Vitae Scholasticae

The Journal of Educational Biography

Volume 30 Number 2
2013

Vitae Scholasticae
Volume 30, Number 2, 2013

Vitae Scholasticae is a refereed journal published by the International Society for Educational Biography.

Members of the International Society for Educational Biography receive each issue of *Vitae Scholasticae* as part of their membership. Subscriptions are available to other individuals for $50 a year and to institutions and libraries for $100 a year (add $40 per year outside of the United States); single copies of issues may be ordered for $50. See form on page 94.

ISSN 0735-1909.

Articles appearing in ***Vitae Scholasticae*** are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

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Editor's Note

Nigel Hamilton wrote that biographers have only three types of information from which to learn about their subjects: primary sources that are unpublished or archival documents, secondary sources that have been previously published or broadcast, and "oral evidence" (which is primary until it is published).[1] Hamilton noted that while the first two categories have long been preferred by historians, the third involves interviews that can provide unique insights to biographers. He wrote, "A biographer who is willing to seek out and interview a host of possibly competing witnesses can…offer a multifaceted picture of the subject through diverse insights and contributions: a collage rather than a single-perspective painting."[2]

This issue of *Vitae Scholasticae* includes four essays in which authors have utilized a variety of sources in depicting the lives of educators. In the first article, Katherine Assante Perrotta and Chara Haeussler Bohan use (written) primary and secondary sources to portray a historical figure for whom interviews are unavailable: Elizabeth Jennings, an African-American teacher who in 1854 was forcibly ejected from a New York City streetcar because of her race. The authors compare Jennings' experience to that of Rosa Parks and argue the importance of including Jennings in contemporary social studies curricula.

Louis M. Smith, author of the second article—"Nora Barlow, Cash Ritchie, Ida Darwin: Activists in the Origin of the Darwin Industry"—is well known to *Vitae Scholasticae* readers. He has looked at Charles Darwin's granddaughter, Nora Barlow, through several lenses in a series of essays previously published in this journal. Smith's work on Barlow has spanned many years, beginning with three summers in Cambridge that he details in Craig Kridel's seminal work, *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research*.[3] In the current article, Smith considers Barlow from a new perspective. He utilizes written primary and secondary sources and interviews, thereby employing the full range of sources cited by Hamilton.

In the third article, "Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright (1905-1962), author Hilton Kelly poses an interesting question about sources: How does one construct a comprehensive story of a

life with too little evidence? Kelly introduces the notion of "pivoting race" to portray the life of a noted Howard University professor while considering the role of the critical race biographer.

The authors of the fourth article rely primarily on oral evidence. To protect human subjects, they did not reveal their own identities or the name of their university, and they used pseudonyms throughout the essay. "Queer on Campus" explores the role that language plays in a campus community's ability to acknowledge and understand the sexuality and sexual orientation of its members.

Finally, *Vitae Scholasticae* readers will be intrigued by Judith Weaver Failoni's review of Katherine Chaddock's biography of John Erskine, the first President of Juilliard School of Music who is credited with instituting the study of Great Books. Failoni finds Chaddock to be meticulous in her documentation of Erskine's multi-faceted life, in keeping with another point Nigel Hamilton raised. He wrote:

> Biographical research…is the effort you make not to prove an ideological conviction to the exclusion of other views and evidence, but to follow, document, and verify the results of genuine, open-minded curiosity: exploring with honesty and humility, the mystery, myths, and realities of a human life.
>
> *That* is the challenge which the biographer seeks to meet—and which holds out untold delights, frustrations, and rewards.[4]

We hope this issue will inspire readers as they consider sources for their own biographical work.

—Linda Morice

Notes

[1] Nigel Hamilton, 2008. *How To Do Biography: A Primer*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 70.

[2] Ibid., 74.

[3] Louis M. Smith, 1998. "On Becoming an Archivist and Biographer." In Craig Kridel, ed., *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research*. New York: Garland, 157-170.

[4] Hamilton, 91-92.

Nineteenth Century Rosa Parks?
Assessing Elizabeth Jennings' Legacy as a Teacher and Civil Rights Pioneer in Antebellum America

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Introduction

Many mainstream histories of the civil rights movement in United States history are focused on famous activists such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dred Scott, Homer Plessy, Frederick Douglass, and John Brown. These leaders challenged slavery and segregation mainly in the South before and after the Civil War. While these figures have prominent places in the social studies curriculum, there are other less-publicized Americans who played important roles in combatting racial discrimination not only in the South, but in the North as well. One citizen who challenged discriminatory policies at the "site of a little-known milestone in racial progress" on the corner of Pearl Street and Park Row in New York City was African American schoolteacher Elizabeth Jennings.[1] In 1854 she was forcibly ejected from a streetcar because of her race. She sued the streetcar company and won. Despite her legal victory at a time when a favorable verdict in this kind of case "would not have been achieved in the North before—or after—the Civil War," Elizabeth Jennings slipped into the quiet annals of United States history and is consequently absent from most states' social studies curricula.[2]

Elizabeth Jennings' omission from many dominant narratives of United States history is an example of how "vernacular" histories are often excluded

from the "official" social studies curricula.[3] Historically, "social studies as a field has been slow to address race and diversity," particularly in the "subfield of…history [as] race has been eclipsed by other issues, such as methods, other topics, and influential leaders in the field."[4] Eric Foner noted, traditional United States histories "gloss over [the] participation of the North in America's slave system…even after Northern states no longer allowed slaveholding within their borders."[5] As a result, generations of Americans are unaware of the role ordinary citizens such as Elizabeth Jennings played in achieving civil rights, particularly in the North before the Civil War.

While Elizabeth Jennings' legal victory against segregation on streetcars was a remarkable achievement that parallels closely to Rosa Parks' arrest in Montgomery, Jennings' lawsuit only accounts for a snapshot of her life as an educator and active member of the free African American community in New York City. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the historical significance of Elizabeth Jennings' lawsuit, but also to examine her teaching career in the former African Free Schools and abolitionist background. Additionally, we analyze possible reasons why Elizabeth Jennings is missing from the social studies curriculum and demonstrate how her inclusion as a civil rights pioneer in her own right can highlight the neglected history of slavery and segregation in Antebellum New York City.

"Good Old New York Stock": The Life of Elizabeth Jennings before 1854

Slavery's pervasive influence on the development of New York City from a colonial outpost to a bourgeoning metropolis caused African Americans to live in an existence of conditional freedom. In spite of the abolition of slavery in New York State in 1827, socio-economic opportunities for African Americans were limited. Freed Blacks were denied the right to vote, hold public office, testify in court, enter interracial marriages, and access public facilities such as mass transit and schools.[6] Consequently, New York City was also the scene of a growing abolitionist movement in which Elizabeth Jennings' family had been highly involved since the British colonial era.

Jennings' grandfather Jacob Cartwright was "a native African…soldier in the Revolutionary War, and took active part in [New York] city politics until the time of his death in 1824."[7] Jennings' father, Thomas L. Jennings, was a respected abolitionist and entrepreneur who was born a slave, served in the colored regiments during the War of 1812, and received a patent for an invention to mend clothing that recognized him as "a black man of 'African descent'" and "'citizen of the United States.'"[8] Thomas Jennings was also a prominent member of several organizations, such as the Legal Rights

Association and Abyssinian Baptist Church, which were aimed at "the benefit and elevation of the colored people."[9] According to the 1850 U.S. census, "Free Inhabitants in [the] Fifth Ward in the County of New York," Thomas was listed as a boarding house owner.[10] Little is known about Elizabeth Jennings' mother.

Elizabeth Jennings was one of four children of Thomas L. Jennings. She was born in Manhattan's Fifth Ward, which extended east of Broadway on Reade and Canal Streets in 1830.[11] Elizabeth Jennings was also involved in abolitionist activities. She was an organist at the First Colored American Congregational Church on Sixth Street near the Bowery. As noted by James Weldon Johnson, "the coloured churches of the city played an important part" in fighting against slavery and segregation in New York City.[12] The church Elizabeth Jennings was a member of "was a place of worship spiced with sharp political commentary" where assemblies with themes such as "Elevation of the African Race" and "The Duty of Colored People towards the overthrow of American Slavery" often featured "Miss Jennings at the Organ."[13]

Like many African American women in the free community, Elizabeth Jennings became a teacher. As a young student, Elizabeth attended a "Colored Normal School" where she learned English, Grammar, Astronomy, United States History, Algebra, Geometry, and Philosophy.[14] She earned her diploma from the New York Board of Education and was hired as an elementary schoolteacher in the former African Free Schools.[15] The New York Manumission Society founded the African Free School in 1787. Among the founding members of the Manumission Society were abolitionists, the Society of Friends, and politicians such as Alexander Hamilton and John Jay. According to Charles C. Andrews, who was a White teacher and principal of the African Free School, the mission of the School was to provide African Americans "the benefits of an education, as seemed best calculated to fit them for the enjoyment and right understanding of their future privileges, and relative duties, when they should become free men and citizens."[16] In short, the purpose of the school was to prepare the children of former slaves for life as freedmen.

Black children between the ages of five and fourteen were eligible for admission into the African Free School. Enrollment was contingent upon an interview the prospective student's family had with the school's governing committee.[17] The predominant attitude among Whites towards Black education in both the antebellum North and South was that stereotypical African American "traits," such as "sloth, emotionality, irrationality, and immorality," could be eradicated with "routines and didactic teachings that would…pave over those traits with an allegiance to the superior traits of the White race."[18] The majority of teachers in the African Free School were White males who

showed "a kindly tolerance for the black race."[19] According to Mary White Ovington, who was a suffragist and co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, African American parents "clamored for colored teachers and succeeded in displacing Charles Andrews himself" after Andrews reprimanded a student for referring to a Black man who visited the School as a "gentleman."[20] By the early to mid-nineteenth century, Black principals and teachers were hired due to increased pressures from parents and the African American community in New York City.

Approximately nine hundred students attended the African Free School, which expanded to seven schools by 1834.[21] When the Manumission Society ended its involvement in public education after slavery was abolished in New York State, the African Free Schools were operated by four separate agencies from 1834 to 1854. The agencies that managed the African Free Schools were the Board of Education of the City and County of New York, the Public School Society, New York Colored Orphan Asylum, and New York Society for the Promotion of Education among School Children.[22] Once the New York City common council procured public funds for the governance of schools, the Board of Education co-opted all African Free Schools by the 1850s.

Charles C. Andrews documented the curriculum of the African Free School, which was modeled on the Lancasterian system of teaching (also known as the monitorial system) named for English school "innovator" Joseph Lancaster.[23] In the Lancasterian system, one teacher could serve a large number of students, as the students with the greatest knowledge taught the less advanced students.[24] Male students were taught a curriculum consisting of graphic arts, penmanship, mathematics, cartography, geography, poetry, and nautical skills. Girls did not receive nautical skills instruction, but were taught sewing in addition to the standard curriculum consisting of grammar and geography.[25]

Elizabeth Jennings worked in several former African Free Schools once they were operated by the New York City Board of Education. She was a teacher in the "female department" of "Colored Public School No. 2," which was operated by the Public Schools Society in 1848, and in the "male department" of School No. 2 that was managed by the New York Society for the Promotion of Education among Colored Children in 1849.[26] Jennings taught in two schools co-founded by Underground Railroad conductors Charles B. Ray and Charles L. Reason.[27] She also served as acting principal at School No. 1 when Samuel Vreeland Berry resigned in 1850. She returned to School No. 2 in 1852, which was renamed "Colored School No. 5," and taught in the "Boy's Department."[28]

While education, religion, and abolition were important aspects of Jennings' life and career, she was not known to be an outspoken civil rights

activist. Nevertheless, the events on a summer morning changed the otherwise quiet life of Elizabeth Jennings as her teacher and church organist persona made her the perfect candidate to challenge the practice of segregation in public facilities in nineteenth century New York.

"A Wholesome Verdict": Elizabeth Jennings v. the Third Avenue Railway Company

On Sunday, 16 July 1854, Elizabeth Jennings and her friend Sarah E. Adams walked to the corner of Pearl and Chatham Streets to catch a streetcar to attend church services. While African Americans could ride on any streetcar in New York City, the customary practice in the city was that Blacks were to leave the streetcar if any passenger objected to their presence.[29] Some streetcars explicitly affixed signs to the cars that read "Colored People Allowed in this Car."[30] When Jennings and Adams attempted to board a car that did not have a sign indicating Blacks were permitted to ride, the Irish conductor told Jennings to wait for the next car "reserved for her people."[31] When Jennings refused, the conductor and a nearby police officer forcibly ejected her from the streetcar, causing her physical harm.[32]

Jennings recounted her ordeal to her church parishioners. Reverends Levin Tilmon and James Vickes called a meeting on 17 July 1854 at the First Colored American Congregational Church where the church secretary read Jennings' statement on her behalf. She stated:

> …when the conductor told us to wait for the other car; I told him I could not wait…He…said to me, "Well, you may go in, but remember, if the passengers raise any objections you shall go..." I answered again and told him I was a respectable person, born and raised in New York…I had never been insulted before while going to church...He then said I should come out and he would put me out…he took hold of me and I took hold of the window sash and held on; he pulled me until he broke my grasp… I screamed murder with all my voice, and my companion screamed out "you'll kill her; don't kill her."[33]

Those in attendance at the meeting expressed their "reprehension" over Elizabeth's treatment and unanimously passed resolutions to "bring the whole affair before the legal authorities," demanding "at the hands of the proprietors, as colored citizens, the equal right to the accommodations of 'transit' in the cars."[34] Jennings' statement and the resolutions were reported with the headline "OUTRAGE UPON COLORED PERSONS" on 19 July

1854 in Horace Greeley's newspaper the *New York Tribune* and on 28 July 1854 in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*.[35]

Thomas L. Jennings, who was a founding member of the Legal Rights Association, formed a delegation to rally public support for Elizabeth and seek legal counsel for her. Thomas Jennings and the delegation asked the law office of Culver, Parker, and Arthur to take Elizabeth's case on behalf of all Black New Yorkers.[36] Erastus Culver, the head attorney of the firm, was an abolitionist and featured speaker at the meetings of the New York Anti-Slavery Society.[37] Chester A. Arthur, a 24-year old partner with the firm, who also had an abolitionist reputation, was chosen by Culver to handle Jennings' case.[38] Thomas Jennings declared Elizabeth's case was a class-action suit for all African Americans that would "bring up the whole question of our right…in public conveyances."[39] Elizabeth Jennings' case possessed the potential to be a bellwether for segregation on public transit.

Arthur presented Jennings' case against the Third Avenue Railway Company in New York Supreme Court in Brooklyn in 1855. Arthur sued the Company for $500.[40] When the trial began on 22 February 1855, Arthur argued that the Company was in violation of New York State common carrier laws. Common carrier laws stipulated that all paying passengers on public conveyances, such as streetcars, had an expectation of punctual and safe accommodations.[41] According to Arthur, the Third Avenue Railway Company was liable for the behavior of its employees, thus holding the conductor and the company responsible for Jennings' injuries.[42] Judge William Rockwell delivered his verdict in favor of Jennings stating "that colored persons, if sober, well-behaved, and free from disease, had the same rights as others; and could neither be excluded by any rules of the company, nor by force of violence; and in case of such expulsion or exclusion, the Company was liable."[43]

Jennings was awarded approximately half the monetary compensation she sued for as her settlement. According to the *New York Tribune*, "The plaintiff claimed $500 in her complaint, and a majority of the Jury were for giving her the full amount; but others maintained some peculiar notions as to colored people's rights and they finally agreed on $225, on which the Court added ten per cent, besides the costs."[44] While some jurors apparently held discriminatory sentiments with regards to Jennings and her settlement, her case was celebrated by abolitionists and members of the African American community as an important legal precedent for transit companies to comply with common carriers in New York City.

Abolitionist newspapers celebrated Elizabeth Jennings' verdict. The *New York Tribune* published an article titled "A Wholesome Verdict" stating, "It is high time the rights of this class of citizens were ascertained."[45] The *National Anti-Slavery Standard* stated "the hardships and insults so long suffered by

the coloured people of this city, in consequence of the general refusal of omnibus and railroad proprietors to permit them to enjoy equal rights as passengers, are, we hope, nearly at an end."[46] Frederick Douglass noted that "We hold our New York City gentlemen responsible for the carrying out of this decision into practice, by putting an end to their exclusion from cars and omnibusses [sic]; they must be craven indeed if they fail to follow the lead of a woman."[47]

Although an 1880 article in the *New York Times* reported that the "Lizzie Jennings" verdict compelled "other car companies [to] quickly follow the…example" of the Third Avenue Railway Company to adhere to common carrier laws, Judge Rockwell's ruling "did little to discourage other streetcar companies from segregating black passengers."[48] The outcomes of common carrier cases in New York City depended greatly upon the judge's opinions, which revealed the "the limits of legal desegregation" on public conveyances.[49] Although Elizabeth Jennings received a favorable verdict, other African American men and women were ejected from streetcars shortly after her case.[50] The legal opinions in Jennings' case, along with those filed by other African American women such as Sojourner Truth for violations of common carrier laws on streetcars and trains were not widely published outside of the cities in which these ordeals occurred.[51] As a result, plaintiffs who sued for damages in common carrier cases had difficulties citing Jennings' case as a legal precedent for upholding those laws throughout the United States.[52] Although Elizabeth Jennings' verdict did not lead to a greater movement for streetcar integration in Antebellum New York City, she helped lay the groundwork for others to use the legal system to fight racial discrimination on public conveyances.

"A Most Learned Teacher": Elizabeth Jennings' Life after the Case

After her case, Elizabeth Jennings continued to teach and advocate for African American equal rights in New York City. She taught at Colored School No. 5 until she retired. While teaching, she married Charles Graham in 1860. They had one son named Thomas. According to Hewitt, Jennings' son may have been adopted because he could not find the child's birth certificate. Additionally, Hewitt found that the Manuals of the Board of Education indicated she did not miss a day of work before the child was born.[53] The New York City Board of Education by-laws stated "if a woman teacher should marry, charges might be preferred against her by reason of such marriage."[54] However, Elizabeth Jennings continued to teach after marrying Charles Graham.

Typically, large cities "protected women's rights more assiduously than did smaller towns" because female teachers and city residents "tended to be

more diverse in terms of religious, ethnic, class, race, and education backgrounds and, as a result, more tolerant of liberal thinking."[55] The fact that Jennings remained employed under her married name is an example of how she was held in high esteem by her colleagues and school administration and that the New York City Board of Education upheld the Greater New York State Charter Section 1117 that affirmed teachers would be "protected against removal during good behavior and competency," particularly where marriage was concerned.[56]

When Elizabeth Jennings' father Thomas L. Jennings died in 1859, prominent members of the African American community eulogized him. Frederick Douglass wrote in the *Anglo-American* that Thomas "upheld society by an active, earnest, and blameless life …Mr. Jennings was one of that large class of earnest, upright colored men who dwell in our large cities. He was not an exception, but a representative of his class, whose noble sacrifices, and unheralded labors are too little known to the public."[57] Clearly, Thomas contributed greatly to the advancement of African American civil rights in New York City and across the nation.

Elizabeth Jennings survived further racial violence in July of 1863 when the New York City Draft Riots erupted. For three days poor Whites, mostly Irish immigrants, revolted throughout the Bowery section of Manhattan against the Union Conscription Act. The mobs lynched freedmen, burned the Colored Orphan Asylum, and drove Blacks out of the city with signs that read, "We won't fight to free the nigger."[58] Moreover, transit companies reinstated their segregationist policies. As Union soldiers who returned from the Battle of Gettysburg subdued the riots, Elizabeth and Charles' one-year-old son died of "convulsions" on 16 July 1863.[59] The child's burial service took place at Cypress Hills Cemetery in Brooklyn. A few years later, Charles Graham died. Records of his death are unclear as to when he passed away. Hewitt claimed no death certificate could be found, but he discovered that Jennings was listed as a widow in 1876 New York City directories.[60] In Leslie M. Alexander's notes, she indicated that Charles Graham died in 1867.[61] Charles Graham's cause of death or age at the time of his passing is unknown.

Jennings lived in relative obscurity until Chester A. Arthur became President of the United States after the assassination of James A. Garfield in 1881. Arthur was praised as "the champion among colored people" due to his reputation as the lawyer in the "Lizzie Jennings" case.[62] The New Orleans pro-Republican Black newspaper *The Louisianian* praised Arthur's "virtues and patriotism" and expressed the expectation he would "protect the humblest Negro as he will to protect the greatest man in the land."[63] Arthur was later criticized for not executing federal laws that ensured civil rights for African Americans as ex-Confederates and Democrats regained political con-

trol from Republicans in the post-Reconstruction South.[64]

Among the little evidence of Jennings' public writings with regard to her case against the Third Avenue Railway Company was a piece in a letter she wrote to *New York Age* magazine in 1890. She expressed her dismay over "the lack of public spirit" in the African American community when only $87 was raised for the legal fund of T. Thomas Fortune, a Black newspaper editor who was denied service at a hotel bar in Manhattan and arrested for disorderly conduct.[65] Jennings also revealed in that same letter that her father was able to only raise "seven dollars" for her own legal fees in 1854.[66]

Jennings' last contribution to the education of African Americans in New York City was her involvement in co-founding the Free Kindergarten Association for Colored Children on the lower level of her home at 237 West Forty-First Street in Manhattan in 1895.[67] The school operated under the support of Black and White benefactors including Jacob Riis, H. Cordelia Ray, and W.E.B. DuBois.[68] Ray featured the kindergarten in an article she wrote for *American Woman's Journal*, describing the school and its library, called the "Graham Library," as a place "where the children are developing sense-knowledge, and learning to exercise that self-activity which lies at the root of this admirable system."[69] The school was the first public kindergarten for Black children in New York City.

Elizabeth Jennings died on 5 June 1901 in her upstairs bedroom. According to Hewitt, Jennings died of a uremic coma brought on by Bright disease, which is "an acute form of nephritis" or inflammation of the kidneys.[70] She was buried in Cypress Hills Cemetery where her son was interred. A year before her passing, Governor Theodore Roosevelt passed a bill banning the denial of admission to public schools based on "race or color" in New York State.[71] Elizabeth Jennings left behind a legacy of fighting for the equal rights of African Americans not only through her legal challenge against common carrier violations by the Third Avenue Railway Company, but primarily through her life's work as a teacher.

Elizabeth Jennings: Missing from the Social Studies Curriculum

Elizabeth Jennings played an important role in challenging segregationist policies in Antebellum New York City, yet she is an obscure figure in United States history and subsequently states' social studies curricula. Jennings' omission from the curriculum is not an anomaly, given the inclusion of local histories, ethnic minorities, and issues of race, gender, and class in states' social studies curricula have been contentious for decades. There have been numerous debates since the Progressive Era concerning whose history counts as the "official" history in the social studies curriculum. For example, a New York State Department of Education committee convened to

develop a "Curriculum of Inclusion" in order to balance the state's ethnic diversity with the "official" history of the state, particularly where slavery was concerned in 1987.[72] State legislators envisioned the slavery curriculum "as a celebration of 'New York's Freedom Trail,' its role on the underground railway, and as a base of operations for abolitionists."[73] Historians criticized the curriculum due to its lack of acknowledgement of the "state's role in promoting and profiting from human bondage"; moreover, "Afrocentric critics denounced the New York curriculum for failing to recognize the primacy of Africa in world history."[74] In 2005, the New York State legislature established the Amistad Commission whose purpose was to "examine whether the 'physical and psychological terrorism' against Africans in the slave trade was being adequately taught in the state's schools"; only two people were appointed to this commission in 2006.[75] Currently, slavery is a part of the of the New York State Core Curriculum Learning Standard 1: United States History for middle or high school social studies, but Elizabeth Jennings is not.[76]

The omission of lesser-known figures such as Elizabeth Jennings from the social studies curricula "keep[s] students in the dark about the nature of history."[77] Mainstream social studies curricula keeps disenfranchised peoples in United States history, particularly African Americans, "visible when slaves, then free and invisible."[78] As a result, a ubiquitous lack of awareness of how ordinary citizens and minority groups fought for and achieved civil rights throughout United States history persists. Furthermore, the failure to include the history of slavery and race in the North in states' social studies standards and curricula contributes to the misconception that slavery and segregation existed only in the South.

The inclusion of Elizabeth Jennings in the social studies curriculum would be beneficial for several reasons. First, students could investigate Elizabeth Jennings' historical significance by analyzing her connection to slavery and the abolitionist movement in New York City history. Although the term *Jim Crow* is most synonymous with segregationist laws in the South and is not "customarily used to describe the nineteenth-century North," Jim Crow minstrel shows were very popular in New York City during the 1800s, hence encouraging "the creation of distinct black and white churches, segregated transportation, and separate schools."[79] Gellman and Quigley assert that referring to "Jim Crow New York" during the time frame in which Elizabeth Jennings' teaching career in the former African Free School, participation in the church, and lawsuit took place is "appropriate as it is provocative" because of the political disenfranchisement, violence, and poor living and working conditions African Americans endured in the Antebellum North.[80] Jennings' inclusion in mainstream social studies curricula could dispel the notion that slavery and segregation existed only in the South before and after the Civil War.

Second, Elizabeth Jennings' inclusion in the social studies curriculum can be used to highlight the various factors that can influence the outcomes of court opinions and legal cases. Judge Rockwell upheld the "common carriers" law in New York that resulted in a favorable ruling for Jennings; however, her case might have turned out differently if another judge heard her case, if a different attorney represented her, if she did not come from a prominent abolitionist family, or if her ejection from the streetcar happened in another part of New York or a different state where slavery was legal or strong segregation ordinances were in effect. In addition, Jennings' case can be used to compare and contrast the historical events surrounding the outcomes of landmark civil rights cases that dealt with segregation such as *Dred Scott v. Sanford, Plessy v. Ferguson,* and *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*.

Third, Elizabeth Jennings' inclusion in the social studies curriculum could be utilized to study issues of gender and race that persisted in the antebellum North. Hewitt noted that despite Jennings' qualifications and brief tenure as acting principal in the African Free Schools, she earned significantly less than her male colleagues.[81] African American female employment was crucial to "the economic survival of the black community over the course of the nineteenth century when black men were experiencing staggering unemployment."[82] The most common professional job for Black women was that of a teacher in churches or the African Free School.[83] Despite the importance of African American women workers in the free community, they were mostly subjected to "the dirtiest and worst-paying occupations" such as seamstresses, manufacturers, washerwomen, cooks, and servants in which they were paid significantly less than their male counterparts.[84] Inclusion of Jennings in mainstream social studies curricula would demonstrate how Black women were at the forefront of the African American labor force, which was critical in the fight against segregation throughout United States history.

Additionally, Elizabeth Jennings was among other notable African American women such as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth who were ejected from streetcars. According to Welke, Jim Crow segregation is intertwined with the study of gender, as the absence of Black women in the dominant narratives of civil rights "lies at the heart of the justification for women's history."[85] Analyses of the cult of domesticity and the separate spheres women occupied in society relates directly to how common carrier laws were enforced in cases filed by women such as Elizabeth Jennings. According to Welke, streetcars during the nineteenth century were emblematic of the "gendered spaces" in which women rode in cars that were separated by gender, race, and class.[86] While women were often provided with comfortable accommodations in separate quarters on transportation, gender segregation

was an acceptable social system during the nineteenth century. African American women were often subjected to riding in male smoking cars instead of in the ladies' car occupied by White women. As a result, race was a determining factor in defining one's class and gender because a White woman was afforded greater privileges on public conveyances than a Black woman. Elizabeth Jennings' inclusion in the social studies curriculum sheds light on the gender and racial inequalities that existed on public conveyances in both the North and South before and after the Civil War.

"More than a Thumbnail Sketch": Glimmers of Recognition

Scholarship on Elizabeth Jennings' ejection from the streetcar and her lawsuit has grown over the past twenty years since Hewitt's article was published. Jennings is beginning to become more well-known. Historians, legislators, museums, and historical societies acknowledge her as a "nineteenth century Rosa Parks" and "heroine" of civil rights in Antebellum New York City.[87] She is commonly referred to as "New York City's Rosa Parks" by authors and researchers such as Ruth Tenzer Feldman, Laura Sassi, Norman Gross, and Alan J. Singer.[88] Bloggers have written about Jennings on social media forums such as Helium.com, Victoraspast.com, theticker.org, goodwriters.net, tumblr.com, and riversofchange.org. Author Mickey Z wrote an article about Jennings in *50 Revolutions You're Not Supposed to Know About* in conjunction with the Zinn Education Project.[89] Articles about Jennings have been printed in newspapers such as *Newsday* and the *New York Times*. Jennings is featured in a series of *Topps* American Heritage baseball cards in which she is identified as a "Civil Rights Leader."[90] She was highlighted in the newsletters of the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Lower Manhattan African Burial Ground, which is run by the National Parks Service.[91] She is also included in an article on Wikipedia.com that cited a PDF document entitled "Early African New York" that was published by Columbia University.[92]

Legislators, teachers, and students are also making strides in recognizing Elizabeth Jennings' legacy as a civil rights pioneer in Antebellum New York. The Henry Highland Garnett Society and Councilwoman Tonya D. Payne set forth a proposal to the City Council of Pittsburg commemorating 18 May 2007 as "Elizabeth Jennings Day" to remember the struggle of Jennings and other activists who showed "courageous fortitude as exhibited both within their own lives and within their respective communities."[93] Teacher Miriam Sicherman and her students at P.S. 361 in Manhattan successfully petitioned the New York City Council to honor Jennings with a street sign in 2007. The sign, which reads "Elizabeth Jennings Place," is located at the corner of Spruce Street and Park Row, near the spot where Jennings was ejected from the streetcar.[94]

In 1990, historian John Hewitt questioned why there were not any biographies or research papers that amounted to more than "a thumbnail sketch" about Elizabeth Jennings.[95] An important reason why Jennings has not appeared in mainstream United States history narratives or social studies curricula is because primary sources and documents written by her remain elusive. To our knowledge, Jennings did not leave behind diaries or letters detailing her teaching career or her ordeal on the Third Avenue Railway streetcar. If Jennings kept records about her life, the documents might not have survived given that fires broke out frequently in New York City during the 1700s and 1800s. Many of the primary sources written about Jennings appear in the newspapers that reported her case including the *Brooklyn Eagle*, the *New York Tribune*, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, and the *New York Times*.[96] Hewitt's article "Search for Elizabeth Jennings, Heroine of a Sunday Afternoon in New York City" comprised a chapter in his posthumous book *Protest and Progress: New York's First Black Episcopal Church Fights Racism*. Hewitt's article is the most comprehensive history about Elizabeth Jennings to date.

The lack of primary sources by Jennings could serve as a lesson teachers could execute in terms of engaging students in historical inquiry. Students could learn about Jennings through the sources that are available in order to determine why certain individuals are widely known in United States history while others are not. With more attention brought to Elizabeth Jennings' life, career, and legal victory against the Third Avenue Railway Company in mainstream and grassroots publications, perhaps she will be brought out of the dark recesses of the "unofficial" histories of the United States and put into a prominent place in content-oriented social studies curricula.

"Something Larger than Herself": Conclusion

Elizabeth Jennings should be recognized as more than a "Rosa Parks" figure in Antebellum New York City history. Both Jennings' and Parks' experiences with segregation on public transportation are similar, but they are not the same. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus was planned and spawned a widespread bus boycott in Alabama for a year, thus bringing the nation's attention to the civil rights struggle in the South. Jennings' ejection from the streetcar was not deliberately planned, nor did her removal from the streetcar lead to mass protests or boycotts in New York City or throughout the country. Similarly though, as many African Americans endured violence during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Elizabeth Jennings also survived the New York City Draft Riots in 1863. Overall, both women deserve their own respective place in United States history because they were emblematic of the socio-political issues of their

time — Jennings in the Antebellum Era and Parks in the post-World War II civil rights movement.

Had Elizabeth Jennings' ejection from the streetcar on a busy street in Manhattan happened in the 21st century, her ordeal probably would have been captured on cellular phone video, posted on social media websites, and reported by the twenty-four hour news networks. Jennings did not publicize her case, nor did she seek fame from her ordeal, even after her former attorney Chester A. Arthur became President of the United States. She did not write a tell-all book or appear in national speaking engagements. Elizabeth Jennings lived her life as a devoted daughter, wife, mother, teacher, and advocate for civil rights. Jennings fought institutional racism in New York City and the United States by upholding the American democratic virtues of social justice through her work as a churchgoer and educator. Her life's achievements merit recognition in mainstream United States history and states' social studies curricula. Elizabeth Jennings is an example of how one citizen can stand up to injustice and enact positive changes in society for future generations. She was a teacher and heroine in New York City and United States history. Her life and legacy should not be forgotten.

Notes

[1] Peter E. Dans and Suzanne Wasserman, *Life on the Lower East Side* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 194.

[2] John H. Hewitt, "Search for Elizabeth Jennings, Heroine of a Sunday Afternoon in New York City," *New York History* 71 (1990): 387.

[3] Bruce VanSledright, Timothy Kelly, and Kevin Meuwissin, "Oh, the Trouble We've Seen: Researching Historical Thinking and Understanding," in Keith C. Barton *Research Methods in Social Studies Education: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives,* (New York: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 226.

[4] Christine Woyshner and Chara Haeussler Bohan, eds. *Histories of Social Studies and Race: 1865-2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 1.

[5] Eric Foner, "Slavery's Fellow Travelers," *New York Times*, (2000) http://www.nytimes.com/2000/07/13/opinion/slavery-s-fellow-travelers.html (accessed 11 November 2012).

[6] Patrick Rael, "The Long Death of Slavery," in Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, eds., *Slavery in New York* (New York, London: The New Press, 2005): 118, 145.

[7] Frederick Douglass, "Legal Rights Vindicated," *Frederick Douglass' Paper 2* (March 1855), http://people.hofstra.edu/alan_j_singer/Gateway%20Slavery%20Guide%20PDF%20Files/5.%20Abolition_Complicity%201827-65/3.%20Activity%20Sheets/a25.%20Elizabeth%20Jennings.pdf. (accessed 10 October 2008).

[8] "Frederick Douglass Describes the Life of a Negro Tailor, 1859," *The Anglo-African I* (April 1859):126-128.

[9] Frederick Douglass, "Legal Rights Vindicated," John H. Hewitt, "Search for Elizabeth Jennings, Heroine of a Sunday Afternoon in New York City": 390; Donna J.

Harden-Cole, "Remembering Our Torch Bearers," *African Burial Ground News* 4, No. 2 (Winter 2005): 2.

[10] United States Federal Census, Year: 1850; Census Place: New York Ward 5, New York, New York; Roll: M432_537; Page 22; Image: 46; Available from www.ancestry.com; (accessed 28 August 2008).

[11] "1837 New York City Divided into 17 Wards," http://thehistorybox.com/ny_city/nyc_divided_into_17_wards_1837_article1566.htm (accessed 23 August 2012). John Hewitt and Frederick Douglass profiled Elizabeth Jennings' siblings. Her brother Thomas was a dentist in New Orleans. Her brother William was a businessman in Boston. Her sister Matilda was a seamstress in New York before moving to San Francisco. See Hewitt (1990): 390, 399 and "Frederick Douglass Describes the Life of a Negro Tailor, 1859," *Aptheker, The Anglo-African* (April 1859), I, 126-128. http://people.hofstra.edu/alan_j_singer/Gateway%20Slavery%20Guide%20PDF%20Files/5.%20Abolition_Complicity%201827-65/5.%20Documents%201827-1865/1859a.%20(A)%20Jennings%20Obit.pdf (accessed 2 April 2013).

[12] James Wendell Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 24.

[13] John H. Hewitt, "Search for Elizabeth Jennings, Heroine of a Sunday Afternoon in New York City," *New York History* 71 (1990): 404.

[14] Ibid., 404; 406.

[15] "Frederick Douglass Describes the Life of a Negro Tailor."

[16] Charles C. Andrews, *The History of the New York African Free-Schools, From their Establishment in 1787 to the Present Time* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1830, 1969): 7; "Examination Days: John Teasman AFS Biography," *New York Historical Society African Free School Collection*, https://www.nyhistory.org/web/african-freeschool/bios/john-teasman.html (accessed 21 January 2013).

[17] David N. Gellman, *Emancipating New York: The Politics of Slavery and Freedom, 1777-1827* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press: 2006): 73.

[18] Ronald E. Butchart, "Race, Social Studies, and Culturally Relevant Curriculum in Social Studies Prehistory: A Cautionary Meditation," in Christine Woyshner and Chara Haeussler Bohan eds., *Histories of Social Studies and Race:1865-2000:*28.

[19] Mary White Ovington. *Half a Man: The Status of the Negro in New York* (Negro University Press, 1911), 14. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39742/39742-h/39742-h.htm#Page_138. (accessed 29 August 2012).

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[21] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 501.

[22] Hewitt, 403-404.

[23] John Lancaster, "Improvements in Education," *The Constitution Society* (1803) http://constitution.org/lanc/improv-1803.htm, (accessed 21 January 2013).

[24] Andrews,7.; Wayne J. Urban, and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr. *American Education: A History, Third Edition*, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 120.

[25] "Examination Days: Curriculum, The History of the School," *The New York Historical Society African Free School Collection*, https://www.nyhistory.org/web/african-freeschool/history/curriculum.html (accessed 21 January 2013).

[26] Hewitt, 403.

[27] Katharine Greider, "The Schoolteacher's Stand," *American Legacy* (Summer 2006):12, 14, 16.

[28] Hewitt, 404-406.

[29] Judith C. Lovell, "Women's History Month: Fighters for Justice in Transportation," *At Your Service: MTA New York City Transit Employee Newsletter*, (March 2005): 4-5. http://retiree.nyct.com/newsletrs/ays0305.pdf. (accessed 9 September 2008).

[30] Hewitt, 391.

[31] Ovington, 22.

[32] Katharine Greider, "City Lore: The Schoolteacher on the Streetcar," *New York Times*, 13 November 2005, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C00E7DF133EF930A25752C1A9639C8B63 (accessed 24 October 2008).

[33] *New York Tribune* (N.Y), 19 July 1854; BAP, 4:230-32; in "Segregated Streetcars," C. Peter Ripley, *Witness for Freedom: African American Voices on Race, Slavery, and Emancipation* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 60-61.

[34] "Outrage Among Colored Persons," *New York City Tribune*, 19 July 1854. Available from "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers" from the Library of Congress, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/ (accessed 28 March 2013).

[35] Hewitt, 392-393. Frederick Douglass changed his newspaper name from the *North Star* to the *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1851. See "American Treasures" of the Library of Congress, http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trr085.html. (accessed 29 March 2013).

[36] George Frederick Howe, *Chester A. Arthur: A Quarter Century of Machine Politics* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1959), 12-15.

[37] Hewitt, 393.

[38] Arthur wrote an abolitionist essay while attending Union College in Schenectady, New York and assisted Culver in the Lemmon Case of 1852 where the firm successfully argued slaves brought to New York by Virginia master Jonathan Lemmon were free. See "American President: Chester Alan Arthur; Life Before the Presidency," University of Virginia Miller Center, http://www.millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/arthur/essays/biography/2 (accessed 9 September 2008); Thomas C. Reeves, *Gentlemen Boss: The Life of Chester Allen Arthur* (New York, 1975), 14-15.

[39] *San Francisco Pacific Appeal*, 16 May 1863.

[40] Ruth Tenzer Feldman, *Chester A. Arthur* (New York: Twenty-first Century Books, 2006), 20; Hewitt, 396.

[41] Barbara Y. Welke, "When All Women Were White and All Blacks Were Men: Gender, Class, Race, and the Road to Plessy, 1855-1914," *Law and History Review* 13, No. 2 (Fall 1995), 273.

[42] Ruth Tenzer Feldman, *Chester A. Arthur*, 20; Hewitt, 396.

[43] "Court Record, Circuit Court Before Judge Rockwell," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 22 (February 1855).

[44] "A Wholesome Verdict," *New York Tribune*, 23 February 1855, 7:4. http://people.hofstra.edu/alan_j_singer/Gateway%20Slavery%20Guide%20PDF%20Files/5.%20

Abolition_Complicity%201827-65/3.%20Activity%20Sheets/a25.%20Elizabeth%20Jennings.pdf. (accessed 10 October 2008).

[45] Hewitt, 397; "A Wholesome Verdict," *New York Tribune*.

[46] *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 3 March 1855.

[47] Frederick Douglass, "Legal Rights Vindicated," *Frederick Douglass' Papers*, 2 (March 1855).

[48] Leslie M. Harris. *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 271.

[49] Leslie M. Alexander, *African or American? Black Identity and Political Activism in New York City, 1787-1861*, 127.

[50] The Legal Rights Association, which Thomas L. Jennings was president, raised funds for the legal fees of other African Americans who were subjected to violence on segregated streetcars. Reverend W.C Pennington was ejected from a Sixth Avenue Railway Company car in 1855. He sued the company but Judge John Slosson ruled in favor of the company a year later, which reversed the Jennings verdict. Peter Porter was beaten and ejected from an Eighth Avenue Railway Company car. Judge Rockwell ruled in favor of Porter in 1858 and by 1860 mostly all transportation companies allowed Blacks to ride. See Alexander 127-129; Harris, 270-271; Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington D.C: The Associated Publishers, 1945),156-157; Burrows and Wallace, 855, 857; Hewitt, 406.

[51] See note 15 in Barbara Y. Welke, "When All Women Were White and All Blacks Were Men: Gender, Class, Race, and the Road to Plessy, 1855-1914." Law and History Review, 267.

[52] A Black woman who was ejected from an Eighth Avenue streetcar shortly after Jennings' case insisted she had "a right" to ride on the trolley because of the "judicial decision" in Brooklyn, but she was removed by the conductor anyway. See Hewitt, 399.

[53] Richard Howell, "A 19th Century Rosa Parks/Woman who sued city bus line remembered," http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/newsday/access/68738554.html?FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&type=current&date=Feb+18%2C+2001&author=Ron+Howell.+STAFF+WRITER&pub=Newsday&edition=&startpage=A.06&desc=A+19th+Century+Rosa+Parks+%2F+Woman+who+sued+city+bus+line+remembered. (accessed 4 November 2007).

[54] *Board of Education Manual* (1860), 303; *Board of Education Directory* (1860), 140; *The Anglo-American*, 30 June 1860.

[55] Patricia A. Carter, "*Everybody's Paid But the Teacher:" The Teaching Profession and the Women's Movement*, (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2002), 99.

[56] George F. Longsdorf, Ed. *Abbott's digest of all New York reports: supplement in eight volumes*, (New York: Baker, Voorhis & The Lawyer's Co-Op Publishing Company, 1915), 1375; Patricia A. Carter, "*Everybody's Paid But the Teacher:" The Teaching Profession and the Women's Movement*, 99.

[57] "Frederick Douglass Describes the Life of a Negro Tailor, 1859," *The Anglo-American* I, (April, 1859):126-128.
http://people.hofstra.edu/alan_j_singer/Gateway%20Slavery%20Guide%20PDF%20Files/5.%20Abolition_Complicity%201827-65/5.%20Documents%201827-1865/1859a.%20(A)%20Jennings%20Obit.pdf. (accessed 2 April, 2013).

[58] Hewitt, 409; David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 310.

[59] Hewitt, 409.

[60] Ibid., 410.

[61] Alexander, 218.

[62] Hewitt, 411.

[63] Ibid., 410-411.

[64] Ibid., 411.

[65] *New York Age*, 20 September 1890.

[66] Ibid.

[67] John H. Hewitt. *Protest and Progress: New York's First Episcopal Church Fights Racism* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000),119.

[68] Judith Weisenfeld, *Black Women and Christian Activism: 1905-1945* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 47.

[69] H. Cordelia Ray, "The First Free Kindergarten for Colored Children," *American Woman's Journal* (July 1895): 251-252.

[70] Hewitt, 414; "Bright Disease," Encyclopedia Britannica, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/79572/Bright-disease (accessed 4 March 2013).

[71] Ovington, 15, 19; Gregory Coleman Jr., "Race and Education: The Future of Desegregation Programs in the United States," *Journal of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity* 5, No. 2, (2010): 1.

[72] Alan J. Singer, *New York and Slavery: Time to Teach the Truth* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2008), 29.

[73] Alan J. Singer, *New York and Slavery: Time to Teach the Truth*, 30.

[74] Ibid., 30.; Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 136.

[75] Singer, 30.

[76] See the New York State Education Department website: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/pub/sscore1.pdf.

[77] James W. Loewen, *Lies my Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 16. Also see Ronald W. Evans, *The Social Studies Wars: What Should We Teach Our Children?* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2004).

[78] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003, 1980), 685.

[79] David N. Gellman and David Quigley, Eds. *Jim Crow New York: A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship, 1777-1877*, (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 3-4.

[80] David N. Gellman, *Emancipating New York: The Politics of Slavery and Freedom, 1777-1827*, 197; David N. Gellman and David Quigley, Eds. *Jim Crow New York: A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship, 1777-1877*, 3-4, 17.

[81] John H. Hewitt, "Search for Elizabeth Jennings, Heroine of a Sunday Afternoon in New York City," 407-408.

[82] Jane E. Dabel, *A Respectable Woman: The Public Roles of African American Women in 19th-Century New York*, (New York: New York University Press), 64.

[83] Jane E. Dabel, *A Respectable Woman: The Public Roles of African American Women*

in 19th-Century New York, 67-75.

[84] Dabel, 67.

[85] Welke, 265.

[86] Ibid., 269.

[87] Donna J. Harden-Cole,"Remembering Our Torchbearers,"*African Burial Ground News*, 4, No. 2., (Winter 2005): 2.; Judith C. Lovell,"Women's History Month" Figures for Justice in Transportation," At Your Service (Metropolitan Transit Authority Newsletter), (March 2005), 4. http://retiree.nyct.com/newsletrs/ays0305.pdf. (accessed 5 April 2013).

[88] See Feldman, 19-20.; Norman Gross, Ed. *America's Lawyer Presidents: From Law Office to Oval Office*, (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 176-177; Laura Sassi,"Elizabeth Jennings Takes a Stand,"*Highlights* 62, no. 1 (2007): 31; Alan J. Singer, *New York and Slavery: Time to Teach the Truth*, 103. Elizabeth Jennings was included in the curriculum *New York and Slavery: Complicity and Resistance* that Dr. Singer edited that can be accessed via the New York State Council for Social Studies website http://www.nyscss.org/Default.aspx?pageId=644414. (accessed 29 August 2012).

[89] See Mickey Z. "Lizzie Jennings Gets on the Bus,"*50 Revolutions You're were Not Supposed to Know* (2005), http://zinnedproject.org/posts/11632. (accessed 30 September 2012).

[90] See "2009 Topps American Heritage Baseball Cards # 60 Elizabeth Jennings Graham (Civil Rights Leader)," http://www.amazon.com/American-Heritage-Baseball-ElizabethProtective/dp/B001SVCM88/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1359228362&sr=8-3&keywords=elizabeth+jennings+graham, (accessed 26 January 2013).

[91] See Judith C. Lovell, "Women's History Month: Fighters for Justice in Transportation,"*At Your Service: MTA New York City Transit Employee Newsletter* (March 2005): 4-5. http://retiree.nyct.com/newsletrs/ays0305.pdf. (accessed 9 September 2008); Donna J. Harden-Cole, "Remembering Our Torch Bearers," *African Burial Ground News*, 4, No. 2., (Winter 2005): 2.

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[93] Tonya D. Payne, "Elizabeth Jennings Day," http://legistar.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/attachments/4989.doc. (accessed 29 August 2012).

[94] Twylla Alexander, "Elizabeth Jennings Graham: Lower Manhattan's Rosa Parks," *DOWNTOWN Magazine NYC*, 21 February 2012, Available from http://downtownmagazinenyc.com/elizabeth-jennings-graham-lower-manhattans-rosa-parks/, (accessed 25 January 2013). Also see "CWS in the News," Available http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/01/M361/TopLinks/CWS+IN+THE+NEWS.htm, (accessed 26 January 2013).

[95] Hewitt, 387-388.

[96] See the Brooklyn Public Library *Brooklyn Eagle* archive available from http://eagle.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/Default/Skins/BEagle/Client.asp?Skin=Beagle, and the Library of Congress "Chronicling America" newspaper archive available from http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

Nora Barlow, Cash Ritchie, Ida Darwin
Activists In the Origins of the Darwin Industry

Louis M. Smith
Washington University in St. Louis

Prologue

This essay is one of a continuing series of essays on the biography of Nora Barlow, the significance of her life and work, and in the intellectual process of what I've called "doing ethnographic biography."[1] Nora Barlow is a granddaughter of Charles Darwin with a major claim as a Darwin scholar as the editor of four books on Darwin manuscripts (1933, 1946, 1958, and 1967).[2] The particular focus in this essay is one episode in Nora Barlow's contributions to the mid 20th century beginnings of the Darwin Industry, a term that refers to the huge amount of work on the life and theories of Charles Darwin. One small but highly significant item was the development of what is called the "Gorringes Catalogue," an outline of the tremendous collection of materials stored in trunks and boxes in the basement of Bernard Darwin's home, Gorringes, in south England. (Bernard was the son of Charles Darwin's son Francis.) This story is an important part of Nora's[3] activist efforts to preserve and make available Darwin's work for contemporary scholars. The complexity of this effort included two other women, the first of whom is Ida Darwin, the wife of Charles Darwin's son Horace and Nora's mother. In a very different role in the activity is Cash Ritchie, a young 20-year-old daughter of a good friend of Bernard Darwin, and an inexperienced librarian

in training. She lived with Bernard's[4] family and was hired to do much of the day-to-day work in cataloguing the materials in Bernard's basement.

Each of my essays toward the biography of Nora combines vivid narrative of a set of events coupled with an underlying conceptual thrust, much in keeping with Leon Edel's conception of "the figure under the carpet."[5] In prior essays these concepts have included "modern woman,"[6] "images,"[7] "strands,"[8] and "artistry of an editor."[9] In this essay the key concept I use to label the work of Nora Barlow, Ida Darwin, and Cash Ritchie is "intellectual social activism." In a sense I am continuing to expand on the figure under the carpet of Nora's life. In this essay I explore this activism by examining four pieces of evidence: letters from Ida Darwin to Nora Barlow; letters from Cash Ritchie to Nora Barlow; an interview between myself and Cash Ritchie (by that point Cash Martineau) that took place when Ritchie/Martineau was 70 years old; and characteristics of the Gorringes Catalogue itself.

The Ida Darwin Letters: The Story Begins

In July of 1932, as the cataloging of the long delayed storage of Darwin materials was well underway, Nora Barlow's mother Ida Farrer Darwin, who was then in her late 70's, wrote an intriguing and enigmatic letter to Nora from Abinger, the Farrer family estate. The implications seem important for the general conception of what I will be calling "intellectual social activism" and the origins of what others later would be calling "the Darwin Industry."

> Your letter this morning is very interesting and exciting. I was going to write to you as to what you thought of a bright idea wh. has occurred to me. I believe there is nothing in the world that your father [the late Horace Darwin, Charles Darwin's youngest son] would so gladly have spent his money upon as getting CD's [Charles Darwin's] papers in order. So why not hand over to you a good lump to be used as you think best for this purpose? (or make any other arrangement you like).

Where such ideas as these "really" start and where they end is not clear. "Good lump" here means "good lump of money," and manifestly Ida seems to be offering both the idea and the use of her considerable wealth for organizing and collecting the Charles Darwin papers. Ida's letter continued with specific ideas to move the project along, and shows that Ida Darwin was a keen observer and participant in the day-to-day aspects of family social and intellectual life. Ida's letter continued:

> Besides the provision for the payment of a competent person to do the job it wd. have the advantage of giving you a voice as to who & how it was done besides the casual advice the B.D. [Bernard Darwin] family wd always I feel sure ask you to give.[10]

Implicit in this comment is an assumption that Nora is someone who would be expected to consult on any of the Charles Darwin papers. This makes sense as she is the only one of the nine Darwin grandchildren trained in botany and genetics and the only one who worked professionally in the area. Earlier Nora had presented two botanical papers (1908 and 1910) to the British Association of Science national meetings of her work with Professor Blackman of the Cambridge University Department of Biology. Also she had published the results of genetics research conducted with Professor Bateson in the *Journal of Genetics* in 1913 and 1923.[11] Nora, too, showed the most interest among the grandchildren in family manuscripts and history for she had published two short biographical essays on Darwin and his cousin Sir Francis Galton.[12]

Ida continued the action line of thought in the next few sentences:

> Think it over & if Alan [Nora's husband] approves – formulate some plan wh. we might talk over when we meet….[13] I am so glad that they have made a beginning with nice Cash Ritchie. I only hope the unearthed treasures may be kept under lock and key.

An image arises of Ida, at 78, still both intelligent and active. In the excerpt Ida confirmed Cash Ritchie's role, and that she (Ida) was keenly aware of the value of the Darwin materials. In general the letter tells us, importantly, that Ida Darwin, a daughter-in-law of Charles Darwin and mother of Nora, is in the background but seems also to be playing a significant role in the genesis of this part of the "Darwin Industry," although no one at that time realized what would be happening in the future and no-one at the time was calling the research on Darwin by that name. But Ida was speaking out with ideas, financial resources, and strategies for accomplishing her personal goals and important social and intellectual purposes. A letter from Ida to Nora two years later (3 August 1934) confirms that Ida's interest and involvement continued:

> I am deeply interested to hear about the papers at the Bank. Shall you follow it up sometime? Have they all gone back again into their boxes? Your Grandmother's [Emma Darwin, Charles Darwin's wife] comments on the Diary wd be interesting - & the W.E.D [Darwin's son William] letters. Are some of them, CD's letters to him? I will ask

Charles [Charles Galton Darwin, Nora's cousin] tomorrow.

Intellectual social activism also seems an appropriate label for Ida's activities.

Constructing the Gorringes Catalogue: The Work of Nora and Cash Ritchie

In the early 1930's a young woman in her early twenties, Catherine Ritchie, was hired to catalogue the Charles Darwin papers at Gorringes, Downe, Kent, the home of Bernard Darwin. With the death of his father Francis Darwin (son of Charles Darwin), Bernard had inherited a large portion of the Darwin manuscripts and stored them in trunks and metal boxes in his cellar. Bernard was educated as a lawyer, but he found his life's work in playing golf, in writing, and especially in writing about golf. He didn't want to be bothered about Darwin, Darwinism, or the trunks of materials left behind. It was he who employed the young family friend "Cash" Ritchie, a librarian in training, to catalogue the materials. Besides having some beginning librarian skills Ritchie was "a near Darwin" for her grandmother had been a friend of Charles, and her father and Bernard were close friends. As a little child, Ritchie had met Bernard at family affairs.

Ritchie's work became the basis of the catalogue of the Darwin collection in the Cambridge University Library. It is now referred to as the "Gorringes Catalogue," and it is dated July 1932. The official records contain little information about Ritchie, and the records contain no account of Nora Barlow's involvement in the activity, even though she was a first cousin of Bernard and the daughter of Horace Darwin, another of Charles Darwin's sons. However, four letters from Ritchie to Nora, over a thirty-year period, give a glimpse of the development of the catalogue and Nora's involvement.

The First Letter

The first letter was undated, but probably from late 1931. It was four pages long, and I've placed relevant and interesting excerpts below:

> Sunday
> Dear Nora
>
> I'm sure I shouldn't but it is certainly a very nice name and I should love to use it.
>
> Thank you so very much for sending me the copy of the Origin with all the proper comparisons of editions of the beginning, and thank you too for the copy of Nature[14] which will stand me in good stead when I come to catalogue the printed books. It certainly was a bumper breakfast for me that morning.

It is a week since you left and I have felt very lost. I did so enjoy it when you were here. The only way to let off steam now is by talking to myself and Nicky [her cat]. It caught me at it, much to her amusement and my cost the other day. I finished the MSS at last on Friday and have started on letters. It is lovely to have your catalogue of The Beagle letters as a pattern…

I delayed writing to thank you for everything as I wished to send you the catalogue up to date. If there is anything drastically wrong I hoped you would put me in the right again. I'm afraid it is very dull reading but it would be so very kind of you if you would go through it. I have packed up everything in lovely brown paper parcels and tucked them up in their trunks all finished and numbered but they could come out again if necessary. You will notice the numbers are not always consecutive in the places where I found something else or took away a wrong'un but I thought perhaps that might be forgiven as it did save so much trouble and time, and as long as each parcel has the same number as it is entered under in the catalogue I thought it would be all right. The question is whether the chapter on the large genera was originally meant for the O of S [Origin of Species]. I have entered it separately for the time being as I was so dreadfully puzzled. It is alluded to in the Journal as Chapter – I forget what, IV? – (I shall send you the copy you made of it) but there is already a chapter IV? Written the year before in 1857. Or is this chapter on large genera what is alluded to in the Journal but something else? It must have been written in 1858 and I should have thought everything written then probably had to do with the Origins.

I am sorry to put out troubles like this but you said I might write questions and I am taking advantage of your rash leave.

Here is a message from Eily [Bernard Darwin's wife]. She loved your letter and your staying here and she is sorry she has never written but hopes you will forgive her. I do wish you could come back again. Couldn't you? I must dash and change for supper. Goodbye and thank you.
Best love from
CASH

The letter illustrates a couple of important features of the social activism of Nora Barlow and Cash Ritchie in this endeavor which became an important part of what would later be known as the Darwin industry. It illustrates the personal relationship between Nora and Cash, as indicated by the first sentence about use of Nora's first name, as, after all, Ritchie was in her early

20s, while Nora was forty-five, married, mother of six children, a formidable personality and intellect – and a Darwin. Ritchie also tells Nora how much she enjoyed it when Nora was there, and her comment about talking to the cat indicates that Ritchie perceived Nora to be a caring listener. Most importantly, the letter shows how the two women worked together on the important task. Cash clearly did most of the labor, but Nora seems to have provided much conceptual and intellectual assistance. She also provided helpful resources, such as the *Origin*, the journal *Nature*, and Nora's catalogue of the Beagle letters. Ritchie clearly felt that Nora's assistance was necessary, as in the letter Ritchie asks Nora to look at the work and to critique, and to answer specific difficult questions.

In summary, the letter poignantly illustrates a small but significant episode in the history of Darwin scholarship, as it shows Ritchie and Nora Barlow laboring in the important details as well as the overall structures of Darwin's prodigious intellectual productivity and setting some of the conditions for the Darwin Industry that would blossom several decades later.

The Second Letter: 11/1/33

The second letter from Ritchie to Nora is a brief thank you note for a copy of Nora's book *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle*[15] and a long account of family events, and it shows Nora's further contributions to Darwiniana. The first paragraph is most relevant:

> Dear Nora
> I have so much enjoyed your book. It is most beautifully put together – not an appendix missing or a note or a map (the proper sort you can keep open outside the book as you read – but oh! How rare) and everything explained and plain sailing for the reader. It is a tremendous piece of work one can see. Indeed & indeed you are a model editor. I mustn't say this too much or you will think it gush and not believe, when I and all who read it are perfectly sincere when we say that. My grandmother got hold of the book today - and is full of it. I think of course you are lucky in your subject! But I also think he is lucky in his editor - which is quits [makes it even].

Ritchie's comments reflected the general commentary in the many reviews of Nora's book that appeared in the *London Times Literary Supplement*, the *New York Times* and the more professional journals as well. The book established Nora's place as a serious Darwin scholar. It was the first major Darwin material published since the work of her Uncle Francis Darwin at the turn of the century.

The Third letter 12/6/41

A decade later, December 1941, the third letter[16] appeared as part of the events leading to the gift, now in process, of many of the Darwin papers to the Cambridge University Library and the safety concerns with World War II and the German bombing of England well underway:

> My Dear Nora
> It is a scream to think of that Catalogue of mine, copied out in my best School girl printing, being unearthed. There was the rough copy of course – but I am not sure whether you had that or not. I think perhaps you did – but it was such a scribble & such a muddle that if it is lost, it really is no great loss. Wouldn't BD [Bernard Darwin] let you have the catalogue typed out? I'm sorry to be (as per usual) so perfectly useless, & to hear that BD is not being very helpful.

In the next paragraph she mixed family news and a final comment on the manuscript:

> I must have a hunt & make sure I haven't the rough copy among my old papers
> Muchness love
> CASH

A telling postscript appeared on the letter as well. It reflects, a decade later, the significant quality and nature of the relationship between Ritchie and Nora:

> I don't think I have ever properly explained the **THRILL** it was making that catalogue with you when I was young - & you were so kind and understanding. It is a terrific landmark in my life.

Another Version of the Story: An Interview with Mrs. Martineau

Stories and interpretations never end. In July of 1986, my wife Marilyn and I had the opportunity to visit with Catherine "Cash" Ritchie Martineau and her cousin. We tape-recorded a long ambling hour of talk. After some brief preliminaries in explaining the project and locating the Ritchie family in time and place, we turned to the Gorringes Catalogue. With only slight editing the interview proceeded as follows:

> LS: And we understand that you were in something that's come to be called Gorringes Catalogue?

CM: Yes
LS: And Nora somehow interlocked with that in some ways?
CM: She did.
LS: One place we might start is to have you tell us a little bit about what all that business of the Gorringes Catalogue was about and how you got involved in it and…
CM: I will. Well now, my parents, and indeed my grandparents– my grandmother was a great friend of Charles Darwin. I was – as we were saying as we came along how in England everybody knew everybody. And so it was an ancient friendship. When I was a very small child, Bernard Darwin, who was the eldest grandchild of Charles, Bernard Darwin and my father were great friends and they came to stay with us. And I was a very small child and he took a fancy to me. I must say I loved him all his life. Well, then he became very tiresome in the eyes of his family because he would not have a professional, as you might say, scientist to come down to Gorringes and stay there perhaps for six months, nine months, sorting out all these beautiful boxes full of Darwinian treasures, which were down in his cellar. Why they were there was because Francis Darwin, who was his father's secretary, when he became an old man. And so Bernard was the only son of Francis. So when the old man dies, I suppose Francis got these tin boxes of his father's, and then when he died, Bernard had them. Well, everybody knew Bernard had gotten them, but he would not have anybody come and cope with them, or look at them. Can you imagine the irritation – of the Cambridge scientists? They were very, very annoyed. And I thought that his uncles would be annoyed with him, though I have been reading his Green Memories – he loved his uncles. They seemed to be very, very cheery about it, not – nobody is – I mean everybody was rather casual about it. Nobody seemed to mind very much. Well, and Bernard was only interested in golf and being a good journalist. And finally he said, "Well, all right. I'll wait till Cash has done her librarianship diploma and she can come and stay and I'll let her do it."Well, I can't tell you, I was – I was absolutely green, I think they call it. I knew nothing whatsoever about science, and really hardly knew anything about cataloguing. I mean I had…
LS: Even though you had a little work in ..
CM: I went to University College and did a diploma. Took me about two years, and I'd learned about Dewey, you see what I mean. But I mean what good is that going to be?
LS: The Dewey Decimal System didn't help much?
CM: So you see, I arrived and just had a lovely, lovely nine months I

think, sitting at Gorringes. These black boxes would be brought up from the cellar, and they were filthy from the moldering remains. In some cases, I seem to remember - moldering remains of frogs and things that he'd been studying. And there was a tremendous lot about blooms, and the bloom on grapes. And there were a pretty good many awful looking little sort of bits and pieces that no doubt had been grapes, that all shut together in the boxes.
LS: So there was this debris really?
CM: It really was a mess. So all my – all I did was to sort of take out, find out what was what and list down what was in the boxes. Of course we found some interesting things like the Beagle Diary. And Nora, who was in a state of rage with Bernard, her first cousin, she used to ride down from Cambridge, and help me a bit, you know, or rather oversee me, cause they were all worried just to what on earth was happening at Gorringes. What was that child – I was about twenty – what was I – what did I think I was doing? Well, I was very casual about it, and we – none of us got very het up about the fact that I was absolutely incapable, really, of doing what I was meant to be doing. But anyway, I enjoyed myself very much. When Nora visited me, I must say she used to let fly when the door was shut about how preposterous Bernard was, not having let these things be seen before, and she got very keen about them. And I may tell you about her character, she was so precise, she was quite obviously of the same ilk. She was a Darwin. She was absolutely precise and clear headed. And she spoke with a very talking, you see. And I – I did – she made me realize that this was important, and she did her best to – to my rather childish handwriting – no typewriters or anything to write out what this catalogue of what the boxes contained. And I suppose she came more than about, once a week, once a fortnight. But she oversaw it.
LS: How many times would she have come down over that period of time?
CM: I think about six times, at least,
LS: A half-dozen, give or take?
CM: Yes. And then Gwen Darwin would arrive, but then they would all be in – the talk at lunch would be all art, of course. You see Gwen Raverat is another first cousin – you realize, was another Miss Darwin. And the cousins would – they were very fond of each other, but exasperated, I must say, exasperated with Bernard. Although I can't tell you what a nice man he was. Delightful man, but not as – not as interested in science.

Much later in the interview we returned to the people and the particular circumstances involved in the sorting and the cataloguing. I raised a question about Ida Darwin, Nora's mother, and this led to quite particular recollections and a demonstration:

LS: Ah, one more question about Ida Darwin, Nora's mother: Did she come down to Gorringes at all when you were there?
CM: Not while I was there. But I know that there was – I can't see why she shouldn't have come. I sure she would have.
LS: But she didn't come around, poking around in, helping you and that kind of thing?
CM: No. Oh, I see what you mean. No, No. She wasn't involved in the – in what was going on in the schoolroom at all. Nobody was. I mean I don't remember Bernard once coming in to see what was in the boxes. And he was writing in a tiny little study he had along the passage from where I was. I had a lovely great sunny room in which I could get on.
LS: So you had a desk or a table or ….?
CM: No I had the floor. [laughter]
LS: All right tell us about the floor.
CM: Well, I mean you can imagine, these great trunks, with these great tin boxes had been put down on the floor, and I would just grab, and find some good deal of it was absolutely – I mean you just had to get rid of it – it was dust and ashes, things that he'd been collecting.
LS: Well you had all that stuff scattered on the floor. And I assume you'd be on your hands and knees?
CM: Hands and knees.
LS: And Nora would join you, would she get on her hands and knees, too?
CM: Yes, too! And she'd say, "But look at this." And we were like this.
LS: [laughter] We're getting a demonstration of Mrs. Martineau sliding off the couch and on her hands and knees on the floor. [laughter]
CM: It was like that. I'm sure you have been in these same situations.
LS: Yes. Actually we're doing the same thing in her study now, as a matter of fact – How would you describe this when the two of you were poking around that way on your knees, was it- and I don't mean this negatively at all – was it school-girlish and just looking into discoveries or …?
CM: She was trying to get me to make a catalogue of it. And I did know just enough. I- you say you have seen my very babyish little

catalogue – I just knew enough to have headings and try and keep things together that should be together.
LS: How did Nora help with those, or how did that work?
CM: I think I did have to - she'd come and see that I was getting on all right. She was very kind, considering, really, how critical she must have been. She must have felt exasperated with this child. Though she was proud of me because she's known me all her life – but she must have been exasperated that this child was given this task. Wasn't she? And I do remember I used to be shocked the way she talked about B.D. [Bernard], because, of course, I thought he was marvelous, you see, very, very fond of him.
LS: Upon a pedestal, and she was giving him the
CM: Yes. And she was always saying, "Bernard!" – you know – she was spitting with irritation about B.D. having actually, you know, run on to this all this time."Look at this. Look at this"you know. She was very excited by it.
LS: But apparently she hadn't much of that from her father and mother? That Francis had all of it and then it went to Bernard, in that sense?
CM: That's it. That's what annoyed them all. That did annoy them. Why should it go to Bernard?"Well" said Bernard."Why not? I'm the oldest cousin. I was the oldest grandson. My father…"— you know, he wouldn't give, you see, he might have let them come and look at what was there, of – but he stuck to his – that was very, wasn't that very Victorian in those days?"I'm the oldest son, I have it."

The interview continued, and Martineau expanded on her family's relationships with other English families, notable for their contributions to literature, poetry, and the intellectual life of England. But for our purposes the information conveyed suggested that Cash Ritchie and Nora Barlow were the socially involved, active, and responsible parties in this part of the origins of the Darwin Industry. Nora's cousin Bernard and his wife Eily had little interest. Nora's husband Alan Barlow, the legal executor of Francis Darwin's estate, did not appear in this part of the story, although we talked of him at length during the hour.

The images created by this lovely woman, Cash Martineau, then in her late seventies, sliding off the couch and kneeling on the floor, demonstrating how she worked with the materials toward the catalogue were humorous, dramatic, and poignant. Later we had a delicious lunch and a walk through her beautiful garden, along a path bordered with lavender in bloom. Doing ethnographic biography has its own fascination.

Results: The Gorringes Catalogue

The catalogue is an interesting document. It has a formal title page, written in ink in a very clear hand:

A
CATALOGUE
of the
Mss, papers, letters and printed books
of CHARLES DARWIN
now at GORRINGES
Downe, Kent
July, 1932

On the inside cover a printed label appears:

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
Presented by
The Pilgrim Trust and the Darwin Family
25 November 1942

No mention is made of the cataloger in the two prefatory pages or in the 47 pages of the document itself, nor in the 15 pages of index in the back of the catalogue. However, on the inside of the back cover are two penciled notes:

This catalogue was compiled by
Miss Catherine Ritchie, later Mrs
Martineau (teste) Lady N. Barlow
17. iv. 62

Miss Catherine Ritchie
See Darwin MSS, item 60
(Letter from Mrs. Ashworth to N.R. Creswick)
P.J. G.
1/5/62

The Manuscripts Room Librarian at the Cambridge University Library, Peter Gautrey (P.J.G.), identified Creswick as the former University Librarian. Catalogue number MSS 156 is the correspondence file from the time of the gift. A third notation appears on the inside of the back cover of the Gorringes Catalogue:

Mrs. Martineau was August, 1988
Living in Walsham Le Willows,
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk
P.J.G.
3/9/88

This annotation contribution was added based on information that my wife Marilyn and I gave to Peter Gautrey, a tiny addition to the Darwin literature made by us subsequent to our visit with Cash Ritchie (Catherine Martineau).

The materials identified in detail in the catalogue were sorted into eight categories labeled A to G. Essentially they were in chronological order within each category. They are identified this way:

The interior of each box contained items of multiple interests, including two that illustrate the importance of the catalog for Nora's later work. Category E 1 in Box C are "Letters after appointment to H.M.S. Beagle till return to London: 1831 – 1836." The labels include name and address of recipient, date, and whether presented in whole, part, or not at all in Francis Darwin's *Life and Letters* with volume number and page number. Most were unpublished or only partially published. It was this group of letters that Nora helped organize for the cataloger Cash Ritchie and also for her later second book *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle*.[17] The 17 Notebooks from the Beagle voyage are in C7a "H.M.S. Beagle, Beagle Notebooks …" arranged chronologically and titled by part of the world, mostly South America, in which he traveled. These notebooks also became part of Nora's second book.

Discussion and Interpretation

This essay is the story of a small part of the origins of the Darwin Industry, the activities of three women, Ida Darwin, Cash Ritchie, and Nora

Barlow that culminated in the creation of the Gorringes Catalogue. This document organized a large number of Darwin documents that had been stored in Bernard Darwin's cellar. It became the initial basic guide to the Cambridge University's collection of Darwin manuscripts. Nora's contribution here and elsewhere led Richard Keynes to comment in a eulogy to Nora:

> It may surprise some of you if I say that Nora deserves to be remembered as an industrial innovator, but, thanks to her pioneering work as a Darwin scholar and editor of some of her grandfather's writings, she was the true founder of what is now sometimes known as the Darwin Industry.[18]

My argument is that the Gorringes Catalogue is but an early and small part of her larger contribution to the large body of intellectual work on the Darwin Legacy.

Women as Intellectual Social Activists

This essay makes the argument for the importance of the concept "activist" or more generally "intellectual social activism" in the lives of Nora Barlow, Cash Ritchie and Ida Darwin in this small part of Darwin history and the sociology of science. In a sense, the conception is a theoretical abstraction and elaboration of a helping or facilitating position and role. The men and women, and often it is the women, who are the unsung heroines, if you like, supporting the work of the heroes who do the major research or write the major essays and book in science or the history and sociology of science. "Handmaiden" has been used by one anonymous critic in a discussion of Nora Barlow and her role in Darwin research, in spite of the four books she edited of the original Darwin manuscripts. Cash Ritchie and Ida Darwin were also unsung workers. This essay picks up on another aspect of Nora and her colleagues activity. From an advocacy perspective this essay illuminates and supports individuals who traditionally escape attention in the description and analysis of important events. In this case in one small part in the origin of the Darwin industry.

I believe that the multiple roles in intellectual work must be celebrated in much the same fashion that Howard Becker[19] has done for the making of art. In his analysis, making music requires not only composers, but also performers, instrument makers, conductors, arrangers, accompanists, producers, audiences, and perhaps even patrons. In this case it is difficult to decide who are the heroes and who are the handmaidens. All are important.

Gould in his *Wonderful Life* presents a fascinating tale of original investigators of an important area with significant fossils.[20] The specimens were

lost, in the sense that they were kept in storage cabinets in a museum for years. Later Gould and his colleagues discovered them and did major re-analyses of them. This work became a significant fossil chapter in another small part in the history of science. Doing science, as well as the history and sociology of science, and doing biography, so it seems to me, have analogues. And this essay on what I have labeled "intellectual social activism" is another small story in this kind of endeavor.

Antecedents and Consequences

Many, if not most social scientists, when developing theory make important arguments about clarification of concepts, developing and testing of hypotheses, and extending those ideas into patterns or theories. In these discussions they speak of hypotheses, antecedents and consequences of particular concepts. Mostly here I've tried to clarify the concept of intellectual social activism as Nora Barlow, Ida Darwin, and Cash Ritchie developed the catalogue. Throughout, the major consequence of this activism has been the Darwin Industry. Implicitly the Darwin family has been a major antecedent. Now I want to elaborate on these concepts a bit more.

The Darwin Industry

The "Darwin Industry" is a latter day label, current among librarians and Darwin scholars in the Manuscripts Room of the Cambridge University Library. The term captures the huge amount of scholarship underway on the original letters to and from Charles Darwin. This "Correspondence Project," the multiple volumes of Darwin's letters now running over a dozen volumes, is perhaps the prototype of this effort in the Darwin Industry. A large table in the Manuscripts room in CUL is ''permanently" occupied with current materials as several individuals busily work daily in the complex editing process. A number of scholars who have worked on the project have written important books on Darwin. Overall, this huge project is but one of many. Informal estimates suggest that the volume of Darwin materials and investigations will soon overtake the Newton efforts. One gets the feeling that "industry" is not an inappropriate label for the activity underway. Such large events in the history of science create their own questions as to the genesis and form of the activity.

This essay sketches an episode in the history of the origins of "the industry," with particular reference to Nora Barlow's important role. Her work was a kind of intellectual social activism important for later scholarship. In conjunction with another essay, "The Artistry of an Editor"[21] that details her

contribution to Darwinian history in editing and publishing four books on the Darwin Manuscripts I believe this makes the further general case for her importance in this aspect of Darwinian scholarship.

The Darwin Family

As a reader reads through the narrative, one of the striking items is the predominance of the Darwin family appearing throughout this story. At one level it seems obvious for Charles Darwin initially created the materials. Lines of inheritance in English society typically go from father, Charles, to son, Francis, to his son Bernard. Male heirs and first sons dominate the norms if not the law itself. That was part of Bernard's argument about possession. Beyond this issue, that of the intellectual estate, perhaps even more important is the interaction of the family. All the efforts surrounding the creation of the Gorringes Catalog were carried out by family members. Cash Ritchie was an implicit member of the family as Bernard had known her since she was a small child and her grandmother was a friend of Charles, and her parents were close friends of Bernard, staying over with each other on family visits. In addition Bernard would have no one else, no "outsider" in to do the task. Ida was writing letters early on, giving money, advice, and support for Nora. Nora was the intellectual lynch pin in the development of the catalog. Ritchie was the steady nine month appointee to carry out the day-to-day task.

Frances Darwin Cornford was another granddaughter of Charles, sister of Bernard, and cousin of Nora. Her family was in financial need and wanted to sell her portion of the Darwin estate, which included materials in Bernard Darwin's cellar. This was significant since it was her brother who held the property. No disagreement occurred in the fact that all members of the family wanted to keep the materials in England. Additionally, Charles Galton Darwin held two of the most valuable manuscripts, the *Autobiography* and the *Diary*. He also was pleased to give the materials for long-term keeping to Nora as she worked on the original manuscripts. Eventually they were to go to the Library. "Along the way," Nora's two most important book editing was of these two books. All indications were that the Pilgrim Trust, who bought the materials, was funded by Ida and Nora. Alan Barlow, who handled the correspondence, indicated that the family was agreed that most of the materials were to go to the Cambridge University Library for the benefit of Darwinian scholars and part of the materials would go to Downe House for a more popular exhibit.

A final small incident of family involvement occurred when Gwen Darwin Raverat, a close cousin to Nora, would visit. She would join in the vehement chorus of Bernard critics. Ritchie was horrified at those tea times. Family issues and feelings swirled throughout the makings of the Gorringes

Catalogue. But all members agreed on the outcomes, the destination of the Darwin manuscripts to CUL and Downe House. They would remain in England.

Conclusion

Intellectual social activism is a key conception growing out of this story and analysis. In moving behind the public scenes and the high points of the Darwin Industry I wanted to make an initial social scientific interpretation of the beginnings of the origins of that industry. Symbolic interactionism argues that individuals making choices, taking action, interacting with other individuals are at the heart of the microanalysis of important social events. And this is one road to social understanding.

Nora Barlow appeared and lurked behind much of the activity reported in this essay. Her role complemented her more heroic role as editor and author of numerous Darwin manuscripts. These include her editing four books, most significantly Darwin's *Diary* of the voyage of HMS Beagle and the unexpurgated version of Darwin's *Autobiography*. But my story is also a story of Cash Ritchie, a young librarian in training who developed the Gorringes Catalogue at the behest of its owner Bernard Darwin. And even more shadowy is the prim and proper Ida Farrer Darwin who seems to have plotted strategy and contributed financial resources, "a lump" of money to keep the Darwin papers together and in England.[22]

Chronologies, taxonomies, and conceptual cause and effect relationships are important as well. In regard to the latter, a major antecedent of the productivity of the Darwin Industry is intellectual social activism. Nora Barlow's efforts personify this idea, an ostensive definition, if you like.[23] The antecedents of social activism have been explored here in only a minimal manner. Mainly reference has been made to the significance of "being a Darwin" that is, a member of the Darwin Family. Other essays by me visit this and other conceptual issues in depth.[24] Being a Darwin suggests the ever-present influence of family and social class. But among the other Darwin grandchildren none of Nora's eight cousins fulfilled this role. She was the only biological scientist and historian of science in the group. The deaths of her father, Horace Darwin, her Uncle Francis Darwin, and her mentor William Bateson all occurring about the same time seem significant in Nora's turn to social activism and becoming a Darwin student and scholar. But my primary aim in this essay has been the establishment of the complexities of the meaning of intellectual social activism and the linking of this to the beginnings of the Darwin Industry.

Notes

[1] Louis M. Smith. "Doing Ethnographic Biography: A Reflective Practitioner at Work During a Spring in Cambridge." *Perspectives in Education*. (Baruda, Gujarat, India, 2009); Louis M. Smith. "The Experience of Biography: Decisions in Organizing and Writing Chapter One." *Vitae Scholasticae 26* (2) (2009): 76-93; Louis M. Smith. "The Artistry of an Editor: Nora Barlow and the Darwin Manuscripts." *Vitae Scholasticae 28*, no. 1 (2011): 28-40; Louis M. Smith. "A Tale of a Darwin Granddaughter." *Vitae Scholasticae 29*, no. 2 (2012), 58-75.

[2] Nora Barlow. Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle' Edited from the MS by Nora Barlow. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933); Nora Barlow. *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946); Nora Barlow. *Darwin and Henslow: The Growth of an Idea. Letters 1831-1860*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Nora Barlow (Ed.) *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin 1809-1882*. (London: Collins, 1958).

[3] Some readers might find inappropriate my referring to Nora Barlow as Nora. The usage is intentional. The use of Barlow or Lady Barlow is a kind of formality that is inconsistent with the biographical portrait I am writing and with the way Nora saw herself and how her children and grandchildren refer to her in the conversations with each other and with me.

[4] The use of first names for individuals with the surname "Darwin" was done to avoid confusion stemming from the appearance of multiple members of the Darwin family in the article.

[5] Leon Edel. "The Figure Under the Carpet", In *Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art*, ed. M. Pachter. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 16-34.

[6] Louis M. Smith, "Nora Barlow – A modern Cambridge Victorian 'The many lives of modern woman.'" *Advancing Women in Leadership Online Journal* 19 (2005), 1-10.

[7] Louis M. Smith. "The Experience of Biography." *Vitae Scholasticae* (2009).

[8] Louis M. Smith. "A Tale of a Darwin Granddaughter." *Vitae Scholasticae* (2012).

[9] Louis M. Smith. "The Artistry of an Editor" *Vitae Scholasticae* (2011).

[10] Letter in Nora Barlow Files CUL.

[11] Nora Barlow. "Inheritance in the Three Forms in Trimorphic Species." *Journal of Genetics 13* (1923): 133-146; Nora Barlow. "Preliminary note on heterostylism in Oxalis and Lythrum." *Journal of Genetics 3* (1913): 53-66.

[12] Louis M. Smith. "A Tale of a Darwin Granddaughter." *Vitae Scholasticae* (2012).

[13] Nora Barlow File in CUL.

[14] *Nature* is a prominent British journal.

[15] Nora Barlow. *Charles Darwin's Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle'* Edited from the MS by Nora Barlow. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933).

[16] There is a 4th letter from Ritchie to Nora, dated November 2, 1959. However it contains little of relevance to this discussion.

[17] Nora Barlow. *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946).

[18] Richard Keynes (1992): 25. "Nora Brlow 1885-1989." (Cambridge: Call Printers 1992): 25.

[19] Howard Becker. "Art as Collective Action." *American Sociology Review* 39 (1974):

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[20] S. J. Gould. *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shales and the Nature of History*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989).

[21] Louis M. Smith. "The Artistry of an Editor: Nora Barlow and the Darwin Manuscripts." *Vitae Scholasticae* (2011).

[22] Louis M. Smith (In process). Nora Barlow and the Darwin legacy.

[23] H. Zetterberg. *On Theory and Verification in Sociology*. (New Jersey: Bedminster Press, 1965).

[24] Louis M. Smith. "Doing Ethnographic Biography: A Reflective Practitioner at Work During a Spring in Cambridge." *Perspectives in Education*. (Baruda, Gujarat, India, 2009); Louis M. Smith. "The Experience of Biography: Decisions in Organizing and Writing Chapter One." *Vitae Scholasticae* 26 (2) (2009); Louis M. Smith. "The Artistry of an Editor." *Vitae Scholasticae* (2011); Louis M. Smith. "A Tale of a Darwin Granddaughter." *Vitae Scholasticae* (2012).

Toward a Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright (1905-1962): Finding Facts, Pivoting Race

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Introduction

On October 27, 1962, the *Washington Evening Star* reported that a noted black college professor had been found dead in quite unusual circumstances: "Mrs. Marion Thompson Wright, 58, professor of education at Howard University, was found dead yesterday behind the wheel of her car in the garage at her home, 1858 California Street N.W."[1] Professors Walter G. Daniel and Elias Blake, two colleagues in the Education Department, discovered her body after she did not report to work the previous day. Wright and Daniel had a close relationship; they published an article together and, along with his wife, shared many outings and meals. Daniel had only recently returned to Howard University after a 25-year hiatus to work as a Specialist in Higher Education in the U. S. Office of Education, and Wright had welcomed his return as her office mate.[2] Similarly, Elias Blake—who later became the President of Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia—had been a longtime friend. According to the newspaper account of Wright's death, "Mr. Daniel and Mr. Blake said Mrs. Wright had appeared in good spirits and gave no indication that she was worried about anything. She missed a class

Wednesday but Thursday was her regular day off." Homicide detectives reported that they found "a garden hose attached to the exhaust pipe of her car, inserted in a front window of the vehicle. The car's motor was not running, and the gas tank was empty." Further, they reported finding a compendious suicide note in Wright's apartment which explained that "she had discovered that an illness she thought had been cured two years ago had returned."[3]

While there remains little mystery surrounding the cause of her death, there is much confusion over the facts of her life.[4] First, some historians have documented the year of her birth in error. Was she born in 1902, 1904, or 1905? Second, historical sources vary over her birthplace. Was she born in East Orange or Newark, New Jersey? Third, historians of African American history wrongly cite Wright as the first professionally trained black woman historian and the first black woman to earn a Ph.D. in history from Columbia University. Was Wright a historian at all? In spite of contradictory information found in the historical record, Wright should be celebrated as a civil rights scholar and activist who made considerable contributions to knowledge about the education of African Americans in New Jersey, contributed her expertise on segregated education to the social science research in *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* (1954), and created the Office of Counseling Services at Howard University. Ultimately, as a former Howard University professor and a sociologist of education, Wright should also be recognized for her scholarship on race and education, which challenged educational policies and practices both in New Jersey and nationwide for more than 30 years of her life.[5]

This article challenges the current historical and social construction of Marion Thompson Wright's life and death, especially the emergence of a triumphalist narrative of this black civil rights scholar and activist in academic discourses. Faced with the challenges of "mining the forgotten," scholars who have written about her have repeated information over and over again, building a biographical monument without the necessary fact-checking.[6] Given that there is very little archival data to support a full-length study of Wright's life, the narrative that I provide here is admittedly partial and uneven but I have set out to make clear some of the confusion over biographical facts and to offer alternative interpretations of key aspects of Wright's life.

In the field of African American women's history, for example, Wright's life has become a symbol of trained womanhood as "the first black woman historian" to receive a Ph.D. in the United States at Columbia University.[7] In Darlene Clark Hine's 2nd edition of *Black Women in America*, Wright is discussed succinctly under the "Historians" section: "In 1940 Marion Thompson Wright became the first black woman historian to earn a PhD in the United

States from Columbia University. Other black women followed in her footsteps."[8] Moreover, the few historians who have mentioned Wright in their work are very careful to make a distinction between "self-taught" historians and professionally trained ones; they contend that Wright was the first black woman historian to be "professionally trained."[9] Although she employed historical methodology in her dissertation, Wright considered herself a sociologist of education who cared deeply about the schooling of blacks in the United States and wrote mainly to influence educational policies and practices. The focus on Wright as merely "the first black woman historian" overlooks her contributions to foundational fields of study in education, such as social education, black education, and guidance and counseling. Future research demands a systematic look at Wright's sociological and educational thought.

In fact, in the field of educational studies, Wright has been recognized as one of the pioneering women in social education.[10] Wright earned her Ph.D. at Teachers College in a specialized history and educational sociology program under the direction of social reconstructionist and scholar activist Merle Curti.[11] Walter Daniel wrote in a tribute on the occasion of her death: "With sound preparation in the area of the social foundations of education and with an interest in the problems of minority people, she conducted an outstanding research investigation on the education of Negroes in New Jersey."[12] More recently, curriculum studies and feminist scholar Margaret Crocco has documented Wright's work in social education stating boldly that she "played a central role in bringing about change, with her [scholarly] work, on New Jersey's constitution, which in 1947, ended all forms of de jure segregation in the state. Through her work as a professor of education at Howard University, Wright also researched, wrote, and taught about the importance of black history to the preparation of teachers."[13]

In her home state of New Jersey, Wright's life, career and legacy has received more attention within academic circles. The annual Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series at Rutgers University-Newark marks the oldest, largest and most prestigious Black History Month event in the state of New Jersey and provides evidence that Wright's scholarship and activism has not gone completely unnoticed.[14] Over three decades, the lecture series has attracted some of the nation's foremost scholars and experts in the field of African, American and African American history and culture, including Annette Gordon-Reed, Deborah Gray White, Eric Foner, Sterling Stuckey and Cheryl Harris. Such an occasion has marked Wright as a pioneer in the improvement of race relations in New Jersey. Absent from all the recognition and celebration, I argue, is a critical race biography that considers how race and racism and its intersections (e.g., sexism and classism) shaped the life and death of this celebrated New Jersey native. Only now that critical race

theory exists, alongside a well-established black women's history scholarship, can scholars begin to imagine and to uncover hidden ways in which race may have shaped the life and death of Marion Thompson Wright.

Constructing A Life

Searching for Sources

Following in the steps of scholars who have written about Marion Thompson Wright, I revisited and reconsidered bibliographic information, archival materials, and secondary sources to reconstruct her life. Whenever I could verify dates, people, places, and events, I have included information and narratives provided by scholars who have worked hard to fill in some major gaps in what we know about her. Early in the process, I began to understand the difficulty in writing about Wright, who lived a life of quiet struggle, leaving hardly any of the materials necessary to tell a complete story. As historian Ula Taylor has explained, "African American women have been placed on the periphery of most historical documents. In fact, the material traces holding the clues to their experiences are limited, heavily tainted, or virtually nonexistent."[15] Combing through a great deal of research that oftentimes barely mentioned Wright in more than a paragraph, I have collected any and all citations in order to piece together a coherent narrative. Citations led me toward elusive archival sources that I suspected would be invaluable.

Since Wright attended Howard University as an undergraduate and master's student, as well as worked in the Education Department from 1928 to 1931 and from 1940 to 1962, I first visited the Howard University archive. The Howard University archive turned up only one folder on Marion Thompson Wright, which included little more than a half-completed 1947 employee information sheet created by the university's publicity department. In addition, there were two versions of her curriculum vitae with education, experience, and contributions circa 1948, and a copy of the program from her funeral service, which took place on October 30, 1962. While these sources did not seem to provide enough data to write about her time on the faculty at Howard, the fact that Wright had completed a self-penned "information sheet" made it possible to get to some truth about her birth year, birthplace, and academic degrees, as well as her extracurricular activities, special interests, and hobbies.

Fortunately, the Howardiana Collection in the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center had copies of yearbooks and course catalogues documenting Wright's presence as an active undergraduate and faculty member. Both the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard, especially its Manuscript Division, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black

Culture in New York provided information about Wright and other distinguished faculty, alumni, and staff of the university with letter correspondence and photographs. In the end, I searched through databases and correspondence in search of names that I could use to find collections that might have a folder on Wright. Searching for folders in little-known collections truly felt as if I were mining the forgotten, but the results have allowed me to begin the journey of telling Wright's life history from cradle to grave. This manuscript presents an interesting problem for biographies, generally, and critical race biographers, particularly: How do we construct a comprehensive story of a life with too little evidence?

Interpreting a Life[16]

Like Nina Eliasoph and Paul Lichterman, I began with my favorite theory—critical race theory—to extend what we know about Wright's life.[17] Since scholars have written about her with a particular focus on gender and sexism, I set out to focus on how race and racism shaped a black woman's life both on and off Howard University's campus. For instance, I wanted to know how Wright, who was born at the turn of the 20th century, navigated a Jim Crow North such that she eventually earned a Ph.D. from an Ivy League University under remarkable circumstances. I also wanted to understand why and how she ended her life in suicide. From the outset, I wanted to use her life to reveal what some black women who became scholars-activists accomplished during the Jim Crow era in much the same way that critical race scholars employ other people's stories or narratives to uncover experiences with and responses to racism.

As I worked to interpret archival materials and secondary sources, I began to ask myself: Why write a critical race biography of Marion Thompson Wright, instead of a "critical race feminist" one? Indeed, colleagues eventually suggested that I read and incorporate feminist theory in my writing of Wright's life. The dilemma that I faced revolved around Wright's being a "race woman." To summarize, the term "race woman" connotes a political stance and social agenda whereby, historically, some upper- and middle-class elite black women strove for "racial uplift" and against white supremacy in their professional work.[18] In celebration of early black women civil rights activists, for example, Deborah Gray White's *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves* briefly highlights many of these race women who had incredibly successful lives and careers, such as Margaret Murray Washington, Mary Church Terrell, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Charlotte Hawkins Brown. Like Wright, these race women defied numerous odds and kept many secrets as they broke color barriers, created organizations and institutions, and defined racial uplift work.[19] White's ground-

breaking book documents race women who were in defense of themselves and explores the intersections of race, gender, and class as simultaneous experiences.[20]

While it has certainly become fashionable, even seductive, to theorize about black women's lives as always already experiencing race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability simultaneously, my biographical exploration into Wright's life compelled me to rethink assumptions within intersectionality scholarship as it relates to writing biography.[21] Race as a crucial factor in Wright's life, I argue, demands a critical race biography that narrates and honors how she actually lived. On the one hand, outside of the Howard University campus, Wright focused mainly on race and racism in her professional writings, which she published in the top-ranked journals of her day. On the other hand, within the campus culture of Howard University as a student and as a faculty member, she struggled against the unequal treatment of women and black male sexism, which arguably steered her into the field of guidance and counseling.

In some ways, the idea of black women negotiating multiple identities strategically is not new. The 1970s Combahee River Collective Statement, for example, remains one of the most important pieces of writing on black feminism and affirms my understanding of black women's intersectional lives:

> Our situation as Black people necessitates that we have solidarity around the fact of race, which white women of course do not need to have with white men, unless it is their negative solidarity as racial oppressors. We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism.[22]

Black women, I argue, often had to pivot or to conceal one or more identities in their racialized lives.[23] Within the popular sport of basketball, pivoting involves stepping with one foot while keeping the other foot at its point of contact with the floor. A critical race biography, then, seeks to pivot race as one of the many ways in which black women strategically negotiate multiple identities.[24] Like basketball, a critical race biography deals with what is on the other foot, so to speak, in a cautious way so that concealed parts and pieces of a life are uncovered but in no way written larger than the one more easily accessed.[25]

Ultimately, intersectionality is less about "simultaneity" and more about "emphasis" and "dissemblance." Critical race biography can raise interesting questions that may not always start at the intersections of race, class, and gender in Wright's life and death. If we understand intersectionality to be experienced only simultaneously, then the idea that Wright may have devoted much time and effort working toward the dismantling of "separate but

equal," without ever mentioning gender or sexism, may indeed seem ludicrous and under-theorized. If, however, we understand intersectionality to be a strategic negotiation of multiple identities, then we can begin to see how racial uplift work may have been separate but connected gender work. After Wright worked a full day for the NAACP's legal defense fund, she could have attended a meeting of Delta Sigma Theta (the sorority she joined) or a lecture at the National Council of Negro Women on some topic related to women's lives and issues.[26] In writing a critical race biography of Wright's life, I am not choosing race over gender, race over class, or race over sexuality; rather, I am consciously telling a partial story about the way in which race shaped a life in quiet struggle against racism in the United States and against black male sexism on Howard University's campus. In the end, the biographical sketch here is a story of a race woman shaped and molded by formal and informal racial structures that consumed her life's work.

Toward A Critical Race Biography of Marion Thompson Wright

The Early Years: "All that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother"

On September 13, 1905, Marion Manola Thompson was born the fourth child to Minnie Holmes Thompson and Moses R. Thompson in East Orange, New Jersey.[27] While a few scholars have noted that her family moved to Newark, New Jersey fairly early in her life, no one knows the circumstances surrounding the family move. Did Minnie Thompson, a domestic, move alone with her children? Was Moses Thompson an integral part of young Thompson's life? Other than the fact that Thompson attended public schools in Newark, New Jersey, there is little that biographers can definitively say about her early familial and educational experiences. While in high school, Marion Thompson married William H. Moss and gave birth to two children: Thelma Moss (born 1919) and James A. Moss (born 1920). According to educational historian Margaret Smith Crocco, "Wright's mother quickly came to consider William Moss as unsuitable for her daughter by dint of class and potential," which ultimately led Thompson to ask for a divorce.[28] In 1923, despite having married as a young teen and giving birth to two children, Thompson graduated from the overwhelmingly white Barringer High School in Newark, New Jersey in record time with her peers. Reports suggest that Barringer High School, at the time, was indeed one of the most prestigious secondary institutions in Newark and that Thompson was one of only two African American students enrolled. Graduating at the top of her class, Thompson earned an academic scholarship to attend Howard University.[29]

Contrary to popular belief, Howard did not have an official "no acceptance" policy against married or divorced students, although the school did

expel students who chose to get married while enrolled.[30] Crocco has claimed that as a young married woman with children, Thompson faced a no-acceptance policy and that, because of this, she "would have to conceal her personal history or refuse Howard's scholarship. She chose the route of deception and enrolled at the university in 1923. This subterfuge necessitated symbolic repudiation of both her marital status and children." Crocco goes on to argue that Thompson faced a dilemma necessitating Thompson's "abandonment" of her two children.[31] In this analysis, Thompson is presented as a tragic victim who rejected her role as wife and mother to pursue an education.

It is true that Howard had a strict policy that forbade students from getting married while enrolled in the college. As historian and curator Ida Jones at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center explained, "Students were not allowed to marry." One of Howard University's most distinguished professors and administrators, Kelly Miller (1889-1935), a mathematician turned sociologist and the founder of Howard's sociology department, dealt with the issue of married students personally. According to Jones, who is also Miller's biographer: "Kelly [Miller's] number 5 child married and was removed [from] the university—he asked his father for special help and was denied—Miller believed the rules [were] the rules. I am sure pregnancy was highly frowned upon."[32] It is not clear whether these rules were written or unwritten, but Jones suggests that the "rules" about marriage applied to women and men alike.

Although it is very possible that a young Thompson and her family struggled with the dilemma to conceal her divorce and children, there is no evidence to support this claim. In any case, the deception and concealment for the sake of college or university admission would not have been Thompson's alone. Frankly, the principal or community member who agreed to write a letter for Thompson's admission to college would have also been faced with a dilemma in judging her character. Like most black colleges and universities at the time, admission to the school required a letter from the principal or a community member who could vouch for a student's "character, scholarly interests, and special ability."[33] While we know very little about how Thompson actually felt about entering college as a divorced mother of two, we know even less about how likely it was for her family and community to rally behind her.

To be sure, numerous factors could have shaped the decision to send Thompson to college, from ability (graduating at the top of her class) to geography (growing up in the North) to opportunity (access to college). But there is some evidence that family support, particularly that of her mother, was indeed crucial. Thompson herself inferred this in a quotation she selected to accompany her college yearbook photograph: "All that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother." Through correspondence between Thompson and close

friends, we know that Thompson had a deep and loving relationship with her mother coexisting with alleged tensions with and estrangement from her siblings and children.[34] From a critical race perspective, I contend, the importance of racial uplift ideology in support of black women by their mothers suggests that to understand Thompson's choices we must see her as part of a community, not in isolation, and be sensitive to the distinct ways that race as well as gender shaped her actions.

In "Mothers of Mind," historian Elsa Barkley Brown details the importance of her mother's influence on her decision to go to graduate school to become a professionally trained historian, defying both societal and familial expectations of a wife, mother, and daughter.[35] Although Thompson's circumstances, time, and context are quite different, Barkley Brown's narrative reveals just how complicated and contradictory racial uplift within black families and communities could be. Barkley Brown explains that her mother demanded that she and her sisters "should get good educations, including college degrees" while insisting that "unless it was an economic necessity, they should never work if they had children." Working while her husband attended school and taking care of her children full time, Barkley Brown decided that it was time for her to enroll in graduate school. Barkley Brown's mother, however, reminded her that "raising a family was and should be all that she concentrated on." Yet, her mother's actions spoke louder than her words.

Grappling with "complicated contradictions" within African American history and culture, which I argue has explanatory value for understanding Thompson's "dilemma," Barkley Brown explained in great detail:

> A month later [mother] replied in a letter which once again told her daughter that raising a family was and should be all that she concentrated on. Future schooling and careers should not be in her immediate plans. A Black woman's responsibility was to maintain her family. Enclosed in that same envelope with that letter was a check in the amount of tuition for graduate school—an enormous sum for the mothers/sisters/aunts who had pooled all and sold some to raise it—an act of faith in another generation of African American women.[36]

Race, class, and gender loom large in Barkley Brown's narrative. Racial uplift ideology, however, best explains what would allow a mother to support her black girl child when it went against her beliefs about marriage and family. My point here is not that gender does not matter in the lives of black women. Rather, I contend that pivoting race, or acknowledging how racial ideologies and discourses shape behavior, can help clarify complicated con-

tradictions in interpretations of black women's lives. Both gender and/or race scholarship contributes to our understanding of the willingness of Thompson's mother to parent her daughter's children as another promising "colored girl" went off to college. As one reviewer stated, which pivots gender within the context of black family dynamics, her mother's support may have been driven by a concern about Thompson's ability to earn a living with or without a man to help support her family.[37] Critical race biography, in this case, demands a consideration of black women's history to interpret Thompson's life and struggles through a racial lens that pivots race but also considers gender and class.

Within African American life and culture, the "problem" of a fallen young black girl did not necessarily mean that her life would be ruined. On the contrary, there are examples of mothers and grandmothers raising grandchildren and great grandchildren so that their daughters and sons could have a better life, which may have been a move "up North" to work in "higher paying" factories or a move across the state to attend a normal school, college, or university. Such decisions were less about gender and more about race—specifically, racial uplift. And while the decision to leave husbands or children might have been a hard one, there is no evidence that it was always seen this way. In Thompson's case, for example, we have little information about how often she returned home from college or what she did on her long breaks away from school. In the absence of this evidence, we cannot assume that alternative family ties that were critical to black notions of kinship and community were not at play.

While deception and concealment may have played a part in Thompson's admission to and matriculation at Howard, she lived in a family and larger community in which early marriage or unplanned pregnancy did not necessarily keep a young black girl from going to college. At most, biographers can reliably claim only that Thompson's mother raised her children while she attended Howard. Without interviews with family members and community members who remember her during this time, it is hard to know what individual, familial, or community logic supported a young Thompson, nor the sentiments felt and the sacrifices made.

The Howard Years: "It has been my aim to reflect credit upon my institution . . ."

In 1923, Thompson began her undergraduate studies in one of the largest classes to have entered Howard University at the time.[38] When she applied to Howard, as discussed earlier, Thompson concealed her personal life in order to gain acceptance from her peers and professors at one of the top colleges for Negroes.[39] As a first-year student, according to the 1927 class his-

tory, Thompson was elected representative to the Student Council by her male and female peers, serving in this capacity four consecutive years.[40] She later became Council recording secretary in her senior year and represented the women of the University at the National Collegiate World Court Conference. Thompson's participation in Howard's Council is significant. As an active member in the formative years of the Council, earning the respect and votes of her peers, Thompson learned first-hand what representative government could be as she dealt with "interclass contests, all student elections, freshman regulations, administration of its own fund, alumni entertainment, student assemblies, chapel speakers, the control and inauguration of new organizations, the superintendence of social activities including the arrangement of social schedule, and the judicial power of recommending expulsion." Coming of age at one of the leading black coeducational institutions of higher education, Thompson received from Howard the opportunity to participate fully in student-led government as a first-class citizen, which fueled her ambitions and activisms as a race woman.

Although some historians have depicted African Americans as longing and dreaming for equality, access, and opportunity rooted in observations of their oppressors, Thompson's biography illustrates that some freedom dreams were indeed lived out and practiced in non-dominant spaces.[41] Arguably, Thompson's future understandings of social and civic education on college campuses and in the larger society got worked out, tried, and tested from practice and engagement in the hidden social world created on Howard's campus. Thompson's professional writings would center on several themes, such as participatory democracy and full citizenship for Negroes, which she clearly learned about and experienced behind the walls of segregation at Howard. Her student years also proved to be the testing ground for her navigation of leadership and service as a race woman.

At Howard, not unlike most social institutions during the Jim Crow era, Thompson faced institutional sexism in her fight against societal racial oppression. One famous example of sexism on Howard's campus occurred during the time in which Thompson was a student. Feminist scholar Patricia Bell-Scott describes the situation as "one of the earliest written accounts of sexual harassment involving Black women in the academy."[42] In a 1927 Memorandum, which was written to be filed away for later use, Lucy Diggs Slowe—the first permanent Dean of Women at Howard University—wrote that she had been contacted by a parent about Romance Language Professor Clarence Harvey Mills' "improper and sometimes vulgar language in his class room with women students present." While the incident occurred in a French literature course where Professor Miller allegedly mentioned and discussed sex in one of Jean Racine's plays, the real problem appeared to be that women were present when the comments were made.[43] Dean Slowe thought

that she and the young male professor had resolved the situation until she received what she referred to as "one of the vilest letters that any woman could possibly receive from a man." Professor Mills wrote to Dean Slowe:

> You forget that you are merely the Dean of Women and not the custodian of morals of the male teachers of Howard University. It is my opinion if you had something to do and two classes to teach as the other Deans, you wouldn't hear so much.[44]

Highlighting the sexism at work in this interaction and the institutional relationships it illustrated, Professor Mills was not terminated as had been promised by the male-dominant administration. President Mordecai Johnson and Dean Dudley Woodard gave him time off with half pay to complete his dissertation at the University of Chicago and later welcomed the prodigal son back to campus. As the lone woman administrator, Dean Slowe saw that the men had protected one of their own despite her rank, position, and collegiality. In Dean Slowe's opinion, they should all have been working towards the betterment of an institution that struggled to be the premier black university, offering doctorates in law, medicine, and engineering. Professor Mills, as Dean Slowe reasoned, had been a liability to a common cause of educating black women and men for greatness; the "old black boys club" at Howard had worked in the young "vulgar" professor's favor.

In light of this incident, we cannot think that Thompson was unaware of sexism on Howard University's campus as a student and as a faculty member. Not only was she most likely aware of sexual harassment cases on Howard's campus; but also, she witnessed the notorious war between Dean Slowe and Howard University President Mordecai Johnson over the unequal treatment and disrespect given to the Dean of Women's Office.[45] Dean Slowe's biographers, Carroll Miller and Anne Pruitt-Logan, confirm that Thompson was a well-respected student leader whose "wide-ranging activities brought her into frequent and close contact with Lucy Slowe where she learned a great deal about the dean's goals."[46] Instead of an uncomplicated struggle against sexism, however, Thompson's biography offers support for the argument that she negotiated multiple identities strategically. In much the same way that traditional Marxist theorists choose to believe that "racism" is a significant distraction and divider of those who should be united around class struggle, the logic and practice of Jim Crow era black intellectuals who pivoted race assumed that a focus on sexism and patriarchy was treacherous, as it undermined the larger collective struggle against racism.

Over four years as an undergraduate at Howard, in spite of clear evidence of sexism on campus, Thompson excelled socially and academically. She was inducted into the prestigious honor society Kappa Mu (which later

became Phi Beta Kappa), and she served as the associate editor of *The Bison*, the college newspaper. Thompson also developed relationships with faculty on Howard University's campus, such as Dean Slowe and Charles Thompson, which influenced her decisions about life and career. The mentor-mentee relationship between Dean Slowe, Thompson, and many other young women at Howard is well-known and documented.[47] Many years later, as a faculty member reflecting upon her relationship with Dean Slowe for a grant application to support a biography of her mentor's life, Dr. Marion Thompson Wright wrote:

> The applicant knew Dean Slowe for fourteen of the fifteen years she served as Dean of Women. During that period, the applicant was an undergraduate leader in campus activities, a graduate student in education and a colleague on the faculty. The applicant is also engaged in teaching courses in the student personnel field.[48]

Not only was she an eyewitness to many of the bad relations between Dean Slowe and some of the male faculty at Howard, especially her tumultuous relationship with President Mordecai Johnson, Thompson would later develop her interest in guidance and counseling on college campuses to honor Dean Slowe—a pioneer in the field.[49] Wright learned from Dean Slowe how to be a race woman, being attentive to the needs of women and girls in the fight for racial uplift and respectability.

Howard would also provide Thompson with opportunities to develop relationships across gender and racial lines. She found a supportive male mentor, colleague, and friend in Charles H. Thompson, who started teaching as an associate professor at Howard in 1926. Later chair of the Education Department, as well as founder and longtime editor of the *Journal of Negro Education*, Charles H. Thompson encouraged Marion Thompson Wright to attend graduate school in the field of education. After her 1927 graduation from Howard with a degree in sociology and magna cum laude distinction, Thompson moved directly into the master's program in education. "Thompson helped shape Marion Wright's career, as he did with an entire generation of students keeping with the goal of encouraging scholars concerned with school segregation to document its negative effects on Black youth," as Crocco reported.[50] From 1929 to 1931, Wright worked as an instructor in the Education Department. Without a doubt, as scholars have pointed out, Charles H. Thompson shepherded Thompson's early graduate work and early career in the field of education.

Although there is hardly any evidence of a strong relationship between a young Marion Thompson and a longtime white education professor, Martha MacLear, there are strong similarities in discipline choice and gradu-

ate institution that lead me to believe that MacLear must have influenced Thompson's decision to enter the field of educational sociology at Columbia. MacLear taught sociology and education at Howard for many years, alongside Kelly Miller. Although no correspondence exists to support a strong relationship between Thompson and MacLear, the courses that MacLear taught became fundamental to the career that Thompson eventually had at Howard. For instance, MacLear was the professor on record for many years for "Sociology 131: Educational Sociology," which was cross-listed with Education 139, as well as "Sociology 130: The History of the Family," which dealt with "the home as the foundation of the educational process." Anecdotal evidence suggests a community of influence that most likely included white faculty as well as black faculty and administrators.

In 1931, Marion Thompson married Arthur M. Wright, a postal worker.[51] According to Professor Walter G. Daniel, in this same year, Marion Thompson (now Marion Thompson Wright) "resigned from Howard to resume residence in her native New Jersey and to devote full-time to graduate study at Columbia."[52] When she left Howard University, she earned a diploma in social work at the New York School of Social Work. From 1933 to 1936, she worked as a family visitor, senior case worker, and case supervisor for the state of New Jersey's Emergency Relief Administration.[53] Judging from her 1948 curriculum vitae, Wright completed her dissertation and possible residency requirements from 1936 to 1938. While little is known about the circumstances under which Wright earned her doctorate, in 1939-40, Wright started working as an instructor for a second and brief time at Howard University in the Education Department. The next year, 1940, Thompson graduated from Columbia University with a Ph.D. in Educational Sociology, and was promoted to assistant professor of education.[54] Wright began a tenure-track position as an assistant professor at Howard University and Director of Student Teaching. Within a year, she published her dissertation as a book, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* (Teachers College Press, 1941).

From 1940 to 1962, Wright rose through the academic ranks, becoming an associate professor in 1946 and full professor in 1950. Throughout these years, Wright organized and acted as the first Director of Counseling Services at Howard University, and even later worked as a part-time counselor. For most of these years, Wright had developed a program in guidance and counseling in the Department of Education offering the following courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels: "Advanced Sociology of Education," "The Use of Social Services by the Schools," "Education and Minority Group Problems," "Counseling: Technique and Administration," and "Principles of Guidance."[55] In one brief year, 1952-53, Wright served as the acting head of the Department of Education. In 1961, the year before she shocked her beloved Howard community by committing suicide, Wright had been hon-

ored in the *Washington Evening Star* for winning their prize award to write a biography of Lucy Diggs Slowe.[56] In a letter to former President Mordecai W. Johnson on the occasion of "recognition of her university activities," Wright stated unambiguously: "It has been my aim to reflect credit upon my institution and to have some situation improved or some person happier as a result of my effort or influence."[57] Her life's work was dedicated to racial uplift through her writing, teaching, and service at Howard University, an institution in which she loved dearly—warts and all.

Conclusions

Critical race biography seeks to get at the very source of our interpretation of a racialized life. Rather than understanding a life at the intersections of multiple identities (e.g., race, class, gender, and disability), the aim of critical race biography is to understand the ways in which racial pivoting, discourses, ideologies, and history can best explain a life lived—not imagined. The critical race biographer's task is to capture the explanatory value and key insights of race scholarship. In the retelling of Marion Thompson Wright's life and death, I had to contend with emerging stories about her that had been built upon misinformation and a compelling gender analysis. While mistakes about her birthdate, birthplace, and educational background proved easy to rectify, I found it more difficult as a feminist African American male to break down a gendered story that just did not ring true to me. It was not difficult to believe that Marion Thompson Wright experienced sexism on Howard University's campus, and it was certainly apparent that she experienced racism in the larger Jim Crow society. But what disturbed me as I read more and more about Wright's life and death, besides the fact that she committed suicide, was the likely conclusion that she was a tragic victim in spite of incredible successes. By any standard, it appeared to me, she had attained much in the way of achievements, honors, and awards for a black woman of her generation.

One could even argue that Wright navigated both her public and private lives well until 1962. Remember that Wright's colleagues were very surprised that she committed suicide. Apparently, Wright's ability to strategically negotiate multiple identities, while burdened with physical and emotional problems, came at a huge cost. Keeping all of this in mind, however, Wright's compartmentalization of gender outside of Howard may have been a missed opportunity for the development of black women's issues on a larger scale. As if on a different pivot point, Crocco claimed, Wright also "struggled for recognition, often commenting to friends that her pay and promotions were negatively affected by her gender. During these years, the pressures of this unfair treatment and an estranged relationship with her children produced

tremendous psychological difficulties for Wright."[58] Since the sources for Crocco's claims are not known, I can only imagine that these comments and sentiments were spoken in private and were not made public. More importantly, I think that the idea that such private feelings might have led to her suicide—although they cannot be substantiated – raises questions about the hardships encountered by race women, such as Marion Thompson Wright, while strategically negotiating multiple identities.

The critical race biography that I have told here is partial and uneven. While I have attempted to show how racial discourses and history shaped Wright's life story in important ways, I have also pointed out the ways in which gender mattered as well. What has not been explored fully are the ways in which class and disability (psychological and emotional) mattered, although both were compartmentalized or concealed.[59] In addition, the biographical sketch raises more questions than it answers: What role did class play in Wright's life history? How might more information on Wright's family, about which she kept many secrets, provide new and different interpretations? What exactly did Wright contribute to the *Brown* decision research? To be sure, critical race biography gives us a partial story that involves racial pivoting, while at the same time leading us to a strategic, contingent theory of intersectionality that can help us understand the complex prioritization of different struggles in black women's lives. As a race woman, Wright made important contributions to the fields of black education, social education, and guidance and counseling. She maintained strong relationships with black male colleagues, which explained how she became a part of the team of social scientists working with Thurgood Marshall on what became the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. My analysis of Wright's life moves us away from her as "the first," or a tragic victim of racism and sexism which ended in suicide, toward a nuanced understanding of a life lived strategically in quiet struggle *with* black men against racism and *against* black men about sexism.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank the James Weldon Johnson Institute for Race and Difference at Emory University for generous funding and intellectual community at the beginning of this research project. I benefitted greatly from the thoughtful comments and suggestions that Daniel Winunwe Rivers provided on early drafts. In addition, I would like to thank Ida E. Jones, assistant curator in the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, for her encouragement and expertise at a challenging time in the research process.

Notes

[1]"Professor Marion Wright Found Dead in Automobile," *Washington Evening Star* (October 27, 1962, B-11); see also "Death of Prof. Marion T. Wright Of Howard U. Probed by Coroner" (October 1962), Marion Thompson Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC.

[2]"Professor Marion Wright Found Dead in Automobile."

[3] Walter G. Daniel wrote the first biographical sketch of Wright's life upon the occasion of her unexpected death. See Walter G. Daniel, "A Tribute to Marion Thompson Wright," *Journal of Negro Education* 32, no. 3 (1963), 308-10. For more information on the close relationship between Wright and Daniel, see C. Glenn Carrington Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY, M. T. Wright to Glenn Carrington, October 3, 1961: "Walter and I are in the same office. He seems to be quite happy to be back at Howard again," C. Glenn Carrington Papers, Box 9, Folder 11. On her birthday, September 13, 1962, Wright wrote to Glenn Carrington: "Saturday, we see 'Beyond the Fringe.' Then the Daniels are taking me to dinner after the show," M. T. Wright to Glenn Carrington, C. Glenn Carrington Papers, Box 9, Folder 11.

[4]"Exhaust Hose In Car, Mystery Shrouds Death of Howard U. Professor," *Norfolk Journal & Guide* (November 3, 1962), C. Glenn Carrington Papers 1904-1975, Box 9, Folder 11, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. There are multiple explanations for her suicide, which include the suicide note that points to a recurring illness. Evidence also suggests that Wright's suicide was the result of a long battle with emotional and psychological issues that grew even worse after her mother's death the day after Thanksgiving in 1953. "Getting adjusted to my mother's death was very difficult and prolonged. That caused me concern because I thought I was abnormal. The situation tended to immobilize me. I am much better now," letter to C. Glenn Carrington (October 3, 1955), C. Glenn Carrington Papers 1904-1975, Box 9, Folder 11, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Still, a few scholars have suggested that she did not commit suicide, claiming that the death was probably an accident (telephone interview (n.d.) with historian John H. Bracey, Jr., who knew Marion Thompson Wright as a child and whose mother, Helen Bracey, taught in the School of Education at Howard University).

[5] Although no scholarly full-length biography of Marion Thompson Wright exists, information on her life is available in several sources: Margaret S. Crocco, "Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright: Shaping Inclusive Social Education, *Theory and Research in Social Education* 25 (1997): 9-33; Margaret Smith Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life: Elizabeth Almira Allen and Marion Thompson Wright," in *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists, 1880-1960*, ed. Margaret Smith Crocco, Petra Munro and Kathleen Weiler, 47-80 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999); Margaret Smith Crocco & O. L. Davis Jr., eds., *Building a Legacy: Women in Social Education, 1784-1984* (Silver Spring, MD: National Council for the Social Studies, 2002); Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Dawning of the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of African American History* 89, no. 3 (2004): 241-61; Margaret E. Hayes and Doris B. Armstrong,

"Marion Manola Thompson Wright, 1902-1962," in *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women*, ed. Joan N. Burstyn (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997): 435-37; Rayford Logan, *Howard University: The First One Hundred Years, 1867-1967* (New York: New York University Press, 1969); Wayne J. Urban, *Black Scholar: Horace Mann Bond, 1904-1972* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1992); Deborah Gray White., ed., *Telling Histories: Black Women in the Ivory Tower* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2008).

[6] For a discussion of the problem that historians face when archival materials, especially pertaining to black women's lives, are sparse, see Deborah Gray White, "Mining the Forgotten: Manuscript Sources for Black Women's History," *Journal of American History* 74 (1987): 237-42. Whenever possible, I have tried to build upon the existing scholarship on Marion Thompson Wright, especially Margaret Smith Crocco's pioneering work on her.

[7] Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, "History as a core subject area of African American Studies: Self-taught and self-proclaimed African American historians, 1960s-1980s." *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 5 (2007): 602-629; Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *Black Women in America*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[8] See Hine, *Black Women in America*.

[9] Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians," 241-61; Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, "History as a core subject area of African American Studies: Self-taught and self-proclaimed African American historians, 1960s-1980s," *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 5, (2007): 602-629; Deborah Gray White, ed., *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

[10] Margaret S. Crocco, "Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright: Shaping Inclusive Social Education, *Theory and Research in Social Education* 25 (1997): 9-33; Margaret Smith Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life: Elizabeth Almira Allen and Marion Thompson Wright," in *Pedagogies of Resistance: Women Educator Activists, 1880-1960*, ed. Margaret Smith Crocco, Petra Munro and Kathleen Weiler, 47-80 (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999).

[11] Sonia E. Murrow & Mary Rose McCarthy, *Social welfare through education: Transformative teacher education at Teachers College, 1932-1954*, (Paper presented at the meeting of the History of Education Society, Philadelphia, PA, 2009).

[12] Walter G. Daniel, "A Tribute to Marion Thompson Wright," *The Journal of Negro Education* 32, no. 3 (1963): 308.

[13] Margaret S. Crocco, "Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright: Shaping Inclusive Social Education, *Theory and Research in Social Education* 25 (1997): 71.

[14] Marisa Pierson, 2010 Marion Thompson Wright lecture series will mark 30th anniversary of NJ's largest black history month conference. (*Rutgers University Media Relations, 2009*). Retrieved April 25, 2010, from http://news.rutgers.edu/medrel/news-releases/2009/12/2010-marion-thompson-20091216.

[15] Ula Taylor, "Women in the Documents: Thoughts on Uncovering the Personal, Political, and Professional," *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (2008): 187-96.

[16] For a good overview of critical race methodology, and its possibilities for biographical analysis, see Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso. "Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (2002): 23-44. Solórzano and Yosso might argue that critical race biog-

raphy—as a methodology—is a type of counter-narrative or counter-storytelling: "We define the counter-story as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform. Yet, counter-stories need not be created only as a direct response to majoritarian stories. . . . Indeed, within the histories and lives of people of color, there are numerous unheard counter-stories." See Solórzano and Yosso, "Critical Race Methodology," 32.

[17] Nina Eliasoph and Paul Lichterman, "We Begin with Our Favorite Theory . . .": Reconstructing the Extended Case Method," *Sociological Theory* 17, no. 2 (1999).

[18] See also Gerald Horne, Race Woman: *The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

[19] Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

[20] See the work of black women scholars who have produced some of the most important theoretical work on race, class, and gender as simultaneous processes that are intersecting and interlocking: Elsa Barkley Brown, "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of Saint Luke," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 14, no. 3 (1989): 610-16); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Routledge Press, 2000); Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no.6 (1991): 1241–99; Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1983); Deborah K. King. "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 4, no. 1 (1988): 42-72; Bart Landry, *Race, Gender, and Class: Theory and Methods of Analysis*. (New York: Prentice Hall, 2006).

[21] In a splendid article titled "Re-thinking Intersectionality," Jennifer Nash questions and challenges the assumptions that underpin intersectionality. Nash writes: "In particular, my article centers on four unresolved questions within intersectionality theory: the lack of a clearly defined intersectional methodology, the use of black women as prototypical intersectional subjects, the ambiguity inherent to the definition of intersectionality, and *the coherence between intersectionality and lived experiences of multiple identities*" [emphasis mine]. It is the last concern which Nash raises that this paper seeks to address by problematizing current intersectionality theory for explaining *lived experiences* of multiple identities. See Jennifer Nash, "Re-thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1-15.

[22] Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith, 267 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

[23] The original notion of "pivoting" comes from a reading of Earl Lewis's 1995 article "To Turn as on a Pivot," in which he illustrated how the nation's history pivoted on the history of African Americans. See Earl Lewis, "To Turn as on a Pivot: Writing

African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (1995): 765-87.

[24] Critical biographies, in general, can be about gender or class or sexuality or region and about all of these things at the same time.

[25] Biographies with a focus on how race and racism shaped a life could fill a large room. My argument acknowledges that racial pivoting already exists in some biographies written about people of color. Here, I seek to "call it what it is" or to name a tradition within biographical writing about/for/with people of color *intended* to reconceptualize and to challenge controlling images, patterns of representation, and historical constructions. At issue, for me, is the degree to which race and other social identities are emphasized (or not emphasized) to construct the life lived.

[26] See Dagbovie, "Black Women Historians," 241-61. According to historian Pero Gaglo Dagbovie: "While at Howard, Wright was an active member of the Urban League, the NAACP, Bethune's National Council of Negro Women, the Delta Sigma Theta sorority, the ASNLH [Association for the Study of Negro Life and History], the National Association of College Women, the NEA [National Education Association], and the American Teachers Association." Dagbovie cites Crocco's 1999 article. In her own words, however, Wright posed the following questions that give us a small window into how she thought about separate black women's and men's organizations for racial advancement, as well as black organizations in which race relations activities made up one part of a total program: "Are we convinced that the paths we are following separately are the best ones from the point of view of racial and national or international interests and effective action? Do the various groups need to come together to effect greater unity of action through planned delegation of specific tasks? Or would it be better in some instances as has been suggested for some groups to work wholly through organizations established for the specific purpose of improving race relations? Let us ponder upon these questions and probably sometime in the future come together again for the purpose of coming to grips with them." See Marion Thompson Wright, "Educational Programs for the Improvement of Race Relations: Negro Advancement Organizations," *Journal of Negro Education* 13, no. 3 (1944): 349-60.

[27] Several sources document Marion Thompson Wright's birth year as 1902; in her own handwriting; however, Wright wrote that she was born in 1905. Historian Clement Price, who is writing a full-length biography of Wright, documents her birth year as 1905. The following sources document 1902 as her birth year: Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 47-80; Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy*. (Actually, within Crocco's 1999 article cited above, she contradicts herself, writing Wright's birth year as 1902 in the beginning of the text and 1905 in the middle of the text.) In another biographical source, Crocco writes that Wright was born on "September 13, 1904."

[28] Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 61. It is unclear how exactly educational historian Margaret Smith Crocco knows intimate details about Marion Thompson Wright's family life since there are no citations to follow for the information reported. From what I can tell, information on Wright's family life comes from one personal interview with Clement Price, historian at the University of Rutgers-Newark, who has kept Wright's memory alive nationally through programming at his institution and the state of New Jersey. I provide more information on Clement Price's efforts to

remember Wright later in the article.

[29] See Crocco and Davis, *Building a Legacy*, 93. In a memoir of his struggles as a civil rights advocate, titled *A Matter of Law*, the late Judge Robert L. Carter—who had been the lead attorney in *Sweatt v. Painter* and who had been the legal assistant to Thurgood Marshall, presenting part of the oral argument to the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*—confirmed the high status of Barringer High School as "Newark's elite secondary public school at the time." His retrospective account of attending Barringer High School in 1928 gives us a glimpse into the high school that Marion Thompson attended only five years before him: "Although there were some black students in the school, none were in any of my classes. I was never made to feel by any of the teachers, however, that I did not belong in their class. If the principal or any of his assistants saw me in what they regarded as bad company, it was reported to my mother." See, Robert L. Carter, *A Matter of Law: A Memoir of Struggle in the Cause of Equal Rights*. (New York: The New Press, 2005), 14-15.

[30] See Rayford Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years*. Howard University admitted women students from its inception in 1867. According to the distinguished historian Rayford Logan, "Howard was thus unique because it also planned the education of a sizeable number of Negro men and women, and white men and women" (p. 25).

[31] Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 62.

[32] Ida E. Jones, personal communication, January 9, 2012. For more information on Dean Kelly Miller, see Ida E. Jones, *The Heart of the Race Problem: The Life of Kelly Miller* (Littleton, MA: Tapestry Press, 2011).

[33] Annual Catalogue of Howard University, Washington, DC for 1923-1924 With Announcements for 1924-1925, p. 66, Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

[34] University Yearbook, *The Bison* 1927, n.p.; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. The quotation appears beside her picture and under her name; while the quotation may not be original, Marion Manola Thompson chose it to express her gratitude for her mother as a graduating senior. In addition, Thompson wrote about love and affection toward her mother often in correspondence with C. Glenn Carrington. See C. Glenn Carrington Papers 1904-1975, Box 9, Folder 11; Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Little is known about the relationships between Thompson, her siblings, and her children. For more information about this particular point with concomitant citations, see Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 47-80.

[35] For the complete story, see Elsa Barkley Brown, "Mothers of Mind," in *Double Stitch: Black Women Write about Mothers and Daughters*, ed. Patricia Bell-Scott, 74-93 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991).

[36] Brown, "Mothers of Mind," 81-82.

[37] For a gender history of childrearing practices of working and middle-class blacks, see Shaw, Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a woman ought to be and to do: Black professional women workers during the Jim Crow era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[38] University Yearbook, *The Bison* 1927, n.p.; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

[39] Logan, *Howard University*. Indeed, in the early 1920s, Howard boasted some of the best intellectuals in American arts and letters, such as the first African American Rhodes scholar and philosopher Alain Locke, celebrated biologist Ernest Everett Just, distinguished mathematician, sociologist, and University Dean Kelly Miller, pioneering Negro education scholar Charles H. Thompson, historian and anthropologist William Leo Hansberry, and the first permanent Howard Dean of Women and English Professor Lucy Diggs Slowe. During this time, William Leo Hansberry offered the first systematic course in African history at Howard. All of these scholars have been remembered at Howard in the form of academic buildings named in their honor. Lucy Diggs Slowe has a dormitory named after her and William Leo Hansberry has a lecture hall named after him.

[40] University Yearbook, *The Bison* 1927, n.p.; Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. Unless stated otherwise, information on Marion Thompson Wright's participation in extracurricular activities as a college student has been taken from this source.

[41] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990). See also Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (New York: Beacon Press, 2002).

[42] Patricia Bell-Scott, "To Keep My Self Respect: Dean Lucy Diggs Slowe's 1927 Memorandum on the Sexual Harassment of Black Women," *National Women's Studies Journal* 9, no. 2 (1997): 70-76. Unless stated otherwise, subsequent quotations have been taken from the 1927 Memorandum.

[43] Carroll L. L. Miller and Anne S. Pruitt-Logan, *Faithful to the Task at Hand: The Life of Lucy Diggs Slowe*. (New York: SUNY Press, 2012): 135-138.

[44] Bell-Scott, "To Keep My Self Respect," 72.

[45] For more information on Dean Slowe and the challenges that she faced at Howard, see Linda M. Perkins, "Lucy Diggs Slowe: Champion of the Self-Determination of African-American Women in Higher Education," *Journal of Negro History* 81, no. 1-4 (1996): 89-104. See also Rayford Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years*, 292, 336-38; For the best source to date on Dean Slowe, see Miller and Pruitt-Logan, *Faithful to the Task at Hand*.

[46] Miller and Pruitt-Logan, *Faithful to the Task at Hand*, 110.

[47] Ibid.; See also, Perkins, "Lucy Diggs Slowe," 91-95; See also Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 63: According to Crocco, Slowe did graduate coursework at Teachers College, Columbia University, under Sarah Sturtevant, Harriet Hayes, and Esther Lloyd-Jones, pioneer in professionalizing guidance and counseling for female students. Slowe carried their principles back to Howard. It is not by chance that Marion Thompson Wright would later teach all the courses in guidance and counseling at Howard, as well as create the Office of Counseling Services.

[48] Draft Research Proposal to *Washington Evening Star*, n.d., page 7, Marion Thompson Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

[49] As early as 1942, Wright began publishing in the fields of social education and guidance and counseling. In 1954, after her mother's death, Thompson had intensive training in the area of guidance and counseling. "The second semester I attended five classes at Teachers College in student personnel and research," Wright to Glenn

Carrington (October 3, 1955), C. Glenn Carrington Papers, Box 9, Folder 11. For examples, see Marion Thompson Wright, "Have You Met The Social Worker?," *School and Society* 28 (1942): 239-41; Marion Thompson Wright and Walter G. Daniel, "The Role of Educational Agencies in Maintaining Morale Among Negroes," *Journal of Negro Education* 12, no. 3 (1943): 490-501; Marion Thompson Wright, "Guidance—The Weak Link in the Educational Chain," *Midwest Journal* 1 (1948): 32-44; Marion Thompson Wright, "Educational Problems and Needs of Negro Youth," *Journal of Negro Education* 19, no. 3 (1950): 310-21; Marion Thompson Wright, "New Jersey Leads in the Struggle for Educational Integration," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 26 (1953): 401-17; Marion Thompson Wright, "Racial Integration in the Public Schools of New Jersey," *Journal of Negro Education* 23, no. 3 (1954): 282-89. The 1954 article was cited in the brief submitted to the Supreme Court by the NAACP.

[50] Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 65.

[51] Ibid., 47-80.

[52] Walter G. Daniel, "A Tribute to Marion Thompson Wright," Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. See also Walter G. Daniel, "A Tribute to Marion Thompson Wright," *Journal of Negro Education* 32, no. 3 (1963): 308.

[53] "Education, Experience, and Contributions of Marion T. Wright," Marion Thompson Wright file, University Archive, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

[54] There remains some confusion over Wright's actual graduation date—1938 or 1940? Marion Thompson Wright *completed* the requirements for the Ph.D. in 1940 and published the dissertation as a book in 1941 with Columbia University Press. For the best encyclopedic source, see Sibyl E. Moses, "Wright, Marion Manola Thompson 1905-1962," *African American Women Writers in New Jersey, 1836-2000: A Biographical Dictionary and Bibliographic Guide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003): 219-222.

[55] University Course Catalogue 1960-1961, Education Department Requirements and Courses, Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

[56] "Dr. Wright, of Howard, Gets Star Fellowship," *Washington Evening Star* (May 14, 1961), C. Glenn Carrington Papers 1904-1975, Box 9, Folder 11; Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

[57] See Walter G. Daniel, "A Tribute to Marion Thompson Wright," 310.

[58] Crocco, "Mary Ritter Beard and Marion Thompson Wright," 26.

[59] "While praising her efforts to help others with their problems, her friends also noted that she did not appear able to find adequate help for her own emotional difficulties," according to Crocco, "The Price of an Activist Life," 74.

Queer on Campus

Charles Nissley, Ella West & Madison Grey[1]
Darien State University

Where there is power, there is resistance…
- Michel Foucault[2]

Progress, march on.
- Mackelmore and Ryan Lewis (feat. Mary Lambert)[3]

Darien State University[4] is a mid-sized state university located in the northeastern section of the United States, nestled within a culturally conservative county. Students attend Darien State for many reasons. The university's teacher education program is recognized as one of the best in the state, faculty members are approachable and committed to their students, and in comparison with other universities tuition is "reasonable." And over the past few years, the LGBTQIA[5]—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, Ally/Androgynous/Asexual—or *queer*, community has been growing on campus. This community has benefitted from students who come from a generation that is critically conscious about sexuality and sexual orientation, and university faculty, administrators, and staff who recognize a need for increased programming and support for LGBTQIA students. And although Darien State has become a destination for students seeking a "sexually open, welcoming, and transformative" campus, the university remains deeply divided over the term *queer*. Most students (particularly those who identify LGBTQIA/*queer*) prefer it as a descriptor and unifier. However, most university employees—those who identify with the LGBTQIA community and others who do not—are "uneasy," and "un-

decided," with *queer*. Many of these dissenters claim that this term is simply "offensive." Interestingly, some of the most ardently anti-*queer* university employees seem to be a few self-identifying heterosexuals. A generational divide also definitely seems to exist: most students seem to be for *queer* and most employees seem to be against *queer*.

Our position is solid. We believe and advocate for the reclamation of *queer*. We believe this reclamation is essential to creating a culturally "progressive" and "open" campus for our current and future students. We see nothing more central to this issue than what students desire. Thus, if our campus is to continue to make progress for the *queer* student body, the university must stay current with terminology, our image, and with how other "progressive" intellectual communities identify sexual diversity. At this present time, we are recognized as a leader in LGBTQIA rights and programming in our state. However, our fear is that if we do not soon transition and reclaim *queer*, in part by establishing a *Queer* Studies program, engaging our students in *queer* theory, campaigning for *queer* rights, renaming our LGBTQIA organizations and committees as *queer* ones, offering *queer* health services, and so on, we will lose traction. Our campus has worked too hard to allow LGBTQIA/*queer* progress to stumble or halt due to discomfort or because the university failed to engage in a critical dialogue regarding reclamation.

We, three self-identifying *queers*—Charles Nissley (Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations, Women's Studies affiliate, Co-Director of the Sexuality and Gender Institute, and also self-identifying "straight"), Madison Grey (undergraduate student of Spanish, and also self-identifying "human"), and Ella West (undergraduate student of English and Theatre, and also self-identifying "pansexual")—believed that there may be clues within our lived university experiences that could lead us to theorize deeper understandings regarding the resistance and potential of *queer* reclamation on campus. So we dedicated ourselves to research and adopted a reflexive-narrative autoethnographic design, dependent upon radical empiricism,[6] because it allowed us to analyze our stories framed within "self-other interactions."[7] After all, our experiences were social ones.

Over several months, we considered our relationship with *queer*, our *queer* experiences at the university, past and on-going conversations with our colleagues and peers, and turned a newly formed critically *queer* eye toward the campus climate in which we lived, worked, and played.[8] Our research was motivated by *queer* educative potential; we wondered if after understanding campus resistance and acceptance we would be able to know how to use our lived experiences themselves as educative examples that open a critical dialogue and promote *queer* reclamation.

Background

"Queer"

Prior to the 20th century, "*queer*'s original significations did not denote non-normative sexualities, but rather a general non-normativity separable from sexuality…*Queer*, then, initially could refer to strange objects, places, experiences, persons, etc. without sexual connotations…"[9] Then, "by the early 20th century, *queer* as sexually non-normative was restricted almost exclusively to male homosexual practices, as in the following example from the U.S. Children's Bureau's *Practical Value of Scientific Study of Juvenile Delinquents* of 1922: 'A young man, easily ascertainable to be usually fine in other characteristics, is probably "queer" in sex tendency' (Simpson & Weiner 1989: 1014)."[10] *Queer* as sexually non-normative generally described "masculine" gay men, but eventually became associated with "effeminate," "fairies," and "faggots."[11] By the Second World War, *gay*—perceived more "politically correct"—replaced *queer*.[12] *Queer* at this point in history became squarely recognized as a pejorative, describing gay men as abnormal, deviant, and perverse.[13]

"The first instance of *queer*'s large scale public reclamation came from Queer Nation, an off-spring of the AIDS activist group AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP)."[14] Queer Nation, founded in March of 1990, was concerned with the "invisibility" of homosexuals and homophobia in AIDS activism.[15] Queer Nation chose its name because *queer* was "the most popular vernacular term of abuse for homosexuals."[16] Queer Nation's employment of *queer* was directly and intentionally confrontational[17] and chosen to organize a "collective identity based on differences rather than similarities"[18] and, "was by no means intended to be a synonym for *gay* and *lesbian*."[19]

Interestingly, perhaps the earliest positive employment of *queer* in an academic setting occurred just one month earlier than ACT-UP's public reclamation. In February, 1990, Teresa de Lauretis introduced *queer theory* at a conference on lesbian and gay sexualities at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Later, de Lauretis asserted that the reclamation of *queer* is to "unsettle" and "questions the genderedness of sexuality."[20] *Queer Theory* quickly became realized as a new and important intellectual area of study. It was predominantly influenced by Michel Foucault,[21] and emerged from the works of academics like Judith Butler,[22] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick,[23] David Halperin,[24] Adrienne Rich,[25] and Diana Fuss.[26]

It is likely that because the newly reclaimed *queer* enjoyed immediate "intellectual protection" it remains, to this modern day, widely positive and accepted. *Queer* has become "politically correct," establishing itself as a "radical, confrontational challenge to the status quo, and a constructionist under-

standing of sexuality and gender."[27] Certainly, there are on-going debates regarding its reclamation—whether it is (im)possible or (un)necessary based on previous pejoration or ability to transcend pejoration. We recognize these arguments as important, but note that they are presently and mostly unresolvable. Meaning, for our work, the fact remains, despite the merits of any debate, that *queer* has been reclaimed. It exists as a reasonable option. Thus, in this historical moment and place at our university, our research finds solace in Judith Butler's claim:

> If the term "queer" is to be a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes, and perhaps also yielded in favor of terms that do that political work more effectively.[28]

For us, this affirms our potential to use *queer* because we recognize it is evolutionary in nature. We "settled" on a few definitions and are "open to settling" differently as this work grows beyond what we have narrated here in these pages.

> …*queer* is posited as a way to disrupt and simultaneously expose the construction of the reified binaries of heterosexual and homosexual and the static, constructed gender assignments male and female. In seeming contrast to GLBT identities, queer points to the fluidity and multiplicity of sexualities.[29]

> …*queer* aims to spoil and transgress coherent (and essential) gender configurations and the desire for a neat arrangement of dichotomous sexual and gendered difference, central to both heterosexual and homosexual identities.[30]

Queer suggests a self-naming that stands outside the dominant cultural codes; queer opposes sex-policing, gender-policing, heteronormativity, and assimilationist politics.[31]

Queer *Campus*

Classrooms, department meetings, committees, extracurricular activities, socializing with colleagues and peers, social media relationships, and so on were collective sites of interest. We wrote field notes, historical memos, and

theorized in journals. We shared our data through email, Google docs, and Facebook conversations. Our narratives, however, were most strongly developed when we analyzed data during face-to-face research meetings and presented at conferences. We were able to weave stories that anchored us in clear understandings about the "everyday" or "typical" experience, resistance, and potential of *queer*. From these meetings we were inspired to write further, and (re)write thematically. Our reflexive-narrative autoethnographic pieces helped situate our selves as researchers/participants and found this process of deconstruction seriously, "as it is the task of self formation, deformation, learning and unlearning."[32] Our research had "experiential starting points" that were informed by and related to theoretical literature.[33] Judith Butler's work on *queerness* and performativity,[34] definitions of *queer* as previously described by Meiners, Luhmann, and Morris, as well as Bornstein,[35] Richardson,[36] and Connell's[37] descriptions of sexuality and gender as "multiple and flexible" social constructs served as underpinnings to our unified theoretical lens.

The finalized representation of writing, here in these pages, went through multiple drafts as three important sections of data representation and analysis became more actualized: our initial and personal *queer* understandings; emergent understandings (themes); emergent understandings (us/our lived experiences).

Our Initial and Personal Queer *Understandings*

Our research began when Charles invited Madison and Ella to his office for a chat. He met these students during a staged reading of the *Laramie Project*, in which they all participated, several semesters ago. Madison and Ella were thoughtful and promising actors, while Charles was merely accepted as part of the cast because the student director wanted "faculty representatives." Though Charles, Madison, and Ella spent several practices together, they did not get to know one another well. Charles suspected that because of their involvement in the *Laramie Project*, and through simple observation, Madison and Ella might identify *queer*. He also perceived them to be sexually self-actualized and self-determined, characteristics foreign to most undergraduate students.

Madison and Ella knew that Charles wanted to talk to them about involving them in some sort of research, but they did not understand the full scope of the work. He bluntly asked, "What is your relationship with the term *queer*?"

> *Madison: I still remember the first time I heard the word. I was a child, playing outside with my sister and friends. A school bus drove by*

*and for some reason, a kid shouted out the window at us, "*Queers!*" I had no idea what that meant. I thought it was the strangest thing, and I really wanted to understand. Many years later I began to become acquainted with the pejorative meaning of the term and I realized what a terrible thing it was that he had shouted that.*

It wasn't until I began to become more familiar with the actual queer *community that I started to understand the positive ways in which the word could be used. Beginning in high school and increasingly as the years went on, I learned (through firsthand experience) about the* queer *community, its history, and the people who make it up. Still, it wasn't until moving closer to Darien State in 2009 that I began to regularly experience the word being used in a positive way. It was also during this time that I began to explicitly identify myself as part of this community, due in large part to my involvement in Darien State's GSA, then officially known as "Allies."*

I imagine that part of what influenced my perspective in thinking of it in a positive way is when a number of us from Allies joined the National Equality March on the Capitol in that same year. There were tens of thousands of people there and, from what I experienced, virtually no protesters. All of them were queer*, or at least supporters. I still remember the rainbow that appeared in the sky on that sunny day. It was a very powerful and moving experience for me.*

The president of Allies at that time, Amber, was someone with whom I was very close. And she encouraged me a great deal; in fact, she was the only person I really knew upon first moving to the area. She helped make me feel comfortable with the term and with who I am. I'm sure it must have been with her encouragement that I attended the march. And even after she graduated I continued to be involved with Allies; these experiences helped make me more comfortable with the term.

Where do I stand with the term now? Well, I think it's a great word to rally around. It's so empowering, in so many senses, particularly because while it used to have a primarily negative connotation, we've now reclaimed it. And through that reclamation process, those hurt by the word in the past can find healing. On top of that, it's simple. Its succinctness and controversial nature lends it far more power than the confusing alphabet soup of LGBTQIA etc. etc. I feel like it is incredibly useful to have one word to rally around.

Charles: What about you Ella? What is your relationship with the term, queer*?*

Ella: I am going to be honest. Despite growing up in Brooklyn, New York,

the extent of my knowledge on anything relating to queer *in my childhood was when my dad referred to my aunt's male friend and his boyfriend as "fags." Looking back, I am aware that this was in reference to how flamboyant and openly affectionate they were with each other, but at the time I had thought it was synonymous to those waist bags that you'd clip onto yourself in the '90s, which some members of my family referred to as "fag-bags."*

I realize that there were other references to homosexuality in my childhood that I was just too oblivious to pick up on at the time, such as Christian pamphlets that portrayed correlations between liking someone with the same genitals and eternal damnation, but growing up with a random mix of public and private schools, it never really occurred to me that anyone could be anything other than straight until I was in high school. It was my junior year, and I noticed one day that a friend wasn't saying anything whatsoever, but rather was writing on a small whiteboard that she was carrying around. When I asked her why she was being quiet, she explained to me that it was the Day of Silence and how the silence was meant to represent people who have to remain quiet about who they truly are in regards to their sexual orientation. I thought it was terrible that people were being mean to others just because of who they liked, so I decided to join in and be quiet for the rest of the day.

My experiences at Darien State University have truly taught me about the LGBT community and the inequalities/discrimination that they face. I had the wonderful opportunity to work with some great people through Theatre of the Oppressed, which helped me gain a true understanding of trans issues as well as the impact some interpretations of Christianity have had on oppressing this community. It was through Theatre of the Oppressed that I ended up getting involved with Darien State's GSA, which kick-started the activist work that I do today.

My first encounter with the word queer *was non-descript; when I first got involved with Theatre of the Oppressed and the GSA, I learned what each of the letters in the ever-expanding acronym meant. For me, like the rest of the letters in the LGBTQIA community, it was how someone identified. It was a label, and at the time it was a label that I didn't think applied to me. Boy, how the times have changed.*

I think that while it could be used in this great way to empower us by taking the word back, after listening to some other stories, I have come to understand the extent to which the word has been and can still be used negatively, and I know how it has hurt some of the people I love dearly, so this has complicated my relationship with queer. *Personally, I don't mind identifying as* queer *because I'm a* queer *mother-f'cker, but I understand the power that it still has as a pejorative and the negative emotions that*

can be charged by it.

Charles: Some remain uncomfortable with queer. *Should we wait until they are ready?*

Ella and Madison: No!

Madison: There's never going to be a time when everybody is ready for it. There's always going to be someone with a problem with whatever term is used. Personally, I feel like right now, in this point in history—for the community that can fall under the umbrella that is queer*—it is very appropriate and it is something we should hold on to.*

Ella: What about you, Charles? What is your relationship with queer*?*

Charles: Well, I feel like I'm queer *and I want to be identified* queer*, but this has been a recent revelation. And though I say this to you, I tread lightly when I say that I'm* queer *in front of others. Those who identify as "heterosexual" or "straight," unless they are my close friends or identify* queer *as well, I feel it would change the way they interact with me, think about me. And I wonder what kinds of socio-political and professional consequences might result. For instance, once I told a colleague, a self-identifying "straight guy," that I was* queer*. This colleague avoided me like the plague for an entire semester. When I ran into him on campus, he'd always fake he was in a hurry. "No time to talk," he'd say. I lost a potential friendship and useful work relationship because of my voiced identification. But I'm just as hesitant in using the term "*queer*" around those who might identify as gay, lesbian, trans, and so on because I feel like they may be suspicious of my intentions. Like I'm trying to usurp some of their power by also identifying as* queer*. I wonder if it is offensive. But part of the allure of "*queer*" is that I get to be part of something important, rather than the "friendly straight ally." For some reason, I hate being the ally. I want to be part of the race, not the guy on the sidelines handing out cups of water as I watch history—the movement—go by. I also think the "ally as defender" identity is weird. Defending, or offering "protection" seems to insinuate that the* queer *community encompasses a bunch of helpless individuals. And that's just not true.*

*But as for my historical relationship with the term "*queer*," I really don't have one. I never remember hearing the term or thinking much about it. I grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania and economic times were, and are still, very tough there. It's currently one of the poorest cities per capita in the U.S. And poverty and race dominated the socio-political narrative*

> *when I was a child. This doesn't mean I didn't learn from the community how to perform "straight white masculinity," nor does it mean there wasn't any "gay bashing." I explicitly remember some of this, but never really by employing the term* queer. *So, my first sincere encounter with the term* queer *was as an academic, when I began reading* queer *theory. It was Cris Mayo, Judith Halberstam, Judith Butler, and others who brought "*queer*" to my attention. And I loved it. From this literature, I have evolved. If you asked me a few years ago, I would have identified "straight." Just last year, I would have identified "pomosexual."*[38] *And this year, I'm* queer.

Emergent Understandings: Themes

Building on our past knowledge of the university, and in a new critical examination of our daily experiences, we came to recognize that there were multiple themes around why there have been agreements, or disagreements, to the reclamation of *queer*. These themes, "too hurtful," "an outing," "it is simply offensive," "unfamiliarity," "socio-political agency," "anti-labels," "something to rally around," and "no matter what, it'll always be pejorative," emerged over time.

Too Hurtful

As suspected, we encountered some self-identifying (predominantly "out") LGBTQIA individuals who experienced adolescence in the 1970s, and 80s who claimed that *queer* should never be reclaimed because it is "too hurtful." These individuals report *queer* was a pejorative weapon used to bully and explicitly hurt them during their childhood years. Schools, playgrounds, and other situations where children were allowed socialization were particular sites of abuse. For them, *queer* brought them back to these spaces and it downright hurt. However, there was some hope that over time, many of these individuals discussed the possibility of reclamation as a healing process.

An Outing

Self-identifying LGBTQIA individuals who are publicly "closeted" and who grew up in the 1960s and earlier were, for the most part, strongly against *queer*. They experienced harassment with the term *queer* as children, but also during formative years when they began dating, establishing careers, and thinking about families. Their experiences with *queer* tended to communicate that the safest place was "in the closet." And to this day, though they might be casually known to be lesbian, gay, and so on to close friends, they would

never admit this publicly on campus, let alone that they are *queer*. They told us that in present day, the current LGBTQIA community on campus (as they perceive it) protects their "closeted" or "private" sexual status. They fear that if the LGBTQIA community adopted *queer*, the community might become more radicalized. This radicalization might place undue pressure for those who were "not out" to "be out." This was an interesting perspective: these faculty members understood *queer* to be an inclusive umbrella term that might attempt to "force" community, and if they resisted, they could be further alienated by the very community that once provided them with some protection.

"It Is Simply Offensive"

"It is simply offensive" was a common response by many of the heterosexual individuals we talked to on campus. The "it is simply offensive" reaction, in our perception, was a shallow response given by people who never really thought about *queer*, nor have a relationship with the LGBTQIA/*queer* community. Some students who just "came out" also lacked a LGBTQIA/*queer* community and were, therefore, "fence-sitters." They often responded, "well…I don't know, but I think it is just offensive." These students likely did not experience much *queer* bullying—it was more likely that they experienced "gay bashing" in the 1990s, 2000s—and reported that more of their concern in coming out came from family and religious ideology, not necessarily out of peer rejection.

Unfamiliarity

Students and university employees alike have been found to resist *queer* because they are simply unfamiliar with the fact that it has been reclaimed—that it, *queer*, is a positively oriented term, and that it builds community and recognizes and celebrates sexual and gender variation. So at first, these individuals are reluctant to use *queer* because they "do not know." Then, they feel like it might be "bad" because they "do not know." And finally, after some discussion, most think it is okay because now "they know."

Socio-Political Agency

Many *queer* employees on campus tell stories regarding their limited socio-political agency. For instance, one faculty member shared his frustration that whenever he runs for elected committee work for which he is well suited (e.g., University Gender and Social Justice Committee) he never gets voted in by his peers. He believes this is, in part, because he considers him-

self *queer*, instead of gay or straight. The Sexuality & Gender Institute (SGI) offers another example: they provide a popular lecture series featuring prominent *queer* scholars from across the U.S.; however, the university does not grant them large physical spaces to accommodate the crowd of faculty, students, administrators, staff, and community members that attend. Only small lecture halls become "available" to the Institute while the best performance spaces on campus go empty. The Institute is told that "the university must keep those spaces open so they can be ready to accommodate special performances." Many who attend the Institute's lectures sit on the floor or are denied entry because the room reaches full capacity. And recently there have been debates around whether or not LGBTQIA and Sexual and Diversity Committees should rename themselves "*Queer*" or simply adopt *queer* as an official identifier. Many are concerned that if these bodies are recognized *queer* they "might not be taken seriously" and "would lose support on campus and in the community."

Anti-Labels

Though "*queer*" is a label, some claim that it holds transformative power to transcend other stale, stagnant, and restrictive labels as "lesbian," "gay," "straight," and so on. Identifying as one of these restrictive labels oftentimes leaves no room within the label for exploring one's true sexual identity, gender identity, and gender expression, and attempts to deviate from these labels often result in backlash from multiple groups that expect strict adherence to said label. *Queer* acts as an umbrella term and allows flexibility within an identity. It frees *queers* from pressure to act within a certain set of socially defined rules.

Something to Rally Around

For some—particularly students—*queer* has become a term to cling to, rally around, and identify with. It helped provide them with a sense of belonging and community. It gave them a way to bond through *queer* similarity, rather than being one of the letters in the acronym LGBTQIA. And because of *queer*'s inclusive nature, virtually anyone who understands sexuality and gender as multiple, fluid, and flexible, could be part of this community.

No Matter What, It'll Always be Pejorative

The final theme we encountered emerged predominantly from conversations with faculty and staff. Employees of the university were largely con-

cerned about reclaiming *queer* because, "no matter what, to someone, *queer* will always be pejorative and used as a weapon." To which pro-*queer* individuals, mostly students, responded, "Exactly! So we need to reclaim it!"

Emergent Understandings: Us/Our Lived Experiences

Ella: No one has ever asked me if I am queer. *Between being Vice President of Darien State's GSA, being President of the Silencing the Hate Planning Committee and a student advisory board member of the Sexuality and Gender Institute, I'm sure there are some people who have wondered. Only on occasion, my sexuality has come into question.*

I have noticed that the overwhelming majority of people assume that I am straight, and if I am not straight, then I must be a lesbian. People never seem to guess an "in-between," nor do they ever go for a label that allows for more flexibility. Nonetheless, there came a point where some of the people closest to me were confused, and they wanted to know WHAT I was. But more importantly, I wanted to know who I was. I sought for an identity. I wanted something that, like me, was not restrictive. Before I went on this project, identifying as queer *was never something that had ever really occurred to me. I was never opposed to identifying that way, but it never occurred to me that I could identify as* queer. *I wasn't sure what it meant to be* queer, *and when it came to identifying as a word, I thought it had to be as specific as possible to satiate the questioners. For me, "pansexual" used to be that perfect word because it meant that I just liked a person for who a person was, not for how they identified or what they have in their pants.*

But what about my own identity? Yes, this explains who I like, but what does this say about who I am? It's not that I feel uncomfortable in my own body. I like being biologically female (although I will admit that sometimes I wonder what it would be like to be born male, it doesn't mean that I'm jumping to make myself that way), but I wouldn't really say that this means that I am cis-gendered. Using queer *is flexible. It's encompassing, and for me, it's comfortable. It doesn't need to mean "I have this but like this and like expressing myself in this specific way but here are these exceptions blah blah blah." This research gave me the opportunity to "try* queer *on." It didn't leave me in a desperate search for other terms to use to explain the other aspects of myself. I liked identifying as* queer. *It gave me lots of room to act out my identity accordingly, and my identifying as* queer *didn't seem to make anyone uncomfortable. In fact, there were some that embraced it.*

"I love queer*!" My friend Ben was particularly excited about embracing it as an identity. "Wait. Let me begin this by saying that I*

absolutely hate labels. But queer *is great; you can use it for gender and sexuality, and you don't have to feel confined by it. Like, yes, I'm gay, but I wouldn't say I'm 100% gay. Maybe, like, 96%. But what if I found a woman that I ended up falling in love with and wanted to spend the rest of my life with? I'd get so much scrutiny from the gay community. Using* queer *allows me to not worry about that."*

Ben wasn't the only person who felt this way; Josiah, another friend of mine, found queer *to be not only great for breaking down labels, but also as an opportunity to make the LGBTQIA community more inclusive. "It's such a charged word, and I know there are people that are more hesitant to use it, but I think it's a great way to unify people as opposed to just constantly adding letters to the LGBT community. It should be reclaimed!"*

More often than not, those who I talked to were in favor of personally identifying as queer. *The question of using it as an umbrella term, however, revealed a fear of offending others.*

"Bring the word around again, fine by me…but what about everyone else?" Betsy, a full-time employee at Darien State responded to the idea of using queer *as an umbrella term.*

"I think it's great that queer *is being used as an umbrella term, but you can't just force it onto people," Jessica, a fellow student and president of the GSA, responded. "You can't go up to them and be like, 'oh, well, you're* queer *now!' We just need to use it ourselves and see where it goes from there."*

"There's no point in reclaiming the term," Samantha, another student, said. "Using it won't make the word any better because it's not the word that is negative. It's the perception."

Samantha was right. A word is a word, and the perception is how we define it. We give and take away power from words. So why is it that a term that has been academically accepted and reclaimed, one that is a label in the LGBTQIA community, one that is still so shunned? If the issue isn't the word, why can't we take the power into our own hands? Why can't we claim it as our own, embrace it, and take that negativity and turn it into an empowering, positive force?

Andrea, another student and board member of the GSA, expressed her preference to using "gender and sexual minority" to queer. *But what constitutes a gender and sexual minority? And what constitutes what is "normal"? It was fascinating to note that those who were afraid of reclaiming* queer *for the entirety of the community were soon quick to adhere to societal constructs that create these illusions of what a minority is. Using* queer *as opposed to referring to oneself as a "minority" not only challenges what we perceive to be normal, but also becomes more-inclusive with all aspects of this community, unifying those who differ from the heteronor-*

mative through sexual identity, gender identity, or gender expression, as opposed to only referring to select groups.

What I found in these conversations was that people who identified as a part of the LGBT community didn't necessarily oppose identifying themselves as queer*, but rather feared that using the term would offend others within the community. The most confusion and controversy proved not to come from those who I talked to who are within this community, but rather those who identified as heteronormative.*

"Wait. Your professor is straight…married…and has two kids. How can he identify as queer*? That's just ridiculous," one of my roommates, Andrew, responded when I explained to him the premise of this research.*

"Why?" I asked.

"It's going to cause such controversy for the LGBT community. If random people just start identifying as queer*, it's going to give people who are already against them more reason to attack it. Like, it's one thing if you're actually gay or something, but he's married to a woman with a family."*

"If Ella were to get married to a man and have children, it wouldn't change the fact that she's queer*," Sam, one of my other roommates who self-identifies as an ally, joined in the conversation.*

"Yeah, but she's actually queer*. Here's a straight guy just identifying as* queer *even though he's straight."*

"It's not just for people who aren't straight. Think of it this way. You're black, but you also identify as Puerto Rican. Just because you're one doesn't mean you're not the other." Although Sam doesn't identify as queer*, she understands.*

"So you're going to make everyone identify as queer*?"*

"We're not going to MAKE people identify. That's the point of an identity; you can't identify with it if you don't see yourself as that."

"I just don't get it."

I think what those who are hesitant to use the word queer *fear, more than directly hurting someone by it, is giving out proverbial ammunition to groups that seek to use the word negatively. I admit that after seeing the fear some people had in using* queer*, I started becoming fearful of having the term be something that could potentially offend and hurt others. The last thing that I ever wanted to do was to hurt the people that I love in identifying as something that brought them so much pain.*

It was in this moment of doubt that I was shown something that changed my life forever.

Andrea, the supporter of using the term "gender and sexual minorities," had commented, "I think we should go back to the Victorian Era, where the word queer *was used to mean 'things that were weird.'" While*

we all laughed at the joke, I thought about it and realized that I don't want to go back. I don't think that going back will do anything for us, and when it comes to using queer, *I don't think that standing still and giving the word a pejorative power is going to do anything for us. Reclaiming this word has the potential to be a unifying, powerful experience. It has shown itself to be a healing process for those who have once been hurt by the word, so why would we want to stand still? As Samantha herself admitted, it is not the word that is hurtful. It is the perception of the word. The only way this word can remain negative is if we LET it remain negative. I, for one, am not going to give it the pejorative power anymore.*

My name is Ella, and I am queer.

Madison: My relationship with the queer *community began in earnest in high school. I was encouraged by someone who was a friend at that time to join the GSA. It was unlike anything I had experienced previously. I admired the upperclassmen who had helped form the group, and I became very close with one of them in particular. Thanks to him I gained, among other things, insight into the* queer *community—through things he explained to me, people I met through him, and experiences I shared with him. As the years went on I continued to explore my identity, largely within the context of* queer*ness. Upon moving, and later enrolling in Darien State University and becoming involved with its GSA, my experiences with the* queer *community only increased. I saw the good and ugly sides of student organizations, but one thing that never seemed to fade, however much drama there might sometimes have been, was the sense that we were all* queer *and thus intrinsically linked by that* queer*ness.*

I have been greatly influenced by many people in my exploration, understanding, and acceptance of not only the term queer, *but especially what it represents. Amber, former president of Allies (now the GSA at Darien State) introduced me to a broader, more inclusive world that was previously unknown to me. Joining the National Equality March was the first time I had ever participated in such a* queer *event, and it was certainly a memorable induction. It helped make me aware of the extensive nature of the* queer *community, and the diversity that exists within it. It was during this period of my life that I also began attending Pride events that, like the March, were "Meccas" of* queer*ness. These events played a role in solidifying for me the value in having something like this to rally around.*

I believe I've also helped influence the perspectives of others, especially my family. As far as I know, I am the only openly queer *person in my family. My family, both immediate and extended, has watched my iden-*

tity shift and transmute, wondering (sometimes aloud) when it would solidify. I have identified with, and do still identify with, many of the "letters" in the "alphabet soup," and I think this has made it especially difficult for my family to reconcile who or what I am—not only to them, but also in general. I've been fortunate in that most of my family has been quietly welcoming, or at least not polemic. Still, the only person in my family who has made a truly concerted effort to step out of their comfort zone and understand my experience of queer*ness is my sister. My parents, still in some ways stuck in a different era of thought, seem sometimes to see things as very black and white. My sister, Carly, close to me in age, has an easier time understanding that identity can be (and often is) a malleable thing over which we have much influence. Carly, despite her own difficulties at first accepting my* queer*ness, has been especially encouraging in every part of my exploration of self, more so than I had ever expected, and I suspect that this exploration of self has helped her in better understanding not only me or* queer *people in general, but also who she is. I think, to some degree, this could also be said about my parents; despite their difficulty in reconciling with the volatility of my identity they have shown through their actions that they love me no matter who or what I am—even if they don't fully understand it.*

I think it is also fair to say that I've had some influence on the university community. When I first started at Darien State, I was very uncertain of myself and presented myself in a largely heteronormative fashion, though as time went on I became more confident. I continued my involvement with our GSA, particularly in my first few semesters, and performed in shows like the Laramie Project and the Vagina Monologues, which helped me not only in exploring my identity, but in more openly expressing it. Thus, as I began to more openly express my identity, particularly in a queer *way, it seemed to me that acquaintances had to reconceive who, and what, I was. Some people backed away, while others remained a part of my life. It was this ebb and flow of relationships at the university that helped me better realize how desperately many people wish to box in others as quickly and easily as possible with clearly recognizable labels. While at times I admit I have desired to give in to this and be what they want me to be, on the whole it has encouraged me to defy this paradigm as openly as possible. Gruff, delicate, masculine, impulsive, uptight, careful, reckless, effeminate, feminine, fun, dull, peculiar, exciting, woman, man—these are all words that could describe me at various points in my time at Darien State. Many of these constructs are generally thought of as mutually exclusive, completely dichotomous. This has forced others to continually reevaluate how they perceive me and, it is my hope that this has helped open their minds.*

Now, I relate to queer*ness in a variety of ways. In my first experiences with* queer *people, in middle school and especially high school, I began to question my sexuality, wondering if I might be bisexual. As time went on, I began to question not only my sexuality but my gender identity as well. I learned about transsexual individuals, people who were born as one sex and "transitioned" into living as the gender associated with another sex. I felt certain that this was a part of myself, and spent many years exploring this. At the time, it was my entire reality, and I went to great lengths to express my identity—changing my legal name, taking hormones, and so on. Eventually I began to perceive flaws in transsexuality, in much the same way I had perceived flaws in heteronormativity. I realized I was more "gender*queer*" than anything else (gender*queer *people are those who identify somewhere within or even outside of the spectrum of the typical man-woman binary). I became familiar with the concept of pansexuality (loving other humans for the sake of who they are as an individual, not based upon sex or gender) and embraced it. Even in terms of relationships I have found monogamy extremely restricting, experimenting with and finally embracing polyamory (put succinctly, maintaining more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved). Even in all these labels and identities I have continued to find cracks and flaws that irk me, and I have continually broadened my scope of identity. At this point in my life, I am* queer*. And though I advocate for* queer*, I feel we must transcend it too. If I could choose a label that best fits me, I would say simply that I am a human being who wishes to share love with other humans. One cannot get much broader than "human," and this human identity has provided flexibility that allows me to open up to people, ideas, and situations from which I feel other labels would have precluded me.*

Charles: "Dr. Nissley talks about 'gay stuff' too much," read one of my first teaching evaluations received at Darien State. I am positive I know which student wrote this—Kevin, an Early Childhood major in my Foundations of Modern Education class. He was a conservative Christian male who often sat arms crossed, red in the face, eyes burning under his camouflaged hunting cap. I sensed he "hated me." Kevin felt uneasy with any talk of diversity—and was particularly disturbed by the one class (an entire one hour and fifteen minutes) I devoted to discussing sex and gender. This student "tanked me" on my teacher evaluations—the most important tool in evaluating faculty at Darien State.

Over the past two years, students like Kevin have provided me with a unique challenge. As a faculty member, I know it to be my ethical and professional responsibility to provide my teacher candidates with a realis-

tic picture of education in the U.S. I also understand that "teacher education seems to persistently cling to frameworks that do not insist on the incorporation of LGBTQ lives and communities."[39] *This includes making some sense of the issues that exist for students who "live on the margins" or what challenges they might face because of their sexual orientation or gender identification in (a sometimes relentless, homophobic, and unforgiving) public school system. Because of this the Kevins in my classes have believed me to be all things evil: "progressive," "Democratic," "gay," "un-Christian," and "intolerant of their values." Believe me, I am no radical. I do not use my classroom as a bully pulpit. Rather we engage in centrist readings like Andrew Smiler's "Unintentional Gender Lessons in the Schools,"*[40] *Sapon-Shevin's "Gender, Sexuality, and Social Justice in Education,"*[41] *Cosier's "Making Safe Schools for Queer Youth,"*[42] *and excerpts from Thorne's* Gender Play,[43] *Pascoe's* Dude You're a Fag,[44] *and Richardson's* eleMENtary School.[45] *Most students find these readings, and our class discussion that follows to be helpful. But Kevin, and others like him, threaten my livelihood—they nail me on my evaluations and hope that the university finds me as an ineffective educator.*

As you can imagine, because of teaching experiences like this, I remained reserved in using queer *in class. I used LGBT or LGBTQIA. But still, the fact that we even broached the subject of sex and gender, despite any reserved acronym usage, it still "pissed off" some of my students. So this past semester, as I was deeply engaged in this research, and out of frustration, I decided to use* queer. *I identified myself as* queer *to my students, and I have worked to normalize this term in my classroom. Though students like Kevin remain stalwart, most of my other students have found it "liberating."*

Chelsea, a quiet, mild-mannered daughter of a Methodist minister, told me after class, "Dr. Nissley, I think I'm queer*! I mean, I only like boys," she said smiling, "but I know, like you described, that sex and gender is flexible…I don't want to get too personal, but I totally see how like me, or my friends, have different relationships with different people…like, with my ex-boyfriend we had one kind of [sexual] relationship, and with my current boyfriend it's different. I liked both, but differently. And I always felt like I kind of wanted to be a bigger part of the* queer *community…but it was intimidating because I didn't know all of the letters…LGBXYZ…"*

Mark also shared his frustration over the LGBTQIA acronym by telling my class, "I totally avoided students who were in my high school GSA because I didn't even know what to call them. I thought I'd mess up the whole 'LGBT' thing and 'QIA' I'm still not sure I know what it means. But, Dr. Nissley, now I feel like by using queer *I can finally talk to*

them…like I'm not going to violate their code or be so politically incorrect. I don't know that I'd go so far to say I'm queer *but if I can just use that term, it sets my mind at ease."*

Lynn "came out" in class and told us of her frustration in relating to others in the LGBTQIA community, "Ok," she said with a trembling voice but wide grin, "so I like don't know how to say this because I never really said it like 'out' I guess. But I'm definitely not straight. But I don't know what I am. But I think that queer *is really good. I kind of have 'double the trouble' because I'm Latina and I'm not straight. It is, I feel, like being Puerto Rican and not straight is different. I went to some [GSA] group here on campus and I was one of the only ones who wasn't white. I just felt they weren't going to get me—and it was like I felt like they all knew their sexuality. So, I never went back. But I think because like you're* queer*, Dr. Nissley," she laughed, "like I can be like that. Like I feel like we're closer, like I'm not some freak for not knowing."*

Ryan, a self-identifying, openly gay (and now queer*) male, told me in my office one day, "Dr. Nissley, when I heard you use* queer *in class for the first time, I was so happy. I know it was like, 'reclaimed' but I never actually heard it in that way. It wasn't in my high school. It's just awesome."*

For my students, I am happy. I have built a community in my own classroom where students feel safe, and they recognize that queer*(ness) unites, is a community builder, and a serious area of study. On campus too, I am recognized as embodying* queer*.* Queer *students who I don't know find confidence to walk up to me and say things like, "Hey! You're that sex guy!" They see me as part of their community. I am (finally) not just an "ally."*

My colleagues struggle to accept my queer*ness. Most of my colleagues are generations older than me and find my very existence sometimes rattling. Since I am fairly new to the university, many are still trying to get to know me. When I mention my "partner" they say politely, "Oh…you're gay," or "Where did you meet him?" I politely say back, "No, I'm not gay, I identify* queer*." In their minds, this still means gay. If the conversation evolves and I talk about my children, eventually something regarding adoption comes up. I respond, "We weren't closed to adoption, but they are our biological children." I don't mean to (mis)lead my colleagues or "put them on," but rather, I feel as though if I take time to constantly "translate" my orientation and understandings of gender and sexuality, I violate the sincere manners in which I identify and believe important. In other words, they would not take my* queer*ness seriously.*

On the other end of the spectrum, some see my queer *identification to be "generous" because it forwards/advocates for our "sexually diverse"*

student population. I recognize that I have significant agency in academia, and the world in general, as a white, middle class, male. When I am perceived to queer *this agency, some of my colleagues find it deeply "honorable." This is troubling for me on one hand because my* queer *identification is not a ploy at advocacy or to "give up" my privilege. It is simply my identity. Yes, my* queer*ness does bring me into/helps create a community with students, faculty, and others who identify* queer*, and together we create and enjoy some new socio-political agency—there is strength in numbers. However, my* queer*ness is not "created" on the premise of forwarding an agenda of advocacy. And I'm definitely not identifying* queer *to be "generous."*

It is evident that my queer *life on campus, and in class, acts as an educative example for my students. However, at this point it confounds my colleagues—hopefully* queer *reclamation will help educate them to think differently.*

Conclusion

We worked hard to understand the complexity behind the resistance and reclamation of *queer*. And though *queer* on campus remains contested, since our research began we have witnessed considerable movement toward acceptance, and some new desire, to reclaim the term. We believe that this simply emerged by our research as an educative act; by (finally) broaching the subject of *queer* reclamation, it provided those who were immobilized, indifferent, or opposed the opportunity to become emergently critically *queer*. Those who were already queer became boldly critically *queer*.

We also noticed that since we engaged in this research process, our identities became more naturally *queer*. For example, we all organically identified ourselves *queer* in scenarios in which we perhaps would not have a few months ago. That is, we have become more self-actualized and embodied *queer* in new ways important to us as individuals. Ella, who had normally refrained from outright identifying as *queer,* has become more vocal in not only self-identifying as *queer*, but in being more expressive of her *queer*ness in other aspects of her life. She has found herself being less afraid of being scrutinized for her sexual identity, has dressed androgynously, and has actively engaged in discussions with many people about the notion of using *queer* as an umbrella term with more self-identifying heteronormative people. These discussions have also inspired her to increase her activism for the *queer* community; very recently, she went with a small group of Darien State students to Washington, D.C. to protest the National Organization for Marriage's rally while the Supreme Court listened to oral arguments on both the DOMA and Prop 8 trials. Madison, while already somewhat open in

terms of sexual orientation, gender identity, and general *queer*ness, has been opening up even more so. With a firm foundation of support from others who use and identify with the term *queer*, and the confidence that using *queer* makes sense and has value, Madison now uses the term *queer* more openly, often, and with less hesitation, even going so far as to wear the word boldly around campus; in support of Silencing the Hate Week, blank shirts with "I AM _____" were handed out to students, and Madison proudly filled in the blank: *QUEER*. And Charles, perhaps perceived the "least *queer*" by others, found himself modifying his physical representations with make-up and androgynous clothing without fear of retaliation by administrators or colleagues. He considers this a personal and professional victory given his pre-tenure status.

Our willingness to untangle and re-tangle *queer* for ourselves, as people of the university, and through research, resulted in our lives becoming lived educative examples ultimately benefitting the reclamation. Also, it provided us an important space to be *queer* and "flaunt it." Quinn and Meiners encourage, "Movement building and sustaining is about *acting* and *feeling* for justice…" and to forward *queer*, colleagues and allies must employ the "anti-covering, even stigma-cherishing, strategy—*flaunting* it—as a way to push back at constraints placed on us in public spaces, including education…" The push back, the anti-reclamation faction, must be met with more education from more reclaimed *queers* like us, who flaunt it—by keeping *queer* celebrations, issues, struggles, victories, and feelings—"even angry love"—public.[46]

It remains unclear if the university will face political or economic repercussions from the surrounding conservative community if *queer* becomes fully reclaimed. And we still wonder if a strong, vocal *queer* community would be understood, supported, taken seriously, or marginalized by the administration, alumni, donors, and other members of the university who remain "uncomfortable" with *queer*. But largely we remain unconcerned; reclamation, at first, is almost always difficult. Difficulty is to be expected, acknowledged, and even embraced as part of the process—as growing pains. Difficulty (and discomfort) can be employed as transformative agents, having the potential to make deep and meaningful change on campus. With our inquiry, we have become armed with *queer* and invite transformation through difficulty and by further understanding others' lives on campus, future research, and being open to any opportunity as a *queer* opportunity.

Notes

[1] Autoethnographic work does not require confidentiality and anonymity. We, however, chose to use pen names, alter our university's name, and assign pseudonyms to colleagues, friends, and others in our work. It is not because we view this work taboo or that it puts anyone, or the university, at risk. In fact, it is just the oppo-

site. However, we simply agreed to err on the side of caution. If you desire communication with the authors about this article, please contact the editor of *Vitae Scholasticae*.

[2] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978): 95.

[3] Ben Haggerty, *Same Love*, Mackelmore & Ryan Lewis (featuring Mary Lambert), © 2012, Mackelmore LLC, Digital Download.

[4] Darien State University serves approximately 7,700 undergraduate and 1,100 graduate students. Students come from around the world (approximately fifty-four countries) and the U.S. (approximately thirty states). Over the past several decades, the university has put effort into promoting a "diverse student body." This resulted in a campaign to recruit students from various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Recently, however, ensuring that the university student body is also diverse in sexual orientation (and to a lesser extent "gender" since it is still largely conceived as a binary) has become of major concern.

[5] LGBTQIA is the acronym used at Darien State University, so we use it throughout our paper. There are other acronyms used elsewhere. For example, LGBTQQIAAPP: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Ally, Androgynous, Pansexual/Polyamorous; QUILTBAG: Queer/Questioning, Unidentified, Intersex, Lesbian, Transgender/Transexual, Bisexual, Asexual, Gay, Genderqueer; and so on.

[6] Barbara Tedlock, "From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 69-94.

[7] Carolyn Ellis, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Autoethnography* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2004): 45-48.

[8] As consistent with federal guidelines, our university IRB did not require us to seek approval for an autoethnographic investigation. However, we used pseudonyms for individuals we have included in our work.

[9] Robin Brontsema, "A Queer Revolution: Reconceptualizing the Debate Over Linguistic Reclamation," *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 17, no. 1 (June 2004): 2.

[10] Ibid.

[11] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994): 17.

[12] Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 19.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Brontsema, "A Queer Revolution," 4.

[15] Michael Fraser, "Identity and Representation as Challenges to Social Movement Theory: A Case Study of Queer Nation," in *Mainstream and Margins: Cultural Politics in the 90s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996): 32.

[16] Wayne Dynes, "Queer," *Encycolopedia of Homosexuality* (New York: Garland, 1990): 1091.

[17] Lisa Duggan, "Making it Perfectly Queer," *Socialist Review* 22, no. 1 (1992): 16.

[18] R. Anthony Slagle, "In Defense of Queer Nation: From *Identity Politics* to a *Politics of Difference*," *Western Journal of Communication* 59, (Spring 1995): 85.

[19] Brontsema, "A Queer Revolution," 4.

[20] William F. Pinar, *Queer Theory in Education* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1998): 123; Within three years of de Lauretis' introduction of the term *queer*, she abandoned it because it was becoming too mainstream and embraced by some institutions that it was supposed to unsettle and resist.

[21] e.g., Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[22] e.g., Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[23] e.g., Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (New York: Regents, 1990).

[24] e.g., David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

[25] e.g., Adrienne Rich, *An Atlas of the Difficult World: Poems 1988-1991* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991).

[26] e.g., Diana Fuss *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

[27] Brontsema, "A Queer Revolution," 5.

[28] Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1, no. 1 (November 1993): 19.

[29] Erica R. Meiners, "Remember When All the Cars Were Fords and All the Lesbians Were Women? Some Notes on Identity, Mobility, and Capital," in *Queer Theory in Education*, ed. William F. Pinar. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1998), 123.

[30] Susanne Luhmann, "Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or Pedagogy Is a Pretty Queer Thing," in *Queer Theory in Education*, ed. William F. Pinar. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1998), 145.

[31] Marla Morris, "Unresting the Curriculum: Queer Projects, Queer Imaginings," in *Queer Theory in Education*, ed. William F. Pinar. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1998), 276.

[32] William F. Pinar, *Queer Theory in Education*, 27-28.

[33] D. Jean Clandinin & Michael F. Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco, CA: 2000).

[34] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble.*

[35] Kate Bornstein, *My Gender Workbook: How to Become a Real Man, a Real Woman, The Real You, or Something Else Entirely* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[36] Scott Richardson, *eleMENtary School: (Hyper)Masculinity in a Feminized Context* (Boston: Sense Publishers, 2012).

[37] Raewynn Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[38] "Pomosexual" stands for "postmodern sexual." See: Carol Queen & Lawrence Schimel, *PoMoSexuals: Challenging Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality* (Berkeley, CA: Cleis, 1997).

[39] Therese Quinn & Erica R. Meiners, *Flaunt It! Queers Organizing for Public Education and Justice*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 90.

[40] Andrew Smiler, "Unintentional Gender Lessons in the Schools," in *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*, eds. William Ayers, Therese Quinn and David Stovall. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[41] Mara Sapon-Shevin, "Gender Sexuality, and Social Justice in Education," in *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*, eds. William Ayers, Therese Quinn and David Stovall. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[42] Kimberly Cosier, "Creating Safe Schools for Queer Youth," in *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*, eds. William Ayers, Therese Quinn and David Stovall. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[43] Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in Schools* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

[44] C.J. Pascoe, *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[45] Scott Richardson, *eleMENtary School: (Hyper)Masculinity in a Feminized Context*.

[46] Therese Quinn and Erica R. Meiners, 100.

Book Review:
Chaddock, *The Multi-Talented Mr. Erskine: Shaping Mass Culture through Great Books and Fine Music*

Judith Weaver Failoni
Fontbonne University

Katherine Elise Chaddock. *The Multi-Talented Mr. Erskine: Shaping Mass Culture through Great Books and Fine Music*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. ISBN 978-0-230-11775-4. 255 pages.

Multi-talented John Erskine (1879-1951) is known to the music world as the first president of the Juilliard School of Music, to the literary world as an essayist, novelist, and poet, to educators as the "Great Books" promoter and capable administrator, to Hollywood as a source for movies, and to the general public of the 1920s-1940s as a performer, popular lecturer, and radio personality. Katherine Elise Chaddock gives us a fascinating panoramic view of Erskine's "expansive manner, multitudinous interests," and takes us on "his journey from public intellectual to prominent celebrity" (178).

From childhood through doctoral study at Columbia University, Erskine's main interests were music and literature. Though he chose to specialize in literature, he became an accomplished pianist, and his dissertation on the lyrics of the Elizabethan age paid homage to both fields. Chaddock indicates that Erskine's lifelong, adamant belief that fine arts and literature should be available to all Americans regardless of their background probably stems from his first teaching position, at Amherst College, in 1903. Encountering students with backgrounds different from his own was a shock, and from this experience he began to explore ways to teach his favorite subjects.

In 1909, Erskine returned to Columbia as a faculty member and proposed

his "Great Books" curriculum, which consisted of western civilization classics of literature, history, and philosophy that were taught in small seminar groups. During World War I he transferred his "Great Books" idea to soldiers at the American Expeditionary Forces University in Beaune, France, which he helped direct. He returned to the United States with the "democratic intent of bringing educational emblems of the highbrow elite to a far larger audience that now sought higher learning opportunities" (81-82). Chaddock includes many examples of Erskine's reputation as a great teacher who could instill passion and knowledge, although some of his colleagues disapproved of the classics being read in translation and worried that he was promoting the "Great Books" for "exploratory enjoyment, not academic inquiry" (88). This anti-intellectual stigma of his approach to teaching would haunt him for the rest of his career. However, as Chaddock points out, despite its detractors, the "Great Books" idea was to have a large influence on American higher education as students and colleagues took the idea to other institutions like the University of Chicago.

Throughout his career, Erskine wrote poetry, literary and music criticism, and essays about teaching. To his colleagues' surprise, he also penned many novels and magazine serials that were sequels to traditional stories such as his novel *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*. Due to these works' popularity and their movie adaptations, he found himself in demand for lecture tours and radio interviews. He added piano performance to his lectures with the intent to teach music and literature through popular means. Chaddock gives us a balanced view of Erskine's fame and monetary success by describing his lifestyle and his popular and professional recognition and awards, along with the mocking of his celebrity status by those who felt he damaged his academic reputation.

Erskine's interest in music and his capable administrative efforts did not go unnoticed. He was hired in 1928 by the Juilliard Musical Foundation to become the first president of what would become the new Juilliard School of Music. His formidable task was to merge two separate entities, the Juilliard Graduate School and the Institute of Musical Arts. Though this was a challenging undertaking, he proved to be an able leader in designing a curriculum and an admission process, finding better facilities, and establishing outreach programs. One example of his outreach was his radio show in which he gave piano lessons, because he believed that a school that trains artists has the responsibility to prepare an audience for them. Though the Juilliard School of Music would become a virtuoso training ground, he felt the music should reach all Americans. His Juilliard ideas became the basis for several prestigious music conservatories, like the Curtis Institute.

After a stroke in 1937, Erskine retired from the Juilliard School of Music. He no longer played the piano, but he resumed writing fiction and music cri-

tique and he continued to bring music and literature to many Americans through his popular lecture tours and radio programs. He never abandoned his "Great Books" idea and in his later years he served on the educational advisory board of the Encyclopedia Britannica's *The Great Books of the Western World*.

In assessing Erskine's multifaceted career, Chaddock poses three theories: either 1) he was a "brilliant and multi-talented educator who sold out to commercial inclination," or 2) he should be "elevated to the pedestal of benevolent caretaker… chipping away at elitism… and enabling average citizens access to good taste and able intellect," or 3) he was a pioneer into "celebrity professor territory" that paved the way for later educators like Carl Sagan (181). Fortunately, Chaddock never presents Erskine's career in a vacuum, but rather provides good details about current events, politics, friends, colleagues, and students, as well as his lavish lifestyle and financial situations, and love affairs and marriages, all of which impacted his decisions. We have much to digest about the influences on and of Erskine's professional life. Chaddock's research gives us meticulous citations and notes, drawing from Erskine's own words as well as published and unpublished accounts by his contemporaries and material from several universities' archives. The book includes an extensive bibliography about Erskine and related topics such as the Great Books and the ever-changing college curriculum.

Chaddock provides insight into Erskine's contributions to many fields and his ideas about higher education that are still relevant today as American universities continue to reflect on their mission. In presenting the struggle between his intellectual interests and the success of his popular pursuits, she refrains from making judgments, but instead allows us to focus on his most significant achievements: the "Great Books" program, his accomplishments making fine music and literature accessible to everyone, and the international prominence of the Juilliard School of Music. Besides being a respected poet, novelist, musician, and educational administrator throughout his life, he was also America's foremost teacher through his lectures and performances. Chaddock's book lets us know that Mr. Erskine was a multi-talented man indeed!

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