as to the discomfort it arouses in us, we may well find ourselves participating in a different kind of conversation, open to other meanings and new pathways. (Brown, 2002, p. 240)

This echoes Gilligan's (1993, p. 162) statement about the power of listening to girls as a way to re-make civilization into a more caring environment for society as a whole.

Zembylas (2007, p. xii) defines Aristotle's moral anger (Boler, 1999; Stocker, 1996) as anger in response to a perceived injustice. As Lyman (1981) writes, "One can define anger as the essential political emotion" (p. 61) because it motivates people to raise their voices against injustice and can be used to inspire social change and transformation (Lorde, 1984; Spelman, 1989; Swaine, 1996). If educators, however, view anger in relational terms, then consider the power of anger to enrich dialogue and enhance our ability to identify and address injustice. Moral anger is the motivation to oppose injustice (Zembylas, 2007, p.xii). This anger motivates Taylor directly as she organizes her three political protests while Deborah acts by traveling to Asia three times to alleviate poverty.

Zembylas cites Freire's idea of "critical hope" (1994) as a central tenet of his philosophy around hope in the classroom. He (2007) explains:

Critical hope inspires teachers and students to see patterns in their emotional, historical, and material lives, to realize how these patterns are made and what their consequences are for maintaining the status quo, and to motivate teachers and students to position themselves critically. To put it in another way, critical hope entails a willingness to speak with the *language of possibility* in the struggle to initiate *transformations* in everyday life. This is in fact an eye-opening perspective if one considers that the notions of *hope*, *possibility*, and *transformation* are what emotions are about; it is our emotions that encompass hope, passion, and the struggle for a transformed lifeworld that rises above injustice, discrimination and healing of past traumas. (p. xii-xiii, emphasis in original)

Since emotions have been traditionally and historically primarily linked with girls and women for centuries, Zembylas' theory is particularly applicable to the relationship between girls and their women teachers. He (2007, p. xiii) further delineates his theory: "Emotions in the classroom, more particularly, are not only a private matter but also a political space in which teachers and students interact with implications in larger political and cultural struggles" (Albrecht-Crane & Slack, 2003). When teachers and students are caught up together in classroom spaces, they are politicized towards social transformation for the greater good (Albrecht-Crane, 2003; Zembylas, 2005).

Lorde (1984) speaks of the danger of remaining silent in the face of anger:

And of course I am afraid because the translation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger. But my daughter, when I told her of my topic and my difficulty with it, said, "Tell them about how you're never really a whole person if you remain silent because there is always that one little piece inside of you that wants to be spoken out, and if you keep ignoring it, it gets madder and madder, and hotter and hotter, and if you don't speak it out one day it will just up and punch you in the mouth from the inside." (p. 8)

We must listen to our daughters. I try to listen to mine.

Next Steps

Latina, African American, and Native American young women are missing from this study. Hence, all my findings cannot be applied to all gifted adolescent girls. Because some gifted testing is racist, Latino/a, African American and Native American students are often overlooked and not admitted into gifted programs. Each ethnic minority has its own culture with a unique set of strengths and weaknesses. Gifted curriculum must be designed to meet these special needs. Testing must be improved to be much more inclusive.

Gifted children are in all classes of American society and must be found to be educated appropriately to meet their needs. Outreach efforts to identify gifted students from working class and poor families must be aggressive in order to educate these children to reach their highest potential as students and individuals. While the focus of this research and my recommendations are on those identified as gifted, this research sheds light on the impact of education on all girls and offers ways of thinking about how we educators can support not only all girls but all students in the schoolhouse.

Next Research

In order to broaden our understanding of the unique challenges facing gifted adolescent girls, research must be done with African-American, Latina, Native American girls and young women. These girls, often overlooked in gifted programs because of racist testing, need to be included and nurtured as well as their White and Asian sisters, who currently tend to dominate gifted programs.

Bi- and multi-racial girls and young women also face singular issues as they straddle multiple worlds and struggle with their own special identity issues. As society continues to change rapidly and the United States' famous myth of the melting pot becomes a melding pot, student populations reflect these encouraging changes. Research must keep up with society's rapidly shifting demographics and get these girls and young women the resources to support their healthy academic and personal development. Conducting research is the first step towards getting these populations what they need to succeed.

Though Americans seem to believe the myth of the United States as a classless society, working class and poor girls face their own challenging set of obstacles to obtain a good education and one that meets their special needs. More research needs to be done on the effect of economic deprivation on girls' academic performance and ability to grow as students and individuals.

As the difficult issues facing LGBTQ students is only now coming to the fore, the area is wide open. Highly controversial among certain segments of American society, these students need immense support to get through school intact. The dire statistics in Chapter Two testify to the need for immediate action to help these students simply survive their high school experience in the most basic sense. Our challenge as researchers is to find the formula for helping these students thrive in a homophobic society.

Gifted girls grow into gifted women. What happens to gifted girls as they cross the threshold into womanhood? How do gifted women manage their lives and still fulfill their personal potential? How do they achieve? What happens? The questions are endless, and research beckons on this neglected population.

Conclusion: Finale

In this last chapter, I have summarized my findings around gifted adolescent girls and academic success. Following Evans-Prichard (1972), she finds sustenance, support, shelter from her family, peers, and teachers. The patterns recurring in my research focused around four themes. First, girls felt a need to break free as individuals, and, second, they need strong psychological resilience. Third, the overall health of the adolescent body is central to any debate about the success of adolescents in trying times. Finally, sublimated anger is the key emotion driving

girls and young women to succeed. The limited parameters of my study prohibited me from examining this final point any further.

I presented a list of recommendations, both curricular and social, of steps schools can take to help all students, but particularly gifted students, succeed academically and personally during their high school years. How can educators help the whole girl, emotionally, socially, psychologically, and physically, to succeed and be happy in this world? I concluded with a discussion of the next steps in research around gifted adolescent girls. Who is not included in this study and why? Who should educators focus on next? Where is the need the greatest?

Before I close, let's remind ourselves that the adolescent gifted girl is a social construction at three levels. To begin, adolescence is an odd transitional phase found in Western culture known as *Sturm und Drang*, "storm and stress" (Muuss, 1988; Santrock, 1993). The definition of a gifted individual remains highly controversial with education researchers arguing constantly with each other about how to identify and nurture gifted children both in and outside the school house. Finally, as feminists have been trumpeting for over a hundred years, girls are socialized to become women within the confines of a patriarchal society. In a world controlled by men, women have no idea what their lives might be like freed from the social conventions expected of a woman in a man's world.

I opened this dissertation with a list of girl's names. Each represents a unique life, an individual story of a gifted girl's journey through adolescence into becoming a young woman. If I could write a chapter for each girl, I would. Her story is valuable in all its drama of setbacks and triumphs. I conclude my work, however, with the words of Deborah, the class valedictorian, plain and simple. "All I want to do is just be happy and successful."
(Interview: 3/21/11)

Bibliography

- Agar, M. (1980). *Professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography*. New York: Academic Press.
- Adams, M. (1977). *Jane Eyre: Woman's estate*. In Diamond, A., & Edwards, L. (Eds.). *The authority of experience: Essays in feminist criticism*. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Agee, J. & Evans, W. (1939). *Let us now praise famous men*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Albrecht-Crane, C. (2003). An affirmative theory of desire. *JAC*, 23, 563-598.
- Albrecht-Crane, C. & Slack, J. (2003). Toward a pedagogy of affect. In Slack, J. (Ed.), *Animations (of Deleuze and Guattari)* (pp. 191-216). New York: Peter Lang.
- Alcoff, L. & Potter, E. (Eds.). (1993). *Feminist epistemologies*. New York: Routledge.
- Al-Lawati, F. & Hunsaker, S. (2002). A multicultural perspective on women's gifts. *Roeper Review*, 25(1), 22-26.

- Allen, M. (1976). Twin studies of affective illness. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 33, 1476-1478.
- The American Association of University Women. (1992). *How schools shortchange girls – The AAUW report*. New York: Marlowe & Company.
- The American Association of University Women. (1999). *Gender gaps: Where schools still fail our children*. New York: Marlowe & Company.
- The American Association of University Women. (2008, December). *Where the girls are: The facts about gender equity in education*. Retrieved from <http://www.aauw.org/research/upload/whereGirlsAre.pdf>.
- The American Association of University Women Educational Foundation. (1993). *Hostile hallways: The AAUW survey on sexual harassment in America's schools*. Washington, DC: AAUW.
- The American Association of University Women Educational Foundation. (2000). *Tech-savvy: Educating girls in the new Computer Age*. Washington, DC: AAUW Educational Foundation.
- American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. (2007, May). *Report of the APA Task Force on the sexualization of girls*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html>.
- American Psychological Association's National Task Force on Women and Depression. (1990). *Women and depression*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
- Andreou, E. (2000). Bully/victim problems and their association with psychological constructs in 8 to 12-year-old Greek schoolchildren. *Aggressive Behavior*, 26, 49-56.
- Angier, Natalie. (2000). *Woman: An intimate geography*. London: Virago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1977). *Between past and future*. New York: Penguin.
- Austin, S. & Joseph, S. (1996). Assessment of bully/victim problems in 8- to 11-year-olds. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 66, 447-456.
- Babich, B. (1994). *Nietzsche's philosophy of science: Reflecting science on the ground of art and life*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Bailey, S. N. (2002). *Gender in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In Holquist, M. (Ed.). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin, TX: University of Austin Press.
- Baldwin, A. (1999). *The many faces of giftedness: Lifting the masks*. Ontario: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

- Baldwin, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Culturally diverse and underserved populations of gifted students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Barecca, R. & Morse, D. (Eds.). (1997). *The erotics of instruction*. Hanover, CT: University Press of New England.
- Barry, H., Bacon, M. & Child, I. (1957). A cross-cultural survey of sex difference in socialization. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 55, 327-32.
- Baum, S. (Ed.). (2004). *Twice-exceptional and special populations of gifted students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Beck, A. (1993). Cognitive approaches to stress. In Lehrer, P. & Woolfolk, R. (Eds.). *Principles and practice of stress management* (Vol. 2: pp. 333-372). New York: Guilford.
- Beck, I. & Catlett, B. (2004). *Teen girls: Re-vision East Rogers Park*. A report from the Women's and Gender Studies Program. Chicago: DePaul University.
- Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N. & Tarule, J. (1997). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bennett deMarrais, K. (Ed.). (1998). *Inside stories: Reflections on qualitative research methods and ethics*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Dell.
- Bentley, M. (1999). The body of evidence: Dangerous intersections between development and culture in the lives of adolescent girls. In Mazarella, S. & Pecora, N. (Eds.), *Growing up girls: Popular culture and the construction of identity* (pp. 209-223). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Berg, B. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, 5th edition. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bernandez, T. (1991). Adolescent resistance and the maladies of women: Notes from the underground. In Gilligan, C., Rogers, A., Tolman, D. (Eds.). *Women, girls, and psychotherapy: Reframing resistance*. (pp. 213-222). Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Betts, G. & Neihart, M. (1988). Profiles of gifted and talented. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 32(2), 248-253.
- Binet, A. (1909). *Les idées modernes sur les enfants*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Binet, A & Simone, T. (1916/1983). *The development of intelligence in children*. Salem, NH: AYER Company, Publishers, Inc.
- Blacking, J. (1987). *A common-sense view of all music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Bogdan, R. & Biklin, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*, 4th edition. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Boocock, S. (1980). *Sociology of education: An introduction*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Borhek, M.V. (1988). Helping gay and lesbian adolescents and their families: A mother's perspective. *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*, 9, 123-128.
- Bosack, S. (2005). *The culture of classroom silence*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Bouchet, N. & Falk, R. (2001). The relationship among giftedness, gender, and overexcitability. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 45(4), 260-221.
- Boulton, M. & Underwood, K. (1994). Bully/victim problems in middle school children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 62, 73-87.
- Bracher, M. (1999). *The writing cure: Psychoanalysis, composition, and the aims of education*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Bracher, M. (2002). Identity and desire in the classroom. In Jagodzinski, J. (Ed.), *Pedagogical desire: Authority, seduction, transference, and the question of ethics* (pp. 93-121). Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Breitbart, J. & Nogueira, A. (2004). An independent media center of one's own: A feminist alternative to corporate media. In Labaton, V. & Martin, D. (Eds.), *The fire this time: Young activists and the new feminism*. (pp. 19-41). New York: Anchor Books.
- Bronte, C. (2001). *Jane Eyre*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Brown, L. (1991). Telling a girl's life: Self-authorization as a form of resistance. In Gilligan, C., Rogers, A., & Tolman, D. (Eds.), *Women, girls, and psychotherapy: Reframing resistance*. (pp. 71-86). Binghampton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Brown, L. (1998). *Raising their voices: The politics of girls' anger*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, L. (2002). The madgirl in the classroom. In *The Jossey-Bass reader on gender in education*. (pp. 204-242). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, L., Argyris, D., Attanucci, J., Bardige, B., Gilligan, C., Johnston, K., Miller, B., Osborne, R., Ward, J., Wiggins, G., & Wilcox, D. (1988). *A guide to reading narratives of conflict and choice for self and moral*

- voice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education, Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development.
- Brumberg, J. (1997). *The body project: An intimate history of American girls*. New York: Random House.
- Buerk, D. (1985). The voices of women making meaning in mathematics. *Journal of Education*, 167 (3), 57-70.
- Buriel, R. (1984). Integration with traditional Mexican-American culture and sociocultural adjustment. In Martinez, J. & Mendoza, R. (Eds.), *Chicano Psychology*, 2nd ed. (pp. 95-130). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Buriel, R. & Cardoza, D. (1988). Sociocultural correlates of achievement among three generations of Mexican American high school seniors. *American Educational Research Journal*, 25, 177-192.
- Burns, D. (1980). The perfectionist's script for self-defeat. *Psychology Today*, 34-51.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1992). Contingent foundations: Feminism and the question of "Postmodernism." In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.), *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 1-21). New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of "sex."* New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J., Coyner, S., Homans, M., Longenecker, M., & Musil, C. (1991). *Liberal learning and the Women's Studies major*. Report in conjunction with the Association of American Colleges National Review of Arts and Sciences Majors.
- Callahan, S. & Joseph, S. (1995). Self-concept and peer victimization among schoolchildren. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 18, 161-163.
- Campbell, P. (2000). *Land of plenty: Diversity as America's competitive edge in science, engineering, and technology*. Arlington, VA: Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering, and Technology Development.
- Campbell, S. (1997). *Interpreting the personal: Expression and the formation of feelings*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Campbell, L. & Campbell, B. (1999). *Multiple intelligences and student achievement: Success stories from six schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Caputo, V. (1995). "Anthropology's Silent Others." In Wulff, H. & Amit-Talai, V. (Eds.). *Youth cultures: A cross-cultural perspective*. (pp. 19-42). London: Routledge.
- Carlip, Hillary. (1995). *Girl power: Young women speak out!* New York: Warner Books.
- Cave, W. & Chesler, M. (1974). *Sociology of education: An anthology of issues and problems*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
- Center for Impact Research. (2009, January). *Wherever I can lay my head: Homeless youth on homelessness*. Retrieved from http://www.thenightministry.org/070_facts_figures/030_research_links/060_homeless_youth/wherever%20
- Centers for Disease Control. (1991). Leads from the morbidity and mortality weekly report. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 266, 2811-2812.
- Chamberlain, P. (2007). The right v. higher education: Change and continuity. *Radical Teacher*, 77, 2-6.
- Chan, D. W. (2005). Family environment and talent development of Chinese gifted students in Hong Kong. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 49(3), 211-221.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chaucer, G. (1951). *The Canterbury tales*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Chesler, P. (1972). *Women and madness*. New York: Random House.
- Chicago Public Schools. (2003). *The Chicago Public High Schools 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results*. Chicago, IL.
- Chodorow, N. (1974). Family structure and feminine personality. In Rosaldo, M. & Lamphere, L. (Eds.). *Woman, culture, and society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Chodorow, N. (1989). *Feminism and psychoanalytic theory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Chopin, K. (2000). *The awakening and selected stories*. New York: Modern Library.
- Chow, R. (1992). Postmodern automatons. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminist theorize the political* (pp. 101-117). New York: Routledge.
- Clandinin, D. & Connelly, F. (2004). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Clinchy, B. (1995). A connected approach to the teaching of developmental psychology. *Teaching of Psychology* 22 (2), 100-104.
- Code, L. (1993). Taking subjectivity into account. In Alcoff, L. & Potter, E. (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 15-48). New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, J. (2014, August 19). Miss Possible engineered to teach girls to dream big. *Chicago Tribune*, pp. A5.
- Colangelo, N., Assouline, S., Ambrosio, D. (Eds.). (1992). *Talent development: Proceedings from The 1991 Henry B. and Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development*. Unionville, NY: Trillium Press.
- Collins, P. (2004). Learning from the outsider within. In Harding, S. (Ed.). *The feminist standpoint theory reader*. (pp. 103-126). New York: Routledge.
- Collins, R. (1975). *Conflict sociology*. New York: Academic Press.
- Corwin, M. (2001). *And still we rise: The trials and tribulations of twelve gifted inner-city students*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Corwin, R. (1965). *A sociology of education: Emerging patterns of class, status, and power in the public schools*. New York: Meredith Publishing Company.
- Crawley, S., Lewis, J., Mayberry, M. (2008). Introduction – Feminist pedagogies in action: Teaching beyond disciplines. *Feminist Teacher*, 19(1), 1-12.
- Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crick, N. (1995). Relational aggression: The role of intent attributions, feelings of distress, and provocation type. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 313-322.
- Crocker, J. & Major, B. (1989). Social stigma and self-esteem: The self-protective properties of stigma. *Psychological Review*, 96(4), 608-630.
- Crosby, C. (1992). Dealing with difference. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 130-143). New York: Routledge.

- Cross, T., Coleman, L., & Stewart, R. (1993). The social cognition of gifted adolescents: An exploration of the stigma of giftedness paradigm. *Roeper Review*, 16(1), 37-40.
- Cummins, J. (1986). "Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention." *Harvard Educational Review*, 56, 18-36.
- Czikszentmihalyi, M. (2008). Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In Steinberg, R. (Ed.), *Handbook of Creativity* (pp. 313-335). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Czikszentmihalyi, M., Rathunde, K. & Whalen, S. (1993). *Talented teenagers: The roots of success and failure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dabrowski, K. (1964). *Positive disintegration*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Dabrowski, K. (n.d.). *Authentic education*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Dabrowski, K., Kawczak, A., & Sochanska, J. (1973). *The dynamics of concepts*. London: Gryf.
- Daniels, S. (2003, February). *Living with Intensity: An Expanded View of Dabrowski's Concept of Overexcitability*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children, Chicago, IL.
- De Beauvoir, S. (1974). *The second sex*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Debold, E., Wilson, M. & Malave, I. (1993). *Mother daughter revolution: From betrayal to power*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.
- Deleuze, G. (1992). "What is a dispositive?" In Armstrong, T. (Trans.) *Michel Foucault Philosopher* (pp. 159-68). New York: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. (1967/1976). *Of grammatology*. Spivak, G. (Trans.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1979). "Living on." Hulbert, J. (Trans.). In Bloom, H., de Man, P., Derrida, J., Hartman, G. & Miller, J., *Deconstruction and criticism* (pp. 75-76). New York: Seabury.
- Derrida, J. (1979). *Spurs: Nietzsche's styles*. Harlow, B. (Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- DeVos, G. (1967). Essential elements of caste: Psychological determinants in structural theory. In DeVos, G. & Wagasuma, H., (Eds.), *Japan's invisible race: Caste in culture and personality* (pp. 332-384). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- DeVos, G. (1984, April). *Ethnic persistence and role degradation: An illustration from Japan*. Paper presented at the American-Soviet Symposium of Contemporary Ethnic Processes in the USA and the USSR, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Dewey, J. (1910). The influence of Darwin on philosophy. Reprinted in Appleman, P. (Ed.), *Darwin: A Norton critical edition* (pp. 303-314). New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Dewey, J. (1990). *The school and society and The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dickens, C. (1982). *Great expectations*. New York: Greenwich House.
- Duke, D. (2013). Are we pushing for greatness? *Phi Delta Kappa*, 94 (5), 45-49.
- Duncan, R. (1999). Maltreatment by parents and peers: The relationship between child abuse, bully victimization, and psychological distress. *Child Maltreatment*, 4, 45-55.
- Durham, M. (1999). Out of the Indian diaspora: Mass media, myths of femininity, and the negotiation of adolescence between two cultures. In Mazzarella, S. & Pecora, N. (Eds.), *Growing up girls: Popular culture and the construction of identity* (pp. 193-208). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Eccles, J. & Roeser, R. (1999). School and community influences on human development. Bornstein, M. & Lamb, M. (Eds.). *Developmental psychology – An advanced textbook*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Egan, S. & Perry, D. (1998). Does low self-regard invite victimization? *Developmental Psychology*, 34, 299-309.
- Eng, P. (1999). *Warrior lessons: An Asian American woman's journey into power*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Epstein, J. & Karweit, N. (1983). *Friends in school: Patterns of selection and influence in secondary schools*. New York: Academic Press.
- Erikson, E. (1963). *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton and Company.
- Erkuts, S., Fields, J., Sing, R., & Marx, F. (1996). Diversity in girls' experiences: Feeling good about who you are. In Leadbeater, B., & Way, N. (Eds.). *Urban girls: Resisting stereotypes, creating identities*. (pp. 55-64). New York: New York University Press.
- Espalage, D., Swearer, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Bullying in American schools: A Social-Ecological perspective on prevention and intervention*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

- Evans-Pritchard. (1972). *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Faludi, S. (1991). *Backlash: The undeclared war against women*. New York: Doubleday Books.
- Faraone, S., Perlis, R., Doyle, A., Smoller, J., Goralnick, J., Holmgren, M., & Sklar, P. (2005). Molecular genetics of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Biological Psychiatry*, 57: 1313-1323.
- Feldhusen, J. & Heller, K. (1985). *Identifying and nurturing the gifted: An international perspective*. Toronto: Hans Huber Publishers.
- Fennema, E. & Leder, G. (1990). *Mathematics and gender*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fine, M. (1992). *Disruptive voices*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Fine, M. & Zane, N. (1991). Bein' wrapped too tight: When low-income women drop out of high school. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 19(1/2), 77-92.
- Flett, G. & Hewitt, P. (Eds.). (2002). *Perfectionism: Theory, research, and treatment*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Flyvberg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ford, D. (1992). Self-perceptions of underachievement and support for the achievement ideology among early adolescent African-Americans. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 12(3), 228-252.
- Ford, D. & Harris, J. (1999). *Multicultural gifted education*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Fordham, S. (1991). Racelessness in private schools: Should we deconstruct the racial and cultural identity of African-American adolescents? *Teachers College Record*, 92, 470-484.
- Fordham, S. (1993). "Those loud black girls:" (Black) women, silence, and gender "passing" in the academy. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 24: 3-32.
- Fordham, S. (2004). "Signithia, you can do better than that:" John Ogbu and the nine lives people. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 35(1), 149-161.
- Foreyt, J. (1995). Psychological correlates of weight fluctuation. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 17, 263-275.

- Foster, K. (2008). "Forward-looking criticism: Critiques and enhancements for the next generation of the Cultural-Ecological Model." In Ogbu, J. (Ed.). *Minority status, oppositional culture, and schooling* (pp. 572-592). New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1988). In Kritzman, D. (Ed.). *Michel Foucault: Politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality, Vol. 3; The care of the self* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1998). In Rabinow, P. (Ed.). *Michel Foucault: The essential works of Foucault: Ethics, subjectivity, truth, Vol. 1*. New York: The New Press.
- Fox, L., Benbow, C., & Perkins, S. (1983). An accelerated mathematics program for girls: A longitudinal evaluation. In Benbow, C. & Stanley, G. (Eds.). *Academic precocity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fraser, N. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse, and gender in contemporary social theory*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Freire, P. (1970/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1974). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freeman, J. (1994). Some emotional aspects of being gifted. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 17(2), 180-197.
- Freud, S. (1912). "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love (Contributors to the Psychology of Love)." In Strachey, J. (Ed.). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. (pp. 189). 1957. Vol. 11.
- Frost, R., Lahart, C., & Rosenblate, R. (1991). The development of perfectionism: A study of daughters and their parents. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 15, 469-489.
- Gadamer, H. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gallagher, J.J. (1985). *Teaching the gifted child*. Newton, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Galton, F. (1868/1952). *Hereditary genius: An inquiry into its laws and consequences*. New York: Horizon Press.
- Galton, F. (1874). *English men of science: Their nature and nurture*. London: Macmillan & Co.

- Gans, J. & Blyth, S. (1990). *America's adolescents: How healthy are they?* Chicago: American Medical Association.
- Gardner, H. (1983/1994). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, J. (1961). *Excellence: Can we be equal and excellent too?* New York: Harper & Row.
- Garnezy, N. (1987). Stress, competence, and development: Continuities in the study of schizophrenic adults, children vulnerable to psychopathology, and the search for stress-resistant children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 57 (2), 159-174.
- Garnezy, N. & Tellegen, A. (1984). Studies of stress-resistant children: Methods, variables, and preliminary findings. In Morrison, F., Lord, C., & Keating, D. (Eds.). *Applied Developmental Psychology* (pp. 231-283). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Garrison, J. (1997). *Dewey and eros: Wisdom and desire in the art of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). (2011). *National School Climate Survey*.
<http://www.glsen.org>.
- Geertz, Clifford. (2003). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In Lincoln, Y. & Denzin, N., (Eds.). *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 143-168). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1993). Joining the resistance: Psychology, politics, girls, and women. In Weis, L. & Fine, M. (Eds.). *Beyond silenced voices* (pp. 143-168). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Gilligan, C. (2011). *Joining the resistance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilligan, C. & Brown, L. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C., Lyons, N. & Hamner, T. (Eds.). (1990). *Making connections*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C., Ward, J. & Taylor, J. (Eds.). (1988). *Mapping the moral domain*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Giroux, H. (1992). "Language, difference, and curriculum theory: Beyond the politics of clarity." *Theory into practice*. 31(3): 219-27.

- Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Gordon, D. (1995). "Border work: Feminist ethnography and the dissemination of literacy." In Behar, R & Gordon, D. (Eds.), *Women writing culture* (pp. 373-89). Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Gouldner, A. (1970). *The coming crisis of Western sociology*. New York: Avon.
- Graham, S. & Juvonen, J. (1998). Self-blame and peer victimization in middle school: An attributional analysis. *Developmental Psychology*, 34, 587-599.
- Greene, M. (1991). Forward. In Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (Eds.). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Grills, A. & Ollendick, T. (2002). Peer victimization, global self-worth, and anxiety in middle school children. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 31, 59-68.
- Grosz, E. (1993). Bodies and knowledges: Feminism and the crisis of reason. In Alcoff, L. & Potter, E. (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 187-215). New York: Routledge.
- Grumet, M. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hankin, B. & Abramson, L. (2001). Development of gender differences in depression. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(6), 773-796.
- Haraway, D. (1989). A manifesto for cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s. In Weed, E. (Ed). *Coming to terms: Feminism, theory, politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (2003). Situated knowledge: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. In Lincoln, Y. & Denzin, N. (Eds.). *Turning points in qualitative research* (pp. 21-46). Walnut Creek, CA: AlmaMira Press.
- Harding, S. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?: Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Harding, S. (Ed). (2004). *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies*. New York: Routledge.

- Harris, A. (Ed.). (2004). *All about the girl: Culture, power, and identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Harris Interactive & GLSEN. (2005). *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.
- Hartsock, N. (1983). The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism. In Harding, S. & Hintikka, M. (Eds.). *Discovering reality: Feminist perspectives on epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science*. Boston, MA: D. Reidel.
- Haynes, N. & Emmons, C. (1994, March). Lecture. Paper presented at the Developmental Psychology Luncheon Series. Yale University Department of Psychology, New Haven, CT.
- Heiner, B. (2003). The passions of Michel Foucault. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 14, 22-52.
- Hekman, S. (2004). "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited." In Harding, S. (Ed.). *The feminist standpoint theory reader*. (pp. 225-241). New York: Routledge.
- Helle, A. (1991). Reading women's autobiographies: A map of reconstructed knowing. In Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (Eds.). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Heller, K., Perleth, C., & Tock, K. (2005). The Munich Model of giftedness designed to identify and promote gifted students. In Sternberg, R. & Davidson, J. (Eds.). *Conceptions of giftedness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Henderson, M. (1992). Speaking in tongues: Dialogics, dialectics, and the Black woman writer's literary tradition. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 144-166). New York: Routledge.
- Hess, F.M. (2011). Our achievement gap mania. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/our-achievement-gap-mania>.
- Hewitt, P. & Flett, G. (2002). Perfectionism and stress processes in psychopathology. In Flett, G & Hewitt, P. (Eds.). *Perfectionism: Theory, research, and treatment* (pp. 255-284). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Hofstadter, R. (1963). *Anti-intellectualism in American life*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Hoge, R. (1988). Issues in the definition and measurement of the giftedness construct. *Educational Researcher*, 17, 12-16.

- Hollingworth, L. (1926). *Gifted children: Their nature and nurture*. New York: Macmillan.
- Honig, B. (1992). Toward an agonistic feminism: Hannah Arendt and the politics of identity. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 215-235). New York: NY: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston: South End Press.
- hooks, b. (1993). *Sisters of the yam*. Boston: South End Press.
- hooks, b. (2004). Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness. In Harding, S. (Ed.). *Feminist standpoint theory reader* (pp. 153-159). New York: Routledge.
- Horner, M. (1969). Fail: Bright women. *Psychology Today*, 3(6), 36-38, 62.
- Horner, M. (1972). Toward an understanding of achievement related conflicts in women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 28, 157-175.
- Horvat, E. & O'Connor, C. (2006). *Beyond acting white: Reassessments and new directions in research on black students and student success*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Illinois Association for Gifted Children. (2007, November). Meeting the needs of gifted/talented learners: An investment in the future of Illinois. Retrieved from <http://www.iagc.gifted.org/advocacy/ChartonFundingAndNoFunding.htm>.
- Infinite, J. (2003). Ethical self-formation: A look at the later Foucault. *Educational Theory*, 53, 155-171.
- Irigaray, L. (1985). *The sex which is not one*. Porter, C. & Burke, C. (Trans.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1987). Sexual difference. In Moi, T. (Ed.). *French feminist thought: A reader*. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Jackson, P. & Moyle, V. (2009). With Dabrowski in mind: Reinstating the outliers in support of full-spectrum development. *Roeper Review*, 31 (3), 150-159.
- Jaffee, S. & Hyde, J. (2000). Gender differences in moral orientation: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(5), 703-726.
- Jaggar, A. (1989). Love and knowledge: Emotion in feminist epistemology. In Bordo, S. & Jaggar, A. (Eds.). *Gender/body/knowledge: Feminist reconstructions of being and knowing* (pp. 145-171). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

- Janos, P., & Robinson, N. (1985). Psychosocial development in intellectually gifted children. In Horowitz, F. & O'Brien, M. (Eds.), *The gifted and talented: Developmental perspectives* (pp. 149-195). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Janos, P., Fung, H., & Robinson, N. (1974). Self-concept, self-esteem, and peer relations among gifted children who feel different. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 29(2), 78-82.
- Johnson, N. (1997). "Subverting the rhetorical tradition through the feminist imagination." Conference proposal, "From boundaries to border lands: Intersections of feminism(s) and rhetoric(s)." Corvallis, Oregon.
- Jones, S., & Dirdia, K. (2004). A meta-analytic perspective on sex equity in the classroom. *Review of Educational Research*, 74 (4), 443-471.
- Jordan, J., Kaplan, A., Miller, J., Stiver, I., & Surrey, J. (1991). *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Kaplan, A. (1964). *The conduct of inquiry: Methodology for behavioral sciences*. San Francisco, CA: Chandler.
- Keaton, T. (2006). *Muslim girls and the other France: Race, identity politics, and social exclusion*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Keller, E. (1977). The anomaly of a woman in physics. In Ruddick, S. & Daniels, P. (Eds.). *Working it out* (pp. 77-91). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Keller, E. (1985). *Reflections on gender and science*. Binghamton, NY: Yale University Press.
- Kemmis, S. & Wilkinson, M. (1998). Participatory action research and the study of practice. In Atweh, B., Kemmis, S. & Weeks, P. (Eds.). *Action research in practice: Partnerships for social justice in education* (pp. 21-36). New York: Routledge.
- Kerr, B. (1983). Raising the career aspirations of gifted girls. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 32, 37-44.
- Kerr, B. (1985). *Smart girls two: A new psychology of girls, women, and giftedness*. Dayton, OH: Ohio Psychology Press.
- Kerr, B. (1992). *Smart girls, gifted women*. Dayton, OH: Ohio Psychology Press.
- Kerr, B., Colangelo, N., & Gaeth, J. (1988). Gifted adolescents' attitudes toward their giftedness. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 32(2), 245-247.
- Khan, S. & Faraone, S. (2006). The genetics of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: A literature review. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 8: 393-397.

- Kingore, B. (1993). *Portfolios: Enriching and assessing all students, identifying the gifted grades K-6*. Des Moines, IA: Leadership.
- Klerman, G. & Weissman, M. (1985). Depression among women. In Williams, J. (Ed.). *Psychology of women: Selected writings*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Kliebard, H. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum: 1883-1958*. New York: Routledge/Falmer.
- Kleiber, P. (2004). Focus groups: More than a method of qualitative inquiry. In deMarrais, D. & Lupon, S. (Eds.). *Foundations of research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- Kofman, S. (1993). *Nietzsche and metaphor*. Large, D. (Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kosciw, J. Greytak, E., Barkiewicz, M., Boesen, M., & Palmer, N. (2012). The 2011 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered youth in our nation's schools. Retrieved from http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTS/file/000/002/2105-1.pdf.
- Krell, D. (2000). *The purest of bastards: Works of mourning, art, and affirmation in the thought of Jacques Derrida*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Kuhmerker, L. (1991). *The Kohlberg legacy for the helping professions*. Birmingham, AL: Doxa Books.
- Kulik, J. & Kulik, C. (1992). The effects of accelerated instruction. *Review of Educational Research* 54(3), 409-425.
- Lai, T. (1992). Asian American women: Not for sale. In Andersen, M. & Collins, P. (Eds.), *Race, class, and gender: An anthology*. (pp. 141-146). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.
- Lather, P. (2003). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: Between a rock and a soft place. In Lincoln, Y. & Denzin, N., (Eds.). *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 185-215). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Lather, P. & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Latour, Bruno. (1999). *Pandora's hope: Essays on the reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Lavach, J. & Lanier, H. (1975). The motive to avoid success in 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grade high-achieving girls. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 68, 216-218.
- Lawton, M. (1993). Sexual harassment of students target of district policies. *Education Week*, February 10, p. 1.
- Leadbeater, B., Blatt, S., & Quinlan, D. (1995). Gender-linked vulnerabilities to depressive symptoms, stress, and problem behaviors in adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 5(1): 1-29.
- Lee, S. (2004). The new girls network: Women, technology, and feminism. In Labaton, V. & Martin, D. (Eds.). *The fire this time: Young activists and the new feminism*. (pp. 84-104). New York: Anchor Books.
- Lenzo, K. (1995). "Validity and self-reflexivity meet poststructuralism: Scientific ethos and the transgressive self." *Educational Researcher*, 45, 17-23.
- Leys, Ruth. (1992). The real Miss Beauchamp. In Butler J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political*. New York: Routledge.
- Lightfoot, S. (1983). *The good high school: Portraits of character and culture*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.
- Liston, D. & Garrison, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Teaching, learning, and loving: Reclaiming passion in educational practice*. New York: RoutedgFarmer.
- Lombrazo, C. (1891). *The man of genius*. New York: Carland.
- Lorde, A. (1984). Age, race, class, and sex: Women redefining distance. In *Sister Outsider* (pp. 114-123). Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *The cancer journals*. Argyle, NY: Spinsters Ink.
- Lubiano, W. (1991). Shuckin' off the African-American native other: What's 'Po-mo' got to do with it? *Cultural Critique* (Spring): 49-186.
- Lyman, P. (1981). The politics of anger: On silence, resentment, and political speech. *Socialist Review* 11 (3): 55-74.
- Lyman, P. (2004). The domestication of anger: The use and abuse of anger in politics. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7, 133-147.
- MacKinnon, C. (1983). Feminism, Marxism, method and the state: An agenda for theory. *Signs* 7, 19-46.
- MacLeod, J. (1987/1995). *Ain't no makin' it*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Marland, S. (1971). *Education of the gifted and talented*. Volume 1: Report to the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Commissioner of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Printing Office.
- Marks, E. & de Courtivron, I. (Eds.). (1980). *New French feminisms: An anthology*. New York: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Martin, B. (2001). "Success and its failures." In Bronfen. E. & Kavka, M. (Eds.). *Feminist consequences: Theory for the new century*. (pp. 353-80). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Matute-Bianchi, M. (1991). Situational ethnicity and patterns of school performance among immigrant and non-immigrant Mexican-descent students. In Gibson, M. & Ogbu, J (Eds.), *Minority status and schooling: A comparative study of immigrant and involuntary minorities* (pp. 205-247). New York: Garland Publishing.
- Matute-Bianchi, M. (2008). Situational ethnicity and patterns of school performances among immigrant and non-immigrant Mexican-descent students. In Ogbu, J. (Ed.). *Minority status, oppositional culture and schooling* (pp. 397-432). New York: Routledge.
- Mayer, J., Perkins, D. Caruso, D. & Salovey, P. (2001). Emotional intelligence and giftedness. *Roeper Review*, 23(3), 131-137.
- McAdams, D. (1987). A life-story model of identity. In Hogan, R. & Jones, W. (Eds.). *Perspectives in personality* (Vol. 2, pp. 15-50). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- McCall, L. (2005). "The complexity of intersectionality." *Signs* 30(3): 1771-1800.
- McClelland, S. (2007). Countering the assault on higher education. *Radical Teacher*, 77, 15-19.
- McCoy, K. (1997). "Killing the father/becoming uncomfortable with the mother tongue: Rethinking the performative contradiction." *Educational Theory*, 47(4), 489-500.
- McElroy-Johnson, B. (1993). Giving voice to the voiceless. *Harvard Educational Review*, 63 (1), 85-104.
- McLaren, P. (1994). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- McWilliam, E. (1996). Touchy subjects: A risky inquiry into pedagogical pleasure. *British Educational Research Journal*, 22, 305-319.
- McWilliam, E. (1997). Beyond the missionary position: Teacher desire and radical pedagogy, In Todd, S. (Ed.). *Learning desire: Perspective on pedagogy, culture and the unsaid* (pp. 217-236). New York: Routledge.

- Merskin, D. (1999). What every girl should know: An analysis of feminine hygiene in advertising. In Mazzarella, S. & Pecora, N. (Eds.), *Growing up girls: Popular culture and the construction of identity* (pp. 113-129). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Mickelson, R. (2006). Forward. In Ogbu, J. (Ed.). *Minority status, oppositional culture, and schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Midkiff, K., Shaver, C., Murry, V., Flowers, B., Chastain, S., & Kingore, B. (2002). *The challenge of change: Identifying underrepresented populations*. Paper presented at the 49th Annual Convention of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). Denver, CO.
- Mika E. (2007). Dabrowski's view on authentic mental health. In Mendaglio, S. (Ed.), *Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration* (pp. 139-153). Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Miller, J. (1976). *Toward a new psychology of women*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Miller, J. (1979). "The critic as host." In Bloom, H., de Man, P., Derrida, J. Hartman, G., & Miller, J. (Eds.). *Deconstruction and criticism*. (pp. 217-253). New York: Seabury.
- Miller, J. (1993). *The passion of Michel Foucault*. London: Simon & Schuster.
- Miller, N., Silverman, L. & Falk, R. (1994). Emotional development, intellectual ability, and gender. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 18, 20-38.
- Mirochnik, E. & Sherman, D. (2002). *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Moon, S. (Ed.). (2004). *Social/emotional issues, underachievement, and counseling of gifted and talented students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Moses, R. & Cobb, C. (2001). *Radical equations: Civil rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Moyle, V. (2000). Dabrowski's "On Authentic Education." *The Dabrowski Newsletter*, 6(2), 12-14.
- Munoz, V. (1995). *"Where Something Catches:" Work, love, and identity in youth*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Muuss, R. E. (1988). *Theories of adolescence*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Napier, L. (1995). Educational profiles of nine gifted American Indian women and their own stories about wanting to lead. *Roeper Review*, 18, 38-44.

- Narayan, U. (2004). The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist. In Harding, S. (Ed.). *The feminist standpoint reader*. (pp. 213-224). New York: Routledge.
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2010). *Generalized anxiety disorder: When worry gets out of control*. National Institute of Health Publication No. TR 10-4677. Bethesda, MD: United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2010). *Panic disorder: When fear overwhelms*. National Institute of Health Publication No. TR 10-4679. Bethesda, MD: United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2011). *Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*. National Institute of Health Publication No. TR 11-3572. Bethesda, MD: United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2011). *The teen brain: Still under construction*. National Institute of Health Publication No. TR 11-4929. Bethesda, MD: United States Department of Health and Human Services.
- Neary, A. & Joseph, S. (1994). Peer victimization and its relationship to self-concept and depression among schoolgirls. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 16, 183-186.
- Nelson, K. C. (1989). Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration. *Advanced Development Journal*, 1, 1-14.
- Noble, K. (1990). Living out the promise of high potential: Perceptions of 100 gifted women. In Ellis, J. & Willinsky, J. (Eds.). *Girls, women, and giftedness*. Monroe, NY: Trillium Press.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S. & Girgus, J. (1994). The emergence of gender differences in depression during adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin* 115: 424-43.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In Roberts, H. (Ed.). *Doing feminist research* (pp. 30-61). Boston, MA: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste: The American system in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: Academic Press.
- Ogbu, J. (1986). *Cross-cultural study of minority education: Contributions from Stockton research*. 23rd Annual J. William Harris Lecture, Stockton, CA.
- Ogbu, J. (1991). Immigrant and involuntary minorities in comparison perspective. In Gibson, M. & Ogbu, J. (Eds.), *Minority status and schooling* (pp. 3-33). New York: Garland.

- Ogbu, J. (1991). Minority coping responses and school experience. *Journal of Psychohistory*, 18(4), 433-456.
- Ogbu, J. (1997). Understanding the school performance of urban Blacks: Some essential background knowledge. In Walberg, H., Reyes, O., & Weissburg, R. (Eds.), *Children and youth: Interdisciplinary perspectives. Issues in children's and families' lives*. (pp. 190-222). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ogbu, J. (2008). *Minority status, oppositional culture, and schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Ogbu, J. & Simons, H. (1998). Voluntary and involuntary minorities: A cultural-ecological theory of school performance with some implications for education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 29(2), 155-188.
- Ogbu, J. & Stern, P. (2001). Caste and intellectual development. In Sternberg, J. & Grigorenko, E. (Eds.), *Environmental effects on cognitive abilities* (pp. 3-37). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Olesen, V. (2000). Feminism and qualitative research at and into the millennium. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 215-255). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Olneck, M. & Lazerson, M. (1974). The school achievement of immigrant children: 1990-1930. *History of Education Quarterly*, 14, 453-482.
- Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2000). The transition from childhood giftedness to adult creative productiveness: Psychological characteristics and social supports. *Roeper Review*, 23, 65-71.
- Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2002). Parenting principles that promote talent development, creativity, and optimal adjustment. In Neihart, M., Reis, S., Robinson, N. & Moon, S. (Eds.). *The social and emotional development of gifted children: What do we know?* (pp. 205-212). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Olweus, D. (1994). Annotation: Bullying at school: Basic facts and effects of school-based intervention program. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 35, 1171-1190.
- Orenstein, P. (1984). *School girls: Young women, self-esteem, and the confidence gap*. New York: Doubleday.
- Orenstein, P. (2002). Striking back: Sexual harassment at Weston. In *The Jossey-Bass reader on gender in education* (pp. 459-475). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Parker, W. (2002). Perfectionism and adjustment in gifted children. In Flett, G. & Hewitt, P. (Eds.), *Perfectionism: Theory, research, and treatment* (pp.133-148). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Pastor, J., McCormick, J. & Fine, M. (1996). Makin' homes: An urban girl thing. In Leadbeater, B & Way, N. (Eds.). *Urban girls: Resisting stereotypes, creating identities* (pp. 15-34). New York: New York University Press.
- Pefanis, J. (1991). *Heterology and the postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard, and Lyotard*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Pels, D. (2004). Strange Standpoints, or How to Define the Situation for Situated Knowledge. In Harding, S. (Ed.). *The feminist standpoint theory reader*. (pp. 103-126). New York: Routledge.
- Perkins, D. (2010). *Making learning whole: How seven principles of teaching can transform education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Petersen, A. (1988). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 39, 583-607.
- Piaget, J. (1932). *The moral judgment of the child*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Piechowski, M. & Colangelo, N. (1984). Developmental potential of the gifted. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 28(2), 80-88.
- Pignatelli, F. (1999). Education and the subject of desire. *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 20, 337-352.
- Pipher, M. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Plucker, J. & Runco, M. (1998). The death of the creativity measurement has been greatly exaggerated: Current issues, recent advances, and future directions in creativity assessment. *Roeper Review*, 21, 36-39.
- Potter, E. (1993). Gender and epistemic negotiation. In Alcoff, L. & Potter, E. (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 161-186).
- Proweller, A. (1998). *Constructing female identities: Meaning making in an upper middle class youth culture*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010a). *Questions & answers: Gender identity in schools*. Ottawa, ON: Retrieved from <http://www.librairie.catie.ca/pdf/ATI-20000s/26289E.pdf>.
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010b). *Sexual orientation in schools*. Ottawa, ON: Retrieved from <http://www.librairie.catie.ca/pdf/ATI-20000s/26289E.pdf>.
- Ramphel, M. (1995). *Across boundaries: The journey of a South African woman leader*. New York: Routledge.

- Rankel, M. (2007). Dabrowski on authentic education. In Medaglio, S. (Ed.), *Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration* (pp. 79-100). Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Read, C. (1991). Achievement and career choices: Comparisons of males and females, gender distribution in programs for the gifted. *Roeper Review*, 13(4).
- Reinherz, H., Frost, A. & Pakiz, B. (1990). *Changing faces: Correlates of depressive symptoms in late adolescence*. Boston, MA: Simmons College of Social Work.
- Reinherz, S. (1983). Experiential analysis: A contribution to feminist research. In Bowles, G. & Duelli-Klein, R. (Eds.), *Theories of women's studies*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Reis, S. (1987). We can't change what we don't recognize: Understanding the special needs of gifted females. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 31, 2.
- Reis, S. (1989). Reflections on policy affecting the education of gifted and talented students: Past and future perspectives. *American Psychologist*, 44, 399-408.
- Renzulli, J. (1978, November). What makes giftedness? Reexamining a definition. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 60, 180-184, 261.
- Renzulli, J. (2005). The three-ring conception of giftedness: A developmental model for promoting creative productivity. In Sternberg, R. & Davidson, J. (Eds.), *Conceptions of giftedness* (pp. 246-279). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Renzulli, J., Smith, L. & Reis, S. (2002). *Curriculum compacting: The complete guide to modifying the regular curriculum for high ability students*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press.
- Rich, A. (1977). Conditions for work: The common world of women. In Ruddick, S. & Daniels, P. (Eds.), *Working it out* (pp. xiv-xxiv). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Rich, A. (1979). Taking women students seriously. In *On lies, secrets, and silence: Selected prose, 1966-1978*. (pp. 390-396). New York: W.W. Norton.
- Rich, A. (1981). *A wild patience has taken me this far*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Riley, D. (1988). *'Am I That Name?'" Feminism and the category of women in history*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Riley, D. (1992). A history of preoccupation. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 121-129). New York: Routledge.

- Ritchhart, R., Turner, T., Hadar, L. (2009). Uncovering students' thinking about thinking using concept maps. *Metacognition & Learning*, 4 (2), 145-159.
- Robinson, A. (1990). Cooperation or exploitation? The argument against cooperative learning for gifted and talented students. *Journal for the Education for the Gifted*, 10, 9-27.
- Robinson, A. & Clinkenbeard, P.R. (1998). Giftedness: An exceptionality examined. *Annual Review of Psychology* 49(1), 117-139.
- Robinson, T. & Ward, J. (1991). "A Belief Far Greater Than Anyone's Disbelief:" Cultivating resistance among African-American female adolescents. In Gilligan, C., Rogers, A. & Tolman, D. (Eds.), *Women, girls, and psychotherapy: Reframing resistance* (pp. 87-104). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Roeper, Annemarie. (1995). *Selected writings and speeches*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.
- Ross, D. (1996). *Childhood bullying and teasing: What school personnel, other professionals, and parents can do*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Rotherman-Borus, M., Dopkins, S., Subate, N., & Lightfoot, M. (1996). Personal and ethnic identity: Values and self-esteem among Black and Latina adolescent girls. In Leadbeater, B & Way, N. (Eds.). *Urban girls: Resisting stereotypes, creating identities* (pp. 35-52). New York: New York University Press.
- Rubin, G. (1975). The traffic in women. In Rayna, R. (Ed). *Toward an anthropology of women*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (2004). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rutter, M. (1981). Stress, coping, and development. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 24(4), 323-356.
- Sadker, M. & Sadker, D. (1994). *Failing at fairness: How America's schools cheat girls*. New York: Scribner's.
- Santrock, J.W. (1993). *Adolescence: An introduction*. Dubuque, IA: WCB Brown & Benchmark Publications.
- Sapon-Sevin, M. (1994). *Playing favorites: Gifted education and the disruption of community*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Schensel, S., Schensel, J. & LeCompte, M. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Schor, N. (1987). *Reading in detail: Aesthetics and the feminine*. New York & London: Methuen.

- Schor, N. (1992). Feminism and George Sand. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 41-53). New York: Routledge.
- Schram, T.H. (2003). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative inquiry*, 2nd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Schweickart, P. (1996). Speech is silver, silence is gold: An asymmetrical intersubjectivity of communicative action. In Goldberger, N., Tarule, J., Clinchy, B., Belenky, M. (Eds.). *Knowledge, difference, and power: Essays inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing*. (pp. 305-331). New York: Basicbooks.
- Scott, J. (1992). Experience. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 22-40). New York: Routledge.
- Shandler, S. (1999). *Ophelia speaks: Adolescent girls write about their search for self*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Shaw, P., Gornick, M., Lerch, J., Addington, A., Seal, J., Catallanos, F. & Rapoport, J. (2007). Polymorphisms of the dopamine D4 receptor, clinical outcome and cortical structure in attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 64 (8): 921-931.
- Sherrill, J. (2010, December). Anxiety disorders. Retrieved from <http://www.nimh.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>.
- Silverman, L. (1989). Reclaiming lost giftedness in girls. *Understanding Our Gifted*, 2, 7-9.
- Silverman, L. (1993). Counseling needs and programs for the gifted. In Heller, K., Monks, F., & Passow, A. (Eds.), *The international handbook of research and development of giftedness and talent* (pp. 631-647). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Silverman, L. (1994). The moral sensitivity of gifted children and the evolution of society. *Roeper Review*, 17, 110-116.
- Silverman, L. (1996). It all began with Leta Hollinworth: The story of giftedness in women. In Ellis, J. & Willinsky, J.M. (Eds.). *Girls, women, and giftedness* (pp. 14-24). Unionville, NY: Royal Fireworks Press.
- Silverman, L. (2002, December). *Differentiation: The key to unlocking the gifted student*. Paper presented to the meeting of the State of Illinois Gifted Education Conference, St. Charles, IL.
- Simmons, R. (2002). *Odd girl out: The hidden culture of aggression in girls*. Orlando, FL: Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc.

- Simmons, R. (2004). *Odd girl speaks out: Girls write about bullies, cliques, popularity, and jealousy*. Orlando, FL: Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc.
- Slee, P. & Rigby, K. (1993). Australian schoolchildren's self-appraisal of interpersonal relations: The bullying experience. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 23, 272-282.
- Smith, D. (1977). Some implications of a sociology for women. In Glazer, N. & Waehrer, H. (Eds.), *Man-made world: A socioeconomic handbook* (pp. 15-29). Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.
- Smith, D. (1979). A sociology for women. In Sherman, J. & Beck, E. (Eds.), *The prism of sex: Essays in the sociology of knowledge* (pp. 135-187). Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Smith, D. (2004). "Comment on Hekman's 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Revisited.'" In Harding, S. (Ed.). *The feminist standpoint theory reader*. (pp. 263-268). New York: Routledge.
- Smith, J. & Butt, R. (1996). Joanna: One life history and the universal woman in science. In Ellis, J. & Willinsky, J.M. (Eds.). *Girls, women, and giftedness* (pp. 77-98). Unionville, NY: Royal Fireworks Press.
- Sorotzkin, B. (1998). Understanding and treating perfectionism in religious adolescents. *Psychotherapy*, 35, 87-95.
- Spelman, E. (1989). Anger and insubordination. In Garry, A. & Pearsall, M. (Eds.). *Women, knowledge, and reality: Explorations in feminist philosophy* (pp. 263-273). London: Unwin Hyman.
- Spicer, E. (1971). Persistent identity system. *Science*, 4011, 795-800.
- Spiegelberg, H. (1969). Phenomenology: The essentials of the method. In Nijhoff, M. (Ed.). *The phenomenological movement*, 654-729.
- Spivak, G. (1992). French feminisms revisited. In Butler, J. & Scott, J. (Eds.). *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 54-85). New York: Routledge.
- Spivak, G. (1994). "Responsibility." *Boundary*, 21(3): 19-64.
- Spivak, G. (1999). *A critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Spivak, G. (2002). "Righting wrongs." In Owen, N. (Ed.). *Human rights, human wrongs: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 2001* (pp. 168-227). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston.
- Spring, J. (2007). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality*. Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw/Hill.

- Stanton, A. (1996). Reconfiguring teaching and knowing in the college classroom. In Goldberger, N., Tarule, J., Clinchy, B., Belenky, M. (Eds.). *Knowledge, difference, and power: Essays inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing*. (pp. 25-56). New York: Basicbooks.
- Steese, S., Dollette, M., Phillips, W., Hossfeld, E., Mathews, G. & Taormina, G. (2006). Understanding girls' circle as an intervention on perceived social support, body image, self-efficacy, locus of control, and self esteem. *Adolescence*, 41(161), 55-75.
- Steiner, H. & Carr, M. (2003). Cognitive development in gifted children: Towards a more precise understanding of emerging differences in intelligence. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(3), 215-246.
- Sternberg, R. (1985). *Beyond IQ: A triarchic theory of human intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sternberg, R. (2006). The nature of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18 (1), 87-98.
- Sternberg, R. (Ed.). (2004). *Definitions and conceptions of giftedness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Sternberg, R. & Davidson, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Conceptions of giftedness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sternberg, R., & Zhang, L. (1995). What do we mean by giftedness? A pentagonal implicit theory. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 39 (2), 88-94.
- Stockard, J. (1980). Why sex inequities exist for students. In Stockard, J., Shmuck, P., Kempner, K., Williams, P., Edson, S., & Smith, M. (Eds.). *Sex equity in education*. New York: Academic Press.
- Stocker, M. (1996). *Valuing emotions*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, S. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, S. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Suarez-Orozco, M. (1991). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of ethnic minority children and youths. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 1-39.
- Subotnik, R. & Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (1997). Restructuring special programs to reflect the distinctions between children's and adult's experiences with giftedness. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 73, 101-169.

- Subotnik, R., Kassin, L., Summers, E., & Wasser, A. (1993). *Genius revisited: High IQ children grow up*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Sullivan, A. (1996). From mentor to muse: Recasting the role of women in relationship with urban adolescent girls. In Leadbeater, B. & Way, N. (Eds.). *Urban girls: Resisting stereotypes, creating identities*. (pp. 226-249). New York: New York University Press.
- Swaine, L. (1996). Blameless, constructive, and political anger. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 26, 257-274.
- Swearer, S. & Espelage, D. (2004). Introduction: A social-ecological framework of bullying among youth. In Swearer, S. & Espelage, D. (Eds.). *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Swearer, S., Grills, A., Haye, K. (2004). Internalizing problems in students involved in bullying and victimization: Implications for intervention. In Espelage, D. & Swearer, S. (Eds.). (pp. 63-83). *Bullying in American schools: A Social-Ecological perspective on prevention and intervention*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Swearer, S., Song, S., Cary, P., Eagle, J. & Mickelson, W. (2001). Psychosocial correlates in bullying and victimization: The relationship between depression, anxiety, and bully/victim status. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 2, 95-121.
- Tannenbaum, A. (1981). Pre-Sputnik to Post-Watergate concern about the gifted. In Barbe, W. & Renzulli, J. (Eds.). *Psychology and education of the gifted*. (pp. 20-37). New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc.
- Taylor, A. (2008). A quantitative examination of oppositional identity among African American and Latino middle-school students. In Ogbu, J. (Ed.). *Minority status, oppositional culture, and schooling*. (pp. 481-495). New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, J., Gilligan, C., & Sullivan, A. (1995). *Between voice and silence: Women and girls, race, and relationship*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Terman, L. (1916). *The measurement of intelligence*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Terman, L. (1925). *Genetic studies of genius: Vol. 1. Mental and physical traits of a thousand gifted children*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Terman, L. (1968). *Mental and physical traits of a thousand gifted children* (Vol. I). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Terman, L.M. & Oden, M.H. (1976). *The gifted child grows up: Twenty-five year's follow-up of a superior group* (Vol. IV). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Thoits, P. (1995). Stress, coping, and social support processes: Where are we? What next? [Extra issue]. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 36, 663-668.
- Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Thorne, Y. (1995). Achievement motivation in high achieving Latina women. *Roepers Review*, 18, 44-49.
- Tolman, D. (1991). Adolescent girls, women, and sexuality: Discerning dilemmas of desire. In Gilligan, C., Rogers, A., & Tolman, D. (Eds.). *Women, girls, and psychotherapy: Reframing resistance*. (pp. 55-69). Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Tompkins, M. & Martinez, K. (2010). *My anxious mind: A teen's guide to managing anxiety and panic*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.
- Torres, L. (1992). Women's narratives in a New York Puerto Rican community. In Rakow, L.L., *Women making meaning: New feminist directions in communication*. New York: Routledge.
- Tyack, D. (1974). *The one best system: A history of urban education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ulmer, G. (1989). *Teletheory: Grammatology in the age of video*. New York: Routledge.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2007, October). NAEP 2004 trends in academic progress: Three decades of student performance in reading and mathematics, by Perie, M., Moran, R. & Lutkus, A. (NCES 2005-464). Retrieved from <http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2005/2005464.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2007, October). Trends in educational equity of girls & women: 2004, by Catherine Freeman (NCES 2005-016). Retrieved from <http://www.nces.ed.gov./pubs2005/2005016.pdf>.
- U. S. Peace Corps. (2014, May 22). Peace Corps Poland Presentation to a Third Grade Class.
- Julie Devaud. Peace Corps Brochures & Posters, U. S. Peace Corps, Washington, DC.
- Valli, L. (1986). *Becoming clerical workers*. Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Vareille, K. (1987). Socialite, sexualite et les impasses de l'histoire: L'evolution de la thematique Sandienne d'Indiana (1832) a Mauprat (1837). Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiskell.
- Vasquez-Levy, D. (1993). The use of practical arguments in clarifying and changing practical reasoning and classroom practices: Two cases. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 25 (2), 125-143.
- Vasquez-Nuttall, E. & Romero-Garcia, I. (1987). From home to school: Puerto Rican girls learn to be students in the United States. In Garcia-Coll, C. & Mattei, D.M. (Eds.). *The psychosocial development of Puerto Rican women*. New York: Praeger.
- Von Karolyi, C. & Winner, E. (2005). Extreme giftedness. In Sternberg, R. & Davidson, J.E. (Eds.). *Conceptions of giftedness*. (pp. 377-394). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Von Karolyi, C., Ford-Ramos, V., & Gardner, H. (2003). Giftedness from a Multiple Intelligences perspective. In Colangelo, N. & Davis, G.A. (Eds.), *Handbook of gifted education*. (pp. 100-112). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Vonnegut, K. (1956). Miss Temptation. *Welcome to the monkey house*. New York: Bantam Doubleday.
- Wade-Gayles, G. (1984). The truths of our mother's lives: Mother-daughter relationships in Black women's fiction. *Sage*, 1(2), 8-12.
- Walkerdine, V, Lucey, H. & Melody, J. (2001). *Growing up girl: Psychosocial explorations of gender and class*. New York: New York University Press.
- Walters, K. (1990). Critical thinking, rationalization, and the vulcanization of students. *Journal of Higher Education*, 61 (4), 448-467.
- Ward, J. (1990). Racial identity formation and transformation. In Gilligan, C., Lyons, N., & Hanmer, T. (Eds.). *Making connections*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ward, J. (2002). School rules. In *The Jossey-Bass reader on gender in education*. (pp. 510-542). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Way, N. (1996). Between experiences of betrayal and desire: Close friendships among urban adolescents. In Leadbeater, B & Way, N. (Eds.). *Urban girls: Resisting stereotypes, creating identities* (pp. 173-192). New York: New York University Press.
- Way, N. (1998). *Everyday courage: The lives and stories of urban teenagers*. New York & London: New York University Press.

- Weis, L. (1985). "Excellence" and student class, race, and gender cultures." In Obgu, J. (Ed.). *Minority status, oppositional culture, and schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Wechsler, D. (1950). Cognitive, conative, and non-intellective intelligence. *American Psychologist*, 5(3), 78-83.
- Wender, P. (2000). *ADHD: Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in children, adolescents, and adults*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Whitford, M. (1991). *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the feminine*. London: Routledge.
- Whitmore, J. (1980). *Giftedness, conflict, and underachievement*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Wilkerson, I. (2010). *The warmth of other suns: The epic story of America's Great Migration*. New York: Random House.
- Williams, S. (1986). *Dessa Rose*. New York: William Morrow.
- Willinsky, J. (1996). Girls, women, and giftedness: An introduction. In Ellis, J. & Willinsky, J. (Eds.). *Girls, women, and giftedness*. (pp. 1-12). Unionville, NY: Royal Fireworks Press.
- Winner, E. (2000). The origins and ends of giftedness. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1): 159-169.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1985). *Philosophical Investigations*. New York: Macmillan.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1999). *Ethnography: A way of seeing*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press
- Woo, E. (1989). Personal reflections on the purpose of special education for gifted Asian Americans. In Maker, J. & Shiever, S. (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural ethnic minorities* (Vol. 2), (pp. 174-178). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Woods, P. (1996). *Researching the art of teaching: Ethnography for educational use*. New York: Routledge.
- Woolf, V. (1929/1980). *A room of one's own*. London: Granada Publishing Limited.
- Woolf, V. (1938). *Three guineas*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Yamada, Mitsuye. (1981). "Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism." In Moraga, C. & Anzaldúa, G. (Eds.) *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color*. (pp. 71-75). Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Yancey, K. & Spooner, M. (1994). Concluding the text: Notes toward a theory and the practice of voice. In Young, K. (Ed.). *Voices on voice*. (pp. 298-314). Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Young, M. (1958). *The rise of the meritocracy*. Bucks, England: Penguin Books.

Zeisler, A. & Jervis, L. (2006-07, Winter). *Lilith*, 31 (4), 43.

Zembylas, M. (2005). *Teaching with emotion: A postmodern enactment*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Zembylas, M. (2007). *Five pedagogies, a thousand possibilities*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

APPENDIX A

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

GIFTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND ACHIEVEMENT

What is the purpose of this research?

We are asking your child to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about how gifted adolescent girls perceive their world and what factors contribute to their academic achievement and personal success. Your child is invited to participate in this study because she is a gifted adolescent girl as defined by her enrollment in a school's gifted program. This study is being conducted by Julie Devaud, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain her Doctoral degree in education. This research is being supervised by her faculty advisor, Jeff Kuzmic.

How much time will this take?

This study will take about one hour of your child's time. Should follow-up interviews be necessary, each would be approximately an hour also.

What will my child be asked to do if I allow her to participate in this study?

If you allow your child to be in this study, she will be asked to complete an interview regarding her life. I will use open-ended questions designed to encourage your child to discuss her thoughts. My questions will focus on your child's perceptions of herself, her educational experiences, and her environment. I will record the interview on audiotape and transcribe it later to get an accurate record of what your child said. I may need to contact your child with follow-up questions related to the initial interview for a second interview. I will also ask your child to provide the name and contact information for a mentor or someone she feels supports her in her personal efforts. I would like to interview this person about your child.

What are the risks involved in this study?

Being in this study does not involve any risks other than what your child would encounter in daily life. However, potential risks may be that your child may experience emotional vulnerability that emerges during the interview process. This vulnerability may express itself as tears, anger, silence, or other behaviors that indicate the presence of strong or intolerable feelings. If the interview brings up difficult issues your child does not wish to discuss, your child may stop the interview at anytime or choose not to answer any individual question. . In the event your child expresses significant distress, I will have a list of school-approved counseling resources to which I can direct your child.

What are the benefits of my child's participation in this study?

Your child will not personally benefit from this study. However, we hope that what we learn will help gifted adolescent girls become more successful academically and personally, adding specific information to the research literature around factors that contribute to the success of gifted girls in school and in their own lives.

Can I decide not to allow my child to participate? If so, are there other options?

Yes, you can choose not to allow your child to participate. Even if you allow your child to be in the study now, you can change your mind later, and your child can leave the study. Your child can also decide to say no to being in the study even if you say yes. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to allow your child to participate or change your mind later. Whether or not your child decides to participate, her grades or relationship with the school will not be affected. Parents, please be aware that under the Protection of Pupil Rights Act. 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c) (1) (A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked or the materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Julie Devaud at 773- 274-3142 to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

How will the confidentiality of the research records be protected?

The records of this study will be kept confidential; there will be identifiers only on the transcripts. In any report I might publish, I will not include any information that will identify your child. You are welcome to have a copy of the final dissertation. All data reported will be summary data, meaning subjects are not identifiable and will not be mentioned by name. However, given the small number of people being interviewed, it might be possible to identify an individual student based upon what information is reported. Research records will be stored securely and only the researchers will have access to the records that identify your child by

name. Some people may review our records in order to make sure we are doing what we are supposed to. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board may review your child's information. If they look at our records, they will keep your child's information confidential. I will erase the audiotapes of the interviews after three years.

Whom can I contact for more information?

If you have questions about this study, please contact Julie Devaud at 312-730-2472 or by e-mail at j.devaud@sbcglobal.net. If you have questions about your child's rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Protections at 312-362-7593 or by e-mail at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have all my questions answered. (Check one:)

I permit my child to be in this study. I **DO NOT** permit my child to be in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Student name: _____

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

GIFTED ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND ACHIEVEMENT

What is the purpose of this research?

We are asking your child to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about how gifted adolescent girls perceive their world and what factors contribute to their academic achievement and personal success. Your child is invited to participate in this study because he/she was identified as a mentor or supporting person for a gifted child who is in the research. This study is being conducted by Julie Devaud, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain her Doctoral degree in education. This research is being supervised by her faculty advisor, Jeff Kuzmic.

How much time will this take?

This study will take about one hour of your child's time. Should follow-up interviews be necessary, each would be approximately an hour also.

What will my child be asked to do if I allow her to participate in this study?

If you allow your child to be in this study, he/she will be asked to complete an interview regarding his/her relationship with the research participant, an adolescent girl, and how he/she has influenced her life. I will record the interview on audiotape and transcribe it later to get an accurate record of what your child said. I may need to contact your child with follow-up questions related to the initial interview for a second interview.

What are the risks involved in this study?

Being in this study does not involve any risks other than what your child would encounter in daily life. However, potential risks may be that your child may experience emotional vulnerability that emerges during the interview process. This vulnerability may express itself as tears, anger, silence, or other behaviors that indicate the presence of strong or intolerable feelings. If the interview brings up difficult issues your child does not wish to discuss, your child may stop the interview at anytime or choose not to answer any individual question. I will have a list of school-approved counseling resources to which I can direct your child.

What are the benefits of my child's participation in this study?

Your child will not personally benefit from this study. However, we hope that what we learn will help gifted adolescent girls become more successful academically and personally, adding specific information to the research literature around factors that contribute to the success of gifted girls in school and in their own lives.

Can I decide not to allow my child to participate? If so, are there other options?

Yes, you can choose not to allow your child to participate. Even if you allow your child to be in the study now, you can change your mind later, and your child can leave the study. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to allow your child to participate or change your mind later. Whether or not your child decides to participate, her grades or relationship with the school will not be affected. Parents, please be aware that under the Protection of Pupil Rights Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c) (1) (A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked or the materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Julie Devaud at 773- 274-3142 to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

How will the confidentiality of the research records be protected?

The records of this study will be kept confidential; there will be identifiers only on the transcripts. In any report I might publish, I will not include any information that will identify your child. You are welcome to have a copy of the final dissertation. All data reported will be summary data, meaning subjects are not identifiable and will not be mentioned by name. However, given the small number of people being interviewed, it might be possible to identify an individual student based upon what information is reported. Research records will be stored securely and only the researchers will have access to the records that identify your child by name. Some people may review our records in order to make sure we are doing what we are supposed to. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board may review your

child's information. If they look at our records, they will keep your child's information confidential. I will erase the audiotapes of the interviews after three years.

Whom can I contact for more information?

If you have questions about this study, please contact Julie Devaud at 312-730-2472 or by e-mail at j.devaud@sbcglobal.net. If you have questions about your child's rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Protections at 312-362-7593 or by e-mail at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have all my questions answered. (Check one:)

I permit my child to be in this study. I **DO NOT** permit my child to be in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Student name: _____

APPENDIX B.

Interview Protocol A

Interview Guide for Research Participants

Academic Questions

How do you feel about school overall? Why?

What do you like or dislike about school? Why?

How do you feel the school's environment affects your learning?

How do you feel about your teachers in general?

How do your friends fit into the picture?

What kinds of grades do you get typically?

Do you work hard or do they come easily?

Are you satisfied with how you do in school? Why or why not?

What do you think about being labeled a gifted student?

Are there positive aspects of being labeled a gifted student?

Are there negative aspects of being labeled a gifted student?

How do you think this affects your school experience?

Why do you think you do so well or why do you think you don't do as well as you would like?

Do you feel what you learn is relevant to your life?

Do you think how you do as a student will have any effect on you later in life?

Self Description

How would you describe yourself?

How would your friends describe you?

What do you like/dislike about yourself?

What would you like to change/keep the same about yourself?

Do you think you have changed over the past year? How have you changed or in what ways have not changed?
What has caused the changes?

Role Models

Whom do you look up to? Who is a role model for you? Who would you like to be like? Why?

Which relationships or relationship is particularly important or most important to you right now? Why?

Relationship with Mother

Can you describe for me your relationship with your mother?

How does she support you?

Relationship with Father

Can you describe for me your relationship with your father?

How does he support you?

Relationship with Brothers and Sisters

Can you describe for me your relationship with your brothers and sisters?

Relationship with Best or Close Friends

Is there one person (or more) whom you would consider your closest or best friend? If no, are there reasons why?

Who? How long have you been closest or best friends?

What makes this person your closest friend?

Relationship with Other Support People

Are there other people in your life who have been particularly supportive to you inside or outside of school?

Who?

How has this person been helpful?

View of the Future

When you think of the future, what do you think of? How do you feel when you think about your future?

What do you see happening in your future?

How do you see yourself getting there?

What are your hopes/fears about the future? Why do you hope/fear these things?

Of all the people we have discussed, is there one or two who would help me understand you better? I would interview them to round out my portrait of you.

Concluding Questions

We have now finished the interview. Are there any comments about yourself that you want to add?

Do you have questions for me?

Thank you for participating in this study.

After reading the transcript for the first interview, my second interview questions were customized for each research participant to follow up in specific areas.

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol B

Interview Guide for Supporter

How did you first meet _____?

Why do you think she recommended I interview you?

What is unique about your relationship with _____?

What do you think of her accomplishments?

How do you think she might accomplish more if she chooses?

What role have you played supporting her?

How have you supported her specifically?

Do you think she recognizes your role in her life?

Why?

What is so unique about _____?

My goal is to develop a well-rounded portrait of _____. Is there anything you might add that would help me do this?

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for participating in this study.