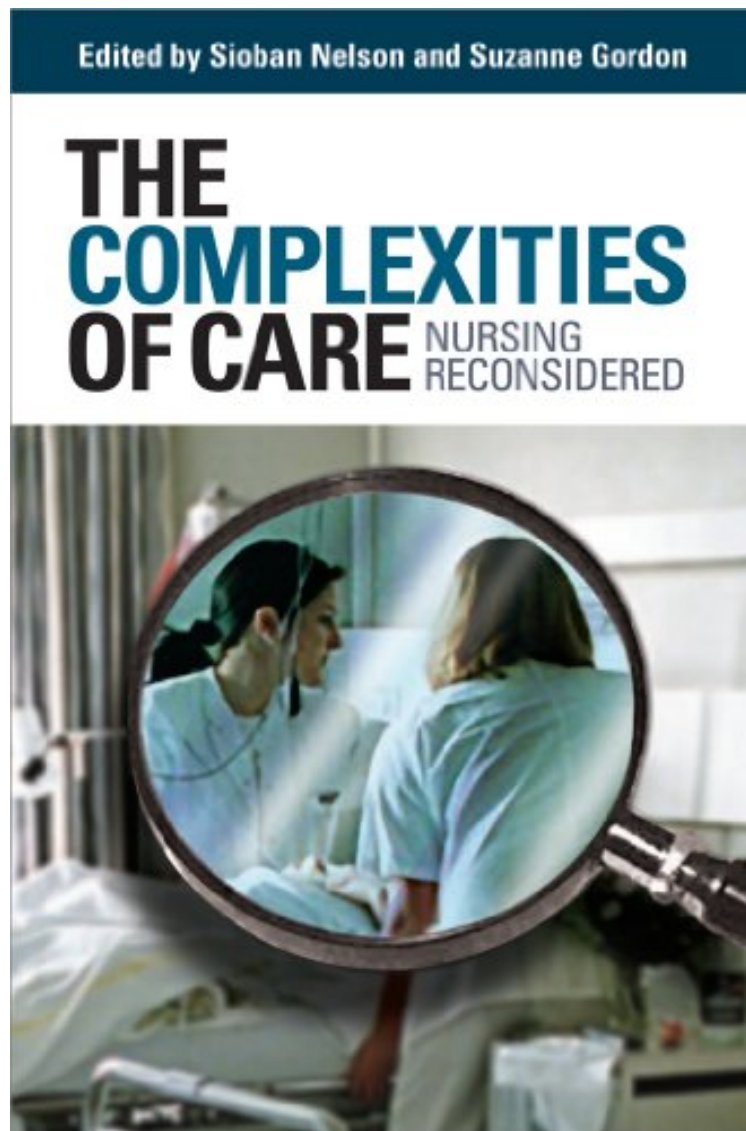


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## The Complexities of Care: Nursing Reconsidered (The Culture and Politics of Health Care Work)

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"Nursing, everyone believes, is the caring profession. Texts on caring line the walls of nursing schools and student shelves. Indeed, the discipline of nursing is often known as the 'caring science.' Because of their caring reputation, nurses top the polls as the most-trustworthy professionals. Yet, in spite of what seems to be an endless outpouring of public support, in almost every country in the world nursing is under threat, in the practice setting and in the academic sector. Indeed, its standing as a regulated profession is constantly challenged. In our view, this paradox is neither accidental nor natural but, in great part, the logical consequence of the fact that nurses and their organizations place such a heavy emphasis on nursing's and nurses' virtues rather than on their knowledge and concrete contributions."-from the IntroductionIn a series of provocative essays, *The Complexities of Care* rejects the assumption that nursing work is primarily emotional and relational. The contributors-international experts on nursing-all argue that caring discourse in nursing is a dangerous oversimplification that has in fact created many dilemmas within the profession and in the health care system. This book offers a long-overdue exploration of care at a pivotal moment in the history of health care. The ideas presented here will foster a critical debate that will assist nurses to better understand the nature and meaning of the nurse-patient relationship, confront challenges to their work and their profession, and deliver the services patients need now and into the future.

"This collection of essays . . . shows that nurses in all settings tend to describe their work as caring, emotional, and compassionate, consciously avoiding mention of the knowledge and skill that are equally essential to the job. . . . The consequences . . . include early burnout owing to mistaken expectations and the greater use of unskilled workers, who are seen as equally capable of providing emotional care. . . . Well written and provocative."Library Journal(15 October 2006)"While the nursing profession has wrapped itself in care talk, has this hampered a more realistic basis for nurses' self identities and nursing's collective power? This hard-hitting collection faces this question head on. The book is a necessary antidote to more saccharine assessments of twenty-first-century nursing and a tough prescription for change in the health care system."Susan M. Reverby, Wellesley College, author of *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing*From the Back Cover"While the nursing profession has wrapped itself in care talk, has this hampered a more realistic basis for nurses' self identities and nursing's collective power? This hard-hitting collection faces this question head on. The book is a necessary antidote to more saccharine assessments of twenty-first-century nursing and a tough prescription for change in the health care system. "mdash;Susan M. Reverby, Wellesley College, author of *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing*About the Author Sioban Nelson is the Vice-Provost Academic Programs, University of Toronto. She is coauthor of *Creating the Health Care Team of the Future* and coeditor of *Complexities of Care: Nursing Reconsidered* and *Notes on Nightingale: The Influence and Legacy of a Nursing Icon*, all from Cornell. She is also the author of "Say Little Do Much": *Nursing, Nuns and Hospitals in the Nineteenth Century*. Suzanne Gordon is coeditor of the Cornell University Press series *The Culture and Politics of Health Care Work* and was program leader of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded *Nurse Manager in Action* Program. She is the author of *Nursing against the Odds* and *The Battle for Veterans' Healthcare*; coauthor of *From Silence to Voice*, *Life Support*, *Safety in Numbers*, *Beyond the Checklist*, and *Bedside Manners*; editor of *When Chicken Soup Isn't Enough*; and coeditor of *The Complexities of Care*, *First, Do Less Harm*, and *Collaborative Caring*, all from Cornell.