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Editor's Note

"As so in biographies in our day, so with Isocrates: Individual life-stories, whether real or imagined, spill into the political" (Poulakos, this volume).

This issue of *Vitae Scholasticae: The Journal of Educational Biography*, reflects the diversity of contemporary life writing. We include articles based in three different genres, a review essay, book reviews, and a reflection on favorite biographies in a reading world in which there are "too many biographies, and too little time." These texts often "spill" into the political.

The volume opens with Takis Poulakos' artful consideration of Isocrates' work on Evagoras (a King of Cyprus who died in 374 B.C.) as an early biographical work. His essay situates Isocrates' work in its historical context and traces tensions in the craft that will resonate with contemporary biographers. In particular, Poulakos credits Isocrates with "framing biography within a rhetoric of praise," that reflects Isocrates' awareness of the potential of using life stories as tools to persuade an audience for political ends. This work is followed with Jim Gentry's auto/biographical essay focused on coming to learn with dyslexia. Gentry first positions his essay as part of a "wild biographical collage" of texts on people with learning exceptionalities. He details his philosophical choice as a learner, teacher, and writer to "focus on the positive." He then shifts into a colorful account that includes varied childhood escapades with tar, pictorial language, typewriter correction tape, and learning the alphabet, a challenge that made him wonder if he would be an "old man" before ever "getting out of kindergarten." In the third essay, Donna Sharp presents a feminist oral history with a fellow teacher that champions "every day" teaching work. In exploring the teacher's reflections on her professional life, Sharp leaves us with a hint of the value of women's hidden stories and resistance to the widespread condemnation of educators.

The reviews in this volume connect to other pressing contemporary educational issues. Historian Karen Graves offers an essay on Boyles and Potts' biography of the intellectual life of Joseph Kinmont Hart

(1876-1949). A prolific scholar at the turn of the century, Hart taught at numerous universities and wrote with a fierce, unrelenting commitment to the principle of academic freedom. Graves underscores the continuing salience of Hart's principles evidenced in Boyles and Potts' well-researched biography for our contemporary climate rife with threats to intellectual rigor, to thoughtful public dialogue, and to the mission of education in a democracy.

In the second review, Jessica Glover's analysis of Richardson's study of gender practices in school highlights enduring intricacies of patriarchal practices and gendered sextyping in schools, as well as the importance of education—in students' hands—as a site for change. David Snelgrove's reflection on Stack's text on the Arthurdale Community School in Appalachia rounds out this volume's reviews. While rooted in depression-era Appalachia, the text foregrounds the broad consequences of economic forces on people's experiences of "community" and the role of the school as a potential site for cultivating a sense of "identity, place and community." Snelgrove details both the promise and problems this school-community model of education faced at the time.

In the final essay, we introduce a new section of the journal, "Reflections and Applications," that invites creative reflections and pedagogical applications of life writing, with an essay by Karen McKellips developed from her presentation at the *The Society of Philosophy and History of Education* annual meeting. In reflecting on her current list of biographical "favorites," McKellips conveys the value of biographies for teaching educational history, her attachments to texts that center female subjects, and the historical cost of educational inequities to women's self-actualization. Readers will relate to both McKellips' affection for favorite texts and her struggles to wrestle the potential candidates into a manageable list. While the biographies vary in fame, her collective reflections render visible the individual, familial, educational, community, and political engagements we readers experience with books.

As Blumer argued in the late 1960s with the lens of symbolic interactionism, we interact with objects (such as biographies) on the basis of their meaning for us.[1] Biographies invite readers to embrace temporal fluidity through recalling memories of savoring a particular book for the first time; imagining the author's historical context; remembering the key relationships and events that ushered the book into our lives; comparing and contrasting our lives with the book content; and always interpreting anew as we shift in time and place. Books foster relationships as well. In one example, McKellips describes receiving a book from a family member who purchased it from a community member's estate sale, a circumstance that evokes her memory of the woman who originally owned the book,

reflections on women's authorship historically, and the relative who bought the book for her: McKellips' life with books, woven with others' lives with books.

We are approaching our 35th anniversary of *VS* next year, and will be publishing a focused volume on the topic of Family Methodologies, the art and science of conducting research *with* and *on* "family." In 2018, we are also issuing a call for papers that explore intersections between technologies and life writing, whether through diverse data collection tools, new sites for conducting life writing, or the digital archives and tools used to preserve such materials. We are interested in research and methodological essays that explore the puzzles and promise involved in such intersections. We look forward to your submissions and we welcome you as readers.

— Lucy E. Bailey

Notes

[1] Harold Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1986).

The Educational Ends of the "First" Biography in Classical Greece

Takis Poulakos

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One of many ancients to explore the genre of biography, the Athenian rhetorician Isocrates is reputed to be the first to have written a detailed account of a person's life, in a form still recognizable today as biographical;[1] that is, a series of events arranged in linear sequence from birth to death and shaped into a life story. By today's standards, Isocrates' biography of Evagoras—a lengthy exaltation of the recently deceased king of Cyprus—comes across as a verbose chronicle laden with exaggerated praise and magnified significance. But to those interested in the origins of biography, this work provides a rare opportunity to witness this genre in the early stages of its formation. As is the case with any literary form, the "first" instance of a genre always turns out to be a consolidation of previously existing formal elements and generic traits. And so it is with Isocrates' "invention" of the genre of biography. His was a version of biography borne out of a long tradition of orators and poets who had infused biographical elements into their songs and orations of praise. In addition to being a rhetorician experimenting with a new genre, Isocrates was an educator, a teacher of rhetoric, who used his works as textbooks for his students' learning. This brings an added interest to the *Evagoras*. For the new configuration of praise manifested in this work—as the life

story of a person, rendered in a chronological order of real events—comes into existence as a form developed not only out of the rhetorical and poetic traditions of praise but also within a historically specific educational context. More than borrowing from his predecessors their practices of infusing biography into established forms of praise, he appropriated these practices for educational purposes and aligned them to his own pedagogical ends. This essay examines the link between biography and education by exploring the process through which Isocrates developed this genre out of the rhetorical and poetic traditions of praise; it also explores how the process he followed on the way to achieving a fully developed biographical account was guided by his deliberate efforts to make this new genre serve pedagogical ends intrinsic to his program in rhetorical education.

The Rhetorical Tradition of Praise

Prior to Isocrates, the tradition of praise was established by the first teachers of rhetoric, the Sophists, who advertised their craft to potential students through clever renderings of mythical stories familiar to their audience. Later on classified by Aristotle as belonging to the third branch of rhetoric—epideictic—these display pieces were delivered as public lectures before audiences gathered to witness the new craft of using language eloquently and to assess the visiting speaker's ability as prospective tutor. The best known example of this tradition is Gorgias' "Encomium of Helen,"[2] an oration aimed at reversing the reputation of Helen of Troy from a woman who betrayed her husband, her king, and her country to an innocent victim taken away by force (*bia*), seduced by love (*eros*), or persuaded by words (*logos*). Other lesser known orations by the Sophists include Protagoras' "Great Speech,"[3] which lauds the civic arts as the most important factor in the progress of humankind toward civilization; and Prodicus' "Heracles at the Crossroads,"[4] which pronounces an implicit praise of the life of virtue that Heracles ended up choosing over the more facile and pleasurable life of vice. Through their unique retelling of ancient myths, the Sophists put a distinctive stamp on the rhetorical tradition of praise: displaying dexterity in eloquence and persuasion through a gesture of praise that demonstrated an orators' ability to teach students interested in the effective uses of language.

In the Sophists' handling of the rhetoric of praise, biography makes its mark in terms of "factual" information associated with the subject of praise. Gorgias, for example, includes in his speech the "fact" that Helen is the daughter of Leda and Zeus. A keener interest in biography is exhibited by Isocrates in his own rendition of praising Helen. In addition to offering

a more elaborate version of her divine lineage, he includes in his Helen several known events about her life as well as a number of mythical persons honoring her beauty. The biographical "facts" and events about *Helen* add up to a well-rounded portrait of her person and appear to justify the orator's choice to exalt her. This playful exercise makes evident the stakes behind Isocrates' interest in biography—albeit within the world of myth. By grounding the gesture of praise on the known life of the person being praised, biography gives legitimacy to an orator's selection of the subject of praise. At the same time, it provides a standard for discerning the praiseworthiness of a given subject for orators and audiences alike. Aware of the new role that biography can play in modifying the rhetorical tradition of praise, Isocrates casts his praise of Helen in the introduction to the *Helen* as a corrective to his contemporaries who display their eloquence by praising insignificant and trivial subjects. "To be a little superior in important things," he remarks, "is of greater worth than to be pre-eminent in petty things that are without value for living."[5] His scorn of orators, who choose "to praise bumble-bees and salt and kindred topics"[6] rather than display their rhetorical abilities by choosing subjects meritorious of praise and beneficial to the audience, reveals Isocrates' efforts to change the focus of the rhetorical tradition of praise from merely showcasing the orator's display of linguistic dexterity to exhibiting a praiseworthy subject with relevance to the audience.

Already in this playful encomium, Isocrates implicates biography in his own interests as an educator, namely, to integrate the rhetoric of praise with themes important to contemporary audiences. The narrative account of Helen's "biography" revolves around her beauty, which is said to have compelled the Greeks to unite their isolated kingdoms and, in an unprecedented show of unity, launch a unified expedition against Troy for the common purpose of getting Helen back. Composed at a time when Hellenic unity was a popular theme among the various Greek city-states, the praise of Helen functions as precedent and pretext for Greek unification. Bringing biography under the auspices of the rhetoric of praise and within the purview of his rhetorical education, Isocrates is showing his students how a successful blending of praise and biography can enhance the visibility of current themes—a lesson he perfected through the *Evagoras*, in which biography takes center stage. As in biographies in our day, so with Isocrates: individual life-stories, whether real or imagined, spill over into the political.

The Poetic Tradition of Praise

In sharp deviation from earlier practices, Isocrates' *Evagoras* engages

neither abstract ideas nor mythical personages, but an actual person, a king, and by seeking to "make [that king's] virtues never to be forgotten among all mankind."[7] This marked departure from tradition has been noted by modern commentators who regarded the *Evagoras* as a truly innovative work. Van Hook identified the novelty of this oration in its serious treatment of the subject of praise in comparison to frivolous "exercises on mythical subjects written by the Sophists";[8] Burgess characterized the work's uniqueness in terms of Isocrates' "choice of a contemporary as the subject"[9] and Marrou pointed to this oration as "the first known example of a prose oration over a real person."[10] Isocrates was cognizant of the innovative character of his undertaking: "What I propose to do," he remarks, "is difficult—to eulogize in prose the virtues of a man."[11] None of his predecessors, he declares, had ever "attempted to compose a discourse on such a theme."[12] For the glorification of virtuous men had always been the domain of the poets, who could "employ song and verse," and by "the spell of their rhythm and harmony bewitch their listeners."[13] That Isocrates is exploring something new is made evident by his preface to this oration, which ends on a note of deliberate experimentation: "we must make the effort and see if it will be possible in prose to eulogize good men."[14]

The challenge he faces is similar to the challenge all biographers face: how to transform real facts into a story, subordinate events to a theme, and make the actual as appealing as the ideal. Such a task could be accomplished only by means of an artistic representation that would shape human events into a model of everlasting virtue (*arête*). Aristotle acknowledged this challenge when he pointed to the difficult but necessary task of epideictic orators: on the one hand, to praise those who had achieved something (*egkomiazomen praxantes*) and, on the other, to give the impression of a virtuous character by making actions appear so (*praxeis epideiknysai*)[15]. And, on the workings of art and its propensity to transform human action into a manifestation of an ideal, whom could one more aptly consult than Pindar? The type of praise attempted in the *Evagoras*, Burgess remarked, had long ago "found a place in encomia in Pindar."[16] Indeed, it was Pindar's artful verse that had immortalized victor-athletes and turned their actual deeds into the very essence of the idea of victory. Only a generation before Isocrates, Pindar composed odes and choral songs in honor of victors of the most prestigious athletic contests, the Great Games, held in Olympia and Delphoi every four years, and in Nemea and Isthmus every two years. Pindar performed his songs in the courts of his patrons to honor the victory of a son who had typically won a horse or a chariot race. More interested in the significance of the achievement than in the details of the contest, Pindar linked the victory in the games with aristocratic values and celebrated the lasting fame

bestowed upon the noble family as a sign of a favor granted by the gods and as a manifestation of the gods' ongoing protection of the community. Isocrates' project, then, to create a portrait of virtue manifested in a real person and to display an excellence (also in the sense of *arête*) on the basis of actual events, finds a precedent in Pindar. He had crafted his hymns of victor-athletes around such factual information as the victor's name, the name of his father, the place of his birth, and the protective deity of the community.[17] The goal of fashioning the deeds of Evagoras into a display of human excellence puts Isocrates in the tradition of Pindar's art, that is, the poetic use of language and its workings to fashion the possible out of the actual.

While Pindar's work had set the stage for incorporating biographical elements into encomiastic praise, and while we may be tempted to consider his hymns as important precedents that might have ushered Isocrates' encomiastic praise of Evagoras in the direction of the genre of biography, it is important to note that, however much Isocrates might have been influenced by Pindar's victory odes, he exhibits an orientation toward biography that is substantively different from that of his predecessor. Far from inserting some factual information into his encomiastic composition, Isocrates included a great deal of actual events. Instead of merely enabling audiences, as Pindar had done, to recognize the real person behind the artistic portrayal of an ideal, Isocrates sought to familiarize his readers with the entire life story of the person portrayed. From the perspective of biography—and the sustained references to the real that the genre of biography demands—commentators' claims about Pindar's direct influence on Isocrates' *Evagoras* appear to be overstated. Indeed, although Pindar constructs a portrait of virtue based on real facts about victor-athletes, he presents only a small number of such facts and utilizes them as a springboard for his poetic creation of the essence of victory. In the words of de Romilly, "Pindar never *describes* the feats he praises, nor does he tell us anything about the victors' lives. He aims at once for the highest meaning of the victory, its universal and symbolic implications for the whole of human life."[18]

To say that Isocrates guided the portrait of Evagoras in the direction of biography by including factual information about the king's life is not to suggest that he was working with "hard" facts. We cannot imagine Isocrates acting like today's biographer, checking sources and corroborating evidence. At a time when the written text was largely circulated from mouth to mouth, the truthfulness of a given work rested with the claim made, not with the irrefutable nature of facts supporting the claim. Aristotle's remark on Isocrates' treatment of Evagoras is a case in point: in his discussion about enthymemes, Aristotle points to the fact

that the Athenian general Conon took refuge with Evagoras as proof of Evagoras' goodness, and as confirmation of Isocrates' judgment on Evagoras.[19] Given the close ties Isocrates had with the Cyprian family, it is not unlikely that his work was regarded as authoritative, even though some facts about the king's life were exaggerated.

The pliability of facts notwithstanding, Pindar's treatment of praise provided, at most, only partial guidance for Isocrates' praise of Evagoras. For the poet's artistic representation of the real had shown how the real could be subsumed by the artistic, and how the possible could be created at the expense of the actual. That the possible can be enacted only through the non-referential function of language and, hence, be crafted beyond the actual is made explicit in modern times by Paul Ricoeur: "The role of most of our literature is, it seems, to destroy the world. That is true…of all literature which could be called poetic, where language seems to glorify itself at the expense of the referential function of ordinary discourse"[20] By contrast to Pindar, and as he makes explicit, Isocrates set out to praise Evagoras not by focusing exclusively on the essence of virtue but by "recount[ing] the deeds of Evagoras."[21] The portrait of virtue he undertook to create did not entail the act of creating a possible world in which actual events had ceased to play a role. In effect, Isocrates sought to represent a virtuous king not at the expense of real events but alongside them. From the perspective of representation, this meant that Isocrates was facing the daunting task of finessing the inherent tension between the contradictory linguistic acts of shaping and reflecting the real. This is the very tension that Aristotle articulated as the most basic opposition between literature and history, when he wrote that the difference between a historian and a poet is not that one writes in prose and the other in verse, for even if the writings of Herodotus had been in verse, he points out, they would still be a kind of history: "The real difference is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen."[22] Pindar's song had displayed the glory of victory by suspending the actual victor-athlete; he had created a possible world—what might happen—by suspending references to the real—what had actually happened. Isocrates' task was very different: he sought to give an account of real events in the life of the king and, at the same time, construct these events as parts of the story of a life lived in virtue. His exploration of biography pulled him simultaneously in two contradictory directions: art and history, the possible and the actual. As in the best biographies today, events and their larger significance must be inextricably connected into one, indissolubly single entity.

Biography and the Rhetoric of Praise

Unlike the Sophists who had framed the rhetoric of praise as a display of the orator's virtuosity in language—a self-display—Isocrates sought to frame his rhetorical composition as a display of the person praised. His commitment to a biographical undertaking guided him to develop the tradition of praise from a playful exercise aimed to show off an orator's linguistic dexterity to a respectable form of rhetoric suited to the purpose of exhibiting the excellence of a person based on actual events associated with that person. To accomplish this purpose, Isocrates—much like biographers in modern times—had to create a universal story and a personal history, a theme of excellence and a chronicle of events.

The *Evagoras* demonstrates Isocrates' successful rendering of a biography encased in the form of encomiastic praise. The chronicle of the king's life, from his heritage and birth, through his exile, return and ascent to the throne, to the wars against Persia and his eventual death comprises a personal history, that is, a narrative account that functions, as Havelock argues about ancient narratives in general, "as an act of reminder and recall."[23] Indeed, this narrative was designed to enable audiences to recall the actual history of the Cyprian ruler. In the words of Jebb, "[t]he chief facts known about Evagoras speak for themselves." [24] At the same time, the events recounted do not occur as a series of disjointed moments but are framed by a story that gives them thematic unity and casts them as parts that contribute to a larger totality. This means that Isocrates' selection of events was guided by the demands of story-telling. As Burgess puts it, facts included in Isocrates' and other orators' encomia "may be selected at will, grouped in any order, exaggerated, idealized, understated…invented in some cases."[25] Van Hook similarly notes the effect of story-telling on the representation of real events when he notes that there is "much exaggeration in the delineation of [Evagoras'] character."[26] As expected in an oral culture that regards facts as pliable and allows room for one's interpretation of events, it is not surprising to come across aspects of story telling that shape the very events comprising that story.

Isocrates was able, then, to render the biography of Evagoras as, at once, a story and a personal history, an artistic making of a world within which virtue dwells in all its glory and an account of a particular life. Following Pindar, Isocrates could recount real events by subjecting them to the dictates of artistic representation, that is, by severing their relation to empirical reality and re-articulating them as so many parts of a possible world. Shaped through art, events portraying the virtue of Evagoras do not reflect the world as experienced by the original audience of the composition, and Isocrates' representation of them should not be understood as an imitative act, a mere copying of something that existed prior to the making of this composition, but as a creative act, an act through

which something new comes to be and a novel world, one of everlasting *arête*, is disclosed. At the same time, Isocrates composed the chronicle of Evagoras' life chronologically: the events surrounding the king's heritage, birth, upbringing, exile, return home, seizing power, and governing his subjects, fighting the Persians follow one another in a loosely arranged manner of composition. This episodic structure of events preserves a sense of contingency for the audience, since it is temporality rather than art that guides the narrative movement from one incident to another. As the account of Evagoras' life progresses from his heritage to his birth, for example, it moves forward by the dictates of chronology, not the requirements of thematic logic; as a result, the narrative maintains some connection to the real world of circumstance and happenstance. That an episodic arrangement of events breaks the illusion of art was recognized by Aristotle who, in the *Poetics*, condemns as inartistic all episodic plots: "Of 'simple' plots and actions the worst are those which are 'episodic.' By this I mean a plot in which the episodes do not follow each other probably or inevitably."[27] And since each event in the Evagoras comes not *because* of a previous one but merely *after* a previous one, the illusion of a self-enclosed theme and a self-contained story is shattered by an emphasis on the actual.

The dual function of the narrative to recount a personal history and to tell a universal story is also made evident by the act of narration. On the one hand, the story about the virtuous king unfolds as Isocrates forges together scattered events into meaningful ensembles and endows them with the meaning appropriate to the story they are meant to confirm. In the account of Evagoras' heritage, for example, the stories of Aeacus' piousness, which helped to end drought, Peleus' marriage to Thetis and the singing of their wedding song by the gods, and of Teucer's founding of Salamis acquire through the art of narration a status beyond their import as individual occurrences. Transformed into parts of a bigger story, they contribute to a larger totality of meaning, in this case, Evagoras' noble heritage and praiseworthy ancestry. Following events in the process of their narration is tantamount to transforming singular events by placing them in larger meaningful ensembles or, in the words of Ricoeur to *"extracting a configuration from a succession."*[28] In other words, to follow the account of Evagoras is to "reflect upon" events with the aim of understanding them in successive totalities.[29] Yet, the act of narration also unfolds by arranging events chronologically and, as such, follows a sequence that remains unaffected by the thematic logic of the story. It is this sequence that generates in hearers questions like: 'and then?' 'what happened next?' 'and so?' The combined artistic and historical character of the narrative, then, is made evident by the chronological and the non-

chronological dimension of the art of narration, and Isocrates may be said to conduct his praise of Evagoras as a true biographer, at once a story-teller and a historian or *syngrapheus*.

Biography and Education

The tradition of poetic praise was inherently tied to educational goals. The pedagogical ends of ancient poetry were recognized in the classical period when the myths of Homer found their way into the education of children. Aware that he was carrying on the didactic ends of the poetic tradition of praise, by aiming "in prose to eulogize good men,"[30] Isocrates addressed in the introduction to his oration the son of Evagoras and new king of Cyprus, Nicocles: we praise "those who in their own time had proved themselves good men….[so] that the younger generation might with greater emulation have striven for virtue."[31] By displaying Evagoras as a good king, the oration challenges Nicocles to demonstrate the moral strength of his father in his own conduct as ruler. Unlike the poets who crafted general models of excellence and exhorted audiences to emulate them, Isocrates created a particular model built from the events of an actual person's life and designed specifically to influence Nicocles. Even though he was exploring this genre without a real precedent, Isocrates understood that biography could be far more persuasive than the exhortations of poets and the arguments of orators. To be sure, he did not explicitly comment on the persuasive power of biography, since the language about this new genre was not available in his time, but he did speak about the credibility of life stories.

As a rhetorical theorist, he believed, as did Aristotle, that character is the most important factor in persuasion. However, unlike Aristotle, who situated a speaker's ethos within the context of a given speech, Isocrates placed it beyond textuality onto a speaker's lived life. As he puts it in the *Antidosis*, "who does not know that....the argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words."[32] Isocrates' treatment of biography in the *Evagoras* illustrates an important principle of his rhetorical education: just as we are more influenced by the manner in which orators live their lives than by the speeches they give, so too the life story of Evagoras will have a greater influence on his son's conduct as ruler than anyone else's words of advice. This principle was at the core of Isocrates' ambition to rescue the art of rhetoric from the negative treatment it had received at the hands of his intellectual predecessors as well as from the devastating critique that Plato, his contemporary and rival educator, leveled against it. The legitimacy of the aim he assigned to his school—to shape students into leaders-to-

be—rested entirely on his ability to disassociate his teaching of rhetoric from the practices of the rhetorically powerful demagogues, who were driving Athens to her destruction, and by instructing his students that their success as rhetoricians rested principally on their ability to establish a reputation as good men. In biography, he developed a form that would lend substance to his credence, namely, that only through the life one lives can the claim that one possesses a good character be verified. Though we have different standards of assessing the ethos of a biographer today, it is interesting to note that textually internal and textually external criteria comprised a theoretical disagreement about persuasion between Isocrates and Aristotle.

Isocrates boasted that Nicocles was one of his students. In addition to the *Evagoras*, he sent two other orations to the new king, *Nicocles* and *To Nicocles*, whose expressed purpose was to advise Nicocles to temper the excesses of tyrannical rule in Cyprus. Within the context of these orations, the life story of Evagoras, a ruler committed to virtue rather than the pursuit of personal gratification, makes a powerful case to Nicocles that he should emulate his father and conduct himself as a moderate ruler rather than as an autocrat, and reign over his subjects by principle rather than by whim. This reading suggests that Isocrates approached biography not only to promote a model of human excellence for emulation but also to influence conduct in a manner that would affect the domain of politics. Part of the educational aim of his school was to influence a state by educating its leaders or, as the apt title of Jaeger's chapter on Isocrates suggests, his was "The Education of the Prince."[33] Clearly, Isocrates viewed the genre of biography as a reliable way of carrying out that aim. Moreover, his goal to influence Nicocles through the life story of his father implicated the genre of biography in Athenian politics.

We have already seen how Isocrates' playful exercise with Helen had sought to link the rhetoric of praise with advocacy by constructing the person of Helen and the mythical Hellenic expedition against Troy as a warrant for Hellenic unification in his day. Through the *Evagoras*, Isocrates attempts something similar. In light of the rising sentiments in favor of Panhellenism, with its concomitant questions about who could be a strong enough leader to unify the Hellenic city-states against Persia and put an end to the threat of yet another invasion by the Persian Empire, the portrait of Evagoras as a good king was designed to direct Athenian attention toward Cyprus as a state where a beneficent tyranny served the interests of their people. For the dividing line about constitutions for the Athenians of the fourth century BCE was not so much between democracy and tyranny as much as between a good or a bad democracy and a good or a bad tyranny.[34] If Nicocles should follow in his father's footsteps and

become a tyrant who had the welfare of his people in mind, the Athenian demos, Isocrates was certain, would be more inclined to perceive him as a viable future candidate for assuming the leadership of Hellenic unification. In view of Isocrates' goal to align his rhetorical education with the project of bringing about the unity of Hellas, his biography of Evagoras should be read as an attempt to implement a political goal.

Conclusion

The *Evagoras* was composed as an oration to be delivered at a festival held by Nicocles in honor of his father. As part of the tradition of the oratory of praise—and much like a eulogy—the biography of the deceased king functions as a vehicle for exalting his rule of Cyprus in the presence of his subjects and for reminding them of his most important accomplishments. As a written composition addressed to Nicocles, the biography of the king functions as a text to be studied, which Isocrates points out to Nicocles at the conclusion of the work: "I submit [your father's achievements] to you for your contemplation and study."[35] As a written work circulating among the small reading public, and disseminated by word of mouth to the rest of the Athenians, the biography of Evagoras functioned as a work whose aim was to influence public perceptions about the Cyprian tyrant and, by extension, his successor. The emerging genre of biography assumed, in the hands of Isocrates, multiple rhetorical ends: to display the praiseworthiness of the subject of praise, to provide a listing of his accomplishments, and to act as a resource for shaping individual and public perceptions.

The strategic uses that Isocrates made of the genre of biography reflect his deliberate effort to align biography with the ends that his program of rhetorical education aspired to attain. The goal of his school was to position the art of rhetoric at the heart of Athenian politics by addressing enduring themes and ongoing issues that would likely have a great impact on the future direction of the polis. By committing his orations to writing, he transformed the previous educational ends of the art of rhetoric—as instruction in and training for speaking effectively in the courts and the assembly—that had given rhetoric its raison d'être. To this end, Isocrates' biographical orations aspired to a new kind of deliberation, one that moved beyond addressing time-bound questions of policy.[36] It was in the context of committing rhetoric to this broader type of public deliberation that Isocrates developed the genre of biography. As such, his contribution to biography should neither be reduced to the intrinsic development of the genre nor be understood as merely a set of formulaic alterations. By framing biography within the rhetoric of praise, he looked beyond the

requirements of the genre to the potential effects that life stories might have on audiences. As I have tried to show, he understood well the power of biography to define what should be praised by the Athenians and hence, to serve as a base for his political agenda, which was to present a vision of the polis as it could be if it approximated the ideals exemplified in admirable life stories.

In a direct line of continuity between ancient and contemporary times, biography provides a connection between life-stories and broader political issues—and pedagogy links biography and politics together. But the resources determining the angle for narrating life-stories and for inserting them into the realm of politics are unique to the particular historical context. Isocrates tapped on the resources of the rhetorical genre of praise to prop up his biographical subject on the basis of dominant valuations in the democratic-imperialistic polis, and to construct the agency of his subject along the lines of a hegemonic rendition of historical and political events. In our own times, biographies complicate dominant valuations through life stories that extend democratic pluralism to less familiar aspects of our society that, in turn, give voice to counter-hegemonic renderings of historical/political events. Isocrates used the genre of biography to educate his students in ways that might have strengthened the fragile democratic polis in his day. In our own times of a secure democracy, we use the genre of biography to educate our students in the variety of voices—some of them not yet heard and others not yet formed—that bid us to understand the character of our democracy as an ongoing, ever-inclusive, continually perfecting project.

Notes

[1] Van Hook, Larue, trans. *Isocrates*. Vol. 3 (London: William Heinemann and Cambridge:Harvard UP, 1945), *Evagoras*.

[2] Sprague, Rosamond. *The Older Sophists* (Columbia: U of South Carolina Press, 1972).

[3] Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (London: William Heinemann, 1977), 320d-322d.

[4] Sprague, *The Older Sophists*.

[5] Van Hook, *Isocrates, Helen,* 5.

[6] *Helen*, 12.

[7] *Evagoras*, 4.

[8] Van Hook, *Isocrates*, 3.

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[10] Marrou, Henri-Irene. *A History of Education in Antiquity*. Trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 81.

[11] *Evagoras*, 8.
[12] *Evagoras*, 8.
[13] *Evagoras*, 11.
[14] *Evagoras*, 11.
[15] *The Art of Rhetoric* I, ix, 32-33.
[16] Burgess, Epideictic Literature, 115-16.
[17] Lattimore, Richmond, trans. *The Odes of Pindar*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985), xi.
[18] de Romilly, Jacqueline. *A Short History of Greek Literature*. Trans. Lilian Doherty (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985), 35.
[19] *The Art of Rhetoric*, II, xxiii, 12.
[20] Ricoeur, Paul. *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*. Trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1981), 141.
[21] *Evagoras*, 4.
[22] *Poetics*, ix, 2.
[23] Havelock, Eric. *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1963), 91.
[24] Jebb, R. C. *The Attic Orators*. Vol. 2. (London: Macmillan, 1893), 113.
[25] Burgess, "Epideictic Literature," 116.
[26] Van Hook, 2-3.
[27] *Poetics*, ix, 11.
[28] Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics*, 278.
[29] Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin & David Pellauer (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984), 66.
[30] *Evagoras*, 11.
[31] *Evagoras*, 5.
[32] Norlin, George, trans. *Isocrates*. Vols 1-2 (London: William Heinemann and Cambridge: (Harvard UP, 1928, 1929), vol. 2, *Antidosis*, 278.
[33] Jaeger, Werner. *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 3 vols. Trans. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford UP, 1939-44).
[34] Konstan, David. "Isocrates' 'Republic.'" Eds. Takis Poulakos & David Depew (*Isocrates and Civic Education*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2004).
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[36] Poulakos, Takis. *Speaking for the Polis* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1997).

An Auto/Biographical Narrative:
A Critical Reflection on Learning with Dyslexia[1]

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I have been an academic all of my adult life, and the field of educational biography has provided the best framework and tools for me to explore existential life issues and experiences that many research avenues dismiss as lesser or, even, meaningless. In a way, writing autobiography feels like coming home. The idea of traveling home, back to where my education began, conveys a place focused on the essence and meaning of life. Varied styles of auto/biography are available to explore those meanings.[2] My experiences engaging with biographical work over the years has inspired new questions about the structure and content of such life-sharing texts, such as "Why did she frame her story that way? Why did she emphasize, for example, her earlier life rather than her later years? How did that event occur at that time and place?" These questions point to the work of educational biography as a purposeful craft rather than a transparent narration of the past. Although I originally conceptualized autobiographical and biographical accounts as focused solely on individual lives, over time, I realized that biographers' choices in style and emphasis can transcend the particular story they are sharing to reflect broader social issues. Their individual stories can reflect the affective nuances influencing educational contexts, the fluctuation of identities individuals experience across their lives, and/or the ever-

changing cultural mores in a given time and place.[3]

In this essay, I share elements of my educational life as a learner with dyslexia. By sharing select events and the influence of teachers on my life, I am sharing my discovery of a key philosophy about the meaning of life that guides my work as an educator—my belief in the importance of learning collaboratively. This essay seeks to share my auto/biographical experiences as a person with learning exceptionalities to encourage teachers to focus on their students' strengths rather their various learning challenges. As I reflect on my experiences with learning differences in the spaces of schools, I remain amazed by the number of positive people and dedicated educators who invested in my life and education. As a college professor now, I hear many negative stories and examples of education malpractice from my students. I was fortunate in my learning journey; however, I am prone to focus on the positive while disregarding the negative. As I reflect on and reconstruct my auto/biographical account here, I see a tacit theme—FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE.

The Purpose: "It is About What They Can Do!"

To structure this essay, I provide connections to other scholarship in educational auto/biography that influence the framing and conversational style of this essay before sharing one version of my story in a holistic fashion. I want you, the reader, to glimpse my thought process as an auto/biographer and to understand the language and style I use to convey and emphasize a positive stance toward the challenges I have faced and, by extension, we all face as human beings. Some educational biographers have provided templates and examples to follow. Others provided inspiring stories to discuss and analyze. Once I encountered these examples, I found avenues to share my story for others to discuss, analyze, and debate.

Many narrative scholars have argued that we write to inquire, to know and to learn, rather than to reflect certainty or some truth.[4] Indeed, I find it amusing that I am discovering more about myself after writing my initial auto/biographical work, which remains an important purpose and outcome of engaging in this work. Writing enables a process of continual becoming and discovery. Following Liz Stanley's conceptualization, this essay is an auto/biography, a mixture of my "biographical self and autobiographical self" with overlap in public and private contexts.[5] The use of the term underscores the inevitable connections between the "auto" and the "bio" in crafting life stories and broader insights about the educational challenges youth can face living with exceptionalities.

Like other auto/biographers, I choose to frame my life "portrait"[6] in particular ways. I have chosen to show certain aspects of my life while

excluding or downplaying others.[7] In this story, one possible version of my story, I emphasize my strengths as a learner, the positive teachers who worked to find ways for me to learn, and my dreams of being a reader, writer, and learner. In the following pages, I paint my story sequentially with personalized elements that start with the differences and end with the solutions to the particular challenges I have faced in life.[8] I chose this approach to storying my experiences because of the past depression and anger I felt at times while dealing with my learning differences. As I matured and accomplished my learning goals, I realized that focusing on negative moments or teachers was a waste of time. I threw off "negative mindsets" as one would remove clothing in order to swim. I now choose to ignore as much negativity as I can in my life because I discovered it does not help me accomplish life or learning goals. As an idealist, educator, and person with learning differences, I say, "Let's be positive and see the solutions and work together as learners. Time is short. Negativity is overrated."[9] Although the negative examples I have experienced are educative in that they might teach us what *not* to do in our lives as educators, focusing on positive examples interrupts common framings of student "problems" in special education, and functions as a catalyst for teaching and connecting with others.[10]

In particular, following the existential trajectory within educational biography, I connect with the psychological tradition that all humans share basic, common needs.[11] My experiences lead me to believe that teachers need to inspire learning growth in their students, and I adopt this "can do" positive philosophical stance through the style and content of this essay, as well. While sharing my triumphs and challenges as a learner with dyslexia, I provide the arguments and life examples for focusing on learning growth over disability. I hope others might weave my story with lessons from others about learning disabilities and common issues with reading and learning that students face.[12] I envision future educators reading this story and searching for ideas to assist their students living with, in particular, this reading/learning difference that "specialists" often refer to as dyslexia. Finally, after my story, the essay ends with a message to teachers who serve our diverse learners. It contains my guiding philosophy, "It is about what they can do!"

Biographical Resources for Framing My Account

Framing or, better, arranging events in a person's life story with a particular perspective are the tools and nature of any biographical work.[13] Barbara W. Tuchman's essay, "Biography as a prism of history," argues historical events and context interplay to determine the essence

of some historical era's dominant philosophies and behaviors. Eras can be characterized by customs concerning dress, language, and behavior, as well as broad policies and events; thus, biographers often use such historical context as tools to position or uncover a biographer's life story. My narrative is informed by the cultural and instructional behaviors emerging in a period in which educators had little understanding of exceptionalities. In my case, this exceptionality is what we now call dyslexia. I share this account for others like me, people with dyslexia, and for their teachers to have an opportunity to self-reflect and ask, "Why should we care about experiences with dyslexia?"; "What light does my story shed on those of others?"; or the existential question, "Who am I as a person and educator?" Through my reflections, readers can gather information about a period before educators and the public understood dyslexia.[14] Mine is only one of many stories concerning the nuances of dyslexia. Together, educators might use these stories to discover and teach better instructional literacy interventions to help students with dyslexia reach educational goals.[15] The linking of such narratives, in fact, can provide a complex "prism" of the history of dyslexia in schools and society.

The genre of life writing reflects the beauty of reading and critical self-reflection.[16] In any critical reflection, we realize the challenges and positive aspects that constitute an educative, thoughtful engagement in the world around us and the people who make up our life experiences. Auto/biography or Biography are art forms in which life, history, and data come together to dialogue about the meaning of lived experience.[17] It is a personal genre, and it should be. In Robert Bullough's seminal work, *Musings on Life Writing: Biography and Case Studies in Teacher Education*, he argues for the value in examining teachers' life stories because of their power to elucidate connections with students' life stories.[18] Bullough suggested that teachers' lives serve others through relationships. Teaching is a personal and messy business—not some sanitized laboratory process. The best learning and teaching practices are discovered in the personal realm. Like Bullough, I have found connections with other teachers' life stories. For me, these patterns constitute a wild biographical collage of the nature and philosophy of teaching. We teachers need to have collaborative dialogue to help improve the learning of the students we love and serve. This is the style of optimism I have chosen for this essay.[19]

What We All Need

We humans need three basic things. According to Maslow we all need to belong, to have a purpose, and to find love.[20] If a person discovers

purpose and a sense of belonging, in essence, that person has discovered the phenomena of being loved. Maslow referred to this as "self-actualization," but I like using the word "love" instead. Like others, I need those fundamental qualities in my life.[21] I think we might also call it, "finding your niche." I see my job, in part, as helping others find their niches. I am an educator of educators. I found my way and niche because of dedicated educators. In 2015, we celebrated the Americans with Disabilities Act's 25-year history of equality.[22] However, for me, November 29, 1975 was a year to remember mostly due to the passing of Public Law 94-142 later known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the beginning of a field dedicated to special education.[23] Both laws have had amendments, but together they made a statement about fundamental American ideals. In America, a person, regardless of his or her differences, has the human right to receive equal access to educational services and opportunities. This point reflects three basic human needs: belonging, having a purpose, and being loved. Learning differences could have defined me as a person, but my learning differences are not *me*.[24] In fact, I do not describe my identity with such terms as "dyslexic" or "learning disabled." In special education teacher preparatory classes at the university, an early lesson is to place names first, before noting adjectives denoting differences.[25] Dyslexia and other exceptionalities people face are not identifiers.[26] I am not dyslexic or learning disabled. I am Jim, and this is my story.[27]

The Auto/biographical Account: How I was Different

It is best to start at the beginning to find the "real-life" meaning from my continuing and "progressive" journey of being different from others.[28] I was born in 1970. As a young boy, I suffered a head injury while playing roughly with other boys. I saw doctors, but I was able to continue on my way. Maybe my injury led to my future learning problems. Maybe not. No one knows. The first signs of problems occurred in kindergarten. My peers could spell their names. I could not spell "James" so my nickname, Jim, was used instead. I turned "Jim" into "Mij" at times. At the time, I did not know why I did this. I did not understand at the time how I reversing the order of the letters of my name. I wanted to fit in with the other kids. Later, my parents and I discovered this name-writing issue was a sign of the struggle to come as I sought to learn and become literate. I still run into people who knew me then. They ask about the name, "Mij," that I used in the early 1970s. I tell them I just went with it, and that "it is a long story." Most just say, "Okay," and move on. A few want to know the story. We always talk for a long time. As you read my path to become literate, you will find my story has varied twists and turns.

It is perhaps not surprising that I did not like school. I decided school was about two things—learning how to read and learning how to write. I performed poorly at both. I did not like myself, and I did not want to be different. I wanted to read and write as well as my peers. I was angry at times. I yelled and threw things. My mother tried to work with me at home, but I did not make it easy for her with my behavior eruptions. I also learned to get out of things by being funny. This skill still gets me out of difficult situations today. Maybe it was the head injury. Maybe I was like my father who did not graduate from high school due to his difficulties with reading and writing. The reasons are not important, but the results were important… I was different. I needed help.

In 1975, I was a first-grade student in a small East Texas town. I could not read and was not progressing. Mrs. H., my first-grade teacher, noticed something different from the other students about the way I engaged in my lessons. She reported to my mother, "He writes backwards when he chooses to write and is very confused with the sounds of vowels. He has difficulty with simple directions." After many disappointing reports with limited or no answers for the source of my struggles, my parents decided to take me to a neurologist. Before we judge this teacher as inept or this small town as lacking in resources, it is important to clarify that during the 1970s, educators had limited knowledge or understanding concerning learning differences in most contexts. So, at the age of six, I met a pediatric neurologist. After much testing, I was diagnosed with Dyslexia and other learning disabilities. When my mother learned of the diagnosis, she asked, "Is it contagious?" Again, before we judge my mother, remember, this diagnosis and its implications were new to her as well. This diagnosis translated into reading, writing, spelling, organizing, and speaking differences. The doctor anticipated that I would have difficulty as a learner. Our neurologist worked with children diagnosed with various learning differences at a special school, Winston School, located in Dallas, Texas, and he recommended it to our family. After visiting the Winston School, my parents also wanted me to attend. However, it was located three hours away from my hometown. This meant that I would have had to live away from home, or my parents would have to arrange complex commutes and visiting schedules, and my family could not manage that. My family stays together. Besides, I was scared and weepy during this time. My mother and father reported that I frequently looked lost and frightened.

Mom confessed years later in one of our conversations about my childhood and diagnosis, "I was working as a mechanic in the US Army: We were already missing time with each other. We need to stay with each other and move or adjust together. If we were going to be lost, we would be lost together. I was damned certain we would find the answers together,

too!" In the end, the Winston School built a tailored curriculum that my teachers back home in East Texas used to help me. The doctor commented on how we were fortunate to have a small school and a group of teachers who were willing to learn about people challenged with dyslexia. Without teachers like this, our family's residence and jobs would have changed. We did not need to take this drastic step because educators in a small town, in the 1970s, chose to care about a boy, me, who wrote strangely and was not developing normally as a reader and learner.

Today, that teaching process would be called "differentiation," which is a term describing how teachers get to know their students and use students' strengths to help them learn or accomplish academic goals without needing any diagnosed reason to help.[29] As an adult, I returned to ask the teacher who had helped me, Mrs. H., about that change in my teaching. She reported, "I just wanted to do what was right for you, and I was willing to try." I was held back in first grade to gain skills I had not mastered. I also started newly-developed special learning classes designed to help me learn. Many times, I was able to access one-on-one instruction. New teachers called "special education teachers" began to help me. Special education existed in schools before 1975, but became nationally mandated and recognized with PL 94-142.[30] This law also established the flexible multidisciplinary team of professionals who serve to advise and find the appropriate tools and environments for students with special learning needs. The multidisciplinary team's purpose revolves around finding methods and tools designed to help all students succeed. This teamwork approach assisted my learning and led me to a more positive self-perception due to the successes I experienced. I wanted to learn and be able to join in with everyone as a learner, reader, thinker, and writer.

My quest not to be "different" from others continued. I wanted to fit in with my peers at school, my family, and friends. East Texas is known for its piney woods. In my neighborhood, we formed a group called the Wild Wood Bunch. This group consisted of a group of kids who played in the woods around our homes. We had dirt road trails to ride bikes and motorbikes that were miles long. People could get lost in the woods: We did at times. If I did not arrive at the meeting place for the Wild Wood Bunch, a big oak tree, at the designated time, I would never find my friends. And on the big oak, my peers pinned notes with announcements and directions. But I could not read them. If I found my friends, it was only by accident. One day, one of the elementary teachers taught us about the ancient Egyptians and Native American languages. People had created pictures to represent meaning. I liked pictures; text written in English was the issue for me. I created a pictorial language that did not confuse me (See Figure 1).

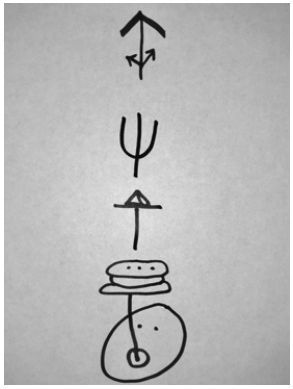


Figure 1.

I brought this language to my friends by the oak tree meeting place. I proposed we needed a secret code that only we could read due to the secret tree houses and clubs we were establishing throughout the trails. Therefore, I shared the secret code, the picture language, I had developed. They added few adjustments, and we had the Wild Wood Bunch language. For the first time in my life, I was able to participate with my peers by reading and writing. I was successful. Due to this great success, I presented this new language to my elementary teachers as the new language we needed. I determined it should replace this thing called English. They were not amused. One of my special education teachers encouraged me, "Jim, if you can do *that*, you can learn *this*." She said this while pointing to the Sword of Damocles that hung above my head in every classroom, the alphabet.

How I Learned

The first crystalizing learning experience occurred in the summer of 1977. The roads in my small town were horrible. Holes littered every road. As a child, everyone criticized the roads. Being compared to the roads was the worst criticism one could utter to others. I never forgot the football games in this place as a child. Football was and is king in Texas. If a player missed a touchdown or dropped a pass, people would say, "That is as ugly as the roads." Later, the expressions became more general, such as, 'Get off the road and do your job.'" The prevailing impression was that the roads destroyed cars. Even after the roads were fixed, the phrasing remained. It is still used today by old-timers who live there. The city reconstructed the roads with asphalt and tar. We all went to watch the roads change, and

it was amazing watching the big machines and foul-smelling tar move around our small town. I stepped in some of that tar. It was sticking on the inside of one of my shoes, so, of course, I put my shoes together to stick them together. This was big entertainment.

This silly childhood event would change my life forever and would lead to me being able to read and write "proper" English. My mom had to put my shoes on me every day. As many people with dyslexia have experienced, I did not know how to discern the difference between left and right. After playing in the tar and sticking my shoes together, I awoke the next day to a ready-made game. I saw the tar on both shoes, lined them up, and put my feet in them correctly with the certainty they were on the right feet for the first time in my short life. I went out and presented my shoe-tar match to my mother. She confirmed my shoes were indeed on the correct feet. Unfortunately, when I received new shoes, I could not find tar, so I used a permanent marker in the place of tar. This experience marked the beginning of my use of visual cues to learn to read, write, and ascertain directions.

I have numerous events that challenged and frustrated me as a learner during my K-12 career. At one point, I decided I wanted to learn to read and write. I needed to learn the alphabet. A crucial event occurred during my second attempt of first grade. Mrs. B., my teacher, walked into the room and announced that all students would use a new paper called notebook paper. I was only familiar with a paper called BIG CHIEF, a term that reflected a company name at the time. This notebook paper was white with blue lines designed for writing and had three holes on one side. I would write my best representations of the alphabet on there. Apparently my writing did not follow expectations. Mrs. B. told me I needed to write on the correct side of the paper. I asked, "What was the correct side?" She said, "Write from left to right." I asked, "What are left and right?" Mrs. B. took my paper and moved the holes of the paper to one side of my desk. She said, "The holes face this way, left." I looked that direction and saw huge windows across the schoolroom wall. I remember thinking, "This situation is like my shoes and that tar." I knew it was unlikely the windows would move, so every time I prepared to write, I moved the holes of my paper, lines side up, toward the windows before writing. I used this "window trick," and I never wrote on the wrong side again. If my desk moved, I learned to adjust to my visual landmarks by asking people what was my left. It worked every time.

Once I knew my location in time and space, I made new discoveries with the letters and numbers. I determined certain letters and numbers did not give me many problems like manuscript A, Ww, Xx, l, 1, 0, 8, or i. However, many manuscript letters differed across writing styles, and

I still struggle with these today when writing manuscript by hand. For example, a, 5, Ss, L, g, b, d, Zz, Ff, 3, 4, 7, Jj, or Cc created challenges. I discovered some letters and numbers had legs and loops that faced the holes while some faced away from the holes on the notebook paper. Letters and numbers like a, d, 7, 3, 4, and Jj faced the holes while Bb, L, Ee, Ff, and Cc faced away from the holes. There were graphemes, as I called them, "confusables" like Zz, 5, Ss, and 2 which had loops and legs that faced toward and away from the holes on the paper. I had to memorize or review the "confusables" more frequently when I needed to use them.

I finally became a second grader. I will never forget the day I believed the world was crazy. After all of the work I did to learn how to write and read letters of the alphabet, Mrs. M.G. wrote a new language on the board and told the class this was the new writing language we would learn. She called it cursive. I remember thinking, "These people will change the writing language every year. I will be an old man before I get out of this elementary school." In the end, I applied my manuscript taxonomy of letters and numbers to cursive as well. I noticed changes in my struggles and my skills. Capital manuscript L became a confusable while I had no trouble with manuscript letter Ss in cursive.

In terms of reading, I could read pictures well. I used visual cues to help me determine the difference between "left" and "right" while playing football and learning to drive a car. I have countless funny and crazy stories to share about football and driving. As one example, I broke my hand while playing football as a middle linebacker. I have a missing knuckle on my right hand. I know it is my right hand because the doctor told me it was my right hand. As a result, I can now tell the difference between left and right in the dark. I simple feel for the missing knuckle, and I know instantly which hand I am touching. As I learned to write, I learned to read better as well. I was not like my peers, but I could pronounce some words orally and use pictures to fill in the missing parts. Using visual cues, working with peers, and seeking meaning were the solutions to learning, reading, and writing. Also, I could persuade peers to read to me, and I pieced the meaning together like a puzzle. I became a meaning gatherer.

I encountered many caring teachers during the course of my schooling, and through that process, also found that reading went beyond text. Real learning, gaining meaning, is personal and social.[31] From my special and regular education classes as a student, I met some of the most caring people in my life. Many of these people approached life with the attitude of giving and sacrifice—a rarity in a business-governed world or even contemporary education contexts that are now governed so heavily by the discourses of efficiency and management. People have become

testing numbers and are described in such terms. In contrast, real teachers are interested in how people think and learn. As Quintero, Lopez, and Zuluaga argue, autobiographies can "sensitize" teachers and future teachers to discover the critical pedagogical needs of their students.[32]

The best teachers use the skills and questions I provided and added the needed content to it, thus, personalizing my learning in a caring atmosphere.[33] I learned from teachers who adjusted as needed to help me learn. Mrs. N., my 4th grade teacher, would sit with me and coach my reading using sock puppets simply because I told her I liked it. Listening and creating discovery experiences in the class were also mechanisms great teachers used to develop interest and deliver content. Mrs. T., my 8th grade special education teacher, believed I was smart. She often referred to me as "The Thinker" throughout the school day. Mrs. T. also said, "You are Jim. It is not about what you can't. It is about what you can!" Along the way, I met many teachers like Mrs. H., Mrs. T., and Mrs. N., who made time to build a relationship with me, learned about my thinking processes, and created an environment for me to belong and have a purpose. To all of this support, I simply say, "Thank you, teachers." These teachers have places in my heart. My experiences as a learner with learning differences led me to seek higher education. I thought, "Maybe I can be a teacher too." Teachers are the ones who cared.

My College Experience

Learning with exceptionalities is never easy. Higher education posed additional challenges for me. Because my test scores were low, I was required to attend remedial college courses, non-credit college courses, at a small community college in Texarkana, Texas. I worked to attain the needed scores to be allowed to take college courses that provided college credit hours toward the degree I hoped to earn. This situation reminded me of my elementary years. Class by class, I completed remedial college. In this environment, I met educators who took time to teach me and get to know me as a learner. I shared my learning differences with dyslexia with some teachers and found many were helpful and cared. They provided extra time for me to write in those "blue book" essay guides: I dreaded essays. I think the best part of this experience was my transformation to a self-motivated learner. I was developing and using my own accommodations to accomplish my academic goals. Once I could attend college classes for college degree credit, I could not learn enough. I wanted to learn and learn.

I was told I needed to type all my papers in college. I went out and purchased a typewriter. My first English paper was difficult. I often

perceived spelling as an insurmountable challenge. The typed paper resembled drywall due to the amount of white correction tape I used to correct misspelled words. It was at that time I began to have reservations about my choice to attend college. Maybe I would not be a teacher after all. However, I found being open with teachers about my learning needs allowed me to get extra time when needed and much more. I found I needed to change my approach to advocate for myself as a learner. I found some college teachers were closed to these types of accommodations while others were more open. I survived, and I am stronger from those experiences. The teachers who took time to know me and commented on my strengths as a means to negotiate my differences left lasting impressions and influenced my life choices. Dr. D., Dr. S., Dr. B., and others became my examples and ultimately led me into thinking about the teaching profession as a possible career choice.

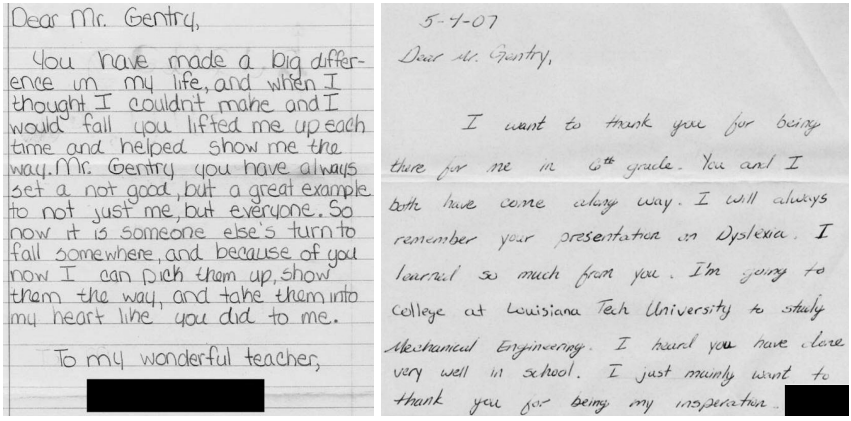
In 1990, I also discovered another resource that changed my life. This was as life changing as my experience with tar on my shoes for determining left from right. It was the invention and availability of the personal computer. I saved for and purchased an IBM clone with a word processing program that would review and check spelling. Once I used the word processor to complete various written assignments from college, I was like a caveman who discovered fire. I thought I had the most significant invention ever created by man. I suddenly became like everyone else. I could turn in clean documents without worrying about handwriting legibility or the letters facing the wrong direction. I was free. I was in college. I could be a writer.

After I began attending "regular" college, with the aid of a computer and word processor, I completed my Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a 4.0 grade point average. I completed my classes in education. I gained Texas certification in special education, general education, secondary English, secondary psychology, and secondary speech communications. As I considered my future, I realized the most important people in my life were teachers. Teachers were unique and special, and what seemed to make them special was their willingness to learn and love learning. Teachers loved learning so much they were willing to work with me throughout my schooling years. All I had to do was be willing to learn. I discovered I had that "specialness" too. I wanted to learn, and I wanted to help others love lifelong learning too. All the struggles and differences meant nothing because I became a learner, reader, writer, and teacher. A teacher is a student first. That was how I began to see myself. I realized I was a teacher all along; I should teach. I have been doing it all my life. As I worked as a teacher, I completed my master's degree in special education and my Doctor of Education degree

in Curriculum and Instruction, both with a 4.0 grade point average.

My Professional Experience

I have spent many years working with children who were like me. I also worked with kids whose exceptionalities differed from mine, but I knew what to do. I listened. I built relationships. I became a caring teacher. My experiences, the case study of my life, varied as I worked in a myriad of roles and tasks in the field of education.[34] I enjoyed working in the field for 15 years, and felt I was able to give back to a field that gave so much to me. I worked many years as a motivational speaker for parents with children with reading and writing differences, and I encouraged parents and students of all ages not to focus on the disability but on their individual strengths and characteristics. I will let my students tell you about their experiences with me as a teacher. I include student letters below, and they illustrate some of my connections with students. These letters provide insights into my teaching philosophy and experiences.[35] I value these letters over any degree or award I have received (see Figure 2).



Dear Mr. Gentry,

You have made a big difference in my life, and when I thought I couldn't make and I would fall you lifted me up each time and helped show me the way. Mr. Gentry you have always set a not good, but a great example to not just me, but everyone. So now it is someone else's turn to fall somewhere, and because of you now I can pick them up, show them the way, and take them into my heart like you did to me.

To my wonderful teacher,

[redacted]

5-4-07

Dear Mr. Gentry,

I want to thank you for being there for me in 6th grade. You and I both have come along way. I will always remember your presentation on Dyslexia. I learned so much from you. I'm going to college at Louisiana Tech University to study Mechanical Engineering. I heard you have done very well in school. I just mainly want to thank you for being my inspiration.

[redacted]

Figure 2.

My experiences in special education and regular education classrooms for 15 years led me to begin teaching in higher education in 2006. I wanted to influence teachers seeking to join the teaching profession. I am now an associate professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Tarleton State University in literacy education. I am able to teach children at times, conduct research and serve my community in my various roles at Tarleton. Most importantly, I share my heart with future teachers. We review research-based practices for building relationships, delivering content,

developing interest in learning, and the assessment of that learning. I love it. Today, I am a children's book author, researcher, and, my most prized title, a teacher. I have been recognized with awards as a teacher and researcher at Tarleton State University. I share these details in linear and non-linear fashion since these experiences are one and make the whole of my person, soul, and mind.[36] For example, at my current institution, I have been awarded the Faculty Excellence in Scholarship Award, O.A. Grant Excellence in Teaching Award, the Chancellor's Academy of Teacher Educators: Significant Contributor to Texas K-12 Teacher Preparation from Texas A&M University System—Chancellor's Academy of Teacher Educators, and several others.

I share these experiences and awards with the desire to offer hope to people who, like me, have experienced learning exceptionalities.[37] I say, "Take the opportunities provided and look past the differences of life and see your purpose!" These awards are empty without the teachers and people who worked with me as a learner, colleague, and friend. The meaning in sharing these awards revolves around my amazement in receiving these varied awards. Like all human beings, I have struggled in life, yes. I have cried, yes. However, I have laughed and lived and see a positive future for me and for people who differ from normative skill sets and learning conventions, just like me. These awards are the tangible evidence of those positive thoughts I chose to "frame" my real life and story.[38] So, let's talk about the future now.

The Needed Philosophy: "It is about what they can do!"

I have the same learning differences I have faced since I was a boy. Yes . . . while driving, I look at my rings and my missing knuckle to check left from right. As difficult as my experiences have been as a learner, I would not change it if I could. Regardless of my labels and differences, I am a constructivist, learner, reader, and writer; I see learning and the expression of that learning as a creation always in the making.[39] My future is today. When I walk in my office at Tarleton State, I sometimes stop and feel an immense sense of joy. I am helping others like me both in the K-12 and college settings. I am excited to influence the future of teaching. The teachers we send out touch the lives of many children with diverse needs and learning differences. I model differentiation and share appropriate practices to address all learners. I have discovered we all have special learning needs. Education is an individualized experience always positioned within social contexts.[40] We need each other, and we all have a contribution. I belong to the teaching profession with a purpose to contribute knowledge via my research while influencing future teachers'

actions by modeling best practices as a teacher. I am loved. I belong. I have purpose. I am a teacher. I am Jim.

Future teachers: Please remember my life experience as you work with students who are experiencing challenges with reading and learning. Take on the guiding, enlightened philosophy, "It is about what they can do!" In the age of individualized education with individualized educational resources, teachers are seeking to find methods to meet individual student needs while maintaining learning goals and objectives set by the state and respective educational institutions.[41] "It is about what they can do!" is a philosophy about teachers seeing students as capable learners, as overcomers of challenges, and as self-champions who have personal and professional life choices to select. In the curricular program titled, *A Study of Heroes: Making a Difference Using Your Heart, Intellect, and Talents*, partner educational institutions representing private and public schools located in New York City, High Point, North Carolina, and suburban Long Island were determined to influence young peoples' understanding of the characteristics of "real-life" heroes. The goal of this program is visible in the partnership's purpose statements: "Students learn to distinguish between the concepts of hero and celebrity and to discover the real heroes in their own families, schools, communities, and most importantly—within themselves."[42] Morin and Bernheim provided the story of Hellen Keller and her determined teacher, Annie Sullivan, as an exemplar for this type of curriculum.[43] I agree. Both Sullivan and Keller experienced various challenges with learning, yet together Sullivan and Keller prevailed over miscommunication, physical, and psychological challenges. Future teachers, see your students as individuals who have choices to make, challenges to encounter and overcome, and as people who can do for themselves. If you do this, you carry the spirit of Annie Sullivan and Heller Keller that is encapsulated within the philosophy, "It is about what they *can* do!"

Notes

[1] *I find myself thankful for an educator who provided time and her expertise in polishing my writing and teaching me the world of educational biography. I was unfamiliar with this world and had no experience with this writing style. Thank you, Dr. Lucy Bailey. Like the teachers I wrote about from my past, you have that rare ability that words fail to define—the ability to be a teacher—my teacher.*

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Oral History of an Empowered Educator: Love and Work Fulfill a Life

Donna Sharp

"Sometimes he [David] would be gone for a week [in the Air National Guard], and I will never forget this. He was going to have to be gone five weeks, and I had these two kids, and I just thought, 'What?!?'" Teresa laughed, then became solemn, "Of course, the irony is that after he was gone, those five weeks became thirty-something years."

Introduction

This article draws from the power of oral tradition to narrate aspects of a female educator's life. Oral history has the potential to mobilize the force of language as the researcher speaks "with women as women."[1] In this oral history, I explore the life of an award-winning, but unknown, American educator who inspired a love for literature in her students while using the power of words to challenge conventional views. I draw from feminist scholarship (e.g. Noddings and Gilligan), and biographical scholarship (Goodson), to analyze this teacher's story. In so doing, I emphasize the imperative of studying teachers for understanding social justice, ethics of care, and a woman's voice.[2] An educational oral history provides a rich opportunity to examine the story of an accomplished career teacher, an "everywoman" who touched thousands of student lives. She became

Teacher of the Year in one of her state's largest school districts. The focus of this article is Teresa, a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and educator who makes meaning from the unexpected events in her life. This article offers an understanding of a teacher's life in a period of widespread criticism of education. Her story is a counterpoint to detractors who condemn the state of teachers and public education in the United States.

Since oral history begins with language and discourse, what better way to communicate than conversation between long-time friends? I have known Teresa since 1984 when I joined her as a fellow teacher at a large suburban high school in Oklahoma. During that time, I taught social studies and she taught English literature. When we met, Teresa was the mother of two preschool-aged children and happily married to David. I was a freshly-minted teacher at twenty-four and newly married. Three years later, Teresa's husband would die in a helicopter collision while serving in the United States Air National Guard. Later, my husband would be permanently incapacitated by an accident. I remember she could not visit me in the hospital as I sat vigil. She knew her presence there would spell out a powerful word, w-i-d-o-w. The unsaid word separated us. If she was absent, that word, *widow*, one she reluctantly embodied, was not apparent. This experience demonstrates how particular cultural concepts whether spoken or unspoken, have power and force.

The purpose of this article is to examine Teresa's three-dimensional story of agency, independence, and purpose and inspire the reader through that story. Teresa displays agency and independence in her choices to continue teaching and successfully raise her children without a partner from ages four and six to adulthood. Purpose appears in teaching literature and life lessons while also educating her children and students on social issues and gendered attitudes.

Oral history can offer a love story, a tragedy, a tale of commitment and tenacity, or, in Teresa's account, all of these combined. Knowing Teresa's history brings greater understanding of the feminist concept of authoring one's life. While navigating a cruel loss, she represents an exemplar for success for the youth she taught. Teresa is a role model for young women making their way in life, faced with conflicting social messages about their roles, opportunities, and difficult choices. In addition, both men and women can learn from oral histories that provide constructive investigations in to the life of an educator.

In particular, Teresa's oral history adds an optimistic chapter to the national dialogue on education. At a time when the public is challenging the competence of teachers, how do we resist these generalizations? We learn from teachers' stories. Despite being overlooked by educative mandates and political agendas, and having to withstand negative media attacks, the effective teacher motivates students, encourages persistence and commitment while promoting tolerance and social and gender consciousness through care and interest in her students. Teresa's story offers a look at an educator who challenged students to think critically,

question social and literary convention, and discover the joys of literature. Teresa's words about her career experiences provide rare insight into the classroom. For a master teacher, literature provides a vehicle for discussion and understanding of gender dynamics and complexities of female-male relationships. Facilitating a classroom conversation on female and male writers, Teresa engaged teenage students in recognizing the importance of an author's voice. Communicating through the language of love and work, Teresa allows the reader a glimpse of her unique life.

Biographical Scholarship on Educators

Education remains a "compelling gendered site."[4] Writings about historically significant educators Charles Hanford Henderson, Horace Mann, and the ubiquitous John Dewey, could lead one to conclude that women's roles in education never rose above schoolmarm.[5] Readers in the twenty-first century are indebted to feminist scholars of the latter 1900s. In 1982, for instance, philosopher Jane Roland Martin questioned whether "Maria Montessori had been the only woman in two thousand years to make a significant contribution to educational thought." Roland Martin also, rightly, challenged the dominance of men in the history of educational theory.[6] Defying traditional androcentric views of teaching as "women's work," biographies and oral histories of female educators offer glimpses into the lives of people who advocate for social justice.[7] Teresa's oral history adds another layer to educational biography, reminding us of women's extraordinary contributions in a career often stereotyped as common and ordinary.

Voices of women teachers have been edited out and silenced in many educational narratives.[8] Words explaining the understandings and interpretations of women educators were not recorded.[9] The feminine voice, including Teresa's as a classroom teacher, is conspicuously absent in research. While Kathleen Casey interviewed groups of Jewish, Catholic, and African American teachers working for social change in their respective communities during the 1990s, Teresa battled sexist notions in the classroom community.[10] Students read feminist literature such as *The Poisonwood Bible* in Teresa's literature class, a text based on a strong woman's voice.[11] Teresa recalled that male students criticized texts with female authors and never questioned male dominance in literature. Explaining the need to understand the opposite sex, Teresa encouraged teens to respect the feminine voice. Whether challenging teen androcentrism or a parent's condemnation of sexuality, Teresa is an advocate for the underdog, expressing frustration with parents who condemned their children who came out as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual, or queer. As Teresa contemplates the unexpected turns in her life, she describes working to balance her career and relationships.

Teresa's story is reminiscent of *Wise Women's* autobiographical essays

exploring the journey of women's development, with its triumphs and regrets. In Freeman and Schmidt's *Wise Women: Reflections of Teachers at Midlife*, teachers at midlife explore earlier stages of their lives and careers.[12] Narratives of teachers at midlife reflect transformation from the untested novice to the passionate veteran educator. Teresa's journey was similar, as she entered college at seventeen and began teaching at twenty-two. I asked Teresa why she chose teaching as a career. She answered, "I cannot say, because I have no idea, why I became a teacher. I have absolutely no idea how I wound up there; my mother wanted me to go to business school. I thought businesses were boring. There were really no teachers in the family, it just was something I liked. I liked English, and I said, 'I think I can do that.' I guess I'm one of those 'bloom where you are planted' people."

Teresa described her early teaching career and her growth as an educator over the years. Handed a textbook and following a school administrator's admonition to "just go at it," Teresa thrived in the flexible teaching environment. Through sponsoring cheerleader groups and pep clubs during after school hours, and creating lesson plans and classroom lectures at night, an inexperienced young woman became an accomplished professional. Over the years, she progressed from moving hourly between junior high buildings, to teaching Advanced Placement English Literature with college texts. After passing her love of literature to the next generation for 38 years, Teresa chose to close her classroom door. Like the educators in *Wise Women*, Teresa loved her work; her oral history would fit snugly with the *Wise Women*.

Feminist Oral History Methodology

I conducted this study using oral history. According to Jensen, oral history allows researchers to disclose common experiences with participants.[13] In this view, women interacting among women can experience a "difference of ease;" they can "speak more freely, more expansively" in a less formal relationship than traditional interviewing provides.[14] Oral history also can reflect the spirit of Patti Lather's focus in conducting research "*with* and not *on*" participants.[15] Significantly, for this project, our established and collegial relationship across 33 years was fundamental to the method, and reminiscing on our mutual gestalt of career, personal, and social lives was fundamental to the interview process. Minister describes reflexivity as "inseparable from the process" of narrator and researcher collaboration in the feminist interview.[16] In the feminist interview, the researcher acknowledges the narrator's statements, the interviewer discloses similar experiences and self-reflects on the subject. Even shy narrators often become eager participants through this method.[17] The practice of reflexivity came naturally in our interview exchanges. I reflected on my teaching experiences, as did Teresa. As

noted of their research, much of the digital recording sounded like every day conversation between friends.[18] Collaboration occurred through a pleasurable recounting of shared events from years spent in the same school, district, school building, and its concomitant ethos of education. With our heads together in her living room, we pored over pictures of Teresa and David, their children, old yearbooks, and even a dress hand-sewn by her grandmother that she conserved lovingly in plastic.

The oral history method offers the power to realign prior androcentric frameworks for understanding a woman's life.[19] Harding proposes the notion of *strong objectivity*, recognizing the role that power, history, and social location play in producing knowledge. Acknowledging the "politics of knowledge" that shapes research practice allows researchers to detect social assumptions at the point of identifying and conceptualizing a project.[20] Other oral history practitioners reject emphasis on objectivity, suggesting that entire fields of research methodology are gendered, with quantitative methods valued as scientific, objective, and masculine, while soft, subjective, and feminine labels are applied to qualitative methods.[21] Androcentrism and masculine bias dominate the practice and culture of science and politics of power, and scholarship focused on only one sex is broadly applied to all.[22]

Feminist theorists recognize other views of what objectivity can and should be.[23] They suggest that objectivity is impossible in the close and equal relationship between the researcher and participant in an oral history.[24] As Westmarland reminds us, the fundamental decision to select a participant is a subjective endeavor.[25] Acknowledging our shared memories of people, places, situations, and the vocabulary of education, I was aware of my common background with Teresa and positionality as middle-class white females as a potential touchstone for connection.

I transcribed more than four hours of interviews as part of my data analysis, and made decisions concerning which elements of the narrative to emphasize. Working within the feminist framework, I pored over pages of transcripts, analyzing passages, as themes of family and career, informed by social and gender concerns emerged. Teresa's information, like that of any woman recounting her life, comes with "selectivities and silences."[26] I realized as I transcribed our conversation that even after 35 years some memories were still too painful for her to revisit.

Forty-five minutes into our first interview, I inquired whether we could talk about the death of her husband. I was taken aback to see Teresa tear up suddenly. She waved her hand in front of her face, and in a breaking voice said, "No, no, I can't talk about that." I quickly assured her that we would not address that subject. Teresa began our second interview with an unsolicited comment that she had reflected on her emotional response to my question. "I think I became more introspective about why I got so upset about the David question. I really did. Because it has been . . . well how long has it been . . . 30, 28 years. Why should I be so emotional about it? I think, I think it was because of the kids. Because they were so

little. And you have to do things when they are little (clears throat) when someone dies. That takes explaining. And those are not happy memories," Teresa said.

Teresa's history weaves together topics of love and work as she recalls meaningful events and considers her years in education, child-rearing without her spouse, and her journey to her present life. Via the oral history narrative, Teresa is celebrated as a multidimensional woman; wife, mother, educator, and the author of her own life.[27]

A Feminist Lens

Oral history merges the forces of history, language, and literature.[28] Women's life stories are a product of the self and society, and thus shape self-representations.[29] Teresa described her early years of teaching, family relationships, and the social fabric of her background as only she understands it. The oral history method covers the narrator's life story and begins with talk, valuing diverse ways of knowing.[30] Feminist methodology and the oral history method work well together, revealing knowledge in similar ways. Understanding the lived experience of the individual is a focus of feminist interviews. In the feminist interview ethic, interviewers and participants are equals, conversing about an issue.[31] Researchers who use feminist methodology strive to make the respondent comfortable, minimize trappings of academia, and reduce status differences between the interviewer and participant.[32] The feminist interview renders explicit a woman's private lived history, whether nurturing her children or educating a classroom.[33]

As second wave feminism flourished in the late 1960s, Teresa was historically situated in a conservative Christian region.[34] Teresa graduated from high school in a class of 265 students. It was 1965, a time when women married young. Delaying marriage until age thirty-one, Teresa's choices did not emulate expected social conventions. While some peers viewed college as a marketplace for marriage, Teresa disregarded those notions. Mores were slowly changing. When I asked why she chose not to follow her peers into early marriage, she replied slowly and with emphasis, "I do not know. I just felt there was more. Not that there was anything wrong with that [marrying young]. When I was growing up you had to get married, that's just what it was. It was quite different back then. College was to find a husband. I remember thinking, I don't want a husband, I want a car!"

Teresa delayed marriage until her thirties, choosing to live on her own, teach, sponsor activities outside the school day, selecting a path that bypassed social expectations. "I was 31 when I married David," Teresa said. "Marge [her sister] didn't marry until she was 35 or 36. Maybe we just had a harder time finding the person, and maybe we were so interested in blazing our own trail that we didn't feel the need. Everybody else in the

family married very young. Seeing what my mother went through, being dependent on my stepfather even though she worked, maybe that had more to it than I realized at the time. She worked, yet she didn't have a lot of freedoms: She was pretty much controlled."

What do we Believe about Teachers?

What expectations does a reader form when encountering a teacher's life history? As Lortie stated, "Schooling is long on prescription, short on description."[35] Goodson notes that there has been little serious study of teachers.[36] In the field of English literature, women educators are sometimes portrayed in a binary fashion as either youthful, selfless paragons or aged, malcontented spinsters. The young, passionate, long-suffering governess Jane Eyre falls in love with her student's guardian.[37] By contrast, the middle-aged, cold, manipulative Miss Jean Brody maneuvers students like pieces on a chess board.[38] As women's unique experiences are often muted in research, women educators' stories are presented as predictable, open-and-shut narratives. [39] Teachers are sometimes presented as statistics instead of individuals or professionals.[40]

Goodson encourages researchers to ensure that "the teacher's voice is heard, heard loudly, heard articulately."[41] Twenty-first century teachers persist as dichotomous figures, lauded as heroic or increasingly maligned in public discourse.[42] While teachers proclaim regarding their colleagues, "I've never seen people work so hard," detractors in the media and politics describe educators as "underperforming" and "ineffective."[43] Teresa described her early teaching years, "I remember how hard it was! I remember how tired I was. And you know, back then, you were just given a book. And I didn't really have any mentor, or syllabus, or curriculum guide." Perhaps the public's displeasure results from the classroom teacher's insularity. Unlike the high school coach, whose team can be viewed by parents and fans progressing from practice to practice or game to game on the field, the classroom lacks Lortie's "visibility of outcomes" for interested adults.[44] There are no fans to watch the measured progression from apathetic teen to immersion in meaningful literature.[45] Levine and Levine refer to "shrill critics" who announce that the public education system is "broken," schools are "dropout academies," and teachers fail to educate.[46] Detractors have seldom spent time in a classroom. In a typically gendered fashion, the teachers depicted in these failing institutions are mostly female. As Gilligan encourages, the voice of a strong woman must be heard.[47] In this case, it is the voice of a dedicated female teacher.

Interviews with a career educator belie the pessimistic headlines. Internal Review Board approval in hand, I looked forward to hearing and recording the oral history of a master teacher. Warm and engaging, Teresa welcomed me into her home for our interviews with an engaging smile, just as she had welcomed students into her classroom. Retired from the contentious classroom proving ground in 2007, Teresa no longer

straightens rows of desks, writes on the white board, or grades essays long into the night.[48] As a girl she observed her grandmothers retire from the workforce and came away with a view of her future, "I remember when I was growing up my mom's mother was SO busy – she was involved in church and civic activities and she was in a writing club. There was always something to do, and she was very social and very active. My grandmother, my dad's mother, once she retired, she sat. And she crocheted. She could sew, both of my grandmothers could sew, but she sat and watched TV all day. I remember when I was very young, thinking, 'I don't want to do that. I don't want to just sit.'"

Teresa now nourishes her spirit with interests outside of school, spending countless hours at the city library and hospital, travelling, and enjoying friends and family. Teresa's oral history offers a flexible space for an authentic teacher and a dynamic single-parent educator making meaning of an unexpected life.

Feminist Themes

The word feminism can at times have negative connotations for women who have not participated in the feminist movement.[49] Teresa approached the term hesitantly and did not self-identify with the word. While Teresa did not take up the mantle of feminism, clear feminist themes of care, voice, and social justice emerged from our interviews.

Ethics of Care

Ethics of care, introduced by Carol Gilligan and advocated by Nel Noddings, reflects a concept of caring that is especially rooted in women's experiences.[50] Care joins people rather than separating them and merges "reason with emotion, mind with body, self with relationships, and men with women."[51] In contrast, ethics of justice is the binary ethic attributed to men, with a focus on reason, fairness, and justice.[52] Holding women to a standard based on male development ignores an equally valid understanding of women as oriented toward interdependence and connection.[53]

Over the course of our interviews, Teresa and I acknowledged our commonalities as mothers, educators invested in our students, and harried chauffeurs who raced from dance practice to the sports field.

> I look back now and I think, "How did I do that? How did I teach school, and cart them around, and be busy all the weekends, and manage to do what I did?" I did it because I had to. I remember taking Jamie to ballet, taking Matt to soccer, picking Jamie up at ballet, then I would go back to get Matt. I was sitting in traffic and thinking, "I really

> don't want to do this." It was so exhausting after working all day long. Something, I guess divine intervention, clicked in my head, and I thought, "Well, Teresa, you can be sitting in traffic, taking your kids to their activities, or you can be in rehab." I thought, "Oh, I'll take this."

A facetious reference to rehabilitation underscores the exhaustion of single parenting, yet parenting and care are a given in Teresa's life. Within a democratic framework, care is not just a feminine ethic, but a human ethic, and the human condition is one of connectedness.[54]

Noddings added to care-focused feminism with her position that the caring attitude is an underpinning of ethics and morality.[55] Caring is natural, in Noddings' words, and we are impelled to help others because we want to.[56] While philosopher Immanuel Kant viewed "doing things because we *ought* to do them" as superior to "doing things because we *want* to do them," Noddings disagreed, stating that, "our 'oughts' build on our 'wants.'" Teresa exemplified Nodding's "oughts" build on "wants" belief as she chose to run from event to event for her children, rather than succumbing to indifference or numbing her feelings.[57]

Ethics of care creates a theme among the women in Teresa's family. Teresa described her grandmother, who would sew all night to make her a new dress, and who took in a long-lost relative when "Aunt Nanny" had nowhere to go. Teresa's mother gave up her job and moved to be in the same city as Teresa, helping with care of her children. Teresa's sister is a mainstay in her life and her children's lives. The caring legacy continued as her mother's health declined, and Teresa and her sister nursed their mother until her death.

Even when a person has a strong ethics of care, caring is not always easy. When Teresa and David married, he had a 12-year-old son from a previous marriage, and the relationship with his ex-wife was fraught. "It wasn't very fun sharing a child. David was a very good father, very good to all three of his kids. Being divorced is very difficult, but it is really rough when there is not a lot of cooperation or communication. You really do have to work at it, probably harder than a marriage. Maybe that is why I didn't want to bring anybody into my life. I remember thinking, 'I don't want another ex-wife,'" Teresa said.

Noddings proposed that the language of care is a woman's native tongue.[58] An ethics of care typifies women's traditional encouragement toward interpersonal responsibility and care. Care is valuable and the costs of carelessness are high; without care comes neglect, abandonment, and exclusion.[59] In an artful understatement, Noddings reminds us, "Caring is important."[60]

The Importance of Voice

In her seminal work, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan questions the

androcentric studies which judge a woman's moral commitments, psychological growth, and values as deficient.[61] From this theoretical perspective, women appreciate the responsibility of care and see a world comprised of relationships rather than rules. Females and males give voice to their experience and thoughts in differing ways. The "voice" of a writer is a common term in a literature course, but in Teresa's classroom voice carried more than the literary meaning. Teresa challenged gender stereotypes and the superiority of the "male voice" in literature.

> I remember when I was teaching, that sometimes boys were miffed to read a woman's voice. There would be an undercurrent. I would say, "Do you want to be married?" I don't know if you could say that now, but I would say, "If you want to be married, have a relationship, and understand women, you have to listen to their voices." I also wanted to say, "If you want to sleep with them, you need to hear their voices." But I didn't say that, obviously. I felt kind of defensive because, in literature, the majority of voices are men, and girls don't balk at that.

Social Justice Concerns

While feminism is a term Teresa approaches with caution, a topic of feminist social justice surfaces repeatedly in her narrative.[62] A woman's right to choose her sexual and reproductive options is a subject she introduces with concern. Teresa states that she "rides the fence" on the issue of abortion and adds that, "I wish women never had to make that choice." Conversely, Teresa describes herself as heartbroken when contemplating a future reversal of the "right to choose" in the United States Supreme Court. Teresa expresses apprehension that women will be "put back in precarious situations." Supreme Court decisions regarding a woman's reproductive rights stimulated the first feminist conversations Teresa and her daughter Jamie shared. "I have raised a feminist daughter," Teresa offers. "I must have sent some kind of message," she reflects with a smile.

In discussions of literature and life, Teresa recalled challenging cultural expectations for marriage and students' conventional attitudes. As she spoke, Teresa recounted incidents with her children and students which exemplify her interest in social justice. When her young son questioned his sister's ability to become a doctor, Teresa realized his only experiences as a patient were with male physicians. Explaining her egalitarian view of girls' opportunities, Teresa fostered a broader view of gender roles in her son.

A script of concern for social justice is evident as Teresa recalled administrators from her years in education. She remarked that despite

the low numbers of women in school administration, a female assistant principal was among the best with whom she worked, "You think of the best, she was definitely a contender. I think there is still that glass ceiling in corporate America. I guess being a teacher, we all got paid the same. The idea that two people could be doing the same job, and because it is a man he could be paid even a nickel more an hour doesn't make sense to me. He might be raising a family, but she may be raising a family, too. It is just almost unbelievable that it still goes on."

Continuing in the vein of equal treatment in the workplace, Teresa notes that male educators have a salary advantage because more men fill the role of coach and earn a separate stipend for each sport they coach: Head coaches earn the highest stipends, but assistants can coach several sports.[63]

> It is still women who don't make the money in schools. They are not football coaches. How many women basketball coaches are there? There aren't that many. Men are going to make more money because they are going to have more opportunities. It is really kind of sad. I'm pretty sure a woman could coach basketball on a men's team. I know you have to have talent, but you have to have something innate within you for motivation and you have to know the mind of the game. Why does that mean it has to be a guy? Here we are, and a woman (Hillary Clinton) is going to run for president? It has been all these years and no one has run . . . really?

Teresa recognized and deplored sexist attitudes. Emphasizing her distaste for American society's sexual double standards for daughters and sons, Teresa described conversations with adults who encourage parents to "keep your daughters pure" and fail to consider a male equivalent, "I was at a Bible study class and a lady said something about teaching your daughters to be pure. And I remember thinking, 'What about your sons?' I wondered why she didn't say, 'your sons.' To me it was glaring. Just be sure your daughters are pure. You might want to be talking to your sons, too! Heck, I don't know, I might have been the only one who noticed, but I did."

Love and Work

When Teresa became a widow in 1987, she had choices to make: Work or stay home with the children, find a new partner or parent without a mate, and focus on the tragedy or the positives of her family and career. She was young, only 37 years old, with two children under the age of

six. This was not part of her life script; this was not supposed to happen. Younger widows have more difficulty with the initial adjustment to their loss and experience greater emotional suffering than women who are widowed later in life.[64] A young widow grieves the loss of a companion and the loss of hopes *and* dreams. Teresa's life in a nuclear family of four was no more. She said, "I just remember thinking, 'I cannot do this by myself. I cannot do this by myself.' I was so used to having a helpmate, even though I felt like I was doing more of the work. Jamie's birthday is in May, and Matt's is in January. He had just turned four and she was getting ready to turn six when David died."

Teresa was at a critical point in her life, when the connection of family would mean more than ever before. Lowe and McClement would define Teresa, under age 45 (at 37) as a "young widow."[65] In 2003, the percentage of young widows who remarried was 47.5 percent.[66] Teresa was not among those who remarried: She did not look for a new husband or father for her children after David's death. The transition to her new life took time, but Teresa made her choices. I inquired about male role models for her children, and Teresa's eyes became moist. With her circle of strong women, who would be their male role model? Teresa's sister Janell met Steve three years after David's death, and he quickly became a member of the family. Teresa remembered, "When Janell and Steve married, he told me that he would be there for the kids (tears up again). He kept his word, even after he and Janell had a child of their own. Steve and Matt walked Jamie down the aisle when she married."

While common motifs expressed by young widows center around losses,[67] my interviews with Teresa display refrains of love and work. As I transcribed our interviews, those themes were dominant, causing my thoughts to turn to Erikson's interpretation of Freud, "Love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness."[68] Teresa is a woman for whom work is a requirement, providing intellectual challenge and nurturing friendships. She said, "It never dawned on me that I would be a stay-at-home mother. That was just not a scenario or example set for me. My grandmother, she had six children, but when she was finished raising those children, and became a widow, she worked. Everyone I knew worked. If they didn't work all the time they had kids, they worked the majority of it."

Modesty Becomes her

Shrugging off accolades, Teresa insists her history is nothing unusual. Teresa displays a winning smile and a few frowns of chagrin as she conveys her story. She did not follow mores of the 1960s, find a husband in college, marry, have children, and become a stay-at-home mom. Teresa graduated from college, taught literature, and lived on her own for years. Marrying in her thirties, she and David created a family of four within three years. Soon a widow with two small children, Teresa continued to

fulfill the roles of mother and father and educator. Teresa had help. She relied on the women who had been steadfast in her life, her mother and sister. Social convention would expect a lovely young mother to remarry, but Teresa had the love of her family and the love of her work to sustain her. In her own words, "I would like for people to know me as someone who, (pause) I worked, I raised kids, I liked what I did."

Postscript

Teresa continues to spend countless hours volunteering at the library and hospital. Her family is the center of her life, and she now has the added pleasure of a grandchild. On the go every day, Teresa is an example of a "bloom where you are planted" person. Teresa has a rich life, and she is *not sitting*.

Acknowledgment

I am grateful to Teresa for her time and her story.

Notes

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Review Essay: Reflections on the Life of a Gadfly

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Boyles, Deron, and Kenneth J. Potts. *From a Gadfly to a Hornet: Academic Freedom, Humane Education, and the Intellectual Life of Joseph Kinmont Hart*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2016. Pp. 215.

From a Gadfly to a Hornet is timely in an age when threats to academic freedom are flying from the left and right, and intellectual rigor in public debate is mocked from the highest offices of government. In a recent op-ed in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* Ramin Jahanbegloo asserted, "Academic life is an ethical enterprise."[1] He went on to challenge those of us in the academy to consider where we stand when basic liberties are in peril. Deron Boyles and Kenneth J. Potts address this challenge in their biography of Joseph Kinmont Hart. Hart (1876-1949) was a prolific scholar in the emerging disciplines of education and sociology at the turn of the twentieth century. He joined the education faculty at multiple universities, was fired from most posts, yet sustained an impressive career as a writer and editor throughout. Hart published 14 books and wrote for *The New Republic*, *Parents Magazine*, *Scientific Monthly*, and *The Social Frontier*, in addition to his work as editor of *The Survey*. According to his biographers Hart endorsed a "full and frank" version of academic freedom, seeking to prod and provoke as necessary.[2] Within academe, not to mention the public square of a democratic republic, the work of the gadfly is always

necessary. In 1918 Hart explained, "…the very logic of democracy [is] based upon intelligent and moral freedom, rather than upon force. Hence the ultimate problem of democracy becomes the problem of education."[3]

Boyles, Professor of Philosophy of Education in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at Georgia State University, and Potts, Librarian Emeritus at California State University, Stanislaus, are both graduates of Vanderbilt University, where they encountered Paul Conkin's *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University*.[4] This is the book, they say, that introduced them to Joseph Kinmont Hart. Boyles and Potts make the case that Hart, nearly forgotten now, was a scholar, intellectual, and teacher worthy of note. They present Hart's persistent commitment to academic freedom as a fundamental principle that defined his life and, therefore, serves as the thematic core of the biography.

The study is based on a twenty-year odyssey through the archives of nine colleges and universities and a critical analysis of Hart's scholarship. Boyles and Potts describe their collaborative effort as an intermittent study, "primarily due to circumstance, coincidence, and serendipity."[5] It would, however, take a great deal of time to canvass the many locales where Hart worked, even if the biographical study were the singular research priority of the writers. The authors describe their approach as "a critical or intellectual biography" that strives "for the important connections narrative biography requires."[6] Six chapters follow Hart's career chronologically, relaying key events that got him into trouble at the various universities where he worked, helpful background information on issues and institutional histories, and Hart's emerging educational philosophy as indicated through his writing. The result is a biography that is nearly equal parts analysis of Hart's intellectual work and historical grounding in social context. The fraction of sources on Hart's personal life is limited to a 1938 photograph of Hart and his brothers, correspondence between Frances S. Hart (Hart's widow) and H. Gordon Hullfish concerning the posthumous publication of *Education in the Humane Community*, a few traces drawn from Hart's autobiographical accounts, interviews with a few former students, and communication with distant family members.

The book is nicely designed, taking the reader on a gadfly's journey from graduate school at the University of Chicago, to posts at various academic hot spots in the early days of the twentieth century: University of Washington, Reed College, Wisconsin, Vanderbilt, Columbia Teachers College, and a 6-year interruption in New York, when Hart took up writing for *The Survey*. With little personal information to incorporate, the biographers rely on Hart's writing to speak his piece. The epigraphs that frame each chapter are particularly well chosen evidence of Craig Kridel's evaluation that: "[T]this is a biography about a serious person who considered important ideas."[7] While education scholars will find the book enlightening on a number of topics including the history of academic freedom, the status of social foundations in teacher education, adult education, and the broader purposes of schools and universities,

a broader audience will appreciate this rendering of a life committed to democracy, social welfare, pacifism, and community organizing. Hart's work to critique, and to propel others into action, makes the "gadfly" reference in the title, particularly apt.

Hart was well connected. He studied with John Dewey, William Rainey Harper, and George H. Mead, and taught George Counts and Donald West (one of the founders of the Highlander Folk School). Politically, he was immersed in legendary American Association of University Professors' battles on one coast, and then found himself at the center of the Social Reconstructionist movement on the other. And Hart was an early critic of teacher preparation programs devoid of intellectual content. Reflecting on his days as a young professor in a 1927 publication, Hart wrote: "I could not get my teaching materials out of the books. The state of Washington became my laboratory. The life and work and culture of the state became my field of study and investigation. Out of these came my students, and back into these went our university graduates to do their work as teachers. Hence, out of these must come my understanding of the situation and the materials for my teaching processes. Under the circumstances, conventional 'pedagogy' seemed irrelevant, absurd, impertinent."[8]

Looking back on his career, at the age of 51, Hart was blunt: "I had worked for years helping prepare teachers to be educational leaders of their communities rather than mere mechanical drudges in the classrooms."[9] Although there may be a hint of resignation there, I trust that, on this point, Hart, and other progressives, many of them women just now getting due recognition from biographers, were right about the nature of sound teaching and teacher preparation.[10] It's the professional peg I've hung my hat on for the last 24 years—the notion that teachers should be scholars, in command of disciplines and pedagogies, yes, but also aware of the political-economic and historical contexts in which schooling takes place. Teaching is a creative act, and it flourishes when teachers and students are free to think, and wonder, and play with ideas.

Hart appears to have been so well connected to many important issues of early-twentieth-century education—school community-building, progressive education, rural education, Danish folk schools, democratic schooling in multiple forms—that I expect this biography to spur new conversations and reconsiderations for, not only education historians but also educators at large. For example, I'm particularly interested in Boyles and Potts' observation that, "The *work* and *example* of Dewey, although not necessarily his personal guidance, most affected Hart's developing educational and social philosophy."[11] In light of Jackie Blount's recent work on Ella Flagg Young, particularly the argument that Dewey may have learned much of his educational philosophy from Young, I wonder if it was, actually, Young's *work* and *example* that shaped much of the thinking of the young Joseph Kinmont Hart? I note the evidence that Hart was quite fond of his teacher, William Rainey Harper and, since Harper and Young stood on opposing sides regarding the respect due teachers in Chicago,

it is not surprising that Hart did not credit Young as influential in his study at the University. To his credit, though, John Dewey recognized the intellectual imprint Young was making during her stint at the University of Chicago. Blount has uncovered some particularly powerful evidence of this, emanating from Dewey's own pen: "Regarding my relations to Mrs. Young,….I was constantly getting ideas from her. …She had by temperament and training the gist of a concrete empirical pragmatism with reference to philosophical conceptions before the doctrines were ever formulated in print." Dewey added that he often "didn't see the meaning or force of some favorite conception of my own till Mrs. Young had given it back to me….I owe chiefly to association with Mrs. Young the depth of my conviction that all psychology which isn't physiological is social."[12]

Considering the possibility of mutual influence between the three from another angle, I wonder if it is possible that Hart's emerging work influenced Dewey as much as the other way around? That is, is there a pattern similar to the relationship between Dewey and Young? To be sure, the parallels between Dewey's work and Hart's are striking, as the biographers make clear. Hart's 1910 dissertation, "A Critical Study of Current Theories of Moral Education" followed Dewey's 1909 publication, *Moral Principles in Education*. Hart's 1918 study, *Democracy in Education: A Social Interpretation of the History of Education* came out on the heels of Dewey's (1916) well- known *Democracy and Education*. Hart's *Social Interpretation of Education* (1929) preceded Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938) by about a decade, and Hart's posthumous *Education in the Humane Community* (1951), the biographers explain, overlaps significantly with Dewey's earlier work on naturalism. Could it be that Dewey learned more from his students or collaborators than has generally been acknowledged? No doubt, the indomitable Ella Flagg Young has almost been lost to history due, primarily, to gender bias. In Hart's case, the formula for his obscurity is more likely a combination of the effects of his intellectual acuity, his tenacity for critique, and his fiery impatience.[13] The career of a gadfly is hard, even in the best of times.

Boyles and Potts' biography of Hart reminds us of the critical importance of the work that falls to those who call themselves scholars. I learned that lesson from another scholarly gadfly, education historian Clarence Karier. In a 1987 analysis that reads strikingly perceptive in our present moment, Karier, wrote: "When the very intellectual basis of public discourse is eroded, the destruction of fundamental freedoms cannot be far behind."[14] I think Hart knew that, which makes *From a Gadfly to a Hornet* essential reading for our times.

Notes

[1] Ramin Jahanbegloo, "Why the Academy Must Protect America's Democratic Soul," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 31 January 2017, http://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-the-Academy-Must-Protect/239051.

[2] Deron Boyles and Kenneth J. Potts, *From a Gadfly to a Hornet: Academic Freedom, Humane Education, and the Intellectual Life of Joseph Kinmont Hart* (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2016), xvi, xxxviii. This is a theme that Boyles and Potts return to throughout the book.

[3] Hart, quoted in ibid.,55.

[4] Paul Keith Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985).

[5] Boyles and Potts, *From a Gadfly to a Hornet*, xiii, xxi.

[6] Boyles and Potts, *From a Gadfly to a Hornet*, xv.

[7] Craig Kridel, "Foreword," in *From a Gadfly to a Hornet*, x.

[8] Hart, quoted in Boyles and Potts, *From a Gadfly to a Hornet*, 15.

[9] Hart, quoted in ibid., 81.

[10] See, for example, Jackie Blount's forthcoming work on Ella Flagg Young and Linda C. Morice, *Flora White: In the Vanguard of Gender Equity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).

[11] Boyles and Potts, *From a Gadfly to a Hornet*, 6. Emphasis added.

[12] Dewey, quoted in Jackie M. Blount, "The Mutual Intellectual Relationship of John Dewey and Ella Flagg Young: *Contributions to Education Series*, 1901-1902," in *Philosophy and History of Education: Diverse Perspectives on Their Value and Relationship*, edited by Antoinette Errante, Jackie Blount, and Bruce A. Kimball (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 35. See also, Jackie M. Blount, "Ella Flagg Young and the Gender Politics of Democracy and Education," forthcoming in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*.

[13] See Kridel's point in "Foreword," in Boyles and Potts, *From a Gadfly to a Hornet*, xi-xii.

[14] Clarence J. Karier, "Some Reflections on the Coming of an American Fascism," *Educational Theory* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 262.

Book Review: Richardson, *Gender Lessons: Patriarchy, Sextyping and Schools.*

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Scott Richardson. *Gender Lessons: Patriarchy, Sextyping, and Schools*. Rotterdam/ Boston/ Taipei: Sense Publishers, 2015. 240 pages. ISBN 978-94-6300-031-4. 240 pages. Paperback: ($ 36.00)

"[G]ood teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher," Parker J. Palmer writes in *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*.[1] Scott Richardson's work in *Gender Lessons: Patriarchy, Sextyping, and Schools* builds on Palmer's detailed account of good teaching by calling for teachers and their schools to deinstitutionalize gender and work toward assisting students in becoming "self-actualizing and self-determining individuals."[2] Richardson argues that students are prohibited from achieving such potentialities due to a form of discrimination that he calls "sextyping." Sextyping refers to the toxic social reproduction of gender stereotypes that routinely takes place in American schools through the informal interactions between staff and students as well as formalized class lessons and school-sponsored extra-curricular activities. Not only do such acts go without critique, according to Richardson, schools and the individuals who work within schools are often more preoccupied with

reinforcing gender roles through sextyping than designing instruction and an educational environment that facilitates learning so that students become agents of their own education and identities. Richardson suggests how dire the stakes are, when he writes, "[W]e are limiting our children's capabilities to be fully human."[3]

In an effort to record sextyping within schools, Richardson engineered his study under the guise of seeking "narratives of success."[4] Over the course of an entire school year, Richardson and three field research assistants developed narrative case studies by conducting observations and interviews in three suburban school districts. Though somewhat rural, these school districts were primarily comprised of white middle-class suburbanites who perceived the increasing racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversification of the school district as a challenge rather than as an opportunity for growth that should be embraced. The data collected includes observations from forty-five classrooms throughout elementary, middle, and high schools (K-12).

For readers invested in biographical scholarship, Richardson's work underscores the value of using narratives as a basis of teaching toward gendered multiplicity and against bullying. *Gender Lessons* foregrounds examples from biographical moments that speak poignantly to the importance of addressing these issues in schools. Richardson weaves in accounts of his personal challenges as a father of two children who attend elementary schools that reinforce heteronormativity alongside heterosexual grooming. He also candidly recounts his struggles as an instructor facing the "most challenging group of students of all-time" due to a group of girls "addicted to being mean."[5] While questioning how gender becomes institutionalized, Richardson goes as far as examining the public messages posted to school websites, the affect and diction of teachers, and the social media students routinely access while at school. The final product is an intense journey through the explicit and implicit institutionalization of gender. What Richardson chronicles along the way is a culture in which sextyping runs rampant.

Richardson illustrates how educational biographies can add to an understanding of the process of normalization that children experience in schools. He is meticulous in his attention to details and his critical examination of how students are forced into a gender binary and the ways in which gender is reinforced and policed by parents, faculty, and administration. Using the lens of a curriculum theorist, Richardson examines the individual experiences of both teachers and students. An overwhelming number of examples of sextyping are included in the book. Examples such as elementary students aping the highly sexualized and gendered performance associated with the tossing of Mardi Gras beads

on Fat Tuesday and the manner in which schools fawn over students who perform gender in acceptable ways, like the cheerleaders and football players who walked the halls "like their existence was the most important thing to ever happen."[6] Even well-intentioned instructors fail to challenge sextyping and further attempt to "normalize" students through the sextyping embedded in daily interactions. Though shocking when situated within the framework Richardson provides, readers will find it nearly impossible not to reflect back on their own educational experiences, only to realize that such accounts are all-too-familiar.

In *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*, C.J. Pascoe examines teasing and bulling amongst middle school boys who deploy the word "fag" in an effort to bolster and maintain masculinity by shoring up their own heterosexuality.[7] In relation, Richardson documents such harmful behavior as early as sixth grade and links it to specific accounts that consistently turn physically violent. Such gendered performances often happen parallel to encouragements from teachers who, mindlessly and relentlessly, push students to embody a static definition of masculinity and femininity. Thus, school becomes a sexually-tense culture where flirting and sex-based conversations take place between students and between faculty. Richardson even observes routine flirting between faculty and students, which he classifies as "playful, risky, and borderline criminal behaviors."[8] However, he also illuminates how the environment teachers construct is paradoxical since students are groomed from an early age to perform gender as stereotypical boys and girls and to show sexual interest in the opposite sex; then adults express concern when students actually engage in sexual behavior. Richardson paraphrases, "To be clear, students were the products of adult desires and imposed culture. Then, unfairly, when students perfectly performed their roles, as they were taught, adults became alarmed."[9] Though Richardson argues that any change within the education system must be a collective responsibility, he places the impetus on teachers. Success, Richardson believes, depends on institutions empowering teachers within the classroom and providing necessary teacher support from parents and administration. This includes addressing such issues as the hyperstandardization, lack of sex education, and religious affiliation of school districts. Additionally, Richardson argues that we can all benefit from studying the education policies and practices of "alternative" schools (e.g. democratic, Waldorf, and Montessori) as well as looking to countries committed to making education more equitable. While highlighting the need for institutional reform, Richardson also underscores the need for a holistic understanding of students' educational needs. While it might seem like a utopic dream, Richardson makes the case that *students* should be the ones to change schools.[10] Such a shift has

the potential for evoking future change throughout the country since, as Richardson states, these kids "will likely grow up to own, control, and govern much of America."[11]

Gender Lessons is an informative and at times disturbing book to read. Richardson successfully synthesizes poetry, field notes, personal anecdotes, time studies from classroom observations, and pithy pop cultural quotations - from the song lyrics of Bing Crosby to Nicki Minaj. Richardson's accessible writing style is suitable for a wide range of readers, including those who have never considered gender theoretically. It works as a primer for anyone new to the subject while integrating feminist theorists such as bell hooks, R. W. Connell, and Michael Kimmel. In reality, *Gender Lessons* is for everyone. This book contains valuable insight for aspiring teachers and veterans in the classroom, school administrations invested in gender equity, and parents and community members committed to the quality of inclusive education. Ultimately, what Richardson presents is a call to action for all parties to stop doing gender to kids: "Let their futures be their own, not a relic of our sexist legacy."[12]

Notes

[1] Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Franscisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 10.

[2] Scott Richardson, *Gender Lessons: Patriarchy, Sextyping and Schools* (Boston, MA: Sense Publishers, 2015), 31.

[3] Richardson, *Gender Lessons*, 3.

[4] Ibid., 36.

[5] Ibid., 12, 15.

[6] Ibid., 128. 7 C.J. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[8] Richardson, *Gender Lessons*, 125.

[9] Ibid., 169.

[10] Ibid., 156.

[11] Ibid., 37.

[12] Ibid., 191.

Book Review: *Stack, The Arthurdale Community School: Education and Reform in Depression Era Appalachia*

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The Arthurdale Community School: Education and Reform in Depression Era Appalachia. By Sam F. Stack Jr. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016. 196 pages. ISBN 978-0-813166889

Sam Stack has a comprehensive body of work revolving around the main themes of The Arthurdale School, biography and the impact of individual educators on education, the philosophy of John Dewey, progressive education, the rural education experience, issues in community education, the school as a social institution, and the impact of the philosophy of education. He has achieved this through extensive research at the National Archives, the Roosevelt Library, the Center for Dewey Studies, and other collections. The Arthurdale School is Stack's third book, preceded by his biography, *Elsie Ripley Clapp* (1879-1965): *Her Life and the Community School* (2004), and *Teachers, Leaders, and Schools: Essays by John Dewey* (2010), edited with Douglas J. Simpson. Stack applies his talents to the study of the Arthurdale Community School from several vantage points. He begins with an investigation of the concept of community, its importance to identity and place, and the efforts to use schools to improve or create a sense of identity, place, and community. Stack describes the

origins of the Homestead Subsistence programs of the New Deal that created the Arthurdale project and the role Eleanor Roosevelt played in its creation. He describes the importance of the Arthurdale experience and its place in the history of education, especially progressive education in its various forms in the 1930s and 40s. In honoring and exploring the educative value of lives in education, Stack acknowledges the perspectives and experiences of the participants in the Arthurdale project, the governing committees, the homesteaders, the teachers, the students, and its leader, Elsie Ripley Clapp.

Stack sets the stage for the chapters by presenting the immediate historical background of the Arthurdale project. The economic boom of the 1920s during which fortunes were made through stock market speculation and prosperity seemed unending came to an end in October, 1929 plunging the United States into the Great Depression. The failure of banking, the widespread unemployment, and lack of appropriate response led to despair and hopelessness. The destructiveness of the economic situation resulted in the breakdown of community life all over the nation. The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933 and the subsequent implementation of the New Deal programs and policies sought to lessen the effects of the economic crisis and the concomitant breakdown of community especially in rural towns.

In the first chapter Stack provides us an overview of the multi-faceted condition of progressive education, the relationship of the philosophy of education to the practice in schools, and the dire consequences of the Depression on schools. In analyzing the condition of progressive education in the middle 1930s, he found a divided and divisive continuum of ideas that revolved around four groups: 1. social reconstructionists, 2. community-school progressives, 3. child-centered progressives, and 4. administrative progressives.

The origins of the Arthurdale project, described in the second chapter, was a visit to the area (Scots Run) by Eleanor Roosevelt. Stack's analysis of the development of the project illuminates many of the problems encountered as the project progressed. Among the rural poor it was not uncommon for farmers, especially those with small amounts of land, to work in order to supplement or, indeed, provide, cash income. In the Appalachian Mountains this often meant mining. The closing of unprofitable mines eliminated that work and that source of income. Government intervention sought to improve opportunities and recreate community and cultural pride and the school was to be the organizing feature emphasizing lifelong community education which recognized and sustained its unique cultural and social environments. The goal of Arthurdale was to provide homes and land for about 200 families. More

than 600 families applied and were interviewed. The concept of subsistence farming and part-time or seasonal work as a supplement required suitable land and a local industry, cooperatives, folk art, and handicrafts. At first children were to be sent to local schools but the area schools were unable to accommodate that number of students and Arthurdale School became a reality.

Recommended by the executive secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, Elsie Ripley Clapp, the focus of chapter 3, was engaged to lead the project. Ultimately, as a result of the failings of government planners and the unwise use or lack of funding, the patriarchal decision-making process as opposed to Dewey's idea of democracy arising from the community, the Arthurdale effort to construct community through the school with the most important decisions being made outside the school and community by those with other agendas limited its success. What made Arthurdale unique is the conscious application of the concept of a community with the school at its center. The concerted effort to meld the school and community into one was based largely on the educational philosophy of John Dewey. The methods of the school were taken and developed from Clapp's own experience in progressive schools with her own and other progressive educators' additional ideas, concepts, and methods. Certainly Clapp was in the perfect position to put the school-community model into practice. As a student, assistant, and disciple of Dewey and progressive education, Clapp had the experience in the progressive classroom and administration of progressive schools. Prior to her Arthurdale experience Clapp had served as administrator for as decade, developing and implementing her view of education at Rosemary Junior High in Greenwich Connecticut then at Ballard School in Kentucky. Stack's biography of Clapp gave him an extensive knowledge of her preparation for and implementation of her progressive philosophy of education. Stack makes it abundantly clear that Clapp developed her own take on progressive and community education.

Stack notes in Chapter 4, that problems existed from the beginning of the project. Upon Clapp's arrival at the Arthurdale project she found that construction had not yet begun on the school buildings because of a disagreement over the budget allocated for the schools. With no teaching materials, no school furniture, few books but with a staff of dedicated progressive educators and a community willing to undertake the challenge the 1934 school year began in buildings available with community built furniture. In addition to the creation of school-community and the reform of the curriculum, there was also the issue of the health and nutrition which became the focus of the nursery school. Arthurdale schools were meeting those head on for it took the community to provide school and

the educators to provide the curriculum, no reform required. School began with teachers creating the curriculum from the culture and history of the place and the people.

During the second year, the subject of Chapter 5, the Arthurdale community was nearing completion. The men were finishing construction of the last of the homes of the community and the agricultural projects were producing. High school aid programs in the form of National Youth Administration programs as part of the Works Progress Administration provided some assistance to the Arthurdale schools in the second year. Stack notes, however, that there was a level of unease. This unease took two forms. One was the unease with the project overall. There was the question of whether the homes the people had constructed or, at least, helped construct were being rented or if the people were paying mortgages for ownership? Second was the concern for the school. Community members questioned the methods of the progressive educators and the lack of accreditation for the high school.

Clapp's leadership of the Arthurdale school and community ended in July, 1936. Chapters 6 and 7 describe the changes that occurred as a result. She had concentrated on finding manufacturers who would locate factories in Arthurdale to provide much-needed jobs for residents. Without adequate employment, grants, and funding failures the situation became untenable. The progressive school-community experiment at Arthurdale was left to its own devices with the departure in August, 1936 of Clapp and most of the progressive educators working with her were forced to seek other employment. Only the nursery school and its programs retained funding. Arthurdale schools were returned to the county and state and eventually the Arthurdale homes were sold to their inhabitants. Stack's penetrating analysis of the Arthurdale school-community points out the pitfalls of planned social intervention, a convoluted bureaucratic administration, disagreement about the budget and its best use, uncoordinated and unfocused policies, and the inability to provide self-sustaining economic opportunities. The success of Arthurdale was most certainly due to Clapp's thoughtful and consistent application of progressive and democratic principles in the school-community. Clapp was forced to negotiate inconsistent bureaucratic policies and decisions while trying to build a sense of community and identity and develop a school that would sustain its community.

Throughout his book Stack has identified several significant problems related to progressive education. The problems of the nature of leadership, rational planning, school as social institution, and the issue of the variety of educational philosophies under the general umbrella of progressive education.

Reflections and Applications:
Too Many Biographies, Too Little Time: Good Books to "Think With"[1]

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Reading biographies is my obsession. If I don't count collections, reference books, old school textbooks, encyclopedias, Latin books, and children's books, I have about 1,200 books in my house. I even have a book titled, *How to Clean Almost Anything*. Counting only the books, fiction and non-fiction I plan to read in their entirety, about 300 of them are biography, autobiography, or memoirs. These books focus on anyone from assorted Popes to Angelina Jolie; From Cleopatra to Paul McCartney; from John Dewey to Don Friesen.

During the last half of my 33 years of teaching at Cameron University in Oklahoma, I was the only person teaching undergraduate or graduate courses in social foundations of education. I also taught multicultural studies courses in education and behavioral studies (for teachers, nurses, criminal justice, and counseling). I wrote the syllabi, chose the textbooks and the recommended readings. For the majority of these courses, the primary textbook focused on biography. Students read about diverse individuals, the culture in which these people lived, and then about the educational philosophies and practices of a given era and place. My undergraduate students' textbook purchases made Gerald Gutek rich.[2]

In the early days of teaching with biography, I thought I was *the* discoverer of the fact that students—especially those who told me at the

beginning of the class that they "hated history"—usually decided they didn't hate it so much if it focused on people and their lives. I now know that is not just my discovery. Ralph Waldo Emerson learned this idea from Thomas Carlisle and then passed it on to Transcendentalists such as Moncure Daniel Conway, a nineteenth-century figure who is the focus of my current research. Conway, a little-known Southerner and Unitarian minister, was kicked out of his Washington, D.C., pulpit when he became an abolitionist. He traveled home to the South, brought his family's slaves north, freed them, and then wrote biographies of such people as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Thomas Paine. He eventually emigrated to England to do similar work there.

Long ago, before everybody was doing it, I tried to promote the notion in my courses that historically, women's lives have been more difficult than those of their male compatriots, and that these circumstances related in part to denying them educational opportunities appropriate to their abilities and interests. Any education available to women usually aimed at preparing them to serve the men in their family, whether fathers, a husband, brothers, sons, and even, male third-cousins-twice-removed if that was the nearest male kin. *And*, if they did manage to attain an education that fit their abilities and interests, they had few opportunities to use that education. *And* when they did find such opportunities, they often ended up in subordinate positions. Any excellent work they did was credited to the men with whom they worked or those in the same field. Most, but not all, of the books I'm recommending in this essay fit the theme of women's struggles for recognition and equity in their respective contexts.

In this paper, I draw from a presentation I gave at the 2016 annual meeting of the Society for History and Philosophy of Education (SOPHE) as part of a panel our group (Martha Mae Tevis, Linda Morice, and Lucy E. Bailey) named, "Too Many Biographies, Too Little Time: Good Books to Think With," to share some of my favorite biographies. Choosing which books to include has been a challenge: At one point in preparing for this panel, I considered including the entire list of 26 books I had piled on my dining table. To narrow the list, I tried organizing them by time period, and then by theme. Neither strategy worked well, as most of my favorites had little in common with my other favorites. In the end, I present below an eclectic list of 'good books to think with', and the reasons they spoke to me, and might speak to you for your lives, pleasure, and teaching.

LaDonna Harris and Henrietta Stockel, *LaDonna Harris: A Comanche Life*
Wilma Mankiller and Michael Willis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*
Sara Eppler Janda, *Beloved Women: The Political Lives of LaDonna Harris and Wilma Mankiller*[3]

This group of texts offers insights into the lives and political efforts

of two significant Native American women. We've all read two or more biographies of the same person and find the authors seem to be writing about two different people. That was my experience reading about the Peabody sisters—Elizabeth, Mary and Sophia;[4] the Jameses—William, Henry, and Alice; Mother Jones; President John Adams' family; and recently, about Wilma Mankiller and LaDonna Harris. Although biographies offer an outsider perspective, I recommend Mankiller' and Harris' autobiographies for readers interested in the history and lives of Native American people or of Oklahomans. In both cases, the autobiographies capture the women in greater depth than the biography.

Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Marcella*[5]

The next book on my list, Marcella, reminds me of a "religious novel with a purpose." The text reveals a hidden figure who lived a textured and productive writing life, and the story of how the book entered my possession also demonstrates the personal connections that bring books in and out of our lives. Literary women in the nineteenth century often used male pen names. Sometimes they wrote using their husband's given and surnames, preceded by the title "Mrs." For example, the author of the book, *Marcella*, is given as "Mrs. Humphry Ward."

My copy of *Marcella* once belonged to the best-educated woman in my small Oklahoma hometown when I was a child. Her name was Miss Mattie Horton. She held a Master's degree, and my parents greatly admired her knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. She could read English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek. The inscription in my copy indicates that Miss Horton received the book as a Christmas present in 1894, the year of its publication. When Miss Horton died, my uncle bought it at the estate sale, and in 2005 my then 93-year-old aunt gave it to me.

The birth name of *Marcella*'s author, "Mrs. Humphry Ward," was Mary Augusta Arnold. Arnold was born in Tasmania, and lived in Ireland and England as a small child. She wrote magazine articles, children's books, reference books, and adult novels that were sold in both England and the United States. In 1903 and 1905, some texts became bestselling novels in the U.S. She was a devoted Catholic, opposed to women's suffrage and the founder of settlement houses and educational institutions for the poor in England.

The Arnold family was packed with well-educated and well-known figures. Her father was a tutor at Oxford University; her uncle was the English poet and critic, Matthew Arnold; and her grandfather was the Headmaster of the famous Rugby School, one of the oldest independent schools in England. Her nephew was the twentieth-century English writer, Aldous Huxley. Before the U.S. became involved in World War I, at the request of Theodore Roosevelt, Arnold wrote articles to explain to

Americans events in England and the Front. And yet, in contrast to her well-known male family members, she remains an unfamiliar name.

Robert Dallek, ***Lone Star Rising: Vol. 1: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960***
Robert A. Caro, ***The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power***[6]

I move from the unknown figure of Mary Augusta Arnold, to a more traditional biography of a president. The reader might wonder how biographies of Lyndon Johnson fit into my interest in women's history and biography. The answer has to do with the multidimensional effects of the Vietnam War. Although I actively opposed the war, I also actively supported the troops. At the time, I was a young mother, college student, and member of a group who made goodie bags for the soldiers. These packages were actually tin cans containing homemade cookies, fudge, small paperback books and other items the soldiers requested in their letters home. I packed tins and also picketed to get the troops out of there. A graduate student friend of mine wrote her thesis on the Bay of Tonkin incident—the international incident attributed in part to America's escalating involvement in the Vietnam War—right after it occurred in 1964 and I attended her thesis defense to provide support. And I certainly didn't spit on our returning troops.

I'm writing this essay today in part because of the loans, grants, and fellowships that became available for students after the war—that made it possible for me and my husband to pursue and acquire the six degrees we possess between us. We were poor kids with two babies arriving during our first 27 months in college. We started funding our degrees with National Defense Education Act (NDEA) loans, and later benefitted from U.S. Department of Education (ESEA) funded Teaching Assistantships, NDEA graduate fellowships, and Emerging Institution grants to fund graduate study for faculty at Cameron University in Oklahoma. The Civil Rights Act, Medicare and Medicaid, and the "Great Society" Programs were very important in my life. To this I say, "Thank you, LBJ."

Yet I don't include the Dallek and Caro books in my list because I benefitted personally from these programs. And I don't include them because Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) was the same age, and looked, and sounded—both accent and voice tone—exactly like my favorite Uncle Deag. I include these books because they—the Cato book in particular—contain beautifully-written chapters on American farm women's lives before and after the arrival of the REA cooperatives. When I assigned these chapters to undergraduates during my teaching years, a few would tell me they cried while reading them. One young man shared a related story about his grandmother. He had once asked his grandmother why her body was so "stooped," thinking she had osteoporosis. She responded that she had been stooped since she was a young woman because she

carried so many buckets of water and loads of firewood from the nearby creek to the farmhouse. Her body began changing during her first years of marriage, before his father was born.

The Dallek book also includes five pages related to LBJ's year of teaching in Cotulla, Texas, in a poor school that primarily served Mexican-American children and immigrants. His description reminded me of a much later incident in California in which a teacher's success in raising student performance prompted accusations of cheating—when they hadn't. The message was, "These students weren't supposed to score well." In his only year of teaching, LBJ experienced a similar level of success and Dallek writes beautifully about it. These "educative moments" in biographies provide opportunities to connect historical events to present day.

Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin*[7]

My woman's book club gave Lepore's book on Jane Franklin the highest rating of the year when we read it in 2014. I rarely write notes, if any, in the books I read to prepare for discussion. Yet, the pages in Lepore's book are covered with my notes, many of them in capital letters with exclamation marks. The book now resides in my "best books I ever read bookcase."

Rarely have I read a book that so poignantly demonstrates how limited educational opportunities for women, even to be allowed to read, constrains their lives and growth developmentally, socially, and financially. This deprivation can prevent them from pursuing and achieving happiness. The author, Jill Lepore, a Harvard history professor and much honored and prolific writer, mines a variety of little studied archival material—letters, documents, portraits, objects—to bring to life Benjamin Franklin's favorite sister, to whom he wrote more letters than anyone else during his life. I've long considered Benjamin Franklin my favorite historical figure, the person I would choose to meet if offered only one visit to someone via time capsule.

Now I'm going to insist that I visit him while he is visiting Jane.

Alexandra Popoff, *Sophia Tolstoy: A Biography*[8]

My book club friends were in the mood to go home and burn anything written by, or about Leo Tolstoy, after we read and discussed the biography of Sophia Tolstoy (1844-1919). The book will convince you that Tolstoy never practiced the principles he preached and might never have achieved fame or even have attained the role of published author without Sophia's aid. She served as his copyist, editor, and publisher, managed his business affairs and his estate, and served as the breadwinner for the family, while

also carrying out all the duties of a wife and mother during a harsh time.

Tolstoy's treatment of Sophia was cruel to the point of sadism. Some women in Russia at the time used birth control, but he forbade her to use it. She bore 13 children. When Tolstoy decided to live as the peasants did on his almost 7,000-acre feudal estate, he spent his time making shoes for his workmen and lecturing Sophia about "being more accepting of her [constant] state of pregnancy." At one point, Tolstoy declared the family vegetarian, and Sophia and the children sometimes did not have enough to eat. Periodically he would threaten to divorce her, then leave his estate and spend a few months in the comfort of his wealthy friends' homes while his family lived the hard life of his peasants. The situation is similar to, but harsher than, that of Bronson Alcott's family in which the mother and the girls lived on apples[9] and Louisa, one of the Alcott daughters, eventually supported everyone with her pen.

Tolstoy renounced his property and copyrights before he died. After his death, Tolstoy's disciples led a smear campaign against Sophia, and these assaults on her reputation made it difficult to use her talents as a writer, translator, photographer, and artist to support her family.[10]

Julie Des Jardins, *The Madame Curie Complex, The Hidden History of Women in Science*[11]

An excellent book fitting my theme is *The Madame Curie Complex*. Most people today know that Marie Curie (1867-1934) excelled in her scientific pursuits; she wasn't just her physicist husband's assistant. It was more the other way around. Many people are familiar with the history of questioning or dismissing Marie Curie's contributions, so Des Jardins' decision to present Curie's name in the title is a fitting tribute to the scientist. The focus of this text differs a bit from that of other Curie biographies. The author argues that, unlike male scientists, Curie, and other women making scientific breakthroughs, are not acknowledged for their success in "hard science." Women's work is recognized if their discoveries are immediately applicable to improving life in some way. In this sense, Curie's physics became worthy of note because they offer promising medical and practical improvements for people's lives—for example, creating x-rays to scan human bodies, or cancer treatments. On Curie's public tours to raise money to pay her bills, the audiences seemed to view her as an early "Mother Teresa," not a "hard scientist" whose discoveries were important to the field of physics.

Although Des Jardins' does not draw connections across women's professional roles, Curie's experiences parallel those of literary women. Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) was encouraged to write books for children rather than adults. The scientific illustrations Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) created for biologists and archaeologists were arguably the best available during her time, but the public and publishers only wanted Peter Rabbit

drawings, for which Potter eventually became famous. Mrs. Humphrey Ward, the author who wrote *Marcella*, would have preferred to write non-fiction about Spanish saints rather than Christian romance novels. Yet social norms restricted women's choices.

Des Jardins' documentation make a good case for the proposition that women in science had more difficulty in getting credit for their work than women in other fields. The lack of credit afforded their work restricted their opportunities for promotion, pay, and publication, a pattern that remains a problem in the field today. It seems as if the "good ole boy" system appear to have functioned more successfully, and longer, in the field of science than elsewhere.

Despite Curie's central role in the title, only 12 pages of this book focus on the scientist. The book is divided into various periods of time (1880-1940; 1941-1962; 1962-2010), and contains the stories of about 20 individuals. The text includes several groups of women as well; for example, the author describes women of the Manhattan project (1942-1946). Based on my own career experiences, I could relate to portions of the book that focus on gendered campus and laboratory politics, and I think other readers who work in higher education will find similar connections as well.

Ruth Goodman, *How to Be a Victorian, A Dawn-to-Dusk Guide to Victorian Life*[12]

With perhaps the exception of court dress during the time of Louis XIV (1638-1715) (e.g. the Sun King, he of the beautiful legs—with perhaps a bit of calf padding in the silk hose), women have always been handicapped by the clothing they have to wear to be considered decent, or professional, when compared to men. While contemporary men may be catching up in terms of the number of face lifts they acquire and the amount of hair dye they use, in general, even today, women must be adorned in uncomfortable clothes to rise to the top in any profession. Just as soon as I see the men who lead top corporations in 4 inch heels and Spanx, I'll begin to think the situation is improving. But to understand how difficult it was to accomplish any kind of work wearing the clothing of the Victorian era, inside or outside the home, you need to read this book. It provides concrete examples of women's embodied lives in a complex historical period.

Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson*[13]

I'm astounded that I knew nothing about Eslanda, but so much about her husband, Paul Robeson, the accomplished bass singer, actor, and Civil Rights activist (1898-1976). Eslanda Cardozo Goode Robeson (1896-1965) indeed lived an active and "unconventional life." She attended the

integrated New York City public schools until her senior year when she moved to Illinois where she took, and won, a highly competitive exam for a scholarship to major in chemistry at the University of Illinois. She learned about the exam by chance one night while attending a high school graduation party, and took it the next day. She was one of three women among the fourteen students taking the exam. At that time, only a handful of African-American students attended the university. Eslanda was usually the only African-American student in her classes, and often the only woman. The campus had an open and active Ku-Klux-Klan chapter.

Eslanda transferred to Teacher's College, Columbia, where she met fellow student Robeson. After graduation, she enrolled in pre-med classes, but soon married Robeson (1921), left school, and worked in a hospital to send him to law school. However, she soon discovered his talents were better suited to the theater and musical performance; she suggested he leave law school where he wasn't doing well, and try the arts instead.

She managed his early theatrical, musical, and movie career—sitting in the back of his performances taking notes on his strengths and weaknesses and helping him improve. They mixed informally with people from the Harlem Renaissance, including Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullin, and Langston Hughes. Her list of well-known friends include Ernest Hemingway, Sylvia Beech, Emma Goldman, James Joyce, Rebecca West, Gertrude Stein, Mary McCloud Bethune, Joe Lewis, Eugene O'Neil, and Noel Coward. She co-authored a book with Pearl Buck. She played roles in some of Paul's films. She introduced friend Langston Hughes to her friend Nehru, and husband Paul to her friend Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya.

Eslanda may have seen more of the world than any other woman of her generation. The book includes a world map of places she visited. She traveled to countries engaged in civil war, in socialist or communist experiments, in post-colonial nation-building. In addition, she traveled throughout Africa alone, even visiting out of the way places where women never traveled alone and could not speak the local languages. In the villages people hardly knew what to do with her. When the Robeson's son (Paul, Jr.) was young, she and Paul lived in Russia where their child attended a Soviet model school. One of his classmates was Joseph Stalin's daughter.

Paul spent considerable time in psychiatric hospitals in the United Kingdom, while Eslanda pursued a graduate degree in anthropology at the London School of Economics. She attended the founding convention of the Progressive Party in 1948 and served on the platform committee. She was nominated for Connecticut Secretary of State and ran for Congress in 1950.

The Robeson marriage had its challenges. The couple began discussing divorce ten years after they married; Paul often lived openly with other women and had numerous extra-marital affairs. Yet when Robeson had problems, Eslanda came to his rescue and they primarily spent the last few years of her life together. He did not respond to her troubles in the same way: For example, he left her alone in Russia to undergo painful, debilitating cancer treatments.

This biography is an amazing book about an amazing woman who I believe must have been one of a kind. Or maybe not. Since I never heard of her, who else have I missed?

Alice Kaplan, ***Dreaming in French, The Paris Years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag, and Angela Davis***[14]

This book utilizes an unusual and effective way to link the influence of an educational experience, broadly speaking, to the lives of three important American women who spent a year or two studying in Paris during their twenties: Jacqueline in the 1940s, Susan in the 1950s, and Angela in the 1960s. All three were educated and enlightened from their time in Paris in ways they could not have anticipated. Kaplan makes an excellent case that the experience shaped the rest of their lives in significant ways.

Examples abound. When Jacqueline became John F. Kennedy's fiancé, she translated Ho Chi Min's writing for him and later wrote long handwritten letters from the White House, in French, to Charles de Gaulle and Prime Minister Nehru. Davis's activism began when she marched in Paris with Algerian and other African protesters. Sontag said her time in Paris allowed her to become a "European" but also become "herself." From the perspective of an outsider, she began to understand American culture and contemporary American writers for the first time and to compare and evaluate French and American literatures and lifestyles. Her time in France allowed her to self-actualize as a public intellectual.

Kaplan includes chapters on these three women's lives before and after the Paris experience, yet hones in on the particular influence of Paris on their lives. Jacqueline sailed to Europe on the same ship as the Aga Kahn but this coincidence likely had little influence on her since he was in the finest first-class cabin and she in third class and thus barred from his part of the ship. The author mentions an array of famous people who crossed paths with one of these women, including Josephine Baker, James Baldwin, Dejuna Barnes, Simone de Beauvoir, Allan Bloom, Allen Ginsberg, Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jane Fonda, Jean Genet, Chester Himes, Herbert Marcuse, Dalton Trumbo, and Richard Wright. Examples of the lasting impact the French "educational" experience had on these women is the core of this book.

Agnes "Sis" Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, ***Red Dust and Broadsides: A Joint Autobiography,*** **ed. Ronald D. Cohen**[15]

The autobiography, *Red Dust and Broadsides*, was so unusual and fascinating, I just had to include it in my current list. The book is a joint autobiography of a husband and wife team, Agnes Cunningham (usually called "Sis") and Gordon Friesen who not only admitted in 1970 that they were communists in the 1940s, but expressed no shame in doing so. They

felt driven to adopt this political position through the horrific conditions wrought by the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. The couple was influential in the development of the type of folk music commonly called work and protest songs that emerged during the Great Depression. Gordon's Mennonite family and Sis's family, the Cunninghams, settled in west central Oklahoma when it opened to white settlement. Both grew up on farms. Gordon worked for the Weatherford, Ok, newspaper and Sis worked in rural schools to help support her family living in nearby Watonga.

The preface to the book was written by their dear friend and life-long collaborator Pete Seeger. Seeger, along with Sis and Gordon, was a founding member of the Greenwich Village-based musical group, the Almanac Singers. Another founding member was the significant folk musician, Woody Guthrie. Earlier they were members of an Oklahoma-based group known as the Red Dust Singers.

The prologue to the book is a joint interview in which they discussed where they met. George shares the story of falling in love with Sis on the banks of the North Canadian River where they were attending a meeting of the Oklahoma Communist Party in 1941. During this time, those accused of being Communists had been arrested and thrown in jail in Oklahoma. In 1940, a number of book burnings and beatings occurred in Oklahoma City. Whenever police or unknown people would come to the riverside to investigate the gathering, the attendees would begin singing the old church hymn, *Shall We Gather at the River?*, and tell the visitors a "baptizin" was going on. The subterfuge worked. Part of that river, the North Canadian, has recently been dammed, diverted, and renamed "The Oklahoma River," and supports a thriving tourist industry, water sports, and boat tours in an old part of Oklahoma City known as Bricktown.

The couple soon decamped for Greenwich Village in New York City where they and other folk singers and song writers lived together in a large apartment where a constant turnover of musicians and supporters of their causes moved in and out. One of the first group was Woody Guthrie, and one of the last was Bob Dylan. They experienced constant harassment from various right-wing groups. As one might expect, the musicians became targets of the House Un-American Activities Committee. They were often visited and interviewed by the FBI, fired from jobs, and kicked out of price controlled apartments.

Sis, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and three others formed a group called the Almanac singers. Gordon served as a sort of manager and publicist. Major companies were afraid to publish the songs, so Sis, George, and a few others, used a home mimeograph machine to publish *Broadside, The National Topical Song Magazine*. The magazine primarily included songs, but also interviews, commentary, and cartoons. They published 28 of Bob Dylan's earliest songs. If the names Woodie Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, or Buffy St. Marie mean anything to you, you must read this book.

If a connection to educational theory and history might help justify reading the book, Sis relates her life as a teacher in a small rural school while attending Southwestern Teachers College part time, picking cotton, and working in a café to earn enough money to attend school. In the summer of 1931, she chose not to attend Southwestern in favor of a socialist college, Commonwealth College near Mena, Arkansas. Administrators and teachers at Commonwealth did not receive a salary. Maintenance and staff people received a small stipend. Students worked 4 hours a day, Sis worked in the gardens every afternoon, and everyone sang "The Internationale," a Communist song, every day. At college she first learned the type of songs she would later publish, songs from the labor movement, such as "Brother Can You Spare a Dime," and "Solidarity Forever," and songs of the Wobblies, such as "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" and "Casey Jones, the Union Scab."

At Commonwealth, Sis encountered diverse groups from New York, the ideas of W.E.B. DuBois, and read Das Kapital and a biography of Karl Marx in the library. Most people at the college expected that the political views circulating on the campus would eventually inspire some outsider to burn it down. Sis returned home from Commonwealth a changed person, and, indeed, the college was burned down in 1940.

Gordon attended Southwestern college. He worked at several jobs including "ghostwriting" term papers and taking correspondence courses for other students.

The focus of this book has an additional personal connection for me as both the area in Oklahoma where Sis and Gordon lived, and members of their family, were familiar. My parents, who were about the same age as Sis and Gordon, lived within a few miles of the Cunningham and Friedan families and knew some of their relatives quite well.

Don Friesen, ***Memories Mostly True, Growing Up in the 40s and Fabulous 50s***[16]

This book was written by Don Friesen, my BFF with whom I've stayed in touch since we were in first grade together at Thomas Public School. He is a retired elementary principal who lives in Edmond, Oklahoma, and rarely a week goes by that we don't exchange emails. He had not heard about Gordon until I introduced him to Gordon and Sis's book.

Unless you grew up in the 1940s and 50s in small-town Oklahoma, you probably would have absolutely no interest in this book. However, it evokes images of small town life more broadly, and describes a number of interesting educational experiences. . . putting the dead skunks in the English teacher's desks, painting the class year on the water tower next to the school building, substituting a girl's panties for the forgotten paintbrush, the thrill of winning three state football championships in a row. Somehow the teachers and administrators at this school managed to teach most students enough subject matter to succeed in life even though they weren't micromanaged by the politicians and didn't spend most of

their time preparing students for standardized testing.

For obvious reasons, I love this book.

Notes

[1] Karen McKellips, "Too Many Biographies, Too Little Time: Some Good Books to 'Think With,'" (Panel presentation, annual meeting of the Society for History and Philosophy of Education, Oklahoma City, OK, March 30-April 1, 2016).

[2] For example, see Gerald L. Gutek, *Cultural Foundations of Education: A Biographical Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Gerald L. Gutek, *Education in the United States: An Historical Perspective* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall College Division, 1986); Gerald L. Gutek, *Philosophical Alternatives in Education* (Westerville: Merrill, 1974).

[3] LaDonna Harris, *LaDonna Harris: A Comanche Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Wilma Mankiller and Michael Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Sarah Eppler Janda, *Beloved Women: The Political Lives of LaDonna Harris and Wilma Mankiller* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007).

[4] Megan Marshall, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (New York: Mariner Books, 2006).

[5] Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Marcella* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1894).

[6] Robert Dallek, *Lone Star Rising*: *Vol. 1: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

[7] Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin* (New York: Vintage Press, 2014).

[8] Alexandra Popoff, *Sophia Tolstoy: A Biography* (New York: Free Press, 2010).

[9] Harriet Reisen, *Louisa May Alcott: The Woman Behind Little Women* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2009).

[10] Sophia Tolstoy, *The Diaries of Sofia Tolstoy*, trans. Cathy Porter (London: Alma Books, Ltd., 2009); Leah Bendavid-Val, *Song Without Words: The Photographs and Diaries of Countess Sophia Tolstoy* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2007).

[11] Julie Des Jardins, *The Madame Curie Complex: The Hidden History of Women in Science* (New York: Feminist Press at City College of New York, 2010).

[12] Ruth Goodman, *How to Be a Victorian, A Dawn-to-Dusk Guide to Victorian Life* (London: Penguin Books, 2013).

[13] Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda, The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[14] Alice Kaplan, *Dreaming in French: The Paris Years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag, and Angela Davis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[15] Agnes "Sis" Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, *Red Dust and Broadsides: A Joint Autobiography*, ed. Ronald D. Cohen (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

[16] Don Friesen, *Memories Mostly True, Growing Up in the 40s and Fabulous 50s* (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2015).

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Karen McKellips taught for 33 years at Cameron University in Oklahoma. She began her teaching career as a first/second grade teacher in a small rural public school in Fay, Oklahoma. Her life experience and research in Native American, African American and feminist studies informed the diverse curriculum, social foundations, and multicultural studies courses she taught at Cameron. Although she retired in 2001, she has remained active in this field, which was not only her career but her passion.

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