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Table of Contents

Editor's Note	3
<i>Linda Morice</i>	
'Schools Yet-To-Be:'	
Recovering the Work of Nineteenth Century	
Women in Early Childhood Education	5
<i>Susan Douglas Franzosa</i>	
Collective Biographies: How Many Cases are Enough?	
A Dispatch from the Far Side of 11,700	
Biographies of Nineteenth Century Teachers	25
<i>Ronald E. Butchart</i>	
Looking Back on a Life of Teaching:	
The Educational Journey of a Teacher	35
<i>Tim Neller</i>	
From Law School to School Law:	
A Personal and Pedagogical Journey	55
<i>Phillip Buckley</i>	
Book Review:	
Janak, Politics, Disability and Education Reform in the South:	
<i>The Work of John Eldred Swearingen</i>	71
<i>Mary Konya Weishaar</i>	
Book Review:	
Kolodny, Normalities:	
<i>The First Professionally Prepared Teachers in the United States</i>	74
<i>Amy Freshwater</i>	

Membership Form:
International Society for Educational Biography77

Subscription Form:78
Vitae Scholasticae

Contributing Authors79

Editorial Informationinside front cover

Information for Contributorsinside back cover

Editor's Note

Nigel Hamilton writes, "Biography, today, remains, as it has always been, the record and interpretation of real lives—the lives of others and of ourselves. But the *way* we record and interpret those lives has varied enormously from age to age."¹ This issue of *Vitae Scholasticae* presents a variety of approaches to life writing, reflecting what Hamilton calls the current "golden age for biography" in which human lives are depicted in "every medium."²

Susan Douglas Franzosa offers one approach to life writing in "'Schools Yet-To-Be: Recovering the Work of Nineteenth Century Women in Early Childhood Education.'" She highlights important—and largely unacknowledged—ways her female biographical subjects contributed to educational theory. Franzosa hopes this knowledge will contribute to an "inclusive past—a reliable archive of experience and memory—that can be held up to critical scrutiny in the present."

Ronald E. Butchart also studies a group of subjects in "Collective Biographies: How Many Cases Are *Enough*? A Dispatch from the Far Side of 11,700 Biographies of Nineteenth Century Teachers." Butchart's engaging essay discusses the challenges that emerge when depicting the life circumstances of very large populations.

The last two essays focus on single biographical subjects. In "Looking Back on a Life of Teaching: The Educational Journey of a Teacher," former principal Tim Neller presents an oral history of the life and career of a male teacher in an elementary school. Phillip Buckley discusses his own professional path to higher education in "From Law School to School Law: A Personal and Pedagogical Journey." Unlike Butchart, Buckley is not concerned with aggregated experience. Rather, he quotes Dona Kagan in stating that "each teacher represents a unique ecological system of pedagogical beliefs and practices that is inextricably connected to the teacher's personality and prior experiences in life."

This issue closes with reviews of books published by two authors who are familiar to *Vitae Scholasticae* readers. Mary Konya Weishaar reviews Edward Janak's *Politics, Disability and Education Reform in the South: The Work*

of John Eldred Swearingen. A smaller version of Janak's book first appeared in *Vitae Scholasticae* in 2010, as an essay about a blind state superintendent of schools who drew from his own experience to improve the education of marginalized people in South Carolina. A precursor to Kelly Ann Kolodny's new release, *Normalites: The First Professionally Prepared Teachers in the United States*, also appeared in this journal in 2008. The book, reviewed by Amy Freshwater, depicts the first students to attend normal schools. Created in Massachusetts by Horace Mann, normal schools set the stage for teacher education throughout the United States.

Vitae Scholasticae celebrates the variety of approaches to biography evident in this issue, as well as the professional growth that is apparent when *VS* essays evolve into full-length books. Such productive scholarship affirms the work of all who contribute to ISEB and its journal, and gives credence to Nigel Hamilton's assertion that we are indeed living in the "golden age for biography."

—Linda Morice

Notes

¹Nigel Hamilton, *How To Do Biography: A Primer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 21.

² *Ibid.*, 1.

‘Schools Yet-To-Be:’ Recovering the Work of Nineteenth Century Women in Early Childhood Education

Susan Douglas Franzosa

Fairfield University

*We were pioneers, hewing our way through forests of established customs;
climbing over mountain ranges of indifference . . . led on always by the
vision of schools yet-to-be.*

Elizabeth Harrison

In her groundbreaking 1982 article, “Excluding Women from the Educational Realm,” Jane Roland Martin interrogated the absences and devaluation of works by and about women in the philosophy of education and traced the epistemological inequalities that have distorted our understanding of the development of educational theory and practice. Pointing to standard anthologies of the time, Martin asked ironically whether it could really be possible that Maria Montessori had been the only woman in two thousand years to make a significant contribution to educational thought.¹

In the thirty-three years since Martin’s initial observations, students of education are much more likely to encounter anthologies that include contemporary women theorists – including Martin herself – and scholars in the history of education have made considerable progress in recovering the work of those Dale Spender once referred to as ‘the disappeared.’² However, even after thirty-three years, distorting omissions and absences remain in mainstream discourse in educational studies. In this paper, I attempt to redress one of those absences by recovering the ‘disappeared’ arguments for a child-centered pedagogy formulated by nineteenth-century women theorists in

American early childhood education.

Nineteenth-century women theorists in American early childhood education were positioned on the borders of scholarly debate during their own era, and their published works have been consigned to what Carolyn Steedman has called the contemporary “dust” of neglected archives in our own.³ Yet, as teachers and teacher educators, founders of schools, training institutes, and professional associations, and as first generation activists in the Kindergarten Movement, they were, in fact, prime movers in establishing the foundations for child-centered pedagogy and curriculum in the United States. As Elizabeth Harrison (1849-1927) wrote in her autobiography *Sketches Along Life's Road*, “We were pioneers, hewing our way through forests of established customs; climbing over mountain ranges of indifference . . . led on always by the vision of schools yet-to-be.”⁴

A recovery of these pioneers' arguments for “schools yet-to-be,” as well as their disputes over what ‘child-centered’ should mean, disrupt and complicate conventional depictions of the development of educational theory. It places their work at the center, rather than the periphery, of educational reform during the nineteenth century. That work included importing, adapting, reconstructing, and finally transforming the classical German kindergarten originated by Friedrich Froebel to meet the educational needs of the young children they encountered in their classrooms. This first generation wrote about their experiences, their discoveries, and their differences, thus enacting their philosophies of education in memoir, autobiography, and instructional texts. Their individual stories can provide scholars of the history of educational ideas with useful heuristic vantage points from which to understand what Robert Cowen has called “moments of cultural transfer, translation, and transformation” in which “the relations between social structures, history, and educated identity” intersect.⁵

The first pioneer in the American Kindergarten Movement was indisputably the essayist, editor, and very public intellectual, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804-1894). In the late 1850s Peabody discovered the theories of Froebel and began to consider the feasibility of importing his model for the kindergarten to the United States. As an American transcendentalist, a member of Ralph Waldo Emerson's circle and the Concord School of Philosophy, Peabody believed that universal education was a key to moral and spiritual evolution. She was attracted by the optimistic romanticism of Wordsworth and the romantic idealism of the German philosophers Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel. As a young woman she had been a teacher at the experimental Temple School and later supported the Common School Movement. In 1859 she met Margarethe Schurz at an abolitionist meeting in Boston. Schurz had immigrated to the United States and founded a German language kindergarten in Wisconsin in 1856. Following their meeting, Schurz

sent Peabody the preface to Froebel's *The Education of Man*.⁶ Froebel's work seemed to Peabody to outline a new way of approaching the education of young children that promised an enlightened social transformation consistent with her transcendentalist perspective. As Michael Shapiro writes in his history of the American kindergarten movement,

Like American transcendentalists, Froebel believed that the material world was only the outward expression of the inner divinity of all things. In a constant world of change, in which both living and non-living matter "unfolded their inner essence" childhood held a special meaning, for it was an uncorrupted embodiment of God's reason.⁷

The German kindergarten caught the imagination of Peabody's colleagues in the transcendentalist community. Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), Peabody's former associate at the Temple School, wrote to the members of the Concord Schools Committee observing that, "The German Kindergarten, or Child's Garden, is attracting attention with us. It is the happiest play teaching ever thought of and the child's Paradise regained for those who have lost theirs."⁸ Peabody had by then made a serious study of Froebelian methods. She and her sister Mary Peabody Mann (1806-1887) opened their own kindergarten, the first English language kindergarten in the United States, in Boston in 1860. In 1863, Peabody and Mann published the *American Guide to the Kindergarten and Moral Culture of Infancy*, widely considered the most authoritative work in English on the theory and practice of the kindergarten during the period.⁹

After four years of directing her own school, Peabody found herself questioning the efficacy of her application of Froebelian theory and felt that her own "comprehension of Kindergarten principles and methods was inadequate."¹⁰ As a result, she visited Germany in 1867 to observe kindergartens and recruit their experienced practitioners to the United States in order to open authentic model kindergartens and train American teachers. On returning to Boston Peabody began to organize what became an incredibly comprehensive national network of kindergarten advocates, teachers, and teachers in training. She traveled the country visiting schools, and lecturing on the kindergarten. She published a newsletter and a journal, *The Kindergarten Messenger*, founded the American Froebel Union, and organized a demonstration school at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

Peabody became known as the 'mother' of the American Kindergarten. As the recognized leader of the American Kindergarten Movement, she mentored a first generation of kindergarten teachers. She recruited them, arranged for their training, raised funds to support their travel, maintained their interconnections, and advised and counseled them through what became a volu-

minous correspondence.¹¹ As a result, the first generation of teachers she sponsored developed an enduring loyalty and affection toward her. When she died just short of ninety in 1894, they paid numerous tributes to her accomplishments. Lucy Wheelock (1857-1946) remembered her as “a woman who saw that the seed of the future must be planted in the heart of childhood.”¹² Kate Douglas Wiggin (1855-1923) described her as “that noble and venerable woman . . . the revered and eminent champion of childhood.”¹³ Wheelock and Wiggin had both been advised and mentored by Peabody. Each recalled serving as her escort to distant professional meetings in Peabody’s later years, fondly noting her eccentricities, but above all remembering her kindnesses, commitment to the cause, and her monumental intellect.¹⁴

Peabody’s mentoring had included immersing her recruits in Froebelian theory and practice. As Evelyn Weber observed, throughout her life “(Peabody) warned against any deviations from (Froebel’s) suggested procedures.”¹⁵ She was adamant that kindergartens should be organized on firm philosophical foundations and not become a fad overtaken by untrained practitioners.¹⁶ Harrison, Wiggin, and Wheelock, for example, each ‘took their training’ with one of the German disciples of Froebel Peabody had encouraged to immigrate to the United States: Harrison with Maria Kraus-Boelte in New York, Wiggin with Emma Marwedel in Los Angeles, Wheelock with Matilde and Alma Kreige in Boston.¹⁷ Several of Peabody’s protégés also traveled to Germany to study kindergarten methods first hand. During the early years of the Kindergarten Movement then, Froebelian tenets were taken on with an almost religious fervor by Peabody’s protégés. His injunction to aspiring teachers, “Come, let us live with our children!” was often rendered in needlepoint, framed, and hung on their classroom walls.

Froebel argued in his teaching manual *Mother Play* that, “The destiny of man as a rational and spiritual being is to become conscious within and because of a relation to nature and thus attain self determination and freedom.” He continued:

To discern this universal principle in nature and humanity is *science*.

To discern its bearing upon the development of rational beings is *the science of education*.

To apply it practically to the stages of human development is *the art of education*.

To lead the pupil to its conscious revelation is *the goal of education*.¹⁸

Froebel understood the child as creating a self by ‘unfolding’ in relation

and response to nature and the gentle nurturance of others. "A child," he argued, "resembles the flower on a plant or the blossom on a tree, is of and connected to nature, a system prepared to nurture, and awaits its potential development."¹⁹ Teachers of young children were instructed to act as unobtrusive and gentle gardeners, ideally enacting the role of loving parent, appropriating the values, concerns and aspirations of an idealized mother-child relation. Kindergarten teaching was thus seen as the natural province of women. Peabody herself believed that it represented "the perfect development of womanliness."²⁰

By the late 1870s, due in large part to Peabody's efforts, interest in establishing English language kindergartens had begun to spread to urban communities across the country. After observing kindergartens on a tour of Germany, Susan Blow (1843-1916) of St. Louis traveled to New York to study with Maria Krauss-Boelte. When she returned to St. Louis in 1873, Blow convinced Superintendent of Schools William Torrey Harris (1835-1909) to open an experimental kindergarten class within the public school system. Usually credited as the founder of the first public kindergarten in the United States, Blow also translated several of Froebel's written works, eventually succeeding Peabody as the foremost American interpreter of his philosophy of education.

Froebel's prescriptions for classroom practice included guided play, group collaboration, sensory and motor training, expressive arts, nature study, and "creative self-activity." But, as Weber points out, however revolutionary these prescriptions for play and creative activity might have seemed in the nineteenth century, or perhaps even now, they were "far from the ideas the words 'play' and 'creativity' connote today. Froebel's notion was not bound tightly to originality or divergent thinking."²¹ While clearly more child-centered than the pedagogical practices prevalent in the common schools, kindergarten activities were nevertheless carefully structured and teacher directed according to a predetermined schedule of stages of logical development and in reference to the classroom materials Froebel had created. The Froebelian "gifts," geometric manipulatives and building blocks, were intended to symbolize and evoke a recognition of universal concepts. "By designing materials with a definite sequence and by supplying explicit directions for their use, Froebel provided an educational system with clear directives for the teacher."²² These directives and the idealization of 'teacher as mother,' became staples of early kindergarten orthodoxy.

Women who became kindergarten teachers during this period shared an historical space characterized by the social and political uncertainties of territorial expansion, urbanization, industrialization, and immigration that followed the American Civil War. Within this context, common schooling was understood as fundamental to social control and national stability. Common

school advocates had increasingly begun to define the steadily rising numbers of immigrant and lower class families as “barbarians” who “if unreclaimed by education will poison society all around them.”²³ Even prior to mid-century, the woman teacher had been seen as particularly suited to the work of reclamation because of what Catharine Beecher had called her “superior influence in matters pertaining to the education of young children and all questions related to manners and morals.”²⁴

The Kindergarten Movement emerged from within this larger cultural context and was necessarily contoured by its norms. Harris, for example, described kindergarten teachers as “urban missionaries working for the regeneration of society morally and intellectually.”²⁵ In his introduction to Blow’s book *Symbolic Education: A Commentary on Froebel’s ‘Mother Play,’* he proclaimed, “There is no philosophy for the young woman to be compared with the philosophy that Froebel has put into his work on the mother’s plays and the games with her children. And they offer to the child in a symbolic form the treasures of experience of the race in solving the problems of life.”²⁶ However, school teaching in the nineteenth century, as Polly Kaufman’s study of women teachers’ correspondence and journals during the era demonstrates, also offered new vocational possibilities that went beyond ‘doing good’ and preparing for motherhood. In teaching, wrote one young woman, “I could try myself alone and find out what I am.”²⁷ Within this context of possibility, kindergarten teaching carried a special prestige.

Significantly, the Kindergarten Movement, unlike the Common School Movement, was led and directed almost entirely by women.²⁸ While occupying the same cultural landscape, kindergartens, unlike the common schools, began as independent private ventures. As Barbara Beatty has shown, even when associated with public schools, as they were in St. Louis, they retained an unprecedented degree of autonomy “to create an alternative professional model, establish occupational norms and practices, and make internal policy decisions.”²⁹ The women who taught in them were understood as specialists who had received intensive pedagogical training and a rigorous education in history, literature, psychology, and philosophy. Wiggin remembered lectures and readings in classical and modern philosophy and studying the theories of Rousseau, Hebart, Pestalozzi, and Spencer, and the psychological theories of Jean Itard and Edouard Seguin.³⁰ Harrison, more humorously, recalled a lecture on Herodotus. “As nearly as I could understand, (the lecturer) was describing the historian’s commingling of sense perception and imagination.”³¹ While certainly framed and often understood as a worthy, missionary-like, vocation, the women who chose kindergarten teaching also saw it as a route to intellectual, creative, and financial independence. It promised both intellectual engagement and personal fulfillment, and offered the opportunity to control one’s own work environment, to advance in, and shape, a newly

emerging profession.

Early teaching experiences recalled in the autobiographies and memoirs of the first generation of American kindergarten teachers capture both a sense of exhilaration and a growing sense of purpose. Lucy Wheelock wrote of her experiences at the Chauncey Kindergarten in Boston that she had felt as if "The gates of heaven opened and I had a glimpse of the kingdom where peace and love reign."³² Elizabeth Harrison, remembering her early years teaching in Chicago at the Loring School, wrote, "I often walked home after classes entirely unconscious of the passing crowd, because I was so absorbed in my heart's song of rejoicing that I had been permitted to become a teacher of little children . . . The great thought which possessed my soul was how to become worthy of my work."³³ Kate Douglas Wiggin, at the Silver Street Kindergarten in San Francisco, recalled that "For the first time in my life I was clearly doing something that I was able to do well, perhaps in the course of time, superlatively well. I felt in my right place, happy, with entirely new springs of action touched, new powers awakened."³⁴

As first generation kindergarten teachers began their teaching, they were confronted with unimagined challenges. They often found themselves occupying a liminal position in relation to the powerful and powerless. As they entered their classrooms, they were necessarily placed between the dominant culture and the children of those perceived as a threat to social stability: the poor, disadvantaged, and immigrant. This was particularly the case for teachers who worked in impoverished urban neighborhoods in the free kindergartens sponsored by social reformers and philanthropists. When she opened her free kindergarten class in one of the poorest districts in San Francisco, Wiggin commented, for example, "Many days were spent in learning the unpronounceable names of my flock and keeping them from murdering each other until Froebel's celebrated 'labor of love' could be made a working proposition."³⁵

It was clear that once one actually did, as Froebel had advised, 'live with children,' a rigid adherence to his sequential curriculum materials and structured pedagogy did not meet all children's needs. The tensions inherent in the teaching role and the disequilibrium these first generation kindergarten teachers felt led to experimentation and a reassessment of their Froebelian training. Harrison remembered,

I did much experimenting in my own kindergarten, the result of which was that, years later, I felt compelled to (reject) a uniform program for all kindergartens regardless of the personal experiences of children from differing home environments and activities. In experimental work I found how much more readily children responded to any form of activity in which they had either a personal experience or a clear mental image.³⁶

Harrison's comments are stunningly contemporary in their focus on the individual child's experience and the need to attend to cultural context. She was also conscious of some of the intricacies of student social class and teacher privilege. When she visited Henrietta Hartmann's kindergarten in Berlin she found "the teaching to be extremely utilitarian. The children washed their own tables, dusted the chairs, cleaned the blackboards, and set the room in order. As children of her kindergarten came from what we would call a slum district in America . . . she had unconsciously substituted reformatory activities for formative ones." In Dresden, at the training center of Baroness von Marenholtz-Bulow, one of Froebel's most distinguished disciples, she noted "an enormous and elaborate display of clumsy, materialistic, and utterly useless handwork" that she thought irrelevant to students' lives and interests.³⁷

Returning to the United States, Harrison discovered that several of her colleagues in the Movement had begun to discuss the need for adaptation and change to orthodox kindergarten methods. In her autobiography, Wheelock recalled that after her first few years of teaching she discarded a number of Froebelian activities because she found they were not developmentally appropriate.³⁸ Wiggin had come to the conclusion that while Froebel's central principles of child nature, unfolding, and nurturance should be retained, kindergarten methods had to be adapted to meet individual differences and special needs. "Sometimes," she wrote, "the child's mind obstinately declined to follow the prescribed route, refused to begin at the proper beginning of a subject or go logically to the end, as the books decreed, but flew into the middle and darted both ways like a weaver's shuttle."³⁹ The solution, Wiggin thought, was for the teacher to see the world, the situation, the task, from a child's perspective. Further, to be truly effective, teachers must forge relationships with their pupils' parents. A school, she asserted, should "have its roots deep in neighborhood life. No teacher, how ever gifted, can influence the children under her care unless she can persuade the parents to be her allies."⁴⁰ Remarkably, Wiggin also challenged the nineteenth century convention that the care and education of infants and young children should be understood solely as the province of women. Men, as well as women, she argued, can enact the roles and adopt the attitudes Froebel associated with an ideal motherhood. In her characteristically witty style, she critiqued the view that women live in "perfect puddles of maternal love" and insisted on exploring the possibilities that men "open their arms to children." Education, she insisted, "is clearly every mother's business and father's business – spinsters and bachelors should not be exempt – it is in fact everybody's business."⁴¹

By the mid 1880s, Peabody's influence, if not the esteem in which she was held, was waning. Her first protégés in the Kindergarten Movement

were now openly questioning their early Froebelian training. While they continued to acknowledge Froebel's monumental achievement in placing the child's developmental needs at the center of instruction, they began to critique the inflexibility of his methods. The result was a series of reinterpretations of child-centered curricula and pedagogy. This first generation of kindergarten teachers had experimented and made discoveries in their initial classroom work, established kindergarten training schools of their own, and participated in debates on the nature of early childhood at teacher conventions and national professional conferences. Although situated as practitioners rather than scholars and scientists at these conferences, their findings were increasingly attracting the attention of academics concerned with educational theory and school reform including G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) and John Dewey (1859-1952), and the influential principal of Cook County Normal School in Chicago, Colonel Frances W. Parker (1837-1902).

While Peabody's protégés began to immerse themselves in the study of emerging work in child psychology, especially the developmentalism of Hall, Peabody continued to adhere to strict Froebelian principles. But she also continued to support the professional growth of the individuals she had mentored. Perhaps owing to her life-long commitment to intellectual inquiry, she was willing to entertain, although not endorse, their consideration of adjustments. Other traditional Froebelians, notably Susan Blow, understood the new psychology, especially Hall's, as a threat. She argued that *any* change to a traditional interpretation of Froebel's work would subvert the kindergarten's mission. In response to Hall's recommendation that educators remake curricula based on the scientific observation of child behavior, she remarked in a letter to Harris, "one man (i.e. Froebel) with the eyes of a genius could see farther than any multiplication of observers."⁴² Blow even objected to updating the list of characters in the dramatizations of human labor that Froebel had designed. Froebel's list included carpenters and bakers. It did not include cabdrivers. Thus, cabdrivers were an unacceptable addition. In Weber's analysis,

Miss Blow's insistence upon the rigid use of Froebelian materials and practices can be understood in the light of her careful analysis of the unity of his writings. Deviations in practice violated the unity that was so essential to the system and destroyed the "universal" meanings underlying specific parts . . . this forced her adamantly to defend the program in its entirety.⁴³

During her early studies Harrison had attended Blow's training classes in St. Louis and had been an admirer. But her views changed after she began teaching. While she continued to see Blow was "the most intelligent

American interpreter of the theoretical in Froebel," Harrison believed that Blow was not preparing kindergarten teachers effectively.

A number of her students showed by their work that they had grasped details only, instead of fundamental principles, and consequently did not have the flexibility and freedom necessary for creative work founded on the selection of educative environments, the experiences, and the cultural background of each group of children; consequently their work became formal and non-creative.⁴⁴

The Kindergarten Movement was rapidly becoming factionalized. Orthodox, "conservative," Froebelian, like Susan Blow, resisted any reinterpretation of Froebel or revisions in the methods of the classical German kindergarten. Moderates, "liberals" like Elizabeth Harrison, Kate Douglas Wiggin, and Lucy Wheelock, took a middle ground. They argued that Froebelian theory could be reinterpreted and adapted to meet the needs of children in diverse cultural contexts and accommodate new discoveries in psychology and child study. "Radicals" including Alice Putnam (1841-1919) in Chicago and Anna Bryan (1857-1901) and her student Patty Smith Hill (1868-1946) in Louisville, aligned themselves more closely with developmental psychology and a more scientific, empirical, study of child behavior. While all three factions defined their work as child-centered, differences in interpretation and application continued to surface throughout the 1890s at national meetings and in professional journals as well as at the popular new summer institutes and university based congresses on early childhood education organized by Frances W. Parker, John Dewey, and G. Stanley Hall.

In contention were issues that are still in dispute today: the value of a logical versus developmental curriculum, the nature of authentically educative play, the importance of creative self-expression, and the need for culturally responsive subject matter and pedagogy. Members of the first generation had identified these issues based on their own practice and began to publish pedagogical texts that, while retaining central Froebelian concepts (as well as much of his flowery language), outlined adaptations and illustrated them with examples from their own classrooms. In Harrison's text *A Study of Child Nature from the Kindergarten Standpoint*, for example, she explained how "a close study of the child" was necessary to curriculum development.⁴⁵ In *Children's Rights*, Wiggin described how she had integrated contemporary occupations, a Chinese garden, and the sights and sounds of San Francisco within the Silver Street kindergarten's curriculum.⁴⁶ Members of a second generation – those who had done their kindergarten training with American rather than German instructors, entered teaching in the 1880s rather than the 1870s, and were thus further removed from the ori-

gin of the Movement as well as personal loyalty to its founder – took the first generation’s adaptations further.

In her training classes in Louisville, Kentucky, Anna Bryan – who had studied with Putnam – abandoned the outmoded thematics of Froebelian ‘plays’ and, like Harrison and Wiggin before her, developed curricula that incorporated materials and problem solving activities relevant to her students’ lives and communities. Her student Patty Smith Hill remembered that Bryan “united with us in building up not only a new practice but a theory growing out of practice . . . her method was a deliberate though unaggressive break with the traditional practice of that time.”⁴⁷ Bryan presented her ideas along with demonstrations from her classroom at a meeting of the National Education Association in 1890. Her presentation was a kind of ‘shot across the bow.’ In her paper, entitled provocatively “The Letter Killeth,” Bryan critiqued the rigidity of strict Froebelian classrooms that subordinated children’s interests to the material, decried activities in which the child is not “creatively active, only mechanically so,” and drew a distinction between what she called the “dictation play” of Froebel and expressive “free play.”⁴⁸

Bryan’s presentation, delivered before an audience of male academics as well as women teachers and kindergarten directors, was only one of a series of confrontations that took place between the conservative and radical factions within the Kindergarten Movement during the 1890s. Liberals, hoping to keep the Movement intact, attempted to mediate. Wiggin, for example, urged her colleagues to remain open minded to the findings of the new psychology. In a speech before a professional association that was later collected in *The Republic of Childhood*, she told the audience, “It may be that as our psychological observations of children grow wiser, more sympathetic, and more subtle, we shall see the need to make radical changes.”⁴⁹ In *Kindergarten Principles and Practice*, intended for an audience of teachers in training, she wrote,

There is apparently no end to the modifications and improvements necessary in the kindergarten in order to make our work keep pace with our growing ideals and our growing knowledge both of the child’s nature and of the world’s needs . . . Don’t be discouraged if you find that, in striving to keep abreast of the time, somebody accuses you of not being true to Froebel . . . It is much more important to be true to truth than it is to be true to Froebel, and that is what he would tell you were he alive today.⁵⁰

Discussions and debates on adaptation and change, however, were no longer internal to the Kindergarten Movement. As University based theorists became increasingly engaged in addressing the future of early childhood

education and its implications for public schools, conflicts intensified and the gulf widened – ultimately isolating and even embittering conservative Froebelians. Commenting on the popularity of Hall's Summer School of Higher Pedagogy and Psychology (1892-1896) at Clark University, Susan Blow wrote to Harris, "They are allowing themselves to be misled by confident assertions – the truth or error of which they are not capable of deciding."⁵¹ More publically, in 1895 Blow supported a walkout during one of Hall's lectures at a conference in Chicago that Harrison had organized to discuss the implications of scientific child study for the future of the kindergarten.

It was a critical moment in the disputes between conservatives and radicals within the Kindergarten Movement and Chicago was now a recognized center for innovation and change. Jane Addams had established Hull House in the city in 1889. The University of Chicago, embracing a public service mission, had opened in 1890. John Dewey had been appointed to chair the university's department of philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy in 1894. Anna Bryan had moved to the city in 1893 to become the principal of the Kindergarten Normal Department at the Armour Institute. Elizabeth Harrison had established the Chicago Kindergarten College and created reading circles and lobbying groups for parents and kindergarten leaders. Alice Putnam, who would later move her kindergarten to Hull House, was conducting training at the Froebel Kindergarten School, and serving as the director of the Chicago Free Kindergarten Association. As Dewey began to draw up plans for the experimental University Elementary School, he drew on these women's expertise and experience. He credited Bryan especially as a chief advisor on the school's early childhood curriculum and pedagogical methods.⁵² In her memoir of Bryan, who died unexpectedly in 1901, Hill notes, "As Dr. Dewey remarked in a recent conversation with me, 'Had she lived ten years longer, the education of young children would have progressed much more rapidly.'"⁵³

Dewey's alliance with the radical faction in Chicago soon became apparent. Distancing the school from any Froebelian orthodoxies the use of the term 'kindergarten' might imply, he chose to refer to curricula designed for its four and five year olds not as a kindergarten but as the 'sub-primary.' In an essay included in *School and Society*, "Froebel's Educational Principles," he made his position on the debates within the Kindergarten Movement clear. Originally one of his 1899 community lectures on the theory and practice of the University Elementary School, the essay begins with an anecdote. Dewey recalls the visit of a conservative Froebelian who is shocked to find no kindergarten at the school. When he explains that, "true to the spirit of Froebel," . . . "play, singing, drawing, manual work, nature study, and attention to the child's social relations" are integrated throughout the entire cur-

riculum, she becomes indignant. He notes that, "The judicious teacher will certainly look for suggestions to the activities mentioned by Froebel and to those set forth *in such minute detail* by his disciples." Then, in an echo of Wiggin's earlier observations, he asserts, "I believe that (Froebel) expected his followers to exhibit their following by continuing his own study of contemporary conditions and activities, rather than by literally adhering to the plays he collected."⁵⁴ As his audience in Chicago no doubt suspected, Dewey was very likely describing, as well as parodying, the visit of Susan Blow to the University Elementary School. "I saw Dr. Dewey's school," Blow had written to Harris, "and the whole principle they are working on seems wrong."⁵⁵

Despite the increasingly pointed critiques by university based psychologists and philosophers and a growing contingent of liberal as well as radical kindergarten directors, the conservative faction persisted in 'literally adhering' to the minute details of what they understood as the dictates of an authentic Froebelian method. At the Seventh Meeting of the International Kindergarten Union in 1900 debates erupted over presentations by Putnam, Hill, and Alice Temple (1871-1946). Putnam advocated for curricula that reflected children's own interests. Hill called for the integration of self-directed play. Temple, a student of Bryan, proposed that children be encouraged "to make objects for which they could see a direct use . . . Let (the child) weave a little basket of vegetable fiber on a wire frame, or a rug of heavy candlewicking for a playhouse rather than a small easily torn comparatively useless paper mat. Let (the child) sew the seams of a doll's dress or a marble bag instead of a conventional design on a perforated card."⁵⁶ Temple's presentation was greeted with horrified silence. Weaving paper mats from quarter inch strips and stitching sequenced perforated cards had been considered essential components of the orthodox Froebelian curriculum. The conservatives charged the liberals with 'revisionism' for entertaining Temple's suggestions and the gulf between factions widened.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Kindergarten Movement that Peabody had worked to create and nurture had ceased to exist as a cohesive community defined by shared goals and commitments. Marking a major theoretical transition in American early childhood education, in 1904 Susan Blow and Patty Smith Hill participated in a series of public debates on the future of the kindergarten at Teachers College Columbia. As would be expected, Blow defended Froebelian orthodoxy and a 'uniform plan' for all kindergartens, and Hill, 'that radical from the South,' argued the merits of experimental psychology and child study. Blow's position was seen as hopelessly outdated and Hill prevailed.⁵⁷ A guest lecturer at Teachers College since 1896, Blow discontinued the affiliation in 1906. Hill was appointed to the faculty in 1905 and in 1910 became the chair of the college's Department of Kindergarten Education.

Although the battle lines between the factions had now been clearly drawn, the liberals continued their efforts at reconciliation within their professional associations. "The programs of the International Kindergarten Union were filled with earnest discussions and followed by vital work," wrote Harrison.⁵⁸ That work included efforts to retain the authority to define the kindergarten and its future. In 1903 the organization formed the Committee of Nineteen "in order to formulate contemporary kindergarten thought and clearly define points of agreement and difference" for a national audience.⁵⁹ After ten years of internal debate, the committee finally issued *The Kindergarten: Reports of the Committee of Nineteen on the Theory and Practice of Kindergarten* in 1913. In her preface, committee chair Lucy Wheelock, with her usual diplomacy, explained the use of the plural 'reports' in the volume's title. "The fundamental principles of the system are accepted by all; but as truth permits many angles of vision, variations in methods have arisen. It was thus impossible to harmonize all views at once and publish a unified report."⁶⁰ However, as Harrison recognized, what remained in contention were ideological differences in foundational theory, not merely 'variations in method.' "*The Kindergarten*," she noted, "was published by the committee to present from three viewpoints the underlying theories, which then controlled the practice of the kindergarten. The conservative report was written by Miss Blow; the radical position was stated by Miss Hill. My part in the work was to state the position of the liberal group who endeavored to find a reconciling viewpoint."⁶¹

Harrison's reconciling viewpoint failed to mend the rift. Based on experimental work within their classrooms, first generation liberals continued to reject any methods-centered 'uniform plan' for all kindergartens and urged child-centered adaptations and commitment to a culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy. Influenced by their study of functionalist psychology and child development, second generation radicals directly disputed the epistemological implications of Froebel's romantic idealism. The child's environment, psychological development, social interaction, and authentic interests, they argued, and not an absolutist belief in the 'pre-patterned' unfolding of an inner child, should form the basis of future thought and practice. While seeking to reunify the Movement, the volume succeeded in documenting its dissolution. "The meaning of the reports was clear. The Committee had begun by formulating kindergarten thought for the twentieth century and ended by declaring its impossibility."⁶²

With the disintegration of what Barbara Beatty has called "one of the first and most popular of women's movements," the locus of control in early childhood education shifted.⁶³ Public normal schools, state universities, and, less often, courses at private women's colleges, began to take the place of the private apprentice-like training programs that had predominated in the nine-

teenth century. Pedagogical texts and kindergarten guides written by the first generation within the Movement were displaced by studies produced by university based philosophers and psychologists. The curriculum for kindergarten teachers in training became the province of the universities; credentialing the responsibility of local public education authorities and state departments of education. Within this context, the 'kindergarten pioneers' were repositioned as advisors rather than leaders and members of the second generation migrated to college faculties. Assessing these transitions at the end of her career, Harrison concluded somewhat sadly, "As the years have ripened educational thought along lines of greater freedom, I realize that we over-emphasize our own views, and too often lack the spirit of the true teacher. We are not willing enough to seek the good that may lie in theories and methods of those who differ from us."⁶⁴

The epistemological inequalities that Jane Roland Martin's groundbreaking work addressed three decades ago have not yet been overcome. Despite the work of historians of early childhood education, the women who were active in the nineteenth century Kindergarten Movement, who established the first child-centered schools, 'lived with children,' understood the importance of community engagement and collaboration with families, and who advocated for a culturally responsive early childhood pedagogy, continue to be excluded from the educational realm. They are rarely acknowledged as having had any part in the development of educational theory and practice in educational studies. As a result, the diversity of their perspectives on what constitutes a child-centered curriculum and pedagogy, the substance of their arguments – which would certainly inform contemporary debate – have disappeared from the record. Their individual stories have much to tell us, not only about the development of educational thought and practice, but also about critical moments of educational change and how they are experienced.

Kate Douglas Wiggin once quipped that, "The male genius of humanity begets the ideas of which each century has need (at least it is so said, and I have never had the courage to deny it or the time to look it up); but the female genius, I am sure, has to work them out."⁶⁵ Wiggin's irreverent comment was a way of depicting a conventional distinction between male theoreticians and female practitioners. She was, of course, positioning herself and her colleagues in the Kindergarten Movement as too busy applying theory to generate it. However, as she had reason to know, ideas also develop from practice. After all, the ideas she and her colleagues had generated in their classrooms had contributed significantly to the reconstruction of theory in early childhood education.

In *Cultural Miseducation*, Martin observed that, "The educational problem of generations is how to maximize the transmission of cultural wealth and at

the same time minimize the transmission of cultural liabilities."⁶⁶ Part of the solution, I believe, is to have access to an inclusive past – a reliable archive of experience and memory – that can be held up to critical scrutiny in the present. With access only to a one-dimensional history distorted by disappearing tricks, cultural miseducation is inevitable. Intelligent action depends on the reconstruction of continuities: the reappraisal of the past within a present in order to move toward a more enlightened future. In this case, toward 'schools as yet to be.'

Notes

¹ Jane Roland Martin, "Excluding Women From the Educational Realm," *Harvard Educational Review*, 52, 2 (Summer 1982) 133-148.

² Dale Spender, *Men's Studies Modified: The Impact of Feminism on the Disciplines* (London: Pergamon Press, 1981).

³ Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001).

⁴ Elizabeth Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Road* (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1930), 133.

Elizabeth Harrison (1849–1927) was born in Athens, Kentucky. She spent much of her childhood in Iowa. She completed her kindergarten training at the Loring School in Chicago and studied kindergarten methods with Susan Blow in St. Louis and Maria Kraus Boelte in New York. In 1883 Harrison became the director of kindergartens at the Loring School, established a kindergarten training school, and organized the Chicago Kindergarten Club. She was a founding member of the International Kindergarten Union in 1892 and a co-founder of the National Congress of Mothers (later the Parent Teachers Association) in 1897. Harrison published several books on child rearing and teacher education. *A Study of Child Nature*, published in 1890, went through 50 editions by mid-century. In 1897 Harrison became a college president when her kindergarten training school was incorporated as the Chicago Kindergarten College. It was later reorganized as the National Kindergarten and Elementary College and then became National-Louis University. Harrison retained the presidency of the college until her retirement in 1920.

⁵ Robert Cowen, "Acting Comparatively Upon the Educational World: Puzzles and Possibilities," *Oxford Review of Education*, 32, 5 (November 2006), 561-573.

⁶ Ruth M. Baylor, *Elizabeth Palmer Peabody: Kindergarten Pioneer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 180.

⁷ Michael Steven Shapiro, *Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹ Beatty reviews the Peabody's text as well as the German kindergarten guides that were published during the era, in her *Preschool in America: the Culture of Young Children from the Colonial Era to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995),

53-56.

¹⁰ Mary J. Garland, "Elizabeth Palmer Peabody," in Carolyn D. Aborn, Catharine H. Watkins, and Lucy Wheelock, Eds. *Pioneers of the Kindergarten in America* (International Kindergarten Union, New York: The Century Company, 1924), 21.

¹¹ Baylor, *Elizabeth Palmer Peabody*, 191-192.

¹² Lucy Wheelock, "Miss Peabody as I Knew Her," in *Pioneers*, 37.

Lucy Wheelock (1857-1946) was born in Cambridge Vermont and attended Underhill Academy, Reading High School, and Chauncey-Hall School in Boston. She completed her kindergarten training in Boston with Ella S. Hatch, a protégé of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. In 1879 Wheelock became the kindergarten teacher at Chauncey-Hall and established a kindergarten training school there in 1882. She served as president of the International Kindergarten Association (IKU) from 1895-1899 wrote articles on parent education and home-school relations, was active in the National Congress of Mothers (the forerunner of the Parent Teachers Association), and was appointed to the Education Committee of the League of Nations in 1929. Following her retirement in 1939, the kindergarten training school she founded was incorporated as Wheelock College.

¹³ Kate Douglas Wiggin, *My Garden of Memory* (Boston: Riverside Press, 1923), 154.

Kate Douglas Wiggin (1855-1923) was born in Philadelphia, spent her childhood in Maine, and attended Gorham and Abbot Academies. She moved with her family to California in 1873 where she completed her kindergarten training. Wiggin became head teacher of the Silver Street Kindergarten in San Francisco in 1878 and founded the California Teacher Training School in 1880. In 1881, she gave up teaching but continued to direct the school until 1893. She wrote stories for children, lectured on children's rights and welfare, and published articles on curriculum and pedagogy. *The Birds' Christmas Carol*, her first novel, was published in 1888 and was followed by *Timothy's Quest* (1890), depicting the experiences of homeless children, *The Story of Patsy*, (1891) about a child with special needs, and *The Rights of Children: A Book of Nursery Logic* (1892). She became an international celebrity with the publication of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* in 1903. Bowdoin College awarded Wiggin an honorary doctorate in 1904.

¹⁴ Eccentricities mentioned by both Wheelock and Wiggin include "ignorance of everyday practicalities:" inattention to time, underestimating costs, getting lost, and losing train tickets.

¹⁵ Evelyn Weber, *The Kindergarten: Its Encounter with Educational Thought in America* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), 27.

¹⁶ Beatty, *Preschool in America*, 61.

¹⁷ Baylor, *Elizabeth Palmer Peabody*, 181.

¹⁸ Friedrich Froebel, "Mother Play," Susan Blow, trans., *The Mottoes and Commentaries of Friedrich Froebel's Mother Play*, New York: Appleton and Company, 1895), 15.

¹⁹ Ibid, 16.

²⁰ Barbara Beatty, "A Vocation on High: Kindergartening as an Occupation for American Women," in Joyce Antler and Sari Knopp Biklen, *Changing Education: Women as Radicals and Conservators* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 38.

²¹ Weber, *The Kindergarten*, 9.

²² Ibid, 17.

²³ Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York* (New York: Wynkoop and Hallenback Publishers, 1872) 46.

²⁴ Catharine Beecher, *Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1842), 9.

²⁵ Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 60.

²⁶ William Torrey Harris, "Introduction," in Susan E. Blow, *Symbolic Education: A Commentary on Froebel's 'Mother Play,'* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894) xxi.

Susan Elizabeth Blow (1843-1916) was born in St. Louis Missouri and attended the McCauley School in New Orleans and the Henrietta Haines Female Academy in New York City. In the early 1870s Blow observed kindergarten methods in Germany and later studied with a student of Friedrich Froebel in New York. She became the director of the Des Peres Kindergarten in St. Louis, the first public kindergarten in the United States, in 1873. Blow established a normal school for kindergarten teachers, translated Froebelian texts and published commentaries on his work, and lectured on kindergarten methods in New York and Boston. She was a member of the Hegelian Society, the Concord School of Philosophy, the Advisory Committee of the International Kindergarten Union and the IKU's Committee of Nineteen. From 1905-09 she taught a course in the history of philosophy and education at Teachers College Columbia.

²⁷ Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 74.

²⁸ The exceptions were William N. Hailmann and William Torrey Harris who are both included in the IKU's *Pioneers of the Kindergarten in America*. See: Beatty, *Preschool in America*, 54-56; 91-92.

²⁹ Beatty, *Preschool in America*, xii.

³⁰ Wiggin, *My Garden of Memory*, 100.

³¹ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, 61.

³² Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 95.

³³ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, 51-53.

³⁴ Wiggin, *My Garden of Memory*, 96.

³⁵ Ibid, 118.

³⁶ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, 121.

³⁷ Ibid, 121; 130.

³⁸ Lucy Wheelock, "My Life Story," unpublished manuscript quoted in Beatty, *Preschool in America*, 80.

³⁹ Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith, "Preface," *The Republic of*

Childhood (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Riverside Press, 1895), ix-x.

⁴⁰ Wiggins, *My Garden of Memory*, 111.

⁴¹ Kate Douglas Wiggin, *Children's Rights: A Book of Nursery Logic*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1892) 4; 228.

⁴² Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 50.

⁴³ Weber, *The Kindergarten*, 33.

⁴⁴ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, 71.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Harrison, *A Study of Child Nature from the Kindergarten Standpoint* (xx), 175.

⁴⁶ Wiggin, *Children's Rights*, 212-214.

⁴⁷ Patty Smith Hill, "Anna E. Bryan," in *Pioneers of the Kindergarten in America*, 224.

Patty Smith Hill (1868 – 1946) was born in Anchorage Kentucky, attended the Bellewood School for Young Ladies, and completed her kindergarten training at Louisville Collegiate Institute. She became the head teacher at the Holcombe Mission Kindergarten in Louisville in 1888 and the director of the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association in 1892. Hill was appointed to the Teachers College Columbia faculty in 1905, was elected president of the International Kindergarten Union in 1908, and became head of the Department of Kindergarten Education at Columbia in 1910 where she developed a highly respected graduate program in early childhood education. Hill wrote extensively on curricula and pedagogy and also authored stories and songs for children (including *Happy Birthday to You*). She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Columbia in 1929 and retired in 1935.

⁴⁸ Anna Bryan, "The Letter Killeth," *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the National Education Association*, 1890, 573-581.

⁴⁹ Wiggin, *The Republic of Childhood*, 202.

⁵⁰ Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith, *Kindergarten Principles and Practice* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1896), 200-202.

⁵¹ Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 116.

⁵² John Dewey, "Froebel's Educational Principles," *Elementary School Record* (June 1900), fn., 151.

⁵³ Patty Smith Hill, "Anna E. Bryan," in *Pioneers of the Kindergarten in America*, 229.

⁵⁴ John Dewey, "Froebel's Educational Principles," in *The School and Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1899), 114-115. (*emphasis mine*).

⁵⁵ Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 151.

⁵⁶ Weber, *The Kindergarten*, xii.

⁵⁷ Shapiro provides the details of the Hill/Blow debates in *Child's Garden*, 164-169.

⁵⁸ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, 134.

⁵⁹ Annie Laws, "Introduction," in *Pioneers of the Kindergarten in America*, xviii.

⁶⁰ Lucy Wheelock, "Preface," in Lucy Wheelock, Ed. *The Kindergarten: Reports of the Committee of Nineteen on the Theory and Practice of Kindergarten* (International Kindergarten Union, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), ii.

⁶¹ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, f.n., 134.

⁶² Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 183.

⁶³ Beatty, *Preschool in America*, 39.

⁶⁴ Harrison, *Sketches Along Life's Roads*, 87.

⁶⁵ Wiggan, *Children's Rights*, 233.

⁶⁶ Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation: In Search of a Democratic Solution*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 62.

Collective Biographies: How Many Cases Are *Enough*? A Dispatch from the Far Side of 11,700 Biographies of Nineteenth Century Teachers

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This essay grapples with a largely unacknowledged methodological problem in the corner of biographical writing known among some as “collective biography.” Collective biography draws upon multiple biographies to reveal aspects of historical eras or movements that would remain invisible without that approach. The methodological problem addressed here is determining, at least loosely, what constitutes an adequate sample, a sufficient number of biographical cases, to warrant historical claims. My effort here will not provide a definitive number, by any means, but it may at least have the virtue of clarifying the issues and offering some cautions along the way. To get to that modest end, however, I must tell a story.

I recently published a history of the teachers who worked with the freed slaves, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876*. It was a follow-on to a study I published a number of years earlier about the freedmen’s aid movement. One chapter of that earlier book dealt with those teachers who served in the schools for freed slaves. In that earlier book, I referred to the teachers, somewhat grandly, as “The Real Heroes of Their Age.”¹

When I went back to that earlier chapter a few years after publication, I was troubled by it. I was simultaneously troubled by three other books that

came out at about the same time as my book that also dealt with aspects of African American education during the Civil War and Reconstruction.² All four of those books were sharply revisionist, rejecting virtually all the claims made by an earlier generation of southern white historians about the freedmen's education movement. Those earlier writers had been hostile to the movement and to the Yankee Schoolmarms who had, as one writer put it, "invaded" the South. They were certain that the teachers were meddlers, fanatics, and zealots who had intentionally and maliciously destroyed the strong, positive bonds that had existed during slavery between southern blacks and whites. Drawing on W. E. B. Du Bois' portrayal, in *Souls of Black Folk*, of the teachers as New England schoolmarms, but imputing astonishingly negative characteristics to the teachers, in contrast to Du Bois, those earlier historians characterized the freedmen's teachers as young (read: naïve), privileged (read: haughty), single (read: homely spinster), schoolmarms (read: engaged in wage labor and hence never a lady) from New England (read: stiff-necked opponents of everything southern). They branded the teachers as abolitionists, about the worst name they could call anyone without violating the southern code of gentility.³

Our intrepid band of revisionists, completing our graduate degrees and pursuing our research through the heady years of the Civil Rights era and the student movement, understood the freedmen's teachers in ways diametrically opposed to the interpretations of those earlier historians. The teachers remained for us those same young single women teachers from New England, but we read them very differently. They were idealistic champions of the civil rights of former slaves, young proto-feminists, the forerunners of the Peace Corps volunteers of our generation. For us, abolitionism carried a very different freight from that assumed by southern white historians; for the generation of the 1960s and 1970s, abolitionism was one of the few authentically noble movements in a frequently sordid national narrative of slavery, racism, colonialism, adventurism, and nativism.

But when I revisited my 1980 story of the teachers, and considered the parallel narratives of the other revisionists, I was uneasy. For it did not take much thought about the sources upon which I and my revisionist comrades relied to realize that we used almost exactly the same historical sources that were consulted by those we intended to revise. And if two diametrically opposite interpretations could be wrung from the same sources, what did that say about either interpretive stance? Were the understandings we reached, the interpretations we urged, nothing more than the sentimentality of our two extraordinarily different generations? Our historiographic antagonists had grown up with academic and media portrayals of an antebellum South with contented black slaves, a refined white culture, a divinely ordained social order, and an antebellum North whose godless radicals and

coarse culture opposed the South's peaceable kingdom, fomented a terrible war, and imposed a tyranny driven by carpetbaggers, scalawags, and black rule. We revisionists, on the other hand, had grown up in an unpeaceable kingdom of Cold War, McCarthyism, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, civil rights marchers, police dogs and fire hoses, and the youth movement; tyranny was epitomized by J. Edgar Hoover, the Pentagon, HUAC, George Wallace, neo-colonial military adventurism, and everyone over thirty. It was the world of *Gone with the Wind* versus the world of *Mississippi Burning*.

So my re-reading of the revisionists, myself included, began to trouble me. Are historical narratives inevitably just pale reflections of the hubris of succeeding generations? Or might another interpretation be possible with different methods? Would this particular historical narrative take on different dimensions if we sought a much broader range of sources than any of us had consulted to date? Would more data yield a different picture? And particularly, what would happen if we drilled down much deeper to discover who the teachers actually were?

That latter question forms the crux of this paper. As I pondered the problem of the generational construction of interpretive positions, I began to wonder: do we even have the basic picture of the teachers right? Do we really know who they were as a group, or perhaps as distinctive groups, plural? What if our collective picture of them was fundamentally mistaken? To answer those questions, I set out to identify a large sample of the teachers and to discover as much about that sample as I could manage.

Thus was born the Freedmen's Teacher Project.⁴ The project sought, at minimum, the teachers' names, the years they taught in the freed people's schools, and where they taught; an individual teacher was added to the database only if I had those three pieces of evidence. Beyond the minimum, I also sought information on the teachers' gender, race, birth year, marital status, their occupations before and after their time in the South, their parents' occupations, whether they taught with family members, the sources of their support while teaching, their educational level, evidence of abolitionism, home, military experience, if any, and religious affiliation. As new information was added, it became possible to track individual teachers across both geographical space and time. Simultaneously, I was seeking published and archival qualitative material on all of the teachers. I was, quite unintentionally, on my way to constructing a large collective biography of the teachers of freed people.⁵

After several years of work, I had identified close to 6000 individual teachers. At that point, friends, colleagues, and particularly my wife told me I had all the information I needed. I had a good sample. Six thousand cases – six thousand individual biographies – is, after all, not an inconsiderable sample. Indeed, in one publication from those years I wrote, "The teachers

thus far identified [i.e., 5,984 teachers] represent the majority of the total number of teachers [who taught in the southern black schools].”⁶ In fact, I now know that I had only found roughly one-third of the total number. Still, how large a sample does one need?

But in collective biography, when is enough *enough*? How many cases does it take to give us a strong sense that we know all we are likely to know? When does the law of diminishing returns make further work irrelevant to the findings one might generate? When, in the arcane language of the qualitative researchers, does a project reach *saturation*, the point at which further research is unlikely to change the conclusions one can reach?⁷ Or, as my wife might have put it at the time, when does this just become obsessive-compulsive behavior instead of serious scholarship?

Now, I would like to be able to claim that when I began this collective biography of nineteenth century teachers many years ago, I turned immediately to the literature on collective biography to be guided in my work and to know, from the outset, how large a sample I would need in order to draw reliable inferences and conclusions. I would like to be able to say that, but in fact I did not turn to that literature until relatively recently. Or, to be more precise (read: more honest) I turned to that literature when I thought it would be a good idea to talk with colleagues who do educational biography and get their sense of whether I have become obsessive-compulsive or have continued to be a rational scholar.

When I did turn to the literature on the methodology for collective biography, I was a bit relieved to read that, even as late as 2005, one methodologist was claiming that, despite a recent resurgence in collective biography work, “very little has been written to date about the method.”⁸ Well, that was a relief; at least no one could accuse me of ignorance of a hoary body of methodological knowledge. But as I read further, I became convinced, as most educational biographers may already know, that the field of collective biography is a methodological mess. Collective biography includes, at one end, those massive, one hundred-plus volumes of “National Biography” and “Who’s Whos” and “Notable Women” that attempt to pose “arguments by example” but that, by the end, probably come closer to Shakespeare’s “tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”⁹ It includes, perhaps not at another end of some spectrum but on an odd tangent from the spectrum, something that its devotees call “collective biography” but that should be more accurately considered collective autobiography, inasmuch as it entails an effort to get at interesting social phenomena through group analysis of the memories of members of the group.¹⁰ The other end of the spectrum may be prosopography, the amassing of voluminous amounts of personal data on large numbers of individuals in order to characterize a group of historical actors. There is even a movement afoot by those doing

large-scale quantitative analyses to arrogate the term “prosopography” to themselves, forbidding other historians and biographers from using the term.¹¹ In between those poles are all manner of narratives that entail more than one biography, though what makes most of them “collective” remains something of a mystery.

Worse yet, none of the methodological sources I found paid any attention to my question about sampling and saturation. So I turned from methodological treatises to books and articles that claimed to *be* collective biographies, but became even more baffled. One relied on a sample size of five individuals who, the author admits, “cannot be said to have formed a cohesive group” but who “did hold a number of qualities in common.”¹² Another drew upon the collective characteristics of a dozen men, as found in their biographies, to identify “timeless principles” of how a society can “cultivate the types of leaders society desperately needs and craves.”¹³ In what sorts of historical-biographical work are five cases sufficient? When are twelve cases enough to warrant claims of “timeless principles?” What do we really know about how collective biography should sample?¹⁴

Finding nothing to help me, I decided that it might be heuristic, at least, to draw on my own work to see what difference sample size made, at least in the particular work I have been doing. When I first began reporting my findings, I had collected data on 5,350 teachers; two years later I had expanded the sample to just shy of 6,000; more than a decade later, I reported on a sample that had grown to 8,200. Perhaps I should have stopped at any of those points, but, dogged to the end, I pressed on. In 2010, I published the book I mentioned at the beginning of this paper that, among many other things, reported on findings regarding 11,672 individual teachers of the freed people. And still I did not stop. While I have only found 55 more individual teachers in the four years since the book was published, I have dug up further information on many of the individuals that I had already identified.

Did all that extra work matter, or, as many suspected, was this work just a good excuse to work for hours in microfilm readers and the back tables of archives?

I will not burden this essay with the many tables I could develop showing the frequencies and percentages that I reported over the years. Let me, though, point to some salient findings that shed light on my question. As early as two decades ago, I was able to establish the fact that African Americans made up a disproportionately large share of the teachers, despite the long assumption that the teachers were primarily young white women. I also claimed, incorrectly as it turns out, that black teachers remained in the southern schools about a half year longer than white teachers, on average. But the data continued to suggest that the corps of teacher was heavily northern and female. By 2003, with closer to 8,000 cases, I could report that

nearly one-third of the teachers were black, a much higher proportion than I found earlier, but the *northern* complexion of the teaching force remained. I also noted in 2003, contrary to claims made as recently as 1979 by Jacqueline Jones, that women more often held positions as principals of southern black schools than did men, 128 to 99.¹⁵

What, then, changed with the increase in sample size to over 11,600, and the addition of several thousand more bits of data on all of the individual teachers? Perhaps most dramatic was finding that the teachers were not primarily northern at all. A majority was southerners, both black and white, and many of the southern white teachers in the freed people's schools were former Confederate soldiers, including not a few Confederate officers; just as ominous, many of those southern white teachers had been slaveholders before the war. Further, the number of black teachers had swollen remarkably. By 2010 I could report that over one-third of all of the freedmen's teachers who can be positively identified and who taught between 1861 and 1876 were African Americans. Further, the project had amassed evidence to establish firmly that thousands more African Americans were teaching during those years whose names may never be unearthed. Just as remarkable, the average number of years in the classroom over the fifteen years of the study revealed much more from the most recent sample than from earlier reports. African Americans again came out on top, teaching on average twice as long as northern white teachers, and three times as long as southern white teachers. It also became apparent that the teaching force was not as overwhelmingly female as long thought. While white northern teachers were primarily women, by a ratio of two to one, the entire teaching force was almost exactly half men, half women. Meanwhile, the number of women identified as principals ballooned from 128 to nearly 200, versus only 130 men.¹⁶

So what have I learned about sample size in collective biographies? Most saliently, it seems clear that in this particular sort of research, no purposive sample would have revealed many of the most important conclusions the project has been able to reach. Even at 8,000 cases, two-thirds of the cases eventually located, the racial profile was obscure. It was clear that earlier historians, including the revisionists, had entirely missed the centrality of African Americans in their own intellectual emancipation.¹⁷ However, the extraordinary dedication of those teachers, and their proportion of all teachers, fully one-third of those who can be identified and well more than half of all that can be surmised from current evidence, was still invisible. Even at 8,000 cases, the gender profile of the teachers favored women, when in fact the gender frequencies were nearly dead-even, with men outnumbering women by a narrow margin. At 8,000 cases, I was still reporting figures that were too low regarding the number of years spent in black classrooms by the various groups. Anything less than a study of as close to a one hundred per-

cent sample as possible would have left us with an incomplete, misleading understanding of the first teachers to work with the freed people.

As noted earlier, since publication of *Schooling the Freed People*, research has continued, though the number of individual teachers has not changed substantially. So, here again is an opportunity to ask, when is enough *enough*. Has the additional research resulted in any significant findings?

In fact, while frequencies have shifted, in most cases percentages, means, and modes have shown little change. For example, between 2010 and 2014, I have been able to determine race for 196 more individuals, 51 of whom were black, but with race known for more than 9,330, the percentages changed less than two percent. Further, the age of over two hundred more teachers have been determined since the book was published, but the impact on median ages of the whole sample have been affected only minutely.

On the other hand, the one variable that has changed in interesting ways with more research is relative wealth. To get at that issue, and thereby to get at social class indirectly, the project has gathered wealth data from the 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses. The most recent research, adding census data to more than 200 more cases, did have an impact on findings and modify my claims in the book. Between the data reported in 2010 and what I know now, the modal wealth of the families of northern white teachers did not change for 1860 but the median wealth for 1860 fell from \$5900 to \$5550 ($n = 764$); for 1870, the modal wealth of the families of northern white teachers rose modestly from \$1300 to \$1700, while the median wealth of northern white teachers in 1870 rose slightly from \$5810 to \$5990 ($n = 932$). While those numbers continue to put northern white teachers pretty solidly in the middle class, they do indicate that those teachers were moderately more privileged than I suggested in 2010. It remains significant, however, that fully one-third of the northern white teachers reported individual or family wealth of \$200 or less, a number that has not changed between 2010 and 2014, confirming my sense that many came from circumstances that were less than privileged.

On the other hand, the most recent data indicate that black teachers and southern white teachers were even poorer than I reported in 2010. The 1870 modal wealth for southern white teachers was a remarkably low \$300, down from the \$400 mode reported in 2010; the median wealth of southern white teachers in 1870 was \$1812 ($n = 656$). The modal wealth for black teachers in 1870 was zero as reported both in the book and as found in the most recent data, but the median wealth reported in 2010 for black teachers, \$896, was too high; the most recent data find a median wealth for the black teachers who served in the freed peoples' schools to be \$773 ($n = 361$). Thus, traditional accounts that assert that the northern schoolmarms in the South were from privileged homes may be marginally more accurate than I thought in

2010, but any characterization of the entire corps of teachers must confront the contrary reality: black teachers taught their freed brethren despite grinding poverty; southern white teachers taught their former bondsmen because of grinding poverty.

Not all collective biographies can hope to achieve a sample size of one hundred percent, of course. Those studying very large populations – all of the teachers in Oregon in 1930, say, or all of the secondary school principals in the mid-west from 1965 to 1985 – would be hard pressed to manage such a project. But this study does suggest strongly that the further away a collective biography is from including all possible cases, the more problematic the results will be. Any process of purposive sampling must be carefully developed and fully justified if the findings are to be taken seriously. Meanwhile, the Freedmen's Teacher Project will continue to find valuable evidence, particularly as it moves into its next iteration, though it may be approaching saturation.¹⁸ On the other hand, it still may be the case that I am obsessive-compulsive.

Notes

¹ Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 115-34.

² Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Samuel L. Horst, *Education for Manhood: The Education of Blacks in Virginia during the Civil War* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1987).

³ See, for example, Henry Lee Swint, *Northern Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1941); J. G. deRoulhac Hamilton, "The Freedmen's Bureau in North Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 8 (1909): 53-67, 154-63; Edgar W. Knight, *The Influence of Reconstruction on Education in the South* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1913); Knight, "The 'Messianic' Invasion of the South after 1865," *School and Society* 57 (5 June 1943): 645-51, from whom the quotation is drawn; and Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Knopf, 1941). Du Bois' initial characterization of the northern teachers in the southern black schools is in W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; New York: Modern Library Edition, 1996), 27.

⁴ The Freedmen's Teacher Project is available to scholars and the public, though it currently exists as a tightly coded file that requires some patience to learn to read. Contact the author for details. See also note 18, below.

⁵ An initial explanation of the project is in Butchart, "Perspectives on Gender, Race, Calling, and Commitment in Nineteenth-Century America: A Collective

Biography of the Teachers of the Freedpeople, 1862-1875," *Vitae Scholastica*, 13 (Spring 1994): 15-32.

⁶ Butchart, "Recruits to the 'Army of Civilization': Gender, Race, Class, and the Freedmen's Teachers, 1862-1875," *Journal of Education* 172 (no. 3, 1990): 78.

⁷ See for example Glenn A. Gowen, "Naturalistic Inquiry and the Saturation Concept: A Research Note," *Qualitative Research* 8 (no. 1, 2008): 137-52.

⁸ Krista Cowman, "Collective Biography," in Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire, eds., *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 84.

⁹ See for example Alison Booth, *How to Make It as a Woman: Collective Biographical History from Victoria to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Bronwyn Davies and Susanne Gannon, eds., *Doing Collective Biography: Investigating the Production of Subjectivity* (London: Open University Press, 2006).

¹¹ Cited by Cowman, 84.

¹² Gary Wersky, *The Visible College: The Collective Biography of British Scientific Socialists of the 1930s* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), 13.

¹³ John R. Shoup, "A Collective Biography of Twelve World-Class Leaders (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2005), 9.

¹⁴ While they do not answer the question about sample size, Jerome M. Clubb and Howard W. Allen raise fascinating and important questions about the conceptual and methodological issues that must be confronted in collective biography; see Clubb and Allen, "Collective Biography and the Progressive Movement: The 'Status Revolution' Revisited," *Social Science History* 1 (Summer, 1977), 518-34.

¹⁵ Among the sources where earlier findings were reported, see Butchart, "'We Best Can Instruct Our Own People': New York African Americans in the Freedmen's Schools, 1861-1875," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 12 (January 1988): 27-49; Butchart, "Reconsidering the 'Soldiers of Light and Love': Color, Gender, Authority, and Other Problems in the History of Teaching the Freed People," unpublished paper presented to Division F, American Educational Research Association, April 2003; Butchart, "Mission Matters: Mount Holyoke, Oberlin, and the Schooling of Southern Blacks, 1861-1917," *History of Education Quarterly*, 42 (Spring 2002): 1-17; Butchart & Amy F. Roller, "Teachers for Former Slaves: Iowa's Freedmen's Teachers, 1861-1876," *Annals of Iowa*, 62 (Winter 2003): 1-29; Butchart, "Remapping Racial Boundaries in Reconstruction: Teachers as Border Police and Boundary Transgressors in Post-Emancipation Black Education, USA, 1861-1876," *Paedagogica Historica*, 43 (February 2007): 61-78; and the two articles cited previously, Butchart, Butchart, "Recruits to the 'Army of Civilization,'" and Butchart, "Perspectives on Gender, Race, Calling, and Commitment."

¹⁶ Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, *passim* and especially Appendix A, 179-83.

¹⁷ Robert Morris is the only historian who focused on the African American teachers, but he only identified a handful and was unaware of the fact that they constituted a full third of the total teaching force: Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 85-130.

¹⁸ The Freedmen's Teacher Project is currently migrating to an on-line environment on the University of Georgia's eHistory site (eHistory.org). Within a year, it should be fully accessible to users who can pull data on individuals, places taught, or

many other variables. The current entirely quantitative database will be transformed to a mixed qualitative and quantitative database containing photographs, extensive archival material, in addition to its current prosopographic data. More exciting, the site will be equipped with crowd-sourcing software that will allow researchers to upload information to the site (after vetting, of course). The goal is to allow the project to continue to grow rather than existing as a static archive.

Looking Back on a Life of Teaching: The Educational Journey of a Teacher

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Prologue

What does it mean to be a teacher? Why do people go into teaching, and what experiences shape, mold, and direct them? Writers have attempted to answer these and other questions, in many genres. Autobiographies like Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*¹ and *Teacher Man*,² or Rafe Esquith's *There Are No Shortcuts*,³ describe life-changing episodes that transform the ways teachers look at the world and interact with their students. Biographies like Mark Edmundson's *Teacher*⁴ document the profound influence one teacher can have on the life of another. Memoirs like *To the Lighthouse and Back: Writings on Teaching and Living*,⁵ *The Art of Teaching*,⁶ and *A Life in School*⁷ weave the threads of lessons learned into the fabric of lessons taught. Oral histories like Diane Manning's *Hill Country Teacher*⁸ and Susan Dichter's *Teachers: Straight Talk from the Trenches*⁹ speak to the reader with the impassioned voices of individuals to whom teaching is a way of life.

I have chosen to present this story of a teacher's life as an oral history. The narrative might aptly be subtitled a love story because it reveals the passion that has propelled one man to devote the past twenty-five years to teaching Language Arts at the elementary level. In a series of seven one-hour conversations conducted in his classroom at the end of the school day over a five-month period, the teacher (whom I call Tommy Calley) disclosed many of his thoughts, memories, disappointments, joys, and sorrows in his life journey. As he recounted his story and shared the intimacy of his recollec-

tions and feelings, I tried to capture the very essence of my subject by carefully transcribing each recorded interview and emailing it to him to verify the accuracy of our conversation. At our final meeting, Tommy Calley and I reviewed the entire story as it had been written to afford him the opportunity to make any additions or corrections he felt were necessary. While maintaining the accuracy of my transcript, I have taken the artistic license to modify the names of places, persons, and events in this oral history to maintain the confidentiality of the teacher.

The story demonstrates that Tommy Calley is both a teacher and a learner. It also reveals the challenges of being a male in a predominantly female profession, and Calley's reaction to critics who question his masculinity because he teaches in an elementary school. The presentation of his story is informed by the work of Madeline Arnot and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, who discuss the formation of self identity (and how it is influenced by society and culture), the roles assigned to gender (and the hegemonic power structure in which these roles are constructed), and the pedagogies that can either challenge or reinforce current structures. Arnot and Mac an Ghaill depict such considerations of gender as "only the beginning of a sophisticated analysis of the operation of social power within a transforming social order."¹⁰

One of the purposes of writing this oral history is to liberate the voice of the individual and explore the forces that have shaped and directed his life. There is no life that is insignificant, but a life can only be heard through the telling of it. As Vivian Gornick observed, "A serious life, by definition, is a life one reflects on, a life one tries to make sense of and bear witness to." Gornick added that the present age "is characterized by a need to testify. Everywhere in the world women and men are rising up to tell their stories out of the now commonly held belief that one's own life signifies."¹¹

What follows is the story of Tommy Calley, a teacher of young children, based on his own testimony.

Learning to Crawl

1

When I was a child
 I spoke as a child,
 I thought as a child,
 I reasoned as a child;
 When I became a man,
 I put aside childish things.

– I Corinthians 13

There is a brass bell that sits on his classroom desk. He uses it at the beginning of class to start the lesson, or at other times when he wants to regain the students' attention. Their response to the bell is almost immediate; the gentle tinkling sound is followed by a hushed silence that serves as a prologue for the teacher's subsequent comments. If one were to look closely at the bell one would discover that his name is inscribed on it: "Mr. Calley." The bell was given to him over twenty-five years ago by an eighth-grade student named Damion Carter when he was a teacher at Turner Middle School in Chicago. The fresh luster of the bell has become somewhat tarnished and scratched over the years, and the original clapper was pilfered at some point in history by a mischievous middle-schooler who undoubtedly reveled in committing such a daring act. In its stead, a small, lead fishing sinker has been used to replace the primal tongue of the little bell, and the resultant voice of its owner is a bit more somber and heavy than it was before the theft. Nevertheless, it still rings clear and true, and faithfully captures the ear of all the students whenever it speaks.

As he sits looking at that bell, a kaleidoscope of colorful memories run through his mind. They are warm and precious treasures that fill his heart and take him back to the early days of his childhood and carry him on to the first day of his journey as a teacher.

Being a teacher was not in his plans. If he had listened to his own voice, he could very well have become a geologist. For as far back as he can remember, rocks have fascinated him, and as an avid rock hound he gathered rocks, stones, and gems on every outdoor excursion that was afforded him. His father's love for travel provided him with abundant opportunities to explore and discover what he perceived to be priceless finds on their summer excursions: clear quartz crystals that sparkled in the rolling hills of the Ozarks, rosy boulders of rhodonite that were scattered in the outback of Australia, black obsidian glass that hid in the recesses of the great lava beds surrounding Teotihuacán in Mexico, and rough chunks of grainy red granite from the Colorado Rockies, rich with mica and feldspar, were all precious additions to his rapidly growing collection. After carefully identifying, labeling and cataloging each of his gems, he proudly displayed them all on the built-in shelves of the living room, protected from dust and theft by leaded-glass doors that added to their elegance.

But his mother had other plans for him. Tommy's father was an attorney, and she envisioned him as an obvious successor to his father's throne. "You will be a lawyer, just like your father," she would tell him, "Rich, and famous, and powerful. Eventually, perhaps, a senator...or even, yes,...some day, the President of the United States."

"But, Mother, I don't want to be rich or famous. I don't want to be a lawyer or President," he would timidly protest. "I want to be a geologist like

Uncle Mike.”

She would just chuckle. “Oh yes, I know, I know. Dear Uncle Mike, he is such a sweet man. Crawling on his belly in those dark, muddy, God-forsaken cave holes in the ground looking for who knows what...oh my. Yes, I know you boys like that sort of thing, bats and all, but you.... you, my little Tommy, you are so much smarter than Uncle Mike, and you have so much more to offer than he does. I know you like your little rocks, and they are very pretty in our cabinets, but you will outgrow all of that and someday you will be thanking me for guiding you along the right path.”

“But Mother...”

“No, no, no, I think we’ve had enough of this discussion. I believe it’s almost time for your piano lesson, isn’t it? You need to go to your room now and tidy up so you’ll be presentable for your teacher, Mrs. Kirkendall. Go along, now, so you won’t keep her waiting. Hurry, hurry...”

There were never really any dialogues with his mother, just diatribes.

Before he was even born, his mother seemed intent on giving birth to the world’s next Leonardo da Vinci. Consequently, she began reading to him and playing classical recordings of Beethoven, Bach and Mozart while he still resided in her womb. Upon birth, to ensure his precociousness she arranged for him to receive piano lessons at age five, soon followed by instruction in the arts: oil painting, ballet, acting, and voice.

“Your father is a wonderful man, and an exceptional attorney,” she would say, “but he is lacking in some of areas of culture. You, however, my dear sweet Tommy, will have no such failings. You will not only be an attorney par excellence, you will be a man of culture. You will be unique. You will be the ultimate Renaissance man.”

And so his life unfolded, not as he would have it, but as his mother planned it.

His father, on the other hand, seemed to have no concrete plans for him. Sigmund Calley’s passion was his work, and Tommy saw very little of his father as he was growing up. On the occasions when he had the good fortune to travel with his father to various locations around the globe, he cherished the rare moments that they shared as they wandered together through the exotic and sometimes hostile frontiers. It was on these remote excursions that the two seemed to be most relaxed and happiest. Mother never went with them, and it often made Tommy feel that perhaps his father, like him, preferred life apart from the mother.

Tommy believes that one of the greatest gifts his father gave him was the opportunity to see the many faces of the world. Not only did their travels together bond them more closely to one other, they also endowed Tommy with a sense of kinship to those whose global homes he visited. At a very early age he began to see the world through their eyes, and within him grew

a deep appreciation and respect for the diversity of the human experience.

As a result of his travels with Father and the countless hours he spent reading the classical literature that his mother provided him, by the age of ten he felt that the world was his home. He had acquired a deep reverence for the varied life forms that inhabited the Earth, and became particularly concerned about the disparity of wealth between the rich and the poor, and the noticeable imbalance in the consumption of the earth's resources. It became apparent to him at an early age that poverty was an unnecessary plight of millions caused by the greed and corruption of a powerful few.

He recalled an early case of being sensitive to the suffering and hunger of the masses while walking with his father on a crisp July day to the market in Cuzco, Peru. As he was admiring the precision with which the ancient walls were shaped and assembled by the Incas, his thoughts were interrupted by the raucous sound of a gang of young boys barreling down the street. The boys appeared to be about the same age as Tommy, but that was where any similarity ended. A thick shock of jet black hair on their heads erupted in all directions, and they were shabbily dressed in torn, ragged, baggy pants and sleeveless shirts that were smeared with dirt and grime, as were their faces, hands, and feet. They wore no shoes, and the skin of their feet looked like elephant hide. The entire band of vagabonds was in eager pursuit of one particular sprite. Smaller than the rest, the boy scrambled frantically past Tommy and his father, his eyes wide with terror, clutching a very large, round loaf of bread close to his chest. Close at his heels was a much larger, red-faced boy shouting as he rapidly gained ground.

"Damenos el pan, cabron! Damenos, ahorita, marecon!"

The boy with the red face then leaped upon the back of his prey, and both slammed hard onto the rough, rocky road. The impact of the two jarred the prize of the fugitive from his grasp, and propelled the large loaf across the span of the street. No sooner had it landed in a large, muddy puddle than the entire pack of ravenous urchins pounced upon it like wolves, tearing and clawing for bits of the soggy, dirty bread until no crumb was left to be found. Upon completion of their frantic repast, the young orphans gazed upon the ground to detect any possible remaining morsel, furtively glancing at each other, and then, with heads down and bodies bent, they shuffled past Tommy and his father and quietly vanished as they turned the corner.

Since that day their hollow stares have followed Tommy, and their desperate faces still haunt him. He is followed by their reincarnations on the streets of every bustling borough of the world: Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Singapore, Sydney, New Delhi, Rome, Paris, Stuttgart, Rio de Janeiro, London, Los Angeles, and Chicago. They are everywhere. However, unlike the humorous depiction of zombies that currently proliferate the screens of primetime television, these living dead are very real, and they are not going

away. They are found in every geographical location of the world whether it be a major metropolitan area, a farm on the back roads of India, a swamp in Louisiana, or a Sandals resort in St. Lucia.

Some of their faces report to his class every day, and although their clothes are not tattered and their hair is more well-kempt, their eyes reveal the hunger and pain that pervades their body and their spirits.

His First Steps

2

Love bears all things,
Believes all things,
Hopes all things,
Endures all things.

– I Corinthians 13

Such was the impact that the travels with his father had upon Tommy as a child. However, they not only made him more aware of the economic disparity that existed among nations, they also instilled within him an appreciation of the richness of the diverse cultures that exist and an awareness of the phenomenal beauty of the earth and its fragile ecosystem.

His frequent trips away from home, especially those trips that extended throughout the summer months, made it difficult to establish long-standing relationships with his peers. In addition, his mother's persistent efforts to shape and mold him into a genius precluded any opportunity to participate in what Mother referred to as "common" activities. As a result, he was perceived by his classmates as a model geek, and he was often the victim of verbal assaults and name-calling, including "nerd," "sissy," "weirdo," and "faggot." Feeling victimized, he further alienated himself by shunning any social activities of the school. He soon began to embrace the life of solitude that he had adopted and immersed himself into the development of his talents and abilities.

By the time he graduated from high school he had become an accomplished artist and had been offered several art scholarships. His artistic ability in painting was complemented by his hobby of photography, and he often used the pictures that he had taken as models or themes for his paintings. Tommy also excelled in mathematics and science, and had a penchant for creating theoretical designs of bridges and skyscrapers. His enthusiasm for geology had waned, and it was supplanted by the possibility of pursuing a career in architecture.

But, then, there was Mother. She was intent on him following in his father's footsteps, and she would not conceive of any other possibility. After a thorough search of possible campuses, she announced that he would be attending Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, a small male college located in the charming Ozark Mountains. The school was rich in tradition, and had a reputation for attracting dignitaries from around the world as speakers, and also was known for providing an exceptional foundation for those who wished to ultimately be in the legal profession. There was no choice in the matter of which college he would attend. It had been arranged. Fulton, Missouri was to be his home for the next four years.

Tommy does admit that his first impression of the campus was quite favorable. He was impressed by the ornate Georgian architecture of the buildings and the brilliant foliage that decorated the campus and hillsides. Being a small private school he also entertained himself with the thought of engaging in coffee shop discourses with his professors through the night to match his wits with theirs. However, his warming to the new surroundings was transient. As he participated in the traditional opening ceremony and passed through the columns two-by-two with the other freshman, he felt like he was boarding Noah's Ark.

But something unexpected happened his freshman year that caused him to abandon the plans that had been laid out for him. It was early one morning in September as he was looking at the bulletin board in the student union that he noticed one particular announcement:

AUDITIONS
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
MALE AND FEMALE ROLES
WILLIAM WOODS AUDITORIUM
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
7:00 P.M.

Ever since he was a child, Tommy had always lived in a make-believe world created to fill the loneliness caused by his father's absences and his mother's oppressiveness. His fantasy world had him playing the roles of Batman, Tarzan, the Lone Ranger, and countless other heroes he imagined himself to be, and he spent most of his time away from his assigned expectations living out his illusions in a kingdom on a cloud. The idea of having the chance to "pretend officially" appealed to him, and so, that Friday night he found himself auditioning for a children's play that was to be presented shortly after Thanksgiving. When the director told Tommy that he would like him to play the role of the servant, Toot Sweet, he was ecstatic. The role

required extensive makeup and a complete transformation of voice and body mechanics in order to effectively portray a seventy year old man, and he relished the challenge.

From that point on, the theatrical world consumed him and every moment apart from his academic studies was spent on stage or back stage. His existence revolved around being in a play, and Tommy had become the consummate player. What was most amazing to him, however, was the metamorphosis that occurred. He was no longer the shy, awkward boy that had been ridiculed and mocked in high school. His newly-acquired confidence allowed him to feel more comfortable in any setting, and he found himself plotting the course for the new direction in which he had set his life.

Learning to Walk

3

Now we see dimly, as in a mirror,
 But then face to face.
 Now I know in part,
 Then I shall know fully
 As I am fully known.
 – I Corinthians 13

The remainder of his college days found Tommy heavily immersed in the world of theater. Everything else was secondary. He had determined that he was going to devote his life to the theater, and he was happier than he had ever been before in his entire life. He felt as if he had discovered a giant hiding inside of him, a giant that was allowing him to undertake challenges and activities that heretofore would have seemed overly daunting. He participated in every theatrical production that was performed at William Woods the next three years, and with each play he acquired new skills and knowledge that enabled him to become more adept in the art of theater.

By his senior year he was eager to begin a career as a professional actor. His mother had disowned him upon the discovery that he would no longer comply with her dictates, while his father was consistently occupied with his legal practice. No matter. The day after graduation, he stuffed as much as he could in his backpack, and began an odyssey that started at the San Diego Repertory Company in California, continued in the Lyric theater in Sydney, Australia and the Canterbury Repertory in Christchurch, New Zealand, took a dramatic shift in New Delhi, India with another detour to Beijing, China, and culminated in Tokyo, Japan. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the journey changed course rather than culminated, primarily since he did

not stop traveling, and ultimately found himself backpacking through Europe along the Mediterranean coastline.

In his travels he preferred to stay in hostels, and rarely commuted via traditional transportation. Hitchhiking provided him with the life of a vagabond, and he loved it. However, while backstage in New Zealand, he reflected on his theatrical experiences up to that point, and realized that he was valued much more for his technical skills than his acting abilities. He was seldom cast in a part when he auditioned, and his reputation as a creative lighting and set designer placed him in high demand in the theatrical circle. Working primarily backstage did not appeal to Tommy and, as a result, he impulsively set sail for India after working for only one month in Australia. Upon arrival in India, Tommy found a job as an English teacher at Delaware Academy High School in New Delhi where he was introduced to a new and very different culture. He was intrigued by the native Indians' perspective on life, their values, traditions, and deep spirituality. He quickly grew very fond of the indigenous population, and found himself learning as much as he could about Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Eastern Philosophy. He spent two years in India, and before heading back to the United States, he visited China and Japan.

It was in China and Japan that Tommy was most aware of a clash of Western and Eastern thought—between a preoccupation with material wealth and appearance on one hand, and a regard for tradition and Buddhist philosophy on the other. When Tommy visited with Chinese and Japanese educators they expressed alarm at the increasing anger, violence, and lack of respect for humanity evident in their younger generation. The educators believed there was a desperate need for the schools to instill within students a deep concern for, and a thorough understanding of, their connectedness with others. Many of the educators feared there was little hope if young people did not take personal responsibility for the well-being of the world.

Tommy observed the reality of their concerns early one morning while strolling through the newly constructed Nogawa Park in Tokyo. He had just sat down in front of a very ornate fountain when a gang of young boys suddenly raced past him. One of the boys had a large, brown, woman's purse clutched to his chest while the others laughed, cheered, and shouted taunts at a screaming short, middle-aged woman who struggled as she pursued them. The boy with the purse looked back at the irate victim of his theft and laughed as he offered her a series of expletives. Her face reddened, and the intensity of her efforts to catch the band of thieves multiplied in response to their chants. But when the boy with the purse had turned to deride the hapless woman, his attention had been diverted from a young woman pushing a perambulator. The two collided, and the young boy sprawled upon the pavement as the purse spewed forth its contents. Scrambling to his feet, the boy

and his accomplices quickly grabbed what little bits of treasure they could before dashing off, leaving behind them a distraught mother with a bawling child and a winded woman with no money.

The scene transpired in no more than a few seconds, and yet during that brief period of time Tommy felt as if he had been transported back to Cuzco, Peru where, as a child, he had witnessed a somewhat similar event. But as he reflected upon the two episodes, he realized they were not similar—not really. In Peru the boys were impoverished; they had nothing, and were fighting among themselves over a mouthful of bread. The boys in Tokyo, on the other hand, appeared to be well-fed and well-dressed. For whatever reason, at a very young age they had become predators and chose as their victims those who were weaker than they and unable to defend themselves.

Tommy slowly rose from the park bench and approached the woman who was now stooping over her purse crying loudly and gathering what was left of its contents. She glanced up momentarily and looked at him. Her face clouded up and she began to hurl what sounded like epithets at him in Japanese. He had no idea why she was angry at him or what she was saying, but it was clear that she did not want him to come any closer. Tommy immediately pivoted and headed in the opposite direction towards his hotel room, sulking as he went with his tail between his legs.

Why had she been so angry at him? Did she blame him for what had happened? How could she? Had she wanted him to try and stop the boys, or to chase them? Did she not like Americans? There was no way of knowing. By the time Tommy finally reached his hotel room he felt as if his head was going to blow up. Words and images and feelings were boiling in his head: her face, the faces of the boys, their voices, their screams, their taunts and jeers, their laughing, their crying—they were all intermingled with the discourses he had had with the teachers in Asia and the writings of the Eastern philosophies; he felt as if he were being nailed onto a cross made of the ubiquitous poverty and oppression that existed wherever he traveled, and each word, each memory, each image hammered itself deeper and deeper into his flesh. He sat there heavily on his bed in that Tokyo hotel and began to sob uncontrollably.

From that point on, his life has never been the same.

Learning to Run

4

If I give away everything I own
And if I hand my body over so that I may boast,
But do not have love,
I gain nothing.
— I Corinthians 13

For the second time in his young life, Tommy made a decision to pass through a door that was entirely foreign to him. The incident in Nogawa Park had stirred up emotions and thoughts that had been buried deep within him since early childhood. And suddenly, everything became very clear to him. At that moment, he resolved to dedicate his life to serving others. Although he was not sure how, he was determined to use all his knowledge, all his experiences, all his talents, and all his energy towards that purpose.

The day after he arrived back to the U.S. in San Francisco, he submitted an application to the Peace Corps. It wasn't long before he received a letter saying that his application had been approved, and six months later he found himself serving as a volunteer with the shamans outside the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar.

Shamans are found around the globe, but the word shaman, meaning "one who knows," comes from the Evenki, an indigenous reindeer-herding people in northern Siberia. Initially, Tommy was skeptical about the entire concept of shamanism. But over the next two years, his skepticism was replaced with a deep respect for shamans and for the people of Mongolia. They live an extremely harsh, simple life that is steeped in tradition. The environment is brutal, and the rigors of everyday life have made the Mongolians durable and persistent. They are a fun-loving people, quick to share their homes and affection with foreigners. They welcomed him into their hearts and had become loyal disciples of the teachings that he had brought from the Western world. Yet in spite of their kindred spirits, they clung steadfastly to their traditional thoughts and customs. It was their way of life.

As he acclimated to the Mongolian way of life, it became apparent that the philosophy of the shamans closely resembled that of the Cherokee Indians of North America. The shamans believe that the universe is a unified whole. They believe that it is a giant network in which everything is linked—mountains, lakes, rivers, sky, animals, humans—everything. They also believe that we are connected not only to each other in the present time but also to our ancestors in the past as well. They believe that ancestors are guardian angels who are real people. The love that is felt for them and from them is an energy that unites them forever and never disappears. So in spite of having a strong sense of individualism, the shamans also believe they are inextricably connected to the past and to nature.

When Tommy left Mongolia, that feeling of love and connectedness did little to buffer the sorrow he experienced as he left behind many families and friends. The sadness in his heart brought to mind Kahlil Gibran's verse:

When you are joyous, look deep into
your heart and you shall find it is only
that which has given you sorrow that is

giving you joy.
 When you are sorrowful look again in
 your heart, and you shall see that in
 truth you are weeping for that which
 has been your delight.¹²

While in Mongolia, he had come to the realization that he had a great passion for teaching, and so as he approached the end of his term of service, he sent out over fifty applications for teaching positions around the continental United States. Much to his dismay, only a handful responded, and those that did graciously said that there were no positions open at that time.

The Marathon

5

So faith, hope, love remain,
 These three;
 But the greatest of these is love.
 – 1 Corinthians: 13

Tommy was disappointed but not discouraged as he hitchhiked from California to Chicago, Illinois. His childhood friend, Kenny Bauer, had written to him and told him of an opening for a librarian at the Chicago Public Library. While the job did not match his desire to apply his skills to teaching, he saw it as an opportunity to reacclimate to the Western culture while preparing for the required teacher certification exams. It also paid his bills.

He had been working at the library for eight months when he received a call from Sylvester Gibson, the human resources director of the Chicago Public Schools. Mr. Gibson told Tommy there was an opening for an eighth grade Language Arts teacher and he wanted to know if Tommy was interested in interviewing for the job. Tommy assured Mr. Gibson that he was, so a time was scheduled to meet with him and Mr. Gooden, the principal of Turner Middle School.

The day of the interview there was about a foot of newly fallen snow on the ground, so Tommy decided to use the L-train to travel to his appointment. Arriving about 30 minutes early, he announced his arrival to the receptionist, who barely glanced up as she acknowledged his presence and promptly ordered him to find a seat and wait. There was a row of oak wooden arm chairs directly across from her desk, so he quickly took the nearest one and ruminated as he predicted the battery of questions that might be thrown at him in the interview.

Tommy's thoughts were interrupted as the office door to his left opened and he heard his name called. Mr. Gooden stood at the doorway and extended his right hand to greet him, "Mr. Calley? So good to meet you."

Mr. Gooden was a tall, thin African-American man with an Ernie Kovacs moustache and thick, black-rimmed glasses. He had a deep, sonorous voice and was much younger than Tommy had expected. He made Tommy feel at ease with his gentle demeanor, and during their entire discourse Tommy felt as if they were having a friendly conversation rather than an interview. Towards the end of the interview, Mr. Gooden looked at Tommy intently, paused, reached for his phone and dialed a number. "Sylvester, this is Dwight. Yes, yes, yes. I've just been talking with our young man Mr. Calley here, and I do believe he is just the right man that we've been looking for. Yes, I know, but he understands all that. This is the man that I want. We don't want to lose him. I'll be sending him with the necessary paper work to your office so that we can get started on this. He'll be ready to start on Monday. Thanks so much. We'll talk more later. Bye." Mr. Gooden looked at Tommy and smiled. "Mr. Calley, I am delighted to have met you. I know that you will be an invaluable addition to our faculty. There are some preliminary procedures that you will have to go through before you begin working on Monday, and you are not officially hired until the board approves you, but those are no more than technicalities. Welcome aboard."

And that was it. Tommy Calley has been a teacher ever since.

EPILOGUE

We are shaped and fashioned by what we love.

– Goethe

Tommy believes his journey as a teacher actually began the day he was born. Every experience since that time has been a resource to be utilized for his students' benefit. Every lesson Tommy teaches is a fingerprint of his life that he freely shares; the students, in turn, offer their hand to Tommy to imprint their lives upon his soul. Tommy's travels have enabled him to understand the connectedness to which the shamans of Mongolia refer. He has had the good fortune to see through the eyes of so many others, and, as a result, has come to believe that he, the earth, and heavens are one.

Teaching is his passion. It is what he does best. It matters not to him whether he is male or female, black or white, tall or short, or possesses any of the other limiting characteristics that society may attempt to bestow upon him. When he was a child, there were those who called him a "sissy" or a "geek." Today, because he is employed in what is perceived by many to be a woman's profession, he continues to be referred to by some as gay, a

pedophile, a loser. Tommy thinks that perhaps his passion is a threat to their masculinity, because he has freed himself from the shackles of conformity that some others placed upon themselves. If he were to label himself at all, it would be with these four words: I am a teacher. Tommy also recognizes that being a teacher is a collaborative effort, for a teacher is a learner. Tommy believes that all of his students are his teachers as well. During the course of each day that Tommy learns as much from the students as they learn from him. As partners, they travel the path of experience together.

Tommy's students live in a community where they frequently face gang violence and drugs; severe physical, emotional, mental, and sexual abuse; pregnancy, poverty, and malnutrition; and the incarceration of parents, or abandonment. The overall absentee rate at his school is high, and a large number of the students who attend his school drop out by the time they reach the ninth grade. However, Tommy's students are the exception to that pattern. A student is seldom absent from his class, and he so inspires them that they often come to his class even when they feel sick. They regularly gather on Saturdays on the school stage to practice their roles for an upcoming play, and their conversations during the lunch hour revolve around their projects and assignments in the classroom. And apparently his effect on them is lasting. A large number of them continue on to college after they have graduated from high school. Some have become lawyers, doctors, engineers, architects, and teachers. Others have been successful in establishing their own businesses, while still others have found a career in the arts. A group of his former students organize a reunion about every five years for all of those who have had him for their teacher to pay special tribute to the man they feel had a significant impact on their lives.

Due to Tommy's passion for education, success with his students, and positive effect on the learning community, he has been honored with the State Teacher of the Year Award. He has also enjoyed honorary membership in the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club, and the Lions Club over the past ten years.

There are no words that can adequately describe the richness and satisfaction that Tommy has experienced on his journey as a teacher. As he reflects upon each moment, day, and year—and upon each pupil who has entered his room and his life—he has come to realize that they have inspired him far more than he could ever hope to inspire them. In each student Tommy recognizes a brilliant spark just waiting to ignite, blossoming into a dazzling shower of illumination that perhaps will allow those around them to see the world a little more clearly.

Reflections

Tommy is not a typical teacher. What, then, are the characteristics that define him as a person and establish his identity? What is it that makes Tommy's teaching exceptional?

Tommy might be described by some as a modern day polymath. He speaks five languages fluently. His passion for reading has resulted in an extensive home library that includes books on the natural and political sciences, inventions, art and architecture, philosophy, religion, biographies, and geography. Besides being an accomplished oil painter, pianist, and guitar player, he continues to perform in community theater and sing in a large chorale group. His talents, interests, and experiences have a profound impact on the lessons that unfold in his classroom. Tommy says, "I present an idea along with questions, and then my students and I go on a journey of discovery. The purpose of our lesson is for them to discover as much as they can about the world around them and about themselves as well, and to come to understand how they are a part of the world, and how the world is a part of them."

According to Shaun Johnson and Brenda Weber, education is one of the "quintessential 'caring' disciplines."¹³ As a result, many men regard being a teacher as suitable for women and not a "viable career."¹⁴ Why, then, did Tommy choose to become a teacher? In his own words, Tommy's choice was prompted by "the tremendous influence that many of my teachers had on me growing up: Mr. Baylor, my sixth grade teacher; Mr. Vogler, my seventh grade teacher; Mr. Elliot, my senior English teacher; Ms. Graybaugh, my philosophy teacher; and Ms. Hemley, my English Lit. teacher..." Tommy then elaborated on each of them and how they had nurtured and respected him and instilled within him a sense of self-worth and an excitement for learning. He discussed their varied styles and their concern for each of their students. "Most of all," Tommy said, "they made me feel important. They seemed truly interested in hearing of my travels, and they in turn would share highlights of their past with the class. One of the things I remember most about their classes is the stories they would tell about their many experiences as they were growing up."

Johnson and Weber cite the fear many men have that, in choosing a teaching career, they would subject themselves to increased scrutiny about their sexual orientation as well as speculation about their interest in young boys. Tommy smiled and shook his head when questioned about this perspective. "There are all kinds of people," he sighed. "I guess they just never really learned how to think beyond what they want to believe, and never really open their eyes to see the world around them. Having the opportunity to teach is probably the greatest gift that I have been given. It is such a priv-

ilege to be able to work with young people and to help them to discover their potential and to grow as individuals."

He attributes his awareness of this opportunity to his travels to countries where he was a stranger and enjoyed little privilege. This awareness was especially profound during his two years of Peace Corps service in Mongolia. Although Tommy was honored for his knowledge and respected for the personal contribution, he felt the shamans always viewed him as an outsider who had much to learn about life. He described that particular experience as "enlightening, humbling, and exhilarating."

The many qualities that Tommy exhibits seem to match the ideal that Stephanie White describes in her study, "Dads as Teachers: Exploring Duality of Roles in the New Zealand Context."¹⁵ Tommy feels his many abilities and varied interests are a direct result of the numerous cultures he experienced during his travels around the world.

Tommy admits that while it is a financial sacrifice to be a teacher in a public school, monetary success does not define what he believes is most important in life. He believes that serving others and giving of one's self is of much greater value than attaining material wealth. He adds that after witnessing abject poverty in his travels, he wants for nothing, and feels more than comfortable with the lifestyle a teacher's salary provides him.

In their study of "Masculinity, Violence and Schooling," Jane Kenway and Lindsay Fitzclarence state:

...hegemonic masculinity mobilizes around physical strength, adventurousness, emotional neutrality, control, assertiveness, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness, instrumental skills, public knowledge, discipline, reason, objectivity, and rationality. It distances itself from physical weakness, expressive skills, private knowledge, creativity, emotion, dependency, subjectivity, irrationality, cooperation, and empathetic, compassionate, nurturant and certain affiliative behaviors. In other words, it distances itself from the feminine and considers the feminine less worthy.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that while many of the masculine characteristics defined in this hegemonic model could be applied to Tommy, it is also true that many of the feminine traits apply to him as well. The reason for this ambiguity is not to be found in Tommy's nature, but in the invalidity of the model that has been constructed. Tommy has created his own model: a model based upon an independent spirit fed by thoughts and feeling from around the world over a lifetime. As a result, Tommy is not hampered by having to decide whether his actions are manly or not. He only concerns himself with his students and what is in their best interests. When the students audi-

tion for parts in their annual Shakespeare production, Tommy casts the roles based upon the personal characteristics and abilities of the students, not upon their gender. In his lessons he always attempts to avoid referring to any activity or characteristic as being appropriate or exclusive only to boys or girls. He joins in all the activities with all of his students. As a result, an observer of his classes may find him dancing ballet, knitting a hat for a play, or baking and cooking with the students in preparation for a theatrical performance. Students have responded positively to the equitable manner in which he engages them in activities. They exhibit a very high energy level, and their interactions are devoid of the bickering and sexist remarks that are common with many students at this grade level as observed by Barrie Thorne in *Gender Play*.¹⁷

It is unlikely that the hegemonic model presented by Kenway and Fitzclarence will be completely deconstructed anytime soon. As Ana Martinez Aleman wrote in "Faculty Productivity and the Gender Question," teaching is still perceived as a "narrative of femininity, a tale of the meaning of relationships."¹⁸ However, there are indications that challenges to this characterization are beginning to slowly transform the way individuals perceive themselves and form their identities. As Stephanie White noted, teachers like Tommy Calley are creating a positive environment in which education becomes a powerful tool to combat sexism, racism, and other forms of prejudice.¹⁹ Ironically, the institution that has been categorized as feminine and of less value in an economy of exchange may be the very same instrument that will empower individuals to overcome the current hegemonic model.

Tommy is an exceptional teacher because of his passion for the profession and love for his students. He refuses to accept the notion that manhood is dictated by the culture in which he lives rather than by his own volition to select his personal identity. His approach to life has allowed him to embrace diversity and welcome challenges. He has the rare gift of being able to see the world from his student's perspective, and with that knowledge he has the ability to engage students as active members of a learning community they create together.

Yes, it would be beneficial to have more male teachers, especially at the elementary level, but only if those men have the desire and commitment to devote themselves to their profession and the courage to challenge existing biases that categorize teaching as a reproductive process that has no market value. As Thomas Barone noted, "A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops."²⁰

In order to change the perception of the male teacher and the role of education, it will be necessary for the men who enter the profession to have an intense passion to effect change and create an educational model that is equitable and respected by all. As Johnson and Weber noted:

A man who is passionate about teaching often belies the gender codes that constitute the mainstream. It is not only the plurality of our students' sexed and gendered lives that must be built into the collective consideration, but the appearances and actuality of our own lives that must be factored into a pedagogical practice.²¹

Is it possible that Paulo Freire was right in proposing that revolution might be the only recourse in creating a change in our culture that would remove the oppression experienced by the majority of the world's population and allow them to be truly liberated through education? Freire believed that liberation is a praxis, the result of women and men reflecting and acting upon the world in order to transform it. Freire argued that liberating education was problem-posing education that consists in acts of cognition, of consciousness, of intentionality.²² Is it feasible to believe that teachers like Tommy, whether they be male or female, can create the elements of consciousness within the hearts and minds of their students to such an extent that revolution will evolve from their internal transformation? The seeds of thought that teachers plant in the minds of today's students may emerge tomorrow as the new life that we will all come to experience.

* * *

Oral histories of teachers are one of the most powerful literary devices to show who teachers really are and why they form the foundation of a society. The importance of having teachers tell their stories has been well expressed by Lucy E. Bailey, who wrote, "...life narratives should be written, savored, shared, discussed, analyzed—indeed, used...their lasting educative value lies in part in their everyday use..."²³

Bailey draws upon the title and symbolism of Alice Walker's short story, "Everyday Use," to vividly convey how sharing the voice of the teacher subsequently engages the voice of the student, which leads to a personal transformation in both of their lives.

What difference do teachers make in a student's life? That question is answered in the memoirs of Mark Edmundson in *Teacher: The One Who Made the Difference*, and of Jay Parini in *The Art of Teaching*. Edmundson and Parini report that one teacher changed their lives forever, a perspective that is echoed in countless other narratives and biographies.

Such was the case in the life of Tommy Calley, whose family prescribed his role early, but who defied conformity and ultimately sought his own destiny. Tommy's curiosity to discover the world, his comfort with himself, and his ability to distinguish truth from prejudice separated him from his peers and allowed him to flourish. Tommy's decision to become a teacher was the result of the profound effect his teachers had on him.

Tommy Calley's story dispels so many of the myths and stereotypes that have been associated with men who are elementary teachers. It also presents for examination the concept of white male privilege and the degree to which it has affected career and vocational choices. Through Tommy's unique voice, presented in this oral history, readers find the inspiration to listen to their own conscience and to follow their own path.

Notes

¹ Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes* (New York: Scribner, 1996).

² Frank McCourt, *Teacher Man* (New York: Scribner, 2005).

³ Rafe Esquith, *There Are No Shortcuts* (New York: Random House, 2006).

⁴ Mark Edmundson, *Teacher* (New York: Random House, 2002).

⁵ Mary Aswell Doll, *To the Lighthouse and Back: Writings on Teaching and Living* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1995).

⁶ Jay Parini, *The Art of Teaching* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁷ Jane Tompkins, *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned* (Reading, MA: Perseus, 1996).

⁸ Diane Manning, *Hill Country Teacher* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1990).

⁹ Susan Dichter, *Teachers: Straight Talk From the Trenches* (Chicago: Lowell House, 1989).

¹⁰ Madeline Arnot and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, eds. *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Gender & Education*. (London and New York, 2006), 4.

¹¹ Vivian Gornick quote in Robert Nash, *Liberating Scholarly Writing: The Power of Personal Narrative*. (New York: Teachers College Press), 23.

¹² Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (London: Oneworld Publications), 40-41.

¹³ Shaun Johnson and Brenda Weber, "Toward a Genderful Pedagogy and the Teaching of Masculinity," *The Journal of Men's Studies* 19, no. 2 (2011): 138-158.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Stephanie White, "Dads as Teachers: Exploring Duality of Roles in the New Zealand Context," *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 19, no. 2 (2011): 173-185.

¹⁶ Jane Kenway, Lindsay Fitzclarence, "Masculinity, Violence and Schooling," *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Gender & Education*. (Arnot & Mac an Ghaill, Eds.) (New York: Routledge, 1997): 206.

¹⁷ Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Ana Martinez Aleman, "Faculty Productivity and the Gender Question," in *Unfinished Agendas*. (Glazer-Raymo Ed.) (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008): 142.

¹⁹ White, "Dads as Teachers," 173-185.

²⁰ Thomas Barone, *Touching Eternity: The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

²¹ Johnson and Weber, "Toward a Genderful Pedagogy and the Teaching of Masculinity," 138-158.

²² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2006).

²³ Lucy E. Bailey, book review of *Deconstructing and Reconstructing Lives: Auto/Biography in Educational Settings* by Lucy Forsyth Townsend and Gaby Weiner (University of Western Ontario: Althouse Press, 2011) in *Vitae Scholasticae*, 2012: 58.

From Law School to School Law: A Personal and Pedagogical Journey

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How do we become the sort of educators we are? Training and preparation undoubtedly play a role. However, no one embarks on a teaching career as a clean slate and no one leaves a teacher preparation program as a finished product. In a still widely-cited review of the research on the professional growth and development of teachers published in 1992, Dona Kagan noted that “case studies of seasoned teachers...suggest that each teacher represents a unique ecological system of pedagogical beliefs and practices that is inextricably connected to the teacher’s personality and prior experiences in life.”¹ Prior life experiences are what put some individuals on the course to becoming a teacher and these experiences, including the experiences one has in the classroom as learner and teacher, help shape the sort of person and the sort of teacher an individual becomes.

In this article, I examine three key life experiences that put me on the course to becoming a teacher of educators. Specifically, I consider three experiences along my journey from entering the law school classroom as a student to entering the education school classroom as a teacher of (primarily) school law. These three experiences—studying law; teaching English and other subjects in the US and abroad; and earning a PhD—served as important stepping stones for that journey. Each of these experiences brought me closer to the position in which I now find myself: a junior faculty member in a department of educational leadership. In addition, each of these experiences helped shape the person I have become, in terms of both my broader “self” and my “teaching-self.”²

"Teaching-Self": Teacher Identity and Teacher Practices

In this article, I am particularly focused on how my life experiences have helped shape my "teaching-self," defined here as a combination of my "teacher identity" and my teaching practices. While the notion of teacher identity is used in various ways across a vast body of literature, I am using the phrase to refer to teachers' ideas and beliefs regarding teaching and learning and their conceptions of what sort of teachers they are. As framed by Sachs, "teacher professional identity...provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society."³ The academic literature suggests that teacher identity has roots in many sources and changes over time. As Beauchamp and Thomas have argued,

The literature on teaching and teacher education reveals a common notion that identity is dynamic, and that a teacher's identity shifts over time under the influence of a range of factors both internal to the individual, such as emotion (Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Van Veen & Slegers, 2006; Zembylas, 2003), and external to the individual, such as job and life experiences in particular contexts (Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005).⁴

Of course, these internal and external factors are related: what we experience influences our emotions and personal qualities; and our emotions and personal qualities influence what things we experience and how we experience them. In this dynamic way, our experiences and personal qualities interact with each other over time in the production of our fluid ideas about teaching and our identities as teachers.

Along with teacher identity, the other component of your "teaching-self" as I am using the term here consists of your teaching practices. These practices are the products of your life experiences, personal qualities and emotions, and teacher identity (your ideas and beliefs related to teaching). As Kagan has argued, "the life stories of teachers (e.g., Cohen, 1991; Louden, 1991) explain that the practice of classroom teaching remains forever rooted in personality and experience."⁵ My discussion of my experiences in this article, then, reflects the assumption that my life experiences have helped shape my teacher identity and my teaching practices. Thus, this article consists of a telling of those experiences and an exploration of how those experiences have helped constitute my teaching-self.

Narrative, Identity, and the Self: Understanding and Constituting My "Teaching-Self"

I recognize that my telling of these experiences, like the telling of any event or experience, is a subjective, interpretive narrative, not an objective description of reality. The process of making sense of your life and telling your story both contribute to the constituting of that story. The process of "narrating the self" may even redirect the life of the narrator.⁶ In addition, in telling your story, the self you present may be more of a reflection of the self you would like yourself to be. In other words, I am not asserting that my depiction of my experiences and my teaching reflects any objective "truth" or meshes with the subjective perceptions of others. Rather, my retelling of these experiences is a combination of "facts"—"events that are believed to have occurred"—and "facticities"—descriptions of "how those facts were lived and experienced by interacting individuals."⁷ My description of my teaching-self likewise reflects what I believe and have experienced vis-à-vis my teaching. However, in discussing certain dispositions and teaching practices that I think stem from these life experiences, I am relying not only on my own perceptions of my teaching (or aspirational notions of the teacher I would like to be) but also on the feedback I have received from formal student evaluations, informal conversations with students, and evaluations of my teaching by peers.

In addition to the subjective nature of my narration, it is important to note that the selection of these three experiences was purposeful. When reflecting on my life and my teaching-self, these three experiences stand out both for having brought me to a particular place—as a university teacher with particular specialized knowledge—and for helping to shape my teacher identity and teaching practices. However, the process of selecting inherently involves the process of excluding. As the literature demonstrates, the factors that contribute to the formation of teacher identity and teaching practice are manifold. By focusing on these particular experiences, I do not mean to imply that they are the only or even the main factors or experiences that have shaped my teaching-self. Events in my personal life, my positive and negative experiences as a K-12 and college student, and my memories of teachers and others who had an impact on me are a few of the many factors that have contributed to the constitution of my teaching-self that are downplayed or ignored in this narrative.

The Journey

Looking back over the years between the beginning of law school and my career as a teacher in higher education, there are several events or expe-

periences that I believe helped shape my teaching-self. My purpose here is to highlight some of what I experienced over those years, with a focus on those experiences and events that I believe map onto some important aspects of my teaching-self. In other words, while many aspects of my life since entering law school have played a role in shaping my career path, my focus is on those aspects that also have helped constitute my identity as a teacher and influenced my teaching practices. To that end, I discuss my law school experience, my experiences as a teacher of English, and my experience earning a PhD in Education, Culture, and Society.

Law School

Being a law student was a significant personal challenge for me. My motivation to go to law school undoubtedly was complex and was not firmly rooted in an actual desire to become a lawyer. Parental expectations and social approbation both played a role, as did the desire to have a career path, whatever it was. Like many young people coming out of college, I was unsure about what should come next. College, where I majored in International Affairs, had done little to help me determine a future path; rather, it had opened my mind to the plethora of paths one could pursue. After graduating, I found it difficult to just be—to live without having a course mapped out, a plan with a clear destination. Completing law school provided such a destination, one I (perhaps unconsciously) felt would meet with approval and one that also allowed me to put off answering the big question: what are you going to do when you grow up? Being technically grown-up and not having an answer was discomfiting. Going to law school provided both an “answer” for others and the means of delaying the formulation of an actual answer for myself.

Not that I went to law school simply to please others or avoid existential questions. Law, particularly as it related to government and social policy, was something that interested me during and prior to college. However, an intellectual interest in law does not necessarily translate into a vocational interest in being a lawyer. This distinction is something I have raised with my own students over the years when they have approached me to talk about law school or asked for a letter of recommendation for their law school applications. My advice to such students has been two-fold. First, find some lawyers and spend time with them observing what most lawyers actually do. Second, reflect on what you like doing, what sort of activities you enjoy and what sort of roles you enjoy playing: talking with people; reading on your own; pulling together arguments; helping people solve problems. Then ask yourself how well the things that lawyers do match the sort of things/roles you find rewarding. My own interest in law was intellectual, particularly as law relat-

ed to policy. My interest was also a reflection of a desire to help others and do work that had a social benefit. Working in law provides a path for many careers with a focus on helping others and benefitting society. My decision to enter law school was much more the product of these interests than in any determination that I would enjoy being a lawyer.

Looking back, my experience as a law school student is not surprising given my motivations for enrolling. I gravitated towards, performed best in, and enjoyed most those courses that meshed with my intellectual interests: First Amendment law; international law; human rights law; and courses related to government and the political process. I spent my summers doing public interest law work on behalf of low-income clients. My first summer was spent at a legal clinic in Washington, DC, meeting directly with people having legal problems (particularly those facing eviction) and working with lawyers to help solve those problems. I enjoyed that experience so much that it erased any doubts I was having about whether law school was right for me. While those doubts resurfaced as I began my second year, the ability to enroll in elective courses (as opposed to taking the required core first-year curriculum), coupled with the positive experience I had over that first summer, helped me keep those doubts in check. However, during my second summer, which I spent doing legal research for an office devoted to providing legal services for the poor, those doubts again resurfaced.

The doubts were rooted in two things: my lack of interest in “lawyering” and the tension between my personality and the confrontational nature of the legal system and much of what went on in the law school classroom. Although what I experienced was far less stressful than the law school experience sometimes reflected in popular culture (e.g., the 1970 novel and 1973 film “The Paper Chase”), the competitive and confrontational nature of law school was visible above, and palpable below, the surface. In most law school classes, particularly during the first year, performance is graded on a curve. Thus, your grade reflects your performance relative to the performance of the bright, driven individuals (many of whom may become your friends) sitting around you. Most class sessions consist of “Socratic” dialogue between the professor and one or more students and your performance in class factors into your grade. From my experience, that dialogue often took the form of what felt like mild-to-severe humiliation, as the professor posed questions and students stumbled for the answers. The feeling of humiliation in part grew out of a form of pedagogical inexperience: whereas in the past we were used to questions that measured knowledge recall and other lower-order thinking skills, we were now being asked questions designed to engage us in argument and trip up our thought process, so as to perfect that process. What is meant to be learned is that process, a way of thinking, not the answers themselves (although law school also teaches students a lot of law along the

way). Being unaware of this or being aware intellectually but still conditioned to approach learning and the classroom differently, I, like many students, experienced a level of stress that interfered with learning or at least made the process of learning rather unpleasant.

Despite my doubts about a legal career and the anxiety I experienced in many of the classes, I completed law school and passed the bar in my home state of Maine immediately after graduation. At that point, I found myself in a familiar place, pondering what I would do when I grew up. Had law school been a learning experience? Undoubtedly. I left law school with a wealth of legal knowledge and had mastered a way of thinking, both of which continue to influence my teaching. The extent to which law school had impacted me cognitively is suggested by my performance on standardized tests. During college, I had taken the GRE, which, at that time, had three sections (verbal, math, and analytical reasoning), all of which were graded on a 200-800 point scale. I do not recall the exact scores that I got at that time but my recollection is that they all were above average but not stellar. A year or two after finishing law school, when I first began contemplating pursuing a PhD, I retook the GRE. My scores improved significantly across the board, particularly my score on the analytical section, making law school the most expensive and time-consuming GRE prep course ever.

Teaching English

The fact that much of my law school experience was negative had a positive side as well: it prompted me to take an important step along my path from law school to school law. By chance, the apartment I shared in Washington, DC was around the corner from the Spanish Educational Development Center (SED Center). Feeling disheartened by my experience as a law student, early in my second year I decided to respond to a nascent calling to teach and entered the SED Center, hoping to volunteer to help out with their English classes for (mostly) Spanish-speaking immigrants. After a few months as a teaching assistant in a Saturday class, the director of the English program asked if I would like to teach my own class. Thus, I began teaching my first ESL/ESOL class, a basic English class for adults, most of whom had little formal education and some of whom (I came to discover) lacked basic literacy skills in their own language.

If I could see myself now teaching that first class, I am sure I would be struck by all of my pedagogical shortcomings. After all, I had had no training as a teacher other than observing and helping another teacher for a few months. Looking back now, I am certain that I relied too much on my ability to speak Spanish and engaged in too much “teacher talk.” I remember having to adapt my teaching quickly in order to meet the needs of the many El

Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Nicaraguan students in the class. (The primarily Central American make-up of the class reflected the immigration flows of the late-1980s and early-1990s that were connected to the Cold War-fueled conflicts in that region.) The challenges inherent to teaching English were compounded by my own lack of experience and training, particularly related to teaching students with little experience with traditional classroom learning and with limited literacy skills. In addition, many of the students were working countless hours each week, arriving at class on Saturdays or in the evenings very tired. Nonetheless, the feedback from students and the director of the program was overwhelmingly positive and students made good progress in my classes. For whatever reasons, despite my inexperience and countless missteps (for example, writing something on the board is not all that helpful as a learning scaffold for someone with little ability to read!), I felt competent in the classroom.

My experience at the SED Center was the first of many experiences I have had as a teacher. After passing the bar and experiencing a few detours and bumps along the way, I embarked on a path that took me to South Boston, Massachusetts, Manhattan, and the South Bronx, back to Washington, DC, and then overseas to Poland, Ukraine, and Serbia. In all of these contexts, I taught English. However, my law training hovered in the background, making an occasional appearance: when I taught “Street Law” to adult high school “drop-ins” in South Boston; when I taught Legal English in Poland; and when I taught Legal English and American law in classes and workshops at law schools and other locations in Ukraine and Serbia. Across these experiences, I honed my ability to engage (primarily) adult learners.

Earning a PhD and Bringing it All Together

The experiences I had working with students from all over the world and living in other countries greatly enriched me as a person and an educator. The students I encountered taught me a lot. They deepened my understanding of the challenges facing those who are less fortunate than I and heightened my admiration for their capacity to resist and overcome those challenges. They helped me to better recognize the value of perspectives rooted in cultures different from my own. They humbled me and helped me grasp the limit of my own knowledge and understanding of life and the world. And the experience of serving, failing, learning from, and succeeding in my role as their teacher helped shape me into the teacher I am today.

On another level, these experiences also deepened my interest in learning about and studying the role that education plays in culture and society. After having lived abroad for the better part of six years, I began to contemplate enrolling in a doctoral program. Again after a few detours, I eventually

identified and had the opportunity to enroll in what turned out to be the ideal program for me: the PhD program in Education, Culture, and Society at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Focusing on law and education was not necessarily my aim when I began the program. However, my interest in law as a cultural and social phenomenon had deepened as a result of my experiences overseas. In addition, somewhat by happenstance, there was a member of the faculty at Penn who helped me identify ways of combining that interest with my interest in education: Dr. Sigal Ben-Porath, who came to be my advisor and dissertation committee chair. While I might have ended up focusing my research on law without her presence and influence, that focus began as a direct result of taking her Philosophical Aspects of Educational Policy class during my first semester, where I began to examine law from both a normative and critical perspective. Subsequent classes with Dr. Ben-Porath, other program faculty, and faculty outside of the Graduate School of Education, especially political scientist Rogers Smith, helped me develop the skills and knowledge I needed to embark on a research path focused on exploring the complex relationships between law, schooling, and society.

When I had the opportunity to teach School Law at the end of my first year at Penn, I took the last step from law school to school law. I ended up teaching the course at least once during each of the six years I was a graduate student at Penn. Like my experiences teaching English, my first experiences teaching School Law involved some fits and starts. Like teaching English, teaching School Law challenged me to make a subject of which I had a deep understanding accessible and comprehensible to those with little knowledge of it. While none of my School Law students lacked formal education and literacy skills, naturally they lacked much of a background in law, a subject many of them found baffling. Bridging the gap between my knowledge and my students' knowledge of the law posed as daunting a challenge as bridging the gap between my knowledge of English and the knowledge of my first English students back at the Spanish Educational Development Center. As with teaching English, teaching law involved learning the needs of my students and uncovering my own unconscious assumptions regarding what they knew and understood about a world and language that was unfamiliar to them.

What Kind of Teacher Am I? Life Experiences and My Teaching-Self

My experiences in law school, teaching English, and earning a PhD all contributed to putting me on the path to what I teach and how I teach. While these experiences influenced my teaching-self in many ways, my discussion

here focuses on five aspects of my teaching practice that stem from or were influenced by these three life experiences:

1. A light-hearted teaching style/demeanor and the use of humor
2. An engaging, "Socratic" approach that incorporates a variety of teaching and learning activities
3. A consideration of the lives and perspectives of the less fortunate and less empowered
4. A focus on critical thinking and reflection
5. An ability to make complex topics accessible but not simple

For the most part, these five aspects of my teaching practice are positive from the perspective of best practice and student experience. However, by focusing on these primarily positive qualities of my teaching, I do not mean to imply that I do not recognize and work to address my shortcomings as a teacher, some of which may be tied to the three life experiences discussed here. In fact, my discussion of each of these aspects of my teaching practice includes a consideration of the negative impact these aspects may have on students and student learning. For example, I am aware that my enthusiasm for particular topics is not always shared by my students and that I may spend more time in class and assign more readings on some topics than students would like. In addition, I recognize that these five aspects of my teaching practice are to some degree aspirational and not necessarily a complete reflection of my teaching. At the same time, most of these aspects of my teaching have been noted consistently in my student and peer evaluations.

A light-hearted classroom style/demeanor and the use of humor

I firmly believe that learners, particularly adult learners, learn best when they are not overly stressed. While learners may benefit from being challenged and pushed outside their comfort zone, these experiences may also be stressful and such stress, especially in high doses, may inhibit learning. The degree to which I am aware of and concerned about student stress stems in part from having felt undue stress in earlier learning contexts, including as a law school student. During law school, I learned more and performed better in classes when professors used a less confrontational but still Socratic style. My experience teaching English to adults reinforced what I took away from my law school experience: learning often involves vulnerability and risk-tak-

ing, both of which may make learners uncomfortable. At times during my English teaching, I saw students struggle with the embarrassment of making mistakes and being unable to do something they had been able to do for most of their lives: speak. These experiences and beliefs related to stress and learning have been further developed by my studying of learning theory, particularly adult learning theory.

Recognizing that a school law course can be particularly challenging to students, I am aware that students may feel more stressed in the course than in other courses. Students have confirmed that the course, particularly at the beginning, involves a steep learning curve as they are immersed in a “different world.” The stress they feel may be compounded by other aspects of my teaching style (discussed below) that may make students feel “on the spot” or under pressure to perform. Learning something that is challenging is stressful under the best of circumstances. For these reasons, I strive to create a supportive, light-hearted environment during class. This involves calibrating my questions to make them challenging but adding scaffolding where necessary to minimize undue student stress. I also find that humor helps to release tension in students and make them feel more comfortable. Thus, I do not hesitate to make funny and even silly comments that are related to the topic we are covering. This may involve, for example, developing silly or outlandish hypothetical situations to illustrate particular legal principles.

An engaging, “Socratic” approach that incorporates a variety of teaching and learning activities

Given that I spent three years immersed in law school, perhaps it is not surprising that my approach to teaching has “Socratic” elements. When used in appropriate ways, I believe that a Socratic approach has many merits. However, as I learned as a law student and while doing a project for a research methods course as a PhD student, the term “Socratic” may be used as a synonym for “confrontational.” (In that project, law students I interviewed often used the term Socratic to describe those professors who were harsh questioners in class and had a gruff demeanor.) Here, I refer to the dialogic nature of the Socratic method. My approach reflects that of the professors I had in law school who used the Socratic method in ways that did not cause undue stress. I say “undue” stress because I recognize that the method may be more stressful than other approaches to teaching in which students are primarily passive. The method engages students by involving them in co-constructing an understanding of the material, thus enhancing learning. As Palmer Parker has described the value of the approach, “Forced to listen, respond, and improvise, I am more likely to hear something unexpected and insightful from myself as well as others.” Especially when coupled with hav-

ing students read interesting cases involving something they care about (education), I find that students in my School Law class are highly engaged. This level of engagement also has been noted consistently by students in their evaluations of my teaching.⁸

In addition to being less confrontational, my approach differs from that of many law professors in at least two other ways. First, I do not call on students but, rather, allow students to volunteer to respond. Since (unlike many law school professors) I do not have large classes, I am able to monitor participation to make sure that a few students do not dominate the conversation. I find that most students, left to their own devices, freely participate in our dialogues. For those who are more reluctant, I find ways to encourage them. This might involve something as simple as making eye contact with a particular student after asking a question, in this way inviting them to respond. I also provide other ways in which students may participate in class via group work and other activities. Which brings me to the second difference between my approach and that of many law professors: I do not rely on one approach to teaching and learning. Socratic dialogues are only one part of what goes on in my classes. I also have students do things like work on problems in groups; present cases to the class; and write short responses to prompts. My experience and training in teaching English, as well as my courses in education as a PhD student, have provided me with a level of knowledge of teaching practice that I am able to draw on in designing classes.

A consideration of the lives and perspectives of the less fortunate and less empowered

Working with lower-income clients in legal aid offices, teaching immigrants in several US cities, and living in countries that continue to struggle with economic and political crises all helped make me more aware of the difficulties facing those who lack the resources and opportunities that others have. Seeing people face, resist, and, at times, overcome such difficulties left an indelible impression on how I see the world and how I understand the role of education. While my teaching of School Law does not always directly involve issues of poverty, power, and privilege, I bring these issues and an overall critical stance to my classes. While many of my students have come to my courses very aware of these issues, having faced them themselves or worked in communities facing such challenges, many of my students have lacked this awareness. In some ways, the lack of a direct focus on these issues in the course provides some advantages in terms of engaging such students. They seem less quick to put walls up and I am able to engage students with these issues indirectly, without seeming to be “preaching” to them. (I may also have another advantage here, being a white male, but that is a topic for

another essay.)

For example, the issue of race and discrimination is one that we all know is controversial and capable of triggering visceral, emotional reactions. While such reactions are understandable, they also may get in the way of having students engage with the issue and examine their own assumptions and biases. A School Law class provides an excellent opportunity to examine the historical and social aspects of racism indirectly, alongside the learning of an important area of law (equal protection). When students bring in a perspective that downplays the importance of racism or emphasizes the alleged plight of the majority and the more powerful resulting from special treatment for minorities or others who are oppressed, a direct approach is unlikely to cause them to question their assumptions. Examining the legal framework related to racial discrimination reminds students of the historical context and political ideals that inspired that framework and that might undercut some of their own assumptions.

A focus on critical thinking and reflection

Engaging students, even indirectly, on issues like race and discrimination sometimes involves challenging students' beliefs and assumptions. Getting students to reflect on their beliefs and assumptions and consider different perspectives is one of my goals in all of my classes. Students in my School Law course consistently note that the course "makes them think." This aspect of my teaching is somewhat rooted in my experience in law school. Law school develops a person's ability to make a clear argument through the use of precise language and careful reasoning. I instill these skills in my School Law students by pushing them to hone, explain and defend their statements in class and in their written work.

As a student of the relationship between education, culture, and society, I honed my own critical perspective, something that also influences my teaching. I encourage students to critique the law and recognize that it is the product of human beings and a reflection of a particular history and social system. In class, I ask students to think about the social consequences of the law and the American system of public education. When examining the law related to school funding, we talk about funding inequity. When talking about student rights, we talk about the meaning of citizenship and the relationship between citizens and the state. When talking about special education, we talk about how the special education legal framework treats parents and children with resources differently from those without resources. My hope is that these experiences will help students develop the skills and disposition of a critical thinker and an engaged, critical citizen.

An ability to make complex topics accessible but not simple

Learning English and School Law both involve learning a complex set of knowledge and skills. Early on, I was struck by the similarities between the experience of my students in School Law and the experience of the students in my English classes. In both cases, students were faced with learning a different way of doing something that had become second nature. In the case of English learners, the students came to the classes with the sophisticated capacity to communicate in at least one other language that is typical of adults. As adult learners, their mother tongue had become cognitively hard-wired, entwined with their innate process of thinking. Learning English involved the sometimes jarring experience of incorporating another complex system of communicating into their mind, a system that was, in some ways, at odds with their preexisting system. My School Law students have expressed similar, albeit less drastic, experiences. For them, the course has involved more than just acquiring content knowledge. It also has involved acquiring a new language (both in terms of vocabulary, style, and genre) and understanding a different way of thinking about the world and about education.

To facilitate learning in both contexts, my early teaching experiences first involved becoming aware of all that I knew, all of the mental short cuts and assumptions involved in speaking English and thinking legally. This process has been on-going, as I have faced the challenge of making something that is second nature to me comprehensible to students who lack the seemingly invisible background knowledge I rely on in both contexts. Like native speakers and the speaking of their mother tongue, law school graduates come to master a way of thinking that becomes engrained. For example, asking someone who is a native speaker of English to explain the use of definite and indefinite articles to someone with limited English proficiency might leave the native speaker at a loss. Likewise, asking someone with a legal background to explain the law regarding, for example, searches of students by public schools to someone without a legal background could create a similar problem. Both situations require the teacher to first understand what the novice learner asking the question knows and doesn't know. Then, the teacher would devise a way to bridge that gap.

Taking the issue of student searches, for example, if the learner also has a legal background, a quick recitation of the legal standard from the TLO case⁹ might answer the question. That learner likely would have an understanding of the general principles involving searches under the Fourth Amendment plus the vocabulary associated with constitutional standards in general. Thus, that learner would have a frame of reference for understanding the legal standard from TLO. However, if the learner lacked that frame of

reference, a more detailed explanation would be required, one that considered the principles upon which the Fourth Amendment is based, the legal standards associated with it, and the difference between those standards and the standards applicable to searches in schools. As a teacher of English, I honed my ability to identify the gap between my understanding and that of my students and then devise a learning experience to bridge that gap. That ability has informed and supported my teaching of School Law: after learning how to design learning experiences to teach the use of articles to speakers of other languages (including languages that do not use articles), designing them to teach educators the law of student searches was comparatively straightforward.

Closing Reflections: My Students and My Teaching-Self

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the role that students have played in enabling me to enact these aspects of my teaching practice. While I believe that people are inherently motivated to learn, various factors in students' current lives and prior experiences may undermine that motivation and interfere with students' ability to engage with the learning experience. While my personality and experience may be the sources of my teaching-self, each of the aspects of my teaching practice discussed here could be problematic if students did not respond positively to them. For example, being light-hearted and using humor impart a lack of gravitas that could give students the impression that they do not need to take the course seriously. I have been fortunate in that the majority of the students in my School Law classes have not responded in that way. My adapted Socratic approach also poses potential pitfalls. If students were unprepared for class or unwilling to engage in dialogue, the approach would fall flat and possibly fail. While I think that my teaching practices encourage students to be prepared and participate, I nonetheless am thankful that students have risen to the challenge and been willing to take risks in class.

This willingness to engage and take risks also has supported my focus on critical thinking and reflection and helping students make sense of complex legal principles. Thinking and reflecting critically is hard work. It requires not only engagement but also openness to different ways of thinking and a willingness to question, revise, and sometimes reject your own assumptions and beliefs. It requires you to defend and provide support for your positions. For adults, assumptions and beliefs are the engrained products of a lifetime of experience. They help us make sense of those experiences and the world around us. Therefore, questioning them can be disquieting. This is particularly so when those beliefs and assumptions relate to highly charged issues like discrimination, inequality, and power. I am thankful to those students who

have been willing both to reflect critically on their own positions, assumptions, and beliefs and to push other students and me to do the same.

Which brings me to my last thought. Writing this narrative of my teaching-self has reminded me of three things that affirm the value of this sort of reflection for teachers. First, I have been reminded that I carry my own set of beliefs and assumptions regarding my identity as a teacher and my teaching practices. Writing them down has encouraged me to reflect critically on these beliefs and assumptions, a process in which I have engaged over the years but to which I could dedicate more effort. Second, I have been reminded that the process of developing and discovering our teaching-selves is an ongoing and aspirational process. As part of reflecting on my assumptions and beliefs regarding my teaching-self, I recognize the ever-present gap between the teacher I would like to be and the teacher I am. Third, I have been reminded of the important role that students play in my enactment of my teaching-self. The degree to which I am thankful to those students who have joined me for parts of my journey reminds me of the reason I first embarked on a career as a teacher: supporting student learning.

Notes

¹ Dona M. Kagan, "Professional Growth Among Preservice and Beginning Teachers." *Review of Educational Research* 62, no. 2 (1992): 159.

² Michalinos Zembylas, "Discursive Practices, Genealogies, and Emotional Rules: A Poststructuralist View on Emotion and Identity in Teaching." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 21, no. 8 (2005): 937; Anne R. Freese, "Reframing One's Teaching: Discovering Our Teacher Selves Through Reflection and Inquiry." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 22, no. 1 (2006): 100-119.

³ Judyth Sachs, "Teacher Education and the Development of Professional Identity: Learning To Be a Teacher," in *Connecting Policy and Practice: Challenges For Teaching and Learning in Schools and Universities*, ed. P. Denicolo and M. Kompf (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), 15.

⁴ Catherine Beauchamp and Lynn Thomas. "Understanding Teacher Identity: An Overview of Issues in the Literature and Implications for Teacher Education." *Cambridge Journal of Education* 39, no. 2 (2009): 177.

⁵ Kagan, "Professional Growth": 163.

⁶ Stanton Emerson Fisher Wortham, *Narratives in Action: A Strategy for Research and Analysis*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), xi.

⁷ Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Biography: Qualitative Research Methods Series 17*. California and London: Sage (1989), 23.

⁸ Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. John Wiley & Sons, 2010, 49.

⁹ *New Jersey v. TLO*, 469 U.S. 325, 105 S. Ct. 733, 83 L. Ed. 2d 720 (1985).

Book Review:
Janak, *Politics, Disability and Education Reform in the South: The Work of John Eldred Swearingen*

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Edward Janak. *Politics, Disability and Education Reform in the South: The Work of John Eldred Swearingen*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. ISBN-13. 978-1137484055. 276 pages.

John Eldred Swearingen was a revered and important educational figure in South Carolina, where he was state superintendent of education between 1908 and 1922. A product of the post-Civil War era and Reconstruction, his family were prominent cotton farmers. At the age of thirteen, John was blinded in a shooting accident, and his life was forever changed. His mother took over his education, focusing on literacy, orientation, mobility and independence. After receiving an initial education from her, Swearingen was sent away to a special school, which at the time was the only formal education option for a child with significant disabilities. Although he was unhappy in school, Swearingen excelled. After secondary school, he applied to and was rejected from South Carolina College because of his disability. However, he was finally allowed to enroll, but only if he could meet the standards set for all students. Although meeting standards was difficult for a student who was blind, Swearingen again proved himself highly successful, primarily due to his extraordinary abilities, perseverance, and willingness to adapt how he learned. For example, although the university did not provide assistance to Swearingen, he asked fellow students to assist him by reading his textbooks aloud and writing for him. Swearingen graduated with honors and took a

teaching position at a special high school (his only option for employment as a person with a disability).

Perhaps because of his disability and ability to succeed academically, politically, and socially, Swearingen ran for public office as state superintendent of schools. He was very successful in that elected position, and promoted educational opportunities for those traditionally excluded from public schools, including mill workers' children and African American children. Swearingen also reformed the structure of the public high school for all students, not just some students. His transformative ideas moved southern public education in the direction of a longer school year, equal school funding, better qualified and better paid teachers, and an improved, standardized curriculum that included vocational education.

In presenting Swearingen's life, author Edward Janak draws on archival sources, family correspondence, oral interviews, newspapers, and secondary sources. He provides evidence that Swearingen was motivated to advocate for all children because of the deep personal rejection he experienced due to his own disability. Swearingen was also encouraged by his mother's insistence that he receive an education and become independent, and by his own desire to meet the role expectations of southern white masculinity. These expectations included learning to "act as a man" in running the family farm, engaging in physical activities like hunting, and taking a paternalistic attitude toward marginalized populations, like African Americans. Swearingen made great strides in the education of marginalized populations, despite obstacles that included his own and his family's racism, his prominent politician uncle's racism, and racist views held by the society at large.

Although two other biographies have been written about John Eldred Swearingen, neither provides an analysis of *why* he took particular actions. For example, neither of these previous biographies discuss why Swearingen assumed positions in opposition to his family and society, or how race, class, disability, and gender impacted his decisions and career. Janak seeks to tell *why* John Swearingen made particular decisions about public education in South Carolina. In doing so, Janak provides greater detail about the context in which Swearingen lived, including how the political environment affected him.

Janak uses a multifaceted framework to construct this biography, which is based on best practice in biographical research and writing. He writes about Swearingen through multiple perspectives, analyzing Swearingen's psychological and physical self as well as the political realities that shaped his world. In particular, Janak focuses on the local, state, and national happenings that reciprocally influenced Swearingen's actions. Such comprehensive research allows Janak to analyze Swearingen with respect to race, class, disability, and gender, thereby closing gaps in knowledge that exist in previous scholarly works. For example, Janak notes that Swearingen was unable to

participate in the normal socialization (e.g., hunting, fishing, physical activities) of boys in the South because of his blindness and that he felt marginalized and rejected when he was initially denied admission to South Carolina College because of his disability. This context, Janak proposes, contributed to Swearingen's interest in providing public education to marginalized populations, like African Americans and mill workers' children. Janak offers additional insight on Swearingen in recounting the outbreak of World War I during his tenure. Many South Carolina men, both white and African American, enlisted and served during the war. When white soldiers came home they were hailed as patriotic, while returning African American soldiers were marginalized. Swearingen used this context as an opportunity to improve public education for African Americans to help correct the injustice.

Against the backdrop of a racist South, a wealthy family, a personal disability, and traditional masculine role expectations, Swearingen made decisions about schools that were contrary to the milieu in which he was raised and lived. In part, he was successful because of his *persistence* during times when citizens and the governor did not support his educational initiatives. He also benefited from an ability to *take advantage* of times when his ideas won voters' and the governor's approval. Among the important, progressive changes within South Carolina public schools that are credited to Swearingen are a standardized secondary curriculum, compulsory attendance, improved teacher training and salaries, textbook adoption, and state funding for schools. Swearingen accomplished all of these while improving the education of the children who had been marginalized.

I was particularly interested in Janak's analysis of disability, given societal attitudes toward people with disabilities during Swearingen's life and tenure as state superintendent. Education policy is partly shaped by case law, legislative law, and parent advocacy. During the time period that Swearingen lived and worked, case law supported the exclusion of students with disabilities from public schools. Swearingen was a prime example of how disability affected families and how all children with disabilities either stayed home or attended special residential schools. Around 1910, the White House initiated a special conference recommending remedial programs for children who were in need and, in 1922, the Council for Exceptional Children was founded, promoting education of students with disabilities. Swearingen's life of mobility and independence, his high level of education, his ability to overcome societal barriers to disability, and his success in influencing education throughout South Carolina suggest he was far-advanced for the time. Meaningful change in public schooling for students with disabilities did not even begin until 1954, with the landmark court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. Therefore, this book would be of interest to scholars studying early role models for people with disabilities, as well as other marginalized populations.

Book Review:
Kolodny, Normalities:
The First Professionally Prepared
Teachers in the United States

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Kelly Ann Kolodny. *Normalities: The First Professionally Prepared Teachers in the United States*. Charlotte N.C.: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2014. ISBN 978-1-62396-688-1. 210 pages.

Lydia Stow, Mary Swift, and Louisa Harris were three members of the inaugural class of the first state-sponsored normal school in the United States. Convening at Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839, they and 22 other young women embarked on a new type of standardized teacher preparation promoted by the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Horace Mann. A pioneer in the common school movement, Mann was influenced by the Prussian state-supported system of teacher training as well as the French *école normale*, from which the normal school derived its name. (The purpose of the *école normale* was to establish norms for other schools to follow. Normal schools, by contrast, were exclusively focused on teacher preparation.)

Kolodny explains that studying the normalities (as the Lexington students called themselves) involved ten years of copious research examining letters, poetry, journals, school board reports, deeds, meeting records, and newspaper accounts. Kolodny visited the neighborhoods where the three women lived, the normal school where they studied, the places where they traveled and taught, and their grave sites. She relates an interesting account of her purchase (online, from a used bookstore) of the “Records of the First

Class of the First State Normal School in America: Established in Lexington Massachusetts 1839" – only to find that it had originally belonged to Mary Swift! The purchase contained Swift's notes on the normalites' obituaries as well as hand-written poems from her classmates. Additional documentation of Kolodny's research is found in drawings and photographs, a list of archives, libraries, historical societies and associations, and an extensive bibliography.

Kolodny decided to take a biographical approach to studying the first normal school because of the unique insights it offers readers. For example, interweaving the young women's journal entries with the contextual information of time and place provides a sense of a closeness and intimacy with the three normalites that may not be possible in other genres. Upon completing *Normalites*, the reader has a feeling of having participated in a rich, historic experience.

Normalites maps the three women's lives over the course of 12 chapters and 210 pages. The book is chronologically arranged and is divided into four parts that detail the women's studies, entrance into the world and the beginning of their careers, transitions in their personal and professional lives, and building of their life work. Kolodny also provides historical information on the feminization of teaching in Massachusetts after years of domination by men. This shift (which women's normal schools helped to encourage) was fostered by a belief that teaching was a natural extension of family and home, and that women instinctively loved children and interacted with them better than men. The transition was also encouraged by the nineteenth century model of Republican Motherhood that suggested women could perform a valuable civic function by teaching their sons to be good citizens.

Of particular interest in the normalites' education is the requirement that they keep journals of their studies and daily pursuits. The journals provide insights into the relationship between Kolodny's three biographical subjects as well as with their supervisor, Cyrus Peirce. A gentle man, Peirce had high standards and was at time frustrated with the students due to their "young and saucy conduct" (28). He believed that the young women were deficient in academic knowledge when they arrived, but held some promise. Peirce emphasized a rigorous curriculum of composition, enunciation, bookkeeping, arithmetic, grammar, geography, and moral and natural philosophy. He also valued decorum, orderliness, punctuality, and appropriate dress. Peirce read the young women's journals, which became conduits for their thoughts about him and the education they were receiving. At times the normalites deliberately challenged him through their journal questions and reflections, knowing he would read their entries carefully. They also used the journal to exercise wry humor, as when Mary Swift wrote on Peirce's lack of knowledge of women's fashion after he insisted that teachers should not wear tight dresses.

Kolodny recounts events at the normal school, citing famous guests and speakers such as Horace Mann, Bronson Alcott, and Samuel Gridley Howe. She also reports on discussions that occurred around a variety of topics that still command interest today, such as whether children should be forced to study, whether teachers should use corporal punishment, whether children should be given tangible rewards when they do well, and whether children should be taught about spirituality and religion.

After completing their studies, Stow, Swift, and Harris found employment in schools located in or near their towns. Their teaching situations were markedly different. Lydia Stow's first position was in a small, one-room school house. Louisa Harris taught some 44 poor children in Roxbury. Her teaching performance was evaluated by men who placed a premium on order and knew much less about teaching than she did. Mary Swift taught blind and deaf students at the Perkins Institution in South Boston. Stow and Swift's formal teaching careers came to an end when they married, but their professional pursuits did not. Swift continued to advocate for the education of deaf and blind children and eventually became the founder of the Boston Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Stow, who had actively participated in the antislavery movement and had sheltered slaves, was the first woman to become a member of the Fall River Massachusetts School Board and the founder of the Fall River Women's Union. Harris' journal reveals her belief that she had a calling to be a lifelong teacher. She remained single and taught in a variety of public and private environments for the remainder of her life.

Readers of *Normalities* need to be forewarned: this is not a book to skim through or quickly scan. The further one reads, the more intense the narrative seems to become. It is an "easy read," but is so loaded with the events of the time and the appearances of historic figures that a "skimmer" might miss out on the delights within. Stow, Harris and Swift lived and worked during the historic intensity of the Abolitionist movement, the Temperance movement, the Irish Potato Famine, the Underground Railroad, the Civil War, the Transcendentalists and the Great Awakening. A few of the people whom the women actually met, knew, visited, studied and worked with were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Helen Keller and Lizzie Borden.

This is a fascinating book that succeeds at what Kolodny intended it to do. Through their personal stories, readers feel an acquaintanceship and connectedness with Stow, Swift and Harris. My heart and mind were touched by *Normalities* to the point where I cared a great deal about the characters, valued and appreciated their legacies, and was disappointed when their stories ended. Many of us can identify with the women's struggles, successes, and reflections. I admired and respected these three women who helped pave the way for quality teaching and education in the U.S. today, and I loved this book.

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