Impossible Fictions? Reflexivity as Methodology for Studying Women Teachers' Lives in Development Contexts

Jacqueline E. Kirk

Department of Integrated Studies in Education,
Faculty of Education,
McGill University, Montreal.

August, 2003

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of PhD

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 0-612-98291-2
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 0-612-98291-2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is hard to know where to start in order to acknowledge and thank the many people who have made it possible for me to do all the work that has gone into the thesis. I am indebted to individuals and organizations both near and far who have been interested in my research and have encouraged and supported me in doing it.

I start with the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada, the organization through which my contacts were established with the Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development (AKU-IED) in Karachi. A special thank you to Dr Gordon Macleod, Director of AKU-IED, to Dr Sadrudin Pardhan and Dr Iffat Farah, and to other members of the academic and support staff who made my work in Karachi possible and also pleasurable. I am deeply grateful for the interest shown in my research, the time spent discussing it, and for all the logistical support that was provided too.

I want to thank the women teachers in Karachi who gave their precious time to talk with me, to tell their stories and answer my questions, and also the principals who gave me access to their schools and introductions to their teachers. Meeting with women in their classrooms, their homes, in the staff-rooms of their schools or in my office was one of the most enjoyable elements of the research process, and I am very grateful to the women who were prepared to talk about their lives and their work. There are many other women teachers who committed to completing a written questionnaire. I am sorry that I was not yet able to meet them, but am grateful for the time, effort and thought they put into completing my document. The encouragement, advice, and practical assistance of the questionnaire facilitators are also greatly appreciated.

In Canada, the US and Europe I want to thank a number of different development planners, program managers and academics working on development projects who were interested in this study, gave willingly of their time and insights, either in interviews or in email 'discussions', and provided me with further contacts, ideas and documents to develop my work.

Closer to home, at McGill, my supervisor, Claudia Mitchell has been an inspiration to me, in constant dialogue about the importance of taking women's and girls' lives

seriously, and about how to develop research projects that do so. Either by email or in person in our many meetings at McGill or down at 'HQ', she has guided me through the roller-coaster of a PhD experience. I very much appreciate everything she has done, and all the advice and support she has offered. My other committee members are Anthony Paré, Chair of Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill, Shree Mulay, Director of the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching in Women, and Penny Enslin of the School of Education, University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg. They have made significant and very complementary contributions to my work, for which I am also very grateful. I appreciate the time they have spent reading and commenting on my comprehensive exam papers, my thesis drafts, and the advice they have given as this study has evolved.

And a huge thank you to Stephanie Garrow, my 'sister' PhD student, colleague, friend, and 'partner in crime', with whom I have lived the ups and downs, excitements and anxieties of the research process. Steph and I have shared fieldwork experiences, significant conference moments, hotel rooms and beds, and a constant dialogue about what our research means to us, and to the world. I am so grateful for all the email messages, the cups of tea and the opportunities to work together - and to wonderful Justin Jack for reminding us to also play, knit, bake and write poems together! There are other friends to thank who have listened to my stories, asked the right questions, or given me breaks and not talked thesis when I needed it, and on other occasions understood my unavailability. Monika surtout, je te remercie beaucoup d'avoir traduit mon résumé; je t'en ai une vive reconnaissance!

Finally none of this would be at all possible without Andy's constant support, his confidence in me and his taking in his stride my frequent travels, the hours spent at the computer, and the intimacy of my relationship with my research. I featured as an image in his PhD thesis, but although he isn't quite so visible in mine, his presence is most certainly to be felt.

I also acknowledge the financial support of the Fonds pour la Formation de Chercheurs et l'Aide à la Recherche (FCAR), from whom I received a doctoral fellowship.

ABSTRACT

This thesis interweaves issues of feminist methodology with theories, policies and practices of gender and development, around a central focus on women teachers' lives. It addresses the position of women teachers in relation to theories and practices of gender, education and development. It examines appropriate research methodology for working with, understanding and interpreting the lives of women teachers in Karachi, Pakistan. Drawing on the multiple traditions of feminist narrative inquiry in the field of education, and on the methods and forms emerging in alternative forms of ethnographic practice, the study is a situated one. Lived experiences are foregrounded, and time, place, context made explicit. Interview, discussion group and fieldnote data are collected whilst working with women teachers in Karachi, Pakistan. After an unexpected departure after September 11, 2001, additional questionnaire data are collected from a distance.

The thesis is a study researching women teachers' lives but also a critical reflection on the dominant development practices in which research takes place. As text it constitutes a form of feminist practice in and of itself. It analyzes the lived, and embodied experience of teaching, learning and researching, and rewrites this into the predominantly male-dominated literature and theory of education in development.

In the traditions of feminist inquiry, the study is also oriented towards change for women. Given the stated importance of gender equity, and especially the attention to girls' education of the international development community, the study has important implications for the ways that development planners think about women teachers, and design programs and policies for them. Shifting attention from natural nurturing and caring abilities of women teachers, to subjective issues of relational power dynamics, and to the individual and collective positionings of women's bodies within institutions and organizations, this study places women's lived experience as central to theories of pedagogy, curriculum, educational leadership, and to research in gender, education and development.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse combine des problématiques de méthodologie féministes avec des théories, des politiques et des pratiques de genre et de développement, autour d'un focus central sur la vie d'enseignantes. Elle adresse la position des enseignantes par rapport à des théories et des pratiques de genre, de l'éducation et de développement, et examine des methodologies appropriés pour travailler avec des enseignantes à Karachi, Pakistan, et pour comprendre et pour interpreter leur vie. Cette étude est basée sur les traditions multiples de recherche féministe narrative, dans le domaine de l'éducation, et sur les méthodes et les formes émergentes dans des formes alternatives de pratiques ethnographiques. Il s'agit d'une étude située. Les expériences vécues de la chercheure sont au premier plan, et le temps, l'endroit et le contexte sont explicités. Les données proviennent d'entrevues, de groupes de discussion et de notes prises tout au long du travail sur le terrain lors d'une période de travail avec des enseignantes à Karachi, au Pakistan. Suite à un départ prématuré, non prévu, en raison des événements du 11 septembre 2001, un questionnaire est utilisé pour compléter la collecte de données à distance.

La thèse est une étude du processus de recherche sur la vécu des enseignantes, ainsi qu'un reflexion critique sur les practiques dominant de développement dans lequels un tel recherche a lieu. La thèse est en soi et pour elle-même une forme de pratique féministe qui permet d'analyser l'expérience vécue et incarnée de l'enseignement, de l'apprentissage et de la réécrire dans la littérature et la théorie dans le domaine de l'éducation dans des contextes de développement, qui est à prédominance masculine.

En poursuivant des traditions de recherches féministes, l'étude est également orientée vers le changement pour les femmes. Compte tenu de l'importance déclarée de l'égalité des genres, et particulièrement de l'attention portée, par la communauté internationale intéressée au développement, à l'éducation des filles, l'étude a des implications importantes pour la façon dont les planificateurs et les personnes qui

élaborent les politiques pensent et planifient des programmes et des politiques pour des enseignantes. En déplaçant l'attention des habiletés naturelles des enseignantes, comme des habiletés de maternage et de soins, vers des problématiques subjectives concernant des dynamiques de pouvoirs relationnelles, et vers le positionnement individuel et collectif des corps des femmes à l'intérieur des institutions et des organisations, cette étude place les expériences vécues de femmes au centre des théories pédagogiques, du curriculum, du leadership éducationnel et de la recherche dans les domaines d'études concernant genre, éducation et développement.

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PROLOGUE

Coming back to my office later that morning after a school visit, there was a new email from my Dad saying that they had just heard on the morning news that the British were being advised to leave Pakistan, "Please consider carefully your position there and be very careful." There was an equally panicky message from my sister with the same information; they were all obviously concerned.

I didn't know what to think. I had been feeling more comfortable that day, and thinking that perhaps things were going to be okay. I phoned the British High Commission to find out what was going on.

"Yes, we are now actually advising all non-essential staff to leave."
"Is this just new advice then, as I only just received the unchanged notice from last week?"
"Yes, it is actually. I will send you the new message straight away."
"Oh - and can you tell me, is there any particular reason to change the advice? Has anything in particular happened that I might not be aware of?"
"No, nothing in particular, rather a situation of mounting tension."

I came off the phone with a real knot in my stomach. I was very, very unsure of my being there and very aware that it would now be much more difficult to stay – psychologically, and also to justify staying when so many people were concerned for my safety. Yet at the same time, I felt very sad and confused.

I caught sight of the director returning to the campus and so beckoned to him, and ran across to tell him the latest news. He knew already, and in fact he was returning from a security meeting with the advice to me and to other foreign staff to leave now as soon as possible. I really wanted to cry at this point, my chin was wobbling, and my voice cracking, and it was obvious that the decision was really made for me. There was no way that I would go against this advice, nor hold out and worry everyone. I also knew that with all this concern for my safety I would be much more worried myself and so unable to concentrate. Instead I went across to the administration building to start making the necessary transport arrangements to leave – and as soon as possible too. It was now important to try to leave before Friday's planned general strike and the anticipated civil unrest.

Back at the Guest House that evening I tried to sort out my papers, go through what I needed to return, and what I would take, but I also spent time writing up notes from the visit to the school, knowing that it would be so difficult to recall in as much detail once I had left the environment. I needed something quite concrete and procedural to do, like descriptive notes; nothing too analytical at that stage. I was insisting to myself that I would be coming back, and purposely made up a box of things to leave behind.

The following morning (Thursday) on campus was very odd; even on the journey into the city I was conscious of my trying to scour faces and attitudes for increased hostility towards foreigners, for increased tension, unrest and uncertainty - for reasons to leave. Once on campus, it was a very strange time of trying to tie up ends, say good-bye to people, but ensuring that things were left open enough for me to return and pick up where I left off. I was saving all my documents from the computer on floppy discs, deleting my files, but having them saved on the server as back-up. I was keeping my email address open, but getting an automatic forward to McGill, returning all my library books, but keeping my ticket, saying goodbye, but insisting that I would be back to pick up where I had left off, and that in the meantime we could keep in touch by email.

Whereas earlier in the week I hadn't had the impression that the political situation was dominating people's thoughts and conversations, by Thursday it appeared that it was difficult to think about anything else. People were planning to stay home during Friday's general strike, documents were being organized to take home to work on, and I think various events and activities were being put on hold.

At tea-break I went across to the 'Social Area' as I wanted to say goodbye to the different people I had come to know. But it was not at all easy, as I knew that they too were feeling very uncertain, very unsure about being in Karachi, and about their families in other countries and in other parts of Pakistan. I was keen to say that I would be thinking of them, that although I understood that as a foreigner I was particularly at risk, I was going with a very heavy heart, and much sympathy for those staying, for those also separated from family. Most importantly, I wanted to make it clear that I would be back.

"Oh, when?"
"Well, it's difficult to know as I have to see what happens to the situation here, I suppose, and also just get home and take stock of what I have done, what I need to do for my study."
"But you leaving makes us feel even more worried – that we have to stay and suffer whatever happens."

One of my participants with whom I had become quite close seemed particularly sad; it didn't really seem the time for gifts, but I had wanted to give her a game for her children. Later on, she sat with me at the entrance, waiting for ages for the driver to arrive to collect me. I was uncomfortable, with little really to say except that I was sorry to be leaving that I'd be coming back, but she seemed happy just to sit and wait. More than anything, I think she was worried about her husband and family in the North, and was waiting to make her telephone call home.

SITUATING THE STUDY

Any girl who had been through the Colpetty Mission School knew that the students divided their teachers into two groups – the confirmed hags and the potential hags. The confirmed hags were women who were well past the marriageable age and to whom ordinary life offered only a bleak spinsterhood on a meager teacher's salary. The potential hags were former students whom Miss Lawton invited back to teach in the junior classes until such time as they found husbands. The more of a confirmed hag a teacher became, the more ridiculed and despised she was. The distinction between the two groups was, thus, strictly and rigorously maintained.

Margery De Sousa, the leader of the potential hags, was standing at the window of the staff room when Annalukshmi came sailing in through the gate on her bicycle into the midst of the students who were gathered in the courtyard.

"My heavens!" She said, raising her eyebrows in astonishment.

The other teachers were chatting with each other around the long staff table in the center of the room. They looked up at her.

"You must absolutely must come and see this," she said.

They all came to the window.

Annalukshmi had now got off her bicycle and was surrounded by the students, most of whom were expressing their admiration, a few pleading to be allowed to do a turn on the bicycle.

"What utter lunacy," Ursula Goonberatne, the leader of the confirmed hags, said. "That Kandiah girl, sometimes I think her brains must be in her backside."
The confirmed hags nodded in agreement.

From *Cinnamon gardens*, by Shyam Selvadurai (1999, pp.18-19).

1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY

Introduction

Selvadurai's description of the Colpetty Mission School staff room provides a glimpse into a women teacher's world in a development context[1] that outsiders are rarely privileged enough to share. The teachers at the school are living and breathing women, and as the story unfolds, readers see the relationships amongst them, between them and their students, and between them and the school principal, Miss Lawton. I am drawn into the story of Annalukshmi's life; she is written as a multi-dimensional woman who falls in and out of love, who has a strained relationship with her mother and sisters, and who negotiates complicated relationships with her colleagues. She is a kindred spirit, perhaps! Her life is lived in school, but also with her family at home, in the meetings of the Women's Franchise Union, and on outings with her friends. As a teacher and a woman she is embedded in the context of where she is living, when she is living, what she is doing, and how she is feeling. The clothes she wears to school are important to how she feels, and they are also important to how others perceive her.

As introduction to a study of women teachers in development contexts, the excerpt from *Cinnamon gardens* is particularly significant. Echoes of what is happening in the staff room in colonial Ceylon are to be found in this contemporary study. Selvadurai's presentation and interrogation of the social, political and economic dynamics of the society in which the school is situated are in tune with my own approach to investigating issues of education, gender and development. At the same time, a critical reading of Selvadurai's story of Annalukshmi's life also raises some very pertinent methodological questions about the possibilities and impossibilities of writing and reading stories about women teachers' lives in development contexts. I purposely set it against my own study of research with women teachers, and against the impossibilities for me to present such an evocative portrayal of women teachers' lives in Pakistan.

[1] I use the term 'development context' to refer to particular locations in countries, regions and communities of the South, the developing, majority or Third World.

Like Selvadurai's story of teaching in colonial Ceylon, my account of studying the lives of women teaching in Pakistan is highly contextualized. Lived experience can be fragmentary, and at times contradictory, but in neither can it easily be divided into neat parcels of in-school and out-of-school teacher identities. However, Selvadurai, an openly gay male writer, of Sri Lankan origin but now living in Canada, does not explicitly locate himself within his fiction. My knowledge of him and of how he went about creating his story comes from attending a literary event when he talked about himself, his background, and the process of writing the novel. Although I am an outsider to the culture, this study, as contrast to the novel, is one in which I am a "situated" researcher, working inside the social and educational phenomena I am investigating (Middleton, 1995). I, and the women in it, am a real and embodied woman. As a novelist Selvadurai can be a disembodied writer/narrator - an absent presence- in the story, but feminist research methodology demands a more conscious self-situating of the author/narrator. It demands an explicit grappling with questions such as: Who can write about women teachers' lives in development contexts? How do they know what they assert to know? How do they interpret and present that knowledge to others?

I use reflexivity to interrogate not only the content of the data collected for the study, but also the methods, contexts and the relationship dynamics of collection. The processes of interpretation and presentation are also equally reflexive. My experiences as a woman teacher and my current professional engagement as a consultant and researcher in the field of education in development[2] give me particular perspectives on women teachers' lives in development contexts. It is impossible for me to put these aside to take up one singular and simple researcher identity. Reflection on multiple identities, and on the shifting power dynamics that they create, is an integral element of the research. The limitations of the researcher self/ves are made as evident as the possibilities they create. Also addressed are the challenges of representing the "other",

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[2] I use 'education in development' to refer to processes and structures of education in development contexts. These are often supported by multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors, international development agencies, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations.

of speaking for other women, and the risks of an over-emphasis on the researcher self, or what Van Maanen (1988) terms "vanity ethnography".

Focus of the Study

This study revolves around two major, related questions: a) Where are women teachers in development contexts located in relation to theories of women teachers' lives and of gender and development? and b) How do we find out more about their lives, interpret and represent what we find? I interweave issues of feminist methodology with theories, policies and practices of gender and development, all around a central focus on women teachers' lives. I am interested in exploring how understandings of the lives of women teachers in the West can be used in relation to women teachers' lives in development contexts. Also important is looking at how what is learned from the lives of women teachers in development contexts can be relevant to working with other women teachers. I see the need to situate work on and with women teachers in development contexts, not only with the literature and current practice of education in development, but also in relation to that of gender and development. I have to respond to my own question, 'Are women teachers women in development?' In doing so, I consider the relationships between women teachers and other women in development contexts, and between policy and programming approaches and activities for both.

The second research question relates to my interest in methodology, and to the importance for feminist research of the processes of researching and interpreting women's lives. I come to this research with my own experiences as a woman teacher, and I need to work with this, and to use this experience as a resource for understanding the lives of other women. I am very aware that most development related research is rarely self-situated and explicitly subjective, but I seek to develop a methodology for a "project of someone: a real person, who in the context of particular individual, social and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of human existence" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 31). Researching and writing as a real person is important, yet even more so is being a gendered person – a woman. Within current policy and programming parameters of education in development, the female body is

rarely addressed in terms of social and political participation (Harcourt & Mumtaz, 2002); it is more likely to be addressed as a problem to be solved. It is therefore of interest to me to explore the possibilities for alternative understandings of the female bodies of the teacher and of the researcher in development contexts.

I use the title, *Impossible fictions? Reflexivity as methodology for studying women teachers' lives in development contexts,* for several reasons. Emphasis on the 'studying' of women teachers' lives, rather than the content of them, reflects the importance of methodology and process within this study. It highlights the creative tension between impossibility and possibility, not only in what is learned, but in how that learning process takes place, and how the findings are presented. Feminist scholars have written at length about the challenges of ethical and meaningful research with women. For Oakley (1981), interviewing women is a "contradiction in terms," and working with women teachers in development contexts, I am aware of complex ethical, conceptual and power dynamics in operation. Being in Pakistan on September 11th 2001, and having to leave my fieldsite in Karachi much earlier than anticipated, draws my attention to the apparent impossible fiction of doing ethical research in an unethical world (Patai, 1991).

In using this title I am also making reference to what Walkerdine (1990) describes as the impossible fiction of the woman teacher; that is the inherent paradox in a name which signifies both power and powerlessness. I suggest the impossibility of studying women teacher's lives in development contexts, yet I develop a theoretical framework for doing so. The question mark in the title, then, enables me to propose possibilities, and to create spaces in which stories of women teaching may be ethically and meaningfully constructed. Using the term fiction signals the storied, narrative nature of my approach, but also draws attention to the need to question the veracity of the account and to probe the details of its construction. Who writes the story? Why? Is this the only way it could be written? The writing of the thesis text, as process as well as product, is a significant element of the study.

In creating a framework for situating the lives of women teachers in development, and articulating an appropriate feminist reflexive methodology for researching lived experience, I hope to inform development policy and planning. My research approach does not aim to solve particular problems, to produce certain results or to identify specific strategies. However, it does aim to produce what Van Manen (1990) calls "action sensitive knowledge" (p. 21). For me, that is knowledge that relates to, and has implications for development activity, programming and policy. With this imperative in mind, the study is situated in relation to the international Education for All (EFA) targets (World Education Forum/UNESCO, 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of gender equality in education[3] (United Nations, 2000).

My Orientation to the Study

The feminist research paradigm in which I work connects important dimensions of my lived experience of being a woman, a teacher, and a researcher, with a desire to make a difference for other women through my academic work. Although there are numerous empirical studies of living and working conditions for women teachers in different countries, and published work around classroom practice and performance, there is very little conceptual and methodological work. By this I mean that there is little attention to women teachers' experiences as lived and articulated by themselves, or to their multiple sociopolitical roles. I believe that development practice becomes more complex, but also more realistic, more sustainable, and ultimately, one might hope, more empowering to women teachers, if we can account for the interconnectedness of the personal, the professional and the political in our thinking and in our interventions. To do so in the context of this study has meant connecting concepts, and suggesting possibilities, where they have not previously been articulated. I try to make conceptual links between complementary areas of literature, theory and practice that are rarely explicitly connected in development contexts.

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[3] EFA target 5: "Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015..."
MDG 3: "Promote gender equality and empower women: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015".

I have been challenged not only to investigate more critically my own assumptions, perspectives and desires, but also to draw from scholarship in a number of fields. I have drawn on feminist theories of education and pedagogy, critical theories of gender and development, and concepts and applications with disciplinary homes in anthropology and ethnography. I locate my research activities, perceptions and interpretations within a broader questioning of what is known about women teachers in development contexts and how this is known. Although the partiality and subjectivity of the study are of its essence, and no attempt is made to provide generalizable conclusions, this study does have implications for teacher policy, teacher education and teacher support, and for further research in education in development. These points are discussed in the final chapter.

The study is focused on the lives of Pakistani women teachers, yet addresses issues beyond individual women's lives. I work with the data from interviews, interactions and questionnaires with women teachers, but also with fieldnote data. I reflect on the essence of conceptualizing and conducting research with women teachers in development contexts. The thesis does not attempt to fully describe an existing situation for women teaching in Karachi, rather, in the words of Van Manen (1990), to mediate "in a personal way the antimony of particularity (being interested in concreteness, difference and what is unique) and universality (being interested in the essential, in difference that makes a difference)" (p. 23). In looking at issues for women teachers in development contexts from my own explicitly subjective point of view, I am very conscious that I may be seen to constitute 'women teachers' in ways which homogenize and essentialize their diverse and multiple experiences. I tread a very fine line between cross-referencing and comparing my own experiences with those of others and making assumptions for them. I tread a very fine line between writing about my self – a subject which may appear to have very little importance in the larger scheme of things - and writing about critical, global issues such as gender equality and Education For All. These fine lines themselves, and the trickiness of finding them and keeping to them, are integral to the negotiation of the impossibilities *and* the possibilities of this study.

Women Teachers in Development Contexts

In the section which follows I situate this study in relation to current theory, policy and practice relating to teachers in development contexts. I then continue with a more detailed discussion of the particular conditions and issues for women teachers, leading into a specific section on women teaching in Pakistan. It is important to situate the study in relation to dominant development discourses, yet at the same time, to challenge their hegemony. I work with an understanding of development policy and performance as messy, ambiguous and lacking "a definitive formulation, clear stopping rules, and an enumerable (or exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions" (Gasper & Apthorpe, 1996, p. 6). As Heward and Bunwaree (1999) write:

> The notion of a continuum of assumptions underlying their gender, education and development discourses, from the liberal economic of the World Bank to human rights at UNICEF is too simplistic in the web of interrelations of discourses, agencies and practices among multilateral, bi-lateral and non-governmental organizations through which aid projects are actually being delivered in the 1990's. (p. 4)

Robinson-Pant (2001) sees many overlapping discourses, rather than one singular 'Development Discourse', and Crewe and Harrison (1999) also challenge a metaphor of cohesive machinery used to describe development in isolation from the contexts in which initiatives are created and implemented. As they write, "Education, literature and the media, for example, undoubtedly play a part in rebuilding ideas that retain currency in development. Development also consists of much more than mere projects" (p. 192). This study aims to look at the relationships between development processes and women's lives, and in particular at some of the relationships between educational development and women teachers' lives. Women teachers' lives are themselves constituted through social forces such as education, literature, the media, as through different institutions such as the family, school and state.

With an overarching imperative to achieve quality basic education for all by 2015, there is a broad consensus from the international community that the teacher is a key actor in educational improvement (IDRC, 1981; Rust & Dalin, 1990; Lockheed &

Verspoor, 1991; Higginson, 1996; OECD/ UNESCO-UIS, 2001). There is acknowledgement that teachers need to be active participants in educational change processes. As the 'Expanded Commentary' of the Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum/UNESCO, 2000) states:

> Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active partnership and ownership of teachers. Teachers at all levels of the education system should be respected and adequately remunerated; have access to training and on-going support, including through open and distance learning; and be able to participate, locally and nationally, in decisions affecting their professional lives and teaching environments. (p. 20)

In 1996, UNESCO organized an international conference on the theme, "Strengthening the Role of Teachers in a Changing World: Issues, Prospects and Priorities", and continues to conduct regular teacher-focused studies, such as *Teachers for tomorrow's schools* (OECD/UNESCO, 2001). Education International, an international umbrella organization of teacher unions and organizations, is also particularly attentive to the changing roles of teachers in society (2000). Teacher education is now seen as a priority in a global effort to improve not only educational access but also quality. Different international studies identify effective, efficient mechanisms for its delivery (for example, Avalos, 1991; Lynch, Modgil & Modgil, 1997; Navarro & Verdisco, 2000; Thomas et al., 1993). According to a World Bank study (Craig, Kraft & Du Plessis, 1998), teacher education programs have, in a number of different countries and contexts, been shown to make a noticeable difference to student achievement. The difference made, however, is very much dependent on the type of teacher education program and support mechanisms implemented. The study highlights the importance of teachers' involvement in change processes, of ongoing professional support, and of flexible and creative teacher development programs to meet the specific needs of each community.

Despite such apparent attention to teachers and to the quality of teacher education, in issues of policy and education reform, teachers are rarely consulted (Villegas-Reimers

& Reimers, 1996). Teacher education programs are predominantly top-down, with little teacher or teacher educator involvement in program design and development (Dyer, 1996; Dyer, Choksi et al., 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). A recent study by Education International (E.I.) highlights the lack of teacher involvement in Education For All (EFA) assessment and national strategy development, and particularly the exclusion of teacher unions from policy consultations and negotiations (E.I., 2003). According to a Voluntary Services Overseas (V.S.O.) study, this lack of participation and apparent disinterest in teachers' opinions is a major factor in the "fragile" and "wavering" levels of teacher morale and motivation in development contexts (V.S.O. 2002).

As Makkawi writes, "When social scientists discuss the concept of teachers' role they often limit their scope of analysis to the roles performed by teachers in the classroom or within the school as an organization" (2002, p.1). In the language of program reports and of agency policies, too, teachers tend to be narrowly defined in terms of their pedagogical roles, with little attention to the lived realities of their multiple experiences. Few ministries of education, or large development agencies, have systemic ways for senior policy-makers to learn about what is happening at the school level. There are also few opportunities for classroom teachers, many of whom are women, to inform these policy-makers about their experiences (Van Belle Prouty, 2002). O'Sullivan (2002), for example, reports on the education reform process in Namibia in which policy-makers failed to take into account the classroom realities of teachers. The demands being made on teachers were far beyond their capacities, and so the reform initiatives were not successfully implemented. Whilst there may be considerable interest in looking broadly and deeply at teachers' lives and their lived experiences of teaching in western contexts, research in education in developing country contexts tends to focus more on the material conditions of teaching (for example, Dove, 1986, 1995; Makau & Coombe, 1994; Tibi, 1990), and on specific interventions, practices, and programs, particularly of teacher education (for example, Croft, 2000; Gaynor, 1997; Kunje & Stuart, 1999; Lacey, Jacklin & Leste, 1999). Furthermore, in uncontextualized documentation, as is often seen in international

agency and in national education policy, gender neutrality frequently conceals the particular experiences that women have of teaching. For women teachers, the working conditions and the heavy and sometimes conflicting expectations of school, home and community can be especially challenging.

Gender issues for teachers do receive some attention, but primarily in relationship to either access for women to teacher education programs, or to teacher (male and female) involvement in specific gender sensitization programs. Both of these are seen as effective means to encourage girls into school and ensure more appropriate, quality learning experiences for them. In the research and programming literature on girls' education, there is often attention to finding solutions to the constraints women may face in accessing training and upgrading opportunities, in order to ensure there are more women teachers in schools to attract and support girls. Only a small number of published studies and articles focus specifically on women teachers (see, for example, Crawford Cousins & Maart, 1994; Gaynor, 1997; Jayaweera, 1991; Khalid, 1996; Maguire Teas, 1992; Morris, 1999; National Education Council, Pakistan, 1988; Sales, 1999; Sardenberg, 2000; Schulz, 1994, 1998; Stacki & Pigozzi, 1995; Stacki, 1998, 2002; UNESCO 2000). Despite efforts from some organizations such as UNICEF to broaden the discussions and understandings of gender, education and development, Heward (1999) characterizes the 1990's as a time of preoccupation with the "single narrowly conceived issue of closing so-called gender gaps in enrollments in regions where birth rates are high, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia" (p. 4).

Despite education policy rhetoric of the teacher at the heart of education, of gender equity and equality, and democratization, the voices of women teachers are noticeably absent. There is little explicit attention to issues of gender as lived by teachers, to teacher empowerment, and the rights of women who teach. Scholars such as Stromquist (1994) and Tatto (1997) call for further in-depth research into the experiences teachers have of professional development and other education programs in order to develop more meaningful and effective responses to teacher needs. In particular, we have limited understanding of the lived experiences of women in classrooms and schools. Within the EFA targets and the Millennium Development

Goals, for example, attention remains focused on the girl child. Women teachers are considered primarily in an instrumental role in facilitating girls' education. Policy and programming initiatives tend not to address the gendered nature of the ideologies, programs and processes of education in development initiatives. For example, we know very little about how women teachers experience gender roles and relations in their schools, families and communities. Studies have looked at different factors affecting girls' participation in education (Bendera, 1999; Brock & Cammish, 1998; Colclough, Rose & Tembon, 2000; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995, for example) but there is little attention to the particular lived experiences of women teachers working with girl students in schools. The well-established and growing literature of gender and development may be more attentive to women's multiple roles and relations, the institutions and organizations with which they are involved (Kabeer, 1994b; Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989, 1993, for example), and to the multi-faceted nature of gender-based oppression, marginalization and discrimination. However, women teachers receive little specific attention. Gender equality in education is certainly an important policy issue in Pakistan at the moment, yet comparatively little attention has so far been given to the experiences and perceptions of women teachers.

Women Teaching in Pakistan

There is considerable activity at international, national and local levels to implement educational change in Pakistan, and to provide quality and relevant education to all, with special attention to girls. In a country of approximately 140 million people, it is estimated that over two thirds are uneducated or under-educated. On a national level, the net primary enrollment rate for boys is 71% and for girls 62%, with drop out rates of 56% and 46% for boys and girls respectively (HDSA, 2000). Adult literacy across the population is 57.4% for men and 27.9% for women (UNESCO, 2002). However, large differences of region, location, class and gender mean that in some remote areas, female literacy may be as low as 5%. The average number of years of schooling for females in Pakistan is only 0.7 years, compared to 2.9 years for males, and again there are large regional differences (HDSA, 2000).

Although improvements in school enrollments have been made, and more school places made available, a high birth rate means that percentage figures remain desperately low. Heward (1999) writes of the "glacial speed of progress" (p. 203), and in fact in some regions net enrollments in school declined in the 1980's and 1990's (Ercelawn, Mahmood & Nadvi, 1994). Of existing schools, approximately two-thirds lack basic facilities such as running water, electricity and bathrooms. Other resources, such as textbooks and teaching materials, are scarce. The low salaries and low social status of teachers, particularly at the primary level, make it a relatively unattractive career choice (Warwick & Reimers, 1995). Especially in urban areas, middle-class children and motivated teachers are often attracted to private, English-medium schools. The gap between these relatively privileged schools, and the under-resourced, dilapidated government schools with their inappropriate curricula, poorly trained teachers, and a high drop-out rate of already disadvantaged children, is widening (Heward, 1999). Another problem is the apparent political rather than professional appointment of government teachers, with postings being assigned according to partisan affiliations rather than qualifications. This situation means that teachers often have little motivation to attend school, and are frequently missing from the classroom. Their lack of qualifications also means that when they are present, they are unable to teach effectively. Teacher absenteeism, especially in rural areas, is an important issue to address. Teachers may appear only occasionally in school to register their attendance for official purposes (Heward, 1999).

Overall, 87% of Pakistan's teachers in the state sector are qualified, but these are most likely concentrated in urban and semi-urban areas (HDSA, 2000). It is also important to recognize that teacher training is, on the whole, "relatively ineffective" (UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCO PROAP), 2000, p. 20), leaving qualified teachers with limited understandings of both subject content and pedagogical skills. With an over-emphasis on theory, there is little time for discussion of the very real challenges of the classroom, and little distinction is made between the needs of different schools and students. The primary teacher education curriculum "suffers from a lack of contextual relevance" (UNESCO PROAP, 2000, p. 20).

Teachers often spend several years teaching before they receive formal training, and in fact there is little evidence to show that students of trained teachers perform any better than those of untrained teachers (O'Gara, Benoliel, Sutton & Tietjen, 1999). This is not surprising given the fact that teacher educators in elementary teacher training colleges are often transferred there just before retirement, meaning they may have little interest in the training process. Educational administrators, on the other hand, may be more actively engaged in examining the work of trainees, but generally have little experience of teaching themselves (UNESCO PROAP, 2000). Outside of the major cities, professional development opportunities for teachers are rare, and often of poor quality (Warwick & Reimers, 1995).

Pakistan does receive a considerable amount of overseas development aid, and international agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), USAID, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as ActionAid and others, are active in the education sector. International financial institutions such as the Work Bank and the Asian Development Bank are also supporting education programs. However, debt-servicing payments and financial constraints imposed through International Monetary Fund and World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies (18 % of government revenue in 1999 (UNESCO, 2002)) have left the government unable to fulfill its own commitments to education spending. The Government of Pakistan spends approximately 3.5 % of the Gross National Product on education, one of the lowest percentages in the world. Increases in allocations to education remain much less than those to defense expenditure and to debt-servicing (UNICEF, 1998). Furthermore, the government gives a low priority to primary education, as compared to secondary and tertiary education (Heward, 1999).

Despite international support for educational development in Pakistan, it is significant that in policy processes, teachers, and in particular, women teachers, are rarely present. At the primary level, women teachers currently make up about 35% of the public school teaching force (UNESCO, 2002), concentrated, for the most part, teaching in urban and less remote areas. However, as Jamil (1999) writes, "In spite of the

feminization of the education profession, many critical voices are being silenced on account of their gender" (p. 43). Increased numbers of female primary school teachers in Pakistan does not necessarily mean more female educational managers, directors or field officers. Neither does it necessarily lead to interesting career development possibilities for women or to more women-centred policy development. According to HDSA (2000), women represent only 4.3% of Pakistan's administrators and managers, and although the barriers to women in education may be somewhat easier to negotiate than in other professions, women are nonetheless under-represented at policy-making levels in the sector. This is the case from the highest levels of government education structure to grass-roots village education committees (USAID, 1999). Educational management and planning is complicated by dual systems for boys' and girls' education, although moves towards a more integrated approach through a single Department for Primary Education are underway. However, changes to 'genderless' (i.e. mixed) schools in North-West Frontier Province cause concern for women educators. They fear that the quality of girls' education will be compromised, and they will be more vulnerable to sexual harassment and gender inequity (O'Gara et al., 1999)

The Social Action Program (Government of Pakistan, 1994) was initiated in 1994 by the Government of Pakistan in order to improve the government's performance in basic social services such as primary education, health, family planning and rural water and sanitation supply. It is supported by numerous overseas aid agencies, including USAID and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands. Objectives for improving services and conditions for women and girls are an important part of the whole program, but are most explicit in the education section of the program (Brouwers & Zafar, 1999). The Social Action Program mandates coordination between the education sector and provincial and national Women in Development (WID) structures (Women Development and Population Welfare Departments, and WID cells located in the Planning, Environment and Development Department at provincial level, and the federal Ministry for Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education), but such coordination is difficult. There is therefore limited application of in-depth gender analysis of any Social Action Programs (Brouwers & Zafar, 1999). A

stated major priority is improved access to quality education for girls, especially in rural and remote areas, where the lack of women teachers is considered a "critical barrier" (Jaffer & Jaffer, 1997, quoted Heward, 1999, p. 213). This is due to the separate schooling for boys and for girls, to parental preference for women teachers, and in fact to their reluctance to send their daughters to classes with male teachers. This is especially the case in conservative areas where restrictions on contact between males and females (girl students and male teachers, for example) are particularly strict.[4] A study has shown the positive impact of women teachers on girls' (and boys') achievement (National Survey Results, MSU, Islamabad, 1995, quoted UNESCO PROAP, 2000, p. 7). There are also reports that female teachers are more reliable, absent less often, and less likely to use corporal punishment or sexually abuse students (USAID, 1999). As in other contexts, women are thought to be more sympathetic and supportive of girls, as well as positive role models to them. The National Education Policy of 1992 (Government of Pakistan (GOP), 1992), the Social Action Programme of 1994 (GOP, 1994) and the more recent National Education Policy of 1998-2010 (GOP, 1998) have all emphasized the need for increased recruitment of women teachers.

In many rural communities, however, there are simply no educated women to become teachers, and there are multiple obstacles to other women living and working in villages away from their home, family and/or husband. Traveling long distances alone is both culturally unacceptable and unsafe for women, and commuting is difficult. It is also costly, as rural teachers generally do not receive a travel allowance. It is also common for women to be teased and harassed by influential men in the villages where they teach, or where they pass through (UNESCO PROAP, 2000). Some communities provide accommodation for women teachers in safe family compounds, but where this is not the case, women can live in social isolation, and can be under pressure from local men to marry. With such conditions, and with limited promotion prospects in rural areas, women given such difficult postings are frequently absent (USAID, 1999).

[4] However, small numbers of girls have been found attending boys' schools with male teachers, and in some communities, older men, who are no longer considered a threat to girls, are allowed to teach in girls' schools (O' Gara et al., 1999).

Committed local women without the necessary formal qualifications may at times be hired as teachers, but they are very much in need of intensive teacher training in both content knowledge and teaching methodologies (Working Group for Women, Aga Khan University, 1999). They will most likely also have to struggle to find the time and energy to complete both domestic and school duties (Heward, 1999).

As Farah and Bacchus (1999) describe, in Pakistani society, traditional perceptions of women are connected to her role within the family and within the home. Women's lives remain structured by men and around men's priorities. Given that the woman is a symbol of family, and therefore of men's honour, men attach great importance to her modesty, often restricting her mobility and limiting her access to education and other resources. Honor killings of women occur with alarming frequency, and domestic violence against women is widespread, including practices of stove-burning, kidnapping and gang rape (Niaz-Anwar, 1997; Pakistani Women's Action Forum, 1995). Although gender-based violence is rarely discussed in the context of educational development in Pakistan, Warwick and Reimers (1995) write that for female teachers, the very real risk of kidnap, robbery and rape in remote, rural locations makes such postings understandably unappealing. There is clearly a great need for women teachers in rural areas of Pakistan in order to provide education for out-of-school girls. However, a contradictory social context prevails in which notions of family honor, and male and female segregation mean that women's movement and active participation in development initiatives is often restricted. As Aftab (1999) writes, "The male-centric controlling hand, dictating masculine theories of research and learning, remains the major scourge of the women's agenda today" (p. 38). This controlling hand may be supported by numerous factors, with overtly masculine forces of politics, religion, the military, feudalism, colonialism and so-called "tradition", creating and perpetuating inequity, oppression and subordination for women on different levels, and in different situations.

When women's lives are largely determined by dominant patriarchal structures of family, community and state, creating a situation in which women teachers can operate as real change agents for gender equality will require considerable time, effort, and

attention. However, such issues are rarely addressed in the context of formal sector teacher education programming. Gender issues for teachers are addressed primarily in terms of either access for women to teacher education, or of teacher involvement in girls' education programs and activities (UNESCO PROAP, 2000). These are both seen as effective means to encourage girls into school and ensure more appropriate, quality learning experiences for them (Shaheed & Mumtaz, 1995). Pakistani education policy and practice in general, and its lived realities for women and girls, is rarely subjected to critical gender analysis. Issues such as the lack of healthcare and sanitation facilities for women tend to be left unaddressed in the teacher education context. The limitation of women into 'natural' roles and their exclusion from resources and from decision-making processes at all levels are equally unmentioned (Ibraz & Fatima, 1993). The embodied, lived experience of pedagogy is unexplored, as are the specificities of female professional knowledge. The gendered power and relational dynamics within schools and education systems in themselves receive little explicit attention. In fact, they may be treated as givens, and, as reported by USAID (1999), circumvented by development initiatives, rather than truly challenged. This evaluation study gives the example of cars and drivers being provided for female teachers to make their commute to school possible, whilst avoiding addressing "the harassment, intimidation and community rejection which underlie the inadequate supply of rural female teachers" (p. 23).

Because of their importance in facilitating girls' education, women teachers are the focus of a number of donor-supported programs (for example, the UNICEF-supported Mobile women teacher training programme in Pakistan (UNESCO PROAP, 2000)). However, initiatives to recruit and deploy more women take place in a context in which education has largely been developed by and for men. Schools and the education system as a whole remain very androcentric, and are slow to respond to changing gender roles and ideologies. Some of the women-specific incentive measures mentioned in government policy documentation remain unimplemented, and others, such as the provision of in-service teacher training, remain for the most part incompatible with women teachers' family and community commitments (Brouwers &

Zafar, 1999). Women, already disadvantaged in many aspects of their familial and social experience, and marginalized from active participation in public decision-making processes, may experience gender-intensified disadvantage (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 2000) as professionals in the education sector. Moreover, the androcentric norms of teaching and learning processes and procedures may be quite alien to women's own ways of knowing and doing. Professional development opportunities may clash with their own family commitments, and more active participation in education decision-making may be difficult to reconcile with family and social expectations. When women do re-enter the education system as teachers, there are many obstacles to their success. These obstacles are not only cognitive, but also affective, and many women drop out in the end (Halai, 1999). According to Halai, factors include insubstantial subject knowledge (women teachers are reported to have scored below men in teacher capability tests in mathematics and general studies (UNESCO PROAP, 2000)), and also the heavy pressure from family commitments. Others barriers to women include the inability to understand and work the system, a lack of realistic self-appraisal skills and knowledge, and a low self-concept.

Teaching has long been considered an appropriate career for upper and middle class urban women, but such women teachers, teaching in privileged schools are likely to have at least some protection from extreme discrimination, subordination, and certainly from poverty. However, as more women teachers are recruited, especially in rural areas, and less-well educated women from outside of the middle and upper classes are brought into the profession, it becomes especially important to consider the different and diverse dimensions of their lived experience of teaching. The rate of increase of women teachers in Pakistan has been slower than in other South Asian counties, but has increased from 98, 000 in 1990/91 to 116,000 in 1997/8 (UNESCO statistics, reported in UNESCO, 2000, p. 8). Unlike India, Nepal and Bangladesh, where over the same period the proportion of women teachers increased, in Pakistan, increases in the number of male teachers has meant that the overall percentage share of women has remained static. Also to consider, however, are the many unregulated

private schools in which there may be many more uncounted women, especially in urban areas, who are teaching for at least part of their day.

Despite the many challenges, in recent years significant progress has been made for many Pakistani women. With increasing levels of literacy and education, larger numbers are working outside of the home, taking up higher education and then higher status positions. Distance education especially opens up new possibilities for women to further their education without the need to travel (HDSA, 2000). However, such progress remains largely class-based, and very dependant on location; for many women, access to resources, opportunities and decision-making positions remains very limited. Women's representation in the formal workforce is still very low (only 13 %) and most women spend long hours on unpaid, household chores (USAID, 1999). In Pakistan, as elsewhere in the world, women's groups, NGOs and other grassroots organizations are seen as holding much hope for the future, working in many different ways to empower women, and to promote women's rights. There are a number of inspiring female-led, non-formal educational initiatives happening which should not be overlooked. Within the Home Teachers Association, for example, there are women setting up schools in their own homes in the slums of Karachi (Shaheed & Mumtaz, 1995). In some parts of rural Balochistan, NGO initiatives are supporting Women Village Education Committees which involve communities in providing and promoting girls' education through local selection of female teachers, and the provision of ongoing support for them (O'Grady, 1995; USAID, 1999). Whilst in Karachi, I was able to visit the offices of the Sindh Education Foundation, which is involved in training and supporting women teachers in non-formal village schools to teach otherwise out of school women and girls. Aga Khan University-Institute of Educational Development (AKU-IED) is also involved in a USAID-funded initiative, working with communities in rural Sindh to improve the educational opportunities available, especially for girls. Training local women to become teachers and leaders in community schools is an important element of this program.

In drawing attention to some very general prevailing conditions for women teachers in Pakistan, I have tried to highlight the paradoxical situation that they may be in. Whilst

they may be the subject of policy attention, and the recipients of incentives such as cooking oil, and of special dispensations with regard to age, and qualification requirements for teacher training, they are often marginalized within educational structures and processes. In the formal education sector especially, their perspectives are largely unacknowledged, their experience and knowledge largely unrecognized, and their minds and bodies regulated by androcentric rules and norms. As more female teachers are recruited into the Pakistani teaching profession, it becomes increasingly important to recognize, value and work with the particularized professional and personal knowledges of a diverse population of women teachers. Although not necessarily recognized as a girls' education strategy, the linkages to be made between women's and girls' experiences in schools are an area for consideration. Women teachers' own experiences of gender and education are highly relevant, as are all the possibilities, impossibilities, tensions, and contradictions inherent in their lived experience of being a teaching woman. It is these linkages, possibilities, impossibilities, tensions and contradictions that I explore in this study from the perspectives of women teachers in Karachi.

Organization of the Thesis

Conceptual Overview

This thesis is an investigation into how the lived experiences of women teachers in Pakistan relate to theories of gender, education and development. It is also a study of how a feminist, reflexive research methodology can be used to investigate these lived experiences, and to analyze and represent what is found. It is about researching women teachers' lives in Pakistan, but is also a critical reflection on the dominant development practices in which such research takes place. This study is one in which process is as important as content, where the situated subjectivities of both researcher and researched are significant. It shows the relationships between who one is and what one finds, and draws attention to the ruling relations within which teaching and researching are located. The study highlights some of the inherent contradictions for a feminist researcher conducting women-focused research in the androcentric worlds of

education and development. There is a constant questioning of the possibilities for doing ethical research in an unethical world, and for developing policy-relevant theories of women teachers' lives in development contexts. As such, the thesis represents both a move towards "getting smart" (Lather, 1991) about women teachers in development contexts, and an analysis of what that "getting smart" entails.

Existing research on women teachers tends not to address the social, gender and power relations in which their lives and roles in schools are situated. In order to explore these issues, the conceptual parameters in which to interpret women teachers' lived experiences first have to be mapped out. Starting with theories of women teachers' lives in western contexts, I develop a feminist critique of the position of women teachers in development contexts. This critique also has a personal relevance and resonance from my own experience as a woman teacher. Yet development-oriented work with women teachers also has to be understood in relation to current theories and practices of gender and development. Theories of women's social relations, of the gendered nature of development organizations and of different gender policies are all very relevant to a study of women teachers. These contribute to a conceptual framework which can reflect multiple social roles as women *and* as teachers. A third theoretical building block is the notion of reflexivity. This is the pivot of a feminist methodology which allows me to explore the lived realities of other women and to situate these in relation to the research process in which they are located. As a researcher I am "ineluctably embedded" (Smith, 1987) within a methodology which is attentive to power, position and authority and which seeks to challenge male hegemony. Female subjectivity becomes a starting point for a reconceptualization of the roles and relationships, pedagogies and perspectives of women teachers in development contexts.

I use the notion of impossible fictions to organize and interpret my data, and to present a series of findings relating to women's experiences of becoming and being a woman teacher, and to my experience of conducting research with women teachers in Pakistan. It is a notion that weaves through the thesis; it is discussed in detail in my readings of the literature on women teachers, and considered again as an element in

my methodological framework, before being used to organize my interpretations. I am also highly conscious of the textual challenges of interpretation and representation, and of the fiction of a single interpretation.

Structural Overview

The thesis is divided into four sections: 'Situating the Study', 'Theoretical Framework', 'Feminist Fields' and 'Future Fictions in Gender, Education and Development'. In 'Situating the Study' I have introduced the reader not only to the writer/researcher, but also to the context in which the study is situated, and why this is of interest. In the 'Theoretical Framework', I devote a chapter to each of three main questions: 'How may my readings of studies of women teachers' lives in the West inform studying the lives of women teachers in development contexts?' 'Are Women Teachers Women in Development?' and 'Methodologically, how can one research the lives of women teachers in development contexts?' My response to the first question is a discussion of relevant literature on women teachers. My response to the second is a consideration of gender and development perspectives in relation to women teachers' lives. I respond to the third question with a presentation of a feminist reflexive methodology. This links autobiographical and narrative approaches in education, ethnographic and auto-ethnographic methods with notions of embodiment. Feminist and post-colonial theory are significant lenses through which I describe the research process itself and what I see and learn from it. Interwoven, they add complexity to the subjectivities of researcher and researched alike, and to the context of the study. These extensive reviews and discussions of literature in complementary areas of scholarship form the theoretical framework of the study. They situate the multiple and embodied subjectivities and social relations of women who teach in development contexts and of a researcher who is working with them.

In 'Feminist Fields', I present the insights gained working with women teachers in Karachi, relating theoretical methodological issues raised in earlier chapters to the data collected. I use data from interviews, small workshop sessions and questionnaires to address issues affecting women teachers' lives. I also use "vignettes" of lived

experience and fieldnote extracts to discuss the realities of gaining access to women teachers' lives, and of being in the field. In this way I respond to research questions relating to both content and process, and link data and findings on methodology to those on women teachers' lives. The multiple challenges of pursuing a feminist research project to study women teachers' lives are discussed in relation to the substantive details of the experiences of my participants.

Finally, in 'Future Fictions of Gender, Education and Development' I present the conclusions of this study. I discuss its contribution to scholarship and the implications it has for future research, policy and programming, as well as its limitations and the issues it leaves unresolved. In so doing, I take up a tentative position that is both within *and* beyond the present and the possible in gender, education and development activity relating to women teachers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For a young woman of twenty-two from a good Tamil family, living in the year 1927, her achievements were remarkable – or, depending on your conviction, appalling. She had completed her Senior Cambridge, an accomplishment fairly rare in that time for a girl: she had stood first islandwide in English literature, much to the discomfort of every boys' school. Then she had gone on to teachers college and qualified as a teacher.

Annalukshmi's qualification as a teacher was held to be her greatest crime by her mother's relatives, the Barnett's. A career as a teacher was reserved for those girls who were too poor or too ugly to ever catch a husband. They saw it as a deliberate thumbing of her nose at the prospect of marriage. She might as well have joined a convent.

From *Cinnamon gardens*, by Shyam Selvadurai (1999, pp. 3-4).

2: STUDYING WOMEN TEACHERS' LIVES

Introduction

The review and analysis of literature of this chapter is framed by the question, 'How may my readings on women teachers' lives in the West inform studying the lives of women teachers in development contexts?' I present this as a means to grounding this study in rich and very appropriate literature and research practice. It is also an important component of the conceptual framework for the study. I situate my own experiences as a women teacher, those of other women teachers I know, and those I work with in Pakistan in relation to this literature. I draw on it in terms of both content and process. Through the chapter, a critical, narrative approach is used to relate the literature to myself and to this study, and to discuss its different implications.

The framing question for the chapter is certainly somewhat problematic. It may appear to imply an easy transfer of theories and methods from one location to a very different one. It raises questions about the imposition of western research and knowledge paradigms onto non-western contexts. These have been addressed by numerous post-colonial critics (such as Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) and by other scholars who critique the processes of development as impositional and imperialist (Escobar, 1995). Acknowledging such issues, and working with their inherent trickiness, the question is a very relevant one for my own study in terms of both content and methodology. As I position myself as both woman teacher *and* researcher, works on women teachers by female scholars and teacher educators are particularly significant. The issues raised and the theories of women's teaching lives proposed resonate with my own experiences, *and* with those of other women teachers I have met with and interviewed. The women described in texts by Casey, Grumet, Munro and Weiler are real, embodied, living and breathing women, as are the researchers themselves. Positioning themselves quite consciously as teachers *and* researchers, researcher *and* researched, relationships between these scholars, their research topics and their research participants resonate with my own. The explicitly feminist, reflexive research methodologies they employ, whilst uncommon in development contexts, do have

relevance for working with women outside of the West. Furthermore, the findings of their studies appear to complement elements of gender and development theory relating to the complexities of women's lives.

In the discussion which follows, I draw particularly on the rich body of feminist literature on women teachers' lives in North America, the U.K. and in Australia. I first present a brief overview of a wider body of research and practice around teachers' lives before concentrating in more detail on key themes from feminist research relating to women teachers' lives. I pay particular attention to self-conscious, reflexive works by women educators and to scholarship which specifically addresses the female teaching body. In presenting my reading of this literature, I start to map out a complex theoretical and discursive space within which women teachers' lives may be situated. I lay the foundations of a theoretical framework for conceptualizing the lives and experiences of women teachers in development contexts in a way which validates female teachers' lives and bodies, and places them at the forefront of educational practice and policy.

Research on Teachers' Lives

As I grew up in a teaching family, married into another, and became a primary school teacher myself, the complexity of teaching lives, and their inter-relatedness with life outside the classroom, has always been clear to me. Although my father was able to make clear distinctions between his home and school lives, I have been less able and less eager to do so. Teachers are women and men, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, friends and colleagues, and as such are part of complex webs of relationships that extend into and out of their schools. I think back to the significant overlapping of my school and home projects, to my husband's frequent teasing and sarcastic comments, "Do *all* your children have to come home with you *every* evening?" But I also remember that he and other friends would easily agree to come in to class to give talks and workshops on almost anything that related to my very inclusive classroom curriculum, and was of interest to my students. Reflecting back on her own school days, however, Tompkins (1996) remembers few instances in which teachers shared

any information about their own lives. She dwells on a special memory of the pleasure she enjoyed when her third grade teacher mentioned her son bringing her orange juice in the shower. She relishes the image of the scene, "I saw the steamy bathroom, felt the heat and moisture in the air, saw the orange of the glass of orange juice held out toward the shower stall by the hand of the mysterious John (in my mind a tall youth with brown hair)". The young girl is "amazed and pleased to learn that Mrs. Higgins had a family life just as I did" (p. xiv). The now older woman author reflects that the incident symbolizes what is often missing from education: the reality of private life.

This sense of life itself may also be difficult to find in much educational research. Traditional approaches, positivist research paradigms and narrow subject conceptualizations shape studies in which 'the reality of private life' - of teachers, students, researchers and readers - is left unacknowledged. In the literature of education in development, the reality of private life can be even harder to find. Such scholarship is often narrowly focused on particular projects or programs. Teachers tend to be considered a homogeneous group of technical workers, and we have little sense of what Fals-Borda's (1991) terms "vivencia". Vivencia refers to the ways in which something (both classroom activity and home life, for example) is actually experienced. As Smith (1997) describes, "'vivencia' forces us to acknowledge people as complex beings with differing motivations, individual capabilities and feelings; varying moments of joy and anguish; multiple relations to each other; and shared needs for community and common effort" (p. 196). For me, vivencia captures a sense of lived experience, good and bad; vivencia is broad and deep in its scope, and avoids an over-simplification or over-romanticization of teachers and teaching. It implies the contradictions of experience, and the struggles for meaning that I believe characterize teaching lives, and most especially those of women teachers. Although initially an alternative and small field of interest, in the West at least, there is now an expanding body of literature and practice which describes and analyses teachers' lived experiences from different perspectives. I discuss some of these perspectives below, and in particular highlight the influence this scholarship has on teacher education,

where there is a growing interest in teachers' lives as source of pedagogical insight and knowledge.

Autobiographical accounts, written by teachers themselves about their own teaching experiences (Ashton Warner, 1963; Herndon, 1969; Kohl, 1967) created broad popular interest in teachers' lived experience. However, Lortie's 1975 study, *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*, was one of the first academic texts to focus on teachers' lives, and from a broader perspective than that usually taken by researchers primarily interested in issues of classroom pedagogy and practice. Nias'(1989) *Primary teachers talking* was also an important account of the subjective reality of primary school teaching, from the standpoint, and in the words, of teachers themselves. Nias examines the notion of teacher as individual subject, and explores how teachers' identities are constructed through the interconnections of experiences, values and attitudes, gained both inside the classroom *and* out of it. She is particularly interested in the way in which primary school teaching has the potential and tendency to become 'inclusive'. For some teachers, the self-expression and use of multiple talents possible in teaching encourage a fusion of their personal and professional selves. Nias presents women teachers' narratives of interrupted, non-linear career paths, and of uncertain futures. These highlight both the frustrations of the teaching profession for women *and* the freedom and flexibility it offers to nonetheless gain immense personal satisfaction. Arguing that "no account of primary teachers' experience is complete if it does not make room for potentially dangerous emotions such as love, rage and jealousy on the one hand, and intermittent narcissism and outbreaks of possessive dependence on the other" (p. 203), Nias insists that the full experience – the vivencia- of teaching needs to be taken into account.

Since the late 1980's and early 1990's, there has been a marked proliferation and diversification of writing dedicated to teacher experiences and to "teachers' professional knowledge landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). As is to be expected in a literature that is based on the centrality of teachers' own knowledge within teaching and learning processes, much has been written by practising teachers, in a wide range of formats. Such a diverse body of literature has no simple linear

development, and does not lend itself easily to rigid classification. Male and female scholars have contributed influential works, situating the lived experiences of teachers at the heart of curricula and educational development. The work of scholars of teachers' lives, in particular Clandinin and Connelly (1995), Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990), Goodson (1992, 1995, 2000), Hargreaves (1984, 1994, 2001), Ginsburg (1995), Knowles and Cole (1994) and Cole and Knowles (2000) has to be acknowledged, as does the influence this work has had on mainstreaming teachers' voices and teachers' experiences into education policy, curriculum development and teacher education practice. In the following section, however, I concentrate on feminist accounts and on gender-focused analyses of teaching, which have particular relevance to this study of women teachers in Pakistan.

Feminist Research on Women Teachers' Lives

The works of scholars such as Casey (1993), Middleton (1993), Munro (1998) and Weiler (1988) are explicitly feminist in orientation, and focus specifically on their female selves, students, friends, colleagues and research participants. The voices of these women are given space, contextualized and theorized. The specificity of individual lived experience is examined in relation to broader societal and educational issues. Such scholarship is therefore relevant to this study of women teachers in Pakistan in terms of both methodology and content. In her study of Nepalese women teachers, Schulz (1992, 1994) is also inspired by similar sources.

Feminist scholarship insists that gender plays a significant part in the ordering of social structure and consciousness, profoundly shapes the concrete conditions of our lives, and as such cannot be excluded from any analysis of experience in any aspect of life. This is particularly true of a field of study that is tied to women's social and professional positions in public school teaching (Lather, 1994). And yet the general critique of feminist educators is that educational practice, analysis and research constantly assumes male experience and male norms. Leftist and particularly Marxist critiques of education have tended to collapse the experience of a category of "women" into a general category of "the oppressed" and gender still remains outside

of, or marginal to, the analysis (Lather, 1994). Despite concrete facts and figures (for example Robertson, 1993) to prove that the history of teaching is the history of a gendered workforce, gender remains "the absent presence" (Apple, 1983) in most research on teaching. Robertson (1993) argues that:

> Our education systems teach, reflect and are sustained by androcentrism, which requires us to see the world from a normalized male point of view, to value that which is associated with the men and male characteristics and values, and perhaps most insidious is the way in which androcentrism invisibly raises male experience to universal experience. (p. 43)

Educational research that unquestioningly accepts such dynamics ignores female perspectives in processes of teaching and learning. It also perpetuates a situation where female success stories ultimately depend on the subordination of women teachers into roles which are "fundamentally geared to the maintenance of society's status quo in all its destructive, exploitative aspects" (Adams, 1971, quoted in Lather, 1994, p. 245). Altenbaugh (1995, p. 73) refers to "the irony of gender" to summarize the paradoxical situation that whilst women make up a majority of classroom instructors, they are treated as a minority within educational structures and processes. This may be especially true of education in developing countries where legacies of patriarchal, male-centric colonialism entrench masculine norms and rules, and impose very gendered bureaucracies and hierarchies (Gordon, 1996). In many contexts, including Pakistan, women are generally limited to subordinate positions as primary school teachers, marginalized from positions of power and decision-making processes. Gender issues in education management and the roles of women in senior positions in education, are addressed in a body of literature that looks at issues of power, influence and leadership in schools from women's perspectives. Acker (1989), Ozga (1993), Ouston (1993), Reynolds and Young (1995), Shakeshaft (1989), for example, have addressed such issues in British and North American contexts. Work by Davies and Gunawardena (1992), Drake and Owen (1998), Hasibuan-Sedyono (1998), Govinden (1998), and Morris (1998, 1999), for example, addresses gender, management and leadership issues in education in development contexts. Here there is particular discussion of the tensions in women's experiences and responsibilities of being female

and successful in a male-oriented system which for women and girls can be both empowering and oppressive (Drake & Owen, 1998).

Feminist researchers challenge dominant, male-oriented paradigms and write women's experiences of teaching and learning into the centre of educational theory-making. Feminist approaches also commit teacher-researchers to a consciousness of their own positionality and of the power of their own voice. Munro, for example, writes, "By placing myself within this work I hope to avoid the decontextualization and detachment, so often found in social science research, that perpetuates the myth of objectivity and neutrality" (1998, p. 17). This detachment and apparent neutrality may be evident in much research relating to development issues, yet as argued by feminist researchers in particular, it is an untenable myth. Central to feminist analyses of schooling and teaching are the constantly shifting power and gender dynamics, the contradictions and paradoxes of lived experience, and the complex realities of female teaching lives.

Women Teachers: Lives of the Past

The notion of an educated woman as a contradictory, paradoxical and ultimately severely limiting social identity for women of the past is of interest to a number of feminist scholars in western contexts. Educated women were often seen as disruptive to the social order, and as embodying characteristics that her culture considered incompatible; that is being educated, *and* being a woman. The teaching profession, however, was able to provide many educated women with a sense of purpose in life. It could create a niche for them in which their learning could be of use to society and to themselves. It also gave women a space from which to work for social justice and social change, not only in education, but also in health, welfare and other issues. "Teaching often meant a life course for women that was both more diversified and complex than that of their peers" (Underwood, 1986, quoted in Altenbaugh, 1995, p. 75).

Becoming a teacher may have allowed an educated woman to escape the frustrated emptiness of life, but it nonetheless placed her in a problematic position. Khayatt (1992) writes that in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century North American society, there were two major sins for women. "The first was to be educated; the second was to remain single" (p. 38). The teaching profession, restricted in many authorities to single women, therefore positioned women teachers as "unnatural", "unattractive", "mannish", and generally superfluous to mainstream society (very much as any "spinsters" were considered in those times). Paradoxically, however, women teachers were economically attractive to hiring boards, and a profession offering financial independence and rewarding work experience understandably appealed to many educated young women.

Women's roles in educational and social change have, however, largely been ignored by the master narratives of male-oriented history. But feminist scholars have sought to recuperate from the past the voices of women teachers whose stories of teaching and learning have been marginalized by mainstream educational histories and discourses. Munro (1995) asserts that the "work of these women educators to address social inequalities has rarely been acknowledged as a form of political activism or of educational reform. Now is the time" (p. 278). Through interviews, and from diaries, journals, records, letters and reports, scholars have gained insights into the lived experiences of powerful women educators in North America and Australia. The interconnected complicities *and* resistances, the submission *and* agency of these women challenge linear, "malestream" stories of educational history and of theoretical developments. The feminist biography and life history work of scholars such as Biklen (1995), Middleton (1993) and Munro (1995), shows how women teachers were able to creatively and powerfully take up alternative subjectivities. Whilst simultaneously resisting *and* accepting dominant gender discourses, women teachers could be both radicals and conservators (Antler & Biklen, 1990).

There is much less published research on the histories of women teaching in non-western contexts, but scholars of education in North America and Europe (for example Miller, 1992; Rousmaniere, 1997) have investigated the ways in which women

teachers' bodies have long been the subject of regulation by school and education authorities. Certain forms of behaviour, dress and comportment have been defined for women teachers, and others prohibited. Khayatt (1992), for example, draws particular attention to the explicit and implicit sexual regulation that school authorities exerted over women teachers through rules against marriage and against socializing with men. By 1965, even though women in Ontario were now officially allowed to teach after marriage, there were strict expectations that they would leave once they became visibly pregnant; the date of leaving was to be at the discretion of the Principal (Khayatt, 1992).

In light of such evidence, the position of women teachers, who were encouraged to be both agents of social change *and* conformers to traditional norms and standards, appears paradoxical. These histories add to the inherent contradictions embodied by the very term 'woman teacher' today. Madeleine Grumet (1988) encourages us to consider individual and collective complicity in processes which have devalued women's work in classrooms, and to connect the present with the past and with the future. She clearly acknowledges the importance of women teachers of the past, and of today, in shaping relationships between school, family and gender in society. Historical analyses and reappraisals of the role of women teachers in western society are used to inform contemporary theories of female pedagogy and of the roles of women teachers. As Miller (1992) states:

> The history of women's increasing involvement in education, as providers and as consumers, is ignored at our peril, I believe. This is not only because those increases have affected women's lives in vital ways, but also because these changes have themselves been at the root of wider social transformations. Women's presence as teachers has quite simply altered childhood: how it is lived and how it is understood and managed in contemporary societies, and how it has influenced patterns of work, who does it, how it is done and how it is rewarded. (p. 21)

This brief discussion has placed current situations in a richer socio-historical context, providing a picture of patterns, trends and movements over time. Of particular interest for this study are the tensions for women teachers, and for those studying their lives,

between social conformity and social change, between regulation and freedom. These tensions, mediated through lived experience, clothing and body, have significant resonance for women teachers today, and perhaps especially so in development contexts such as Pakistan.

Today's Woman Teacher: an "Impossible Fiction"?

In the West, significant progress has undoubtedly been made in working towards equity in at least the material conditions of women teachers' employment. Married, unmarried, lesbian, divorced and separated women work with at least official equity alongside their male colleagues in schools. Walkerdine (1990), nevertheless, draws our attention to the "impossible fiction" of being a woman teacher in today's society. She points to the tensions and contradictions that are inherent in an identity which asserts power, status and commands respect (teacher) at the same time that it speaks of subordination, marginalization and repression (woman). Munro explains that "to be a woman is to lack authority, knowledge and power. To be a teacher is to have authority, knowledge and power" (1998, p. 1). Gannerud's study (2001) highlights the contradictory situation women teachers are in with regard to authority within a school context in which their work is given a low status. Impossible polarities, such as body/mind, intuition/intellect, womb/brain, are inherent in the identity of a woman teacher. To be a woman teacher is to take on what Greene calls a "fictitious self" (1992, p. 17). Walkerdine suggests that any fixed, institutionally-determined position or subjectivity defined by the term 'woman teacher' is impossible. It is therefore necessary to account for multiple identities and subjectivities, shifting positions and ever-changing power dynamics within complex discursive contexts. It is important to consider the multiple ways in which being a woman may shape teaching identities, how being a teacher may shape experiences of being a woman, and how they may overlap, interconnect, and/or contradict. Also to be acknowledged is how other aspects of individual identity, such as race, class, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity, further shape gendered experiences of teaching. When I was teaching in a Catholic primary school in London, it was Friday's mass in particular which made me feel, and look, a very non-Catholic woman teacher. My age was another site of difference even

amongst the other women on the staff, and this shaped my perspectives on issues such as staff outings and reading material for the students. On such occasions I was clearly seen as a very young woman teacher.

Steedman's (1987) description of her own teaching experience within the 'prisonhouse' of her primary classroom highlights another impossibility, that of becoming the intellectual worker that her responsibilities and position implied. She resents the history of her profession which defines her as a substitute mother of other people's children.

> I read everything there was to read, later was to make myself a minor expert on children's writing. No-one cared – indeed, no-one knew – what social and political theories informed my classroom practice: all I looked like was a very good teacher, doing all the things that the textbook said were right. (1987, p. 117)

Walkerdine (1990) writes a short but poignant text after a job interview at a primary school that highlights inherent desires and contradictions for women teachers. She describes the university environment, which, with its prestige and status, makes her feel like a valued academic. At the same time, however, she fears that "somebody would find out that, after all I am stupid" (p. 82-3). In contrast, the primary school environment, which although appealing, colourful, comfortable and important to her, nonetheless feels 'second-rate' and 'the province of women'. On entering primary schools now I often experience similar mixed feelings. The displays of children's work, the busy hum of activity, the dramas of mini-crises in the playground or in the bathroom draw me in. The hugs and hellos from children and teachers and the easy-going staffroom with its constant supply of coffee and conversation are all very appealing to me. However, I can never feel completely at ease. There is always a nagging feeling that it is precisely the collegiality, the coziness and the emotions of the primary school which render it a women's world, and which circumscribe its importance as site of pedagogical innovation, leadership and knowledge. In my first teaching position in London I was always intrigued (but could not have articulated why) by the deputy head teacher who particularly enjoyed the informality of our afternoon cup of tea, brought to the classroom every afternoon by a teachers' assistant

for us to drink as we continued to work with the children. At the same time, she always wore a formal suit for work, and would often make the point that she dressed for school "as if I were going to an office".

My experiences are in no way unique, and such practical and theoretical conundrums are lived out in specific material, social, historical contexts by millions of women teachers across the world each day. As I have described, western feminist scholars suggest that living truthfully and coherently as a powerful, successful and respected woman teacher is an impossible fiction. It may be that for women teaching in developing countries, the fiction is even more far-fetched, and the dissonance between 'official' and 'lived' versions of being a woman teacher even stronger. In Pakistan, special incentives and dispensations may qualify a woman to teach in a remote rural village, and yet at the same time prevailing expectations of appropriate gender roles and relations make it impossible for her to do so. A woman teacher may be expected to devote herself to her students and yet her own family responsibilities and household chores do not allow her to do so. Whilst such issues may be touched upon in some more progressive teacher education programs, such complexities and tensions do not generally appear within teacher education curricula in development contexts, and especially not in Pakistan. Here, rather than addressing the complex processes of individual and collective subjectivity as women and teachers, the teacher training curriculum is more likely to be subject-content focused, concentrating on teaching performance rather than teaching experience (Khalid, 1996).

North American and Australian feminist teacher educators such as Britzman (1991), Ellsworth (1989), McWilliam (1994) and Miller (1995) write about their own complex teaching lives in relation to those of their student teachers. The teacher education experiences they are describing, reflecting on and theorizing from, are experiences grounded in 'vivencia'. Their pedagogies acknowledge and work with the lived experiences of student and beginning teachers. Critical, feminist perspectives are shared which challenge the androcentric meta-narratives upon which the educational status quo is constructed. Such alternatives are grounded in quite different notions of power and empowerment; they privilege the strengths of undecidability and

particularity, and are couched in a language of possibility rather than certainty. As Miller (1995) writes on the process of autobiographical writing she introduces to her beginning teachers, "We have to start from an acknowledgement of difficulty and difference if we are ever going to describe the complex and changing relations women have with the theoretical discourses which mark out their professional activities" (p. 25). Other feminist educators working in high schools, elementary schools and early years classrooms have also written their own stories of female teachers' lived experiences into mainstream literature. These accounts may be truer to women's particularized ways of knowing, and to Middleton's (1993) assertion that sharing life stories is remaking theory. Collections such as *Repositioning feminism and education* (Jipson et al., 1995), *The feminist teacher anthology* (Cohee et al., 1998) and *Intersections: Feminisms/early childhood* (Hauser & Jipson, 1998) place stories of individual experiences and subjectivities within collective frameworks which highlight the connectedness of individual experiences within shared socio-political contexts. These women's stories now contribute to the established literature of western teacher education. However, experiences of women teachers in the South are much less likely to be documented.

Particularly relevant to this study are a small number of feminist scholars who have worked intensively with groups of women teachers to explore their lived experiences. Although these studies take place in western contexts (North America and Australia), their conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches to women teachers' lives make them highly relevant to studying women teachers' lives in development contexts. Common to the scholarship of Weiler, Casey, Munro, and Middleton, are conceptual frameworks that allow for the co-existence of agency and accommodation, action and resistance, power and powerlessness, and the interdependence of self-definition with external factors. The women teachers they talk with are active agents in the history of social development, living, and yet at the same time refusing to live, the impossible fiction of female teaching experience. I too move between multiple positions of woman, woman teacher, teacher educator. Although I am aware of the privilege of my own situation as a western researcher, I also base my methodology on collegiality, and

on recognition of shared experiences of the social and political worlds of education. I highlight four themes from this literature as particularly relevant to this study: woman teacher as agent of change, the subjective/ objective fictions of being a female teacher, situated, self-reflexive scholarship on women teachers, and the female teaching body. Such themes also have echoes in the literature already discussed on women teachers in the past.

Women Teachers: Agents of Social Change?

Kathleen Weiler (1988) explores in detail what she calls "dialectics of gender" in the lives of contemporary women high school teachers. Weiler rejects subject-object dualisms, and the oppositional nature of *either* social production *or* reproduction theories, and of *either* resistance *or* acceptance. Her analysis "holds on to both ends of the chain" (Althusser, 1971, quoted Weiler, p. 74). As such it "attempts to unravel the ways in which structural forces shape the individual experiences of individual subjects, while recognizing that it is on the terrain of everyday life that social relationships are reproduced and contested" (p. 75). As Giroux (1983) writes, "If we are to take human agency seriously, we must acknowledge the degree to which historical and objective forces leave their ideological imprint on the psyche itself" (p. 149). The agency demonstrated by Weiler's women teachers (for example, countering the male-centred humanities curriculum with boxes of material written by women writers, and by questioning *with* their students the accepted versions of social reality and relations) challenges the mechanistic quality of much educational theory. Their actions also reveal the potential for change of critical, feminist pedagogies.

Kathleen Casey (1993) uses the metaphor of teacher voice in a powerful opening to her influential work, *I answer with my life: Life histories of women teachers working for social change*. In the cacophony of voices speaking about education, Casey hears the politicians, the policy-makers and the bureaucrats the most clearly. Children are very faint, and one has to tune in and listen very hard in order to make out the voices of women teachers talking about their lives in schools. Relegating the dominant voices and the most prominent speakers to the margins of her analysis, Casey gives centre

stage to the "ordinary and the anonymous". When placed side by side, the narratives of progressive women teachers "create a kind of Bakhtian dialogue on the possibilities of alternative discourse; together they stand in opposition to dominant interpretations of the meaning of education" (p. 27). Casey draws on Bakhtian theories of diverse, changing and changeable meanings as constructed through multiple, simultaneous and interdependent languages. In so doing she disrupts the dichotomies and categorical relationships so dominant in educational discourse. Casey's women teachers are not only creations of discourse, but also creators of discourse. Their selves are defined in relationship to others, but "to credit each of these women with deliberately choosing to engage in certain social relationships is to distinguish individuality from isolation, alienation and individualism" (p. 160).

Casey identifies life history methodology as a way of examining the relationships between traditional dichotomies of subject-object, individual-collective, as experienced in the lives of Catholic, Jewish and black women teachers. She also seeks to contextualize their individual choices to be political within particular personal-social relationships. Casey's approach necessitates reflection on her own identity as a female teacher working for social change, and to do so, she draws on Gramscian theory. She explains how biographical details illuminate historical networks of human relationships, and are important not only in interpreting the present, but also for transforming the future. In development contexts, such as Pakistan, education is heralded as such an important building block towards more democratic, equitable societies (Government of Pakistan, 1998). However, within such dominant discourses, women teachers' multiple and shifting, powerful *and* powerless identities and biographies are most often ignored. Casey's work therefore has important implications for thinking about women teachers, and for conceptualizing research which seeks to transform the future with more conceptually relevant, women-inclusive theories of teaching.

Women Teachers: Subject to Fiction?

The work of Petra Munro (1998) is equally relevant to this study. Munro uses post-structuralist theorizing to position non-unitary women teachers as subjects of, but also creators of, educational discourse and history. She explores the life histories of three female educators in order to better understand how women teachers construct their selves both within and against dominant educational and cultural (androcentric) norms and discourses. Feeling that the period from the 1930's through to the 1950's was relatively neglected in educational history, Munro wanted to collect stories from social studies teachers of this time. As a social studies teacher herself, she felt she would be able to relate to them particularly well. One teacher, Agnes, tells a story of the progressive network of female educational activists and reformers of the 1930's and 1940's. Her story challenges official histories of education, and asserts the political significance of female early years teachers who were reclaiming their profession from its lowly status as "women's true profession", framed by male-centred narratives of passive, nurturing women. Another woman, Cleo, a self-defined "drifter", taught social studies in the Pacific Northwest for around thirty years before retiring early in the 1980's. Her ambivalence towards teaching, her reminders that "she could have lived another life and been just as happy" (p. 14), and the complex yet subtle processes of resistance and agency that she employs, intrigue Munro. Cleo's story disrupts dominant ideology and dispels reductionist understandings of teacher career choice and motivation. The third woman is Bonnie, who is still a social studies teacher in a middle-class suburban high school in the Pacific Northwest. She narrates to Munro her personal and professional development as a teacher-advocate and activist. Her involvement in union activity, the civil rights movement and other social justice causes is crucial to her teaching identity. However, the fact that this involvement is primarily located within male-centred contexts creates considerable tension for her.

Munro's title, *Subject to fiction*, signals her engagement not only with the fiction created by policy and program assumptions about women teachers' lives, but also with the complex problematic of subjectivity. Central to feminist scholarship across different disciplines, and to Munro's work in particular, is the trickiness of creating

subjects of women. There is a constant tension between deconstructing a unitary, universal subject and holding on to notions of shared experience, and to the collective understandings of prevailing social constructions and conditions which make the political project of feminism possible. Post-structuralism, and its attention to changing and changeable positions within and against particular discursive fields, offers Munro possibilities for "reconceiving the subject, resistance and agency in more complex and powerful ways" (p. 28). Drawing on the work of Trinh Minh-ha (1991), Munro sees the possibilities for women to engage with, but also to disrupt and divert dominant ideologies in their constant movement between the center and alternative, marginal positions. Through the complex and often contradictory stories of her interviewees, Munro argues that women's resistance does not depend on traditional conceptualizations of power as a commodity to be acquired, seized, or shared. It therefore survives the post-modern challenge to unitary subjectivity. Alcoff (1989) understands resistance as dependent on positionality, where subjectivity is non-unitary and constantly in flux. Munro too understands agency as "a product of discourse, a capacity that flows from a position within discursive formations" (p. 35). Munro's post-structural subject defies any positional pinning down, and also defies a solid, fixed, unitary and universal teacher identity implied by notions of the 'critical pedagogue', or the 'transformative intellectual'. Multiple subjectivities combine at particular points in time and space, in relationship to particular discourses, in order to constitute individual identities; analysis has to acknowledge movement and change. As Munro writes:

> The complex and contradictory ways in which subjects take up or choose not to take up identities made available to them through discourse become the site for mapping the local and relational dynamics of power and agency. (p. 34)

Feminist scholars, however, question whether the loss of the unitary and universal 'woman' subject undermines the potential for feminist agency and resistance (Fraser, 1989; Harding, 1987; Hartstock, 1990, for example). They ask what happens when the worlds of women are treated as texts, as systems of signs that resist decoding because of the multiplicities of meaning (Hawkesworth 1989, quoted in Munro, 1998; Moi

1985). Yet Munro constructs powerful alternatives whereby multiple subjectivities create multiple sites of resistance and diverse possibilities for agency:

> The rejection of the unitary subject for a more complex, multiple and contradictory notion of subjectivity results not in a lack of agency but in forms of agency not solely dependent on a universal subject. The non-unitary subject that is in flux, fragmented and decentralized has multiple sites from which to engage in acts of agency. (p. 35)

Furthermore, if women reject outright unitary subjectivity, then this in itself can signify a considerable resistance to the norms and assumptions of patriarchy (Greene, 1992).

Unrestricted by notions of the constant female subject as *either* powerful *or* powerless, and as *either* accepting *or* resisting, Munro see the non-unitary female teacher as working from multiple positions. She uses power in multiple and alternative ways (not necessarily conforming to the acts of agency inscribed within 'malestream' discourse) to resist and accept diverse forms of patriarchal subordination. In so doing, women are not only victims of patriarchy, but also agents of both its perpetuation *and* its disruption. Munro's theorizing therefore opens up spaces in which to envision woman teachers and researchers as accommodating dominant discourses whilst simultaneously challenging them. This may be equally relevant outside of the particular North American context with which she was primarily concerned. In Pakistan women teachers are marginalized from the center of policy-making, yet are crucial to policy implementation. Munro's work helps us to imagine how that very positioning, and movement between the margins and center, can generate particular insights. If given attention, women's experiences may also challenge established norms and the patriarchal status quo.

Situated, Reflexive Scholarship on Women Teachers

A number of feminist scholars have taken an autobiographical, self-reflexive approach to research around women teachers' lives, in order to better understand not only their own teaching selves, but also the teaching selves of other women. Autobiographical work from women teachers in development contexts is hard to find. However, the

interconnections between home and school, professional and personal lives, of mothering and teaching, and the power dynamics created through race, class, gender, geographical location that are explored by western writers do resonate with what is known about women in development contexts. Yet the theorizing of scholars such as Middleton and Grumet goes further. It places women teachers' lives, and the knowledge generated through their experiences of being mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, at the centre of pedagogical knowledge.

Using a life history approach, Sue Middleton's, *Educating feminists* (1993) focuses on the tensions, contradictions and complexities of women's educational experiences, intertwining her own story with those of her research participants. Reflecting on her own experiences as feminist educator and feminist activist, Middleton connects history, biography and social structure in order to examine master narratives of education from the inside out. From a feminist perspective she critiques education as a complex sociological field, shaped by multiple inequalities and power-differences. It is also a field in which feminist knowledge is often marginalized. In order to disrupt this status quo, and to develop a feminist, sociological account of women's education in New Zealand, Middleton interviews twelve women born in New Zealand in the late 1940's and early 1950's. All twelve women worked as educators and identified themselves as feminists. The stories they tell of their developing feminist consciousness allow Middleton to build a framework of the different strands of feminist discourses at the time, from the perspectives of those who were involved with them. Tension, contradiction and ambiguity are rife in the rich life stories she is told. They include examples of overt *and* covert sexual activity, of acceptance *and* resistance to dominant views of feminine behaviour and dress, of the limitations of supposedly emancipatory university education, *and* pretentious intellectual attitudes. Equally evident are the frustrations of marginalized feminist pedagogy in schools and colleges. Educational experiences for many postwar women offered both equality *and* subordination, and "enabled them to feel 'cheated'" (Mitchell, 1973, quoted by Middleton, p. 89). For the interviewees, such feelings provided strong foundations for feminist activism. By identifying and naming the various feminist discourses

articulated in the stories, (liberal, bicultural, radical, socialist) Middleton is able to theorize the contradictions they create, to understand individual and collective histories and to connect her own stories with those of her research participants.

Middleton explores "the relationships between individuals' educational histories, their historical and material contexts, and the broader patterns of power relations (such as those of class, race and gender) that shape and constrain our possibilities and that release our educational imaginations" (p. 9). She too is interested in the power of dominant discourses, and like other feminist educators, she "make[s] visible the positionality or situatedness' of her analysis" (p. 7). Quoting Dorothy Smith, Middleton recognizes that "opening an inquiry from the standpoint of women means accepting our ineluctable embeddedness in the same world as is the object of our inquiry" (p. 31). She argues that "a woman's sense of relevance and grasp of possibilities influences her choices of theoretical and political positionings from those perceived as available" (p. 100), and examines how different educational policies have shaped subjectivities and positioned herself and her own educators in particular ways. Seeking, hearing and valuing women teachers' voices, experiences and subjectivities within educational contexts, where female experience has been trivialized and female voices marginalized, is certainly challengingly. However, by making visible the constructed nature of these voices, as well as of her text itself, Middleton challenges dominant and oppressive constructions of the female teacher. Rather than risk paralysis, fragmentation and dissolution of academic feminism, she advocates a "living the contradictions", and discusses her own experiences teaching a 'Women and Education' course. In this way, Middleton writes women teachers, individually and collectively (herself included), as powerful actors into the past, present and future of educational and social change.

Madeleine Grumet's *Bitter milk* (1988) is an analysis of teaching and schooling in which artificially-imposed boundaries - between home and school and between teaching and parenting - are interrupted by alternative conceptualizations and different forms of pedagogy. Developing a metaphor for education based in aesthetic experience, Grumet argues that teaching can be understood as art, and the teacher

described as an artist. With such a metaphor, the study of life in schools reveals the essence of educational experience and "illuminates the relation of curriculum to the rhythms of history and biography and to the lived spaces of home, factory and church" (p. 79). As an artist, the teacher dwells exclusively on neither one side nor the other of the imposed home-school line. Grumet believes that adopting the stance of the artist challenges taken-for-granted values and cultures, but she explores the contradictions and traditions of teaching and the extent to which these support aesthetic experience. As she writes:

> Because most of the people who teach our children in the public schools are women, we must ask whether there are particular conditions surrounding women's lives that will influence our capacity to take up and live out an aesthetic approach to our work in the classroom. (p. 81)

Responding to some of the physical and material conditions surrounding women teachers' lives in development contexts has led to more accessible courses and workshops and more flexible arrangements (such as babysitters accompanying women and their children on residential training courses). However, rarely does this attention develop into a conceptual framework in which these conditions are anything beyond problems to be solved. Grumet, on the other hand, draws on her own experiences of interconnected roles and identities in order to reclaim teaching for women from its lowly status as women's work. In this way she promotes new forms of educational knowledge grounded in the materiality of lived experience, which have relevance for women teachers in any location. Grumet's vision of education as intimately connected to the rhythms of society certainly resonates with feminist versions of development, These too connect different aspects of social, political and economic reality with education, and reject compartmentalized versions of development. This being said, however, for many women teachers, the notion of teaching as an aesthetic art may be quite an alien one. This is especially so in contexts where the material difficulties of lived experiences (such as no electricity, no running water, scarce resources, books and non-existent or dysfunctional infrastructures) may challenge even the most determined woman teacher-artist.

Grumet (1988) also seeks to reclaim the teacher's body from curricular and pedagogical invisibility. Her writing on women teaching and women's education is infused with a strong sense of her own embodied presence, as teacher, mother, wife and daughter. Her physical movements and the clothing she wears define and inform her pedagogy. The knowledge she generates through attention to such dimensions of lived experiences become important sources of curriculum theorizing. Attentive to the ways in which popular discourses of education have linked women's bodies to teaching young children in limiting and essentially disempowering ways, Grumet posits alternative relationships between the body, teaching knowledge and practice. The riskiness of the boundary crossing involved in discussing experiences of childbearing and family life in professional, public settings are very clear to her. However, Grumet is adamant that by remaining silent, and by denying our own knowledge and experience, we become complicit with a system which ignores them. Mitchell and Weber (1999) also disrupt the apparent social taboo that divorces the professional practice of teaching from aspects of self that we all experience, such as appearance, dress, body shape, sensations, sensuality, sexuality, physical pleasure, pain, desire, fantasy and emotions. They are nonetheless aware of how bringing these terms into discussion of teaching practice quickly brings one on to shaky ground, especially so when issues of sexual abuse are at the forefront of the public mind.

In a Pakistani context, I may be on even shakier ground still; open discussion of private issues such as sexuality, sensuality and body can be taboo, students and teachers are usually divided by sex, and dominant power relations between men and women, teachers and students can compromise the safety and security of girls and women. I persist, however, encouraged, not only by indications of the embodied realities of the classroom in conversations in Pakistan, and by some of the exciting work on embodiment and women teachers in western contexts, but also by South Asian (mostly Indian) feminist scholarship on the body (for example, Thapan, 1997). In the education sector more specifically, there is also some encouraging work in the area of gender, sexuality and especially of HIV/AIDS in education in other

development contexts (see Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention, 2003; Safe Passages to Adulthood, n.d.; UNICEF ESARO, 2002, for example). As didactic approaches to teaching about the dangers of sex to adolescents are seen to be problematic, and less effective than hoped in the battle against HIV/AIDS, alternative approaches are being taken. Sexuality, masculinities, femininities, gender roles and relationships and the interconnections between them have become important discussion topics in some innovative and less traditional lifeskills and reproductive health curricula. Preparing teachers to comfortably and effectively present and work on such body-focused topics is an acknowledged challenge, and one to which more attention has to be given (Coombe, 2003).

The work of Erica McWilliam (1996a, 1996b, 1999) places woman teachers' bodies to the forefront of teaching and learning theory. McWilliam draws attention to the problematic ways in which male dominated thinking has led to the prevalence of mind/body dualisms and separations, and the constant privileging of the mind as that which defines the human being. In the education sector, the human body, rather than being completely ignored, is present, but not in connection with cognitive and mental activity. For students and teachers alike, the body, as a physical entity, has to be controlled, regulated and managed, so as not to interfere with the more important intellectual activity. This sort of control and regulation occurs through physical education programs, through uniform policy, and by the mere fact that most schools confine children to spending most of their time sitting in desks. Although exciting theoretical developments may have been taking place in feminist theorizing of the body, as McWilliam writes, in education, "bodies remain im/material in much of curriculum design and pedagogical work" (1996a, p. 341). Education systems and institutions have a long tradition of disciplining and regulating the bodies of both teachers and students. According to McWilliam, teachers' bodies have become more visible in schools only as they are increasingly guilty of suspicion of abuse, and particularly so if they are male and gay. However, testimonies of female educators such as Grumet (1989) and Steedman (1987) assert the importance of bodies in processes of teaching and learning. In recent years feminist scholars of education

especially have taken an increasing interest in the female teacher's body, in the embodied knowledge of female educators, and in applications of feminist theorists' understandings of the female body, of body performance and bodyvoice to the classroom context (see for example, Elbaz-Luwisch & Estola, 2001; Estola, 2003; Mitchell & Weber, 1999; Visser, 1999).[5]

McWilliam examines the "corpor/realities" (1996a) of the lived experiences of the female teacher and insists on the physicality of personal and professional knowledges. Rejecting traditional educational theory, she draws on emerging feminist theories of the female body as site and subject of discourse and of its role in knowledge production and reproduction. Her work reclaims the teaching body as a significant site of educational activity that is both cultural and political. But as she develops her argument, drawing on a history of women teaching erotic arts and on notions of seduction, eroticism and pleasure, she is aware that she is becoming somewhat subversive and dangerous. She risks critique from feminists fighting against sexual harassment and overt sexualization of the female body, and from those who believe that good teaching is primarily about control. McWilliam acknowledges that eroticization has contributed to gender oppression for women, but she is also adamant that it is necessary to acknowledge the legitimacy of bodily pleasure. She writes, "As teachers we need to indicate what pleasure we have in making ethical choices about our own gendered identity. This is increasingly difficult to do if we continue to conflate erotica with sex-as-weapon" (1996a, p. 347).

For McWilliam (1996a) pedagogy needs to be understood as a lived and embodied relationship between power, pleasure and knowledge, where teaching is an active performance of these dynamics, in relation to students, and to the different 'bodies' of disciplinary knowledge. She writes, "Through oral and textual performances as teachers, we indicate a range of positions in relation to a 'body' of disciplinary

[5] In fact the 2002 bi-annual summer institute of the Canadian Association for the Study of Women and Education (CASWE) was dedicated to the theme, 'Diverse perspectives on embodiment: Ways of knowing in and through the body' (CASWE, 2002).

knowledge. We model knowledge by striking a range of scholastic and even discipline-specific poses, through which the learner is mobilized to desire to learn, to reject the seductive power of ignorance" (p. 309). As constitutive of such performances, the teacher's body is no longer immaterial – "it becomes the pedagogical 'body of evidence' in disciplinary instruction" (Angel, 1994, quoted McWilliam, 1996a, p. 309). However, in mainstream education contexts, the disembodiment of teaching and learning processes continues. Although the teacher is an apparently important actor in educational development, information technology, distance learning, and dominant discourses of effectiveness and efficiency further distance the teacher's physical presence from teaching and learning processes.

Although she insists that teachers must acknowledge the presence of their bodies in the classroom, McWilliam is concerned that notions of teaching performance can easily be misunderstood. This is especially so in the current educational climate in which terms such as performance indicators abound. Such terms correlate educational input with output in very mechanistic ways:

> The actual 'performance' is not the sort of scholastic and physical postures, poses and persuasions that a teacher engages in; rather, the quality of the entire performance' is assessed by ignoring the utterances and actions of the teacher altogether. (p. 312)

McWilliam's concerns may be especially relevant in development contexts where similar discourses of effectiveness, efficiency and program results divert attention away from what is actually happening in classrooms full of students' and teachers' bodies. Performance of teaching – a superficial display of what might be expected by an observer - may in fact be a very real strategy for many women teachers. Resource constraints on training and in-service teacher support create pressure for teachers to assimilate – or at least perform assimilation of - new and complex ideas, such as child-centred or multi-grade pedagogy, in very short amounts of time.

There is clearly a fine distinction to make in order to assert the "corpor/reality" of a feminist pedagogy, which values and builds on the bodily knowledge of teachers and their students, and which reclaims the potentially erotic nature of teaching and

knowledge production, but which at the same time differentiates from the sexually exploitative. Instead of suppressing the physicality of the pedagogical encounter, and denying notions of desire inherent in teaching and learning processes, McWilliam works with this tension. She shifts the notion of the teaching body from "korper" (the bio-medical model of body) to "leib" (a "lived body"), thereby "open[ing] up the possibility of an authorized shift from a limited and limiting performance of heterosexual and heterosexist sexuality, to a more substantial experience of the nature of eros, one which is not merely derivative of male pleasure, narrowly defined" (1996a, p. 345). With this move, teaching and learning can be understood as a lived body (leib) experience, and desire in its multiple forms (including teaching and learning processes) can be redefined and discussed in ways which contribute to personal development and fulfillment for both teacher and student.

When attention is focused on the body, however, McWilliam (1996a) highlights a further paradox for the female teacher. Her "fleshly body" performing in the classroom is not only a "site" of educational knowledge, but also a "sight" for external gaze. This gaze, often male, also assumes its own knowing and its own authority over the female body. Teaching an all-male high school class, McWilliam becomes very aware of her own material body, "and its paradoxical positioning as a site and sight of knowing, of authority" (p. 344). Through the implementation of different teacher education and upgrading programs in development contexts, the bodies of women teaching may also become sights of supervisory, inspectorial gaze. Such a gaze, again often male, assumes authority through knowledge of modern teaching methods and other recognized elements of what is defined as good practice. The external gaze, largely un-discussed in the literature and practice of education in development, is, however, of particular interest to post-colonial theorists. The physicality of oppression, the embodiment of a legacy of exoticizing and eroticizing of the "other", and the internalization of the external gaze, are articulated by non-white feminists teaching in northern educational settings (Bannerji, 1995; hooks, 1994). Their theorizing can be informative in developing a notion of corpor/reality for development context classrooms.

McWilliam's theorizing asserts the importance of lived body (leib) experience in the classroom, but given the realities of many developing country classrooms (the lack of space, resources and even materials, the large numbers of children crammed into them, the draining professional and personal workloads of many women teachers, and so on), there are perhaps limitations to the extent to which her theories of pedagogical eroticism make sense in such contexts. There are also important issues of gender-based violence in and around schools to keep in mind. And yet to ignore the female teacher's body, or to limit discussion of it to essentialist discourses of childrearing and nurturing and to 'accommodate' it only in so far as assuring its immediate physical needs are met, would be to ignore an important dimension of women's teaching as embodied, lived experience. It would also mean the loss of an opportunity to re-theorize women teachers' practices, positions and experiences as constitutive of educational knowledge, expertise and leadership. Rather than denying the risky presence of female bodies, it is important to find ways of defining corpor/reality that embrace the pleasure *and* the vulnerability of women's physical presence in classrooms. There are interesting anthropological, ethnographical and development applications of feminist theories of the female body (Busby, 2000; Harcourt & Escobar, 2000; Harcourt & Mumtaz, 2000; Thapan, 1997, for example), which do operate in challenging physical conditions for women and which can be informative. Moreover, connections can also be made to the embodied theories of colonization and decolonization of Third World feminists, such as Eisenstein (1993, 1996), Alexander and Mohanty (1997). It may be necessary to recognize the 'korper' of women teachers (by ensuring, for example, access to decent sanitary facilities, and to safe spaces to live and work free from gender-based violence), but at the same time to recognize the importance of the leib and to examine in more detail the interconnections between korper and leib and how one impacts on experiences of the other.

McWilliam signals the extent to which her theorizing takes her against the grain of mainstream western educational thinking. In the theory and practice of education in development, dominant discourses of effectiveness, efficiency and performance indicators are equally intense, speaking to the urgency of improving material

conditions, of creating opportunities for as many people as possible on limited budgets. There may therefore, be even less room for complex theoretical maneuverings, and even less space for an apparently unnecessary discussion of teachers' bodies. I am on risky ground on a number of counts, but insist that although a woman teacher in Pakistan may experience corpor/reality in a qualitatively different way to McWilliam and other feminist scholars interested in female teaching bodies in western contexts, physical embodiment is nonetheless significant. The interconnections between korper and leib may be somewhat different, but the concept of corpor/reality is nonetheless a useful one for investigating and describing the complex and contradictory embodied experiences of being a woman teacher in development contexts.

Summary

To summarize, it can be seen that feminist scholarship in certain western contexts has produced rich, powerful, passionate, if contradictory and uncomfortable stories of women's teaching lives. Clear distinctions between researcher and researched become blurred. Autobiographical detail, combined with self-conscious reflexivity, allows for a more subjective analysis of the bodily experiences of teaching and of researching. Themes of woman teacher as agent of change, the subjective/objective fictions of being a female teacher emerge as of particular interest. Boundaries again become blurred as connections are made between curriculum and conception, erotic desire and desire for knowledge, pedagogy and passion. When examined in relation to researching women teachers' lives in development contexts, these themes remain very relevant.

In this chapter I have aimed to pattern relevant writing on women and women teachers' lives in western contexts in a way that sets a strong theoretical foundation for working with women teachers in development contexts. I make visible spaces and opportunities for projects of possibility, but also point to areas of potential tension and trickiness. I start to build a framework in which the lives and stories of women teachers can be placed at the heart of educational development, and their lived and

embodied experiences valued and recognized as important aspects of professional and political process and knowledge.

3: GENDER, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: ARE WOMEN TEACHERS WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT ?

Introduction

This chapter focuses on teachers as *women*, as contrasted with the previous perspectives on women as *teachers*. It is more particularly related to the field of gender and development, and to the policy and programming frameworks and initiatives of international development agencies and organizations. The rhetorical question posed in the title is meant to be provocative; it is an inherently problematic, but also engaging question. In discussing it from a critical, feminist perspective, this chapter makes connections between theories of women's teaching experience developed in the West, and gender issues for women in developing countries. I review and discuss relevant literature from the field of gender, development and education, in order to locate the lives of the women teachers I worked with in Karachi within a broader context of development theory, policy and practice. [6] In a brief situational analysis, I describe the ways in which gender issues have been integrated into education in development. I look in particular at the relationships that educational policy and practice construct between women teachers and girls' education. I examine the linkages between women teachers and girls' education from a perspective that is informed by conceptual shifts in development practice and theory from an approach characterized by the term 'Women in Development' (WID), to one generally known as 'Gender and Development' (GAD). I also address the somewhat problematic notion of women's practical and strategic gender needs. These issues are discussed with reference to the theoretical and programming implications for women teachers. In a final section I am particularly attentive to issues concerning the female body in development contexts and discuss in some detail issues relating to girls' and women teachers' bodies in schools.

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[6] The chapter, although primarily theoretical and literature-based, is very much informed by interviews and communication with a number of development planners and education specialists in development organizations.

The established literature and practice of gender and development is concerned with empowering women, and especially women marginalized by poverty, geographical location, class, disability, ethnic and religious affiliation, who experience a gender-intensified disadvantage in development processes (Kabeer & Subrahmanian (2000). Women teachers, who may also belong to marginalized groups, appear, however, to be considered somewhat differently. Even if not rewarded by professional wages, status or working conditions, they may nonetheless be accorded a quasi-professional status, being, in most cases, an employee or at least an official volunteer of an institution such as the state, a church, community or non-governmental organization. There is an implicit or explicit expectation that beyond ensuring their own and their families' survival and well-being, their work will make a significant contribution to the well-being of the children in the school. By extension this will then impact on the community and society at large. Like other professional women in development contexts, and particularly those working in development sectors such as health, agriculture and governance, women teachers have received relatively little attention in the gender and development literature. It is more often the beneficiaries of the programs and activities they implement and facilitate who will be the focus of attention.

At the same time, access to education has been seen as an important aspect of challenging gendered exclusions in development (Unterhalter & Dutt, 2001). The importance of education as a site in and through which significant developments for women and girls have taken place, cannot be denied. These developments continue to take place each day, and women teachers are both subjects and agents of them. National governments and donors have taken up the critical issue of girls' education, and the international community in general appears to be committed to gender equality in education. This attention to girls' education is aimed at creating long term changes in gender roles, relations and expectations in societies and is certainly encouraging. However, as discussed below, addressing critical issues for women working in the education sector from a gender and development, empowerment-focused perspective may also be an important element in the achievement of gender equality.

Gender, Education and Development

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in and attention to gender issues in development. The 1979 United Nations (UN) Convention on all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1989 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1995 United Nations (UN) World Conference on Women, and the resulting Beijing Platform for Action Statement, have all had a particular impact on the shaping of national and international development policies relating to girls and women. Different sectors such as health, environment and economics have, at least officially, taken on a commitment to addressing gender issues and promoting the equality of men and women. The Beijing Platform for Action (UN, 1995) in particular includes strong statements about women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is seen as possible through development attention to critical issues such as poverty, health, violence, armed conflict, education and training, and the girl child. The attention given to girls' education in international gender instruments, such as the CEDAW and the Platform for Action, indicates the importance of girls' education in promoting gender equality in society as a whole. The rights of women and girls are inextricably linked; educated girls become informed, active and influential women, shaping future society. At the same time, empowered women are better able to fulfill and protect the rights of their daughters, for example to education, health, safety and security.

In the education sector, too, gender issues are of concern, especially since attention has been drawn to the more than sixty million girls who are excluded from school. The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) highlighted the need for priority actions to ensure access to quality education for girls and women. More recent declarations, and especially the Dakar Framework for Action (a result of the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000) have, however, become more insistent about the need to take concrete steps to address the glaring gender disparities in education. Efforts have been stepped up, and the six goals outlined in the Dakar Framework have become international Education for All (EFA) targets. Most

importantly, increased financing, technical assistance and monitoring attention have been attached to these targets, in order to ensure that countries have the necessary resources to achieve them. In countries where enrollment for girls is relatively high, the quality of education may be more of a concern. Gender-sensitive curricula, pedagogies, and materials are seen to constitute important ways of encouraging girls not only to come into school, but also to stay in school and to achieve desirable results.

UNICEF in particular has taken an international lead in promoting girls' education, making this its uppermost organizational priority for the period 2002-2005. It is working with UNESCO and with other UN and international agencies, regional and national organizations, governments and civil society to support countries in achieving the EFA targets, with a particular focus on gender. A number of global and regional initiatives to promote girls education, such as the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), and the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI), involve multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors in partnership with national governments and civil society. UNICEF's new initiative, '25 by 2005' targets twenty-five countries in which the gender gap in education is particularly wide. In these priority countries, efforts will be intensified to achieve "robust and sustainable gains in gender parity in primary and secondary education". With a 24 percent gender gap in enrollment at the primary level, Pakistan is one of the countries included in this program (UNICEF, 2003).

International financial institutions, such as the World Bank, have also made considerable investments in girls' education. The promotion of girls' education is seen as a vital strategy for, amongst other things, increasing women's labor force participation rates and earnings. As the World Bank Education Sector Strategy (1999) states, "Equity considerations and the high economic and social benefits associated with girls' education require the Bank and others to work to reduce the gender gap" (p. 29). Other donor agencies have also made girls' education a priority area, but from a more rights-based perspective. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2002), for example, has recently highlighted girls' education as a "key focus area" for future programming in basic education. CIDA is committed to concentrating on "strategies that work to change the attitudes and practices that currently create

barriers to full and equal participation of girls and women in education systems" (p. 21).

Teacher policy attention has been given to women teachers, who are considered crucial in attempts to bring more girls into school, with different measures being taken to increase recruitment and retention. This is the case in Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 1992, 1994, 1998), but also in countries such as Bangladesh, Ghana, Gambia, India and Nepal. Especially in rural and more conservative areas, parents are usually more likely to allow their daughters to go to school if female teachers are present. Women teachers are also thought to be more supportive of girls' academic and personal development (Baden et al, 1994) and are often considered as important role models for girls in school. A study in Nepal indicates that mothers feel more comfortable talking about their children with a woman teacher, and in India, women teachers are considered 'more sincere' as they are less likely to be involved in local politics (UNESCO PROAP, 2000). Whilst not a strategy explicitly promoted in the Dakar Framework for Action, nor in individual agency policies, in different countries specific programs have been developed which target women teachers for initial and in-service training. Examples include the well-known BRAC program in Bangladesh, which is supported by multiple donors (BRAC, 2003), the Shikshakarmi Programme in Rajasthan, India (Rajagopal, 2000) and the new Sudan Basic Education Program (USAID, 2003).

Gender issues for teachers are addressed primarily in relationship to either access to teacher education for women, or to teacher involvement in gender-related programs and sensitization activities. Attention is primarily focused on the girl child, and women teachers are considered in an instrumental role in promoting and facilitating girls' education. Women teachers' experiences of teaching girls, nor their perceptions of girls' education and of gender equality issues are rarely considered (UNESCO PROAP, 2000). Gender training workshops for teachers tend to focus on home and school practices that discriminate against girls in favour of boys (for example, choosing boys in question and answer sessions, providing resource material in which boys are portrayed in active roles whilst girls are passive bystanders). There are few

documented examples of initiatives where teachers' own gendered experiences and issues are discussed, or related to the issue of girls' education.

Whilst gender issues may be a stated educational priority, education in development itself is rarely subjected to gendered analysis or to critical feminist investigation (Leach, 2000). Stromquist (1996a) is critical of the ways in which international agencies officially espouse gender equity, and attend to "gender issues", whilst consistently ignoring the contributions of feminist analysis. The agencies' focus is on supply, and it is assumed that the education being supplied is neutral, unproblematic and uncontested. As Leach writes, however, they fail to "understand, appreciate and act upon the powerful gender ideology embedded in all educational institutions, which along with the family, is the state's key agent of socialization of the young" (2000, p. 336). Policy documents, such as the Dakar Framework for Action, are optimistic in presuming that school will create positive change for individuals and future society, and especially girls. In contrast, Longwe (1998) interprets conventional school systems as "a process of schooling for women's subordination" (p. 19). Schools are "patriarchal establishments which are grounded in the values and rules of patriarchal society" (p. 19) in which females are conditioned to accept the naturalness of male domination. Jeffery and Basu (1996) critique the popular notion of schooling for girls as an effective contraception (and so able to reduce family size and decrease the birth rate) and express their doubt about the impact of education on women's autonomy. Their point warrants consideration, especially in a context in which "the schooling of girls is more often about inculcating piety and deference than learning how to insist" (Heward, 1999, p. 7).

Goetz' (1997) critical, gender perspectives in *Getting institutions right for women in development* encourage similar perspectives on the school as a development organization. In the education sector in general, the gendered ideology, structure and functioning of the school as an organization are rarely questioned. Issues that Goetz takes up, such as the gendered allocation of resources, of work assignments, and the gendered nature of the spatial organization of the offices and institutional timetables, are rarely considered in relation to the school. Stromquist (1996a) critiques the

tokenistic approaches often taken by governments and agencies and the constructed discourse that allows for gender equity to be defined, mediated, and controlled by patriarchal, male-dominated networks. Rather than looking at the educational landscape from the standpoint of being female, women and girls are treated as an add-on (Stromquist, 1996a). Stromquist critiques the "gender delusions and exclusions" in relation to education and democratization and describes donor-dominated, top-down approaches. Although rhetorically relying heavily on the involvement and buy-in of teachers, agencies make only passing reference to teachers' training needs, and exclude them from important conferences and other meetings.

For women teachers, who make up over half the global teaching force, their lives in school are only one aspect of complex and shifting configurations of multiple identities as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, community members, community leaders. They are implicated in the gendered ideologies of different institutions and organizations (Kabeer, 1994b), including the school, family, community and state. Women's varied roles and relations, the institutions and organizations with which they are involved, and issues of participation and empowerment within them are important, inter-related themes in the literature of gender and development. Consideration of these themes in relation to the lives and experiences of women teachers opens up new areas for inquiry with significant implications. Approaches to analyzing women's experience developed by scholars of gender and development outside of the education sector provide conceptual tools which are also of relevant to women teachers. This is of particular interest if such approaches and tools can be connected to sufficiently complex theories of women teachers' lives, and integrated into conceptual frameworks in ways which can position women teachers in development contexts as educational leaders and change agents. I continue therefore, with a short historical introduction to the field of gender and development, in particular to the shifts in development thinking from segregationist through integrationist to more transformative or agenda setting strategies (Elson, 1992, cited in Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996). This section provides a platform for further

discussion of women teachers in relation to gender and development theory and practice.

From Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD)

The shift in development thinking from an approach characterized by the term "Women in Development" (or WID) to one described as "Gender and Development" (or GAD) has been well documented by various writers in the field (Goetz, 1997; Kabeer, 1994; Moser, 1989; Razavi & Miller 1995; Staudt, 1990), and can be briefly summarized. Boserup's study (1970) first drew large-scale attention to the ways in which women were systematically being left out of development, that the benefits of development were not being equally shared between men and women. Moving to improve the situations described by Boserup, different groups (consisting mostly of women) in the North and South were mobilized to advocate for the changes necessary for women to be brought into development processes. The imperative was for women too to enjoy some of the material, economic, health, education and other opportunities that development offered (Goetz, 1992). A result of this first wave of concerted actions was the implementation of various structural measures. These included the setting up of women's bureaus in government departments, and the development of policies and guidelines relating to women by different international agencies and organizations. Various studies were also commissioned to measure and monitor women's involvement in development initiatives. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), for example, first developed women in development policy guidelines in 1976. At this stage, women's relationship to the labour market was of particular interest to researchers, but attention was also given to low education and literacy rates of women and girls, and to the need for reducing fertility rates. The status of women was of concern, but little attention was being paid to the role of men in determining the status of women. Approaches were often top-down (such as setting up government departments and official quotas for women), which imposed policies on female bodies. This was especially so in the case of population control. The term used

to describe this kind of approach was generally "Women in Development" (WID), and it is an approach that was particularly taken up in the education sector. In Pakistan, for example, there are distinct provincial and national Women in Development structures, with Women Development and Population Welfare Departments, and WID cells located in the Planning, Environment and Development Department at provincial level. There is also the federal Ministry for Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education.

Over time, however, questions began to be raised about the value of such approaches. Women were brought into structures and systems (such as the labour market) with little consideration of their culture and make-up. There was little analysis of the gendered development ideologies they represented. However, feminists soon began to draw attention to the fact that underlying such initiatives, there was no fundamental questioning of gender relations. Nor were the roles and responsibilities, potential and possibilities for women being redefined. Institutionally too, these approaches could be difficult to implement. In Pakistan, as in other countries, coordination between the official gender structures and the education sector is difficult, meaning that there is limited application of in-depth gender analysis of government programs for education (Brouwers & Zafar, 1999). Staudt (1990) describes how bureaucracies at international, national and local levels managed to institutionalize forms of women's involvement, which left them ultimately disempowered and disconnected. Goetz describes how the data has been collected on women's lives in ways which ignored concepts of power and reinforced existing paradigms. Women's programming was stripped of its political content, and women became problematized as 'deficits' and 'gaps' (Schaffer 1984, cited by Goetz, 1992). Gender position and privilege remained unchallenged as information about women was defined by the social and political status of those providing it (Goetz, 1994).

Advocates of a more transformatory approach to improving the situation of women sought to challenge the gendered nature of power relations in families, communities, organizations and institutions. The aim was to create more meaningful change *with* women of the South. The concept of gender was preferred in order to refer to the social

construction of men's and women's identities, roles and relationships. This represented a shift from WID approaches, which tended to separate women and treat them as an isolated category. So-called Gender and Development (GAD) approaches then began to be developed. This terminology helped to conceptualize alternative ways of working for and with women, which had the potential to challenge the status quo of gender roles, responsibilities and relations.

It would be inaccurate to present WID and GAD as dichotomously opposite approaches, rather there is a continuum that exists across policy and practice. Furthermore, scholars point to the frequent inconsistencies and disconnections in gender theory and practice (Goetz 1992; Rowlands, 1997, for example). Nonetheless my summary of dominant characteristics of the two approaches in table form may be useful:

Women in Development (WID)	**Gender and Development** (GAD)
Issues of entry and access for women are at the forefront	Issues of quality, empowerment, choice and rights are highlighted
The absence of women is discussed	Gender relations and power dynamics are discussed
Gender is treated as a separate development issue	Gender is considered in all development planning, and may be 'mainstreamed' across sectors
Women are addressed in isolation	Men and women brought together, and gender relations discussed in relation to contexts in which they are living
Women are targeted with specific interventions	Interventions target men and women
Top down, bureaucratic solutions are implemented, such as government bureaus for women's affairs	Bottom-up, women-directed, local solutions are sought
Policies aim to 'bring women in' to existing structures and systems	Solutions proposed seek to change established structures and systems to be more women-centred
A tendency to essentialize 'women' as a homogenous group with identical needs and interests	More awareness of diversity amongst women as, for example, young, and old, able-bodied and disabled, heterosexual and homosexual women articulate specific needs and interests

Different agencies and institutions have also responded to this shift from WID to GAD with policy reformulations (the Canadian International Development Agency, for example). However, GAD concepts and approaches remain problematic. It is important to acknowledge that the characteristics of such approaches may remain more intentional than actual. Attempts to mainstream gender (rather than use specific structures and policies) may also have diluted some of its political content (Goetz, 1994). Whilst GAD approaches may seek to express diversity in male and female gender identities, their operational frameworks nonetheless tend to treat women and men "as if they constituted immediately identifiable groups by virtue of their sex alone" (Cornwall, 2000, p. 9). Furthermore, Rowlands (1997) draws our attention to the ways that GAD, just as WID approaches, may allow gender to be used in a merely instrumental way in which women are involved to further quite different objectives. Prevailing gender ideologies then remain unchanged. This critique has relevance in an educational context where women teachers are often perceived as important means to achieving girls' education. With World Bank statements such as, "Investment in girls' education increases women's labor force participation rates and earnings" (1999, p. 29) and its promotion of girls' education as a means to economic development, this critique has particular significance. From such a perspective, girls' and women's bodies in schools are important only in the extent to which they constitute human capital and therefore a potential contribution to economic growth.

Practical and Strategic Gender Interests of Women Teachers

Molyneux' (1985) differentiation between the women's practical gender interests and women's strategic gender interests has been particularly influential in the framing of gender and development theory. It draws attention to the differences between responses to the concrete, practical, and more immediate needs of women, and responses which are more strategic interventions, aimed at longer term, more transformatory goals, such as women's emancipation. There is a parallel to be seen between WID and GAD approaches, and practical and strategic gender interests. Whilst to some extent problematizing the notions of "women's interests", Moser

(1989) takes up Molyneux' differentiation, and applies it to policy planning. In so doing, Moser suggests the need for more considered policy interventions which, even if aimed at meeting practical gender needs, are aware of longer term needs, and larger, strategic possibilities.

International agency and national government level policy responses to women teachers in development appear to be largely based on meeting women's practical gender needs. For example, Unterhalter and Dutt (2001) describe the Indian District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) as very much structured within a WID framework, with women being brought into teacher training alongside men. Where policy and programming responses tend to position women teachers as a potential means to development ends (and especially the EFA targets and/or specifically gender equality in education), attention is often focused on the tangible and short-term constraints to their participation. These constraints can include lack of appropriate qualifications, other household and childcare responsibilities, family and especially husband disapproval, and the financial resources necessary to pay for training and for living away from home during residential trainings. Solutions are proposed to these barriers such as creative scheduling, innovative packaging, incentive schemes and special allowances for women (Brouwars & Zafar, 1999; Government of Uganda, 2001; Sharma 1993).

Policy measures identified as necessary (if not necessarily implemented) in Pakistan, for example, have included the relaxation of the age limit rules for women teachers (from 18-25 to 18-40 in North West Frontier Province, to 14-40 in Balochistan). Entry requirements for women teachers in remote areas have also been relaxed to a Middle Pass, with the understanding that the Matriculate exam would be completed within three years. Salary incentive allowances for women have also been approved, as has the hiring of transport for female Learning Coordinators to visit and support the new women teachers in remote areas after their intensive training course. Other incentives have included the provision of cooking oil for both girl students and female teachers (Brouwers & Zafar, 1999). In other development contexts, attention is given to the difficulties for women teachers to combine their professional work with home and

child-care responsibilities, and to travel as easily and freely as men teachers might to meetings and training sessions. In southern Sudan, where male resentment and disapproval can be a particular issue, at the end of teacher training courses offered by different NGOs, women are often given gifts for their husbands, such as clothes and shoes (Kirk, 2003). Here, as elsewhere, there is also increasing recognition of the fact that in order for women to become teachers, provision must be made for women's bodies and for the children they produce, in the school and the training facilities. Therefore, it is more common for women to be able to bring their children with them to residential training courses, and sometimes to also bring a babysitter from their home.

Women's practical gender needs are most easily met through such programming features. However, as Goetz (1997) points out, "diffidence towards the gender-transformatory aspects of policy can also be reflected in the tendency to downplay the empowerment-related objectives of such programmes, and to focus instead on the 'technical' matters of quantifiable input provision, in a process which turns a blind eye to issues of women's actual control over these inputs" (p. 7). Questions have to be asked about the extent to which these technical details contribute to long-term shifts in gender roles, responsibilities and expectations. Although certainly important, emphasis on solutions such as specifically tailored programs to target women teachers may deflect attention away from the broader context of gender relations in which women are systematically marginalized. Such policies may be successful in bringing girls and women in to schools, but they may do so in ways which do little to change dominant attitudes toward the relative roles and responsibilities of men and women, nor to challenge the inferior positioning of women and girls in relation to men and boys once in schools. Questions relating to why women have such heavy childcare responsibilities or why they need male approval to train as teachers, are sidestepped. Equally left aside are issues relating to the sexual harassment and other physical risks that remain a constant fear for women teachers recruited in rural areas in Pakistan (Warwick & Reimers, 1995), as in other development contexts. Policy responses tend to simplify complex issues; in state education systems especially, these tend to be

determined at the central level, and then imposed. Such top-down approaches also tend to minimize the space available for reflection and discussion on the contexts in which they are implemented (Goetz, 1997).

Goetz' (1997) concern about the stripping of political content of development programs for women, and the problematization and stigmatization of women resonates with respect to women teachers. Policy and programming initiatives can position their unqualified status as problematic; women are in need of 'upgrading', and their teaching techniques in need of modernizing and updating. Training initiatives can certainly be very important, providing teachers with new and helpful tools and strategies with which to be effective educators, and to cope with the every day challenges of the classroom. Yet an unproblematic emphasis on women teachers' *lack* of official credentials may devalue the important work they may have previously been doing and ignore histories (the unofficial, informal and non-public histories) of women teaching and of women's education that might otherwise be very powerful. It may also divert attention from the gendered ideology of a system that produces far fewer trained female teachers than males. In these ways an inequitable status quo is implicitly sanctioned. Important questions, such as why women are less likely to have the same official qualifications as men, are rarely asked. With the pressure to implement new initiatives, and especially to achieve EFA targets, such histories and perspectives may become lost. The model of the problematic, deficit woman teacher is then perpetuated through attention to 'gaps' and 'deficits' in qualifications which require fixing with solutions such as workshops and training courses.

It may be hoped that the increased participation of women in education, as teachers in particular, may contribute towards long-term changes in gender roles and relations, expectations and attitudes, and can therefore be a strategic initiative towards gender equality. Yet it is hard not to think about the impact of the feminization of the teaching profession in western contexts. This has not necessarily created stronger positions for women as educational leaders, nor has it necessarily brought about the strategic advances for women that feminist educators might have been hoped for (Grumet 1988; Miller, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990). Questions have to be raised about development

policy focused primarily on recruiting, protecting, and sometimes promoting women teachers. Attention has to be given to the short and long term implications of increasing female participation in teaching, not only on girls' education, but for the system as a whole. Might it not be ultimately quite disempowering for both men and women if such policy further entrenches divisions of labour along gender lines, narrows the choices available to men and to women, and promotes gender identities for women that depend largely upon 'natural' nurturing, caring and child-rearing abilities? Schools throughout the world perpetuate inequalities along multiple axes such as gender, race and class. Subrahmanian (2002) questions the extent to which alternative schools in India, seeking to address imbalances (gender and other) in current access to education, do so in ways which exaggerate current patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Women teaching and girls learning in alternative, non-formal, female-only schools risk being doubly disadvantaged, situated at the periphery of an educational system that was developed by and for men, and which is slow to respond to changing gender roles and ideologies.

Rethinking Gender Policies

As Kabeer (1997) points out, the line between women's practical and strategic needs is far from clear-cut, and it is important to examine the related strategic advances for women which may occur through a more practical needs-based policy, such as child care provision. Whilst not specifically targeting the empowerment of women, rather the schooling opportunities for girls, an incentive which enables or encourages a woman to gain respectable and paid employment outside of the home, which brings her into the public arena, into contact with other women, men and organizations, surely constitutes a significant, strategic shift in gender relations. This shift is possible not only for the woman teacher herself, but also for other women in the community, and importantly, for the girls she is teaching too. [7] For Kabeer (1994b), meeting

[7] A development planner working with women teachers in an NGO in Bangladesh commented on the difference it made to perceptions of women and women teachers when they were seen on motorbikes. In some rural communities in Pakistan, women teachers are reported to "represent a new wave of active women" (O'Gara et al., 1999).

strategic gender needs may be thought of in more processual ways. The necessary processes entail responding to, but also challenging, the structurally defined gender relations embodied in women's practical gender needs. Rather than 'separate and dichotomous categories', women's practical and strategic needs are interrelated and complementary. Shifts in women's roles and responsibilities, perspectives and possibilities, brought about through practical policy interventions, must be seen as part of larger scale transformatory processes. As Kabeer notes, "meeting daily practical needs in ways that transform the conditions in which women make choices is a crucial part of the process by which women are empowered to take on the more deeply entrenched aspects of their subordination" (1994b, p. 301). Balancing the practical and strategic interests of women teachers in this way poses a considerable challenge to the education sector. The implementation of measures to meet practical gender needs appears to risk entrenching or at least perpetuating gender roles and relations. Women who become teachers may be able to exercise certain autonomy in the classroom, the freedom to develop their talents and be creative there, yet their position in the school, and in a primary classroom of it, remains relatively marginal. Furthermore, it will be rare for them to have an opportunity to participate in school or ministry level decision-making processes.

Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) are very aware of the fact that rethinking policy and practice from a gender perspective may not automatically result in significant changes in the unequal relations between women and men. Their classification of gender policies in terms of their intentions and outcomes is of relevance to the education context, and therefore warrants a summary. Gender-blind policies, which are most often implicitly male-biased, recognize no distinction between sexes, and promote existing gender relations, usually favouring men. Gender-specific policies use a knowledge of gender differences to respond to the practical gender needs of either men or women, but within existing gender division of resources and responsibilities. Gender-aware policies, on the other hand, recognize that men and women are significant development actors, and are both constrained in different, often unequal ways, and have differing needs, interests and priorities. Gender-aware policies fall into

two categories: gender neutral or gender-redistributive. Although they target both sexes and are aware of these differences, gender-neutral policies do not challenge existing gender division of resources and responsibilities. Gender-redistributive policies, on the other hand, are intended to transform existing divisions and distributions, to create more balanced relationships between men and women; they may target either or both men and women, depending on specific needs in the context. Gender-redistributive policies may also focus on meeting more practical gender needs of men and women, but at the same time will be more strategic in perspective. They may have the transformatory potential that other forms of gender-aware policy lack.

To apply these classifications to gender policies in education is a complex but worthwhile process. Tensions between the short term and long term gender interests of women and girls have to be acknowledged. Policies which may appear at least to some extent gender-redistributive, in that they target girls' education needs in ways which promote shifts in gender roles, responsibilities and expectations, may, from the perspective of women teachers be of the gender-neutral or gender specific type. This is the case when although women teachers' needs are met (for example, through the provision of child care facilities or culturally acceptable transportation possibilities), this is done in a way that perpetuates lived inequities for women in the home, school and community, and without challenging existing gender roles and expectations (for example, that women will always be responsible for childcare). Such policy approaches may be seen to "utilize women as a tool for a greater good" (Unterhalter, quoted in Raynor, 2000, p. 17). That greater good might be gender parity in school enrollment, but unless systemic changes occur in the way gender relations shape women and girls' experiences in the school, the policy initiative may be limited in its strategic impact. Ironically, it appears that much development planning and policy, and much of the gender training and sensitization being implemented in order to promote girls' education, is relatively gender blind; little distinction is made between male and female teachers. Little attention is given to the different experiences, perspectives, and desires either may bring to the training scenario, or to the differences in the different potential for implementation men and women teachers have once they leave. Other

interventions, such as those discussed which do acknowledge the family and child care responsibilities of women teachers, and/or which do provide extra incentives to encourage them into the profession in greater numbers, may be considered gender neutral or gender specific.

Alternative, gender-redistributive policies for women teachers do have the potential to provide opportunities for women to assert authority in positions of responsibility, leadership and influence within communities. Balancing practical and strategic interests might be done through teacher education initiatives for women which not only provide childcare and other necessary facilities, but which also create opportunities for women to discuss their situations in relation to those of the girls they are going to teach. It might involve women teachers being mobilized to take collective action on issues that affect them, and being involved in decision-making processes around curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, for example. Strategic gender training for women teachers would certainly need to address the gender needs (both practical and strategic) of men, and the possible challenges for women whose interests in advancing the status of women and girls are at the same time personal *and* professional, individual *and* collective. Acknowledging and working with women teachers' own experiences of girls' education may provide interesting starting points for teacher development initiatives which promote quality education for girls and leadership for women teachers (Mitchell, 1995). An example might be the innovative professional development described by Bonder (1995), which is very much centred on the participants' own understandings and experiences gender relations. This allows them to name and explore their own multiple and shifting identities as individual women who teach, but also as mothers, partners, daughters and friends. Readings, discussions and activities are all related to the lived experiences, attitudes and ideas of the women teachers. These all aim to deepen understandings and then to develop strategies which acknowledge and challenge the interconnections of gender inequities in schools, homes and communities.

As Stacki and Pigozzi (1995) write from their experience with an empowerment-focused teacher education program in India:

> Especially for female teachers in developing nations, curriculum must include a critical understanding of patriarchy, balancing traditional values of conventional societies with women's values and ways of knowing. Content should include analyzing and discussing to better understand themselves and their societal situation; recognizing the balance required to accommodate new definitions of men and women. (p. 18)

Whilst in the long term the gender interests of women teachers and girl students are certainly not unconnected, in the short term, tensions and contradictions may exist. This is especially so when development agency policy and implementation frameworks make it difficult for us to think about gender issues for women and girls at the same time. As Stromquist, Klees and Miske (2000) state, "It is not possible to isolate girls' education from the substance and politics of women's concerns" (p. 255). Yet this is exactly what can happen when programming, policy and thinking relating to girls and women are detached, and attention is focused on practical policy measures. The conceptual, practical and strategic linkages between women teachers and girls' education have to be explored in more depth in different cultural contexts, in order to better determine the relationships between the empowerment of women teachers and the empowerment of girls through schooling.

To summarize, despite some conceptual shifts towards GAD and towards more strategic, redistributive and more transformatory policy approaches, gender policies in education tend not to challenge the status quo for women in the sector, and remain rooted in the traditions of liberal feminism. Women's and girls' bodies are increasingly present in schools, and measures are being implemented to increase that presence. However, quantitative measures of access and equality of opportunity for women and girls have taken priority over more qualitative issues of gender identities, experience and expectations (Kabeer, 1997; Pearson & Jackson, 1998).

Women's Bodies in Development

We might look to the literature and practices of gender and development for more qualitative insights into the ways in which women's bodies are implicated in development processes. Here the female body is certainly present, and especially so in

the work of women's rights scholars and activists. Issues such as women's health and reproductive rights, violence and sexual harassment against women are of major concern. These issues were addressed in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), upon which much gender and development practice has been based. The year before, in 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo was a significant event for women, in that an agenda was built around the struggle for women's rights to reproductive health as a social and political issue. Taboos on sexuality, autonomy and empowerment for women started to crumble.

According to Harcourt and Mumtaz (2002) however, this crumbling is nonetheless taking place with little attention to local cultural understandings of a gendered female body. This is an issue which is of particular concern to Third World feminists. Development communities, and the feminist movement in general, have been criticized for tending to conceive of an essentialized, homogeneous category of 'women' that primarily reflects the needs, aspirations and perspectives of women from the North. The female body in development, although quite clearly marked as brown or black, may nonetheless be assumed to have the same needs and experiences as the white bodies of the predominantly middle class, well-educated and relatively privileged western women who are involved in development policy and research. As Spivak describes, women's bodies become objectified through development processes which focus on "white men saving brown women from brown men" (1988, p. 297). As Pearson and Jackson state, "Those who claim to be, or to speak for, 'women of the South' must also take care not to (mis)represent the diverse positions of different women, nor to collapse the complex multiple social identities of women into a simplistic notion of gender identity" (1998, p. 7). As gender and development specialists are often northern women, feminist post-colonial critiques of development also have to insist on a re-examination of white *women* saving brown women from brown men. I have to acknowledge that my own ideas of the female teaching body are located in a particular configuration of experiences and perspectives, and have to explore the implications of this for my theorizing.

Gender and development practice is to a large extent premised on the notion of 'women' as a unifying category, and as a group which is usually comparatively marginalized, repressed, vulnerable and poorly represented. Reconciling a political agenda that relies on such a collective identity with more postmodern notions of difference and diversity, of multiple, shifting and fragmentary identities, does pose a challenge for feminist movements and women's rights activists. Third World and post-colonial feminists assert the distinctiveness of the experiences of women of the South. In particular, they insist on the importance of addressing coloniality, and the ways in which it intersects with issues of race, class, and gender in multiple and ever-shifting configurations. In their work, the body is no longer bound to the private sphere, but is very much present in political, cultural and the social realms. The body is a contradictory site and sight of oppression and empowerment, of colonization, and of decolonization and democratization (Eisenstein, 1993). Some feminist theories of the female body may be critiqued for their ethereal, highly abstract nature. For Third World feminists, however, rather than abstract theorizing, their work has to address some very real issues. Rape, gender–based violence, female genital mutilation, honor killings and stove-burnings are explicit violations of women's and girls' bodies which occur with alarming frequency.

In development contexts especially, bodies are vulnerable to the impacts of armed conflict, to malnourishment and disease, including HIV/AIDS, all of which affect women's bodies more than men's (Save the Children US, 2003). Women too are affected by low levels of maternal health care and by sanitary conditions that make menstruation problematic. In Pakistan, as elsewhere, women teachers are also compromised by physical and sexual violence, by disease (Bradley, 1994; EI, 2001; Warwick & Reimers, 1995), and from the poor quality of health and sanitary conditions already discussed. An ongoing challenge for my own theorizing, and that of other feminist scholars interested in the body, is to maintain the centrality of these very concrete issues whilst at the same time, developing more complex theories of women teachers' bodies. In so doing, it can become possible to conceptualize female bodies in

schools as political, social and cultural entities, and much more than merely passive surfaces upon which development processes are imposed.

Female Bodies in Education

As Goetz (1994) and others point out, female bodies in development matter. However, as Stromquist (1996a), Leach (2000) and others observe, in the education sector these bodies are largely defined in male-dominated terms and conditions. In response to demands for equality, women and girls' bodies, especially in schools, have to be counted. There are usually too many students in a class, or too few girls in schools. More often than not, there are too few teachers, and most especially, too few women teachers. Girl students and women teachers are often a "present absence", and seen in terms of "negative numbers" (Schulz, 1994). Bodies and minds become separated in this counting process. Aside from this, attention to bodies in schools is generally focused in two domains, those of curricular intervention and of bodily regulation, protection and provision. The bodies to be regulated and protected are most often those of girl students and women teachers.

Development agencies and organizations may be involved in initiatives related to both, through, for example, support for lifeskills and HIV/AIDS curriculum development, and through support for policy development to create safer schools. When it takes place at all, curricular attention to bodies and sexuality tends to be through didactic instruction on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy prevention, often with a strong emphasis on abstinence (Mgalla, Schapink & Boerma, 1998). Although there are examples of work that does engage young people, to encourage them to speak openly about their bodies and their bodily feelings, in South Africa (Walsh et al., 2002), Uganda (Straight Talk Foundation, 2002) and South Asia (Seshadri, 2002), for example, much of this occurs outside of the formal school context. Stromquist (1999) reminds us of the controversial nature of even the most conservative curriculum units on adolescent sexuality and the potential for conflict between parents, religious leaders and education authorities. The body addressed in most formal school curricula tends to be a bio-medical body (Mirembe & Davies,

2001), which is assumed to operate outside of social contexts and behaves rationally according to information received. Little attention appears to be given as to whether such curricula are taught by male or female teachers.

Teachers' bodies too are affected by HIV/AIDS. Teachers and school administrators themselves can be particularly susceptible, with prevalence rates in the profession of around 30 to 40 % in some sub-Saharan countries. UNICEF (2000) estimated that in 1999, 860 000 primary school children in sub-Saharan Africa lost their teacher to HIV/AIDS, and there are reports of schools closing because of an HIV/AIDS-related dearth of teachers (UNESCO, 2002). However, there is little gender-desegregated data available in order to investigate the differential impact of HIV/AIDS on male and female teachers. In the planning, policy development and associated research, teachers' bodies are important, but primarily with regard to the number of student instruction hours lost when, because of HIV/AIDS, those bodies are absent from the classroom.

Education policy attention to the body may also occur around issues of student and teacher pregnancy, rape, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. As indicated by a number of recent studies (Hayward, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Mgalla, Schapink & Boerma, 1998; Mirembe & Davies, 2001; Omale 2000; Panos, 2003), these issues are certainly cause for concern. In many cases they may warrant protective measures, especially for girls and women, to be in place. The number and frequency of reported cases of sexual harassment and even rape of female students by boys and male teachers in school are, in some contexts, alarmingly high. Where HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst male teachers is high, the consequences of teacher abuse of girls can be even more serious. In South Africa it is estimated that 1 woman in 6 is in an abusive relationship, and that rape and assault are frequent features of intimate relationships (statistics from Human Rights Watch, 1995, quoted in Mlameli et al, 2001). As discussed in Chapter 1, the bodies of Pakistani women are also vulnerable to domestic violence, stove-burning, kidnapping and gang rape, (Pakistani Women's Action Forum, 1995; Niaz-Anwar, 1997). Women teachers are not immune to such violence. Pakistani women teachers in rural locations run the very

real risk of kidnap, robbery and rape (Warwick & Reimers, 1995). In the context of schools in sub-Saharan Africa, Makau and Coombe (1994) recognize that sexual harassment of female teachers, and the publicly acknowledged use of sexual power over women teachers in matters of appointment, deployment or selection for training, for example, has to be stopped. Policy development may be a way forward, but a way forward that risks further problematizing and stigmatizing the female body. This is especially so if the policy development process is one which excludes and/or marginalizes female educators.

Regulation of Female Bodies

Feminist scholars such as Kristeva (1982), Young (1990) and Oakley (1984), have critiqued the ways in which male-dominated popular discourses have made problematic the 'leaky' female body. Such discourses have attempted to organize and control the constant fluidity of women's bodies, to regulate and at times pathologize the menstruating, pregnant, birthing or breast-feeding body of women. It might be argued that the impulse to control and regulate the disorder that women and girls are perceived to create, is equally apparent in education. Rules and regulations concerning specifically female issues such as exclusion from school in pregnancy, may exist, and as such may be more explicit in their discrimination against girls' and women's equal participation in education. Chilisa (2002) reports that national education policies in seven countries of sub-Saharan Africa force pregnant girls to leave school. Six countries have re-entry policies. However, as the example case of Botswana shows, re-entry policies can ignore the gender dynamics that make it very difficult for a girl to return to school after motherhood, and tend to ignore the psychological, health, academic and security needs of girl mothers who re-enrol. Teachers' colleges may also exclude pregnant women, or in some cases even bar entry to married, and therefore potentially pregnant women. In many cases, however, an explicit ban is not required as prevailing gender relations and the facilities provided make it impossible for mothers, or even married women, to attend.

Teachers generally are placed in a paradoxical situation in which they themselves are subject to comprehensive control within a hierarchical structure, whilst at the same time they are authority figures with rules and regulations (such as uniform, pregnancy policies) to impose on student bodies (Sattler, 1997). This paradox can be especially true when female teachers are assigned pastoral responsibilities for girls and thus become responsible for the patrolling and disciplining of girls' bodies, imposing uniform and behaviour rules. As is the case in Mirembe and Davies' (2001) study of school culture in Uganda, equally disturbing for the girls is the women teachers' lack of attention to their bodies and to the very real issue of physical, sexual harassment by boys and male teachers in the school. "The [women] teachers themselves do not challenge sexual harassment in school but just choose to tolerate, thereby giving a helpless situation to the girls", girls report (p. 410). Yet it is important to recognize that this is occurring within a school context of hegemonic masculinity, where women teachers are also subject to sexual harassment by male teachers and students. As Goetz (1997) asserts, attention has to be paid to the gendered structuring and ideology of the organizations women are involved with, and so by extension, to the schools in which women teachers are working in. The sort of "gendered archaeology" of the organization that Goetz recommends might be very relevant for such a school context. It might start to unearth the gendered imbalances inherent in the ideology of the school, and in the ways it functions, in order to better understand the situation of a woman teacher who may have no authority, opportunity, nor professional training to be able to speak out about gender-based violence, sex or sexuality in her school.

Whilst there may not be an official uniform, or rules as strict as those imposed on women of the past, regulation of male and female teachers' bodies and their attire remains a feature of educational policy. In Uganda, for example, the Teaching Service Commission's Regulations dictate the teacher should "dress appropriately and shall be in mode of dress decent and smart". "Decently" is described as meaning "to dress in an acceptable manner without much ado, lavishness or outlandishness but appropriate to the circumstances" (Government of Uganda, 1996). Although such regulations are not specifically aimed at women, in situations where men retain positions of power over

women, women may find that such rules are more often used against them than against male colleagues. In situations where no such explicit regulations may exist, silent and implicit expectations of teachers' behaviour and outward appearance may be equally powerful devices in the shaping of actual activity and its interpretation. In environments where male power dominates, women are more likely to be the subject of both explicit and implicit censure and regulation.

Women Teachers: Nurturing and Caring Bodies?

On the one hand, then, development policy and discourse tends to problematize women teachers' participation on account of their deficit status and their 'messy' bodies. At the same time, discourses which connect women to teaching through their biological function of child bearing and rearing, are also relatively common. Emphasis is placed on women teachers' natural abilities in the classroom and on their reified status as carer and nurturer:

> A teacher is not just someone who stands up in front of a group in order to give a lesson; he or she should treat the boys and girls with patience, affection and care, preparing them to work for a decent standard of living, as well as reinforcing social role models that promote gender equality.
> Due to motherhood, and traditional family responsibilities, women are prepared to relate to children. This is undoubtedly a great advantage that relates to teaching. However, it is not enough. Professional training is required so that women may perform optimally in education systems. In traditional societies it is also important for female teachers to give parents greater confidence in sending their daughters to school. (UNESCO, 2000, p. 33)

Described by Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996) as 'eternalizing', this form of biological determinism through which certain roles and tasks are assigned to women on the basis of some notion of natural suitability, is one way in which gender inequality is perpetuated through policy. Elson (1992) describes how male bias is created in the development process, whereby the oppressive nature of many women's lives can result in them developing certain skills and aptitudes, but not necessarily by choice. Elson gives the example of how aptitudes such as women's "nimble fingers"

are developed by an upbringing that trains them in repetitive, mundane tasks such as sorting and separating. The 'great advantage', which, according to UNESCO, childcare and family responsibilities give to women teachers, has to be questioned. This is especially so when, as is the case for many women teaching in the developing world, it gives them the advantage of working for pitiful salaries and long hours, with heavy workloads from large classes and high administrative expectations.

So whilst on the one hand involving women in development, such eternalizing and essentializing approaches may mean that this is carried out on exploitative terms. Discourses of nurturing and caring may become in themselves regulatory mechanisms through which women's participation is controlled and limited to the classroom. Especially at the primary level, cultures of schooling intersect with cultures of the home and family (Unterhalter & Dutt, 2001). In contexts such as Pakistan, gendered power relations in both family and school converge to create constraints for women. Women are marginalized from leadership and management in education, and from policy and decision-making processes. Women teachers, defined primarily in terms of their biological body, become equated with less-valued classroom-based tasks, whilst men, their bodies invisible, become associated with higher status, mindful activities such as management, supervision and policy development. As suggested by Raynor (2000) in a Bangladeshi context, the preference for the terms female teacher and female education in educational policy hints at a biological rather than a gender focus. Such a choice of terminology may indicate a more conservative and less transformatory agenda than the terms gender or woman might imply.

With a development planning approach that emphasizes the need to train and upgrade women to work as caring, patient and nurturing teachers, the male domination of a system in which that very patience, care and affection is required just to cope with the frustrations of limited resources, pitiful salaries and so on, remains un(der)challenged. As the UNESCO statement points out, "professional training is required so that women may perform optimally in education systems" (p. 33). It is the woman teacher who is incomplete and insufficient, not the system. As Leach (1998) writes, "Development agencies' literature and activities surrounding the promotion of women's education

can be summed up as supporting women, firstly as reproducers and only secondly as producers" (p. 62).

To summarize, despite apparent attention to the interests of women and girls, education in development is generally a rather disembodied field of practice. With few published ethnographies of schools in developing countries (Mirembe & Davies, 2001; Stromquist, 1999) rarely do we gain a sense of teachers and students as living breathing bodies in schools. There is some attention to gender-based violence against girls in schools, but rarely is the classroom considered as a physically-charged space, nor teaching and learning considered as embodied processes. The female teaching body is a significant physical presence in development programming, and most especially so in relation to providing education for girls. However, physical presence tends to be measured only in quantitative terms. When it is considered from qualitative perspectives, alternative questions arise. How does the woman teacher feel standing at the front of the classroom? How does she enact an apparently gender-neutral pedagogy? How does she dress her obviously womanly body as an apparently rational, technical, sexless teacher? How can she manage the vulnerability of her body whilst at the same time recognizing it as a source of pedagogical insight? How can we theorize the positions, movements, sensations and feelings of a woman teacher as both constitutive of *and* more beyond classroom practice?

Discussion: Towards an Embodied Politics of Gender, Education and Development

Gender issues may have come to the forefront of policy development and practice initiatives, but this is most often translated into concerns to bring girls' bodies into school and to protect and regulate them once there. The dominant approach with respect to women teachers is one of integration into existing gender and educational paradigms. Such a paradigm appears to separate body from context, body from mind and most especially, bodies from politics. It focuses primarily on quantity rather than quality, on outcome rather than experience. Gender is separated into distinct sections, measures, and action points, mostly concerned with girls' access to education and

gender sensitive curricula and teaching and learning materials. Such separation may be typical of the "compartmentalization" described by Kabeer and Subrahmanian (1996), whereby social reality – and women's lives within it – is broken down into a series of compartments, each of which, it is assumed, can be analyzed and acted upon in isolation from others.

However, the literature of gender and development records that in many communities of the developing world, women are organizing in many different ways to resist and transform situations of oppression, marginalization and discrimination, to challenge what they see as limitations to their self-fulfillment, and to their contributions to education and to society in general (Gujit & Shah, 1998; Marchand & Runyan, 2000; Porter & Judd, 1999, for example). The impetus created at international conferences in Cairo in 1994 and in Beijing in 1995 has helped many women, and women's organizations, to assert their demands, to position their bodies, and in particular their health and reproductive needs and rights firmly within the public and the political domain. These demands have to some extent been incorporated into development policies and practices, and gender issues at least officially mainstreamed into most development initiatives. Women involved in other development sectors may be involved in different empowerment focused initiatives in which individual and collective autonomy, self-determination, and the potentially disruptive nature of changing gender dynamics are discussed. Women's collectives, action committees and organizations are means through which women can have access to production inputs such as credit and development assistance, and take control of the outputs (for example, garden produce, craft items and services such as catering, but also campaign materials, workshops and other activities). These are examples of concrete initiatives around which discussion and action towards women's empowerment and gender-related transformation can be made explicit. However, for women teachers such issues are seldom articulated, and especially so within the formal education sector. Women teachers are a group who receive little particular attention, and at least at an international level have not been very vocal in making their own particular demands.

Drawing on gender and development perspectives as described above, informs and challenges a broader inquiry into the patterns, processes and gender practices of women teachers' lives in development contexts. In asking the question, Are Women Teachers "Women in Development"? this chapter describes some of the key themes of gender and development literature, and examines them in relation to women teachers. Yet it also problematizes the concept of women in development and especially its depoliticizing and homogenizing potential. In drawing attention to gender and education in development contexts from the perspective of women teachers, I highlight the "irony of gender" (Altenbaugh, 1995). Whilst gender policy in education might seek to promote quality education for girls, often through the recruitment and placement of women teachers, I point to an inherent paradox. If the gendered experiences of women teachers are bypassed in policy and training that focuses on apparently gender-neutral professional practice, the tendency will remain to homogenize and essentialize the notion of teacher. Assumptions are then based on a generic 'male-neutral' model who is in fact quite differently positioned in relation to other teachers, to the administrative hierarchy of the school, to his family and to those of his students, than a woman teacher. An alternative, gender and development approach to thinking about women teachers may provide a more critical vantage point from which to explore the gender-based marginalization, discrimination and limitations that women and girls may experience in schools. Such a perspective provides a very pertinent critique of current policy which appears to stigmatize the female teaching body as leaky, problematic and in need of policy regulation. It may then encourage policy development which goes beyond a mere recognition of men's and women's different roles and responsibilities in society, and which aims to shift imbalances in gender and power relations.

4: METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the methodological foundations for a story of studying women teachers' lives in development contexts. The methodological question of just how one goes about doing research relating to women teachers' lives in development contexts is a central one to the study; methodology has become an issue of both process and content. Feminist research theory, which draws attention to the subordinate position of women within patriarchal systems and institutions, and insists on a "maximal ethics" (Patai, 1991) of concern and compassion for the women of the study, provides the foundation for the methodological approach. I discuss this in some detail, then integrate post-colonial perspectives and issues. I continue with a discussion of the different forms of narrative inquiry, such as life history, ethnography, and the human science, phenomenological approach of Van Manen (1990) that I use to work with the data, to develop my analysis and to craft a study of lived experience. Embodiment is also a significant process issue which I discuss in relation to these approaches. Unfortunately, the inevitable linearity of this chapter does an injustice to inter-twinedness of the theoretical components and to the ways in which these were lived out in the very real and very challenging experiences of the field.

Within this methodological framework, reflexivity is used as a tool to problematize the political dimensions of constructing knowledge in general, and of fieldwork in particular (Calloway, 1992), and to theorize researcher participation in the processes of research (Okely, 1992). The postmodern, post-structural self is a fragmented and discontinuous self, and the researcher I is certainly no unified and static self, rather a multiplicity of selves. These are all used as a resource for understanding others (Okely, 1992). Most importantly, this self is an embodied and extended self (Eakin, 1999), which experiences the world physically, can remember the past and anticipate the future, and which requires a mode of representation through which to express this.

Reflexivity: a Methodological Pivot

Reflexivity serves as the pivot of the methodological framework of this study. It is central to a family of related methodologies across a number of disciplines, including (auto)-ethnography, self study and narrative inquiry. Reflexivity is a tool used in particular by researchers who seek to interrupt dominant discourses of disembodied, androcentric development and to disrupt prevailing myths of objective research. Furthermore, the notion of reflexive practice has currency in teacher education, as well as in development practice. It is seen as a way of promoting practice that is more analytical, more thoughtful and considered than might ordinarily be, allowing for learning, improvement and refinement over time. Cole and Knowles (2000) suggest that the concept of reflexive inquiry has considerable potential for individual and collective teacher development. They use a very concrete example with which to explain it:

> Being reflexive is like having a mirror and transparent prism with which to view practice. Examinations of practice, with an eye to understanding and/or improving it, sometimes lead to complete turnabouts in thinking. Mirrors and prisms also separate light rays into component wavelengths, making visible the color of the spectrum. Similarly reflexive inquiry affords opportunities for the analysis of the various components or elements of teaching practice. (p. 3)

Reflexive practice and reflexivity as research methodology are of special interest to feminist scholars of education as ways of disrupting the false categorizations imposed on lived experience, and of building alternative theories. Scholars such as Grumet, Walkerdine and Steedman use their own experiences of mothering, of teaching and of being a girl in school as prisms through which to critically analyze and reconceptualize educational theory and practice.

Reflexivity is also a key concept for feminist researchers in other fields. It is a source of insight, illuminating how the marginal position of both female research participants, and the researcher herself, may provide unique insights and perspectives with which to analyze particular contexts, situations and relationships (Fonow & Cook, 1991). Reflexivity extends throughout feminist research processes, implying that one remains

attune to multiple gender asymmetries ranging from choices of research topic to the presentation of research results (Stanley & Wise, 1991). The notion of reflexivity that I use is necessarily multi-layered, drawing on a number of relevant foundations, in order to draw attention to and theorize around the marginal position of women teachers in development. I also use it to highlight the experiences of a feminist researcher whose relationship to different centers of power is a tricky and ever-shifting one. Reflection on these positions, on their limitations and partiality as well as the insights they may afford, is integral to the study. My research process has been a constant shuttle between my own experiences, intuitions and perspectives and those of other individuals, and of related institutions. The tensions and contradictions produced during the multiple research activities I engaged in were, at times, frustrating. However, when probed further, the discontinuities and the dissonances between periphery and center, between self and other, between theory and practice, become sources of insights and a springboard for further investigation.

Feminist Research: An Overview

Feminist research has evolved, expanded and connected with other theoretical positions such as post-modernism and post-colonialism, over a period of about thirty years, to create a concept which may be now be understood, described, and practised in many different ways. In fact, the very core and strength of feminist research may be that it is such an inclusive, difficult to define, and contestable term. Reinherz (1992) acknowledges the subjectivity of the field, and prefers to use a working definition that depends on self-definition. Feminist perspectives may inform every stage of a research process, from choices of research topics which reflect the needs and perspectives of women, to interviewing strategies that emphasize caring, compassion and collaboration. In different combinations and in different settings, such perspectives create significant epistemological challenges to more mainstream understandings of knowledge and knowledge production. Fonow and Cook (1991) recognize four themes common to the work of the feminist contributors to their collection: reflexivity, attention to the affective, the use of the 'situation-at-hand', and orientation to action.

Although by no means an exhaustive description of feminist research, these four themes nonetheless provide a starting point from which to highlight some of the implications of feminist methodology for a research project focused on women teachers in Pakistan. I continue with a further discussion of reflexivity from feminist perspectives, then a discussion of the implications of using the situation at hand, and of a feminist orientation to action in relation to this study. I discuss the attention to the affective later in chapter.

Reflexivity as Feminist Practice

The potential for reflexive practice to capture the marginalization that often characterizes female positions has already been mentioned. Primary school teachers in developing countries usually have little input into education policy. Whilst there are specific measures in place to recruit large numbers of women teachers, it may be argued that their needs and perspectives are largely ignored, as are their particular skills and understandings of teaching and learning. According to feminist researchers, however, this very marginality, this distance from the center of policy, discourse and mainstream activity, may provide women teachers with very valuable perspectives. It creates a particular sensitivity to certain issues such as the gender, race or class-based asymmetries of power, and generates important yet often unappreciated knowledge. Trinh Minh-ha (1991) suggests that whilst engaging in dominant ideologies, women simultaneously disrupt them as they "narrate a displacement as they relentlessly shuttle between the center (patriarchal norms) and the margins (their own understandings)" (p. 17). Whilst such displacements are largely ignored by traditional, positivist research paradigms, the reflexive practices of feminist research aim to recognize, and also validate such particularized experience and knowledge.

These perspectives are very relevant to the situation of women teachers who, in contexts such as Pakistan, are likely to be at the periphery of policy development. At the same time, though, they themselves embody policies such as the relaxation of rules on entry requirements for teaching, and other specific recruitment measures. They are also actively engaged in policy implementation, through curriculum delivery, for

example. However, whilst the value of these different positions, and the importance of women's perspectives on policy issues might be acknowledged by feminist researchers and activists, the difficulties of actually challenging the education system with such perspectives should not be underestimated. This is especially so when the conditions for women in schools that are described earlier, are taken into account; women teachers are likely to be un(der)qualified, very young and if trained at all, trained for a technical job that is relatively disconnected from their everyday realities. The marginalization they experience can make it very difficult for them to voice their perspectives. Open channels for communication between them and policy makers are unlikely to exist.

In comparison, the feminist researcher, who may also experience a certain marginality within traditional institutions and traditional research paradigms, is much more able to articulate her different perspectives. Although working somewhat outside of mainstream activity, she may also have far more potential to influence policy than the women she is working with. This is tension I too have to address in this study. I may be an "outsider within" (Hill Collins, 1991) – that is an outside researcher within a Pakistani teacher training institutional context, a woman teacher, and yet a white western, woman teacher. At times I am also a consultant located within development organizations, but with particular concerns about gender issues, about women's and girls' lives and about the fixed stereotypes and dominant paradigms of knower and known that development initiatives can perpetuate. These concerns can, at times, marginalize me from the centers of activity. From a feminist perspective, my own tricky, tenuous, and ever shifting positions may be considered as a source of particular insights. However, I also have to acknowledge the comparative privilege I enjoy in being able to articulate my perspectives in my writing and in my ongoing interactions with development planners.

Research from the Situation at Hand

Fonow and Cook (1991) refer to the tendency of feminist researchers to work from "situations at hand", but also to work within such situations in creative and

spontaneous ways. This tendency may relate to an ethic of care, to a concern not to overburden busy women with complex, time-consuming and research commitments, but also to a desire to in some way challenge the problematic power imbalances inherent in research relationships which predominantly benefit the researcher. Individual stories, memories, and lived experience, however, are very much at hand, and provide ample material to be shared and worked with. These issues were certainly on my mind as I set up individual and group meetings with women teachers in Pakistan, and yet I could not ignore the illusory nature of apparently natural settings. My research strategy involved me going to schools to meet with teachers at their convenience, to 'be with' women in their natural settings, and with a minimum investment of time and energy on the part of participants. It may have been more equitable, and less extractive than other research approaches that demand particular set-ups and conditions. However, the rooms that had been arranged, the drinks that were brought in and the efforts that had gone into liberating teachers from other after school duties were clear indications of the attention that had been given to accommodating me. In a research context imbued with the power dynamics of post-coloniality, of age, gender and class, the situation as hand, and the data gained from it, may never be as pure as one might wish.

Critical reflexivity can provide a means to negotiating the sorts of issues described above. Subjectivity, temporality and tentativeness have to be made explicit, and personal experience critically analyzed, and then used a resource for developing alternatives. For Arnot and Weiler (1993) a feminist stance implies a commitment to "continually and actively assess the appropriateness of the theoretical frameworks in which we work" (p. 2), and like other feminist researchers, Middleton (1993) "make[s] visible the positionality or situatedness" (p. 7) of her analysis, locating it within her own biographical, historical and cultural context. For Grumet (1988) it is her own particular 'situations at hand', experiences of being a daughter, and a mother which provide particular insights into the relationships between women and school curricula, and lead to new theories:

> I risk misinterpretation and anchor these arguments in examples drawn from my own experience of childhood and parenting because I am convinced that if only a theoretical presentation of these issues were offered, we would literally "overlook" the ways that each of us is implicated in them and the ways that our own practices as educators are motivated by them. It is the deviation of our own reproductive histories, mine and yours, from these theoretical formulations that opens the gap for new theory to fill (p. xvii).

My own research activities and data collection have been very much rooted in situations at hand, as I bring together stories of my own experiences, of women teachers' lives and of the lived realities of researching women teachers' lives. Whilst this methodology may be in keeping with feminist sensibilities to working in and closely with women in as un-invasive ways as possible, it nonetheless has to acknowledge the 'within and against' tensions that are created for women when such 'situations at hand' are constructed within a patriarchal status quo.

Feminist Orientation to Action

An orientation to action and social change is an important feature of feminist research practices, and many feminist academics seek to use their research to create improvements in the lives of the women they are researching. Many are simultaneously engaged with feminist movements outside of academia, using women-led and/or women-centred community groups, collectives, or organizations as sites for collaborative research. Research topics are chosen, investigated and presented with a view to changing public policy and advancing social justice. As Harding (1987) writes, "Feminist politics is not just a tolerable companion of feminist research but a necessary condition for generating less partial and perverse descriptions and explanations" (p. 127). Fine (1992) rejects the "ventriloquism" of researchers who hide behind the voices of others, denying the I of the text, and the political nature of their work. Middleton (1993) explains at length her own political involvement in a feminist politics of education in which her life history and autobiographical research, as well as her activism, are rooted. Grumet, whose curriculum theorizing is explicitly related to her own lived experiences of schooling, teaching and mothering, is also clear about the ultimately political and transformatory aims of her research. This study too is

orientated towards the development of educational policy that is more women-centred, and which recognizes the importance of the particular experiences and knowledges of women teachers. Furthermore, it argues for the need for more reflexive, situated research in which personal experience and perspective are resources for providing insights for improved theory and practice. As such it is political, disrupting official versions of research and policy process, and is potentially upsetting to existing norms, expectations and power relations.

Feminist research argues for an "intensified awareness of women's own realities, the shape of their own lived worlds", and has the potential to articulate, "a clear perception of the arbitrariness, the absurdity (as well as the inequity) involved in genderizing fields such as the arts, the sciences, and yes, school administration" (Greene, 1994, p. 22). It seeks to expose the patriarchal structures and systems within which women's experience is shaped, and to draw attention to the oppressive nature of many of the institutions in which we live and work. It seeks to disrupt the assumptions, expectations and worlds created for women by, for example, the "development regime" and the "gender regime" (Greene, 1994). As such, feminist theory is a crucial tool in a research project which seeks to further understanding of the ways in which women teachers are positioned by dominant discourses of education and development, and to open up alternative spaces for investigation and action. Although in no way monolithic, unified structures, the institutions of both education and development can be critiqued as highly patriarchal. Schools around the world are traditionally constructed along androcentric models, with male-biased authority structures, curricula and teaching and learning materials which presume a male norm. Organizational and systemic cultures marginalize women teachers, female non-teaching staff and girls into the corners of the staff room, and of the playground, and away from the spaces in which decisions and policies are made (Acker, 1994; Apple, 1983; Kenway & Willis 1998; Robertson, 1993; Weiler, 1988). Since the 1970's, the processes and structures of development have also been subjected to a powerful feminist critique which draws attention to the unequal ways in which men and women participate in and benefit from development initiatives. Stromquist (1994, 1995, 1996a & b) and Leach (2000) have in

particular critiqued the male-dominated paradigms of gender and gender-related responses that have been integrated into dominant discourses and practices of education in development. For a critical study relating to gender in education and development, feminist theory is an important theoretical and methodological lynchpin.

Researching Lived Experience

Van Manen's (1990) phenomenological approach to researching lived experience is of considerable relevance to this study. His work offers a way into conceptualizing both lived experience and the study of it. Van Manen theorizes from everyday life, from what he calls the "lifeworld". He asserts the value of research which is attune to the lifeworld, which reflects on it, and which seeks to communicate the meaning made of this experience. Phenomenology involves the thoughtful pursuit for meaning in everyday experiences, without the pre-imposition of particular categories, classifications or taxonomies. It is the study of essences that aims to better understand what it means to be in the world. Rather than an abstract and disembodied science, phenomenology is a very subjective approach. Phenomenological research is what Van Manen calls a "caring act" (p. 5), which engages the researcher in a very committed way. Like Van Manen, I am convinced that,

> to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to know the world is to be in the world in a certain way, the act of researching –questioning- and theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better to become the world. (p. 5)

My questioning of living in the world is shaped by a critical gender perspective, and my own 'caring act' involves investigating in more detail the lived experiences of women teachers. These are experiences which I feel are often unnoticed, ignored, dismissed or misunderstood by educational researchers and policy-makers. Smith (1987) is particularly interested in the lived experiences of women in society, describing a "line of fault" and "a point of rupture in my/our experience of woman/women within the social forms of consciousness – the culture or ideology of

our society – in relation to the world known otherwise, the world directly felt, sensed, responded to, prior to its social expression" (p. 49). Smith applies her theories to analyze women's experiences in different contexts, and her work is a very appropriate starting point for me too. From here I can expose and investigate the ruptures in my own experiences, and in those of women I work with. I can start to articulate the dissonances between the official policies of education in development and women's lived experiences of schools, classrooms, families and society.

Smith explains that women may experience disjuncture as attempts are made to fit their own lives and experiences into theories and formulas developed by and for men. Such attempts dominate the public world, and so the individual's struggle to understand and make meaning from her reality can be a silent and lonely one. Smith draws on Marx and Engels to describe the power of ruling classes to shape consciousness throughout society, but is adamant that their analyses of dominant ideologies are incomplete without specific attention to gender. Traditional research in sociology – as in any academic discipline - is a socially organized practice, and is therefore created through and by discourses, conceptual frameworks, tools, and methods that are oriented to men's experience. The woman subject of the research is objectified within frameworks which disconnect the knower from the known, and which entrench us in particular functional, rational, abstract systems, far removed from the specificities of our own locations. In the education context, in which, as Miller writes, "while most teaching is done by women, most theorizing about schools and classrooms and teaching and learning has been done by men (1995, p. 24), such concerns are particularly pertinent. Smith's alternative, "a sociology for women", makes women's realities visible, and articulates the knower's location as part of the knowing. She shifts attention to the standpoint of women, and in so doing, can express the lived experience of being a female body, experiencing the material world and her position in it in multiple ways. By problematizing the everyday world, we may be able to perceive the ways in which "the conditions of our actions and experiences are organized by relations and processes outside them and beyond our power of control"

(p. 176), and to "see the 'micro' and 'macro' sociological levels in a determinant relation" (p. 183).

For Khayatt (1992), Smith's methodology enables her to do research with lesbian teachers, locating her own knowing within a social organization that conceals and/or excludes lesbian teachers. Khayatt challenges such relations and procedures which "serve as a boundary to inquiry rather than as a beginning" (p. 93), and makes problematic a normative, inherently ideological categorization of heterosexuality. Smith's (1987) belief that "opening an inquiry from the standpoint of women means accepting our ineluctable embeddedness in the same world as the subject of our inquiry" (p. 127), enables Khayatt to draw on her own experiences and perceptions of lesbian teacher identity. Mueller (1995) also uses Smith's methodology to expose the oppressive ruling relations in which Peruvian women may be located, challenging the 'Development regime' and its associated research practices with alternative perspectives. As a researcher attempting to highlight the experiences of Peruvian women in the everyday world, she positions herself at "precisely the moment at which people's ordinary, everyday lives are touched by the discourses and disciplines of domination which powerfully shape (but do not determine) them" (p. 96). Mueller's alternative research strategy attempts to turn on its head the traditional research scenario, where the women become the objects, the known, within a pre-defined field. Instead, the development discourse, seen now from the women's perspective, becomes the topic of the research. Mueller describes how the train for which the women are waiting represents dominant, persistent, and inequitable Third-World-First-World relations. The foreign tourists it brings to buy their hand-made goods follow in the footsteps of the colonialists coming to the area in the nineteenth century, to take wool back to the mills of northern Britain. Mueller's study is a significant example of how Smith's methodology can be applied in development contexts. At the same time, it raises questions for me about the researcher's own interpretation of these women's realities, and the extent to which she too is complicit in the dominant Third World-First World relations she critiques.

Such issues cannot be ignored, and post-colonial feminists draw attention to the significant imbalances in power and status between women of the West and of the developing world. Development policy and practice may pay lip-service to the complex issues of inequitable power relations between local people and outside interventions, but in the field of education, where the lasting legacy of colonial imposition may be very tangible, issues of post-coloniality warrant particular attention.

Post-coloniality and Education in Development

We are living in what Lather (1996) describes as a powerful post-colonial moment in world history. In many aspects of our research, as well as day-to-day lives, it is increasingly impossible to ignore, or to gloss over, the powerful and persistent legacy of European colonial expansion to Africa, Asia and Latin America. The imperative is to acknowledge and then seek to change the explicit and implicit ways in which dominant discourses continue to structure the world, and knowledge of that world, according to power relationships established during colonial empires. Such relationships position colonized peoples, their cultures, countries and knowledges as outside of the main western canon. They may be seen as exotic, inferior, 'other', or they may not be seen at all. The superiority of white, European perspectives is constantly reinforced by a powerful, but often subtle hegemony. Patterns of domination were so strongly embedded during colonial times, and are still perpetuated by those whose interests they serve, that we are often blind to them. We allow them to continually replicate themselves. Said (1978) writes of the "positional superiority" assumed by the colonial powers and still in evidence today. In relation to female participation in education in particular, it is also important to recognize that the educational systems inherited by newly independent countries from colonial powers were "riddled with inequities" (Mahadevan Eyango, 2001, p. 107), and that access to education for colonized peoples was very unevenly distributed across class, race and especially gender.

Post-coloniality, as articulated by theorists across different academic disciplines, implies a challenge to this status quo, a questioning of the assumptions made about

others. It also represents the affirmation of powerful voices from 'the margins'. An essential research tool of post-coloniality is reflexivity, and most importantly, a notion of reflexivity that extends from the very start of a project, questioning and challenging the assumptions upon which all choices, from topic to style of presentation, are made.

Influential works of scholars such as Fanon, Said, and later post-colonial feminists such as Trinh Minh-ha, Mohanty and Spivak have created major shifts in the ways in which anthropologists, ethnographers, and other social scientists conduct research and especially fieldwork. Educational theory in development contexts, however, remains relatively naïve of post-coloniality and its implications. The problematic nature of development itself, as a post-colonial construct, is acknowledged by many writers, such as Escobar (1995), as are the many contradictions inherent in the practices of development. However, the specificities of education in development are rarely explicitly probed. Spivak (1993), Bannerji (1995) and hooks, (1994), for example, write eloquently of the impositional, colonial gaze of "the other" as they teach classes in western universities. However, my own gaze upon the women teachers I worked with in Pakistan remains untheorized, as is the gaze of other western consultants and technical experts observing the work of teachers in development contexts.

In the educational context, the legacy of colonialism is perpetuated through school curricula, materials and administrative structures, based upon western models. In these, the Third World subject is totally ignored, is placed at the margins, or is rendered so 'exotic' or 'other' that she remains unrecognizable in her own milieu (Willinsky, 1998). The educational consultant, bringing new educational materials, theories and ideas to a development context may equally reinforce entrenched patterns of knowledge, generated in the North, then being taken to the South. The libraries of the British Council in Uganda, of the teacher training institution where I worked in Pakistan, and even the bookshelf of one of the teachers I interviewed, contained copies of a recent book written by a McGill faculty member. Yet so few works written and published in Pakistan or Uganda, for example, ever appear on the shelves of our western libraries.

Academic research has perpetuated such inequities through its "underlying code of imperialism and colonialism" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1998), and it continues to draw on an archive of specific knowledge and systems, rules and values. The dominance of particular systems of classification and representation ensure that western interests remain dominant, creating very real material consequences for colonized people. In critiquing traditional "open cast mining approaches to research (see, take, destroy)" (p. 118), Tuhiwai Smith challenges us to take a "more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices" (p. 20). Although feminist researchers may be more attune to subordination, oppression and domination of all forms, post-colonial feminists force us to scrutinize the assumptions upon which such feminist methodologies are based. Mohanty (1988) critiques the hegemony of the western scholarly establishment, and also the western feminist scholarly establishment. This latter tends to create and publish texts that are constructed predominantly from the perspectives of white women researchers, comfortably located within western academia. bell hooks (1989) attests to the racism and class elitism which has shaped so much feminist theory in the past. These issues of are particular significance for western feminist researchers studying the lives of non-western women.

Alexander and Mohanty (1997) challenge the "hegemony of whiteness", "a particular characterization of gender" that is "naturalized through the history and experiences of middle class, urban, Euro-American women". They reject the claims of a new form of 'international feminism' that despite its inclusivity, its articulation of difference and its polyvocality, is nonetheless "often premised on a centre/periphery model where women of color or Third World women constitute the periphery" (p. xviii-xix). Narayan (1997), however, complicates over-simplified versions of colonialism, making us aware that colonialist representation is not exclusively made by western subjects. Furthermore, the post-colonial claims of Third World feminist movements may be dominated by those of middle class, successful women. These women too may ignore or render 'other' the realities of women differently positioned to themselves. As a renowned post-colonial, feminist scholar, Spivak (1990) is very conscious of her

own identity as a Third World woman, but having grown up as a relatively privileged middle class Indian, now speaking from an academic position in a university in the United States. She reminds the reader of this particular position, especially in relation to the subaltern, the oppressed other, whose perspectives she wants to make known, and whose oppression she wants to challenge.

The impossibilities of ethically speaking for the oppressed, and of western feminists representing women of the developing world, are issues of particular concern to post-colonial feminists. When subjected to rigorous post-colonial analysis, the assumptions of methodologies through which western researchers seek to give voice to the marginalized, may also be critiqued as perpetuating a patriarchal, colonial superiority. Spivak (1990) clearly articulates the paradox of letting the subaltern speak, but at the same time believes contradictions can be productive. Lather (1996) uses metaphors of mapping and journeys to describe her "continued wrestling with the meaning of a post-colonialism that charges my 'white feminist imaginary' (Blunt & Rose, 1994, p. 4) with rethinking hegemonic maps of representation" (p. 362). Hale's (1991) interview with Fatma Ahmed Ibrahim, a leading activist in the main Sudanese women's organization, and Sudan's most visible woman politician, raises many questions about shared cross-cultural notions of feminism, and in particular about the use of a life history research mode in such a context. Hale feels that she has been somewhat manipulated by Ibrahim to convey particular political messages. She finds it difficult to reconcile her disappointment in a woman she has always held in respect with her acknowledgement that she cannot expect to be addressed by her interviewee as she sees herself. She realizes that to Ibrahim she represents so many other categories of other, such as colonizer, white, westerner and academic. Her telling of Ibrahim's story is therefore not as straightforward as it might seem.

There are no easy answers to the challenges of post-coloniality for a study relating to women teachers' lives in development contexts, especially as my own subjectivity is conditioned by and complicit in the very institutions, attitudes and perspectives I might critique:

Reading this account [Willinsky 1998] *brings home to me how strongly my own perspective on the world was shaped by an imperialist imperative to capture, collect and collate the world, by a desire, if not a need, to render familiar as much of it as possible, and in so doing, make it safe. Growing up, home was dominated by a father whose fascination with the world was matched by his suspicion of it. Maps were sacrosanct and the places they described places to be first imagined, reconnoitered, then cautiously approached after carefully planning and preparation. Travel to the imagined place made it familiar, tamed the potentially dangerous possibilities it may have held, 'bagged' it in a way that served to reinforce the patriarchal position as 'knower'. As I grew older, I sought to explore for myself the landscapes on offer to us as a white, middle class, educated family of the 'first world' in the piles of travel brochures, library books, timetables and maps that collected around my father's chair. My own wanderlust challenged the patriarchal position, at the same time as it offered him a chance to view more of the world from a safe distance, through the reassuringly familiar lens of my camera, my stories and my descriptions. No longer the colonial traveler, seeing and experiencing first-hand the wonders of the world, he now becomes the voracious consumer of knowledge of it – a knowledge of it clearly acquired by myself, and by him, through the education we had of the world. Daddy remains torn between enthusiasm for my adventures, assuming my complicity with his taming imperative, passed from father to daughter, and a reluctance to allow them the possibility of dislodging him from pole position of knower of distant places.*

Journal entry, November, 2000

Coloniality is implicitly connected for me with patriarchy. The school system in which my geography lessons, and my school assemblies on poor children in Sierra Leone took place, was literally "the father's world" (Grumet, 1989, p. 26). If it was not my father delivering such lessons, then it was a teacher under his supervision, or even the vicar of the affiliated church. The influence this has had on me cannot be denied; I have to acknowledge and question my continued impulse to travel the world and to work internationally more often than locally.

Post-coloniality is evident for me in the research activities I conduct with women teachers in Karachi. It is implicit in the time and respect with which I am accorded in a Pakistani school. It is implicit in the extent to which I, as a white western researcher or consultant, am able to arrange a meeting with Ministers of Education to whom the women teachers I am working with might have more limited access. Post-coloniality is implicit in the way in which apparently wherever I turn, the education system, the university, the library collection and the reading list for students, is so familiar to me.

As Willinsky (1998) describes, the systems and structures, the syllabuses and exams discussed by teachers in Pakistan are quite similar to those that I experienced in my own schooling. At one point in our conversation, when describing how the principal of the school is male, one woman states, "*We have adopted the British system you see, and although some things have changed, many haven't.*" The books on her bookshelf, and her familiarity with the theories and methodologies of teaching and learning that are considered good practice in teacher education programs in North America are an indication of the more subtle ways in which implicit western superiority is embedded in teaching, learning and research processes in development contexts. But this teacher's own complicity in such a situation and her enthusiasm for works researched and written far away from the classroom in which she is teaching, indicate the complexity of post-coloniality which is rarely addressed in education in development.

I have my colonial ancestors to thank for the fact that as a native English-speaker I can travel extensively without ever having to attempt another language. I am aware that I have what might be considered a considerable advantage compared to those who have to learn English. When an interviewee articulates her hope that she will learn from me, my modern, western teaching theories and methods are assumed to be better than local ones. Whilst mine might have been developed thanks to a privileged access to resources, books and teacher education provision, I have to question their superiority compared to those of other teachers. I cannot, however, criticize my research participants for actively implicating me in power dynamics I might feel uncomfortable in. I can only seek to recognize and explore the complex web of relationships, loyalties and demands in which the researcher and research subject are positioned. I feel uncomfortable when another interviewee explains that despite applying several times, she has been unable to access teacher training opportunities because she does not speak English; she pulls out the letters of rejection to show me. The institutional environment which allows me to work effectively in my own language excludes her, and I am at a loss to know quite what to say. I have to resist over-simplified versions of colonialism, pay attention to the complexity of the situation, and attend to the subtle shifts in position and perception that are possible. As researcher, my own ambiguous

position as complicit *and* resistant in the perpetuation of asymmetrical relations between North and South adds another layer of complexity to this study, and to any research in education in development. Post-coloniality is interrupted, but only temporarily, and in an uneasy, somewhat uncomfortable (judging from the looks, the nudging and the shifting around), and very fleeting way when I ask a group of women teachers in a school in Karachi what *they* think is important to research for women teachers.

As Willinsky (1998) points out, schools around the world are surprisingly familiar and so there are comparisons and cross-referencings which naturally occur, and yet which, from a post-colonial perspective, need to be more critically addressed. As a consultant, my work depends on the transfer of technical assistance to countries of the South. Although I may desire a more collaborative approach, a bottom-up, people centred-approach, in which southern partners are 'in the driving seat', at the same time, certain methods, within certain paradigms, are promoted. As white, middle-class and well-educated men and women from the North, consultants and technical experts impose particular expectations of gender equality on to the situations we experience and yet rarely is there opportunity or encouragement to reflect on these. Crossley and Broadfoot (1992) are concerned that the huge increase in international travel and consultancy has increased the danger of inappropriate international transfer of educational policy and practice. "Looking my own whiteness in the eye" (Razack, 1998) becomes almost obsessive in a post-colonial context such as Pakistan, and yet speaking with development planners, my conversational maneuvers to try to look at our collective whiteness in the eye create the sorts of tensions and uneasy moments I do my best to avoid.

Whilst it in no way negates the serious issues of power and privilege, reflexivity is a tool with potential to maintain vigilance to the inequities in position and status of post-colonial research, and to problematize one's own privileged whiteness. It is a vigilance which is attentive to my own stance as a positioned and self-positioning subject. It creates awareness of how my interpretations of other women teachers in development contexts are shaped and represented both within and outside of the institutions in

which they are articulated. Integral to reflexivity is also the willingness to acknowledge the complicity of researcher in what she seeks to interrupt. As Grumet (1988) writes, "The very institutions that I repudiate for their perpetuation of patriarchal privilege are the ones within which I have found the voice that tries to sing the tune of two worlds" (p. 29). Reflexive research depends on an acknowledgement that all assumptions are subject to questioning. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) sets an example:

> In writing close to the other of the other, I can choose only to maintain a self-reflexively critical relationship toward the material, a relationship that defines both the subject written and the writing subject, undoing the I while asking, 'What do I want wanting to know you or me ? (p. 76)

Embodiment: Process and Content

Reflexivity is a tool through which to expose the discontinuities, inequalities in what is apparently known, what is presumed and what is accepted wisdom about women teaching in development contexts. It is also a tool with which to develop alternatives, and a way in which to describe and analyze what Grumet (1988) describes as "a secret everybody knows" (p. 3), that is, body knowledge. She is referring to the extent to which what we know about the world and how we experience the world is much more than a cerebral process. As an integral element of lived experience, it is to the notion of embodiment that I now turn.

> The bodily experience of particular bodies perceived and lived as women constructs a self and place that has a political meaning and is based on fleshly experience. As feminists it is important to validate the bodily experience of women in their myriad locations, constructing a concept of self and place that has political meaning and experience that forms the basis for political actions. (Harcourt & Mumtaz, 2002, p. 37-8)

Embodiment is a term used to describe the multiple ways in which our lived experience of the world is inherently physical. It is the locations, sensations and actions of our bodies which we interpret in order to know; what we know is then performed in various physical ways. Living and learning, experiencing and being are

dialectical processes involving the psychic and the social; the body is at the interface of the two (Connell, 1995). Embodiment may be captured and shared through a very reflexive research process, but is a very absent element of more traditional, supposedly objective research methodologies.

Traditional forms of autobiography and 'I' narrative have tended to posit an entirely cerebral, unified author, and to focus attention on more abstract issues of identity. However, there is increasing attention to and interest in the body as a "space-occupying entity in the world" (Eakin, 1999, p. 33), as a mediator of social and psychic experience meaning making. In fact, all identity narrative has a bodily essence. As Harcourt and Escobar (2002) write, "While men certainly have bodily experiences as well, history and culture have rendered their relationship to their own bodies very differently" (p. 10). Although men too have become interested in the ways in which human experience is shaped by one's corporeal form, it is feminist scholars who have shown particular interest in the body, and especially the female body. Their accounts of corporeality are of interest to this study, providing interpretative resonance for theorizing my own experience of research, and for reconceptualizing the lives and work of women teachers in development contexts.

The female body has, in different ways, always been at the centre of feminist thinking and action. Attention has been drawn to the multiple ways in which female bodies have been talked about, acted on, classified, regulated, controlled, altered, decorated in both private and public realms (Brook, 1999). Much of this work has been empirically based, using feminist research methodologies to work with individual women and with groups, to challenge policy and other popular discourses, such as those promoted in women's magazines. In recent years, however, a number of feminist scholars have taken a more philosophical approach to understanding and writing about women's bodies, developing what has become known as corporeal feminism. Perhaps the most well-known of these writers is Elizabeth Grosz.

Primarily concerned by the many ways in which human experience tends to be divided into categories of mind and body, and how the mind inevitably takes precedence over

body, Grosz (1994) seeks to disrupt these and other dualisms. To describe what she calls "embodied subjectivity" and "psychical corporality" (p. 22), Grosz introduces the Mobius strip, a model used by Lacan. With this she demonstrates a rethinking of relations between mind and body. This kind of figure-of-eight model, where inside becomes outside and outside is inside, "provides a way of problematizing and rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject, its psychical interior and its corporeal exterior, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducibility but the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, vector, or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside" (p. xii).

Grosz traces a history of western thinking, for which she holds Descartes quite responsible, in which the body has been philosophically projected as an ahistorical, biologically given and acultural object, inferior to the mind. Natural science and medicine too, have also regarded the body as an object for study, but have considered its sensations, activities and processes as somehow of a lower order than those of the mind. The body is coded in terms that are passive, "animal" and of little value, all to be transcended by the superior, rational concept of mind. Across these domains, theories, which have traditionally been generated by men, were developed from men's experience, and remain predominantly male-centred. Philosophy has developed as a discipline through the marginalizing and excluding of the body, and the exalting of the mind. However, as Grosz points out, it is that *male* body that has been disavowed and excluded, and the *male* mind exalted. Women, on the other hand, have been contained within their bodies. Female bodies, in complete contrast to the male mind, are represented as frail, imperfect, unruly and unreliable. They are defined by biological functioning, especially child-bearing, and as such are vulnerable, and in need of special protection and treatment:

> The coding of femininity with corporeality in effect leaves men free to inhabit what they (falsely) believe is a purely conceptual order while at the same time enabling them to satisfy their (sometimes disavowed) need for corporeal contact through their access to women's bodies and services. (p. 14)

Feminist scholars McWilliam (1996a, 1996b) and Grumet (1988, 1991) also write to disrupt this dichotomy between mind and body, to acknowledge and theorize the bodies of teachers and students in classrooms, and to reframe curriculum, teaching and learning processes in bodily terms. For Grosz, the body provides a point of mediation between what is perceived as purely internal and accessible only to the subject, and what is external and publicly observable. It is a place from which to rethink the opposition between the inside and the outside, the private and the public, the self and other, and other binary pairs. Understood as such, the female teacher's body is a key dimension to an anti-essentialist project of developing more complex, feminist theorizing about women's teaching in development contexts. In order to take on such a dimension, however, a careful path has to be drawn to coherently connect feminist theory, gender and development, feminist pedagogy and education in development in ways which have resonance for real women teachers.

Grosz develops her own account of the human body which serves feminist purposes and advances the cause of women. She is critical of the way in which other feminists have actually perpetuated the dualisms of male/female and mind/body. To liberal feminists for whom issues of access and opportunity for women are the focus, the female body can be regarded as a limitation. They therefore make demands for measures to overcome perceived bodily obstacles to women's access, such as menstruation, pregnancy, maternity and lactation. On the other hand, eco-feminists and others insist on women's special association with nature, and on their particular natural instincts seen to be lacking in men. In so doing, they perpetuate polarizations of categories such as male and female, mind and body, public and private. Childbearing and rearing may therefore represent either a limitation on equality for women *or* a privileged experience. Thinking and planning for women teachers in development contexts contains both of these approaches. In both cases, when females are essentially, and quite exclusively defined by a biological body, by childbearing and rearing, they risk being excluded from political, social, cultural and intellectual activity. More specifically, they risk being excluded from policy development and decision-making processes.

Primarily interested in men's experiences of masculinities, Connell (1995) insists on the need to rethink the problematic relationships that have been constructed between gender and the body. There are two extreme approaches which predominate. He sees that biological reductionism rigidly defines men and women in terms of their biological capabilities and functions, and that social constructionism looses sight of the body in a myriad of semiotic signals. These extremes ignore the fact that "there is an irreducible bodily dimension in experience and practice; the sweat cannot be excluded" (p. 51). For Connell, social relations of gender are both realized and symbolized in bodily performance, and bodily processes become part of social processes for individuals and groups. In his descriptions of men's experience of male sports' culture, and of sexual activity he shows how social processes and institutions shape physical sensation and how physical sensation and activity produce new or different social relations. Body and social process are dialogically connected:

> With bodies both objects and agents of practice, and the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined, we face a pattern beyond the formulae of current social theory. This pattern might be termed body-reflexive practice. (p. 61)

Connell's attention to social process and the relationships to bodily performance allows for consideration of both individual action and sensation, and of larger patterns of collective movement and activity: "through body reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed" (p. 64).

As Friedman (1988) states, "A white man has the luxury of forgetting his skin colour and sex. He can think of himself as an 'individual'. Women and minorities have no such luxury" (quoted in Okely, 1992, p. 8). The physicality of oppression, the embodiment of a legacy of exoticizing and eroticizing of the 'other', the internalizing of external gaze is of particular interest to post-colonial theorists. This is especially clearly articulated by non-white feminists teaching in northern educational settings:

> I am recounting, I notice, about being a body in space. And since it is a body, in a space, I am speaking particularly of my own non-white Indian woman's body, in a classroom where the other occupants are mostly white, ...

> I am surrounded by their eyes, their ears, their pencils, papers, reluctance, skepticism, incipient boredom, the preconditions that they bring to the class.....
>
> They confront me. They look at me. Their look tells me volumes. They stop on the outer edges of my skin, they pick out my colour, height, clothes, and I am aware of this look, 'the gaze' that both comes from and produces fixity.....(Bannerji, 1995, p. 100-101)

As Foucault (1980) states, "There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze" (p. 155).

For post-colonial feminists, the oppressive imposition of colonial hegemony was and continues to be felt physically as well as intellectually. "'Otherness' is constructed on bodies" (Eisenstein, 1996, p. 21) and in particular, on the brown or black female body that has been separated from the rational, powerful and knowing white male mind. Individual and collective female bodies are subject to regulation, restriction and limitation by the patriarchal institutions of the state, church, and education systems too. Colonization is inscribed on the body, and therefore processes of decolonization must also be physical in nature. As Eisenstein (1994) writes:

> I start with bodies because political states always have an interest in them; because politics usually derive from such interests; and because, as we move increasingly toward new technologies that redefine female bodies, we must recognize these interests as utterly political. Feminists can insist on using our bodies to push out the boundaries of democratic theory. (p. 171)

Anthropologists and ethnographers, and especially those whose work is more self-situated and reflexive, are also increasingly interested in the ways in which their research experiences, particularly those in the field, constitute embodied knowledge. Such knowledge can be gained, for example, through participation in the physical work of community activity. Researchers gain insights into other cultures not only through the verbal interviews and discussions, but through all the senses, and particularly through movement, through their bodies and their "whole being in a total practice" (Okely, 1992, p. 16). Okely uses Bourdieu's (1977) notion of bodily memory

in order to explain how anthropologists' fieldnotes may trigger bodily memories to be further analyzed and written up.

Whilst ethnographers such as Busby (2000) may theorize the bodily actions and gestures of the local people she is working with, there is a trickiness to theorizing the subjectivity and the bodily experience of others. Bodily experience is so much a natural, individual awareness, that is not easily accessible to inspection, insight or report (Eakin, 1999). I am very aware of the ways in which my experiences of teaching and of research are situated as much in my body as in my brain. I have strong bodily memories of discomfort standing up at the front of the classroom, of enjoying the altered perspective of sitting at a table surrounded by children. I can still feel the occasional unsolicited hugs from my students, and of the shock of being thumped hard and quite deliberately by a boy in my class in my early days of teaching. These memories may then lead me to advance certain theories of teaching and learning. But I am very aware that mine is a very individual, internal story, produced through a self conscious, reflexive process. Attempts to elicit evidence of others' embodied knowledge and to theorize, from the outside, the ways in which others may experience the world, may be quite problematic. It is significant that scholars who theorize teaching and learning in bodily terms, such as McWilliam (1996a, 1996b), Grumet (1988) and Okely (1978) do so primarily through self-reflexive practice. In her account of boarding schools for girls, Okely concentrates very much on her bodily memories of the way in which her and her peers' young bodies were "corrected and straightened, ordered to sit and stand in straight lines" (p. 130), were subjugated and unsexed by the concealing uniform, and were forced into a regimen of compulsory physical exercise.

As Grumet's work is particularly indicative, reflexivity in research is a means through which experience and knowledge can be expressed from within its embodied context. Reflexivity makes explicit the presence of the researcher body and draws attention to the ways in which experience and knowledge are shaped by bodily experience. Okely too works outwards from an embodied self that is imbued with her own bodily memories of attending a girls' boarding school. A reflexive methodology allows for attention to and expression of corporeality, of bodily expression and memory.

(Auto-)Ethnography

As the traditions and the emerging trends of anthropology and ethnography have created a growing interest in self-reflective research in the field of education, I present a brief discussion of how I draw on what can be called (auto-)ethnography, and how this connects to notions of reflexivity and embodiment.

The term auto-ethnography is used to describe the work of researchers who use a more autobiographical approach and use the self as pivot for understanding others (Okely, 1992). However, as Reed-Danahay (1997) makes clear, there are multiple other uses for the same term. These include what might be otherwise called native anthropology, in which people who were formerly the subjects of research become the authors of studies of their own group, and ethnic autobiography, in which personal narratives are written by members of ethnic minority groups. In the field of ethnography there is also increasing interest in doing research at home, on one's own social, professional or interest-related group (see Pink, 2001, for example). For feminist ethnographers in particular, reflexivity is an essential element in an approach to working with other people, and especially with women, in particular environments. The researcher self and her own perspectives, concerns, and interests are made explicit and are factored into her analysis. Reflexivity allows for critical reflection on issues such as the power dynamics between researcher and research subject, on the sometimes conflicting expectations that both researcher and researched might bring to the research situation. Reflexivity acknowledges the intense emotional pressures, experiences and issues of living in a different environment, attempting to build relationships and to understand other people's lives. This sort of very personal involvement in the study may be reflected to varying degrees in the final text.

This growing tendency, not only of feminists, to write one's own experiences into anthropological texts has led to "an unsettling of the boundaries that had been central to the notion of a self studying an other" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 471). The terms upon which scholarship is constructed and then judged, have shifted, and it is widely acknowledged that there is no one master plot, no all-encompassing theory of culture

in a particular location, however small. For scholars such as Geertz (1995) and Clifford (1997), traditional, disembodied, impersonal and authoritative ethnographic accounts are no longer adequate, and alternatives are required. The conscious positioning of the ethnographer has become an important element in developing alternative understandings of other cultures, for which reflexivity serves as a crucial tool.

Post-modern questioning of master narratives and of the anthropologist's self are forging an evolving practice and scholarship of "applied anthropology", "development anthropology"and of "anthropology of development" (Grillo, 1997). This has the potential to meet the perceived need for more complex socio-cultural, economic and political analyses of development, combined with forces of globalization. Crewe and Harrison's (1999) study is an example of a more personal inquiry into gender and development from their own experiences of working on a collaborative project between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the NGO, Intermediate Technology. Their work shows how dichotomies of developer/recipient, local/non-local, traditional/modern, culture/economics, state/NGO, expert/non-expert, us/them all merge when explored in context. Subjective descriptions of personal experience are a means to describe the multiple, and often messy, lived realities of development policy and performance.

To work within, and yet also beyond, an already complex discursive field requires a study in which complexity is the essence. As Harrison (1995) found, such a study may be hard to write, going against the grain or accepted ways of writing about "them" and "us". However, it has the potential for a researcher to represent in meaningful ways the multiple realities, subjectivities and discourses of education in development, whilst remaining as far as possible true to principals of feminism.

Narrative Inquiry and Storytelling

As Maxine Greene (1991) states, "the sounds of storytelling are everywhere today" (p. ix). In many contexts, there is a growing interest in narrative. Narrative processes

acknowledge our deepening understandings of individuals as constantly engaged in exchanging, communicating, and making meaning of their own and others' actions and attitudes. Such meaning-making processes are necessarily reflexive; they are dependent on individual engagement with the story being told or heard, and on a critical questioning of both content and process. Storytelling, especially in oral form, is common to all cultures and has long been recognized as a traditional way of exchanging information, and of passing on societal customs and norms. However, more recent attention has given narrative form a higher status. Its validity against more scientific forms of thinking and expressing, such as logical thinking and rational argument, is now recognized. For the qualitative researcher, narrative descriptions "exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in the world. Narrative is the type of discourse composition that draws together diverse events, happenings, and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes" (Polkinghorne, 1990, p. 5). For the researcher gaining insight into a complex discursive field, personal narrative, memory and autobiographical texts, constitute both data, and data representation. The process of writing narrative texts can also constitute data analysis

Storytelling and narrative are multi-levelled processes through which individuals are simultaneously engaged in creating their present and future lives. They are reflecting on their own pasts and shaping them as they explain themselves to others; individual lives are woven together with their social contexts. Erben (1998) describes how individuals configure a series of events, a chronicle, into "the storied nature of selfhood" (p. 14), a process that Riceour (1980) terms "emplotment" (or "mise en intrigue"). From the wide variety of actions and events that could be included in a story, we select and work with ones which may provide a suitable account of our lives. For the researcher, these narratives, or stories of selves, offer fascinating insights into individual lives *and* their social contexts. Narratives present life experienced "in a conflation of subjectivities and social structure" (Erben, 1998, p. 14).

For feminist researchers, the power of personal narrative enables them to "create a more inclusive, more fully human conception of human reality" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 3). Working from the bottom up, experiences from the past and the

present are redefined from the storied selves of female tellers. Their narratives may challenge dominant and normative views of the world, which have been constructed largely from white, male experience. Women's stories may expose "lines of fault" (Smith, 1987) and reposition women's lives as legitimate sources of intellectual thought. These processes may lead to fundamental changes in accepted epistemologies (Neumann & Peterson, 1997). Feminist reconstructions of our world may start from listening to women's voices, studying their writings and learning from their experiences; women's narratives become essential primary data for research. These narratives may take many different forms, including life histories, memory texts and self-studies, each of which has it's own traditions and theoretical foundations.

Feminist Attention to the Affective

Fonow and Cook (1991) discuss how feminist research refuses to ignore "the emotional dimension of the conduct of inquiry" (p. 9). In this study, a narrative approach, grounded in the traditions of feminist life history, provides a means of working with women teachers in Pakistan. It allows me to express the emotional and relational dimensions of teaching, learning and doing research, and to validate these as resource material for theory-building. Moreover, it enables me to convey my own involvement with research participants, my concern for their well-being, my sensitivity and empathy for their positions, as well as my frustrations, discomforts and disappointments with them. As Cole and Knowles (2001) state:

> ... the term 'life history' acknowledges not only that personal, social, temporal and contextual influences facilitate our understanding of lives and phenomena being explored, but also that, from conceptualization through to representation and eventual communication of new understandings to others, any research project is an expression of elements of the life history researcher's life history. (p. 10)

Life history in no way negates the serious ethical challenges of research, but makes the subjectivity of the researcher explicit. It forces her to place her own self subject to scrutiny and as such is perhaps more honest and affective than research methodologies which attempt to "do the God trick" (Haraway, 1988) of disembodied, disengaged

objectivity. For feminist researchers, keen to develop non-exploitative, collaborative and mutually rewarding relationships with participants, narrative approaches can provide an enjoyable and enriching mode for speaking and working with participants. Furthermore, the researcher can orient the women-centred stories which emerge toward social change, to more widespread acknowledgement of the importance of women's perspectives, and to the creation of more women-centred analytical frameworks, and eventually policy.

Teacher Narratives

In the field of education, teacher storiesand the life histories of teachers have become a relatively well-accepted point of entry for examination of teacher lives, knowledge and teacher identity. Goodson (1992) sets a research agenda that challenges traditional research paradigms which dismiss teacher life stories as 'soft data', too idiosyncratic or too personal. He states:

> Studies of teachers' lives might allow us to see the individual in relation to the history of his or her time, allowing us to view the intersection of the life history with the history of society and thus illuminating the choices, contingencies and options open to the individual. Life histories of schools, subjects and the teaching profession would provide vital contextual background. The initial focus on the teachers' lives would therefore reconceptualize our studies of schooling and the curriculum in quite basic ways (p. 119).

Like Erben (1998), Connelly and Clandinin (1990) also draw attention to the constant and multi-levelled nature of storying processes, and take very seriously the stories that teachers tell, the metaphors by which they live. They insist that they reveal far more about teachers' work than may have previously been thought. Other researchers/teacher educators such as Knowles and Cole (1994) use a variety of narrative tools to promote reflexivity and inquiry into teacher lives and experience with pre-service students. For them, autobiographical writing, journal writing and collective autobiographical accounts become integral ways of collecting data, reflecting on it, and learning from it in action research processes. However, although there is emerging work within teacher education that is starting to contest the unitary

self, mainstream research tends to assume a single teaching self. It tends to pay less attention to notions of multiple and shifting selves, and to the different positions that teachers may take up in relation to dominant discourses and ideologies. The partiality of perspective for any one storyteller at any one time remains under-explored, as does the trickiness of the relationship between researcher and researched. Later work by Goodson (1995) does raise awareness that life history is not necessarily emancipatory, and encourages more careful consideration of the trust involved in educational storysharing. For feminist scholars, however, taking on the more problematic, political and power-related issues of life history work is particularly important.

Feminist teacher educators such as Ellsworth (1989), McWilliam (1996) and Britzman (1991) write about their own complex teaching lives and the lives of the student teachers they work with. Their autobiographical narrative descriptions of their own work in faculties of education make us very aware of the richness of their own observations, of the knowledge they have created through their own meaning-making processes. They provide insights into critical pedagogy that are quite different to more impersonal, disembodied textbooks or manuals. As vehicles for feminist inquiry into women teachers' lives, narrative and story-telling are natural choices, making it possible to illustrate the kaleidoscopic rather than linear way in which life is lived (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). Life history, narrative methodologies have been used in a number of studies of women teachers' lives (Casey, 1993; Middleton, 1993; Munro, 1998; Weiler, 1988). For Schulz (1994), interviewing women teachers in rural Nepal, and sharing her own stories of teaching in Canada, it is a natural thing for a woman to ask other women to talk about their lives. She writes:

> the act of sharing life stories remakes teaching and learning as a site of cultural practice, as a publicly contested site where we interpret what it means to be a teacher and a woman, and it puts women teachers, collectively, in a much stronger position to contest (or accept) those meanings and what they signify in practice (Jones, 1993). (p. 18-19)

Although I might agree with her in principle, and want to believe in her sentiment, the practice of doing this is not a simple process. My own experiences illustrate some issues of power and representation which warrant further investigation. Rather than

dismiss these as tricky relational and process issues, I place them at the center of this study. I draw attention to the signaling of subtle and yet deeply entrenched differences that exist between women even with apparently strong mutual experiences (such as teaching). I highlight the specificity of the complex dynamics in the research moment in which western woman- researcher and southern research-subject come together. These two women are quite differently positioned and differently vested with power and privilege, and can have quite different needs and expectations. Differences in status due to academic position, race, class, or location, rather than ignored, can become important starting points for investigation. Attention to such issues allows for a reexamination of their staying power, and encourages a rethinking of alternatives; possibilities are created through active engagement with the apparent impossibility. The social and power relations in which my research activities take place have to be taken into account as I reflect on the data collected, and consider the extent to which I might have been protected from any very valid challenges to my own privileged position. Consideration of these relations problematizes the extent to which collaboration between researcher and researched can take place on shared terms and with shared understandings, as can be somewhat idealized in the literature of life history methodology.

Summary

Reflexivity then, allows for a subjective investigation of a field in which the feminist researcher is an active, embodied participant rather than a passive observer. It enables me to investigate the lived experience of women teacherness in Pakistan, but also the essence of researching women teachers' lives in development contexts, and to consider the policy and political implications of doing so. I situate myself within the methodological framework, rather than merely applying it, and am able to use it to develop a study that is focused not directly on the researcher herself, but on what she knows about something, and how she knows this. Smith's (1987) notion of the "ineluctable embeddedness" of the researcher in the context of her research is very relevant to my own position as teacher educator, professional researcher and

consultant in education in development. As Behar (1996) describes it, there is an opening up of "an intermediate space we can't quite define yet, a borderland between passion and intellect, analysis and subjectivity, ethnography and autobiography, art and life" (p. 174). This study is situated within this intermediate space.

Questions and issues of methodology are addressed at multiple points in the thesis. However, in this chapter I have presented a framework for a methodology-focused study of researching women teachers' lives in a development context, and have discussed some of the implications of this approach. Such a framework has reflexivity at the core, incorporating methodological layers of feminism, post colonialism, (auto-)ethnography and narrative inquiry. The intersections and interactions between these perspectives are of particular relevance for development-oriented research about women teachers. Such a framework shifts the focus from the researched to the researcher and back again, creating a constant dialogue. It allows both "self and other to appear together within a multiplicity of dialoguing voices" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 471). It presents experience as subjective and embodied, social and processual. Bodies shaped by social contexts and marked by differences in age, gender and ethnicity, are all presented as partial identities. A self-reflexive research methodology with multiple narrative and reflexive tools allows me to express doubts, uncertainties, contradictions, trickiness and tension. It suggests more critical ways of working with narratives, and is attentive to the shifting, non-unitary individual. It highlights what is written or said, in relation to what is neither written nor said, and the ways in which stories (narratives and policies, for example) are written and told. This type of approach may challenge traditional notions of development-related research, and especially so in education. It may also be an intellectual and a political struggle. However, I agree with Wolf (1996) when she states the need to "continue confronting and integrating these dilemmas without naiveté, to continue rocking the epistemological boat, ... and to continue striving for politically meaningful coalitions and projects" (p. 38). To this I would suggest the need to first develop more nuanced methodologies for working with women teachers, in order to create the necessary politically meaningful coalitions and projects in development contexts.

FEMINIST FIELDS

That afternoon a visitor would have found the Kandiah family at tiffin on the front verandah, their white whicker chairs pulled around the matching table, Louisa presiding with the teapot. A lively conversation was in progress between Louisa and Kumudini about the pattern for a tablecloth Kumudini was completing for her sewing class at the Van Der Hoot School for Ladies she attended.

...At present, Annalukshmi sat with her teacup in her hand, trying to be attentive to the conversation about the table cloth. Yet her mind was far away, contemplating the plan she had come up with that would allow her to ride her bicycle to school the following day.

(From *Cinnamon gardens*, by Shyam Selvadurai (1999, pp. 13-14)

5: ON DOING FIELDWORK

Introduction

Any qualitative research project may inevitably require what Geertz (1988) describes as 'progressive refocusing'. In the traditions of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Wolcott, 1995), there is recognition that one cannot predict in advance exactly how the study will unfold. Although most reference works on ethnographic methods stress the need for flexibility and for a preparedness for the unexpected, especially whilst conducting fieldwork, I take the notion of 'progressive refocusing' to also imply a critically reflexive response to situations, and a self conscious readjustment to new circumstances, or to new realizations. It implies an iterative process through which one may not end up where one expected to at the outset of the project, but one in which the researcher is attune to the dynamics of the shifts and is questioning the implications for her work. The circumstances of September 11th 2001 and its aftermath were a dramatic example of the importance of such research approaches, but also of the potential for the unexpected to create new knowledge. Working and theorizing with such unpredicted turns of events can produce new and significant insights for an educational context in which crisis, conflict and emergencies are of critical concern.

In this chapter I describe how the theoretical and methodological foundations presented relate to the concrete practices of fieldwork with women teachers in Pakistan, and of collecting further data from a distance. I discuss the evolution of the fieldwork, starting with my preparations for working with women teachers in Karachi, through to later data collection facilitated through questionnaires. Based on the methodological underpinnings described in the previous chapter, the final section of this chapter discusses more explicitly the research tools that I used. I describe the particular combination of informal workshops, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires for women teachers, and of fieldnote writing. I end with a presentation of the close reading analysis method used for working with my data.

Researching with Women Teachers in Pakistan

Through consultancy and professional involvement in the area of education in development, I was already quite familiar with the work of the Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development (AKU-IED), Karachi, Pakistan. It was established with substantial international donor support in 1993, aiming to "improve the quality of education in developing countries through research, educational programmes, academic partnership, policy initiatives, and a commitment to wider social development" (Aga Khan University, 1998). As I was interested in looking at the positioning of women teachers in development policy and planning, there were so many other field sites which could have been equally interesting, and it was quite difficult for me to decide on one in particular. However, the AKU-IED was particularly attractive for a number of reasons. Achieving Education for All and Millennium Development Goals represents a considerable challenge in Pakistan, with the gender goals requiring particular effort and resources. Policy attention, in addition to human and financial resources, had been focused on women teachers, creating a potentially very conducive research environment for a study which would, I hoped, have significant policy implications.

Although I had never been to Pakistan, I was somewhat familiar with South Asian cultures, from extensive travel and work with teachers in India, and from my involvement with immigrant women and their networks in Montreal. From what I learned from others familiar with the institution, AKU-IED would provide a stimulating setting in which I would be immersed in the issues and the practice of education in development, and connected with a number of different professional development programs in which women teachers are very much involved. Furthermore, the involvement of a number of international donors in the setting up, and ongoing support of AKU-IED means that international ideologies, discourses and practices of education in development are very present. The Aga Khan University as an institution is committed to cultivating leadership in education and research, improving standards of education and most significantly, to advancing the status and

professional opportunities of women. Gender mainstreaming is seen as an important issue for AKU-IED (Aga Khan University, 1998), and some initial research, teaching and policy activities had started on gender in education and on women teachers' lives. I knew too that the largely English-language programming for teachers would ensure that there would be women teachers comfortable enough in English to be able to engage in research activities with me. This would inevitably create a significant limitation on the research, in that it restricted my research participants to a specific group of relatively well-educated women. In an urban context such as Karachi, and especially within a teacher education institute, however, working in English is quite normal, and I felt that this limitation would be at least somewhat balanced by the ease of direct communication between me and my research participants, by my ability to link into different teacher networks, and by the institutional interest in my research activities.

Gaining Entry

Gaining entry to women's lives is a difficult issue faced by many feminist researchers, but it can be even more complex when the women's lives one hopes to enter are so far away and different from one's own. Working through a teacher training institution appeared a very appropriate route to take which would in some ways ease my entry. It could put me in direct contact with women already engaged in professional development activities and so therefore possibly more interested and available than others to become involved in a research project. It would also provide me with a base from which I would have access to resources (such as library facilities, computer, e-mail) and to a community of teachers, teacher educators and researchers with whom to discuss and share my work. The Ottawa-based Aga Khan Foundation Canada, which provides some support and resources to AKU-IED, was the first point of contact for me to make initial inquiries about my proposed study.

My research proposal was of interest to Canadian personnel, and so I started a more formal process to enable me to go to spend an initial six-week period at AKU-IED. This became quite long and complicated process as I needed to obtain different

authorizations – in the right order- of the people responsible at the different levels of the organizations involved. As an outside graduate student, the terms of my proposed stay at the AKU-IED did not easily fit within existing project parameters, nor within the type of student exchange programs they are used to dealing with, and this made arrangements quite complicated. Communication by email did facilitate the process, and enabled me to move quite quickly once the official approval was granted. However, the months preceding my fieldwork in Karachi were a frustrating period of waiting, and wondering. I was very careful in the wording of email messages to find out about progress on the approval process. The different organizational members, and senior staff at the AKU-IED were very much the "gate-keepers" (Wolf, 1996) to the women teachers with whom I was anxious to make contact. Although they existed for the most part as distant, disembodied names on emails, the negotiation process with these gatekeepers seemed just as tricky as if I had been able to meet them face to face, and they had constituted a physical barrier. Eventually, however, I was able to complete all the formalities, obtain my Pakistani visa, make the preparations for my trip, and to arrive in Karachi on September 1st, 2001.

Fieldwork Routines and Activities

Staying in the faculty hostel in a suburban area of the city, I was straight away initiated into the AKU-IED routine. This constituted an early morning bus for a long day on campus, interrupted by very collegial tea breaks morning and afternoon, and a lunch hour in which students and staff all ate in the cafeteria. The bus left to return us to the various hostels at six, and my evenings were spent in a combination of reading, writing up fieldnotes, talking with other faculty members, strolling and shopping with them at the stalls and little stores in the neighbourhood. Only a couple of times did we go a little further afield in search of fabric and tailors to make up shalwar kameez outfits. Through the email communication I had had with faculty members before my arrival, I was able to start very quickly contacting women teachers who had been recommended to me as potentially interesting and interested individuals to talk to. I was able to set up a mini-orientation session, to which I invited as many women as possible, to talk about the work I was doing, and to invite their input in the research design and process.

Primarily I planned to work quite intensively with a small group of 5-10 women primary teachers, with whom I would conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews. I wanted to work with a small group of women in order to spend a considerable amount of time with each, listening to and learning from their experiences, discussing with them those experiences, and collecting rich and detailed stories of their teaching lives. I was aware that I would need to work hard to gain the participants' trust and confidence for them to dedicate time to two in-depth interviews and to speak frankly about personal and professional issues with an unknown foreigner. I was therefore pleased that some preparations had already gone on prior to my arrival, and several potential participants had already been informed about my research. At the same time, however, this raised some very tricky questions for me. I was concerned that any possible participant did not feel obliged to be involved because they had been recommended by their teacher educator, or by someone else in a position of power and authority over them. Although arriving in an unknown milieu I was pleased to be given contact names and numbers; I was also concerned that any women I contacted directly would feel at all under pressure to participate, and would be unable to comfortably decline my request. I was in a difficult situation of wanting to both sell *and* not sell the study and it felt somewhat paradoxical to on the one hand be asserting the worth of a project focusing on women teachers' lives, and at the same time insisting that no one should feel obliged to participate. Within the context of an ethnographic study with extensive fieldwork, it would be possible to work on these issues over time. However, given time, financial and other constraints to this study, alternative strategies had to be developed.

In line with my original proposal I organized an orientation session to which I invited all potential participants. This allowed them to find out more about the study, its aims and objectives, and key research questions, as well as the commitments and expectations on the part of the researcher and the participants. The involvement of the institution in providing contacts, hosting the event and providing refreshments was both reassuring and problematic. It certainly demonstrated a certain level of trust in myself as an outside researcher, and commitment from the institution to my research,

which may have been important to participants. But it may also have added an extra layer of obligation for those who were invited to come. Wording the letter of invitation to the session I was very conscious of how I might position myself, and how I might most appropriately word my affiliation to the institution. I was also concerned that staff at AKU-IED felt it necessary to contact the head-teachers of the schools from which the teachers might be attending, thereby possibly compromising the confidentiality and autonomy of participants. However, as a guest in the institution, unfamiliar with the usual formalities and protocols, it seemed appropriate for me to go along with this and then to make a point of discussing the issues of voluntary consent in more detail at the session.

In the end, AKU-IED staff members were all otherwise occupied and so unable to stay through the session, and the discussion that I was able to have with the five women who attended seemed to be quite candid and comfortable. I was pleased that not all the women invited turned up, and felt that this was a sign that obligation to be there may not have been as much an issue as I had feared. I used stories and photographs of my own school days, and my own teaching career as a way of introducing not only myself, but also my narrative approach to learning and thinking about women teachers' lives. At the end of the session participants were left with the consent forms to look over, and an invitation to arrange an interview if they were interested. Two women told me straight away they were interested, one was going to speak to two colleagues, and the other two would get back to me during the following week.

Ethical Consent

Ethical issues, although important to address explicitly at this point, are of ongoing significance to a process-oriented study. In line with McGill guidelines, I had received ethical approval from the Faculty Ethics Review Committee before departure for Karachi, having submitted documentation on my project, the research activities and the letters of consent that I would be using. More than an administrative detail, however, I was very concerned about the ethical issues I would need to consider. At the initial orientation session, and again at the beginning of the interviews, I explained my

research project including the aims, research questions, methodology and expected outcomes; this information was also included in the letter of consent (see Appendix 1). I was aware that some of the women may have felt under some obligation to attend or to tell their story, and so I emphasized the fact that participation was totally voluntary, interviewee-centred, and confidential. I insisted that identifying markers (such as name, school name, location) would be removed from the data. I invited women interested in taking part to arrange individual interview sessions with me at times and in locations convenient for them. At the beginning of each interview, I talked over again the conditions of participation, and reminded participants that they could stop, decline to answer, or withdraw totally from the study at any point with no questions asked. I knew that none of the teachers would be first language speakers of English, but that AKU-IED is an English-medium institution, and so the teachers and other staff are very used to working in English. I was confident that all of the teachers in this AKU-IED group understood these issues, but was also prepared that if clarification of any terms or ideas were needed, I could ask a Pakistani colleague to explain in Urdu. Working with a translator with a woman teacher who spoke no English at all brought some particular challenges and raised quite significant questions about the fiction of an account of a woman teacher's life that had been mediated first by a translator and then by a researcher, distanced by an inability to communicate directly.

Interviews, Conversations and Broadening the Focus

Once installed at AKU-IED, and I had started some of the interviews I had planned, it became clearer that although there are diverse populations of women becoming teachers in Pakistan, locating myself within the institution, desiring an intense relationship with a small number of women, was going to considerably limit the perspectives I would gain. It would allow me to interact most easily only with a somewhat similar group of mostly well-educated, middle-class women, teaching in relatively privileged schools, involved in professional development programs at AKU-IED. I was not seeking generalizability and large-scale applicableness but, amongst my participant group of 5-10 women, I had envisaged a broader section of women teacher experiences and perspectives. Whilst the interest shown by these women was very

encouraging, stimulating and very validating, it nonetheless raised many questions for me. Did I only want to work with these women? How representative might they be of women teachers in Pakistan, of women teachers in Karachi? Especially bearing in mind the very different experiences of many other women teachers in Pakistan described in Chapter 1, how could I broaden my research scope without losing my focus?

Using the term teacher, whilst apparently a simple defining term, became more problematic as I learned that teacher training is not necessarily an entry requirement to a Pakistani school, or that teaching is neither the only, nor the most important job that women might hold. Hina, one of the women I interview, for example, has taught for over 20 years but has no formal qualification, and is finding it difficult to obtain one, even though she is close to retirement. Is she a teacher? Are women head-teachers teachers? Are female teacher-educators teachers? These are questions I asked myself, and others, and have no definite answer for. Any assumptions I had about being able to define an singular identity for a 'Pakistani woman teacher' became even less useful when I met a teacher who is teaching in a Karachi school, yet completed her education in the United States, spends every summer there, and has a personal library of major educational texts from North America.

An outside researcher inevitably arrives in a research setting with certain preconceived ideas. Before going to Karachi I had met several times with two Pakistani women, who, through a capacity building program, were enrolled in graduate studies programs at a university in Canada. In the North American context it had been quite easy to define these women as Pakistani women teachers, and even, as I realized later, to construct various assumptions about what this might mean. In Karachi, however, as they returned to the city just as I was just settling in, I was forced to reconsider the assumptions I had made. Our relationships had to be reconstructed as they too were negotiating new insider-outsider relationships with colleagues on campus, in schools, and at the professional development centers they were involved with. Sharing a room with one woman in the Faculty Hostel, discussing our respective research projects with women teachers, and taking up an invitation from her colleague to dinner in her

luxurious home, brought to my attention the subtle yet powerful othering that had been going on in my mind, and the limited, stereotypical repertoire of Pakistani female teacher identities my own imagination had been drawing on.

Issues of class, privilege and status and their impact on the life and experience of women teachers are evident not only in my own story of middle-classness, but also, in those of my research participants. I might feel pleasantly comfortable in a familiar-feeling middle-class home, and feel relaxed in an interviewee's cozy study, but at the same time, I am very aware that she cannot represent Pakistani women teachers, nor even Karachi women teachers. This woman's class position, like my own, is very related to her teaching. She is able to resource herself with books, a computer and with outside activities such as theatre and art, and in her rather privileged school she teaches children from a similar class background as herself. Her experience of teaching, her position in the school, in her family, and in her community must be quite different than that of a less privileged and less well-educated woman teacher in a rural area of the country.

I decided to loosen the methodology somewhat, to continue with the in-depth interviews, but at the same time to open up my mind to other possibilities for gaining insights into the lives of women teachers. I started to see how many of the different people around me (male and female teacher educators, administrative staff, masters students and my hostel colleagues) could act as guides, and could enrich my understandings of women teachers' lives, and most importantly could share their perspectives on important research issues in relation to women teachers' lives. I was also able to pursue opportunities to set up mini-workshops in two schools and at the women's hostel in which teachers enrolled in long-term professional development courses lived. These activities, although most enjoyable and informative for me, brought their own methodological, and interpretative challenges and encouraged me to think more critically about the social and power relations within which the sessions were situated.

After the session at the women's hostel, for example, my initial rather smug sense of satisfaction and accomplishment soon began to wane, and I was left wondering to what extent I was humoured by the group, to what extent the activities I had prepared were really of interest and relevance to the participants. I wondered to what extent their expectations and needs were met by an evening that clearly excited me and provided me with lots of interesting data. It was much harder to know how to prepare for such an activity, and to gauge an appropriate tone for the interaction. My own position was somewhat destabilized by the uncertainty of the experience and whilst I might feel more comfortable in a less formal setting, the informality and the unpredictability it might encourage was also somewhat disturbing. I found the workshops I conducted in schools equally stimulating and fascinating, and yet at the same time frustratingly 'unfinished'. There were very clear tensions for me between wanting to fulfill an expectation that I had something to teach or to give, and a desire to disrupt such post-colonial constructs and to insist that I was there to learn from them.

Leaving Pakistan

Into my second week at AKU-IED, I was certainly doing some rapid thinking and adjusting, broadening my focus somewhat, and engaging not only with a specific group of interviewees, but talking to many other women teachers, teacher trainers and others involved in schools and especially in gender issues in education. Many of my preconceived notions about working with women teachers in development contexts were being challenged, but I was nonetheless very excited about initial fieldwork activities. I had held the orientation session, set up various interviews, and mini-workshops, taken part in numerous informal discussions, made visits to schools, and my relationships with faculty members, especially those staying in the same residence, were developing.

The September 11th attacks in the United States were, of course, a huge shock. I remember being called into the lounge to watch the evening CNN news broadcasts with fellow hostel faculty, feeling very unsure about what was happening. At the same time, however, New York was far away, my research was paramount in my mind, and

I was not really thinking about the possible ramifications of the events. The following day it was certainly talked about at length at AKU-IED, and I was very keen to find out how people were interpreting what had happened, and to learn more about the possible implications for Pakistan. At the same time, the pace and intensity of the work of educational development continued. For a few days at least, life appeared to continue relatively normally, and whilst I was trying to stay attune to the situation, to keep informed, I was highly engrossed in my work, and certainly not wanting to think about possible interruptions. The implications of September 11th for continued study in Pakistan, then, took several days to become evident. The mounting popular objection to President Musharraf's support for American intervention in Afghanistan led to street protests, a fire-bombing at the nearby Kentucky Fried Chicken, plans for a general strike, and therefore to heightened security measures. However, as Pakistan, and Karachi in particular, has a history of political instability, civil unrest and dissent, for some people with whom I talked, such events were not unduly disturbing. I took advice from the British High Commission and others to take a low profile, not to go out alone, and especially to avoid large crowds and popular areas of the city center. This advice I heeded, but it really meant very little change in an everyday routine for me, and for most women at AKU-IED, of planned and chaperoned travel between work and home, and of few opportunities for individual exploration. From the start of my fieldwork it had seemed most appropriate, and quite expected too, that I should wear shalwar kameez, and in fact I felt most comfortable in these suits with long tunics, baggy trousers and a large scarf draped across my chest. After September 11th, however, I was strongly advised to always wear these Pakistani style clothes.

At first I rather naively thought that the situation would just return to normal and that I would be able to continue my research as planned. As the situation became tenser, I then began quite selfishly, I admit, to hope that any American retaliation against Afghanistan would not take place until after my planned departure, and that I would be able to carry out what I had planned. However, within a few more days there was increased concern about the security situation in the city. I was moved from the faculty hostel, which was apparently located in an area containing several more radical

mosques, to the AKU-IED guesthouse some distance away in a safer suburb. I had resisted this move for a couple of days, not only because I felt relatively safe, but also because I did not want to exploit any potential white, foreigner privilege in order to enjoy the more luxurious environment of the guesthouse. In the end though, I realized that there was genuine concern for my safety and I began to worry that my presence in the hostel may have been putting others at risk. By September 18th, the difficult political position of Pakistan, and the decisions taken by President Musharraf, was beginning to create more widespread dissent, and a general strike was planned. For an obviously white westerner (and possible American) it was becoming increasingly uncomfortable, and although safe on the AKU-IED campus, I was beginning to feel nervous out in the city.

It was certainly not easy to think about leaving at this point, and I was very upset at interrupting not only the research activities that were becoming so interesting, but also the relationships that were developing between myself, my research participants, research guides, faculty, students and others. However, by this time I was feeling increasingly foreign and white, and it was not only my security at stake now. I was also concerned about the risks I might be creating for men and women working, living and traveling around the city with me, and for the drivers and residence staff. In addition to this, my family, friends and university colleagues from Canada and the UK were sending me concerned emails, persuading me to return home. It was on September 19th that all "non-essential" westerners were strongly advised to leave, by both the British High Commission, and the University authorities. It would have been mere bravado to stay on at this point, and very unfair to any of my hosts who might have been at risk, inconvenienced, or compromised in any way by my presence. Whilst research activities could perhaps have continued, I am very unsure about if and how I could have expected women to show commitment to my project during such difficult, preoccupying circumstances. At the same time though, departure was not easy. Whilst I was packing my bags, transferring my computer files, and making arrangements to leave, there were many others who would have loved to be returning to family in other parts of Pakistan, Central Asia or East Africa. It was particularly difficult to imagine

how it must have felt for those staying. Although being western and white I was probably at more risk than local people, nonetheless, my privileged situation, the fact that I could get up and leave a potentially dangerous city for the relative safety and comfort of Canada, were very much on my mind and made it very difficult to know what words and gestures of goodbye to express.

My experiences of gaining entry to the field might be somewhat similar to those of other researchers making institutional and organizational affiliations in which to conduct research in development contexts. However, my 'exiting the field' was very different. Compared to the slow preparatory process prior to my arrival in Karachi, leaving happened all so quickly. Emotionally, it was far more intense, and there was little other documented research experience upon which I could draw. Kleinman and Copp (1993) draw attention to the emotions of fieldwork, yet I have to disrupt an artificial boundary between the field and home, as my premature return to Montreal left me with complex theoretical, practical and affective questions. I was struggling to re-vision my research project in such an uncertain situation, with very little hope for a return visit to Karachi in the near future. Family, friends and colleagues were understandably pleased and relieved to see me, but I was not at all happy to be home. I felt a failure having not been able to complete the fieldwork as planned, and quite the pawn in a complex geopolitical situation of which I had only a very basic understanding and no control at all.

Extending the Field

The research activities in Karachi had already pushed me to extend my fieldwork activities beyond the life history work with a small number of women teachers that I had originally planned. Back in Montreal, as I returned to the research and policy contexts in which I situated my work, I started to see how I could develop the study and build on the experiences that I had shared and the interviews I had done in Karachi as prompts for further analysis. With some renewed enthusiasm for "a study-in-process" rather than what I was thinking was "a study-cut-short", the initial fieldwork activities became a springboard for further probing of the experiences of women

teachers in Karachi. I was very conscious of an affective need to maintain the contact as far as possible with women teachers I had met and started to work with. In such uncertain times it was especially important to me to sustain and develop the relationships I had started to build in Karachi.

Continued email communication showed the ongoing interest in my work of a number of enthusiastic women teachers and teacher educators, and I was encouraged to develop a questionnaire which could be emailed to colleagues in Pakistan (see Appendix 4). With this I sought further insight into the complex worlds of a diverse group of women teachers. As a research instrument the questionnaire was certainly not easy to develop, nor was it simple to work out an ethical and manageable way to distribute it and receive it back. In recent years, researchers have become aware of the potential of the internet for conducting research from distant groups of people at relatively low costs and in less time than in the physical world (Frankel & Siang, 1999). Yet there is also awareness of new ethical questions that emerging modes of computer–mediated communication raise. Much of the scholarship on the ethics of internet research and of virtual communication for research purposes is focused on listserves, chatrooms, and on-line surveys (for example, Baird, Ramsower & Rosenbaum, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Mann & Stewart, 2000; Suler, 2000). However, it does provide important insights into the complexities of obtaining informed consent, of the blurred distinctions between public and private domains and of the limitations of the internet and email for ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Using email to communicate and to facilitate at least an initial distribution of the questionnaire, I had to acknowledge all of these issues and to find ways of making optimal use of an easy mode of communication whilst at the same time being able to make important ethical commitments to participants.

I was relying on other women (facilitators with whom I had been in communication, and who had volunteered to do so) to distribute and collect in the questionnaires. Especially given the tense, post-September 11th conditions in which I knew they were living, I was wanting to make this task as uncomplicated as possible. However, I was also anxious that my ethical concerns about voluntary participation would be

respected, and that the women approached by the facilitators would not feel under any obligation to participate. This was of particular concern, as I knew that the facilitators were in certain positions of respect and authority such as teacher educators and professional development teachers. At the same time, though, I was concerned that my own ethical concerns, and the letter that I had developed for questionnaire facilitators to sign, were in themselves an imposition and a taking up of a false moral high ground by a researcher who at the end of the day was using the questionnaire for her own needs – both academic and affective. In letters to the facilitators and to potential questionnaire respondents (Appendices 2 & 3), I tried to be as succinct and yet as comprehensive as possible, and to be transparent about my concerns. Aware of my anonymity to respondents (Frankel & Siang, 1999), I introduced myself in some detail, and emphasized the contact that I had had with the facilitators and their colleagues in Karachi. Facilitators were able to offer potential participants either a printed out version of the questionnaire to complete by hand and return to them (to be directly placed in a closed envelope) or an electronic version that they could complete and email back to them, or directly to me. I left it up to respondents to choose which they felt more comfortable with, and also offered to email an electronic version directly to them so they did not necessarily have to go through the facilitator. In the end, most of the nineteen responses were sent by regular mail, with six sent by email.

I knew that the responses could represent only a small and somewhat random, yet selective, group of women teachers in a small number of schools in the city. I also knew that completing a questionnaire with the sort of comprehensive responses I was hoping for would be a time-consuming activity for women teachers. It would also be an even more onerous task for those less confident in English. Acknowledging these issues and limitations, the responses received did reveal much of interest, and are presented and analyzed in Chapter 6.

Developing the questionnaire, sharing drafts of the questions to include, seeking advice on how best to word them, and trying as far as possible to involve key people in Karachi in the questionnaire design and the distribution, was very much a learning process. It also satisfied a personal need at the time to be doing something, not to be

stalling with my research, and to be maintaining a concrete link with women who had volunteered their time for me and for whom I wanted to show my continued interest and commitment. These doubts, concerns and affective responses to the lived experience of researching women teachers' lives, as expressed in fieldnotes, are also in themselves significant process-related data.

Interaction with Development Planners

In order to better understand how women teachers' lives might be understood and interpreted in the context of development policy and planning, I was also interested to interact with development planners and policy makers based in development agencies and organizations involved with programming and policy relating to women teachers. It appeared very pertinent to seek insight into how they understand and work with women teachers, to investigate how women teachers are positioned by them and their institutional policies and programs, and to consider the implications of this. As major development agencies have adopted specific policies in both education and in gender, after my experiences in Pakistan, I wanted to learn more about how and where women teachers might be located in relation to these two major policy frameworks.

I was also keen to ensure that this study would speak to development planners, programmers and policy-makers and that any policy recommendations emerging from it would have resonance and relevance in contexts where they could make a difference. At the same time I was very aware of the difficulties in working simultaneously with very specific, local contexts (for example, Karachi, Pakistan) and with more global level, non-specific development ideas, policy and practice, and wanted to problematize this very issue. How can development policy and/or gender and development theory be both universally relevant and locally appropriate in relation to women teachers' lives? Where are the spaces for the specificity of women teachers' lives in particular development contexts to fit into the broader picture of agency and institutional work? The development planners I met and communicated with were, on purpose, not directly connected with my field-site, nor with the organization supporting it. Rather than their perspectives and opinions on a particular development program, I was

interested in their reflections on how they were thinking and what they were doing in relation to women teachers. I wanted to initiate a more reflexive consideration of individual experiences, ideas and thoughts rather than a program-focused discussion.

In order to address some of these questions, I first developed a short questionnaire to be sent by email to a diverse group of individuals working in education, and especially gender and education, in development agencies and organizations (see Appendix 5). In it I posed questions about particular project initiatives that the respondents' organizations were involved with relating to women teachers, about the rationale for any particular focus on women teachers. I was also interested in the perceived needs of women teachers and how these were being met, and the extent to which women teachers were involved in policy development. The agencies and organizations were chosen on account of the scope of their work, the extent of organizational attention to gender and education issues, and known individual 'insider' interest. Considering the workload of these individuals, I found the response rate encouraging; from the twenty-six questionnaires sent out, nine were returned completed and I had the opportunity to meet with another eight individuals from a number of organizations, and then organize further discussions with eighteen participants at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on their work with gender and education policy and programming and with women teachers. In such meetings I raised very similar questions to those in the questionnaire.

Research Tools

In this section, I describe the combination of fieldnote, interview and questionnaire tools and processes with which I have worked to stimulate reflexive narrative from different sets of perspectives - my own and those of women teachers in Karachi. Thomas (1995) draws our attention to the fact that personal narrative may in fact be captured in a variety of forms, in logs, diaries, research journals, vignettes as well as life histories and autobiographies and through interview. "All these modes of expression can be seen as ways in which the person socially constructs him or herself" (p. xii), and can then be used as a source for developing understanding of others.

Although somewhat more problematic, I would suggest that open-ended questionnaires also have some potential too. All of these forms have at different times been useful in constructing this study, and the findings from them are presented in an interconnected way in Chapter 6.

Interviews and Group Discussions

I had planned to use interviewee-centred, semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data on women teachers' lives, and soon after my arrival in Karachi, was able to start working with three women teachers. Similar interviewing techniques have been used by many different feminist scholars as they can provide the possibility for a less extractive research process in which women's experience is valued. They can also create a context for researcher and researched to engage in a more equal relationship based on issues of shared concern. Other life history researchers working with women teachers have similarly used a series of open-ended questions to stimulate rich descriptions of women's lives, following the interviewee's narrative flow. This sort of approach is another means of using the situation at hand and of respecting the interviewee as at least to some extent, in control. I began my interviews with broad questions such as: Can you describe how and why you became a teacher? Can you tell me about your average day? Can you tell me about your classroom and what goes on in there? Can you tell me more about your school and how you are involved in it? Two of my participants who had been at my initial workshop, brought along photos of their school days to the interview, and these provided a very helpful framework for our discussion. I felt that having something concrete in their hands to refer to and talk about reduced some of the self-consciousness and awkwardness that sometimes arises when people talk about themselves. With the photographs, the participants talked through the life stories and the career stories that they represented with very little prompting. Furthermore, these photographs served to visually situate the women within multiple social and professional contexts. Rather than isolated individuals, their photos located them immediately within families, staff teams, workshop participants and training course cohorts. From the photographs of their own school days, both participants described their own experiences of school, and those of their family

members. I was able to share in their stories of academic successes as well as particularly memorable events. Career development as teachers was portrayed through photographs of significant activities both within the school and at different training institutions.

A loose interview schedule allowed participants to share only the information that they felt was of relevance to the study, and that they felt comfortable about sharing. Although it was sometimes a challenge to remain as attentive as necessary to the nuances of the story/ies being told, and to know when and how to probe for more detail, to clarify points or to pull back to the focus if I felt we had strayed a little off topic, I was nonetheless pleased by how each one worked out. The interviews usually lasted about an hour; by the time the tape was finishing, both my interviewee and I were often starting to lose concentration somewhat. I then transcribed each interview tape as soon as possible afterwards. I had been planning to use these transcripts as the starting point for a follow-up interview with each participant, but this, unfortunately, was not to be possible.

With the three group discussions I conducted in the form of mini-workshops, the starting points were similarly open-ended questions. Having introduced myself and the study, I then introduced a brief icebreaker type activity asking participants to list on a piece of paper three things they liked doing which were considered typical for women, and three things that they did not. This activity was not only fun for each group, but it set the scene for a discussion of women's roles and experiences as teachers from a gendered perspective. With a group, the open-ended questions I posed had to be inevitably less focused on long stories of individual lives, but rather on specific experiences and activities. I asked questions such as: What do you most enjoy about teaching? What do you most dislike? How does the school you are in compare to your own experiences of school? In each session, the group dynamic meant that the discussion developed with quite minimal intervention. Participants asked each other questions, wanted clarifications and explanations, and were keen to respond to each other with supplementary ideas as well as counter arguments too. In large rooms, often with the loud whirring of the fan, it was impossible to tape-record the discussions, but

in each session I made as many running notes as possible at the time, and then as soon as possible afterwards, sat down at the computer to try to reconstruct the discussion as best I could.

Questionnaires for Women Teachers

As described earlier, the questionnaire I developed was a tool with which to elicit further data on the lives and experiences of women teachers once I had left Karachi (see Appendix 4). I sought input from women I had worked with and who had advised and guided me in Karachi to develop a series of appropriate questions which would elicit further data on the ideas and issues I had been investigating whilst at AKU-IED. It was certainly a challenge to develop questions which were open-ended enough to stimulate the hoped-for detailed responses, and yet which would be clear enough to a reader who had never met me. I also needed questions that were not too daunting for a non-native speaker of English, and, above all, would not be too much of a time-burden. I asked about how and why participants became teachers, what they liked and disliked about teaching, what they found easiest and most difficult, and the extent to which they are involved in educational policy-making. Some of the questionnaires were returned to me electronically and so I was able to work directly with the participants' text, cutting and pasting it into a series of different organizing frameworks. Others were completed by hand and mailed to me, and so these I first had to transcribe.

Writing Fieldnotes

In my use of fieldnotes I draw particularly on ethnographic methods, for which fieldnotes, journals, memos and commentaries are crucial tools. As a regular and ongoing – if sometimes obsessive – activity during time in the field, I wrote fieldnotes to document in detail the complexity of my experiences. At the same time, I problematize a simplistic notion of the field. In my own experience, 'being in the field' has come to mean many different things and a series of sometimes connected, but often disjointed research activities. It has meant being in Karachi classrooms, finding it hard to make myself heard and to hold down the papers under the whirr of the ceiling

fan. With the aid of email communication, it has meant me sitting at home at my computer in Montreal crafting letters which could be read only seconds later on the other side of the world. But the fieldnotes I made on these experiences are important method-related data, essential for capturing the reflexivity of my research approach.

I wrote copiously during the intensive period of time in Karachi, noting in detail ongoing reflections, thoughts, questions and observations. In these texts – some long, some short - I was particularly anxious to capture elements which would be absent from the interview transcripts, and from the logistical field log I was keeping. It seemed natural for me to want to record as much as possible of the lived experience of being in such a rich environment, and I was surprised when asked by a graduate student about when I would be starting my data collection. I replied quite quickly that it started even before I had left the airport in Karachi, but then judging from his puzzled look, I had to take some time to explain my ethnographic approach to being in the field. Although this approach may have been quite unfamiliar to the graduate student I talked with, my ongoing notes were a way for me to capture aspects such as the context of a meeting, the rapport I felt with the participant/s and the physical environment in which we were meeting.

The details of the environments and relationships described in my fieldnotes are the means to creating what Geertz (1973) terms "thick description", and the starting point for interpreting and then presenting the complex social worlds in which I was participating:

Although I hadn't been sure what to expect in terms of age or anything, I was quite surprised to see a woman of about 50, quite short and rounded, with shortish, styled hair that was hennaed at the central parting, wearing a simple but stylish black suit trimmed with a black and white pattern round the cuffs and as scarf. Thinking back now, I think it was her smallish, dark rimmed glasses that gave her quite a sophisticated look. She was sitting behind her desk – a few papers and books on it including a monogrammed leather case, and a couple of what looked like project reports. Her computer was on, which she seemed to glance at every so often, although the screen was hidden from me – a shelf stretching behind her with some documentation. To the side, there was a small round table with several chairs around it – the office seemed to have a separate section at the back, maybe with filing cabinets

etc there, and then in the corner were a couple of floor cushions, in sort of Middle Eastern style.

Fieldnotes, September 15th, 2001

I was also able to add notes and memos to the fieldnotes when I was reflecting later, and to react to the related readings I was doing. Fieldnotes were an important space in which to work with the emotional issues of being in an unfamiliar environment, excited about the research challenge, but daunted by the need to be constantly thinking and rethinking about what I was doing and why, who I was and what I represented.

As is described and demonstrated in Chapter 6, my fieldnotes also became the basis of longer ethnographic texts, of extended pieces of "analysis in description" (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p. 106), or what I call vignettes. The vignettes are presented as an alternative means of working with some of the inherent tensions and contradictions of studying women teachers' lives in development contexts. Wolcott (1994) uses the term "transformation" to describe what the researcher does with data collected; creating and then discussing these vignettes is a way for me to move through the processes of description, analysis and interpretation that are inherent in this concept of transformation.

Working with Data

Once back in Montreal, I worked with the interview data, and with the records I had of group discussions by reading and re-reading the texts from several different perspectives, firstly in a more holistic, impressionistic way, and subsequently in more detail according to major emerging themes. I read my fieldnotes separately, and then read extracts relating to particular interviews and discussions alongside the transcripts of these activities. From some of these interviews I wrote initial teacher portraits based on what I had learned. Additional data that I had collected through the questionnaires distributed to women teachers after my departure, provided me with different and yet quite complementary texts on becoming and being a woman teacher. These responses provided me with very 'dense' data with which I could do close readings. I organized the data in several different ways in order to facilitate an analysis; firstly by question,

then by themes. As I did so, some of the texts stood out in their complexity, in the interconnectedness between different ideas expressed within them, and also in the dissonance within them. These texts became the ones with which I worked in most detail.

In working with these different texts, I draw particularly on the work of Tobin (2000), who presents short extracts from conversations with children on the media and discusses them with particular attention to the ways in which children understand, interpret and discuss media texts. Tobin works with children in an elementary school in Hawaii and in so doing, demonstrates how making meaning of global media products such as *Swiss family robinson* depends on and is mediated by the children's local identities and experiences within their communities. Tobin's point is that in listening closely to the words the children use, we gain insight into the worldviews, concerns, issues and prejudices of the communities in which they live their lives. These communities are inevitably heterogeneous, and therefore so are the discursive resources upon which they draw when talking. The conflicting views and perspectives of a society are then inevitably reproduced in what individuals say and write. By paying particular attention to the contradictions, by "looking awry" at "things that stick out" (Zizek, 1991), we can therefore tease out some of the racist, sexist, colonialist and other ideological messages that have currency in that particular community. At the same time, in listening closely to individual instances of resistance to dominant messages, we can gain insight not necessarily into individual psyches, rather into the possibilities for participation in discourse communities in which dissent and resistance are possible. From a feminist perspective, as Smith (1987) encourages us to do, this approach can be seen as a method for making the everyday world of women problematic.

Tobin himself is inspired by the work of Voloshinov (1976), whose belief that in any complex, changing and potentially conflictual society, individuals will express confusion, contradiction and stress seems particularly relevant in the context of Pakistan. Such a socially-inflected approach to working with my data resonates within a conceptual framework in which woman teachers are understood as multi-

dimensional individuals. These women are living and working with, within and against a complex discursive environment, and one in which the messages, images and attitudes towards women teachers are, as described earlier, quite contradictory. Working from a feminist perspective I situate the accounts women provide of their teaching experience within a social and discursive environment which is structured by and through gender-imbalanced power relations. To do so, the description of feminist methodology used by Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe and Thomson's (1999), when researching young people's sexuality, is particularly helpful. They too have to acknowledge that the young people who talk to them about their sexuality may or may not be aware of the social construction of sexuality nor of the extent to which of their subjective experience is a result of a particular gendered social position. It is clear that interview transcripts – or questionnaire responses – do not "speak for themselves", and that it is a feminist research method that produces an analysis of them in relation to gendered power relations. The research team writes:

> Our focus on young people's expressions of their experience, rather than on the 'facts' of their behaviour, gave us qualitatively and politically different access to how and why young women take sexual risks, and accept risky practices. (p. 460)

In my own data analysis it is also the expressions of experience (the stories told) of becoming and being women teachers that can give me qualitatively and politically different insights into woman teacherness than most accounts of women teaching in development.

The title of Tobin's work, *Good guys don't wear hats,* comes from a facilitated discussion of Swiss Family Robinson by a group of six year olds in his study. When the interviewer asks how can you tell who are the good guys and who are the bad guys, the rather confusing responses are:

> Keoni: 'Cause the good guys don't have, uh, hats.
> Kenchiro: 'Cause the good guys are more smarter than the bad guys.
> Dylan: The bad guys don't have horses or anything.
> Elijah: Or a nice house. (p. 1)

Whereas many researchers may have left aside such an exchange, for Tobin it is of great interest. The apparently strange connections the children make in their dialogue are a starting point for Tobin to analyze the larger societal context in which such comments are produced and do in fact make sense. He is interested in finding an explanation for what makes children think that good guys have horses and nice houses.

With attention to the details of both boys' and girls' words, Tobin seeks insight into the specific forms of gender performance in particular locations. He analyses, for example, a short discussion between a mixed group of boys and girls, in which in different ways and in different moments he hears boys and girls attempting to perform particular gender roles through their reactions to different films and TV shows. These gender positions, rather than pre-existing stable gender identities brought to the conversation, reflect the different gender possibilities current in their communities. The children can then access these different discursive possibilities to make sense for themselves. Such possibilities are often contradictory and yet the children are able to pick up and perform them as and when they need. The multiple citations, references, mimicry and connections made by the children in response to particular questions and prompts are an indication of their embeddedness in complex social worlds and of the multiple positions that they can and do take up within these worlds.

Although the context and content of Tobin's research may seem quite different to my own, the methodological underpinnings of his analysis are very similar. In starting to interpret interviews and questionnaire transcripts I was, like Tobin, not necessarily looking for a clear and cohesive pattern of responses across a sample group of participants. Rather than proceeding to analyze by codes and themes across the data, my approach was to read and re-read the individual texts and to allow my attention to be taken by particular moments, comments and statements. I was drawn to extracts in which the meaning was not immediately obvious, and to apparently contradictory elements in particular stories. I was especially interested in conjunctions, to other linking words and phrases, and to the ways in which women teachers constructed coherent stories from their experience. But I was also attentive to the ways in which they expressed dissonance and incoherence. Words such as "but", "somehow",

"depends on" were of particular interest, drawing me into a deeper reading of what was being said. I was interested in moments of certainty, as well as moments of uncertainty, in discernable shifts in emphasis, and in mood. Points of tension and contradiction also stood out for me, even within quite short questionnaire texts.

Teaching has made me a respected person anywhere I go ...and earning my own living has made me a very responsible and independent person somehow

This sentence was a response to the question in my questionnaire to women teachers, "Please describe any changes teaching has made in your life". It was a response that greatly intrigued me; more specifically, it was the final word, the "somehow" that intrigued me. It is at this point that an otherwise quite conventional response appears to go awry, and that there is suddenly a shift detectable in the response. One word like that may have gone unnoticed in a traditional transcript analysis, and the response coded in terms of its references to respect, financial and general independence. But to do so, would, I believe, have been ignoring a wealth of meaning. This is not to say that I have any doubts about the authenticity of her comments relating to the impact teaching has had on her life, rather that the "somehow" might be read as a verbalization of the line of fault in the realities of women's experience of such apparently empowering experiences.

I could have left it aside as an anomaly, or a quirk in the respondent's style, and continued with a thematic analysis, but Tobin's approach to transcript analysis encourages me to consider the "somehow" as a indication of a contextual condition of some significance. Rather than asking what a particular woman meant at that particular time, the interpretive question relates to what this comment says about the context in which it was uttered. How can it be interpreted from the insights I have gained into the lives and experiences of women teachers in Pakistan? From this perspective, the word could be read as a comment on the very ambiguous position women teachers may be in; it may be possible for them to become more independent, and to accrue respect, but it is not a straightforward process. There are tensions to negotiate, often between school and home, compromises to be made, and individual woman are "somehow" working through these on a daily basis.

Of course, I was influenced by my mother, who has been teaching since 30 years. I am doing my MBA and I will make teaching my profession 'cause I love to be with children

This is another somewhat hard to read extract in which I also felt warranted further analysis. This written response to a question about how and why this woman became a teacher appeared to contain at least three distinct, and somewhat contradictory stories. It would be very hard to code this extract as any one of the three, but it should not be passed over. According to Tobin's approach, these three stories co-exist in the response because the discourses they represent coexist in the community/ies to which the speaker belongs, and they should therefore be given attention. Interpreting this response in its context, it is interesting to explore the relationship between the first and last sections, between the influence of a mother's career choice, and one's own "love for children". Are there alternative attitudes, and/or even careers that would be possible for this woman to pursue? Apparently yes, as she is also doing her MBA, a qualification that it seems unlikely to be considered as professional development for a teacher. On the other hand, however, she is doing this MBA whilst at the same time professing her love for children and her desire to make teaching a profession. We have to ask whether, in the context in which she lives and works, this is a way for her to negotiate with herself and with others an interest in alternative careers and perspectives.

This sort of process was for me an exercise in problematizing the everyday lives of women, as Smith (1987) encourages us to do. It was a way of identifying and then exploring the lines of fault that Smith recognizes in the lives of women, and in the stories they construct of their lives. Reading these 'lines of fault' from a sociological rather than a psychological perspective, I interpreted the comments made by women as an indication of the complexity of the discursive environment in which they are working, and the multiple positions they take up within it. As do Holland et al. (1999), I came to my conclusions by attempting to grasp women teachers' experience as they expressed it, and in interpreting this experience in the light of feminist conceptions of gendered roles and relationships.

Tobin admits that what he can offer based on his detailed readings of "the most odd, incoherent, and uncanny" (p. 138) is a very speculative interpretation. As he states:

> To understand another human being, we must use intuition, empathy and imagination. To make meaning of any statement – spoken, written or painted – we must read it. And to read is necessarily to read in, for meaning-making is a process not just of decoding, but also of interpreting. (p. 138-9)

I am similarly candid about my own "reading in" of the data I collected from women teachers, about the need for imagination to make sense of them, and about my desire for dialogue about the multiple interpretations possible.

Summary

Within this chapter I have outlined and discussed the 'nuts and bolts' of the research activities and processes. I have told a story within a bigger story, that of the development of the study, and of the fieldwork activities that I set up and carried out. The chapter makes tangible the theoretical, methodological foundations of my work, and presents the complementary methods used for data collection, analysis and presentation. It describes the application of a critical reflexive, feminist methodology to this study of women teachers' lives in Pakistan.

6: INTERPRETING THE FIELD

> Data might be better conceived as the material for telling a story where the challenge becomes to generate a polyvalent data base that is used to *vivify* [original italics] interpretation as opposed to 'support' or 'prove'. Turning the text into a display and interaction among perspectives and presenting material rich enough to bear re-analysis in different ways bring the reader into the analysis via a dispersive impulse which fragments univocal authority. (Lather, 1991, p. 91)

Introduction

In the quotation above, Lather (1991) states that data might be better thought of as story-telling material, to be interpreted from a multiplicity of perspectives. One of the reasons I have for working with multiple forms of data representation is to engage the reader more fully in the interpretive work. This stimulates a multiplicity of analytical perspectives, and therefore disrupts the authority of a single interpretation. As Tobin (2000) points out, especially as an outsider, it is anyway impossible to pick up on every clue, allusion, connection or connotation in individuals' texts. Any interpretation is therefore inevitably partial. Any interpretation of the larger context in which researcher and researched are engaged is equally partial and contingent. However, presenting a response to research participants is an imperative to which Tobin is committed and which I am concerned to take on too. Although we can never be exactly sure of what the words of participants mean to them, for researchers there are ethical issues in listening as hard as possible, in trying to make meaning, and in some way attempting to answer. It is in this spirit that my interpretations have been developed.

In this chapter I present and discuss data of the different forms described in the previous chapter. I work with interview transcripts, questionnaire responses and with a substantial quantity of fieldnotes, juxtaposing the words of women teachers in Karachi with my own perspectives. I use a multi-layered organizer of impossible fictions to present and discuss data relating to three interconnected themes, those of being a woman teacher in Pakistan, of the linkages between women teachers and girl students,

and of researching women teachers' lives in development contexts. Through the thesis I address both content and research process, and their relationships to each other. Methodology for investigating women teachers' lives is an area of inquiry in itself, and data was collected on this, primarily in the form of fieldnotes. It is therefore important that this third impossible fiction is integrated into this chapter, and set in relation to the other two.

Munro (1998) explains that her study of women teachers does not lead her to new definitions or methods for establishing truths. I too can assert that rather than discovering new truths, I have gained a deeper understanding of the multiple ways in which we come to know about women teachers in development contexts. I have gained insight into how this is embedded in the relational, physical and emotional processes of what is often assumed to be disembodied, disconnected and objective research. The women I interact with are social actors, constructing their lives - and the stories they tell of their lives - from a number of different discursive resources. As theorized earlier, I conceptualize these accounts as situated within a framework of socially-constructed, gendered power relations of which the women who give them may or may not be aware (Holland et al., 1999). This approach enables me to highlight the social and political context in which the narrative was presented and to keep attention focused on the 'researching' story. The research activity is, in itself, an important dimension of the context in which the responses are produced and this has to be accounted for in any interpretation developed. Also to be considered is the extent to which specific responses are produced as a result of the particular questions asked and of the expectations that the questions create.

For a feminist researcher, finding ways of working both within and against the authority of dominant development discourses is not easy. It is a challenge to find ways of disrupting the hegemony of male power over females, of western researcher over local teacher, and of school hierarchies of power. It may require what Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe as a "bricoleur" approach to genre and form, in which different sources and different modes of presentation are used together in experimental ways. This is especially so as there are few precedents on which to draw in the field of

education, gender and development. Within each impossible fiction theme, I therefore work with data in different forms. I begin each theme with a short storied text I call a vignette, written from my research data. These vignettes not only demonstrate my findings, but also represent a textual alternative to the dominant development policy, program and research language relating to women teachers. As described in detail below, these vignettes form an alternative, feminist narrative to challenge the genderless, technical texts of teaching in development contexts. The contradictory nature of both being a woman teacher and of researching women teachers' lives is at the center of each. This contradictoriness is at the same time both validated and problematized.

The organizing concept of Impossible Fictions is so intricately connected to the vignette form of data analysis and presentation that it is difficult to know how to present the two. I will start with a section entitled 'Impossible Fictions: An Organizing Concept', in which I explain how I organize my interpretations of the data. This is followed by a section entitled, 'Constructing Vignettes', in which I discuss the rationale and the method used for the vignettes. I build on the methodological foundations presented in Chapter 4, to describe an alternative form of data analysis and presentation. I describe how and why the vignettes were constructed. The central section of the chapter comprises the impossible fiction themes, each presented through a vignette and then through other forms of data. The final section discusses the ways in which meaning is made and presented within the chapter.

Impossible Fictions: An Organizing Concept

The conceptual organizer of impossible fiction has several interconnected layers, and I use it to discuss three particular themes: being a Pakistani woman teacher; linkages between women teachers and girls' education; researching women teachers' lives. Taken literally, it is quite possible to become a woman teacher, to teach girls, and to conduct research with women teachers, yet in this particular context, each of the three activities contains inherent tensions, contradictions and impossibilities. These are reflected in women teachers' every day experiences, as they move between their

multiple positions in schools, families and classrooms. Researchers too have to negotiate the complexities of their different roles and relationships.

My interpretations revolve around dialectics of possibility and impossibility, fact and fiction. I draw in particular on Walkerdine (1990) and Munro's (1998) work on women teachers, discussed in Chapter 2. According to Munro, it is an impossible fiction to expect the woman teacher to ensure each child's 'pathway to reason'. An apparently impossible situation is created, in which the gendered subjectivity of women teachers traps them "inside a concept of nurturance which held them responsible for the freeing of each individual" (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 19). Being a woman teacher may be understood as an inherently paradoxical experience. The women teachers' stories and responses I present are certainly shaped by sometimes quite contradictory expectations and limitations. Yet they also express resistance and dissent. The dissonance between what they might want to do and what is feasible for them to do can be quite tangible. Their accounts reflect the complexity of the social worlds in which they live, and in which the position of a woman teacher is a particularly tricky one. From their narratives of experience, it is possible to tease out broader issues relating to the contradictory nature of women's experience in Pakistan, and how this is lived in the context of the school.

Looking at the experiences and perceptions of women teachers in relation to girls' education reveals perspectives which may also be somewhat problematic. This is especially so when they are read in the context of priority programming for women teachers to facilitate education for girls. The notion of impossible fiction highlights some of the tensions between the priorities and lived realities of women teachers, and the practical and strategic gender interests of girls and women in schools. It is also helpful in framing 'impossible' situations in which women teachers appreciate, rather than challenge, dominant, traditionally masculine identities of boys.

Working within a framework of impossible fiction allows me to do several things. Firstly, I can make important connections between the conventional data of my interviews and group sessions with women teachers and my fieldnote and journal data.

I can reflect my experiences of setting up, conducting, analyzing and writing up such interviews and sessions and problematize what is said in relation to the context in which it is said. Secondly, I can be self-conscious and reflexive about what I say and write, and about the fiction that the thesis as a whole represents. Finally, I can work with the inherent tension in this study, the tension between the need to know more about women teachers' lives and the trickiness of actually gaining insight. I strive to make explicit my own positionings in relation to what I describe, and to present the unevenness and the "entanglement" of my experiences (Clifford, 1997). I draw on the work of Crewe and Harrison (1999) whose subjective descriptions of personal experience enable them to demonstrate the complexity of development policy and performance and to disrupt persistent development dichotomies with a messier, more ambiguous picture of lived realities.

Constructing Vignettes

> But to intermingle the utopian "feminine" space (of religious and a-social aura, of "ultimates") with an attracted loathing for the blush/red etc feminine with a rooted feminist lust for material social justice in the quirky voice of a person mainly gendered female – well this is approximately the practice. (DuPlessis, 1990, p. 165)

It was necessary for me to develop process and form for my writing which would reflect my conceptual and methodological approaches. I needed a) to express and analyze the reflexivity of the study and the insights it was generating; b) to evoke in the reader some sense of the embodied research experience of studying women teachers' lives in Pakistan, and c) to rewrite women's lived experience of teaching within *and* against apparently apolitical, yet male-dominated theorizing of education in development. Creating short, storied texts based on my experiences had the potential for fulfilling these needs, allowing me to present some of my data of 'woman teacherness' in as complete a way as possible. I resist the tendency that Van Manen (1990) describes for much of educational research to "pulverize life into minute abstracted fragments and particles that are of little use to practitioners" (p. 7).

Feminist scholars are particularly concerned with seeking appropriate, creative ways for working with the "indeterminate realities of producing knowledge" (Jipson & Palin, 1997) and for prioritizing women's experiential knowledge. This is especially necessary in the apparently apolitical and yet implicitly male-oriented worlds of education and development. Alternative research methodologies may disrupt androcentric norms of research content and process, and may draw attention to the connections between the two. In the field of education, Maxine Greene was a pioneer in the blurring of research and writing genres. Through such blurring, she and others are able to disrupt the categories and structures within which women's lives and experiences are traditionally organized. Attention can be drawn to the multiplicity of possibilities and one can account for individual, partial and contingent perspectives. In North America and the UK especially, a new generation of scholars is finding alternatives to the traditional doctoral thesis, using poetry, autobiography, fiction and collage as both research process and expression. Such work is forcing us to "situate inquiry in a vaster epistemological space" (Jipson & Paley, 1997, p. 3), and to re-determine what may count as research, as data, as analysis and interpretation. It suggests alternative forms for construction and presentation of research knowledge. Teachers' stories, memory work texts and even photographs have become valid and valuable resources for addressing issues of curriculum, educational reform and pedagogy. As discussed in Chapter 2, narrative approaches are now relatively well established for presenting teacher-related research, and may be particularly appropriate for capturing a sense of the individual within their context.

In the fields of ethnography and anthropology, shifts in thinking about the epistemological foundations of study, discussed in Chapter 4, have equally created interest in new ways of communicating scholarly inquiry. The conscious positioning of the ethnographer, and the self-reflexivity required for these newer forms of ethnography-as-process, also have to be reflected in alternative forms of ethnography-as-text (Gottschalk, 1998). Clifford (1997), for example, chooses to create collage, mixing the different genres of travel writing, formal essay, poetic collage and book review. He needs to be able to work with the unevenness of his experience, and to

present the "entanglement" of experiences and ideas in the worlds he explores. As method, collage enables him to work with both the individual elements of his experience and the overall nature of it, and allows the reader to appreciate the same. Fieldnotes were traditionally seen as apparently objective, descriptive accounts of culture which was "out there". In these new forms of writing and of written collage, fieldnotes are equally critical, yet as explicitly subjective, raw data to be worked with in a number of ways. Other researchers, such as Prosser (1996) and Pink (2001), practise alternative forms of visual and ethnographic inquiry, using images created by video, photo, and digital technology to explore and interpret everyday life through different media. Such alternatives may provide means through which to disrupt the authority of the text, and to work outside of the tension inevitably created when everyday life is represented by a flat, written text. It becomes more possible to convey to readers (and viewers, listeners or web-surfers) powerful, multi-faceted and multi-sensory representations of research data, analysis and interpretations. Spaces are created for a politicized questioning of current social relations, structures and systems, and for the interrogation of the researcher's own entanglement within these.

For feminist ethnographers such as Stacey (1991), the traditional written text, as product of a feminist ethnography, is highly problematic. Such a text inevitably perpetuates asymmetrical power relations between researcher and researched. Writing can, however, become in itself a form of feminist practice through which the issues of gender-based inequalities can be addressed. The power dynamics and relationships that exist between and amongst males and females, and of the male bias of many cultural, professional and academic norms can also be challenged. Feminist ethnographers can find forms of writing and representation that challenge traditional scholarly forms, such as poly-vocal texts, autobiography, film and installation. However, as DuPlessis (1990) points out, as academic/ poet/ mother/ wife/ daughter, she is inevitably marked by gender, and is therefore produced as gendered through certain forms of language. In a reflexive, feminist study of women teachers in Pakistan, the multi-layered challenge is firstly that of deconstructing the language through which myself and my research participants are produced as women, as women teachers, as women in development

and as a women researcher. That same language then has to be used to develop and present alternatives.

To construct vignettes, I used the data I had collected in my fieldnotes and journals, in order to both confront *and* intersect with stories already created about women teachers (Bailey, 1997). Van Manen, and other ethnographers too are concerned to "dethrone the authority of the neutral-objective observer, to dismiss the scientific genre, point at the rhetorical construction of truth," (Gottschalk, 1998, p. 209). My short texts, constructed through multiple layers of reflexive and self-situated writing, can be seen as an alternative to the traditional stance of the impartial observer. From a feminist perspective they fragment the univocal authority (Lather, 1991) on education in development that is predominantly male. I rewrite my own and other women's bodies and voices into education in development in ways that are outside of the somewhat limiting discourses of nurturing, caring and of practical gender needs. In doing this, it becomes possible to some extent to decentre knowledge about women teachers, to reterritorialize it from a feminist standpoint, and to critically remap what is 'known' (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991).

The writing of vignettes is not only a product of the research, rather part of the method (Van Manen, 1990). I wrote and rewrote in order to process the data I had collected, and to reflect on issues of language, position, power and authority. I completed evocative texts which aim to engage the reader and draw her into the experiences being explored. As part of the analytical process, in the rewriting of these texts I borrowed from the genre of fiction, most especially for its attention to language, sounds and rhythms, and its power to explore and then provoke emotional response. I aimed to make the events more meaningful for the reader through attention to a narrative structure and to what I know is the evocative power of the story. Like Selvadurai's *Cinnamon gardens,* my vignettes seek to convey a sense of what did happen *and* what might have happened, and are to be read for their explanatory power, their resonance with lived experiences. However unlike the novelist, I make my own situatedness as researcher quite evident, and lay open the research process. The vignettes should resonate with the theoretical frameworks already presented.

Bailey (1997) writes of the importance of telling her own stories of teaching as a way of making herself and other women teachers subjects, rather than objects, of history. In the particular moment in time and place in the world that I was doing my fieldwork, this becomes even more important. Being in Karachi on and immediately after September 11th, 2001, working with women teachers either side of this landmark world event, I felt powerless and insignificant. In this context, the vignettes present a repositioning of myself, and of the women teachers and the issues I am interested in, into world history.

Thus I arrive at presenting the three impossible fictions through Vignette 1, 'On becoming a Pakistani Woman Teacher', Vignette 2, 'On a Woman Teaching Girls', and Vignette 3, 'On Meeting with a Group of Women Teachers'. Each of these vignettes is followed by a section entitled 'Beyond the Vignette', which is a complement that includes other forms of data presentation. Included are fragments of conversation and discussion from women teachers I worked with in Karachi, and extracts from the questionnaire responses elicited after my departure. As explained in more detail in Chapter 5, such data are, I believe, most usefully understood expressions of social concerns and understandings that get articulated by and through individuals as they speak (Tobin 2000). Understood in this way, the spoken or written words that I present become social texts, that is, texts that have been produced in a certain context. As such, they can give us insight not necessarily into individual psyches and intentions, but into the anxieties, concerns and tensions of the time and place in which they are produced (Tobin, 2000).

Impossible Fiction 1: Being a Pakistani Woman Teacher

The Vignette: On Becoming a Woman Teacher

Tasneem's home wasn't easy to find, and the driver had to stop several people in the neighbourhood to pinpoint exactly the block, number and actual house. In the end though, we drew up in the driveway exactly at the appointed time. It was in a smart residential area of the city, quite quiet and green with secluded houses and apartments

set back from the street, with private yards. Tasneem came out to meet me, followed by her 'puppy', an already quite large dog, which welcomed me enthusiastically. I was quite relieved that having shown me into the hallway of the house, she took it upstairs, and I was left to gather some first impressions.

It was a very middle class home; a comfortable, spacious home, with a familiar pattern of room lay-out, furnishings and ornaments. I stood in the large hallway, with stairs leading off at the back; to the left was a dining room – quite formal, but not too grand. The table was half set and I thought that we would perhaps work in there. To the right was a lounge area – again, quite formal, but not overly plush. There was a faintly old-fashioned, comfortably lived-in feel, with nothing too fussy or loud. Lacy mats, china plates and family photos covered the sideboard counter. At the back of the hallway, on the left was the kitchen, and then on the right was the office where Tasneem showed me into when she came back downstairs. I never saw or heard anything of her husband, but from her silent gestures I assumed he was upstairs.

When I had met her previously, Tasneem had been wearing a shalwar kameez, but today, as I arrived in my carefully chosen shalwar kameez, she met me in a sleeveless blue shirt, flowing Indian cotton skirt in blues and black, and flip-flop sandal-slippers. I am suddenly aware that although I desire informality, intimacy and the sort of confidence that goes beyond a working relationship, I arrive dressed as if for work. It was at Tasneem's request that I had gone over to her home; she tells me that Sunday is her day to catch up on some work, to read, and to have family come to visit. Saturday is usually taken with school activities and so Sunday is really her only free day. She apologized for "dragging me out" on a Sunday, but I was more than happy to take a trip out to the other side of the city; the rest of my week had been so busy and anyway, I wasn't at all excited about a whole day spent inside back in my hostel room.

So we moved into the study and sat on the sofa, comfortably into the two ends. The room had one wall lined with bookshelves, and opposite was a desk with a dust-sheet covered computer. Familiar texts on teaching and learning, and even one written by a McGill faculty member, caught my attention as I scanned the titles on the shelves. The

tape recorder was between us - not too obtrusive, I hoped, but close enough to check every so often. It all felt quite comfortable and relaxed and, turned to face each other from either end of the sofa, our eye contact was frequent and natural. After setting up and turning on the tape, and starting up the interview conversation, interview self-consciousness dissipated and Tasneem started to talk. Prefacing the conversation with an apology that she said she had not had much time to think about the interview, she nonetheless had a story to tell today. I was often biting my tongue, stopping myself interjecting and interrupting, but when I did comment or pose a question, Tasneem continued on her own track.

In response to my opening question, Tasneem starts to tell me how she came to be a teacher. She was a young art student of about twenty, who was really enjoying experimenting with different artistic processes as well as studying art history, but she decided to go into teaching. It was "by default" she explains, perhaps, she now thinks, because she was lacking confidence. She continues:
"So I joined a school - er a boys school, and I first tried the Montessori level, which I didn't like. I thought the children were really too small and I wasn't getting any mental stimulation for myself in that, so I moved into the primary school, and I enjoyed that, I enjoyed that a lot in fact. The school, unfortunately, was very, very, very traditional and I think I must have been one of the very very few young people there. All the teachers there were really old, and they had really old ways of doing things with kids - I think that young people do have a freshness with youth ..."
I start to agree, but then bite my tongue.
"Yes, and so anyway I taught there, I enjoyed that, I did a lot also theatre, student theatre, I worked with the boys on plays and that sort of thing, and then I got married in the meanwhile, and when my eldest daughter was about to be born, my husband decided I ought to stay home. And I agreed. I agreed. I didn't really think too much about it. I accepted that. And the reason I am saying that now in retrospect is because I realize just how compliant I had been, which I wouldn't be now - I think I did have certain views about women, and women's rights, or you know I don't use that term,

but just that women also have a place in society and have a need to do their own things - so now I question, how and why I was so compliant."

"Yes?"

"But at that time, I just accepted it. Anyway, I enjoyed being with my children. My daughter. I enjoyed being with her because I did a lot with her and I think, I think actually I learned a lot, through having my children, because I was already interested in learning, and in teaching, and I have 3 daughters, and I stayed at home for that entire period, till my youngest was 8 years old. But I think I really tried out a lot of things with them."

Tasneem continues to explain how she became informally involved in different activities in her children's school, until the youngest was ready for primary school, she started back teaching, this time at a grammar school. Before then it is more difficult for a woman to work; as she says, "You know you can't just leave a baby at seven in the morning and walk out."

I am curious if and when Tasneem did any teacher training, and she tells me yes, whilst she was teaching she did a course.

"And how did that - did that help?" I ask.

"Actually that course, no, no, I didn't find – I mean it was – it was very theoretical course, it was just – it wasn't really a help at all. ...In fact I don't remember a thing about that course, to be very honest. It was just my own reading and my own - er - I think just learning on the job, so to speak."

"Sort of experimenting?" I ask.

"Yes, - watching my children, and how they felt about certain things and other teachers sort of, and you felt, well I don't want to be like that or...

The house was quite silent and the only sound apart from our voices was the clinking of the coffee cups on the saucers. Tasneem had brought drinks in on a small trolley before we had formally started the interview, pushing it up in front of the sofa, within easy reach of us both. Although the contact was certainly warm, Tasneem maintained a certain distance throughout. It was a professional relationship, not a personal one. She didn't invite me to the school I was so curious to see. She mentioned an activity

she was preparing for teachers, I mentioned my interest, but didn't receive the hoped for invitation. Yes, she would let me know whether it was going to happen or not. I start to think that perhaps this research relationship was not quite the collegial one I had envisaged.

The hour-long interview was intensive for teller and listener too, perhaps because the reality of an opportunity to tell one's story becomes quite mundane in practice. Whatever, maintaining concentration is hard on both of us. Yawns are surreptitiously suppressed in the silence of the house. By the time the tape finishes, our interview is over - but the story nowhere near so. Continuity, closure or some follow up I need, but I follow the lead she has taken and am careful not to over-impose.

"I hope I will be able to read your research," Tasneem suddenly says as I am preparing to leave. It is a comment which surprises me and yet shouldn't. My assumptions of a collaborative, collegial relationship, of a participant-centred approach, and of an interviewee who has been as active in constructing the morning's conversation, are disrupted, but I quickly insist that she certainly would, reiterating how much I hoped to stay in contact and to pick up again where we were leaving off. At her suggestion we make a plan for a follow-up interview in two weeks' time, but for nothing more beyond or in-between.

Beyond the Vignette

As discussed in Chapter 2, notions of impossibility, tension and contradiction in the experiences of women teachers are richly documented in literature from North America and Europe. The notion of impossible fiction could be used to characterize my own experiences of being a woman teacher, of wanting to *and* not wanting to take up the profession, of loving *and* hating it. It describes my ongoing, somewhat love-hate relationship with schools, teachers and education systems. From the responses of the women teachers I interviewed and interacted with in Karachi, and those who completed my questionnaire, similar tensions in their lived realities emerge. In the story above, we see how Tasneem's story of becoming and being a woman teacher is

one with multiple layers. Teaching was not a profession she explicitly chose, and yet it is one in which she feels she can develop her own maternal understandings of child development. She can also use her creative talents and interests to the full. Although she describes with enthusiasm the projects, activities and professional development programs she is involved with now, her tone remains wistful as she reflects back on the choices she had to make, or which were made for her.

As another woman teacher told me:

Even we are common with God – in the past - and nowadays [...] *people say, okay, if they don't know anything, okay, they are going into teaching. Yes - but I have heard it from lots of people, that people go into teaching that, you know, can't do anything else.*

Her words indicate the contradictions which may exist in the experience of being a teacher in Pakistan. As in the West, it is a profession that on the one hand does command some respect and can elevate the teacher to a position of some status within a community. Yet on the other, in today's society, where state resources for education often reduce teachers' salaries, where working conditions are poor, and classrooms sadly under-resourced, someone who works in such conditions may not be viewed particularly positively. Especially in the cities of Pakistan, where apparently more glamorous, better respected and better remunerated career opportunities may exist, this woman indicates how teaching is now often seen as a profession for those who have no other options.

And the reality is that for many women, there may be little else they can do. Teaching is often considered a worthy profession, one that is acceptable for women, and one in which the working environment is relatively safe. As the first open question in the questionnaire, I asked how and why women became teachers. I have found this to be a very effective opening question at the beginning of interviews and focus groups, and even in a questionnaire format it appeared to engage respondents, and encouraged them to write quite detailed and candid responses. I was interested to know more about the reasons women would give for their entry into the professions, about the extent to

which these reflected personal aspirations and/or family or society expectations of appropriate careers for educated women.

One woman replied:

I chose teaching because it is a noble profession and I thought that I would be able to teach easily to the younger group of children. Yes, there are lots of teachers in my family. Yes, my family wanted me to become a teacher.

Within this short text three distinct stories of becoming a teacher co-exist. Firstly, the notion of teaching as a noble profession is articulated, a notion which, according to the earlier quote may no longer be quite as true as it was in the past. Nonetheless, such a story retains some value in Pakistan, and may be an account into which women invest and gain an important sense of the value of their work. At the same time, also articulated is the belief that this woman will be able to teach younger children, reflecting a common perception that women are pre-disposed to working with young children, and therefore particularly suited to primary school teaching. As discussed in Chapter 3, any comparative advantage that women may have in caring for young children is somewhat problematic, and especially so when it becomes a means of limiting the range of professional opportunities open to women. Although taking up teaching and enacting this special relationship with young children may represent an act of agency for individual women teachers in Pakistan, it remains an agency that is circumscribed by traditional gender roles. A third story expressed in this short text is one of family expectations and perhaps limitations; teaching is clearly an acceptable profession and one into which this woman is encouraged. These three stories are potentially contradictory, and may be understood as a reflection of the tensions between quite different perceptions of women teachers in the Pakistani context. Yet they co-exist within a very brief extract of text and they are all very valid. For the woman teacher they are all three very viable discursive resources from which she constructs her story of becoming a woman teacher.

In different questionnaire and interview responses, teaching is also described as a career that can be compatible with the heavy family and household commitments that

most women deal with every day. Women teachers are able to work a morning at school and then return relatively early to prepare the food and the home for the evening. Alternatively, they may first complete chores at home before coming to school for an afternoon shift. Although one woman in particular asserts the active choice she made to become a teacher, one even defying her family's opinion, most of the narratives reflect family approval if not encouragement. Rather than a specific vocation to be a teacher, it may be the realities of family expectations and household commitments which channel a woman into the profession:

I thought about other careers as well and worked as an accountant for two months in an office. But being the eldest of three sisters and having no mother, I have many responsibilities at home to fulfill so it was not possible for me to work for twelve or thirteen hours in an office and my father also objected to it so I chose teaching where I have to spend seven to eight hours in school and 'sometimes' eleven to twelve when I go for workshops but I can easily come home and complete my assignments at home which was not possible while working in an office

Another woman writes:

I had to choose this job as I was in financial crisis. I thought of other jobs such as office but the timing did not suit me.

And indicating the way in which teaching may be more of an accommodation than a vocation, one woman writes:

This profession suits me, because in Pakistan whole responsibility of house and children is mostly of women, due to short working duration it suits me, I can easily balance my both duties.

These stories attest to the situation that many Pakistani women may be in, needing to contribute to the family income, and yet, as a woman, only being able to do so in certain, acceptable ways. Teaching may be a considered a suitable profession, and one which can be combined with other responsibilities. As I discuss later, however, this apparent ease with which women teachers can combine their professional and household duties is not that simple either. I am made aware of how much time and energy has to be invested by teachers in order for them to make the most of their career. I learn of the long hours and, especially in the non-government schools, of the

multiple professional development and school activities that take place after regular hours. A constant negotiation of a comfortable and feasible balance between home and school activities may be just one of the challenges that women teachers face in their daily lives.

It is interesting to probe further the relationships between gender and teaching expressed in other descriptions of becoming a teacher:

My mother-in-law and many other relatives were/are teachers. Women have always played a vital role in building family ties and society. This inborn characteristic motivates them to share the responsibility of building a competitive society.

This text is particularly interesting, in that it encapsulates the tension that Walkerdine (1990) so eloquently describes for the woman teacher. She is expected to facilitate the individual, rational development of each child, and yet has to do so from within the confines of a classroom, where her role is considered similar to that of a nurturing mother. In this response, we can hear articulated the importance of education in building the future of Pakistan, a discourse that is very present not only in the Government's educational policies, but also those of the country's major investors, such as the World Bank. The responsibility of women teachers to contribute to building a competitive society is, however, somewhat paradoxical, in that it seems to depend on the traditional roles (family and community building) that women have played. The students are projected as privileged subjects into a future society within which women teachers are not necessarily assured a more powerful position. Tensions inevitably exist. Is the achievement of a "competitive society" actually at the heart of women teachers' aspirations for their work? Is it even possible for them to achieve it from positions defined by "inborn characteristics" of women? Essentialist descriptions of women teachers, and any comparative advantage they may have based on natural abilities for child rearing are, as I present in Chapter 3, quite problematic. Yet it has to be acknowledged that in the context of Pakistan, this narrative is one which at least positions women into development, and can assure them a role within its processes. In this way it represents a significant and very viable discursive resource for a woman teacher to draw upon.

As discussed in Chapter 5, an account that one woman gives of how she came to be a teacher includes references to her mother's influence, her love of children, *and* to her MBA studies. It is interesting in its presentation of apparently quite different stories of becoming a woman teacher. This woman's mother is an important role model to her as a teacher. We might therefore imagine that she is motivated to join the profession by the importance she can ascribe to the work her mother does, by the impact of her mother's presence and pedagogy on her students, and by the positive impact teaching might have on her mother's own life, sense of purpose and relationships. However, she completes her short response with quite a different reason, "*'cause I love to be with children*". Given societal expectations that women love children, and that women teachers especially are selfless in their devotion to their students, there may be a sense of obligation to cite this reason to an outside researcher. As a motivating factor, however, this sits somewhat awkwardly with the fact that the woman is also pursuing an MBA. And yet these two stories (loving children *and* pursuing an MBA) may also represent very complementary discursive resource with which this woman is able to negotiate, justify and balance her interest in less acceptable career aspirations for a woman.

A Satisfying Career as a Woman Teacher?

Farida, who is a committed and enthusiastic teacher, actually entered the profession more by chance. She went along to a teacher training college with a friend, and then obtained a first teaching job in the school in which a friend was working. As she explains to me in an interview:

...and after 1 year I realize what is teaching and why teaching is very much - er like - it's like - respectful profession. So I, one year I am thinking, then I decide okay, I want good teacher [...] then I take part in workshops and different courses and - quality-wise I want good teacher - professionally - then I decided now, yes, I like teaching at that time and I want good teacher.

Farida's inability to articulate very easily what teaching is and why she likes it so much is of considerable interest. After some hesitation she uses the word "respectful" to describe the profession, and yet this word is more of a description of teaching from

the outside. It is a reflection on how teaching is perceived by others, rather that what it really is, or feels like, for a teacher, and especially for a woman teacher. Farida is not a native speaker of English, but she works entirely in English, and can be quite articulate in the language. She knows she wants to be a good teacher, and has opportunities she sees will help her to be one, such as workshops and courses. Yet what that may actually represent as lived experience, what it feels like for her to be part of a "respectful profession", is quite absent from her narrative.

Even if they may have entered the profession by chance or not exactly by choice, just as the teachers in Nias' (1989) study express the personal satisfaction and strong sense of self that they develop through their teaching, Pakistani women teachers also indicated how their profession can be highly fulfilling. At the same time, though, in order to be so fulfilling, teaching can make heavy demands on individuals. In the questionnaire I asked, "Can you tell me what you enjoy most about teaching in your school and why?" I was careful to validate women's experiences in the classroom, and rather than focusing on problems, to seek out what was positive and what the women would be proud of sharing about their experience. Replies included:

Teaching is a fun-loving profession but it requires full attention and full devotion. The future youth is dependent on you.

And

Teaching is a respectable profession so I think its enjoying only when [you] *are totally devoted to it...*

And

Teaching depends upon the interest the teachers. The more you are involved in it, the more [you]*'ll find interest in it.*

It may seem that like any other activity, the more you put into teaching, the more you will get out of it. However, analyzing the phrases in which women use words such as "but", "only" and "depends", attention is drawn to the inherent tensions in their experiences. Teaching can be a very stimulating and rewarding career for women, and it can gain one respect, yet the extent to which it can provide this sort of satisfaction

depends on one's interest, hard work and commitment. The word "devotion" is used, a word that implies heavy demands on the individual. It reflects not only a dominant narrative of women's natural love for their classrooms and their students discussed earlier, but also a sense of self-effacement. As women devote themselves entirely to their teaching and to their students, and are perhaps expected to do so, we have to ask whether they as women and as teachers are not lost from view.

Equally problematic is that these women may want to invest more time and energy to their teaching, but are unable to do so because of family and other commitments. As one participant in a workshop articulates:

Well yes, I wanted to make a difference – and I am trying – even our students they are doing so many more activities and things than we were doing. But still, I have the boundaries. I can't do everything.

Having to respect the boundaries, and not being able to do everything may create frustration and tension, and may in fact detract from the appeal that the teaching profession may once have held. And yet for an individual woman who is asked about her work, it may be difficult to disrupt dominant discourses and to describe a less than devotional commitment. Drawing on the arguments of feminist critiques such as Miller (1992), Robertson (1993), discussed in Chapter 2, I suggest that these women's comments speak to the social and political construction of a profession that relies heavily on women's devotion, energy and input. At the same time, this female commitment, engagement and action continue to be subordinated within male-centred processes and systems. Education depends on and further entrenches particular gender relations and expectations. Teaching is, in the words of a number of the respondents, a profession that is primarily about caring and loving. Women may be expected to show devotion to their teaching, to work hard, and yet not to push the boundaries or rock the boat too hard.

Despite these issues and limitations, though, teaching does bring certain satisfactions. As one woman wrote:

I enjoy the extra–curricular activities like class projects and dramas etc because through these activities the children are motivated to show their inner qualities which in normal routine remain hidden. Although we have to work extra hard with the children but I feel proud of my students when they put up their work with great enthusiasm.

Again, the enjoyment derived from teaching is tempered by the "extra hard work" that is involved. Although the responses tend to reflect a more selfless enjoyment derived from the students' achievements, one woman's response clearly indicates the possibilities for teaching to create a space for women to be creative, to experiment, to take leadership and to feel they are making a difference in the world:

I enjoy the most when my students' response is well and they are anxious to know more about the subject. By this I am aware how successful I am.

Teaching may also allow women to develop particular attitudes and skills which then impact on their lives outside of the classroom. Responses to my question, "Please describe any changes teaching has made in your life", indicated some of the ways in which teaching, although not necessarily a preferred career choice, has contributed to personal development, fulfillment and some economic advancement:

Teaching has made many good changes in my life. [I.e.] *I am always aware of new educational systems taking place around me. It always helped me in my children's education, naturally money improves our social status.*

And

[Teaching] *broadens the vision, build confidence in women. Women also learn to deal with the opposite sex on equal levels.....my social circle has enhanced, I've become more social. I have learned to handle difficult and tough situations. Time management has improved. I use my time in more productive ways as compared to the time period when I was a housewife.*

Although such narratives may be very positive and inspirational, they remain somewhat problematic for me, in that they are premised on a somewhat deficit model of the non-teacher woman. In the second narrative especially, the pre-teaching housewife appears as a socially inept individual, who is unproductive with her time. From the stories I hear about the workload of Pakistani women within the home it is hard to imagine how they might be considered unproductive, but this comment may

reflect prevailing perceptions of housewives' lives. As described in Chapter 3, notions of productivity and reproductivity may be quite contradictory for the woman teacher, who, on entering the workforce, apparently becomes a 'productive' member of society. At the same time, her productivity is premised upon her reproductivity – that is her innate talents as a woman for raising children. In any case, can the teacher's role in society be characterized as productive? If it is, then it appears we arrive back at the problematic notions of women teachers' complicity in education "to build competitive society" discussed earlier. It becomes particularly important to highlight the resistance to such models of education serving economic development ends that can be discerned. This appears in the emphasis respondents placed on, for example, "the children's inner qualities", and on their "anxiety to learn more about the subject".

The Authority of a Woman Teacher

In Chapter 2, I discuss in some detail the apparent impossible fiction of the authority a woman teacher may command. The quote about teachers being in common with God discussed at the beginning of this section reflects how issues of teacher authority might be equally complex and contingent in Pakistan. My data suggest that for a woman teacher, notions of authority are especially contradictory. Women I talked with were quite candid in discussing the authority over them, especially in relation to needing the permission and approbation of their families (and especially their fathers and husbands) in order to take up a teaching career. In the questionnaire I ask about the extent to which they are involved in educational decision-making in order to gain insight into women's participation in educational issues beyond the classroom. I was interested to know if and how they were involved in curriculum selection and development, for example. At the same time, I was aware that by posing the question I inevitably set up certain expectations and thereby to some extent framed the responses provided. Respondents describe being the subjects of higher school authorities. They indicate the lack of teacher participation in decision-making beyond the classroom but also their respect for the authority of the school administration:

We are only involved in school activities and school events only... I think teachers in Pakistan are not allowed to participate in any school decisions.

And

School policy and school rules are totally based on the administration. However, we can always give our suggestions about the curriculum and activities and events [which] *take place in the school.*

And

I am not involved in any education decision-making. I only obey them.

Although these responses may be somewhat disappointing, they have to be understood within a context where, as one woman states, it is believed teachers are not allowed to participate in school decisions. Another writes:

Frankly I do not have any idea about our level of participation in educational decision-making because it has been only 5 years for me to be a teacher.

They also have to be read in relation to responses to my probing of the level of satisfaction with the extent to which they are involved, such as:

I think the current level of participation in educational decision-making is just right neither is it too less nor is it over-burdening.

And

I am totally satisfied with present situation.

If one is already giving one's "full attention and full devotion" to classroom instruction, to assuring the development of each individual for a role in competitive society, is it at all feasible to imagine that a woman teacher has the time, energy or inclination to be involved in higher-level decision-making? The answer is apparently yes. One woman is particularly adamant about the inappropriateness of the school administration's approach:

As such we are not at all involved in the school policy, curriculum, school rules or any events ! We are just given the final outcome !!...I would like to be more involved !

because I am a part of this institution and I must be given some value. By taking my ideas and views for all this

And another woman writes:

We are involved in giving ideas only. The decision is made by the administration ... I would like to be more involved in decision-making more by giving more ideas and putting them into practices as well and not just working on what is assigned to me.

Women teachers may feel frustrated about their lack of authority in the school and the authority that is exercised over them in school context. However, as indicated earlier, it may, at the same time, be very possible for them to appreciate the authority they can and do command in their classrooms, families and communities. One woman describes the change that she has experienced in her life:

A major change that teaching has made into my life is that I've started giving advises to everybody.

But I think back to the "somehow" of the response discussed in Chapter 5. In that response, the description of the respect and independence accorded by teaching for women goes somewhat awry with a final "somehow". I interpret this "somehow" as a reflection of this woman's experience of the apparent oxymoron of the term 'women teacher' that I describe in Chapter 2. The respect, independence and authority a woman teacher might feel she has gained are clearly not straightforward, but apparently somewhat problematic. They may be contingent on subordination to higher authorities on certain issues, and it may be that her own authority is limited to certain domains such as the classroom. On the other hand, the "somehow" may also reflect the woman's agency, of the perhaps subtle ways in which, within relatively limited parameters and with the resources available to her, she has, in particular ways, been able to negotiate successfully various boundaries and borders, and to position herself more powerfully in relation to others.

Constructing Woman-Teacherness

An important layer of impossibility addressed in my data analysis relates to the ways in which teaching as a profession, and particularly as a profession for women, is a

particular social construction of a certain time and place. The stories of the women with whom Weiler (1988) works are marked by the powerful hegemonic ideologies which not only shape the multiple structures (educational, social, formal, informal) of which they are part, but also shape their own self-definitions and identities. For women teachers who respond to my questionnaire, and those with whom I discuss their lives as women teachers, this is equally so. Being a woman teacher in Pakistan cannot exist outside of the particular context in which understandings are developed of what this implies. Numerous participants describe teaching as a caring profession that is appropriate for women. This in itself may represent a fiction in comparison with the reality of what the life of a woman teacher actually entails, but it is a fiction into which women may want and need to invest. Mitchell and Weber (1999) use the term "destiny narratives" to refer to the stories teachers tell of how and why they became a teacher. Such stories and schemas may help us to create some unity and coherence in a complex world, and yet, as Weiler (1992) discovered after listening to the stories of retired teachers, they may be quite fictitious. Although some of my respondents were quite candid about their lack of choice, others are less explicit. Weiler (1992) discovered that her participants' narratives of free choice were frequently used in a context where there was very little choice in careers for women at all. I problematize the stories told to me of women teacherness through the lens of impossible fiction, and use a methodological approach which probes disjuncture and highlights dissonance. Doing so allows me to draw attention to the ways in which powerful societal and individual narratives work to produce certain perceptions and narratives. Individual narratives of woman teacherness do not exist in isolation and, as Mitchell and Weber demonstrate, are culturally and socially constructed from a myriad of individual and collective images, memories, icons and stories. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are some very powerful development discourses relating to women teachers, perpetuated through the programs and policies of a myriad of interconnected institutions. Nurturing and caring qualities are emphasized, as is the importance of women teachers for girls. The recognition of the hegemony of certain discourses of gender and of teaching and of the power of their impact on individual teachers' stories is therefore especially relevant.

Taken literally, being a Pakistani woman teacher is clearly very possible, and there are thousands of women who every day embody that description. However, my data suggest that taking up and acting out a narrative as a woman teacher in Pakistan may nonetheless be an inherently contradictory experience. It is an experience that is characterized by compromise, by what is doable within quite rigid boundaries, and by a delicate balancing of the possible with the impossible. Describing that experience to an outside researcher may represent another impossible fiction which can only be understood in relation to its particular discursive context. I have to agree with Walkerdine's (1990) suggestion that any fixed, institutionally-determined position or subjectivity defined by the term woman teacher is impossible. We have to think about multiple identities and subjectivities, shifting positions and ever-changing power dynamics within complex discursive fields, and to acknowledge and work with the very diverse experiences women may have of becoming, being and of being named as Pakistani women teachers.

Impossible Fiction 2: Women Teachers and Girls' Education

The Vignette: On a Woman Teaching Girls

Ahmed had summoned me to the meeting, and it was an invitation that I could not refuse. Having met him briefly at the organization where he works, he is interested in the research I am doing, and volunteers to try to 'find' some women teachers for me. The gung-ho approach he might take, and the sort of interview situation it might set up, do concern me, but I am nonetheless interested in meeting women outside of the AKU-IED network, and am certainly not going to turn down his generous offer. I really didn't expect to hear any more from him. But I did, just a couple of days later. Ahmed was very excited to have found a woman who, previously a teacher and headteacher, is now moved involved in local politics. I was called to a meeting as soon as possible.

Arriving at the office, with Fariba, a colleague from IED, who had wanted to come to use the resource centre, Ahmed is bustling around – he seems to be quite excited to be

part of a project- my project - and leaves, quite officiously, to go to collect Hina, the woman teacher I am about to meet. I sit waiting, surprised by my nervousness and really very unsure about how the interview will work out. Who in fact will be leading it, me or Ahmed? Knowing the woman doesn't speak English, how we will work with the language barrier? But they soon return, and Hina comes in to the room where I am waiting. She is a tiny woman, very delicately dressed in a bright green outfit, with coordinating shalwar and kameez, and her scarf draped over her head. Even with the thick-soled sandals she is wearing, I tower above her, and soon move to encourage us all to sit down. She sits next to me at one side of the desk, and Ahmed on the other side, and although I had not been able to think ahead about it, it seems to work. Hina and I have a horizontality, a sort of solidarity on one side of the table, that I at least appreciate. Whilst Ahmed is busying around, collecting papers and things, I make a little polite conversation, but we can't go too much further. I recognize her frustration at understanding, but not being able to reply, and so we have to wait for Ahmed to act as our translator.

The start-up moment, however, does produce a more formal start, a point at which I can give her my card, introduce myself a little, and talk about what I am doing. I can express my thanks for her coming and giving up her time and, the piece that I always feel somewhat uncomfortable about, ask her to sign the consent form. Given the rush of the meeting I have been unable to have it translated, but she insists this is fine, and as she reads through it in quite meticulous detail, she translates it out to Ahmed who confirms her understanding.

Hina is understanding quite a lot of what I am saying – and my asking fairly broad, general, and relatively easy questions anyway make things much easier. We aren't waiting for everything to be translated, but even so, the dynamic of a translator, a male translator and one who I presume she does not know that well either, certainly shapes the content and the context of our discussion. Although I know Ahmed had met her through the organization's women's program, I am unsure what their relationship is, whether they share a political affiliation, or even whether this matters. I am having to be very careful about the sorts of questions I ask, leaving her as much room as

possible to take the conversation where she feels comfortable. She is talking about her many years as a primary teacher, coming to what she described as the "safe environment" of a school from the atmosphere of a bank in which she very much disliked working. This is a story that I have heard before, but unlike other women I meet, she has stayed at the same school for many years, moving up the grades with her classes, and becoming the headteacher just over a year after her initial appointment. Only four years ago she moved to another school which she finds more difficult, and less rewarding.

I am really interested to know more about the community activities she mentions being involved in, in the education and welfare groups she is part of which are outside of school, but at the same time apparently connected with her commitment to teaching. Ahmed, on the other hand appears more interested in her political activities and seems to be asking his own questions around this, some of which are translated for me and others not. I am becoming more uncomfortable as she is becoming uncomfortable. I am not sure whether my writing notes is concerning her, or whether it is proving my interest in her story and in some way making the meeting worthwhile. I continue to write, but at one point, she asks me to stop. I insist that she shouldn't feel obliged even to continue telling the story she is starting, but she does. I am pleased that she has asked me not to write, and has taken some authority in the interview, but Ahmed is pushing for more details of her story that I feel he wants for his own work; it is perhaps more difficult for her to tell him not to write.

At a suitable pause, I try to shift the conversation into a safer area, I ask her about girls' education and what she feels girls should be learning in schools. Ahmed backs off a little, and resumes a more impartial – I hope – interpreter role. Hina is adamant that the school should teach girls the things they need to know, such as cooking and sewing, and yet that they should have up-to-date, quality facilities to do so. She talks about her family and her own daughters. Her professional work and community activity is made possible only because of her husband's support, and earlier in her career, her mother's help. This is a story I have also heard before. Hina has four children of her own and is a grandmother now too.

By now I am bursting with questions that are impossible to pose. One of the most significant factors in Hina's own story is the cooperation and understanding of her husband, and the fact that unlike so many Pakistani men, he had helped at home, with the children, and left her to manage the finances. So why does she then say that girls need to learn how to sew and cook because in Pakistani society that is their responsibility and so there should be special classes for that at school? It seems to me that it is not only girls who need education, but also boys, on new ways of being boys and men, which do not depend on women and girls doing all this household work. Yet Hina's ideas of education for girls appear to maintain the status quo and do little to transform conditions for girls and women. Neither do they seem to create the sort of conditions that might make it possible for more women to do what she has done. I am surprised that a successful woman like herself does not appear to be an advocate for more wide-scale transformation. Is it that she sees the issues as being individual, and at the family level – she was insistent on the importance and influence of the extended family in terms of gender roles? I find it difficult to understand why someone who is obviously quite politically astute, and quite aware of broader issues in society, is involved in charity work to provide dowries for poor girls to get married rather than involved in campaigns to reduce the importance of dowries, to change expectations and to shape 'culture' for girls to be active agents in it rather than passive 'victims' of it.

But such challenging questions are not ones I can ask her now, and having been talking for over an hour, I feel we are beginning to flag a little. I am uneasy about how to draw the interview to a close, though, especially as I know that we probably would not meet again. Have I given Hina enough time to show my interest and to make coming out here worthwhile? Have I taken too much of her time, but she was embarrassed to stop me? Has the interview been as interesting for her as it has been for me? We should have fixed a time. I have learned that in my other interviews, it helps if everyone has the same idea of about how long we will talk for, but with this more impromptu meeting there has not been the chance. I make what I think is a polite comment about not wanting to take up much more of her time, but she says, no, she is

okay for a while. I dig up more questions, but then a little later preface my question with "...and this is perhaps the last question ..." which seems to be an appropriate way to bring closure without cutting anyone off. I ask if she has any questions to ask of me, and I tell her to call either me or Ahmed if she wants to follow up. Yes, she wants to know a bit more about my PhD and my specialization. I feel somewhat uncomfortable talking about me, but it is expected. And anyway, isn't reciprocity and exchange what I am seeking? It sounds rather strange in translation, though.

Leaving the office, eventually, I feel very unsure about how I can offer with transport. I know that Hina has come in from the other side of the city, probably by public transport, and that we have a car to ease us straight back to AKU-IED. I check with Ahmed, wondering whether there somewhere we could drop her. I don't feel I can undertake on AKU-IED's behalf to drop her at home, and wonder about offering the money for a taxi. Western magnanimity or a thoughtful gesture? I should have checked all that with Ahmed beforehand, but we had hardly had chance to confirm the essentials of the time of the meeting, let alone the more delicate details that are perhaps vital for her. I hope that the offer to drop her somewhere is okay. She does take it up, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to in some way connect with her without Ahmed being present.

This seems to work well, and although I feel somewhat excluded, the conversation between Hina and my colleague seems easy and friendly, sort of woman to woman. But once Hina steps out of the car, Fariba starts to ask me what she had been saying, what I thought of her, and starts to make comments based on their brief conversation. Now included and engaged, I find myself very torn. I would love to share some of my questions with her, to ask for her take on some aspects of Hina's story that I am not sure I have grasped, to check my first reactions against hers. I know she would love to do so and would be very responsive too. But confidentiality is a research ethic I assure. I am uncomfortable being on the spot like this, and even more so knowing that Fariba knows exactly who I would be talking about. Anonymity is impossible. I tell her I need to think about it all for a while, and shift the conversation by asking what she has found out during her time in the resource library.

Beyond the Vignette

The story of my experience interviewing Hina is an indication of my finding that the seemingly obvious connection between women teachers and girls' education may, in reality, be a more complex issue. As she enters local politics, Hina may be a powerful role model for younger girls and women, and yet the education she would advocate for girls is one that concentrates on traditional, gender stereotyped skills such as sewing. This is a particularly significant point when contextualized within the dominant discourses of educational development, Education For All, and gender issues in education. As described in detail in Chapters 1 and 3, women teachers are present in development discourse often as a means to increasing girls' access, retention and achievement in schools. It may be that Hina's comments are shaped by her awareness of the presence of the male translator and of the expectations he may have of her. If this is so, it raises concerns that in male-dominated environments women teachers may feel unable to articulate, let alone implement, ideas of more transformatory curricula for girls.

In many cases, linking increases in numbers of women teachers to increased girls' education may be very relevant, and different strategies to recruit and deploy women teachers may be effective. However, in order to make real a rhetoric of gender equality and to promote the mutual empowerment of girls and women, my data suggest alternative perspectives relating to women teaching boys and girls. The teachers involved in this study were teaching either girls or boys, and would have most probably been to all girls' schools themselves. I was interested to find out more about this very gendered experience of education. The data were then read within *and* against the context of the development imperative to promote girls' education in countries like Pakistan.

In the questionnaire, one woman replies to the question about what she enjoys most about teaching in her school:

I enjoy teaching girls and making friends with them. I love to share their experiences, joys, games, ideas etc.

This is a response which suggests that the woman teacher positively enjoys working with girls and identifies closely with those she teaches. However, her relationship with them, and the activities they engage in together, are very much constructed within the gender status quo. The 'making friends with girls' may be a way to develop a closer relationship with her students, it may be an expression of her devotion to her profession, but when read in relation to educational policy documentation which simply positions girls' education as a strategy for gender equity, it becomes more problematic. Contained within this sort of relationship between woman teacher and girl student, the potential for transformation of patriarchal structures and processes and for the shifts in power relations required to bring about gender equity, appears quite limited. In the questionnaire I pose the question, How do you think your own experiences of growing up, and being a girl-student in school influence your teaching and the way you think about teaching? This is admittedly a very hard question to respond to, especially in a short written text, but I am encouraged by the efforts made, and by the complexity of the responses. One teacher, for example, is particularly reflexive about her own girlhood and what that implies for her own commitment to teaching girls:

Being a student in a girls' school I was very shy and unconfident. Now I encourage my students – who are all girls - to be bold and confident and to think of their careers which they are going to select from now and work hard.

It is interesting to speculate whether teaching would be one of the careers this woman encourages her girls to consider. From a feminist perspective, the emphasis placed on girls working hard to achieve success in particular careers is somewhat problematic. Houston (1996), for example, draws attention to the ways in which such gender equity strategies, although they might be common in education contexts, and quite meaningful for an individual teacher to take up, actually perpetuate the hierarchical male-centred power structures which marginalize women and girls in the first place. Attention is deflected from contextual factors, from structural and systemic inequities which force the girls to select their career well in advance, and to work particularly hard. Also ignored are the compromises (for example, family, friends and community) a successful career woman might have to make to achieve her position (Houston, 1996).

Furthermore, from such perspectives on educating girls, the impossible task that Walkerdine (1990) describes for the individual woman teacher to facilitate the rational individual development of each child from within the confines of the classroom takes on another layer of gendered complexity. The burden for women teachers of facilitating the individual development of each girl student from a position that is circumscribed by gendered limitations and constraints, is surely even more paradoxical.

Farida's school is split between mornings for girls and afternoons for boys, with a different set of teachers and of administrative staff for each. In an interview, Farida talked about her own choice and the preferences of other staff between teaching boys and girls:

Farida: *Mostly the teachers choose girls.*

JK: *And why do they choose the girls?*

Farida: (laughing) *Because boys are more energetic - and because afternoon time is a tough time – for teaching. And girls are mostly shy and quiet and disciplined, and boys are slightly – like- so that is why peoples like coming on girls' shift.*

JK: *And when the teachers are talking together, and you're talking together, what emerges as the main challenges for teaching the girls?* ...[waits a while] *What do the teachers find most – what do they need- do they ask for support or – help - or whatever, in terms of teaching the girls – and how does that compare with the challenges of teaching the boys?*

Farida: *In a girls'* [section] - *teachers are saying they are not participating very much - not group discussions, not in group work, so how can we improve this? And, in the boys' section, we are mostly working with discipline, for discipline.*

JK: *What made you decide to choose the boys?*

Farida:..[thinking for a while] *Because even I start in a boys'* [school], *and I comfortable with boys. I think so. I like boys, boys are participating and they are communicating, and they want more, more, more - like enhancement* [...]. *I think so, it's better than in a girls' school- girls like .... in a one part they are, "Stop, okay miss, it's enough." Boys, - they is not, they want more, more, more.*

JK: *And that's – and you find that more enjoyable as a teacher?*

Farida: *Yes.*

What is fascinating here is the reasoning Farida gives for why other women teachers may prefer to work with girls than boys. It is not necessarily a question of gender identification, nor particular concern for the rights of girls to quality education. Nor is it a particular awareness of gender policy and the need to promote girls' participation in the education system, but firstly the fact that the girls are easier to work with. Later in the interview she talks about the fact that teaching the girls' shift, which is the morning session, is more convenient for many women in that they can complete their household chores in the afternoon and prepare for the evening. Ironically, the gendered expectations of household responsibilities for the women teachers and the socialization of girls to more passive and less demanding classroom behaviors converge in the school context, and converge in a way which appears to neither disrupt nor challenge the prevailing patterns of gender relations in society.

Women Teaching Boys

Farida, in contrast to other women teachers in her school, prefers to teach boys. She finds them more exciting, more demanding and therefore more stimulating to work with. Ironically, however, she has to negotiate her own sense of satisfaction as a teacher with the perpetuation of gendered roles and patterns of socialization for boys and girls in the school - she clearly enjoys the boys' boisterousness and their obvious enthusiasm for learning. When I ask her how she might work with boys to improve the situation for girls and women in Pakistan, she replies:

Yes - in my class, I mostly discuss it with my students, like girls and boys have equal thinking style, and we give equal opportunity of boys and girls. So I discuss with my students many times, and I think so, we are [just at the] *start, so in our schools like debating this topic and these type of discussions, like - so - in future, we are build*[ing] *some people, or we have some people who they thought, no girls - and women - are equal,* [...] *They, we, can accomplish so many things, so then we are change this type of thinking - maybe*

She does feel that she can make a difference, but the final 'maybe' indicates a tentativeness that is also significant. Farida also talks about how much she enjoys teaching in a co-educational religious evening class:

Well, my class is very good class – we are all researching, debating, and questioning so many things - [emphatically] *that is why I said co-ed is best. That is why I said co-ed is best - because in a co-group I saw so many things. They are working together, they are helping together- even they support – one person is not say something, so they give support. They say, " Why, why you are not participating?"*

Farida also reflects on the extent to which the afternoon schooling shift disadvantages boys over girls, and reduces the opportunities for alternative forms of socialization:

Because girls, they are getting many things, like time-wise, like teachers-wise, because those young teachers are appointed. So the whole day they are in the school. The girls they come 7.30, now 12.30 they have time, for playing, for - er - going any other place. But in the morning, all things are closed, so where are they [i.e. the boys] *going? They are going to tuitions. Yes, and then they are coming in the school. And by the time they've finished, that's it. So they don't have time for play and er- very difficult. And in the night -time, like - er - 9 o' clock or maybe 10 o'clock, or maybe not, because parents are worried about next day. And they sleep early so they –boys suffer. I thought boys suffer. Yes, because even the recreational, they don't have recreational time.*

Other women teachers in a different boys' school also talk about their enthusiasm for teaching boys, and reflect positively on the impact that teaching boys has had on their own lives:

You become a bit bolder and more confident - you will go up and ask the prices in the market.

The impact of her experience as a teacher may be very positive, both for the teacher and for other girls and women who see her activity in the market. Yet a woman teacher's assertiveness and confidence is surely somewhat problematic if its structural underpinnings remain those of the socialization of boys to behaviours and attitudes which require of the woman teacher boldness and confidence.

From talking with these women I also gained fleeting indications (rarely captured in interview or discussions transcripts) of a somewhat sexually charged classroom environment in which a woman is teaching boys. This is an element of the classroom experience, and of woman teacherness that is quite absent from any policy or program description. I was fascinated when, for example, in one workshop, Ghazala, started to describe her early days as a teacher:

Ghazala: *I was only 17 or 18* [when she started teaching] *and there were some of the boys who were maybe 14 or 13 and there was definitely a special twinkle in their eyes, and they would be working very hard at their religion* [the subject she was teaching] - *no other subjects, only religion was so important.*

JK: *And how did you feel about that?*

Ghazala: *Well, I was scared – I was only new to teaching and I was a little bit scared, I didn't know how to handle these boys*

JK: *But did you enjoy it at all too?*

Ghazala: *Yes,* [smiling] *I liked it.*

The situation Ghazala describes resonates not only with McWilliam's theorizing of the "corpor/reality" of the classroom, but also with my own personal experience of teaching of being involved in classrooms and with my experience of the corpor/reality of research process. This candid description embodies both the power and the powerlessness of the novice woman teacher. Ghazala is quite aware of the hold she has over these somewhat flirtatious boys, who work harder for her classes than for those of other teachers. And yet this power is tentative and somewhat problematic. She is scared, and aware that the expectation is that she will "handle them". Is an acknowledgment of one's sexuality, and of the sexually charged nature of the classroom an acceptable means of handling such students? Apparently not, and Ghazala needs to find alternatives. However, traditional and acceptable modes of discipline may jeopardize the positive relationships she has with the boys, and may also imply a regulation of her own pedagogical pleasure.

As with Farida, the satisfaction women may gain from teaching appears, ironically, to be dependent on the ways in which the boys they teach are socialized into more outgoing, active and perhaps somewhat flirtatious behaviours in the classroom. As Farida commented, it is the passiveness of girls, the ease of classroom management with girls and the less demanding and less challenging behaviours of girls which appeal to many girls' school teachers. One development planner later tells me that the education sector may be such a key place in which to start work on gender issues, because, "*You are starting at the beginning with girls*". This may well be true, but it

would appear that rather than limiting attention to gender in education to the girl students, the different positions of women teachers, and the relationships between them and girl students, between male and female teachers, and between female teachers and male authorities, need to be kept in view.

The data presented in relation to women teachers teaching girls and boys reflect the theoretical tensions in development planning and programming I discuss in Chapter 3, Are Women Teachers Women in Development? They signify a more complicated relationship between girls and women teachers in schools than might be assumed, and suggest the need for a more critical gendered analysis of girls' and women's multiple positionings inside and outside the classroom. Also significant in discussion of gender issues in education, is the relationship between women teachers and boys, a subject that has so far received very little attention in development contexts.

Impossible Fiction 3: Research with Women in Development

The Vignette: On Meeting with a Group of Women Teachers

As I was leaving the residence, the comments are ringing in my ears, "We really enjoyed that", "Come again soon", "We only just got started", "It's really interesting", and "I've never thought about those things before." So this is what it really feels like, to be a feminist researcher. So this is what my research objective, 'to stimulate discussion amongst women teachers about gender and education that goes beyond issues of access and attainment,' actually looks like in practice. It must have been a success as I was invited to go back and continue one evening the next week.

But it had all started a little uncertainly, with a casual arrangement for me to go over to the women's residence to lead an informal session relating to my research. On the AKU-IED bus in the mornings and evenings I had chatted with some of the female teachers/students, about where they came from and what they were doing, about their experiences of being woman teachers in their own countries and contexts. We had talked about what I was doing – and when asked – why. The invitation for the evening session had emerged from these conversations.

Having set it up like this, my plan – on paper and in my head - was a very flexible one. It could have easily been a non-plan if needed. I was very unsure what to expect from what had been quite a casual arrangement, and I was reluctant to make it more formal. Would the women really want to do things, or just to chat? Would it actually be a workshop-type activity or more of a social visit? I prepared so that I could follow the flow, having a number of activities that could be quite fun, engaging, interesting and provocative, yet nonetheless not too 'heavy'. I was more than aware that as students in an intensive program, they were overloaded with different assignments and other tasks, spending long days on campus with each other. Would alternative, woman-teacher-centred theories of teaching and learning be of interest to them, or would they contradict with what they had been studying on campus? Would my work be the last thing they wanted to engage with on a Saturday evening? Although there were sixteen women in the residence, I had no idea how many would come, nor whether they would all stay throughout.

As I arrived, two women were upstairs on the balcony hanging out washing, but came rushing down to greet me. Other residents were apparently busy elsewhere, and I was shown into the large, empty lounge, with a TV in the corner, a large shabby sofa and chairs round the outside of the room. There was nothing much else apart from a coffee table. "Great," I think. "A big space to work in, in the middle of the room." Four other women came in to join us, and we started chatting about life in the city and in the residence, about the difficulties of being so far from home and family, about the different sacrifices that have been made to follow the professional development course. We talked about the food, about children left behind in other countries and in distant regions of Pakistan, about the workload of the professional development course. We talked about persuading the driver to stop to get roast chicken on the way back from campus. We talked about wearing shalwar kameez. Our chatting is at the same time completely about being a woman teacher, yet nothing about being a woman teacher.

I started to need to steer the conversation a little. I felt I had to explain myself and to be explicit about my presence in their space. With the maneuver into this, into the 'ice-breaker' I had planned, and into follow-up activities and discussion prompts, I risked

a loss of momentum, a breaking of the flow and a restructuring of the relationships being built. But the alternative seemed somewhat wasteful of the opportunity presenting itself. Anyway, I was sensing an expectation that I would in some way lead.

Following my prompt, as a group we discussed things we like and dislike doing that are typical and atypical for women. We talked as women and not necessarily as teachers. Discussion of menstrual taboos and exclusions arose from one woman's comment from that she disliked "all the caution you have to use during your period", explaining the need to sit and walk carefully. For women from different cultures, the discussion, which is simultaneously personal, social and starting to be somewhat political, is clearly of interest. We move on to discuss the less than adequate toilet facilities for women and girls in schools, a subject which allows me to pose further questions about feeling empowered and disempowered in the school setting. Now we are thinking and talking as women teachers. The examples given become stories in themselves; multiple stories of marginalization from decision-making power but also contradictory stories of alternative sources of strength and empowerment. The card a woman receives from a parent, the possibilities to take on new projects and learn different things with the students, taking collective action to raise money for a less fortunate colleague, all make different women feel good about their roles as teachers.

Although I am unsure of the right tone to be taking, and find it difficult to lead and to let go, the whole tone of the evening is much more relaxed – even, I dare to think, more 'authentic' than might have been the case had we organized a workshop session on campus. I appreciate a setting away from the confines of the institution. Within the women-only domain of the residence, my participants are more relaxed in their dress. Head scarves are no longer required, and several women are lounging in kaftan-type house clothes, sitting round on the floor and up against the cushions. Having come directly from campus, my own more formal dress feels suddenly restrictive, uncomfortable and inappropriate. My scarf is constantly in the way and yet it seems somehow wrong to discard it totally. The small amount of white skin I am showing contrasts with the brown and black bodies I am surrounded by. Togetherness and complicity are feelings as fleeting as difference, distance and otherness.

Consent forms inevitably impose a formality onto the situation and my uncertainty about how to lead the evening meant that I hadn't got them out or even talked about them when I first arrived. I didn't want to scare these women off, nor contrive a more formal session than they were really wanting, but once we started talking it became obvious that the ideas flying, the comments being made and the questions raised were too interesting not to be somehow captured as data. In researcher-mode I intervene to stop the flow for a second, to ask if I could take notes, and to ask for their consent for me to use the data. Consent forms could be left with them to complete next time. Perhaps this was not the best, text-book example of how to conduct group research, but if ethical research means comfortable and mutually satisfying for all concerned, then maybe we were creating an alternative model. Anyway, the expectation was there that I would use the data. Why would I be there otherwise? Why would I want to occupy women's precious time if the discussions weren't for some purpose? I had been asserting the importance of women's stories and women's lives, so surely the discussions were very relevant data.

Sitting in the car on the way back to my hostel, I try to imagine what the participants would now be thinking. Would the discussion have continued amongst themselves? Would there be follow-up the following day? I also wonder about how the women would talk about what we had been doing with their male colleagues on the bus and in class the next day. How would they describe it? (How would I describe it?) Would they have considered it a "real" research activity? (Do I consider a real research activity?) Would its location, timing and women-only focus only devalue it within the institutional setting and its more formal research paradigms? But does that matter anyway?

Beyond the Vignette

The story of the informal/somewhat formal research activity presented above demonstrates some of the trickiness I have discovered around the realities of studying women teachers' lives in development contexts. My reflexive methodology produced significant process-related data in the form of fieldnotes, and in this section I take a

more conscious, self-situated stance to present and discuss these data. I use these fieldnotes together with other forms of data which demonstrate what I conceptualize as the impossible fiction of gaining insight into the lives of women teachers in development.

It is the first time anyone came to me to talk about these things, about women and teachers and what they are doing. I will learn something new - and no-one here in Pakistan will talk about these things, they won't do such a study because it is too difficult.

The teacher who made this statement during an interview was aware of the difficulties of studying women teachers' lives, but was nonetheless excited about the prospect, and felt the process would be of benefit to her as a participant. I took her comment as encouragement but also as caution. Talking with her in Karachi, I was already aware of the complexity of the analytical and representational challenges that lie ahead as I thought about how I would work with the data collected. I was to understand from her enthusiasm for being involved in the research, for arranging a follow-up interview, and from the first section of her sentence, that yes, she did think it was interesting, worthwhile and personally relevant research. And yet why was she so certain that no one in Pakistan would attempt it? Did she at the same time think I was a little foolhardy in even wanting to try? This may have been a comment relating to the traditional, quantitative nature of most Pakistani research in general, or more specifically to its lack of interest in women and women teachers. Perhaps she felt that such research tended to avoid tricky issues and address less complex or potentially contentious areas of inquiry. From a post-colonial perspective, I could also consider the possible implication that as an outsider I could have particular privileges that would make research possible for me that would be impossible for Pakistanis.

Her words made me reflect on the educational research traditions of Pakistan as well as the social and cultural sensitivities related to working with women and gender issues. As I continued with my research, reflexivity illuminated the often concealed power relations inherent in research, and drew my attention to multiple identities, and to the very real issues of power and position and conflicts of interest that emerged

during my fieldwork. The constantly shifting power dynamics between myself as researcher and the different women I met were, I felt, particularly significant, and should be highlighted from my data.

The fieldnote extract below shows the emotional and theoretical complexity of being in the field, a sensitivity to the physical and power positions of the researcher and researched and the interconnections between them. It is testimony to the multi-dimensional and complex experience of investigating the lived experience of other women.

This week has been very much "entering the field" – negotiation of almost everything, even space in the fridge. Actually I have found negotiating the hostel relations probably more tricky than the professional ones – there have been several occasions when I have really felt very uncomfortable, or very unsure of what I was saying or doing – and very conscious that I was dependent on them to go out and shop, for example. I felt as if I was being quite pathetic, or at least coming across as incompetent in some way and yet didn't quite know how to do things/ or say things differently – at the same time, it's so hard to gauge feelings and attitudes, and I am trying very tentatively to feel my way in to unfamiliar situations, protocols and expected ways of doing and being.

Fieldnotes, September 7th, 2001

Concerns for feminist research ethics of collaboration, consultation and equality were constantly on my mind, and were constantly challenged. An example is the comment from a participant who, I had assumed, had been feeling relatively powerful in her position as interviewee, in control of the interview, and taking in the conversation in the direction she wanted. *"I hope that I will be able to read your research",* she says as I am packing away to leave. This comment alerted me to the assumptions I had been making and was comfortable making, and to the multiple challenges of reconstructing more equitable research relations, especially in a context where research is a predominantly a top-down process. Data are usually collected from research subjects, and then analyzed, presented and disseminated with little further input or involvement from the very people the research is supposed to concern.

Below I present a conversation with a school headmistress in Karachi to whom I had been introduced with the idea of possibly organizing a group activity with women

teachers in her school. This dialogue demonstrates the apparent impossibility of setting up the sort of informal, voluntary workshop session with women teachers that I was hoping for.

HT: *So how many teachers do you want?*

JK: *Well I am very happy to work with as many are interested in my work and are able to come along.*

HT: *Well they are all able to come if we organize it. I mean 40 to 50, is that okay?*

JK: *Well, er, yes, but....*

HT: *Or, well maybe we could limit it to 25.*

JK: *Well yes, although I wouldn't want to stop anyone, to put a limit if there were more who were really interested.*

HT: *No, we will just invite the ones who we think will be best.*

JK: *Er - well I think it's important that for something like this the teachers have the choice - and so I would feel much more comfortable if there was a way of organizing it so that the teachers who want to come can, and the others .....*

HT*: Yes, so about 10 then.*

This conversation, which might have been discarded as mere logistics in a less-process oriented study of women teaching, was reconstructed in my fieldnotes, and is critical data in this study. Although it was conducted quite comfortably, and with no perceivable hard feelings, it nevertheless gave me much cause for concern. It forced me to acknowledge the particular power dynamics of the context in which the foreign researcher meets her woman teacher participants. On the one hand I felt that I was doing the right thing, asserting my own ethical concerns and attempting to ensure that no one would be forced into a research relationship they did not understand, appreciate or desire. On the other hand though, as I walked out of the office, having agreed to send a brief description of the session I was proposing to the kindly headmistress, I had to question the ethics of my own insistence on voluntary involvement. The attitude of the headmistress might be considered authoritarian and I did not want to be implicated in any top-down imposition on the women teachers, yet at the same time,

was my own ethical stance at all superior to her own? I had gathered from the discussion that she had only her teachers' interests at heart, and she was genuinely concerned to offer her staff an opportunity to learn something more about other cultures and other ways of doing things from an outside researcher. Furthermore, she was helpful and willing to accommodate my request. It seems that on a short-term initiative, we could collaborate, but only with a tentative understanding of each other's objectives.

After September 11th, my fieldnotes demonstrate the additional emotional issues of being in a potentially dangerous location, caught up in a complex scenario that had both local and global implications. These fieldnotes are testimony to the trickiness of attempting to deconstruct powerful ruling relations based on patriarchy and colonialism and to reconstruct them in line with women's interests, women's perspectives and with feminist values of equality and collaboration. They record the ever shifting boundaries between the self and other, western and non-westerner, and now, especially, between Muslim and non-Muslim.

...by last night I was feeling more definite in my desire to move to somewhere a little more secure. I had woken up several times in the night and been alarmed by what – without my glasses and in those weird middle of the night hours – could have been a veiled figure on the balcony outside my room. At the time I was merely nervous, unsettled, the whirring of the fan adding to the surrealism of the scene – by the morning I was shocked at the way my own imagination had been shaped by a menacing image of the veiled Arab – the Muslim fanatic, the terrorist lurking.

Fieldnotes, September 18th, 2001

My fieldnotes were also the basis of regular emails that I sent to family and friends whilst I was in Karachi. The immediacy, informality and ease of this electronic dialogue between home and field served to blur borders and boundaries, to redefine who and what is close and what is distant. It also provided a very tangible sense of the lived experience of being in the field to those who might help me to interpret it.

This initial entering the field has been quite an experience and coming into an institutional environment such as this, I am realizing the importance of the positioning and the relationships with everyone around me, not just the research participants.... It

is certainly a very intense experience – Karachi itself isn't exactly the most relaxing place although I have to admit to being 'protected' to some extent through the IED network, the reality of the streets is quite harsh. Just shopping, getting out and about is quite challenging – especially for a single woman and I am already feeling a little constricted by the limitations on independent exploration and activity – both spoken and unspoken. There is much less English spoken here than what I am used to in India and so it isn't easy without the help of my hostel buddies - but not impossible.

Email to friend/colleague, September 8th, 2001

Colonial adventurers, early ethnographers and travelers in the past have all contributed to a tradition of writing about their travels. In addition to their formal texts, they also wrote letters home from the field, which concentrate on conveying a sense of the exotic, the savage and the mysterious to their distant families. Such letters "produced" the rest of the world in certain ways (Pratt, 1992) for the majority populations in Europe and North America. Furthermore, they served in certain ways to reinforce the borders and boundaries between home and away, between metropolis and periphery, civilization and other. Post September 11th, any boundaries that I might have been able to blur and to deconstruct through my own forms of writing were rapidly reconstructed in the distant and difference that had been created between West and East, and in President Bush's words, between "Them and us". A friend's email demonstrates this point; it indicates the sudden shift in perspectives and shows how impossible it was to think about my research relation with women teachers in Pakistan in quite the same way as before.

My dear Jackie

I had started to draft this letter last night…only now to have been completely shocked by the terrorism that has hit the US today. I pray that you are alright, safe and feeling not too incredibly far away. It is a tragedy beyond proportions one can comprehend. Please be careful and take care over the next few days. I so wish I could be there with you, as it must be such an unsettling time.

Email from a friend, September 12th, 2001

A Long-distance Research Relationship

I describe in Chapter 5 the challenges of continuing to interact with women teachers in Pakistan once I was forced to leave the field. The experience of developing and

executing a questionnaire, captured through email and fieldnote data, reflects a constant dialectic of impossibility and possibility. Yes, given the circumstances, an email communication seemed to be a feasible way of moving ahead. As one potential facilitator, who I had asked for advice, wrote in an email:

Jackie, I think it is a good idea, given the uncertainty of when things will return to normal around this part of the world....Thanks for your expressions of concern and wishing you all the best in your efforts to make the best of a difficult situation.

However, even given this sort of support, and the advice from this and other potential facilitators, the logistics of an arm's length research process seemed at times quite impossible:

i am sorry for the delay in my reply, the main reason was that i waited for the teachers to come back to me with what you suggest. I am sorry but they are not interested. maybe if they did not have the fear of completing their syllabus and the demands they have, esp[ecially] *with the current situation, when strikes take place schools close and Saturday becomes a working day. They want to and appear keen to participate but say they cannot spare the time.*

Working to develop a possible, feasible, and ethical way of continuing with the questionnaire was not at all easy. Despite the increasing ease of communication across the world, and the apparent opportunities for conducting on-line, virtual, and distance research with women teachers, the compromises that have to be made to a feminist methodology grounded in spending time with women in collaborative reflection and in seeking more equitable power relations, remain highly problematic. The e-mail communication I present below further illustrates the complex relational dynamics that I found to exist between researcher, questionnaire facilitator and research participant.

[Questionnaire facilitator's message to me as she forwards the woman teacher's response]
I haven't of course "considered" M's response to your questionnaire.

[Woman teacher's e-mail message to questionnaire facilitator which appears below]
Please find my reply attached here for your consideration.

The extracts here indicate different layers of expectations regarding the research data. The woman teacher who completed the questionnaire clearly expects that the facilitator will read – and maybe even correct – her responses. Even though this was clearly explained in the letter to women teachers (see Appendix 2), this is most likely a situation that the respondent has never been in before; normally she would probably expect a superior to read her work. Yet the facilitator is conscious of my own concerns, of my expectations of her, and of the careful distribution and collection process we have worked out and to which she has committed. She is careful to point out to me that she has not at all "considered" the response. Such extracts of communication are critical data for this study, revealing much about how the teacher perceives the role of the facilitator (who is also a professional development provider) and of course, how my facilitator perceives her commitment to me and the expectations I might have of her. It is an interesting three-way relationship which, although I might be desire it to be more triangular and interconnected, may inevitably be a more hierarchical one, in which I, somewhat uncomfortably, sit at the top.

Presenting Embodiment

As discussed in Chapter 3, the expanding literature of education in development and the gray literature of projects reports and evaluations are informative in terms of the material conditions of women teachers' lives and of attempts being made to meet the physical needs of women teachers' bodies. But my interest in women teachers' bodies goes beyond the provision of adequate sanitary and other such facilities. I understand teaching itself to be an embodied activity, and my research data confirm this for me. As I spent more time interacting with women teachers in and out of classrooms, my attention was constantly drawn to the physical nature of women's teaching, learning and research. My fieldnotes became a place to describe and start to develop a more bodily conscious- way of thinking about studying women teachers' lives. Such an alternative perspective on female teaching and on researching women's teaching disrupts a dominant discourse focused on a problematic female body which requires special facilities and measures.

She is a short, rounded sort of lady, simply dressed in quite a plain green suit, with a thin dupatta worn more like a scarf. She rearranged it several times during the interview, putting the end over her shoulder, but then I was also having problems comfortably arranging the large net scarf that N. had lent me.

Fieldnote excerpt from interview in Karachi, September 2001

Later, in my analytical notes, I wonder whether it was an uncomfortableness in the research setting that made us both need to rearrange our clothes. I could understand it as an indication that our woman to woman interview was imbued with multiple social and power relations of which we were both aware, but unable to articulate and – at that point of time – to do anything about. I was on the one hand in her space, in her school, and in her classroom. Yet I had arrived from the teacher education institution, was recommended to her, and had a research agenda and specific project I was told she might be interested in. I was physically quite different - tall and white - but was wearing Pakistani style clothing similar to her own.

As Goffman (1989) insists, being in the field demands, "subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals" (p. 125). The tension and impossibility in researching with women teachers discussed earlier is often physical as well as intellectual. Relationships between participants are often structured and regulated according to body and physical position. In the vignette of the interview with Tasneem, the rapport between us is tangible in the way we are comfortably seated at either end of a cosy sofa, at ease in her home. Yet at the same time I feel slightly uncomfortable about the way I am dressed and what it might imply for the way this research relationship is understood and continued. Meeting with Hina, I also feel awkward; I am much taller than her. I am particularly concerned that in a situation where she knows neither my project, nor me, I don't overwhelm her or force her into to literally looking up to me.

I am keen to experience a sense of woman-to-woman rapport with the women teachers with whom I work, and am inspired by feminist scholars who strive to create and maintain such relationships with their participants. However, marked differences in

experience, expectation and position have to be acknowledged. These differences can be very physical. At the workshop with women teachers in their hostel, for example, I feel very white and quite clumsily dressed in an inappropriately formal outfit compared to the informal dress on the black and brown female bodies I am interacting with. Difference is embodied, but it is the politics of the situation which shapes its meanings (Eisenstein, 1998) and therefore defines our interpretations of it. From a somewhat ambiguous position of an after-hours researcher on quite unfamiliar ground, outnumbered by a group of participants, my body, and those of the others in the room is at the same time "utterly personal, private, and intimate, and inescapably public" (Gould, 1994, quoted Eisenstein, 1998, p. 33). Body – and especially the whiteness with which mine is marked - is an obvious boundary, and a source of difference. The freer clothing that the women wear this evening makes me suddenly very aware of our very differently coloured and shaped bodies. This awareness sits rather uneasily with naïve assumptions of woman to women rapport and identification. As is made clear from their stories of juggling child-care and teaching, these women's bodies have, unlike my own, given birth. I am inevitably asked about children and try to explain that I have not felt ready to start a family yet. Again the body, as site of choices I have made, and been able to make, is a significant marker of difference.

On the other hand, though, I find that connection can also be embodied. At the same time as marking difference in multiple ways, the body is also a site of shared struggle from which, as women, we can empathize about the discomforts of sanitary protection and protest the exclusions and restrictions imposed on women during menstruation. We do have shared experiences to discuss and to joke about, but also to take seriously. Sharing stories and comparing cultural expectations in different communities in Pakistan, East Africa and Central Asia, a collective project of resisting women's subordination and of strengthening women's positions can start to emerge.

In the fleeting conversation discussed earlier in which Ghazala alludes to the "twinkle in the eye" of the boys she teaches, she is, however tentatively, indicating the extent to which woman teacherness is a physical experience. The brevity of her comments and her slightly embarrassed giggles indicate, however, that it this is not easy to talk about,

and this is perhaps especially so in a group setting. Dominant discourses of teaching and learning assert the mental and technical aspects of the profession, and rarely refer to its physical dimensions. But as Estola and Elbaz-Luwisch (2001) write of their own research with women teachers:

> It was eye-opening for us to notice that actually work in the classroom starts with bodies. We first recognize others as bodies. We see, hear, smell and touch. They are bodies who speak. As we listened to the stories of teachers, we were impressed how stories of embodied practices seemed to constitute teaching and education. (p. 2)

Research is more than a cerebral activity; it is an inherently embodied one. As Van Manen (1990) asserts, writing as research process is corporeal, and my fieldnotes attest to my personal need to be doing something once I left Karachi. I needed to be bodily and not just mentally busy, to be continuing with my research project, writing about what had happened and, even if not physically present, remaining connected and remaining actively engaged in the field, and with the women I had worked with. Research is carried out by real bodies interacting with others, and in my case, it is real female bodies interacting with others. Through interview and fieldnote data relating to bodies and embodiment, I place more central to gender and development research the embodied nature of what it is to teach as a female and what it is to conduct research with women teachers.

On Making and Representing Meaning

As Lather states in the quote at the beginning of the chapter, data can be seen as the source material for story-telling. Rather than necessarily nuggets of truth to be analyzed in and of themselves, the data – interview and discussion extracts, questionnaire responses and fieldnotes - become the building blocks from which the researcher develops interpretive stories. Such stories should relate to the contexts from which they have developed, and to the contexts in which they are told. They should resonate with the lived realities of those who have contributed, and those who listen, and yet they should not presume to be the only stories possible. My interpretations

represent one set of possible meanings. Rather than prove grand theories, they aim to "vivify" the theoretical framework I have developed and presented. The chapter presents a set of interpretations, but within the thesis as a whole, these are situated as one possible display of perspectives, necessarily interacting with others (Lather, 1991). As Lather's "getting smart" about feminist research methodology involves writing towards "some understanding of the deeply unsettling discourses of postmodernism in a way that doesn't totalize, that doesn't present emergent, multiply-sited, contradictory movements as fixed and monolithic" (1991, p. 1), so do I write towards a relevant and potentially emancipatory interpretation of the lived experiences of women teachers.

My possible interpretations are created from a conceptual framework in which women teachers are understood as social and gendered individuals whose lives and experiences are situated with complex webs of power relations. In addressing lived experience in relation to policy and programming, my interpretations are a response to the question of "Whose development?" (Crewe & Harrison, 1999). The authors' own response is one in which there is a blurring of categories, multiple interpretations of particular projects and their aims, and a distinct lack of clear and straight lines of relationship, cause and effect.

> Discussion of detailed ethnographic material at several levels can provide a nuanced picture of how the interface between different actors in the development process combines with the structural and historical specifics of their institutional location. Whether one is a senior planner, a junior researcher, a man, a woman, Sri Lankan, Zambian, or British, these are all aspects of this location. This creates a messier view of reality than many of the 'deconstructors of development' appear to imply, but arguably a more accurate one. (p. 5)

Crewe and Harrison too illustrate the multi-faceted social and gendered positioning of the different actors within and around the development projects they investigate. They illustrate that they are all "constrained by different pressures and limits, but nonetheless create their own space for manoeuvre when they can" (p.186).

My response is not a simple one either. I use the vignettes as what Kiesinger (1998) calls "evocative narrative". These vignettes, in conjunction with the transcript excerpts, put the spotlight "on life's messes, complications, ambiguities and dilemmas" (p. 134). Within my response I "splinter the dogmatism of a single tale", and in some ways undermine the authority of the teller, to "free her from being captured by the reflection provided in a single narrative" (Grumet, 1991, p. 72). I avoid a problematic "compulsion toward wholes" (Gunn, 1982, quoted in Grumet, 1991, p. 72), and present and theorize the fragmented and disjointed nature of in-depth research. Rather than gloss over the uncomfortable disjuncture between home and field, participant and non-participant, one research situation and another, I use transcript analysis and the writing of vignettes to exploit the interstices and to represent the constant backwards and forwards as sources of insight into important issues. As Munro (1998) found in her work with women teachers, we need "to attend to the tensions and contradictions rather than to succumb to the temptations to gloss over these in our desire for *the* story" (p. 13). She is especially attentive to the fiction of the unitary story. A post-structuralist perspective allows for the acknowledgement of a multiplicity of selves, and for a disruption of the illusion that language can transparently reveal an essential and unified subject (Usher, 1998). I construct a multi-layered interpretation of a disrupted research experience, creating coherence whilst at the same time retaining an authentic sense of the dissonance, disjuncture and disconnection that characterize the content and process of the study. I acknowledge the fiction of any apparent objective research facts in relation to women's lives, but use the techniques of transcript close reading, and of writing my own fictions to suggest quite possible interpretations and to give a response to my participants' data.

Summary

This chapter has presented findings relating to the conceptual, practical and physical challenges of becoming and being a woman teacher in Pakistan, and of studying women teachers' lives in a specific development context. The impossible fictions I describe are a constant presence in the lives of women teachers, and have to be

acknowledged and worked with if teacher support, education and other projects and programs are going to be meaningful for women, and if policy language of gender equality and of women's empowerment is to be made real. Although a presentation of the complexity, uncertainty and messiness of the data collected in the study, it is also important that this chapter is read as creating possibility for re-imagining the future (Bailey, 1997) and for constructing alternative, more woman–centred, future fictions in gender, education and development.

FUTURE FICTIONS IN GENDER, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Once Annalukshmi had gone past Horton Place and was on Green Path, heading towards Colpetty, she began to be filled with elation. She looked up at the canopy of leaves created by the huge trees on either side of Green Path and she smiled. Her plan had succeeded. Here she was riding her bicycle to school. The deliciously cool wind flapped against her sari and crept underneath it. She pulled off her hat, threw it into the wicker basket, and rose in her seat. She began to pedal faster, blissfully unaware of the looks she was getting from pedestrians and motorists.

From *Cinnamon Gardens*, by Shyam Selvadurai (1999, p. 17).

7: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Selvadurai places Annalukshmi's story at the centre of a larger story of what is happening in colonial Ceylon. Her teaching life is a reflection of the social, political and economic forces of the time and place, and of the ethnic, religious and class locations in which she is living. Her relationships with other teachers, with her principal, and with her pupils are embedded within them. At the same time, though, Annalukshmi is an agent, active in the construction of her own destiny, and very aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of a teaching career for women. However, the lives of real women teachers in development contexts rarely receive similar attention, and are rarely situated in relation to social, economic and political forces. In the West, there is a well-established body of narrative inquiry, theory and teacher education practice, which does make important linkages between the different spaces of teachers' lives. It recognizes the value of teacher knowledge and experience as fundamental to pedagogical knowledge and to professional identity. In this study, a feminist methodology, informed and nuanced by scholarship on teacher lives and on gender and development, makes it possible to look at different aspects of women teachers' lives in a development context. I investigate the relationships between lived experience, and policy and programming in gender, education and development.

In this final chapter I discuss some conclusions to be made from this study, its contribution to scholarship as well as its limitations. I describe how my thesis responds to my broad research questions, but also where unresolved questions and issues remain. I then make some suggestions for what the "action sensitive knowledge" (Van Manen, 1990) produced by this study may imply for policy and programming, and for future research in gender, development and education.

Conclusions

One conclusion of the study relates to the importance of a multi-layered theoretical framework in order to make meaning of the complexities of women teachers' lives in Karachi. Weaving feminist research methodology into the theory and practice of gender, education and development around a central focus of women teachers' lives creates such a framework. Within it, women teachers are also women in development, living complex and sometimes contradictory lives within and across multiple organizations and institutions. A reflexive, feminist approach that draws on scholarship relating to women teachers in the West, but which is at the same time grounded in the theory and practice of gender and development, provides a meaningful methodology within which to develop the investigation.

Working with gender and development perspectives to investigate the lives of women teachers creates possibility for more transformatory thinking about gender and education issues in development. In a context in which teacher policy and programming tends to be either gender neutral, or to focus on the practical needs of women teachers, it is very relevant to consider how the school setting, and the act(s) of teaching itself can be reframed in more complex terms. Teaching is seen to be at the same time both empowering *and* disempowering, possible *and* impossible for women. The position of the classroom teacher is an ever shifting one of power and privilege but also one of isolation, marginalization and exclusion, and most especially so for women teachers. The narratives of these Pakistani teachers indicate how the classroom can be a particular site of agency, activity and ownership. It can be a space in which women can enjoy being creative, learning with their students, and in developing their own personal and professional skills. At the same time, though, this classroom space has to be understood in relation to school, family, community and society spaces, in which women's positions may be quite different. Women teachers have to constantly negotiate very fine lines between professional satisfaction and family obligations, between what is expected of a woman and what they want to do. Focusing in on the odd, the inconsistent and the contradictory elements of women's narratives, it is

possible to explore in more detail these lines of negotiation and these "lines of fault" (Smith 1987) in women teachers' experiences. Close readings of women teachers' narratives expose their multiple positionings within *and* against the gendered ideologies of different institutions.

Being attentive to the words of women teachers in Karachi, I identify a number of areas in which a tension or contradiction exists between official versions of women teachers' lives, and their lived realities. In a discursive environment in which contradictory messages about being a woman, being a mother, being a wife and being a teacher circulate, the positions which women teachers can and do take up are inevitably somewhat problematic. Becoming and being a woman teacher, and teaching girls are, although physically possible, nonetheless theoretically, practically and physically challenging. Working with such complexity, the act of researching women's lives is yet another impossible fiction.

In development contexts, especially where women teachers may be working in extremely oppressive contexts, with meagre pay, resources and support, and where the threat of sexual and gender-based violence is ever present, the "corpor/reality" (McWilliam, 1996a) of the classroom may be somewhat different from that of western contexts. In Pakistani schools, women's and girls' bodies are counted, but are not necessarily seen as central to the processes of teaching and learning. Researchers in education too are unlikely to be explicit about their own body or about those of their research subjects. This study suggests, however, that corpor/reality nonetheless warrants attention. The material reality of the female body provides a starting point from which traditionally polarized categories, of mind/body, public/private, home/school, researcher/researched can be disrupted and alternatives explored. The study indicates the appropriateness of conceptual linkages between theories of women's teaching lives, of gender and development perspectives, and of feminist research methodologies. In this way, rather than merely programming problems, women teachers' bodies can be repositioned as central to theories of teaching and learning education in development.

From the thesis we can see how the researcher too is part of a complex web of power relations and positions, which may be understood and expressed in both bodily and cerebral ways. The study is testimony to the powerful contradiction for feminist researchers and practitioners that lies in our complicity with the ruling forces of development which shape the language and practice of interventions for women, and which implicate us in the production and perpetuation of certain discourses and practices. A complementary series of vignettes allows for a multiplicity of perspective, and for a constant shifting of position – both physical and conceptual – of researcher and researched. Space to describe and examine this movement is created through specific attention to key episodes or critical moments. The vignettes lay bare ruling relations, and evoke a sense of how they look and feel in specific situations. With these forms of analysis and representation, the researcher and the researched are liberated from false positions of apparent unity, definitiveness, fixedness and omniscience. Both are subjects situated within the complex social and power relations which shape their experiences and the ways in which they are interpreted and represented. However, any attempt or impulse to define with finality, clarity and linearity is avoided.

According to Mueller (1995), we have the responsibility to investigate the ways our own professional work practices may participate in reproducing other women's marginalization, "to examine how we know what we know, and ultimately to work 'in and against' development, to resist, oppose and dismantle ruling relations which subjugate women in development, and to forge new connection and alliances" (p. 106). In a small way, this thesis works in this direction; a reflexive, feminist methodology represents possibility for engaging in Mueller's "in and against" project.

However, even though I argue the importance of women teachers' experiences for enhanced theories of gender, development and education, the thesis presents and analyzes the trickiness of working with women in development contexts. The richness of detail, emotion and the relational complexity expressed in a fiction such as *Cinnamon gardens* might present a model to inspire research into women teachers' lives. However, it may also raise important questions about authorial authority, about representation of other women and of the relative positionings of the writer/narrator or

of the interviewer/researcher. Feminist research methodologies are not unproblematic. They may seek long-term compassionate, caring, respectful, non-exploitative and mutually beneficial relationships with participants, paying attention to ensure their comfort, well-being and sense of self-esteem, but this study suggests that realities can be quite different. This is especially so when one is working in very different geographical and cultural contexts, and with time, financial and other constraints. Having to leave Pakistan under such stressful, saddening and uncertain circumstances put my small and very tentative attempts to restructure ruling relations between researcher and researched into perspective.

Since returning to Montreal, beyond the development and completion of the questionnaire, ongoing relationships with research participants have been sporadic and somewhat disappointing for me. The women I worked with clearly have many other priorities and commitments and there is little I can do to mediate feelings of having mined my research site for what I wanted, and then left as quickly as possible. Munro (1998) is uneasy about the potential of life history research to reinvent colonial relationships, to speak for the silenced, or to explore teachers' knowledge in ways reminiscent of colonial adventurers setting out to plunder the riches of "native" knowledge. In the specific research process and the broader development context that I am engaged in, these issues are highly pertinent. I am constantly aware that all research relationships and activities locate themselves within existing dynamics of privilege and power, and at the same time actively creating and recreating others. I see how eliciting other women's stories can serve my own ends. Entrusted with many different stories of women teaching, it is then my responsibility to handle them sensitivity, to craft my own story that does justice to them, and to provide what I hope is a resonant account of their realities.

Representing Participants

Having spent over three years engaged in research with teacher educators within and outside of her institution, Cole (2001) realizes that she is in a very tricky situation. She not only expects potentially vulnerable academics to talk candidly about their

experience within their institution, but she then has to interpret and represent to them what she learns. Like myself in relation to the women interact with, Cole is both insider and outsider, recognizing the need to proceed carefully in order to protect herself and her research participants.

> "Be careful what you say." "Be careful what you write" These words sat on our shoulders and mediated every conversation, giving wise counsel on the potential or what is revealed. The promise of anonymity is vital; yet how possible is it really? (p. 167)

Similar words sat particularly heavily on my shoulders during the interviews and discussions I had with women teachers, and remained on my shoulders as I sat at my computer composing the passages in which I represent their words, gestures, what is said and what is not said. I am very aware of the potential damage or insult I might cause to people whose time, insights and perspectives I am grateful for, by revealing their doubts or criticisms of the schools they work in and institutions they are connected with. I am aware of the ethical issues involved in presenting and representing women teachers' lives with whom I only spent brief moments in time. I maintain a hope that I will be able to return to the site and re-establish collegial relations with women with whom I worked. But whether this happens or not, I have strived to be attentive to the possible hurts, offense or other negative impacts that a perceived misrepresentation might create for a woman teaching in Karachi.

Furthermore, as I hope that this study will make a difference to development thinking and policy and lead to more women-centred policy development and program implementation, I have to be particularly careful about how I represent women teachers in development. In the writing of my thesis, and of the vignettes in particular, I actively acknowledge accountability for what I create and present. I strive to find "forms and voices which will allow for less positivistic and reductive accounts of what goes on in education" (Miller, 1995, p. 24). As I deconstruct certain terms, I also seek to rewrite them under new conditions. As Anderson and Jack (1991) state, "an exploration of the language and meanings women use to articulate their own experience leads to an awareness of the conflicting social forces and institutions

affecting women's consciousness. It also reveals how women act either to restructure or preserve their psychological orientations, their relationships, and their social contexts" (p. 18). The vignettes, explicitly constructed from an awareness of these conflicting forces, are my own textual move to present data relating to the power relations which may marginalize women teachers and undervalue research relating to their lives. In a small way I attempt to restructure ruling epistemological relations relating to them/us. The vignettes try to make explicit the power relations evident in the lives of the women teachers I work with, and to expose the multiple structures of ruling relations in which women teachers, and a researcher wanting to work with them, are inevitably embedded.

Contribution to Scholarship

Feminism has in many fields challenged assumptions of gender neutrality, and has disrupted male-centred master narratives and the linearities and regulation they impose. Feminist approaches promote a more critical reflection on one's own personal, professional and political positionings, and encourage research methodologies that are attune to gender-based inequities. However, critical feminist awareness and reflexive, non-traditional research methods have yet to make much impression on mainstream research in education in development. Few ethnographic studies of schools in development contexts exist and so rarely do we get a glimpse of either teacher or researcher as living and breathing women. This study presents an alternative to gender-neutral teacher policy and programming in development contexts, and an example of feminist practice in development research in the field of education. Linkages made between feminist theories of women's teaching lives, and gender and development perspectives, mean that power, position and pedagogy can be meaningfully addressed. Women teachers themselves, rather than the teaching techniques, materials and training they might need, are repositioned as central to theories of gender, education and development.

Although scholarly inquiry into teachers' lives and realities rarely takes place in development contexts, this thesis articulates teaching and doing research as lived

experiences. Here, fact and fiction, past and present, home and school, personal and professional, collide and interact. Seldom does analysis of educational development, and of its teaching, learning and research processes, account for gendered nature of teaching, and for the complexity, messiness and ambiguity of its lived experience. This study is written from a situatedness that is made explicit, reflecting a theories of fragmentation and contradiction, of tension and of trickiness. The notion of 'impossible fictions' disrupts pre-conceived linearities in research, and allows me to work with complexity, corporeality, and emotion, and with a research experience that was unexpectedly interrupted by world events. The time and place of the study, and its theorizing of the experience of "9/11" from alternative perspectives, also add to its significance. More than just a historical record, however, the study contributes to understandings of theoretical, methodological, and especially feminist responses to the unexpected, the disastrous and the uncertain. In the current global context, such understandings surely have to be further developed.

But beyond the particular time and place of this study, the attention paid to the 'how' of researching with women teachers highlights the need to reconsider what constitutes pedagogical and development knowledge, how it is produced, and to whom it belongs. The foregrounding of method, process and personal story in relation to gender, education and development is significant, drawing attention to issues, questions and complexities which are rarely acknowledged. Crewe and Harrison's (1999) question, "Whose development?" remains for the most part unasked in gender, education and development contexts, where little attention is given to the personal engagement and position of the teacher trainer/consultant/evaluator or researcher.

In development research, post-coloniality and the powerful and complicated ways in which it shapes our consciousness and defines our positions, is often glossed over. So too are the structural and systemic underpinnings of research relationships and the embodied way in which these positions, relationships and consciousnesses are experienced and expressed. Such issues can be quite intangible and tricky to articulate, and tend to be marginalized in more traditional, and especially quantitative research. This study demonstrates, however, that they are very relevant, and that they can be

addressed as complex and problematic, but not necessarily insurmountable. Attention and analysis can create valuable insights as well as possible tools for constructing alternatives.

Limitations and Unresolved Issues of the Study

Having asserted such conclusions, I cannot, however, ignore the impossibilities, the tensions and the limitations of this study and the unresolved issues within it. These should be given some attention. Although I might, for example, theorize the importance of reflexive, feminist methodologies quite convincingly, I cannot pretend that I have not experienced difficulties in their practice. I cannot wish away own my doubts, my questions, nor shy away from those that others might pose.

Firstly, I have to recognize that although the study was developed and carried out with feminist research methodology very much in mind, it is limited in the extent to which it can respond to the demands of feminist approaches. It is a study by a woman, about women and at least to a large extent for women. It takes women's lives very seriously, and accords importance to their everyday realities, the tensions and contradictions within them. It also challenges the patriarchal structures, systems and language of education, and creates a woman teacher-centred perspective on gender, education and development. It is reflexive, candid about the positionings of the researcher, and attentive to the affective. However, the study is not one that can necessarily mobilize women to act. I was not able to, for example, work with community-based women teachers to help them organize themselves to better their conditions. It is a study that for the different reasons given sidesteps the realities of many thousands of rural, non-English speaking women teachers in Pakistan. Furthermore, it is a study that was not as participatory as could have been in a different set of circumstances.

I am also very conscious of the asymmetries in expectations and intentions of some of my research relationships, and of the tensions inherent in woman-to-woman research, where there are inevitably different expectations and priorities on the part of researcher and research subject. I would love to think that others are as interested in my research

topic as I am, but I have to acknowledge that for most women teachers, their woman teacherness is not something they are explicitly thinking about, nor necessarily interested in prioritizing. I may have hoped that the collaborative research activities I set up provided an opportunity for "enriching and stimulating professional development experience for the teacher-participants", but I have to be honest about the realities of the situations I was working in, the contexts in which the relationships were constructed. There are multiple possible interpretations and expectations of my research project itself, and of the research relationships developed around it.

Whilst there appears to be a growing interest in Pakistan about documenting women's lives, such research remains relatively rare. Smith (1997) is unequivocal when he describes the research landscape of Pakistan as "dominated by people counting numbers in one form or another" (p. 247). However, taking an alternative approach to research with women teachers – one which is not about counting numbers, which is not necessarily institutionalized, but which takes place in homes, residences and individual classrooms – is also somewhat risky. It may be considered "soft", and "only for women" and may merely perpetuate an impression that a subject of women teachers does not warrant a "hard" research approach. Reading Code's (1995) *Question of method in feminist practice* whilst in Karachi, I became concerned that what I might have considered appropriate feminist methodology for working with women teachers could give the impression that the research subject was not serious enough for a more quantitative, more traditional study. Am I in fact devaluing the contribution of women teachers, through approaching and representing their work and lives in this way? Could it in some ways be a more feminist project if I sought the hard data of facts and figures, to in some way make a strong case for the subordination of women teachers in Pakistan? More feminist, as in perhaps more likely to create change, and more collaborative, supportive and participatory because it perhaps responds more directly to other women's needs and not only my own? When narrative approaches are exclusively connected to women's lives, I wonder if there is a risk that this in fact encourages a perception that women's lives are trivial and not worthy of apparently more serious forms of research.

I recollect a conversation with female colleagues in Karachi when I had been talking about my interest in women teachers' lives and experiences. Shabnam had then said, *"And so hopefully you will find a solution to the problems these women are facing"*. My rather awkward response was that I hoped more to raise awareness about the women's own experiences, that I did not see my work alone as able to solve anyone's problems, and that whatever I wrote would be an interpretation of my experience. As I spoke, I became quite aware that focused very much on me, on "I", my response probably sounded very hollow. I could see how my approach risked perpetuating a hierarchy of my perspective, and an avoidance of issues that other women might feel important. There is undoubtedly an unresolved tension between a feminist desire to find solutions to other women's problems, create better conditions for them, to promote women's rights and to argue for women's participation in policy dialogue, and a feminist awareness that one cannot speak *for* other women, and can only speak with authority and authenticity from one's own particular, identified location. There is a desire to make strong policy recommendations for working with women teachers in development contexts *and* a belief that such recommendations should come from those women themselves and not from a western academic.

But as a relatively privileged western researcher, I do have access to policy-making fora. My own narrative is a potentially powerful voice in certain contexts and may even have some authority to propose solutions to some women's problems. As a feminist researcher I surely have a responsibility to use it, but to use it carefully and to be attentive to its potential to silence or to conceal the voices of other women. How can one speak *with* women teachers, when in certain contexts my own voice might speak louder? How can one use that loud voice to create spaces for other voices? Making one's biography, politics and relationships part of the fabric of the field (Bell, 1993) inevitably give them a certain importance and status, and so how can one deconstruct the power of one's voice and perspective whilst at the same time use it to create awareness which may lead to better policy and programming for women in development contexts? Such concerns cannot easily be resolved, and should not be easily put aside. I can only be encouraged by the fact that other feminist researchers

are working with similar tensions, and hope that through further work, dialogue and collaboration increasingly nuanced understandings and future directions will emerge. As Pearson and Jackson (1998) write,

> Feminist research on development policy and practices presents feminism with a series of paradoxes, uncertainties and contradictions. Rather than try and resolve or dissolve them we should embrace them as a genuine reflection of the tension between the essentially modernist project of development, and the subversive deconstructing tendencies of feminist analysis. (p. 13)

Rather than an all encompassing, generalizable model, this study is explicit about aiming to present a realistic and accountable representation of particular situations viewed from particular locations and at a particular moment in time. An account (*and* a doctoral thesis) is inevitably a piece of a story, with a certain arbitrariness at both beginning and end (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). It can always go backwards and/or forwards, contain more detail in certain places, have a lead-in or a continuation section. A story could always be told in different ways and may never actually constitute a discrete unit. My writing is therefore explicit about its partiality, its locations and its timings. In a different moment, the stories told might be quite different and might be interpreted from quite different perspectives. I draw on a small range of the possible experiences that might constitute working with and learning more about women teachers in development contexts. Beyond my fieldwork in Pakistan, my experience is predominantly in South Asia and Africa. In Latin America for example, where I have no field experience, gender issues in education might look quite different, and the theoretical frameworks required to research them might be quite different too.

The issue of working with men teachers is also an important one with which I have not engaged in this study, and there is certainly a case to be made for more nuanced and storied studies of men teachers' lives in development contexts. More recently, certain development organizations and agencies have started to learn more about masculinities in development (Chant & Gutmann, 2000), and to address gender issues from a gender and development (GAD) perspective rather than isolating either sex. Roles and responsibilities, perceptions and experiences of men towards gender practice in

education certainly warrant much further investigation. This study may provide some interesting theoretical and methodological starting points, but the gendered nature of men's lived experience of teaching would need to be re-explored from quite different perspectives. Having said this, whilst women teachers remain for the most part marginalized from the traditional sites of power in education and often invisible in gender-neutral policy and programming language and practice, I believe that it is important to accord special attention to them and to their positions within development discourse, policy and practice.

Implications for Policy and Programming and for Further Research

Increased attention to gender issues in education in development, and especially the emphasis on recruiting women teachers to promote girls' education, suggest that more complex understandings of women teachers' lives and experiences are also required. Outside of development contexts, feminist scholars of education place female experience at the center of teaching and learning processes and insist that women teachers' knowledge and experiences constitute particular and valuable pedagogies. Stories from classrooms, but also from homes, from communities, and from the many other locations that women take up in their everyday lives, provide a medium of expression and a starting point for inquiry. Feminist reflexive methodologies are a means to working with these stories and to investigating their significance. Such approaches, and the content of what they reveal, are, however, rarely explored in development contexts. Working directly with women's experiences, and with their expression of these experiences, produces some different perspectives on what it means to be a woman teacher in Pakistan, and on what it means to work with women teachers in development contexts. These findings have significant implications for the ways in which policy, practice and research in education in development are conceptualized and implemented.

Implications for Policy and Programming

I am, however, aware of the apparent dissonance between a reflexive, process-focused narrative, and policy and programming imperatives to implement effective development interventions. One might question the implications for development planners and policy-makers of a study which is explicitly subjective, self-referential and storied. This tension is a thread that runs throughout the study, which I address at multiple points in the thesis, yet which has no easy answers. In my discussion of feminist methodology, I point to the inherent paradox of conducting strategic research that seeks to strengthen and advance the position of women and girls, but that is at the same time self-conscious about its partiality and about its necessarily limited perspective. From a post-colonial perspective, the power and privileged position of the white, western, academic author also has to be addressed, however well-meaning her policy recommendations might be. In 'Feminist Fields', I highlight the practical, methodological challenges of developing a study that is situated both within and against current development practice. Furthermore, I quite explicitly present data on and discuss in detail the apparent impossible fiction of actually working with women teachers in such a context.

Developing a theoretical framework in which these paradoxes and these dissonances can exist, and can be related to current policy and programming, is an integral element of the study. It responds to the first of my broad research questions: 'Where are women teachers in development contexts located in relation to theories of women teachers' lives and of gender and development?' Drawing on narrative, feminist research on women teachers' lives, and on the literature and practice of gender and development I construct a space in which to situate a study that relates to both. In order to respond to the second of my questions, 'How do we find out more about their lives, represent and interpret what we find?' I develop a feminist, reflexive methodology within which tensions and contradictions are understood and analyzed as sources of meaning. This conceptual and methodological space is certainly quite tentative, and is not an easy one to maintain. However, it is one which, when mined creatively, can provide some significant policy and programming directions. Crewe and Harrison

(1999) tell a similarly situated story of development, insisting on the primacy of lived experience over impersonal and apparently objective policy and programming. They too insist that a detailed examination of lived experience should stimulate a reconsideration of certain development discourses and practices.

I believe that the experiences of women teachers in Pakistan and in other development contexts do constitute important bodies of knowledge and as such should be closer to sites of policy development and decision-making. My work and my approach to it also reflects a feminist imperative for research which serves a purpose of improving conditions for women and girls. Being professionally involved in the field of education in development, I have always been reluctant to move too far away from the everyday realities (possibilities and impossibilities) of the classroom. It is important to me that this study does have relevance and implications for development practitioners and policy makers, and that I can respond to the question, "What difference does this sort of research make?"

Stromquist (1994) is concerned about the extent to which projects for women tend to be undertheorized, calling for stronger theoretical work on gender issues at the agency level, in order for development planners to understand that "gender problems affect not only poor women but women of all social strata" (p. 7). I suggest that this study, with its emphasis on conceptualization, process and on method, contributes to a more complex theorizing of women's teachers' lives in development, and to the practices of teacher education and curriculum development. As Lather states, "strategically, reflexive practice is privileged as the site from where we can learn how to turn critical thought into emancipatory action" (1991, p. 13). It is in this spirit that I see the study as a critical step in a process towards further, future action.

To develop "gender-redistributive" (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996) education policy - that is policy which is intended to transform existing divisions and distributions to create more balanced relationships between men and women – in-depth understandings are required of the multiple ways in which women live and interpret their lives. We need to know more about personal and professional relationships of

women teachers with each other, with men, with girls and with boys. We also need to be able to theorize the connections and disconnections between women's positions in the classroom and their positions in their own families and communities. With heightened international awareness of the remaining gender disparities in education, and with many different initiatives currently taking place to address them, investment in conceptual development and in methodology is increasingly important. Thinking about women teachers as actors in complex social webs in which they are both women in development and teachers, and theorizing the implications of the multiple positions and possibilities available to them, is a starting point for developing policies and programming which are responsive to the multiple, interconnected gender issues women teachers face.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider in any detail applications to particular programs, I can comment briefly, for example, on one element of the *Basic education action plan* of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2002) which pertains to teachers:

> **Enhance the training levels, professionalism, status, and morale of teachers, principals, and school administrators.** CIDA will support programs to improve the training of education professionals at all levels of the education system, both in academic content and in pedagogy. Initial training should be followed by opportunities for in-service, professional development, and career progress, with policies to encourage retention of trained and experienced teachers, principals and school administrators. CIDA will also support initiatives to improve the working conditions and status of teachers. (p. 25)

On the one hand, my thesis stands as a counter-narrative to such gender-neutral policy discourse around teachers, in which the emphasis is placed on specific policies and programs to upgrade and improve the teaching profession as a whole. On the other hand, however, paying attention to women teachers' lives, and developing sensitive, reflexive methodologies for northern organizations and individuals to work with women in the South, offers much potential for doing exactly what CIDA commits to doing. This implies taking into consideration the tensions, contrasts and contradictions of lived experience of being women and teachers, and of being researchers, consultants

and development planners working with them. The widespread mainstreaming of gender perspectives into education may seek to embrace the different experiences, knowledges and pedagogies of male and female teachers, and to acknowledge the different ways in which development policy and practice can impact and make a difference in their lives. Yet the realities of maintaining this focus and of developing strategies for implementation may be difficult for large agencies and organizations. This is especially so as through sector wide and similar pooled funding approaches, they are increasingly working at the macro rather than the micro level of development assistance in education. Maintaining a focus on lived experience is especially challenging in the current context where attention is focused on dramatic issues of urgent concern, such as education in emergencies, and in conflict situations, and on meeting the quantitative targets outlined in the Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum/UNESCO, 2000) and in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000).

In relation to the urgent issues of improving the educational opportunities of the 68 million girls who remain out of school, and of education in emergency and especially conflict situations, this study also has particular significance. The lived experiences of women teachers, and of girl students too, in Pakistan and elsewhere, provide possible starting points from which to develop complex and nuanced theories of gender and education. Listening to the stories women and girls tell of their lives in and out of schools, of their concerns and of their needs can provide insights into the relational complexities of women working with girls in different contexts. Comparisons can be made between policy and practice, intention and reality, fact and fiction. Brown and Gilligan (1992) for example, assert the need for women teachers to look back at their own silencing, marginalization and the compromises they have accepted, as a starting point for developing more authentic support for adolescent girls in their classes. In line with their work, I suggest that for women teachers, sharing and examining life stories, reflecting on and questioning biographies, sexualities, social contexts and the relational dynamics of the school and classroom settings, constitutes innovative, yet very relevant, teacher development for girls' education.

Within the international community there is increased awareness of the gendered experiences and interpretations that women have of conflict and of peace, of the short term and long term ramifications of conflict on women's and girls' lives. There is also an increasingly widespread recognition of the need to involve women in peacebuilding processes. In recent years, more importance has been given to the role of education in processes of reconstruction and peacebuilding and education is more likely to be given priority within the first wave of any humanitarian aid to a conflict situation (Sinclair, 2001). This study implies that it is very relevant to look in more detail at the roles of women teachers in the restructuring of educational systems, in the development of new curricula and programs, and in the reconciliation, through education, of communities torn apart by violence. For the most part, however, in emergency and conflict situations, teachers appear to be considered gender neutral. Mirroring country reconstruction, educational reconstruction in post-conflict scenarios, is most likely male-dominated. There is the risk of on the one hand essentializing women as natural grassroots peacemakers and on the other excluding them from official peacebuilding decision-making and policy development (Sales, 1997). Rather than pedagogical leaders, conceptualizers and innovators, women teachers risk being defined as policy subjects and as education program implementers. This study suggests that women teachers' stories, their lived experiences and the different ways in which these stories are told are significant. Their knowledge deserves particular attention in conflict and post-conflict situations as it may demonstrate significant gender differences in perceptions and experiences which should be addressed, for example in new school curricula. Furthermore, women teachers may have important insights into peacebuilding strategies and processes which are of relevance to the school and its community. Such strategies and process may better account for embodied experiences of conflict, peace, of power and of pedagogy, may make significant connections between gender inequality and conflict, and, one might hope, may move towards effective, gender-responsive and gender- redistributive pedagogies for peace.

Implications for Further Research

This study opens up for future investigation a number of as yet under-explored areas of content and of research methodology. Although women teachers have not been seen as a prime target group for development research, the importance of their everyday interactions with children and their roles in the development of societies suggest the need to know more about what they do, and about how and why they do it in particular contexts. Women teachers' pivotal roles in the shaping of gender identities of boys and girls in different school contexts is a large area for future research which could be very informative to future policy strategies for gender equality. I have been able to make some connections between feminist theories of embodiment and education and women teachers in development contexts, but further investigations of the embodied knowledge of teaching and the body-voices of women teachers in development contexts is clearly another area for rich and challenging further research. As discussed in Chapter 3, gender and development theories provide new perspectives on schools as development organizations, which warrant further investigation from the perspectives of the women and girls within them. The sort of gendered archeology proposed by Goetz (1997) should be further developed as a starting point for further critical analyses of the structures and systems of schooling that are rare in development contexts.

In terms of research process too, this study also opens up a number of areas for future studies to develop. As internet and other forms of technology (video-conferencing, for example) make contact between distance locations easier, and they become more widespread at least in institutions in development contexts, their potential for research should be explored in more depth. Such technologies can blur distinctions between 'in the field' and at home, between far and distant and between them and us, but in so doing, they raise new and important ethical questions. They also create new distinctions between those on-line and those with neither easy access nor the skills to use computers. These issues are especially important for feminist research as it has strong traditions of embodied research and of ethical concerns for women's autonomy and well-being at every stage of the process. Feminist research also has much to gain

from easier ways of connecting groups of women across distant locations and of sharing relevant information, ideas and concerns. Further experimentation and investigation is required in order to learn more about the potential of new, distant technologies for equitable and ethical research with and for women. Such technologies could be very appropriate tools with which to develop the more collaborative research projects with women teachers that I suggest are needed. Considering the acknowledged limitations of this study, further research has the potential to generate insights into appropriate processes for bringing together and mobilizing women teachers around issues of importance to them. The impact of such processes on education policy is then a particularly important area for further study.

Towards Future Stories of Women Teaching in Development Contexts

Rather than giving up on the apparently impossible quest of ethical research with Third World women, Patai (1991) insists that we actively engage with impossibility, with the actual conditions of the real world today, and with writing about the oppressed without becoming one of the oppressors. In shifting attention to and from the researcher and the researched, critically placing the two in relationship with each other and with their contexts, this study illustrates alternative sites of interest for educational development and in particular for feminist theorizing of it. Taking and building on the results of this study, I hope to be involved in more participatory activities with women teachers in development contexts and to work on elements of the policy and research development agenda I outline. Positioning myself as a "developing subject", I can use my imagination to create multiple possibilities and visions, to reject preconceived notions of women's and girls' potential (Perry & Schenck, 2001), and I would add, to encourage others to do likewise.

With such projects there will inevitably arise many more challenges, and the tensions and trickiness of working with women in development contexts will never – and should never - subside. I have no easy answers to some of the questions raised by this

study, yet feel it is important to continue to confront them, and in so doing, to continue to rock the epistemological boat (Wolf, 1996). For a feminist researcher and practitioner it is the explicit taking on, and theorizing with these tensions, contradictions and challenges which offers the potential for more woman-centred policy and programming in education. The intellectual and political struggle are surely worthwhile in striving collaboratively to create more complex descriptions of current landscapes for women teachers, and to initiate more exciting, equitable and empowering possibilities for future work in gender, education and development.

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APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM

I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education, University of McGill, Montreal, Canada, working on a research project entitled: *A study of women teachers working for educational change in Pakistan.* At a time of increased international attention to basic education and educational change, to girls' education and to gender equity, especially in countries of the developing world, a qualitative study to find out more about the lived experiences of women teachers in Pakistan is highly significant. The study is based on in-depth, informal interviews with a small number of women teachers. Participants will be invited to arrange 2 individual interviews with me, at times and locations convenient to them. In the first session I will ask the interviewee to talk about her experiences of being a female teacher in Pakistan, and the second will be an opportunity for us to talk together about the stories and ideas told previously. The interviews will be taped and transcribed as quickly as possible, and there will be opportunities to change, add to, or erase any of the ideas expressed. When I have completed the interviews, at the end of the month, I hope participants will come to a group meeting at which we can collectively discuss further some of the research questions, and I can share some of my initial comments, questions and ideas.

Individual data will, however, remain confidential and identifying markers (such as name, school name, location) removed. No interview transcript, or observation notes, in whole or in part, will be used without your approval. Should you decline to answer any questions, or decide to withdraw from the study at any point, your decision will be respected. There are no foreseen risks involved in this research and by engaging with me in this research partnership, I hope that the collaborative inquiry to be simulating and professionally relevant for participants.

My study is of interest to academic and practice communities at local, national and international levels and in addition to my doctoral thesis, I intend to share the insight gained through conference or journal papers, through articles in teacher journals, and through presentations to educational development organizations. Participants will be invited to give input and feedback to these documents and copies will be sent to them.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact me at:

If you wish to confirm your participation in this study, kindly sign the Consent Form attached. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jackie Kirk

A Study of Women Teachers Working for Educational Change in Pakistan

Jackie Kirk

McGill University, Montreal

I, _____ consent to participate in the research project as described by Jackie Kirk, knowing that the process will involve participation in two in-depth interview sessions, to be arranged at times and in places convenient to me. I understand that individual data will remain confidential and that identifying markers (such as name, school name, location) will be removed. No interview transcript, or observation notes, in whole or in part, will be used without my approval. Should I decline to answer any questions, or decide to withdraw from the study at any point, my decision will be respected with no questions asked.

Signature: _____ Date:

APPENDIX 2

WOMEN AS TEACHERS/ TEACHERS AS WOMEN PERSPECTIVES FROM PAKISTAN

I am a PhD student at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, doing research with and about women teachers in Pakistan. I was recently in Karachi, based at Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development, and although the current situation meant I had to return to Montreal early, I am keen to continue with my study and to learn more with and from Pakistani women. I am therefore inviting you to complete this questionnaire.

I am very interested in educational policies at international, national and local level, but most particularly how those policies affect women teachers, how they understand them and put them into practice. Doing qualitative research, I focus on ideas, experiences and perceptions, rather than numbers, and so this questionnaire is rather longer than most, and may take some time to complete. However, I hope that you will find it interesting to work on, and that the questions I raise are relevant to you in your professional and personal life. I have also included space for you to tell me of any other aspects of the subject important to consider. Please feel free to add additional sheets of paper.

Globally, and nationally, there is certainly much interest in women teachers, and so research that aims to find out more about their lived experiences, both in the classroom and elsewhere, is highly significant, and of interest to academic and practice communities at local, national and international levels. In addition to my doctoral thesis, I intend to share the insight gained through conference or journal papers, through articles in teacher journals, and through presentations to educational development organizations. In this way, it is hoped that there will also be an impact on educational policy development.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to the person who gave it to you (in an envelope if you prefer). She is someone who I knew and worked with whilst I was in Karachi. She understands the ethics of my study, and is committed to ensuring the confidentiality of the data you provide. Once you return the questionnaire to her, it will be sealed in an envelope with your colleagues', and collected, along with others, to be mailed back to me. If you prefer to mail it directly to me, then please do so. If you wish to work directly on a computer, please send me an email and I can easily email you an electronic version of the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you should feel very comfortable about declining for whatever reason. No questions will be asked, and there will be no negative consequences whatsoever.

Although your name is included on the questionnaire, individual data will remain confidential, and any identifying markers (such as your name, school

name, location) removed. I hope that being involved in my study in this way will be interesting for you too. I hope to return to Karachi in the near future, but in the meantime please feel free to contact me at the address at the end.

Voluntary and Informed Consent

I have read the accompanying letter, and understand that the data collected in this questionnaire will be used by Jackie Kirk as part of a doctoral thesis, conference and/or journal papers, in articles in teacher journals, and through presentations to educational development organizations.

I am happy to contribute to this study, but feel under no undue pressure to do so. Although my name is included on the questionnaire, individual data will remain confidential, and will be sent directly to Jackie Kirk. Any identifying markers (such as my name, school name, location) will be removed. Should I decline to answer any question, or decide to withdraw from the study at any point, my decision will be respected, with no negative consequences whatsoever.

---------- Name ---------- Date

----------Signature

Jackie Kirk,
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, 3700 McTavish Street,
Montreal, Quebec,
H3A 1Y2, Canada.

jackie.kirk@mail.mcgill.ca

APPENDIX 3

WOMEN AS TEACHERS/ TEACHERS AS WOMEN

PERSPECTIVES FROM PAKISTAN

Letter to facilitators:

I very much appreciate your help in continuing with my study after my early departure from Karachi in September. In agreeing to facilitate the distribution, collection, and return of questionnaires to women primary teachers you are involved with, you are enabling me to add to the data I was able to collect whilst based at AKU-IED, and to build on what I learned through my interviews, discussions and interactions with groups and individuals.

I would like to draw your attention to certain ethical issues which such a process raises, before you to commit to the conditions I outline below.

As with your own involvement, it is very important that the women who complete my questionnaire do so entirely of their own will, that they understand what I am doing, and that they know they can withdraw at any point in the research process with no negative consequences. Please ensure that they feel very comfortable about declining the invitation to participate, and please insist on the voluntary nature of participation.

The data that they provide on the questionnaires is highly confidential, and as explained to participants in the accompanying letter, you are asked to collect the completed questionnaire, to add it immediately, unread, to an envelope along with the others of your group. Once you have all the returns, then please seal the envelope and give it to the nominated collector at IED. Once all are returned to her, she will mail a package directly to me in Montreal. Individual women may chose to return the questionnaire directly to me, and this is fine; others may chose to receive an email copy and to complete it directly on a computer. I am trying to be as flexible as possible in order for volunteer women to respond in the easiest and most suitable way possible; I trust that you will respect this process.

Although these are serious ethical considerations, I also hope that there will be some pleasure – both professional and personal – in the completion of the questionnaires. I would be very happy if any groups of women teachers would like to organize a time to discuss it as a group, either in their school, class or meeting, and I hope you could respond to any such ideas.

With your input, the development of the questionnaire has been a very enriching process, and the emails that we have exchanging, fascinating examples of the complexity of the issues I am exploring. I would like to be able to use extracts from some of these 'discussions' in my future writing, and I hope that you will agree to this. Your name and any identifying markers will, of course, be removed, and you will have

the opportunity to review any material I use, and the option to withdraw any of it, with no negative consequences at all.

I hope that you will feel comfortable in committing to the conditions I have outlined, but please do not hesitate to discuss any of these issues with me further.

I very much look forward to continued collaboration with you

Yours,

Jackie Kirk

I understand the importance of voluntary participation of women teachers in this study, and will ensure that my colleagues have every opportunity to decline the questionnaire, or to withdraw their data at any time. No pressure will be exerted on anyone to complete it, and all completed questionnaires returned to me will be added immediately, unread, to an envelope. Once all accepted questionnaires have been returned to me, I will then seal the envelope and give it to the nominated person to mail, along with other similar envelopes, in a package directly to Jackie Kirk.

I have read and agree to the conditions outlined above:

---------- Name---------- Date

----------Signature

I understand that the email messages between Jackie Kirk and myself are a very interesting part of the research process, and I agree to extracts being used in her future writing. My name and any identifying markers will be removed, and I will have the opportunity to review any material she chooses to use.

---------- Name---------- Date

----------Signature

Jackie Kirk,
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec,
H3A 1Y2, Canada.
jackie.kirk@mail.mcgill.ca

APPENDIX 4

WOMEN TEACHING/ TEACHING WOMEN

PERSPECTIVES FROM PAKISTAN

As this study focuses on the ideas, perceptions, and experiences of women teachers, this 'questionnaire' is an in-depth one, which may take you some time to complete. The questions may be quite difficult to answer, so please use as much detail as possible, and do use specific examples, events and episodes to illustrate your points. Feel free to continue on other sheets of paper !

Introductions

1.1: **Please start by introducing yourself, describing your current teaching situation.** *(For example what type of school/s are you currently working in ? What class/subject responsibility/ies do you have ? How long you have been there ? How long have you been teaching ? Did you chose this position, or if it was assigned to you ?*

1.2: **Are you currently involved in any professional development / teacher training?** Please describe.

1.3: **Are you actively involved, as a professional or a volunteer, in any other education-related projects ?** (For example an NGO, a religious organization or community). Please describe.

I am very interested in what motivates women to become teachers and how they do this.

1.4: Please describe why and how you became a teacher. (For example, why did you choose teaching as opposed to any other profession ? Are there other teachers in your family ? Did your family want you to become a teacher ? Or was it by chance ? Were you inspired by other teachers, including your own ? Did you think about other careers ?)

1.5: How do your own experiences of growing up, and being a girl-student in school influence your teaching and the way you think about teaching? Please do give specific examples.

Women Teaching Girls and Boys

I'm very interested in what women teachers think is important for children to learn in school.

2.1: What do you think are the most important things for girls and boys to learn in school?

2.2: To what extent are you able to help your students learn these things?

2.3: What do you find most difficult, and why? What might make it easier?

2.4: What do you find easiest and why?

2.5: What sorts of professional development do you find most helpful and why? (For example, workshops, discussions with colleagues, reading

books on teaching, observing other teachers? Please be as specific as possible)

Women Teachers in Schools

3.1: Can you tell me what you enjoy most about teaching in your school and why?

3.2: Can you tell me what you dislike most about teaching in your school and why?

3.3: Can you comment on how 'friendly' your school is for women teachers? (For example, is the administration understanding of your family responsibilities and workload out of school? Are meetings scheduled at convenient times? Are the sanitary facilities adequate for women? Are there specific gender policies?

Women Teachers in Educational Decision-Making

4.1:How are you involved in making decisions in your school ? (For example, around school policy, curriculum, parental involvement, school rules, activities and events)

4.2: How do you feel about your current level of participation in educational decision-making ? (Would you like to be more or less involved ? Why ? How ?)

In different countries around the world, including Pakistan, there are special policies, programs and projects intended to recruit and support women teachers.

4.3:What do you feel are the special contributions that women teachers can make to education?

Women Teachers in Society

I would like to know more about if and how teaching brings about changes for women teachers in their lives outside of school.

5.1: Please describe any changes teaching has made in your life. (For example, in the sorts of activities you do, the relationships you have, the skills you have developed or the income you earn)

Further Thoughts on being a Woman Teacher in Pakistan

If there are other things you would like to tell me about your experiences and perceptions as a woman teacher, please continue overleaf, or on extra paper. Please let me know if there are other aspects of being a woman teacher in Pakistan, which you feel are important for me to consider. I would also appreciate any other suggestions of people I should contact, or resources you can recommend.

Following Up

If you would be interested for me to follow up with you from this questionnaire, please indicate how I could contact you. If you have one, an email address would allow me to communicate with you from Montreal. Email dialogue, although not the same as face-to -face discussion, can be very interesting, and if it is possible, I would like to be able to use extracts in my writing. If this is the case, you will have to opportunity to review and amend the extracts used, and/or to withdraw them, as with all other information that you give me.

I agree to the above. Signed: ----------

Address: ----------

Please now return this to the person who gave it to you.

APPENDIX 5

WOMEN AS TEACHERS/ TEACHERS AS WOMEN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

I am a PhD student at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, doing research with and about women teachers in the context of education in development. I am interested in educational policies at international, national and local level, particularly those concerned with 'gender issues', but most especially how these policies affect women teachers, how they understand them and put them into practice in a particular development context. I was recently in Karachi, Pakistan, conducting fieldwork based at Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development. I am now seeking insight into international educational policy development and implementation processes with regard to women teachers in developing countries. I am to some extent familiar with the work of your organization in this field and would very much appreciate your input into my study. I am therefore inviting you to respond to the questions below.

I understand that you are very busy, and I appreciate the time involved in completing such a questionnaire. If you would prefer to schedule a face to face, or a telephone interview, please let me know. I would be very grateful if you could return the questionnaire, or make alternative arrangements with me, by January 14th, 2002.

Although I am asking you to draw on your professional experience of working within an organization, these questions seek your own perspectives on the subject of women teachers in developing countries, and on the policies, training and support initiatives that may affect them through international development assistance. Therefore, your responses will remain confidential, and as I use the data, any identifying markers (such as your name, your organization's name, project details etc) will be removed. Should you decline to answer any question, or decide to withdraw from the study at any point, your decision will be respected, and no questions asked. In responding by email or on the telephone to the questions I have posed, I will assume that you have read and agree to the conditions outlined above. For a face-to-face interview, I will ask you to sign a consent form.

I hope that being involved in my study in this way will be interesting for you, and I would certainly welcome further comments, suggestions or references. Please refer me to any additional information from organizational literature, reports, web-sites etc, and if you feel there other people within your organization, or elsewhere, who could also respond to the questions, please forward it to them. As I believe that my study will be of interest to the international educational development community, I look forward to sharing the findings with you in the future. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at the address below:

Jackie Kirk,
Department of Integrated Studies in Education
McGill University, 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y2. Email:
jackie.kirk@mail.mcgill.ca

Policy and Programming Experiences for Women Teachers

1.1: Please describe any particular project initiatives that your organization is involved with (or has been involved in, in the past), that relate in some way to women teachers (such as teacher education, curriculum development initiatives).

1.2: If women teachers have been specifically targeted in this initiative/s, please explain the rationale.

Training and Supporting Women Teachers

2.1: In relation to the programs you are involved with, how do you understand the professional development and training needs of women teachers?

2.2: How might these be different from those of men teachers?

2.3: What other support might women teachers in developing countries require?

2.4: From your organization's, or your own particular experience, what are the particular challenges of working with and for women teachers in development contexts?

Women Teachers and Participation

3.1: Have women teachers been involved in policy development related to your organization, or the partner organizations (agencies, ministries etc) you work with? Please describe.

3.2: Please describe the planning process for your projects/ programs. Have women teachers been involved? If so, please describe how.

Women Teachers in 'Gender and Development'

4.1: Can you describe how your organization addresses 'gender issues' in education? What are a) the most important issues b) the key concepts, and c) the main approaches to implementation?

4.2: How do you understand your organization's approach to women and gender in development issues (ie not necessarily in relation to education). What are a) the most important issues b) the key concepts, and c) the main approaches to implementation?

4.3: How do you see the relationship between your work with women teachers, and any programming initiatives aimed at 'women in development' or 'gender and development' issues?