THE AMERICAN TEACHER MEMOIR:

FROM *CONFESSIONS* TO *THE INSPIRATIONAL TRUE STORY*

by

Jessica Wells Cantiello

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2012

This manuscript has been read and accepted by the
Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Dr. Nancy K. Miller

April 17, 2012
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Dr. Mario DiGangi

April 17, 2012
Date

Executive Officer

Dr. Sondra Perl

Dr. Hildegard Hoeller

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

THE AMERICAN TEACHER MEMOIR:
FROM *CONFESSIONS* TO *THE INSPIRATIONAL TRUE STORY*

by

Jessica Wells Cantiello

Adviser: Professor Nancy K. Miller

Over 225 American teachers have published autobiographies that recount their lives in public school classrooms, but the teacher memoir, as a literary genre, has yet to receive sustained scholarly consideration. Since at least the beginning of the common school movement in the 1830s, a movement that is chronicled by the first teacher memoirist William Alcott in his aptly named *Confessions of a School Master* (1839), Americans have put enormous faith in the power of schooling to create an educated citizenry that can sustain a functional democracy. Teacher memoirs combine with portrayals by historians, administrators, policymakers, and scientists to assess the success or failure of education, which is often entangled with the perceived success or failure of America itself. I read teacher memoirs in the context of educational policy and literary history to demonstrate how the cultural climate in a given era shaped the way in which teachers narrated their experiences, and, in turn, how the memoirs influenced educational debates. This study raises complex questions about the political efficacy of literary texts, contributes to discussions within autobiography theory of the ethical considerations of life writing, and enriches historical narratives of teaching and learning.

Acknowledgements

Like teaching, writing a dissertation is an extremely collaborative process, and I have been lucky to have met and worked with a number of dedicated teachers at the Graduate Center. This project would not have been possible without the mentorship of Nancy K. Miller, whose advice and feedback has been invaluable from conception to fruition. I am grateful to Sondra Perl for her willingness to take a leap of faith by examining me on an orals list dedicated to teacher memoirs and her unflagging support of the project since then. Hildegard Hoeller also served on both my orals and dissertation committees and provided valuable comments throughout the process. I worked on various stages of the dissertation prospectus in workshops led by Anne Humpherys and Marc Dolan and thank them and my colleagues in those courses for their contributions.

I am grateful both to the English Program and the Provost's Office for generous dissertation year fellowships that allowed me to focus on the completion of this project. Travel grants from the Graduate Center also facilitated the presentation of earlier versions of portions of this work at various conferences. Conversations with panel organizers, participants, and audience members were always edifying and often inspiring. I especially appreciate the support of Tom Couser and Alison Booth, who chaired the two MLA panels sponsored by the Division on Autobiography, Biography, and Life Writing in which I participated. Preparing for the International Auto/Biography Association's conference on "Intimate Publics" informed my thinking about contemporary teacher memoirs. Presenting at an international conference dedicated to academic autobiography was especially fulfilling, and I thank the conference organizer, Rocio G. Davis, for her enthusiastic embrace of the project and her editorial comments on the article that I eventually published out of that talk.

I met Erin Lee Mock because we were co-teachers but we leave graduate school as the closest of friends. Her awe-inspiring commitment to my idea, characterized by our innumerable conversations and her careful, clarifying, and challenging comments on multiple drafts of each and every chapter made this project a much stronger one. Tahneer Oksman and Molly Pulda also read sections of the dissertation and provided helpful feedback as well as the requisite chats, coffees, and emails at different stages of the writing. My wonderful friends and family, including my ridiculously supportive husband Jim, have contributed to the completion of this project in a myriad of ways.

Finally, my former students and colleagues at P.S. 128 in Manhattan have been in my thoughts for the duration of this project. I dedicate it to them.

List of Illustrations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Who shall write the epic of the schoolroom, with its mimic wars, its marshaling of forces good and evil, its pitched battles, its slow sieges, its victories, its defeats, its carnage, its loot, its interposing gods, its heroes, its devils, its slain, its dirges, its sacrificial rites, its songs of triumph!
- Ella Gilbert Ives, *The Evolution of a Teacher,* 1915

Representations of schooling occupy a unique place in American politics and popular culture. Everyone goes to school, and because the vast majority of Americans have attended public schools, people draw from their own experiences when thinking about public education. In part because of this, everyone has something to say about American education. Schools and education have become the locus for conversations about immigration, the economy, poverty, international relations, and almost every hot topic of American politics. In addition to drawing from personal experience, the American public also understands what is happening in the schools through popular filmic representations, journalism, political speeches and rhetoric, and, more recently, documentaries and popular coverage of test results, school "report cards," and research studies.[1] These days one can hardly pick up a newspaper without reading something about teacher evaluation, cheating scandals, low American educational rankings, charter schools, violence in the schools, or Race to the Top, to name a few of the hot button issues of the current moment.

Teacher memoirs offer another, heretofore understudied, way in which Americans glean information about public schooling. The form is ubiquitous in the contemporary moment in part because of the current publishing market, where memoir has replaced fiction as the genre of the day (Couser, *Memoir* 1). However, teacher memoirs have been published since the beginning of

[1] See Farber, Holm, and Provenzo, S. Cohen, Giroux and Simon, Ayers and Ford, and Ayers et al. for analyses of the relationship between schooling and popular culture using a cultural studies framework.

common schooling – the first, William Alcott's aptly named *Confessions of a School Master,* appeared in 1839. The teacher memoir functions differently from other popular representations of public schooling because it offers an ostensibly authentic and truthful account that is also personal, individual, and narrative. Taking the over 225 teacher memoirs that have been published in America and their irregular publication history as a starting point, this study asks what is so compelling about the teacher memoir to different generations of teachers, how its history as a genre has both influenced and been influenced by the history of education in the United States, and what an analysis of these texts can add to our understanding of autobiography in general.

I describe autobiographies of k-12 teachers about their teaching experiences as "teacher memoirs" for a number of reasons. I originally chose the term memoir over autobiography because it is the more popular term in contemporary publishing; a number of the recent texts in this study utilize the characterization in subtitles. However, the term memoir has also historically been used for books more focused on exteriority than interiority, texts that showed as much or more about history and politics than about the specific person whose story they recounted.[2] Given this valence, memoir is the more appropriate term for texts by authors that take American education, alongside their personal classroom experiences, as their subject. I also use "teacher memoir" rather than the more popular "teacher's memoir" or "teaching memoir" to highlight the importance of the figure of the teacher to the work that the text does.[3] The slightly

[2] For a more detailed description of the differences between "memoir" and "autobiography," see Pascal; Couser's introduction to *Memoir*; Smith and Watson 2, 198; Yagoda 1-3; and Zinsser 14-15.

[3] A review of *In the Deep Heart's Core* in *The Harvard Educational Review* uses the term "teacher memoir" but then shifts over to "teaching memoir" (H. H. 98-100). Authors Robb, Glover, Osbourne, and Jan Walker call their texts "teacher's memoirs."

ungrammatical feel of the term equalizes the two nouns and highlights the two most important aspects of the genre: the job and the autobiographical representation.

As Philippe Lejeune, one of the founders of contemporary autobiography theory, has noted, genre definition is inherently circular and subjective: you collect a bunch of texts that you believe define a genre, and then define the genre based on the characteristics of that corpus of texts (148). Lejeune's definition of autobiography, "a retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality," is a good place to start when thinking about teacher memoirs, which could be defined as "a retrospective prose narrative written by *an American teacher* concerning his *or her* own existence, where the focus is his *or her* individual life, in particular the story of his *or her teaching career or a segment of it.*"

Lejeune's attention to the focus of a text has been quite important in formulating my rules for what texts belong in a teacher memoir canon.[4] Although Diane Bjorklund identified 373 autobiographies by educators published between 1800 and 1980 in her exhaustive study *Interpreting the Self: Two Hundred Years of American Autobiography,* I have excluded books that do not focus heavily on the teaching life. For a text to be a teacher memoir, rather than simply a memoir by a teacher, it must make some comment about education through first-person representation. This is not to say that a text must describe an entire life of teaching – since 1945 a vast majority of teachers have focused their memoirs on a short period of time, either because they teach for a short period of time, or because they consider a certain period of their tenure to

[4] Teacher memoirs are similar to Pascal's characterization of "the story of a calling," in which the calling reveals what range and variety of activities are considered relevant to the form (112) and Bloom's concept of the "single experience autobiography." The fact that teacher memoirs often treat just a part of the author's life is another reason for their characterization as memoir rather than autobiography, a distinction noted by Yagoda (1) and Zinsser (15).

be more important. Oftentimes these choices are instructive and politically motivated, as in Flora Gregg Iliff's choice to write only about her teaching experience on the most primitive Native American reservation, which I discuss in chapter two. Finally, because the mythology around education in America is imbricated in public schooling, the teachers themselves had to have worked in American public elementary, middle, or secondary schools.

There are some exceptions to these generic rules and boundaries, which I note when they arise in the following chapters. Two of the more difficult considerations were length and self-publication. Although I have mostly limited this study to full-length books, certain shorter texts published in the 1900s or early in the twentieth century were too important to exclude, and are treated in chapter one. I mostly exclude self-published works since some of my analysis centers on why certain texts are published at certain moments, but the decision of some teacher memoirists to self-publish in the 1950s and 2000s informs my arguments in chapter two and in the coda.

Once I started looking, I found teacher memoirs everywhere.[5] My bibliography of teacher memoirs (located in the appendix) lists over 225 memoirs published since 1839. A smattering of texts was published in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the bulk of teacher memoirs have been published since 1945 (figure one). In the later twentieth century, texts emerge around significant eras of educational crisis and reform, with the publication of "eruptions" of similar books between 1948 and 1957, 1964 and 1974, and 2001 and 2010 (figure

[5] In addition to researching references in educational histories and extensive internet searching, bibliographies compiled by Addis, Briscoe, Brunner, Clarkson, Finkelstein, Kaplan, Maldonado and Winick, and Newman and Schulz were quite helpful. Following Lejeune, I utilized paratextual markers to identify autobiographies rather than fictionalized representations. I matched authorial names to protagonists, looked for genre markings on the books themselves or on their bibliographical information in catalogues, and used reviews to confirm autobiographical status.

two). I invoke the imagery of the eruption because these books come fast and furiously, appearing at times when the heat around education in America has reached a fever pitch. Educational crises in America are always bubbling under the surface – when these issues come to the fore in popular discourse so too do teacher memoirs.

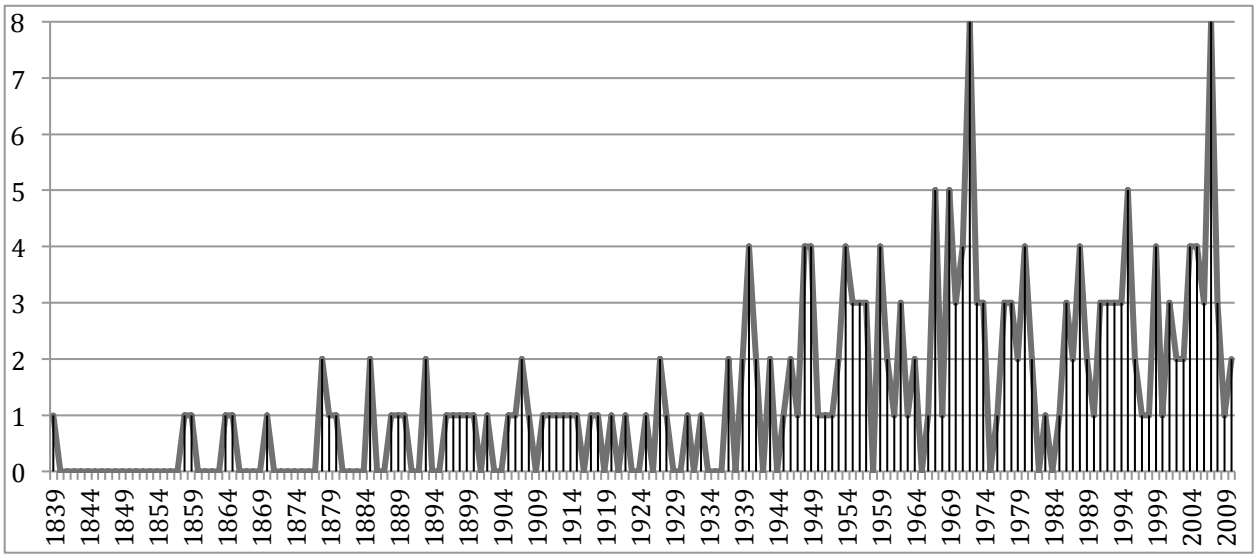

Figure 1: American Teacher Memoir Publication, 1839-2010

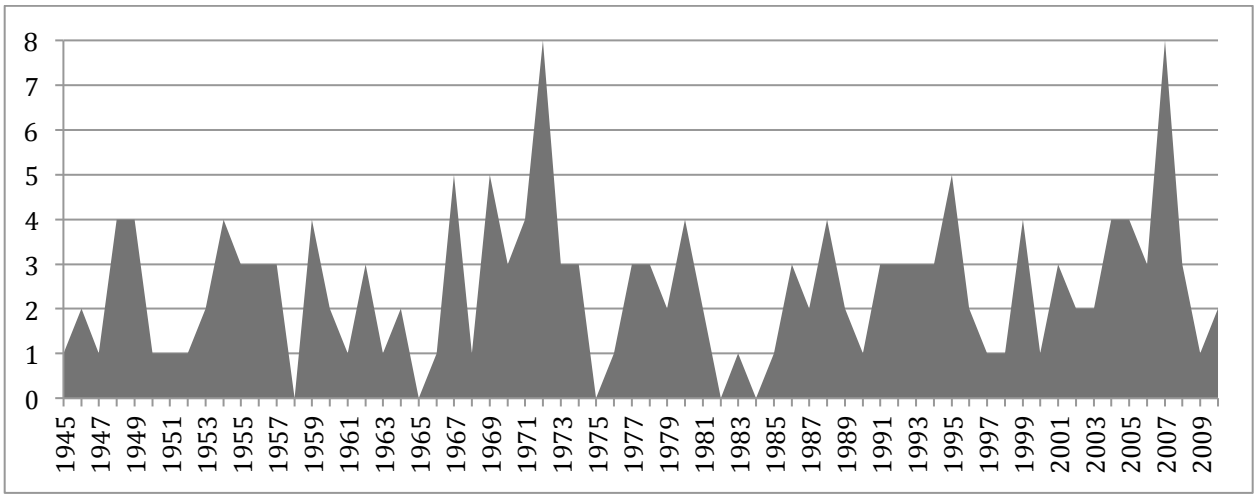

Figure 2: American Teacher Memoir Publication Post-1945

Each of these post-1945 eruptions coincides with periods of increased educational concern and investment. The 1950s saw the widening of educational opportunity, as many

veterans took advantage of the provisions of the GI Bill to earn a college degree. Segregation officially ended with the Brown vs. Board of Education decision in 1954, but the vague implementation guideline of "all deliberate speed" handed down in Brown II meant that segregation would not be truly addressed until the following decade. At the same time, the Cold War inspired American self-reflection on the state of the schools just as the space race engendered the rhetoric of crisis about Americans' ability to compete on the world stage. These concerns remained visible in the 1960s, but were joined by an increasingly urgent and impossible to ignore call for educational equality from the Civil Rights movement. The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and educational legislation that went along with it was a victory for that movement, but its implementation in terms of educational equity was challenging and remains so to this day. After a relative lull in educational interest in the 1970s, the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* thrust education back into a national spotlight and reinvigorated the insistence on excellence if America was to retain its international dominance. Since then education has been central to every presidential political race, and remains an oft-discussed topic in the media. Debates in the past three decades have centered on the perceived tension between access and excellence, achievement gaps based on race and class, testing and accountability, and the possibilities of applying free-market economic principles to the system of public education, among other issues.

In each era of educational crisis, a subset of teachers spoke out from the pages of their memoirs to engage the discourse of the day. While not every book that came out within these "eruption" years is exactly alike, each period includes a critical mass of texts by authors who are very similar in age, race, class, and gender, and that treat almost identical teaching experiences. In the chapters that follow I explore why these eruptions occur and what they mean for education in each particular period. The first chapter sketches the first century of teacher memoir

publication in broad strokes and examines how early teacher memoirs anticipated some of the central issues of the twentieth century. While there was no extreme eruption in the nineteenth century, a subset of memoirs were written by Northern teachers who traveled south to teach the freedmen during and immediately following the Civil War. These teacher memoirists are the literary forbearers of later memoirists for a plethora of reasons: the role of education in the period, the difference between the freedmen's teachers and their students, the teachers' desire to make a difference, their impulse to publish their accounts through autobiography, and their engagement with contemporaneous genres to render their narratives more influential and palatable to the general public.

The subsequent chapters address the three major eruptions of the twentieth century. In chapter two, I analyze memoirs by white women who taught at Native American boarding schools between the turn of the century and World War I. I argue that these texts emerged in the 1950s to talk back to the contemporary rhetoric around Native Americans and education, particularly the renewed interest in the termination of tribal rights, a proposal that arose right around their publication. In chapter three, I address texts published by white teachers in segregated Northern and Western schools between 1964 and 1974, with a focus on how these texts interacted with public perceptions around race, class, and education, particularly questions of integration and busing. Departing from analyzing eruptions of texts by different authors and instead focusing on multiple representations produced by highly influential teacher memoirists, chapter four examines "celebriteacher memoirs" and their film adaptations in the context of educational debates in the 1990s and 2000s. Finally, the coda investigates the varied incarnations of the teacher memoir in the past decade and how teacher memoirs continue to shape cultural ideas about teachers and education in America today.

Autobiography and questions of pedagogy are intimately related. Indeed, studies of autobiography and educational history or philosophy often begin with the same figures because many of the earliest autobiographers were also interested in education. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the progenitors of modern autobiography, also authored *Emile*. In America, autobiography and education are even more closely associated. Autobiography has long been a part of American popular and literary culture; the earliest indigenous genres of American literature, the captivity narrative and the slave narrative, were autobiographical.[6] Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin both wrote influential autobiographies and posited the two main strands of early American educational philosophy: Jefferson's liberal model and Franklin's utilitarian one. In his autobiography *The Education of Henry Adams*, a classic work of American literature, Adams uses the form to critique American education for its failure in preparing the population for the twentieth century. The story of the self-made man, a central myth of American identity, stems from both autobiographical and educational roots. Ostensibly told about oneself (at least at first), the bootstraps mentality myth hinges on the protagonist either taking advantage of public education to effect social mobility or rejecting traditional educational venues to make it on his or her (usually his) own. Either way, school is an important pivot point.

Various influential educational historians have characterized public education in America as "all-things-to-all-people" (*Education Week* 1), a "civic religion" (D. Cohen 397), a "panacea and a scapegoat" (Tyack and Cuban 14), and a "secular church" (G. Clifford 318). American diversity renders public education more difficult and fraught than in other nations, and education often provides the context for political discussions of race, class, and ethnicity (Roithmayr 4; Rousmaniere 56). Hannah Arendt argues that in the United States education has played a

[6] For the significance of autobiography to American literary history, see Parini 11; Couser, *Memoir* 108-139; Stone 3; Sayre 147; and Abbott 14.

"different and politically, incomparably more important role" than in other nations because of the role of continuous immigration (qtd. in Tyack and Cuban 2). The unique role that both autobiography and education have played in American culture, politics, and identity renders the teacher memoir a quintessential American genre.

Teacher memoirs are fundamentally different from, but related to, other genres that address American education, including the coming of age narrative or *Bildungsroman* and fictionalized representations of classrooms in novels and short stories. Even when representations of schooling are similar, the generic difference between the teacher memoir and its fictional counterparts is important because it affects how the texts are read and understood, and therefore how they contribute to discourse and policy.[7] In the past thirty years autobiography theory has emerged to provide a theoretical framework for reading, analyzing, and understanding autobiographical narratives, or life writing. Like my project, which begins with a description of what teacher memoirs are but is more interested in what they do, autobiography theory began by making genre definition and description its central object, but it has developed over time to engage with questions of the work that the genre does. This trend can be observed in recent considerations of autobiography by prominent scholars in the field, especially those meant for a popular or undergraduate audience, including G. Thomas Couser's *Memoir: An Introduction* (2012), Sidonie Smith's and Julia Watson's *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2001) and Ben Yagoda's *Memoir: A History* (2007). In addition, Paul John Eakin's *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (2008) and Nancy K. Miller's *But Enough About Me: Why We Read Other People's Lives* (2002) stand as relatively

[7] Howes notes (in the context of Wilkomirski's faux Holocaust memoir) that an "autobiographical narrative of this kind can be a powerful statement," but if it were fiction it would be "exploitive schlock" (261).

recent examples of influential critics exploring, among other things, what autobiography does for and to a reader.[8] Drawing from their and others' contributions to autobiography theory over the past three decades, these authors interrogate the difference between autobiography and other genres in terms of political and personal experiences of reading.

One obvious difference between autobiography and fiction is the claim to truthful representation, and this informs how teacher memoirs work politically. If the various recent hoaxes and controversies over memoir have illustrated anything, it is that contemporary audiences are quite invested in the promise to authentic or truthful representation inherent in Lejeune's concept of the autobiographical pact, which describes autobiography as a contractual genre in which the author promises to tell the truth.[9] No matter how many scholars or critics remind us of the subjective and inconsistent nature of memory, readers expect that memoirs recount what really happened. The narrative authority of memoir "derives not from research but from personal experience, from memory and subjectivity" (Couser, "Authority" 73). Memoirs' nonfictional characterization mean that they can be invoked as political evidence and serve a testimonial function, performing what scholar Philip Abbott has termed "autobiographical persuasion" (17). Since, at least, the abolitionist movement in the United States, which relied heavily on slave narratives to support abolition, autobiographies have worked in tandem with political movements, both advocating and personalizing political platforms. While novels too

[8] In addition, the most recent issue of *A/B: Auto/biography Studies* is a special issue focused on "The Work of Life Writing" (Brant and Saunders).

[9] For academic engagements with autobiographical hoaxes, especially the James Frey controversy, see Aubrey; Gilmore, "American Neoconfessional"; Eakin, *Living* 17-21; Miller, "Entangled Self"; and Nunes. The Frey situation is now invoked in almost every popular discussion of autobiography (and many academic introductions); Mendelsohn's *New York Times* op-ed is instructive in distinguishing between Frey and other hoaxes that perpetuate what he characterizes as "stolen suffering." Eakin's introduction to *Ethics* explores the relationship between the controversies around Rigoberta Menchu and Binjamin Wilkomirski and ethical issues in life writing.

have historically played a role in certain movements for social change, I concur with Yagoda's argument that, "Today, for a didactic text to be taken seriously, or even attended to, it requires a certification of documentary truth" (239).

Certainly, in the context of education, the personal and the pedagogical have long been the political, and teacher memoirists have often written their texts with certain political goals in mind. Political scientists have acknowledged the role that public opinion plays in policy-making, especially about swing issues like education (McGuinn 20, 210).[10] There is also growing evidence that narratives and stories, as opposed to statistics, keep our attention longer, help us to retain information, and even inspire behaviors like charitable giving.[11] Political insider and author of *Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age* (2004), Christopher Cross explains that, "more often than we might wish to know, federal law is shaped by anecdotes. The power of a personal story, the presence of a wronged parent or child, an exposé of injustice – all motivate political leaders. Often these stories are reported in the press or told by a witness at a hearing, but often they are the result of a lawmaker's personal experience. When research contradicts personal experience or political ideology, research usually loses" (150).[12] Recently, Emily Parker, drawing from her experience working on the State Department's policy planning staff, wrote an essay in *The New York Times Book Review* that argued for the significant influence of book-length arguments on policy making, especially in a "sound-bite-driven debate."

Parker's observations and Cross's suggestions illustrate how teacher memoirs might influence public policy. Teacher memoirs narrate key issues of educational reform by weaving

[10] McGuinn cites a number of studies that emphasize that politics, rather than "empirical evidence of the effectiveness of particular programs, form the basis for most educational policy decisions" (196).
[11] See Freeland; Small et al.
[12] David Mathews asserts that this trend of drawing conclusions based on "personal experience or the experience of family members or close friends" extends to personal choices by voters (3).

them into stories. If lawmakers do not have personal experience in public schools, particularly in low-income communities, teacher memoirs might provide the type of personal or anecdotal evidence that Cross argues often informs decision-making. Recently, the publication of *The Freedom Writers Diary*, which I discuss at length in chapter four, got the authors direct access to policymakers: Erin Gruwell and her students were invited to testify in front of Congress. Reviewers of Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age* (chapter three) consistently urged policymakers to read that teacher memoir, and he has been testifying in front of congressional committees consistently since 1969 (Kozol, *Letters* 210).[13] Beginning in the 1950s, it was not unusual to find educational manifestoes tucked into the pages of a teacher memoir, waiting for the right reader to implement them.[14]

In the following chapters, I map the complicated web of discourses around education in a given period and examine how teacher memoirs participated in these conversations. It is not my contention that the reading of teacher memoirs directly caused the political changes that I discuss. I argue, instead, that the memoirs contributed to a cultural climate around education in each period, and that this climate influenced educational policy and political developments. Of course, whatever political influence teacher memoirs wield depends on who is reading them. With the exception of texts by Jonathan Kozol and Herbert Kohl in the 1960s and LouAnne Johnson and Erin Gruwell in the 1990s and 2000s, which reached the bestseller list, it is difficult to determine the numerical readership or reach of most of the texts in this study. I have tried

[13] Due to the media attention he received before penning his memoir, Thomas R. Bloch, the author of *Stand for the Best: What I Learned After Leaving My Job as CEO of H & R Block to Become a Teacher and Founder of an Inner City Charter School* (2008), received a letter from former President Bill Clinton, praising his work at the University Academy charter school in Kansas City, Missouri (187).

[14] Abbott notes that this is a common strategy for American autobiographies more generally, especially those with a political agenda (16).

whenever possible to discuss the publication histories of each eruption of texts in the following chapters, and I have canvassed reviews and contemporary coverage of education to sketch out the "horizon of expectations" for the teacher memoir reader in each period: how and why a reader would have approached both the genre and each individual text, and the way in which that reader would experience the text in the context of educational debates of the period.

My commitment to historical analysis derives from New Historicist theoretical framework, but theories of reader reception have also been central to my methodology and the larger questions that this project asks. In particular, the work of Hans Robert Jauss, who originated the notion of a "horizon of expectations," has influenced my thinking about the reading of teacher memoirs and how to gauge the work of each eruption. Jauss argues that a literary work exists in a triangle between the work, the author, and its readers, and that to understand a text fully the critic must explore how the text was read upon its publication and how it continues to be read in any given era (19). In laying out his "aesthetics of reception," Jauss is clear about the role that genre plays in how a reader understands a text: "the analysis of the literary experience of the reader avoids the threatening pitfalls of psychology if it describes the reception and the influence of a work within the objectifiable system of expectations that arises for each work in the historical moment of its appearance, from a pre-understanding of the genre, from the forms and themes of already familiar works" (22). Given the significance of genre in the analysis of reception, I have organized this project to both describe the development of the genre of the teacher memoir across time and direct specific attention to its reception in targeted periods of American history.

By calling for the reconstruction of the horizon of expectations and placing reception in its historical context, Jauss' theories formalize one aspect of reader response, but the variety of

individuals within the theoretical "reader" has made it notoriously difficult for literary critics to analyze the experience of reading. One way critics have addressed this is to conceptualize various types of readers, for example, Stanley Fish's "ideal reader," or Judith Fetterley's "resisting reader." As I explain in greater detail in the first chapter, since their inception, teacher memoirs have been directed to a dual audience of both teacher-readers and non-teacher-readers. For teacher-readers, teacher memoirs provide points of extreme identification or disidentification, as the reader compares his or her teaching experiences with those in the memoir.[15] This type of response can be found on blog posts about contemporary teacher memoirs, in op-eds, and in scholarly criticism, especially about teacher movies.[16] Gary Rubinstein glosses this teacher-reader response in an essay for *Teacher Magazine:* "Not only have we read the book, we could have written it" (47). The focus is on what the teacher memoirist got wrong or right based on the reader's own experiences. The response of a teacher-reader undermines the experiential expertise of the teacher memoirist because the reader brings her own experiential expertise to the reading process.

Responses by teacher-readers to popular culture representations of teaching, which I explore in chapter four, indicate the stakes of these representations for a general audience. Teacher-readers are usually upset by portrayals because they worry that people without their more nuanced understanding of the schools will misread or misunderstand the texts, which can and does happen. Since 1945, most teacher memoirs have been directed at a general (non-teacher) audience. Perhaps the most ubiquitous trope across the eruptions, the journey from home to school, illustrates how the memoirists take the non-teacher-reader "along for the ride"

[15] See Miller's introduction to *But Enough About Me*, especially pages xiv-xv, for an engagement with the issue of identification and disidentification in terms of autobiography more generally.
[16] See Isenberg; Ayers; T. Moore. Greg Michie engages in this type of analysis in the introduction to his own teacher memoir, *Holler If You Hear Me*.

into the unknown. Almost every single author recounts their physical, mental, and emotional journey from their relatively comfortable home environment to the foreign and unknown setting of their teaching, whether it is the trek to the western frontier to teach on a Native American reservation in 1902, or the twenty block subway ride from the Upper East Side to Harlem in 1962, or the drive through the mansions of Orange County to a gang-ridden school yard in Long Beach in 1992.

Like this journey motif, book covers, reviews, prefaces, and textual comments by the authors themselves indicate that most modern teacher memoirists see their role as exposing something about their experience, and by extension, their school, and by extension, American public education. The impulse to exposure necessitates a relatively uninformed reader. Many of these memoirists write to earlier, pre-teaching, versions of themselves. The expertise that the memoirists claim as a result of their experience is compounded by the extreme inexperience (and therefore inexpert positioning) of the reader. Compounded by the "honesty" and "authenticity" that many reviewers observe in the specific texts, and that comes with the memoir territory as a generic convention, the relationship between the reader and the author becomes one of identification and trust, which imbues the teacher memoirists' representations with a good amount of power over the non-teacher-readers' opinions.[17]

Although I use the term "general audience" to refer to the non-teacher-readership of these texts, the target audience is actually a very specific general audience: usually white, usually

[17] My analysis of this reader-writer relationship is informed by recent readings of late nineteenth and early twentieth century realists and naturalists, especially Jacob Riis, by Giles and Trachtenberg ("Stephen Crane"). Trachtenberg argues that Riis and others framed themselves as guides to the slums and their readers as tourists. In this model, according to Giles, "it is essential to create a fictional bond between narrator and reader: both are assumed to be enlightened individuals of goodwill who would alleviate the brutal and sordid reality of the American slum if they had the power to do so" (34).

middle class, usually well-educated. Teacher memoirists target this audience because of their potential political power and the possibility that they might be able to extend the advocacy that teacher memoirists see their texts as performing. As such, the question of readership is linked to authorial intention, which is also central to this study.[18] Most teacher memoirists assume that the exposure their texts effect is a necessary precursor to a more engaged populace. They hope that people truly do not know what is happening in the schools and that once they do, they will become more politically active and advocate for the type of educational reform that the teacher memoirist deems appropriate. However, the fact that teacher memoirs have been published with the same intention (exposure) throughout history indicates a problem with this model. The drive toward exposure in nearly every teacher memoir of every decade illustrates the failure of memoirs to do the work they were supposed to do in earlier periods.

One other subset of readers is worth mentioning here. In the nineteenth century, memoirists sometimes invoked their students, usually all grown-up, as possible readers for their texts.[19] This impulse seems logical, as many of the stories teacher memoirists tell are about their students, and perhaps their students would want to see what they had to say. However, after 1945 it is rare to see this type of invocation, and the emphasis on exposure renders it even more unlikely, as the people who have lived the experience alongside the teacher would not need to be exposed to it again. Likewise, the focus on exposure also mitigates the usefulness of the texts for parent-readers, although certain shameful situations that were exposed, especially in the 1960s, may have been hidden even from parents of students in these schools. In certain cases, for example in the eruption of the 1950s, parents' inability to read English would have rendered

[18] See Porter for a recent engagement with authorial intention and autobiography. Lejeune rightly observes that "authorial intention is always determined by the reader" (123).
[19] See Tevis; Hubbard; and Holbrook.

them incapable of accessing teacher's representations of their children, and this continues to be true in certain cases today.

However, there is always the possibility that parents and children might have read teacher memoirs, and if they did, they might not like what they see. As early as 1927, teacher memoirist Leoti West struggled with this type of reaction. Recalling how she wrote up a classroom incident for a lyceum (adult education) meeting, she indicates that she sought permission to use it in public from one of the students depicted in it, but she had neglected to seek permission from the other student involved. Describing what happened when he and his family arrived at the meeting unexpectedly, she writes,

> As I read I noticed Will's face growing redder and redder until it rivaled his hair, while many of the pupils in the audience were turning in their seats to grin at him… "I will never forgive her. She made fun of my hair." I was conscious of my mistake but nothing I could say to him had any effect in soothing his hurt feelings. He went to school with me until June of that year and while I never had any trouble with him, I could always feel that undercurrent of antagonism which I had unwittingly engendered. (169)

West decided not to publish the anecdote in a book she was collecting and publishing primarily for former students, but she did include it in her memoir, noting that she and Will had reconnected when he was grown and he seemed to have forgotten his antagonism.

West acknowledges her mistake in representing her students without their express permission, particularly when writing in a less-than-flattering manner, and her shame and humiliation on this score stand as a cautionary tale. Realistically, though, no teacher memoirist

receives permission from all his or her students to include them in their texts, and while many think that changing names and identifying characteristics solves this problem, it would not have prevented Will's embarrassment if West had written about a pseudonymous "Bill with the big nose" rather than Will with the red hair; students recognize themselves in the telling. Given the dominance of the success story paradigm in many teacher memoirs, most anecdotes about students are not, like the one about Will, offensive at face value. However, teachers may not always predict what students will find objectionable; West did not anticipate Will's extreme mortification, at least not enough to make the decision to prevent it. Students do not enter a classroom with the expectation that their likeness may end up in the pages of a published book. West's insertion of the anecdote of the classroom incident anticipates the complicated valences of student representation in teacher memoirs that continues into the present moment.

As I discuss in the coda, just last year parents and students in California protested the representations in a teacher memoir by Steve Poizner, who was at the time competing in the Republican gubernatorial primary. Poizner misrepresented his experience teaching briefly at a local high school, and students and community members came out in droves to correct what they felt was a racist, classist, and generally offensive portrayal. The reaction was spurred, in large part, because of his political aspirations, but the situation brought up a number of significant questions about the ethics of teacher memoir writing and publication. What responsibility do teacher memoirists have to the students they portray in their texts? Do teacher memoirists silence the voices of their students and/or co-opt their stories? What happens when the political platforms the teacher memoirist espouses contradicts the politics of the community for whom he or she is supposedly advocating? In short, what are the ethical implications and ramifications of writing a memoir about your teaching experience?

In the past decade, a number of autobiography theorists have become interested in the ethics of autobiography.[20] Paul John Eakin has repeatedly asserted that "ethics is the deep subject of autobiographical discourse," and his collection *The Ethics of Life Writing* (2004) brought together noted critics to discuss the ethical issues involved in writing, and writing about, autobiography. In particular, theoretical forays into the ethical aspects of autobiography have addressed the ethics of "representing others," one of four sections in Eakin's collection. Since Mary Mason's germinal essay "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers" in James Olney's foundational collection of autobiography theory, scholars have acknowledged the ways in which self representation, especially by women, is performed through a grounding of that identity in relation to a chosen other (210). The presence of the other and the role that the other (or others) plays in the creation of the self and in the construction of autobiography has been a central preoccupation of autobiography theory and, by now, has become a truism of the discipline.[21] However, some autobiographies are more concerned with role of the other than others, and emerge as what Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck have termed "radically relational": texts that insist on a multiplicity of subjects and authors (9).

Teacher memoirs are highly relational in a relatively unusual way. Because teacher memoirists describe classroom situations and the focus is their professional life, the most significant others in their texts are their students. The others that populate most memoirs are familial: spouses, parents, children. Friends and colleagues occasionally appear, but most often

[20] In addition to those discussed below, see Loureiro and O'Rourke. Loureiro also glosses the critical turn to the ethical in the late 1990s and 2000s on page x. *Biography,* one of the leading academic journals to focus on autobiography, dedicated a section of its Winter 2001 issue to "Exploring Ethics," which the editors noted was a "recent theoretical concern" (Egan and Helms x).

[21] Couser notes, "it is now a critical commonplace that all autobiography is necessarily heterobiography as well because one can rarely if ever represent one's self without representing others" (*Vulnerable* x).

the autobiographical gaze is turned on those who interact most intimately with the author, and those intimate relationships are usually those with family members. In recent years, family members almost routinely emerge to question their representations by authors (Eakin 3) and authors have reflected on the ethical choices that they make in representing their intimate relations.[22]

Ethics are tricky for any memoirist, but the ethical considerations are heightened by power differentials within certain families. In his foundational work *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing,* G. Thomas Couser examines (primarily) family relationships that are complicated by an illness or disability that renders the non-writing other especially vulnerable to manipulation or misrepresentation. His concept of "the vulnerable subject" has been invaluable to my analysis of representations of students in teacher memoirs. Couser defines "vulnerable subjects" as "persons who are liable to exposure by someone with whom they are involved in an intimate or trust-based relationship but are unable to represent themselves in writing or to offer meaningful consent to their representation by someone else." He continues, "Conditions that render subjects vulnerable range from the age-related (extreme youth or age) and the physiological (illnesses and impairments, physical or mental) to membership in socially or culturally disadvantaged minorities" (xii). Students in teacher memoirs are highly vulnerable: they are both young and usually members of socially or culturally disadvantaged minorities. Like Couser's medically vulnerable subjects, student subjects' level of vulnerability, and the cultural difference between them and the writer, raises the ethical stakes of the teacher memoir and renders the need for ethical scrutiny "urgent" (xii).

[22] See Mills; Miller in *Ethics*; Bloom "Living"; and Karr.

Students emerge in teacher memoirs in a myriad of ways. First, they populate the classroom. Memoirists provide descriptions of them and anecdotes about them to help readers imagine interactions in the classroom and understand the communities in which the teacher memoirist is teaching. Second, most memoirs include a smaller cast of characters, what I call "featured students," who reappear throughout the narrative. Authors invoke featured students for their sympathetic or inspirational potential – their life trajectories are supposed to be representative of either what was wrong or what was right in the educational system. Finally, students sometimes enter the texts as unattributed co-authors, as a large majority of teacher memoirists embed student work and writing in the body of their memoirs.[23] Memoirists include student work for a number of reasons: to illustrate their effective teaching methods, to support their arguments about the schools or communities in which they work, or to provide personal information from the students themselves, in the form of embedded autobiographies written by students.

To greater and lesser extents, teacher memoirists struggle with the representation of the shared experience of the classroom and acknowledge the differing perspectives that they and their students bring to the experience. The difficulty of representing the collaborative nature of teaching and learning in an individual narrative is one reason that teacher's include student writing in the body of their texts. They want to represent the voices of their students, to create

[23] Some narrative theorists, including Gerard Genette, have identified embedded narration as a characteristic of fiction. According to Genette, "the concern with verisimilitude or with simplicity generally orients factual narrative away from excessive reliance on second-degree narrations. It is hard to imagine a historian or a *memoirist* letting one of his 'characters' take responsibility for a major part of his narrative…" (qtd. in Nelles 164, my emphasis). While few teacher memoirists let one character take responsibility for a major part of the narrative, many of them let a conglomerate of different characters take responsibility for part of the narrative, and rely, at least to some extent, on second-degree narration. The ubiquity of embeddings in teacher memoirs undermines this generic distinction.

what I characterize as a well-intentioned polyphony, by quoting and embedding "authentic" examples of what their students sound or write like. In this sense, student embeddings resemble testimonials by native informants in cultural anthropological texts.[24] Like teacher memoirists, anthropologists, especially after the 1960s, were interested in collaboration between themselves and their subjects, and began to quote regularly and at length from informants. Postmodern anthropologist James Clifford reminds us that "such a tactic only begins to break up monophonic authority. Quotations are always staged by the quoter and tend to serve merely as examples or confirming testimonies" (*Predicament* 50). As in traditional ethnography, teacher memoirs give one voice, that of the teacher, the pervasive authorial function, and stage the voices of students by embedding them verbatim or paraphrasing them (Clifford, "Introduction" 15).

Teacher memoirists not only select and contextualize the quotations in a way that may or may not be true to the intentions of the original speaker, they also generate them by assigning students to write in response to particular prompts. Although some memoirists include the prompt so that the reader better understands the context, most do not. Especially for elementary school children, but even for older students, the way in which a question is framed can have huge repercussions for the answer. For example, if you were to ask students, "what do you like about your neighborhood," "what don't you like about your neighborhood," or "tell me about your neighborhood," the answers would all be about the neighborhood, but they would have much different tenors. Were a teacher memoirist to exclusively reprint students' negative descriptions of their neighborhood without the generating prompt, readers might assume all students hated their neighborhood, instead of having a more nuanced understanding of the assignment children

[24] For examples of "post-modern ethnography" see Geertz; Clifford; and M. Fischer. These authors questioned the authority of the ethnography, the bias of the narrative, and the invisibility of native informants, and called for "polyphonic" accounts of cultures (H. Carr 5).

were asked to complete. In this way, embedded student texts often feel more authentic and representative than they really are, especially because many teacher memoirists do not edit the work, which makes it sound child-like and "real," and can overshadow the constructed situation in which the work was conceived, completed, and selected.[25]

Representations of students in the body of teacher memoirs bring up larger questions about a teacher's responsibility to his or her students and whether or not the writing of a memoir interferes with those. Another early teacher memoir raised this question directly. In July of 1896, *The Atlantic Monthly* published six anonymous "Confessions of Public Schoolteachers" that editors had solicited from "successful teachers whose work has been continuous from periods of from ten to thirty years" (97). Although the confessions followed the format of the success story that I discuss in chapter one, one author strays a bit from that plot to express a modicum of guilt and regret about his treatment of students, writing, "whatever knowledge or principles I possess I have learned from experience and observation, and at the expense of the children. I shudder to think of the innocent victims who have been sacrificed to make me the very moderately successful pedagogue that I am" (97). In its nineteenth-century context, this statement is meant to advocate for the professionalization of teaching through normal schools and licensing examinations, but it underscores an additional ethical concern regarding the writing of teacher memoirs more generally. While what this author calls "wretched teaching" may be an unavoidable by-product of learning to teach (even after the extensive training that some pre-service teachers are currently afforded), the evocation of sacrificing innocent student victims

[25] In his introduction to *The Me Nobody Knows: Children's Voices from the Ghetto* (1968), teacher and editor Stephen M. Joseph details the process by which he generated, collected, and chose the work by over 200 students he included in the collection. Although this does not mitigate all of the ethical issues involved, it does contextualize the work in its methods of production.

raises the question of how writing a teacher memoir affects the author's actual teaching. It is very possible that teachers who write during their time in the classroom are less effective than they would have been if they were not penning a memoir concurrently. The anonymous teacher's confession applies to future teacher memoirists, whose readers are left wondering about the "innocent victims who have been sacrificed to make [them] the very moderately successful [autobiographers they are]."

In my analysis of teacher memoir eruptions, I explore both the ethical ramifications of teacher memoirs for individual schools, students, and families, alongside the more general consequences for larger communities and for educational policy, what I call the "ethics of reception." I assert that, taken together, each eruption of memoirs makes arguments about American education that work in tandem with other persuasive sources to effect public opinions that often have a negative impact on the communities that the teacher memoirists intended to help. In *The Ethics of Working Class Autobiography: Representations of Family by Four American Authors,* Elizabeth Bidinger examines memoirs by authors who grew up working class and concludes that the texts are problematic because they do harm to individual family members by harming their reputations and reinforce class, cultural, and racial stereotypes (6). In the case of the teacher memoir, student reputations generally remain in tact because the author changes names or creates composites. Students might recognize themselves in the book and be personally hurt, but it is unlikely that their reputations will suffer. However, like the texts that Bidinger discusses, teacher memoirs often reinforce class, cultural, and racial stereotypes through depictions of students, their families, and their neighborhoods.

Like Couser, Bidinger also worries that these authors appropriate the voices of their family members, in effect silencing them from representing their own lives and experiences, and

this is another concern of teacher memoir production. A final early example from teacher memoir history is instructive. Elizabeth Botume, one of the white freedmen's teachers, slips conveniently into speaking for her students and their families, describing herself as a member of their racial community. She writes: "We had peace if not plenty, and we were contented if not comfortable. By *we* I mean the colored people" (247). This slippage is striking not only because Botume elides significant power differentials between herself and her students, but also because she does so in the context of claiming contentment, which is likely not the experience of recently freed African Americans struggling to find a place in a fluctuating political economy. This brief example speaks to the possibility, discussed at length in the following chapters, that teacher memoirists not only co-opt student stories, but that they deploy them to advocate for politics that the student might not necessarily support. Even when the authors do not actively espouse political positions that undermine or contradict those of the communities in which they teach, once published, teacher memoirs can be invoked as evidence for a myriad of political positions, including even those that their authors would oppose.[26]

Following Couser's invocation of medical ethics in his reading of memoirs that address medical conditions, I looked for ethical guidelines for teacher memoirists in treatments of teaching ethics more generally. Ethical treatments of teaching, whether textbooks for teacher training or theoretical engagements with the topic, frequently note that schooling is compulsory, that teachers wield a significant amount of power over their students, and that students usually

[26] The disconnect between intention and results that I explore in the following chapters is not unprecedented. Parker notes that the Clinton administration evoked Robert Kaplan's historical travelogue *Balkan Ghosts* to justify nonintervention in the region, an interpretation the author considered naïve. Gary Marx also suggests that the muckraking sociology of the 1960s had unintended consequences (22).

spend as much, if not more, time each day with teachers than they do with their parents.[27] As such, the ethical dimensions of teaching are worth sustained consideration, which is why the National Educators Association (NEA) adopted a Code of Ethics in 1975, a document that has since become the gold standard.[28] Considerations of ethical teaching practices have not directly addressed the ethics of writing and publishing narratives of the classroom. As of now, teacher memoirists occupy the same ethical gray area as most memoirists, who are not governed by ethical codes like professional journalists or academic researchers. However, certain components of student representation in teacher memoirs are at odds with this code. The code stipulates that educators "shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage," and "shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law" ("Code"). While most teacher memoirists change their students' names or create composites, these measures still seem to me to violate the spirit, if not the letter, of this code. Publishing student work generated for educational purposes without the student's express permission also seems to be a breach of professional ethics.

The "private advantage" experienced by teacher memoirists varies depending on the popularity of the book and the period in which they were writing. Jonathan Kozol, one of the most famous teacher memoirists, who after publishing a teacher memoir became a well-respected educational theorist and journalist, addressed this issue in a new epilogue appended to the 1985 edition of his memoir *Death at an Early Age*: "Indeed, as time would prove, I was perhaps the only one to profit from the year's events….Black people were generous in their

[27] See, for example, Strike and Soltis and Goodlad et al.
[28] Scholars have noted the limitations of a formal code in the ethical realm, since ethics derive from personal values and are often quite situational, but at the very least the code provides a baseline for educational ethics. See Campbell 103-114.

reactions.…It was a white woman who observed to me that I had made 'a killing' on the 'death' of children I had once naively thought to help. Financially, this was not the case; but on another level, there was truth in her remark. I have yet to reconcile these contradictions" (233). Kozol's engagement with the ethics of his writing, even though he comes to no formal conclusion, is important, and is conspicuously missing from most teacher memoirs emerging today.

Most of the ethical concerns that I have sketched above emerge out of the publication of teacher memoirs for public consumption. Autobiographical writing also plays a central role in classroom management and in certain types of educational research, and my concerns about the ethical ramifications of the teacher memoir should not be mistaken for a condemnation of reflective practice.[29] Much of the work on teacher memoirs coming out of education departments calls for the use of autobiographical writing to examine and improve teaching practice, and I certainly see potential in this type of work. Educational researchers have the additional ethical guidance offered by the Belmont Report, which lays out the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects research, and are required to receive approval from institutional review boards to ensure compliance ("Belmont").

While the writing of a teacher memoir is much less predetermined than conducting a research study, certain protocols of human subjects research offer possibilities for teacher memoir writing, for example, the requirement of informed consent. In the case of teacher memoirs that are conceived after the graduation of a particular class, the author could attempt to get informed consent for the representations before publication. For instance, Michael Johnston, author of *In the Deep Heart's Core* (2002), "allowed students to read their sections of the book

[29] For more on autobiographical writing as reflective practice, see Kass; Alvine; Sharkey; and Schrader. Cohen and Scheer discuss educational theorists who "embrace the idea of 'story' as a legitimate vehicle for understanding the complex act of teaching" (1). Jalongo and Isenberg also argue for teacher storytelling as a "legitimate mode of professional development" (xii).

and decide whether [he] should use their own names or a fictional name of their choosing." In his endnote he details which students opted in and explains that he changed the names of students he could not locate to "review" their section before publication (221).[30]

By raising these ethical questions I do not mean to discredit the genre wholly but rather to open new areas of analysis in terms of both autobiography theory and educational history. Memoir has eclipsed fiction as both the representative genre of American life and as a marketable commodity, and the ethical issues that teacher memoirs raise are applicable to a host of other types of memoirs, especially those that have the potential to have a political impact. Many memoirs now include meta-commentary on "doing memoir." In a meta-memoir, usually an introduction, they describe the process of writing, explain whether or not the memoirist sought to fact-check any of the events, note lapses in memory, discuss the role of the significant others in the editing or drafting of the book, including whether or not anyone was allowed to censor episodes that depicted them, and detail tough decisions about what to include and what to exclude.[31] Like Kozol's parsing of the ethics of his memoir's publication, these discussions rarely come to a conclusion about the responsibilities of the memoirist, but they do help readers to draw their own conclusions about the ethics of the project and the role they play as a reader.

---

[30] Sondra Perl's author's note in her memoir of teaching Austrian adults also describes the process of composition and assures that students gave permission for her usage of embedded texts (xi).

[31] See Porter for earlier theoretical engagements with this type of work (xii). Eakin notes how the opening pages of Dave Eggers' *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* brilliantly exploit and explode the generic conventions of meta-memoir (*Living* 34). David Carr's recent *The Night of the Gun* dedicates an entire text to a rigorous process of meta-memoiring. Carr, a recovering addict and journalist, submitted his memories and memoir to a vetting process similar to the fact checking required by long form journalism and spends much of the text reflecting on memory, representation, and memoir in general. Brendan Halpin, the author of two memoirs, one a teacher memoir, humorously engages the subject of truthful representation in his author's note: "Everything in this book is true. Well, anyway, I remember everything happening this way. Whether that's the same thing is an interesting topic but kind of outside the scope of this note."

Torey Hayden, a popular serial teacher memoirist whose texts usually focus on a single student, includes an extensive "Frequently Asked Questions" section on her website. There she wrestles with ethical questions and provides detailed responses to reader's curiosities about how she makes decisions about representing students, how her texts are marketed, and what she views as her responsibility as an author (Hayden). This type of meta-analysis of the process of writing teacher memoirs and transparency about decision-making would not necessarily change the ethics of reception but would be helpful in determining the repercussions of the representations for individual students and their families. For this memoir reader at least, more is more when it comes to parsing the ethical dimensions of memoir writing.[32]

The limited critical engagement with the teacher memoir genre has been both challenging and exciting. The absence of any mention of teacher memoirs in the expansive *Encyclopedia of Life Writing* (2001), edited by Margaretta Jolly, indicates the invisibility of these texts in autobiography theory. The entry on "Pedagogy and Life Writing" is exclusively about the uses of life writing in educational research and in classrooms; published memoirs about teaching are not referenced (Coia). Only a few scholars have theorized the significance of teacher memoirs as a category and they focus more on its potential usefulness for the professional development of teachers. In *Going by the Book: The Role of the Popular Classroom Chronicle in the Professional Development of Teachers,* Joan Isenberg describes how what she calls "teaching narratives" (which include both fictional and autobiographical representations) contribute to the

[32] In "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists" Mark Kramer describes some suggested guidelines for literary journalism, which shares many characteristics with teacher memoirs, as I discuss in chapter three. Like teacher memoirists, literary journalists are often not governed by the ethical codes of a newspaper because they publish in magazine venues or full-length books. Kramer notes the importance of "implicit covenants about accuracy and candor with readers and with sources" and suggests that writers dispense with this in the first few paragraphs of a work (23). He also logically explains "it is easy to keep readers unconfused and undeceived, just by letting them know what you're doing" (25).

teacher-readers "professional coming-of-age" (xii). Isenberg's generic conceptualization is a valuable precursor to my work of genre definition; she rightly characterizes these texts as "a type of literature that is often marginalized by literary critics who claim it is merely 'popular' and educational theorists who dismiss it as merely 'pragmatic'" (xvi). However, she treats only a few texts and does not address historical context, instead using her own autobiography as a prism through which to view teaching narratives. In *Stories of Teaching: A Foundation for Educational Renewal,* one of a number of collections that collect narratives by or about teachers and anthologize sections of teacher memoirs, editors Steven Preskill and Robin Smith Jacobvitz include selections from a wide range of time periods, including texts by Charlotte Forten, Daniel Payne, Angelo Patri, James Herndon, and Jonathan Kozol that are treated in this study.[33] The text includes some historical analysis alongside the excerpts, but it is primarily an anthology targeted at teacher preparation courses.

In one sense, this project is also one of reclamation: I collect these texts and insert them into contemporary discussions of education. Situating teacher memoirs as part of a historical continuum confronts the amnesia that often plagues educational debates. At the same time, the analysis that follows is about reevaluation and asking how these texts work politically. Sustained critical analysis of these texts demonstrates how the history of the genre is rife with contradictions and paradoxes, and raises significant ethical concerns about memoir writing in and outside the classroom. To borrow a memorable turn of phrase from an early-twentieth

[33] Many anthologies have collected teacher's experiences "in their own words" (see M. Foster; Hoffman; Jennings; Intrator; Kane; Kaufman; Ryan; Warren; and Cohen and Scheer). These editions illustrate a commitment to publicizing teachers' first person accounts and engaging in social history, but they do not contain extended critical analyses of the significance of these texts, and are usually focused on a subset of teachers rather than providing comparative or historically diverse selections. The little analytical work that has been done on specific texts within the teacher memoir genre focuses on earlier texts (see Carter "Completely"; Enoch; Watson "As Gay"; and Butchart) or filmic representations, which I discuss in chapter four.

century teacher memoir, “teaching school,” and, I would argue, writing about it, “is not all joyrides and belly laughs” (W. Patterson 23).

CHAPTER ONE

From *Confessions of a School Master* (1839) to *Confessions of a School Master* (1939): The First Century of Teacher Memoir Publication

In 1839, William Alcott, a former teacher, published his *Confessions of a School Master*, the first American teacher memoir. The text recounted approximately twelve years of Alcott's teaching life, from his first post in a district school to his later role as an administrator and school visitor. Alcott used his autobiographical treatise to argue explicitly for common schooling, an increasingly popular position due to the work of Horace Mann in Massachusetts, but in 1839 still nevertheless an uncertain prospect.[34] That Alcott, a prolific author of over one hundred texts, chose to write a teacher memoir for this political purpose underlies the interaction between the autobiographical and the political at the heart of the history of teacher memoirs (Rachman).[35]

Although fewer and farther between in publication than the memoirs of the twentieth century, nineteenth-century teacher memoirs laid the groundwork for later memoirs in significant ways. Self-conscious about their multiple audiences, the early memoirists evinced concern about how teachers had been portrayed in popular culture. They were aware of how their memoirs contributed to popular perceptions and how these perceptions were in turn translated into public policy. Partially for this reason, the early memoirists were almost exclusively invested in telling success stories and drew from the conventions of other genres to make their texts more palatable to their readers. In addition to the more general life stories that emerged in this century, a sub-

[34] Mann is the most recognizable of the early reformers, but common schooling was also advocated before the Civil War by Henry Barnard in Connecticut, John Pierce in Michigan, and Samuel Lewis in Ohio (Cremin 8). It was not until after the Civil War that state officials began to institute public schooling on a broader level (Rousmaniere 14). For influential histories of common schooling, see Nasaw and Kaestle.

[35] Alcott also wrote a second memoir about his career as a doctor entitled *Forty Years in the Wilderness of Pills and Powders: Cogitations and Confessions of an Aged Physician* (1859).

group of teachers published "single experience autobiographies" of short times in the classroom. These accounts of freedmen's teachers, or northern teachers who went south to teach newly freed slaves during and immediately following the Civil War, engaged issues of race, class, and education that would reverberate throughout the twentieth century.

In many ways, the texts treated in this chapter differ from those in the following chapters. During the first century of teacher memoir publication the distinctions that bind the parameters of this project are harder to map. Unlike later teacher memoirists who often write about a few years teaching at one school, the teacher memoirists in this cohort, with the exception of the freedmen's teachers, follow the autobiographical conventions of their era and usually tell longer, even full-life stories.[36] This tendency is underscored by titles like *Sixty Years in the School Room* (1878), *Recollections of Seventy Years* (1888), *Sixty Five Years in the Life of a Teacher* (1907), *Half a Century in the School Room* (1920), and *In School from Three to Eighty* (1927).[37] The scope of these texts means that they often cover their author's experiences in various types of teaching situations, including at public, private, religious, primary, secondary schools, colleges, and as both teachers and administrators. There was much more fluidity between primary, secondary, and college education in this period, and many teacher memoirists began their careers teaching primary grades, returned to school to earn an advanced degree, and then transitioned into teaching in higher education.[38] The growth and expansion of public schooling throughout

[36] Of the almost 50 full-length texts I examined for this chapter, all but six treat at least twenty years of the author's life.

[37] Comparing the time span of these titles with later texts that reference much shorter tenures, i.e., *Four Years of Teaching and Learning in Bedford-Stuyvesant* (1974), *Two Years: A Teacher's Memoir* (1993), or *Diary of a Teacher's First Year* (2001), underlines the significant difference.

[38] This is unlike the contemporary era, when texts by academics have been characterized as a distinct sub-genre of "academic autobiography" and very few of their authors have k-12 teaching experience. See Franklin and the 2009 special issue of *Prose Studies* on academic autobiography,

the 1900s makes it difficult to separate out private schooling completely from this cohort; many teacher memoirists taught at both public and private schools. Public schools in the period routinely charged parents "rates," or tuition, and private schools often received some state or local funding, thus complicating contemporary distinctions between public and private education (Nasaw 30, 34; Kaestle 166). The close relationship between education and religion in America in the period contributes to the inclusion of missionaries and ministers, whose dual positions as preacher-teachers justify the characterization of their texts as teacher memoirs.[39]

The variety of teaching experiences in a single life is exemplified by the career of Daniel Payne, who taught free children of color in the antebellum South, opened schools in Baltimore and Philadelphia, studied for a ministry in the AME Church, and then accepted the presidency of Wilberforce College (thereby becoming the first black college president). Edward Hicks Magill is another example: he taught public school in rural Pennsylvania and urban Philadelphia, served as the principal of Providence Classical High School and as a sub-master at Boston Latin, and eventually became the president of Swarthmore College. Most of the memoirists of the period would have agreed with Mary Ellen Chase, who began her career teaching in a country school and ended it as a professor at Smith College: "a teacher is a teacher wherever placed, and the interest aroused and held in the college classroom essentially no different from that excited and kept in the country school" (xi).

Although there are key differences between the early teacher memoirs and those that came later, when reading Alcott's *Confessions* in the twenty first century it is sometimes easy to forget that it was written almost two hundred years ago. Many of Alcott's frustrations and

---

edited by Rocio G. Davis, for recent engagements with this sub-genre. My article in that issue treats representations of teaching in the autobiographies of Jane Tompkins and Alice Kaplan.

[39] Nearly every memoir mentions religion, but see Riggs, Marrs, and Payne for teachers who were also ministers or missionaries.

experiences would be familiar to teachers teaching today. His terror in approaching his first class of students, his lack of preparation and overcompensation for this lack by instilling extreme discipline, and his joy in small successes, all speak to the consistencies in both experiences and representations of teaching across time and place. Even his attitudes towards parents find echoes in contemporary rhetoric; for instance, his comment that "we live in a day when parents have too much to do to find time for bringing up their children" could easily have been written this year (111).[40]

In addition to the personal parallels contemporary teachers might recognize between their experiences and Alcott's, his engagement with the multiple audiences of his text prefigured other teacher memoirists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and remain applicable today. In his introduction, Alcott states that the purpose of the book is to serve as a guide for new teachers who might be able to learn from and benefit from his mistakes and improvements (iv). Throughout the text he decries the lack of good teacher training and professional development books during his early years of teaching, and although he comments that these are now more available than they were before, he clearly sees his text as contributing to this field, albeit in a more circuitous route than the textbooks and teacher manuals he also penned. Although he dedicates most of the text to anecdotes about his time in the classroom, he sometimes provides explicit instruction about how to teach, as in a fully-reproduced lesson plan where he refers to himself as "the teacher" rather than in the first person, ostensibly to make it easier for the teacher-reader to replicate his strategies (269; see also 241, 250). Later memoirists would also encourage the teacher-reader to use their memoirs as manuals, and the reproduction of lesson

[40] Nasaw describes common school reform as a direct judgment of lower-class parents' ability to effectively raise their own children to be the type of American worker and voter that the reformers envisioned.

plans, along with asides throughout the text (135, 161, 311, 316), indicates that Alcott assumed that one major audience for the text would be teachers, particularly new or inexperienced ones.

Given his invocation of this audience, it is no coincidence that Alcott's text was published in the same year that the first normal, or teacher-training, school was opened in Massachusetts. Throughout the century teacher memoirists would engage with issues of teacher-training in their texts, sometimes lauding it and seeing their texts as a supplement to the already-adequate curriculum of these schools, and other times criticizing it and using their own self-taught experiences as evidence for why teacher-training is unnecessary. The concurrent development of normal schools and the teacher memoir points to the professionalization of teaching in the period.

Other memoirists also explicitly directed their texts to teachers.[41] These writers hoped their texts would provide needed encouragement and support, and perhaps improve teaching in some way. In 1908, William Augustus Mowry wrote, "If [teachers] shall find this book of service to them in the severe and often arduous duties, if it shall encourage them to seek improved methods of instruction, or lead them to greater personal interest in their pupils, if it shall in any way aid them in building sound character, the writer will be amply paid for his labor" (4). Given the development of both normal schools and educational journals over the course of the nineteenth century, early teacher memoirs provided one of the few sources of professional development for inexperienced teachers. Hanus claims that before 1900 it was possible for a person to have read every single article or book in English on education (130). Many of the teacher memoirists also published curriculum or were later involved in training teachers, and these impulses are evident in their autobiographical texts.

[41] See Emerson 1; Hubbard 3; Holbrook iii; Magill 1, 314; Harley 31; Patri 132; Turner "Prefatory"; Hall 247; West 220; and Cole.

However, the memoirs were also meant for a more general audience.[42] As soon as Alcott directs his text toward teachers, he also widens the scope of his audience to include "school committees, school visitors, etc.," and "negligent parents," and notes that "the familiar style in which it is written, and the general novelty of its instruction should secure for it a favorable reception in every family" (v). Later, he often pairs parents and teachers in his appeals to readers, widening the scope beyond "negligent parents" to all parents (311, 316). In addition, Alcott's consistent, and at times explicit, argument for common schooling is directed toward a general audience, specifically taxpayers who would have to approve that public coffers be used to fund the schools; ostensibly readers who had already chosen to become teachers would not have needed convincing of the benefits of common schooling.[43]

Alcott's decision to direct his memoir to a wider audience stems from his acknowledgement of popular perceptions of teachers and teaching in the period and the way those erroneous ideas contributed to political decision-making. Mann himself had noted that the "principal obstacle to common school expansion was the 'apathy' of the people" (Nasaw 52). According to Alcott, "It is a lamentable fact that people in general, in a majority of cases, seem to regard not only school houses, but schools and teachers, as a sort of necessary evil. They must exist, they know; but in so far as their mere feelings are concerned, they would very gladly have them out of the way. I speak now of common or district schools only. They cost them trouble and money" (141). He condemns the "universal fear of a little expense in the instruction of children"

[42] For instances of memoirists invoking a general audience (often in addition to other teachers), see Orcutt vii and Whitney. Even those who do not explicitly invoke a general audience often decry public attitudes toward teaching and wish to change them through their writing, which belies a general audience.

[43] According to Nasaw, "The campaign for the common schools – through the later 1830s and 1840s – was no more and no less than a campaign for public taxation" (51). See also Lortie 7 and Kaestle 148-51 for a discussion of the way in which taxation and structures of local governance influenced the development of the common school and teacher salaries.

(95) and argues that common schooling will never improve in the public's esteem until common school teachers make a living wage (144). Since common schools were funded by property taxes, Alcott and later teacher memoirists often identify the public's commitment to education by the amount they are willing to pay teachers and raising teacher salaries is an oft-heralded reform (20).[44] Indeed, Alcott's text is an extended description of the hard work that goes into teaching and his writing in it stands as evidence for the intelligence of the teacher. He acknowledges that "hundreds never think of a teacher as any other than a sort of idle being. He is in school six hours a day, they admit; but what is that? He has nothing to do but to sit there, in a warm room, and hear the pupils read, set their copies, and mend their pens, etc!" (34) Taking these attitudes literally, Alcott explains that most teachers do not actually sit, and he enumerates the hours spent on preparation outside of the classroom, based on his own experiences and those of the many teachers he knows. In effect, he hopes his detailed recording of his own life in the classroom will convince the general public that they are mistaken about the work, and therefore the worth, of the typical common school teacher.[45]

Like Alcott, many nineteenth-century teacher memoirists used their experiences to support claims by activists for the usefulness of common schooling and other educational developments. Their texts contributed to what noted historian Lawrence Cremin characterizes as "half a century of public-school propaganda" that cemented the relationship between education and national progress in the eyes of the American public (8). For example, John Griscom,

---

[44] Nearly every teacher memoirist in this period cites his/her salary and their increases throughout their teaching tenures. Many explicitly argue for higher salaries. See "Confessions"; Emerson 93; Hubbard 48; Magill 175; Harley 15; Turner 341, 393; West 11, 37, 124; and Hanus 41. Ives notes the wage gap between male and female teachers and points out that her salary would have increased by a third had she been a man (131).

[45] Many other authors also decry negative public attitudes toward teachers. See "Confessions"; Tevis 481; Magill 149; Harley 18; Patri 127; W. Patterson 255, 266, 274; Hanus 234-6; Washington 111; and Thomas.

another advocate for common schooling, whose son published his previously unpublished autobiography in 1859, emphasizes the importance of public education for the continuation of a functional democracy:

> I feel fully persuaded, that of all the institutions and agencies which characterize the most highly civilized condition of human society, none can at all compare with the influence of common schools over the well-being and happiness of a people; – none whose prosperity is half so essential, so indispensably requisite, to the sustenance and durability of that form of government under which we live, – a form of government the most equitable, secure and desirable of all that has ever been tried upon earth, – with an enlightened and virtuous population; – but the most anarchical, insocial and oppressive, under the general domination of ignorance, prejudice and passion. (337)

Anticipating debates that would rage for 150 years, he argues that common schooling is a right of every American, "of whatever parentage" (339). John Cotter Pelton, looking back to his early days as a young schoolmaster, writes, "Then, as now, I regarded the free public school as the potent moral and intellectual factor in society and the state – the great social leader and leveler – elevating the more humble and gently repressing the austerity of the more exalted" (175). Guiding the reader into commons schools, nineteenth century memoirists emphasized the centrality of education to major American value systems: democracy, social mobility, and equality.

To advocate for common schooling, these writers had to make the case that it worked, which is why a vast majority of them tell success stories, perhaps their most influential

contribution to the history of the genre.[46] Although Alcott advertises the memoir as his confessions in the title and warns that "errors, and confessions of error, appear to predominate" in the introduction (iiv), the text, with a few exceptions, details years and years of successful teaching.[47] Indeed, almost exactly midway through the text, Alcott acknowledges the irony:

> Fine confessions these! Some reader will, perhaps, by this time exclaim. What, does this writer mean to give us a long account or his own excellence as a teacher, and call this work his "confessions?" Yet have a little patience with me, I beseech you. If there be a bright spot amid so much darkness and error as attended my devious school master course, why not allow me to enjoy the pleasure of bringing it into view. My whole conduct, up to this period, or nearly the whole, appears to me, now, as a tissue of blunders. It gives me great pain to review it or to write it, and I would not do the latter but in the hope that it may be the means of helping on the good cause to which I then was and still am very much devoted. (149)

While here Alcott greatly exaggerates his confession of error, his text does include moments of "autobiographical shame" (Miller, *But Enough* 40). His insistence on error and his self-reflection about his development as a teacher positioned next to and sometimes even overlapping his claims to success underline a central tension of the teacher memoir in its various incarnations. Like all professionals, teachers fail and have regrets, but to publicize these incidents in their

[46] Although I would argue that the stakes of the success story are higher for the general reader since there are political gains to be made, certain early teacher memoirists also suggest the importance of the success story for the teacher-readers who try to replicate those successes in their own classrooms by following along with the memoir (see Orcutt ix; Holbrook iii).
[47] See Yagoda's interesting footnote on page 65 for a history of texts named "Confessions of a…", a popular titular construction since the early-mid 1800s.

memoirs risks personal judgment from the reader and can potentially undermine their political positions.

Thus, what emerges from the first century of teacher memoir publication is an image of fleeting trial and error almost immediately overshadowed by extreme success. For example, Magill details his triumphant arc from dejected to successful over the course of a single paragraph:

> Hence, on this first night, when I returned to my little family at Jamaica Plain, I quite broke down, expressed bitter regret that I had made the change, and felt that a disgraceful failure was before me such as some of my predecessors had met with.…But the next morning, after a good night's rest, I felt quite myself again, and I am sure that never after, in all my experience as a teacher, professor, and president, has the fear of absolute failure so haunted me as it did after that first day in the Boston Latin School. I firmly resolved that from that day on there should be in my vocabulary no such word as fail. And it was not long before my earnest efforts were rewarded with all the success I could desire. (87)[48]

Magill's dejection would be familiar to many new teachers, but the success of his mind-over-matter attitude might not be. With no details about what his "earnest effort" entailed, no

[48] See also Turner 38-41 in which the author transitions from "fear and trembling" to "love for the work" in a mere three pages. Pelton lauds his success in a way that begs the question of how he could possibly know, in such detail, what everyone thought of him: "And it is a pleasant reflection that no patron in my whole life ever long remained unreconciled with any of my acts of discipline; that no pupil ever finally went from under my instruction or care or superintendence with other than the warmest and kindest feelings toward myself, both as schoolmaster and as friend; that no associate or subordinate teacher ever left me without respect and good-will" (208).

description about how he transformed his failure into success, and just the vague "not long" as an indicator of how long it took, he leaves the reader with the feeling that it was relatively easy to overcome the challenges of being a new teacher. Perhaps Lewis R. Harley, who taught history for twenty years at Philadelphia's Central High School and whose 1914 essay is also called "Confessions of a School Master," is correct in his characterization of the memory of the memoirist in terms of the success narrative: "Time is, indeed, a kind and gentle servant, removing from the mind the memory of drudgery and seeming failure, and cheering the vision with bright pictures of cherished companionships and of young men assisted to careers of successful achievement" (15).[49] In effect, Harley argues that success is more memorable, and therefore more "memoir-able" than failure. Nineteenth century readers enjoyed success stories – most bestselling books in the period were about the success of subjects – so in addition to lauding the author's capabilities and advocating for certain educational reforms, success-focused teacher memoirs likely appealed to publishers (Danahay 850).

The impact of the success story – on teachers and non-teachers alike – is a central preoccupation of this study. Meant to argue for the continuation of certain trends, like common schooling in Alcott's case, or for reforms advocated by the author, like the widespread institution of normal schooling for which Jeremiah Hubbard's *A Teacher's Ups and Downs from 1858 to 1879* argues, success stories have often had unintended consequences. As I discuss in chapter four, in the late twentieth century, the image of the heroic, sometimes martyred, teacher perpetuated the notion of teaching as a passion project rather than a respected profession, and sometimes undermined political solutions to problems exposed by the memoirs. The emphasis on observing other good teachers, the description of their own teachers as models, and the depiction

[49] I discuss this phenomenon in a contemporary context in the coda.

of the trajectory from student to novice teacher to advanced teacher somewhat curtails the hero-teacher model in this first century of publication, but certain early memoirs anticipated the image of the hero-teacher. For example, James William Turner's *Half a Century in a School Room*, the subtitle of which – "containing sketches of the author's early ancestry, his early schooling, his life work as a teacher, the evolution of our public schools, his public addresses, Golden Jubilee, exercises, his editorials, and various other public writings" – illustrates the wide-ranging contents of many early teacher memoirs, quotes a doctor whose description of teachers frames them as angelic and tragic:

> I have buried fair young women that have fallen at their post of duty at the teacher's desk, martyrs to conscience and to their holy task, wasted away by that imperious call that bids the teacher give not only her knowledge, but herself, heart and soul, her whole being, her personality to the children, that its tenderness and beauty and nobleness may suffuse them and bless them and become theirs. (277)

Writing in 1905, Turner uses this anecdote to argue that teachers deserve more respect from the public, which he, like Alcott before him, quantifies based on salaries. The alignment between public perceptions and salaries continues into present day debates about school reform, but the image of the martyred teacher suggests that teachers should be paid more not because they are skilled professionals but because they are noble, even Christ-like. It belies an expectation of extreme self-sacrifice on the part of teachers, especially women.

The religious rhetoric of this excerpt underlines the close relationship between education and Christianity in nineteenth-century America.[50] Before public schooling most Americans received literacy instruction in Church or at home in a religious context and many teachers (and teacher memoirists) of the era were very devout and saw their teaching careers as a calling from God; influential sociologist of schooling Dan Lortie characterizes colonial teachers as "almost-but-not-quite" ministers (11). Common school reformers, using explicitly religious rhetoric, argued that American salvation would be had through the common school (Tyack and Cuban 1). Early teacher memoirists capitalized on the popularity of spiritual autobiographies and conversion narratives to recount what, in some cases, amounted to a secular conversion to the cause of common schooling (Cooley 5).[51] Because of the affiliation between education and religion, many memoirists of the period struggled with how to represent teaching: is it a calling (which you do because you have to), a career (which you do because you choose to), or both? According to Patricia Carter, "women were expected to become teachers, not for the monetary rewards but out of duty to God and community," an attitude supported by Horace Mann's 1860 description of "the devoted, modest, female teacher, conscious only of her duties, unconscious of ambition or earthly reward" ("Social" 128). Turner's assertion of the teacher's nobility appeals to the humanity of the reader, claiming an ethical imperative to support a teacher's good works, but the worth of the teacher's deeds is overshadowed by the pathos of her demise. At the end of his text, which is a collection of poetry with a teacher memoir attached, John Cotter Pelton explains

[50] The separation of church and state in terms of schooling developed over the course of the nineteenth century and its relationship to constitutional documents was only asserted in the twentieth. Explicitly protestant curriculum was one reason why Irish parents invested heavily in Catholic schools in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Kaestle 167).

[51] Teacher memoirists' secularization of the conversion narrative mirrors what happened in American autobiography more generally. According to Holte, Benjamin Franklin's autobiography was the culmination of the colonial spiritual narrative and the first modern American autobiography (32).

that he has published this book because he is destitute. He feels that based on a lifetime of financial sacrifice, during the course of which he instituted the public school system of San Francisco, he deserves a "kind and helping hand" (237). The image of the self-sacrificing teacher literally dying at her desk because of her extreme commitment, or the dedicated aging pedagogue pleading to avoid the poorhouse, prefigures the unsustainable behaviors of later teacher memoirists and foreshadows the expectation that the institution of mythical hero-teachers in every classroom is the only meaningful path to educational reform.

In 1931, William Patterson, a veteran teacher of forty years, published a collection of letters he wrote to his son, John, starting when John was in normal school and continuing through his early years of teaching. An extraordinary document, *Letters from a Hard-Boiled Teacher to His Half-Baked Son* registers one of the earliest recorded critiques of the hero-teacher image. Patterson is very concerned about representations of teaching in popular texts, and even though his son has lived with him and observed his practice for his entire life, he is convinced of John's vulnerability to these images. First, Patterson comments on the representations of teachers in popular fictional fare:

> In such books as "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" and "The Brown Mouse," the teacher is annoyed grievously by the bad boys in the school and the villains in the community, but he outwits them all and turns out a victorious hero. I must admit that Dickens' schoolmasters are despicable characters, but they successfully meet all comers, hold their jobs, and seem to enjoy their wicked lives. Ichabod Crane was not a hero in the

> community, but in the schoolroom he encountered no trouble.…So you get the notion from the books that such troubles naturally never happen to teachers; *but they do.* (15)[52]

Patterson is not just concerned about popular fictional fare. Moving on to nonfictional and autobiographical representations, he continues:

> The tales told by experienced teachers are even more misleading. I have heard numerous teachers on various occasions relate how they had to struggle with hostile boys, fight a school board composed of grafters, overcome the handicap of ignorant, indifferent, and superstitious patrons; and how before the end of the year the lion was induced to lie down with the lamb, and all lived together happily afterward. The stories all admit but of one conclusion: the narrator was the conquering hero. (16)

Patterson then relays a story of his own early teaching failure, in effect practicing what he preaches by framing his own experience as more complicated than a simple success story. The danger, he argues, inherent in the success story for the teacher-reader is the cultivation of ego and over-confidence, alongside the development of unrealistic expectations about the ease of teaching that, when frustrated, lead to intense dejection and even quitting (as was the case for him early on).

---

[52] Forty years earlier a writer for *Scribner's Monthly* worried about the effects of sensationalistic fiction in which "all teachers, of course, are sneaks and blackguards" (Trachtenberg, *Incorporation* 198). Washington also decries the "false conceptions [that] have been fairly well disseminated by such writers as Dickens, and Washington Irving with his depiction of Ichabod Crane" (17). Chase alludes to Dickens' Gradgrind and M'Choakumchild when describing her father (15), and infers from stories from others that there are still incompetent teachers like Dickens' Mr. Feeders and Cornelia Blimbers in certain schools (26). Knowlton condemns some of his colleagues as "Gradgrind idiots" (75).

Patterson's condemnation of representations of the teacher-hero in both fiction and nonfiction texts foreshadows later critiques. He writes: "I am not trying to convince you, Son, that all of the success and victory stories are bunk. They are probably all true; but separated from the general run of experience and bunched together in a solid chunk they don't represent a cross-section, and they lead you to believe that a teacher can't fail" (18). Indeed, the damage done in later periods by teacher-hero memoirists stems from this lack of a "cross-section": the isolation of their successes from more nuanced portrayals and the sheer number of success narratives emerging in tandem.

At the same time, for certain authors telling their success story is an explicitly political act, particularly in this earlier era of teacher memoir publication. Although two thirds of the memoirists in this period were American-born white men, the era also saw the publication of memoirs by women, immigrants, and African Americans.[53] Success stories by disenfranchised groups took on added significance because they proved the capability of people like them. For women, writing a teacher memoir allowed them to refute negative preconceptions about women teachers and expand the popular tales of self-made men to include women. Alcott asserts throughout his memoir the higher worth and value of male teachers, even as he admits that, in his experience, female teachers have been the ones desperate to improve. Mirroring the general attitudes of educators in the early-mid-1800s when women usually were allowed to teach summer school only or were hired simply because they could be paid less (Altenbaugh 8), Alcott

[53] The famous surnames of certain teacher memoirists of this period is not coincidental. Alcott was Bronson's second cousin, and George Barrell Emerson, author of *Reminiscences of an Old Teacher* (1878), lived for a time with Ralph Waldo when he was a child. Many memoirists, both male and female, were able to write their memoirs because they were relatively well-known in education circles or connected to literary society in some way. In addition, teacher memoir writing seems to have been somewhat contagious; authors sometimes mention each other in their texts. For example, Marrs knew Tevis through his wife, Washington and King were students of Holbrook, and Laylander's sister went to the school Holbrook founded.

advocates for two teachers in each school: "It is a matter of economy; as there are a thousand things in every school for which a female is better fitted than a male, while *his time*, which is far more valuable, can, by her efforts, be saved and applied to other and far more important purposes" (59).[54] Indeed, one of the reasons for the mass exodus of male teachers over the course of the century was that fact that women were expected to work for much lower salaries – when the cry for larger salaries sounded by the memoirists fell on mostly deaf ears, women took over as the majority of the teaching force (Rousmaniere 34-5; Cohen and Scheer 69; Nasaw 62).[55] Although teaching by women was accepted in the mid-late 1800s as an extension of the ideals of the cult of domesticity and republican motherhood (Rousmaniere 41; Salazar 253; Altenbaugh 9; Kaestle 123-4), and some male memoirists make this point explicit (see for example Emerson 64), more men espouse sexist attitudes towards female teachers and argue that they are simply not as good teachers as men (see "Confessions" by teacher four, Hall 55). These attitudes continued through the final *Confessions of a School Master*, where Lawrence Washington worried that, "There's a real danger that the elementary training of our youth will be left in the hands of incompetents and women" (111).[56]

Simply through their publication, success stories by female teachers countered the prevailing notion that they were incompetent, but some female teachers also took the opportunity

[54] Attitudes like these among the reformers led to schools being staffed by large numbers of female teachers and a single male "principal" teacher who served as a leader and oversaw the staff, a system that eventually evolved into the administrative school model we have now with professional administrators at each school site who continue to be disproportionately male (Kaestle 124-5).

[55] The first reliable data about the teaching force is from 1870, when two thirds of American teachers were women. By 1900, between 70 and 75 percent were women (*Education Week* 183; Kaestle 125).

[56] For other examples of sexist rhetoric in this text see also 122, 344. He also quotes his mentor, Alfred Holbrook, who penned an 1885 teacher memoir, as feeling negative about the future of education because "only women and mediocre men aspire to teach" (165).

in their memoirs to explicitly denounce sexism in education or assert that women actually made better teachers than men (Tevis 467). In *The Wide Northwest: Historic Narrative of America's Wonder Land as Seen by a Pioneer Teacher* (1927), Leoti West describes how, "after eulogizing my work and expressing the greatest confidence in my ability to teach, [a school trustee] nearly took my breath away by remarking that it was the plan of the board as soon as possible to secure some good man to take over the work, and make the school a *real success*" (my emphasis). West's invocation of success underscores its significance in terms of gender dynamics. She goes on to explain that she is telling this story "simply to show the feeling of the people of that time, and to some extent of the present time that it takes a man to bring about the greatest success along any line of human endeavor" (94). West pokes fun at the modesty topos endemic to the memoir genre, as she includes numerous examples of her successes big and small, both in her own estimation and that of others. In one humorous instance, she recounts a meeting in 1869 where she was highly praised and her promotion to head of school was recommended. Claiming to be "altogether too modest to reproduce these resolutions here," she ensures that the reader knows where to find them: "they are on record in the minutes of the association for that year" (63). By proudly trumpeting her success even as she insists she is too modest to do so, West claims it as representative of the potential of women in education.[57]

Like those by white women, teacher memoirs by African Americans (both men and women) served as evidence for the intellect and capability of all members of this group, including their African American students. Serialized in two issues of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1864, Charlotte Forten's "Life on Sea Islands," a short autobiographical narrative describing her

[57] I do not want to overstate West's feminist tendencies; in two cases she emphatically supports republican motherhood and decries the "New Woman" (79, 286-273). Ironically, West is what many would characterize as a "New Woman," as she worked her entire life at a successful career and never married, although she writes briefly about her regrets regarding "her fate" (156).

experience as a teacher in freedmen's schools during the Civil War, provided an articulate defense of African American's humanity and intellect.[58] Forten's first-person account described former slaves desperate to learn, and recounted their remarkable successes, but, like the slave narratives that were so popular in the period, her own narrative itself also spoke to the capacities of the race. Editors ensured that readers understood this by inserting a short, bracketed introduction to the first piece noting, "Its young author is herself akin to the long-suffering race whose Exodus she so pleasantly describes" (67). Likewise, memoirs by Elijah P. Marrs (1885), Daniel Payne (1888), and Fanny Jackson Coppin (1913) document sensational careers by members of "the talented tenth."

Both black and white teacher memoirists who engaged with issues of African American education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drew heavily from the conventions of the slave narrative, a recognizable and popular form, to tell their stories. The memoirs were also influenced by the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which illustrated the political potential of literature; after President Lincoln famously referred to Harriet Beecher Stowe as "the little woman who started this great war," the text became shorthand for the power of literature to effect social change. As Turner noted in 1906, "The literature of a nation wields a great influence over its citizens and is the leading power in molding public sentiment. The writings of William Lloyd Garrison, Elijah Lovejoy, James Russell Lowell, and especially Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, did more to create a public sentiment against slavery than all other

[58] Readers of *The Atlantic Monthly* would have had access to many abbreviated teacher memoirs in the late 1800s. In addition to Forten's two articles (1864), the magazine published stories by Zitkala Sa (discussed later in this chapter), the anonymous confessions I discussed in the introduction, W.E.B. Du Bois' short narrative "A Negro Schoolteacher in the New South" in 1899, and excerpts of Anna Leonowens' autobiography in 1872, which eventually became the source material of *The King and I*. *The Atlantic Monthly* was a highly influential publication, read by the political and business leaders of the day (M. Marshall 16, 113).

forces combined" (361). Teacher memoirists who wanted to invoke compassion for former slaves and argue for their continued education used the tropes of the slave narrative and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (which was also influenced by autobiographical accounts of slavery and escape) to tap into public sentiment that had already responded positively to similar representations.[59]

Forten embeds a number of short narratives, sometime in dialect, that she claims to have heard from former slaves on the Sea Islands. Many recount the dramatic escapes that brought them out of slavery, and some also detail the extreme cruelty of masters and the horror of living under slavery (77-8, 80, 82-3). Writing back to a Northern audience in the midst of the Civil War, Forten connects these somewhat familiar plots to the need for more education for her race, writing: "Daily the long-oppressed people of these islands are demonstrating their capacity for improvement in learning and labor. What they have accomplished in one short year exceeds our utmost expectations. Still the sky is dark; but through the darkness we can discern a brighter future" (86). Her position as teacher memoirist extends the argument for abolition into one for education.

The purposes of slave narratives, which were published in large numbers in America throughout the nineteenth and into the beginning of the twentieth century, obviously differed depending on the moment of publication (Andrews 80). According to noted scholar Frances Smith Foster, "As time passed, slavery became heritage and the slave narratives became the archetype for Afro-American autobiography" (60).[60] Memoirs by Marrs, Payne, and Coppin, published well after the Civil War and Reconstruction, do not advocate for the abolition of

[59] Botume even comments that one former slave's real story, as relayed to her, is "an epitome of parts of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'" (132). Ames refers to one student as "a regular Topsy" (22).

[60] See also Y. Taylor xvi and Andrews 83 n. 18.

slavery, but rather for the widening of educational and professional opportunities for the descendants of slaves.[61]

Marrs' autobiography resembles the slave narrative most closely since he spent the longest time as a slave. Describing, in the words of his preface, "my experience of twenty years as a slave – of nineteen months in the army – of eighteen years in the school-room – and of thirteen years in the ministry," Marrs characterizes his teaching career as a metamorphosis effected by emancipation: "I was a perfect curiosity to the white people of Simpsonville, simply because I was the first colored schoolteacher they had ever seen, and yet I was no stranger to them, for just three years from the time I left Simpsonville, a slave, to join the Unites States Army, I returned a free man and a school teacher" (79). Refusing the north-south trajectory of most slave narratives, Marrs returns to Kentucky to "labor for the development of [his] race" (77). By returning to the South and staying there, Marrs refigures the slave narrative to cover post-war experiences, and frames the south not as a place from which to escape but as a site of possible education for newly freed slaves. Although the narrative details white resistance to black education (as exemplified by constant harassment by the KKK, including an incident where a masked white man releases gunfire on black children at a playground), Marrs invokes himself and the over one thousand students he educated as heralding the potential of African American education in the New South.

[61] Marrs was born to a free father and an enslaved mother, so he was enslaved for the first twenty years of his life, until the Civil War. Coppin was enslaved for the first twelve to thirteen years of her life in Washington, D.C. and was purchased by her aunt, to whom she dedicates her memoir. Payne and Coppin knew one another; Coppin thanks Payne for providing her with an annual scholarship at Oberlin (13). Payne does not mention Coppin in his memoir but calls the former head of Coppin's Institute for Colored Youth, Charles Reason, a friend (46-7). Payne also visited the Sea Islands in 1864, and therefore may have met Charlotte Forten; he also mentions meeting the Forten family in Philadelphia (51).

Although Coppin's *Reminiscences of School Life and Hints on Teaching* is less a slave narrative than Marrs' autobiography, the dedication immediately indicates the text's reliance on the tropes of the slave narrative. Coppin inscribes the text "to my beloved aunt, Sarah Orr Clark, who, working at six dollars a month saved one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and bought my freedom." The reminder of a life's worth in 1913 contextualizes Coppin's autobiography in a history of slavery, and forefronts a journey to freedom that is not actually central in the narrative. The slave narrative portion of the text takes up only a tiny fraction of the work as whole, just the first two pages in which she describes growing up a slave under the care of her grandmother. Then, with very little narrative fanfare, her aunt buys her and sends her up to Massachusetts. Interestingly, this very short narrative continues for another two pages, up until her graduation from Oberlin (13), after which she slows down and flashes back to give some stories of her upbringing and education in greater detail, eventually bringing the reader back to Oberlin and then on to Philadelphia. It is almost as if she needs to conclude the conventional slave narrative in order to move beyond the strictures of the genre.[62] Like Marrs, Coppin manipulates her narrative's role within the slave narrative tradition, as she both claims it and moves beyond it. Additionally, unlike the famous narratives of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs and others, which recount self-education in hiding under slavery, Coppin's education begins after her freedom and move north, so even this trajectory is slighted shifted from the ignorance to literacy trope so prevalent in the literature of the time.[63] Like other post-bellum narratives, the text

[62] As James Olney has noted, "elements in slave narratives come to be so regular, so constant, so indispensable to the mode that they finally establish a set of conventions – a series of observances that become virtually *de rigueur* – for slave narratives unto themselves" (152).
[63] Olney calls this the "literacy, identity, freedom" triad and argues that these three narrative strands "lead into one another in such a way that they wind up being altogether interdependent and virtually indistinguishable" (156).

extends the trajectory, because for Coppin literacy was just the beginning of a life dedicated to developing and passing on that literacy.

Alexander Payne's autobiography engaged with slave narrative as well; even though he was born free, he was not spared certain well-hewn plots of antebellum African American lives. In 1830 Payne opened a school to teach free children of color, which rapidly expanded to serve over sixty students. Four years later, South Carolina passed a law that forbid any free person of color from operating a school for other free people of color; the penalty was the same as that for anyone who taught slaves to read or write. Forced to close his school, and the target of racist threats by white planters in the area, Payne resolved to go North, tracing the familiar journey for African Americans of the period, albeit not escaping in the way of enslaved people. Writing about his leave-taking from Charleston, Payne is strangely oblique for a memoirist, claiming amnesia: "What were my peculiar feelings, emotions, and thoughts … I cannot now tell, as I kept no journal of those days, and half a century has effaced them" (41). However, only pages later he has recovered his memory or reconsidered his forgetfulness, as he inserts a dramatic recitation of his feelings:

> O the parting scene in that school-room, those interesting children, and my sister, who I would never see again! But what made my thoughts almost agonizing was the recollection of the fact that this separation was the bitter product of unjust, cruel and blasphemous laws – cruel and unjust to a defenseless race, blasphemous of that God who of one blood did make all nations of the earth, all its races, all its families, every individual man. (57)

This flashback is remarkable for its reliance on the tropes of the slave narrative, including the wrenching apart of families, the defenselessness of African Americans, and the unjustness of the laws of the land. However, Payne is not here condemning laws that codified slavery, but rather policies that forbid education; this excerpt posits the slave codes against literacy as equal to the institution of slavery itself. The memoirists who explicitly address African American education in the first century of teacher memoir publication all emphasize the significance of continuing education as an extension of abolition, in part through their use of the tropes of the slave narrative within the teacher memoir.

The slave narrative is not the only generic intertext of nineteenth-century teacher memoirs; other teacher memoirists interacted with other popular genres to capitalize on the public's comfort with conventional tropes and categories. For example, West begins her memoir with a reference to *David Copperfield,* comparing her project with Dickens' hugely popular fictionalized autobiography (9).[64] The experience of the itinerant schoolteacher necessitated a fair amount of travel for these teacher memoirists, so there is a significant amount of overlap in this era with the travel narratives. In fact, West comments on how she is targeting her experiences in the West in the telling of her autobiography, prefiguring the next cohort of teacher memoirists' engagement with the Western in the 1950s. The last teacher memoirist of this cohort, Lawrence Daniel Washington, both condemns and imitates popular "yellow backs." Blaming them, in part, "for the unrest, the hedonism and the mad scramble for money which symbolized the trend of the next thirty years," Washington also replicates many of their key characteristics in his text, which reads as a type of picaresque and follows his trials and

[64] In a more esoteric intertextual moment, Holbrook recalls stealing apples from a fruit tree with a cadre of friends, a reference to the episode with the pear tree in St. Augustine's *Confessions,* a seminal text of Western autobiography.

tribulations as he grows from an adventure-seeking youth to a devout and rather conservative school teacher (241). More salacious and novelistic than any other text in this project, Washington's *Confessions of a School Master* epitomizes how memoirists tried to utilize available generic conventions for their own political purposes.

While engagement with popular fictional genres made teacher memoirs more palatable to a general reader and perhaps expanded their audience, the political usefulness of memoirs by teachers stemmed from their firsthand experiences. In particular, the experiences of teachers who taught African American students, like some other memoirists with poor white or immigrant populations, demonstrated that all students can and will learn, which was not at all a given in the period. Angelo Patri, an Italian immigrant himself whose *Schoolmaster of the Great City* (1917) testifies to the educability of Southern European immigrants, makes this argument explicit: "Many times I have heard people say that the children who had it in them to be good men and women would become good men and women, and children who had it in them to be bad would become bad. My *experience* has been different" (79, my emphasis).[65] While the assertion of student competence is not unique to memoirs with these student populations (see for example Hubbard 49), given the racial pseudo-science prevalent at the time and the entrenched attitudes about the inferiority of people of color and immigrants, the testimonies about these groups wielded more significance. In many ways, white teachers teaching in communities of color or poor urban communities in the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries are the literary ancestors of post-World War II teacher memoirists who published books about teaching on

[65] Hanus, who does not work primarily with students of color, reprints excerpts from a report he made on a visit to the Hampton Institute, Booker T. Washington's school for African Americans, to argue that the difference between the races is "not primarily a difference of inborn characteristics; it is chiefly a difference of social background and education" (196).

Native American reservations (in the 1950s), in segregated "ghetto schools" (in the 1960s and 1970s), and in under-resourced communities in the twenty first century.[66]

In his introduction to *Two Black Teachers During the Civil War* (1969), which reprints Lewis Lockwood's 1863 biography of the first black freedmen's teacher, Mary S. Peake alongside Forten's autobiography, James McPherson characterizes the Port Royal Experiment of 1862 (where the freedmen's teacher memoirists were all teaching) as "a project of education and acculturation watched critically by the entire North." He further argues that "much was at stake in the schools and on the free labor plantations of the South Carolina Sea islands" (iv).[67] Accounts like Forten's emerged immediately in periodicals to provide inside access to this grand experiment.[68] A white teacher of the freedmen, Sarah Jane Foster, wrote letters home that were published in the *Zion's Advocate* of Portland, Maine during her tenure, which lasted from 1864 through 1868. Although not a teacher memoir in the conventional sense, Foster's choices about what to emphasize in these letters are significant because they illustrate what she thought was most important to tell a very specific audience, i.e., people very much like her in racial and geographic location. Her preoccupation with asserting the fitness of African Americans for educational investment suggests a need for this type of experiential evidence for white people in the period, and the extension of this preoccupation into the formal full-length memoirs published later indicates a continued necessity.

---

[66] One shocking parallel: freedmen's teachers in the 1860s were harassed as "nigger teachers" through threatening letters by white supremacist organizations and Erin Gruwell was also the victim of similar threats (by phone) when her work with her multiracial class was publicized by local news media in the 1990s. Clearly the threat of physical violence was more significant for freedmen's teacher, who were routinely attacked by the KKK, but the similarity is striking.

[67] For information about the freedmen's schools, see McPherson, Reilly, J. Jones, and especially Butchart.

[68] In addition to the series in *The Atlantic Monthly, The Liberator* published letters from Forten between 1862 and 1864.

Foster uses her own erroneous prejudices and descriptions of how her actual experiences contradicted her expectations to instruct her audience about their own mistaken assumptions. A letter published in December of 1865 reads, "But color I find is no test of ability. I have encountered but three, out of more than a hundred in both schools, who could justly be called stupid. I certainly expected to meet more low, animalized natures among them than I have found" (35). From South Carolina she writes, "are these the low people who in freedom were to relapse into barbarism? Things do not look like it here," and, "Then we hear a great deal of cant about 'negro domination' and 'negro insolence,' but I am bold to say that I am very pleasantly situated on a black man's farm, with no white neighbors, and rarely seeing a white face, and I was never better treated" (171).[69] Foster's honesty about her preconceptions paired with her first-person testimony that she was wrong contradicts assumptions and stereotypes about African Americans in a way that is difficult for someone without similar experience to refute.

Later in the century, other white freedmen's teachers published their experiences in book form, including Maria S. Waterbury's *Seven Years Among the Freedmen* (1890), Elizabeth Hyde Botume's *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (1893), and Mary Ames' *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie in 1865* (1906). These books, which emerged after the failure of reconstruction and at what many historians have termed the nadir of African American experience in this country, reminded readers of an earlier time of hope and investment in education, and also argued for a reengagement with education as a political tool for equality.

Like Foster, Botume illustrates the way in which her students and the African Americans with whom she came in contact exceeded her own expectations in many ways, providing an

[69] See also 104, where Foster exposes the assumption that African Americans do not mind the break up of their families as an extreme falsehood. Ames also insists that no slave was every happy under slavery (65).

opportunity for the reader to identify with her prejudices, but then trust her experience, and therefore, perhaps, recalibrate his/her position. By repeating the phrase "on the contrary," Botume exposes popular prejudice and undermines it. For example, when describing the freedmen, she anticipates the common assumption and then espouses the opposite, based on her experience: "They were not idle or lazy. On the contrary, they seemed to have a passion for work" (220).[70] In another instance, Botume is convinced that an old man would give up in the face of overwhelming challenges and consistent disappointment, but "on the contrary" he rallies and succeeds at his endeavor (242).

The white teachers of the freedmen did not wholly escape the racist attitudes of the period, and while they contradict certain racist assumptions they often reinforce others. For example, these texts, particularly Botume's, engage in a troubling alignment between African Americans and animals.[71] Instances of racism within memoirs meant to serve anti-racist causes is not particularly surprising in the period, given the significant overlap between civilizational discourse, which posited a hierarchical (but bridgeable) schema of racial classification, and African American uplift ideology (see Gaines). Historians have noted that classist and/or racist paternalism was never far from the common school project, but the long-standing tension between oppression and liberty in American education emerged with potent force in the 1890s. Teacher memoirs that depict the turn of the twentieth century inaugurate representations of the group that would populate the classrooms of the vast majority of future American teacher memoirs: low-income urban children.

---

[70] See 163 for a similar description of "the maternal feelings" of enslaved women. When describing the first election day where African Americans were allowed to vote, Botume also uses this construction and explicitly identifies to whom she is opposing herself. She writes "contrary to the predictions of many of the white people and hopes of a few, the election passed off admirably" (262).

[71] See 31, 41, 43, 46, 67, 82, 229, and 267.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries American cities experienced huge population booms due to immigration from Europe and the migration of rural families (*Education Week* 5). Writing in 1919, one of the first historians of education, Ellwood Cubberley, characterized the period this way:

> The great stream of immigration that has come to our shores, the caste industrialization which has taken place, the destruction of the old-type home, the virtual disappearance of the apprenticeship system of training, the institution of compulsory education, new conceptions as to the education of delinquents and defectives, new child welfare legislation, and the rise of a rural-life problem of great dimensions, - these are the more important changes and forces of the past three decades which have necessitated extensive modifications in almost every aspect of our educational service. (ix)

Some of the earlier teacher memoirists addressed the relationship between poverty and education, particularly in urban areas. John Griscom, who founded a high school in New York City, was a very early advocate of addressing poverty alongside education; he also founded the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in 1817.[72] Likewise, Edward Austin Sheldon, who went on to found Oswego Normal School, one of the first teacher-training institutions in the country, was also inspired by the situation of the urban poor. He describes a project undertaken in 1848 to investigate poverty in the city of Oswego, where he finds over fifteen hundred illiterate people:

[72] In addition to other strategies, the society advocated for members to go door-to-door to the dwellings of the poor and "advise the indigent with respect to … the education of their children" (159). The funds of the society were to be used to build churches and schools, which would "provide amply for the education of every child in the city" (161). In 1825, after nearly a decade of advocacy, the society succeeded in building a House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents, which was meant to educate and reform juvenile offenders (187).

"As a country boy I had hardly known of such a person, and my astonishment may be well understood on finding such a degree of gross ignorance. To me it seemed like being in the midst of heathendom" (74).[73]

Published in 1911, Sheldon's autobiography joins that of Jane Addams (1910) and Angelo Patri (1917) as arguments for a progressive settlement house model for the uplift of the urban poor.[74] The settlement movement exemplified the growing belief over the course of the 1890s that poverty was neither the fault, nor the inevitable lot of the poor, and that it could be alleviated through education (Cremin 59). Emerging as paragons of this Progressive era, these writers advocated what we now call "wraparound services" for low-income families: providing support for children from birth through adulthood, preparing adults for parenthood and work, and bundling education with other services like healthcare and equitable housing.[75]

Advocacy for the "neighborhood school" or settlement house was, by necessity, predicated on certain failures of the common school model, which had developed in rural areas and towns and was, in certain ways, ill-suited to the requirements of urban populations. Joseph Mayer Rice visited schools in thirty-six cities in 1892 and published a scathing, muckraking report in *Forum* that drew sustained attention to the problems of city schools for the first time.[76] Compounded by Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and *The Children of the Poor* (1892), negative, sad, and frightening images of youth in American cities abounded.[77] As David

---

[73] Sheldon and Griscom's experiences illustrate that poverty was on the rise in urban centers even before the Civil War (Nasaw 13).
[74] For an analysis of Patri's motivations for writing, including "to influence schools for the better," see J. Wallace, especially 213.
[75] The most notable contemporary wraparound program is the Harlem Children's Zone, a model that has been lauded by President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.
[76] For treatments of Rice see Ravitch, *Left* 357; Rousmaniere 24; Cohen 346; Menand 321; Cremin 3-5; Cuban 26; and especially M. Marshall.
[77] See Jacobson for an interesting reading of Riis' texts as fear mongering.

Nasaw rightly notes, what was considered a "youth" problem was really a class problem (98). Thus, the 1890s saw the first major crisis around American education, what historian Lawrence Cremin calls "a nationwide torrent of criticism, innovation and reform" (14; Tyack and Cuban 43).[78] The crisis was also compounded by competition with Germany, which was rapidly expanding its military and economy (Cuban 244).

In some ways texts by Sheldon, Patri, and Addams are precursors to the exposure narratives of the 1960s, in that they expose the limitations of schooling in the period to address the needs of urban populations. However, because they hone so closely to the format of the success story and focus on describing how they addressed the issues they observed, their descriptions of the "slums" never become the horror stories that depictions of the "ghettos" of the 1960s do. The widespread reach of Riis' and Rice's texts did much of the work of exposure for the teacher memoirists of the period – the vast majority of readers would have approached these texts with some knowledge of conditions in urban neighborhoods and schools.

Each of these authors dedicated their life's work to the improvement of poverty through educational institutions, but they approached the project in different ways, and advocated for their specific strategies in the body of their texts. Sheldon began by opening a single free school, but eventually expanded his impact by helping to institute a vast and effective public school system, thereby rendering private schools unnecessary and trying to address poverty from inside the Oswego public schools. Addams deemed the Chicago schools insufficient to solve the problem of poverty, and insisted that the settlement house model was superior. Patri began with the school and then argued that it needed to expand to include a settlement house component, which he instituted as part of his east Harlem New York City public school (82).

[78] See M. Marshall 14 fn. 14 for an extensive list of sources about education in the 1890s.

Regardless of their differences in approaches, Sheldon, Patri, and Addams are all missionaries for their pedagogical creeds. Sheldon explains his desire to found and work at a normal school as a means of spreading the gospel; once he trains teachers they go on to train other teachers, thus multiplying the impact of his teaching philosophies (171). Patri comments, "we are all preachers by nature. We get an idea and at once believe it is the most important idea in the world. Then like true reformers we launch into a campaign" (73). Addams characterizes her realization of the power of the settlement house movement as a conversion, and her voluminous writings on the subject made her one of its most recognizable advocates. This missionary zeal is one reason that these three people chose to write their autobiographies – to ensure that their ideas are available to further generations, and, in the case of Patri and Addams, to spread the gospel even when they are still alive.[79] Like Alcott, each of these authors wrote a variety of other texts in other genres, but *also* wrote their autobiographies, and used these texts as personalized pedagogical polemics.

As many recent historians have noted, while Progressivism was instrumental in extending education to all Americans, the movement, like much of the focus on "progress" in the period, also had a darker side.[80] The investment in education as a means of civilization, and the assumption that assimilation would eradicate the less civilized cultures of southern and eastern Europe for the superior Anglo-Saxon American one, was advocated, in greater or lesser degrees by most progressive reformers. Patri, himself an Italian immigrant, evinced the tension between the transformational and oppressive aspects of schooling. Clearly advocating education as a means of social mobility throughout the text, he ends it with an interesting undercutting of the

[79] As Yagoda notes more generally of memoirs in the period, "The notion of autobiography as more a means to a social end, less an instrument of personal expression, was characteristic of the era, which is referred to as 'Progressive' for a reason" (149).
[80] See Stromquist; Ravitch, *Left*; Lissak; Crocker; and Sullivan.

ethos of Americanization: "Americanize the foreigner, nay, through the child let us fulfill our destiny and Americanize America" (140). Patri sees child-centered instruction as a means of making education more democratic and invokes Americanization not as it is commonly used in the period (regarding English language acquisition, entrance into a capitalist system, following the culturally-prescribed rules of urban living) but rather in an idealized form in terms of individualized education that benefits each child in his/her own way. With this single exception, the depictions of urban schooling in teacher memoirs of the period illuminate how success was measured by the norms of the day and the both philanthropic and paternalistic qualities of education in the period. Just like the memoirs I address in the next chapter, progressive teacher memoirs illustrate Walter Benjamin's assertion that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (256).

In no instance were the dangers of education more clear, at least to its subjects, as in the case of Native American education. In 1900, Zitkala-Sa, a Sioux writer and advocate, published three semiautobiographical stories in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Entitled, consecutively, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians," they traced the trajectory from child to student to teacher that had become familiar fare to readers of teacher memoirs.[81] What was not familiar was her outright condemnation of the school system in which she was educated and later worked. Rejecting the model of the success

[81] See Enoch for an analysis of Zitkala-Sa's educational philosophy and Davidson's and Norris' introduction for background information about Zitkala-Sa's life and a cogent reading of these stories in historical context. I agree with their argument that "the politics of this story reside in its affective register" (33) and also suspect, as they do, that readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* would be emotionally moved by her prose but able to hold paradoxical political views of Native Americans at once (34). In other words, readers could both empathize with her plight and continue to view Indians in general as savages in need of civilization (34).

story (she is the first teacher memoirist to admit to quitting so early in her tenure), Zitkala-Sa utilizes the teacher memoir form to undermine US intervention in her people's education.

Like African American and immigrant teacher memoirists before and after her, Zitkala-Sa herself stands as a testament to the educability of Native Americans. However, unlike other teacher memoirists who are happy to serve as exemplars, Zitkala-Sa wants to question the entire premise undergirding education as civilization. Her coming of age entails her realization that the schooling she so desperately begged for necessitated the loss of her family ties and was ultimately unfulfilling. After describing how she convinced her mother to send her East when she was eight, Zitkala-Sa ends the first story with a foreboding feeling of regret: "I was in the hands of strangers whom my mother did not fully trust. I no longer felt free to be myself, or to voice my own feelings. The tears trickled down my cheeks, and I buried my face in the folds of my blanket" (86). Resonant of stories of families being broken up by slavery in earlier slave narratives, this moment reverses the alignment of education with freedom present in nearly every other memoir in the period and associates it with oppression.

In the second story, Zitkala-Sa describes the harsh conditions of her imprisonment in the Northern boarding school. After graduating, she decides to stay East and to go to college, against her mother's wishes. In the third story, she exposes the hypocrisies of the Indian school system from the inside, as a teacher herself. First, she is demoralized by the fact that her brother, who had earned a good job in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as a result of his Eastern education, has been replaced by a white man, probably because he tried to advocate for their rights (109). Then, she exposes corruption within the BIA: opium-addicted teachers who retain their jobs because they need to support dependents, teachers who taunt students, and fake student work provided to inspectors and government visitors to avoid questioning (111).

After she shares her decision to leave Carlisle, she closes this final installment with a different kind of exposure from that of her contemporaries. In addition to providing the inside access to schools that readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* would have come to expect from earlier teacher memoirs in miniature, Zitkala-Sa exposes how access itself is politically defined. Describing the liberal visitors who came to Carlisle to see "the children of savage warriors so docile and industrious" (112), she concludes her memoir in this way: "Many have passed idly through the Indian schools during the last decade, afterward to boast of their charity to the North American Indian. But there are few who have paused to question whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization" (113). Zitkala-Sa's text is meant to provide that pause, to interrogate assumptions about the beneficial results of education as assimilation. In this passage Zitkala-Sa could also be describing the first eruption of twentieth century teacher memoirs, written by white teachers who taught in Native American schools in the early 1900s, only a few of whom paused to question their engagement in these educational projects.

The teacher memoirs examined in this chapter represent the diversity of teaching and learning experiences in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The twentieth century was a period of immense educational expansion in the United States; by 1960 seventy percent of American children would earn a high school diploma, as opposed to six percent in 1901 (Ravitch 368). The investment in education exhibited by these early teacher memoirists would eventually be shared by most of the American public. At the same time, questions of educational inequality and oppression based on race, class, and gender raised by some of these early memoirs continue to haunt American schooling into the present moment.

CHAPTER TWO

Manifest Pedagogy: The Memoirs of BIA Teachers

Between 1948 and 1963, ten memoirs were published by a cohort of white authors, who, as young women, had worked as teachers of Native American children in federally-funded Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools.[82] Six of these memoirs focused on their authors' experiences in the early twentieth century, forming a cluster of texts that engage with the educational politics of both eras: Alice M. Brooks' and Willietta E. Kuppler's *The Clenched Fist* (1948), Minnie Braithwaite Jenkins' *Girl from Williamsburg* (1951), Estelle Aubrey Brown's *Stubborn Fool: A Narrative* (1952), Flora Gregg Iliff's *People of the Blue Water: My Adventures Among the Walapai and Havasupai Indians* (1954), Gertrude Golden's *Red Moon Called Me: Memoirs of a Schoolteacher in the Government Indian Service* (1954), and Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed's *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song: Two Women in the Klamath River Indian Country in 1908-09* (1957). The four others recount more recent experiences teaching Native Americans after World War I, mostly in Alaska: Eva Alvey Richards' *Arctic Mood: A Narrative of Arctic Adventures* (1949), Dee Inman's *Don't Fence Me In: Life of a Teacher in a Navaho Hogan* (1955), Anna Martin's *Around and About Alaska* (1959) and Agnes Rodli's *North of Heaven: A Teaching Ministry among the Alaskan Indians* (1963).[83] Charged with forcefully assimilating Native Americans into a nation that had been waging violent wars against

[82] I have tried, in the following treatment, to heed Robert Berkhofer's reminder that "the 'Indian' is a white construction," given that this term encompasses at least 2,000 distinct cultures and societies (at time of first contact) (4). When possible, I use specific tribal names and affiliations, but I use the generalized terms "Indians" or "Native Americans" when speaking about general US policy or white attitudes, when discussing trends across the texts, or when the teacher memoirists themselves use more generalized language.

[83] Precursors to these texts include *My Experience with Indians* by John James (1825), which treats his experiences in Texas from 1869-1888, *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux* by Steven Return Riggs (1880), which covers 1837-1877, and *Daylight Moon* by Elizabeth Chabot Forrest (1937), which covers her time teaching in Alaska from 1915-1918.

them since before it was even a nation, these teachers both criticize the system of Indian education and defend it. Written by teachers working within this system and focused on their experiences as outsiders entering into native communities, the texts evince a tension between the teachers' impulses toward ethnographic salvage and their mandate to "kill the Indian, save the man."[84] Regardless of authorial intent, these texts stand as artifacts of what I term the "manifest pedagogy" of the United States, wherein education works in tandem with other racist policies to eradicate Native American self determination.

These texts erupted when the United States was experiencing one of the many educational crises that would captivate the nation's imagination throughout the twentieth century (Cremin 338), as well as beginning the march toward integrating the public schools. Following World War II, critics argued that progressive education had dumbed down American secondary education (Cremin 69, 339, 343; W. R. Johnson 238; Szasz 50). As early as 1947, Benjamin Fine published *Our Children Are Cheated* and embarked on a sixth month long speaking tour about the failure of education (Tyack 273-4). Cold War anxieties crystallized around the issue of education, highlighting its failures and using competition with the Russians as a justification for educational change (Takaki 298). The historic decision to integrate the schools came about at least partially as an international public relations move, an attempt to model democratic values in the face of communism.[85] Especially after the Russians launched Sputnik and beat the United States in the space race in 1957, Americans were left to ponder and reflect on their failure (Cremin 347; Ravitch, *Left* 361). As a result, the federal government passed the National

[84] Richard Henry Pratt, one of the early progenitors of the boarding school movement, used this phrase to describe its objective in 1895 (Churchill 13-4).
[85] Press coverage of Native American issues in the late 1940s reminds readers that Russian exposure and condemnation of the mistreatment of Native Americans is bad for America's international image (Fixico 13).

Defense Education Act (1958), which provided aid to states to improve math, science, and foreign languages (McGuinn 28; Hacsi 6). Even more so than in the 1890s, improving education was a national priority because it was an aspect of national security, a justification that continues into the present day. Immediately upon its publication in 1955, Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read* reached the *New York Times* bestseller list and stayed there for over thirty weeks (Ravitch, *Left* 353). Although he advocated for a very specific type of pedagogical model, Flesch tapped into the general anxiety of the moment by parlaying his concerns about reading instruction into a generalized condemnation of American education.[86] *Life* and *U.S. News and World Report* both ran "crisis in education" series between 1956 and 1958, with one headline querying, "What's Wrong with Teaching in [the] U.S.?" (Cremin 346).

In addition to questioning the quality of teaching and curriculum, cultural critics were also concerned about a perceived upswing in juvenile delinquency (Biskind 197). *Blackboard Jungle,* the film adaptation of Evan Hunter's eponymous 1954 novel, created quite a stir when it came out in 1955 (J. Patterson *Grand* 371; Ayers 229; Biskind 216). It both capitalized on and contributed to contemporary concerns about delinquency by depicting the contemporary (especially urban) classroom as alien and often threatening. In marketing *Blackboard Jungle* filmmakers utilized the rhetoric of savagery to describe the problems in the schools; the trailer explains, "It is fiction, but fiction torn from big city savagery," a portrayal of "the teenage savages who turn big city schools into a jungle."[87]

---

[86] This conflation, along with the inflammatory title, has resulted in the text erroneously being invoked as a scathing critique of all aspects of American education, even to this day.

[87] The overlap of concerns about juvenile delinquency and Indian affairs was not just rhetorical. State officials testified at the 1954 juvenile delinquency hearings that the BIA did not give school districts enough money to incorporate Native American students into their systems (Burt 68). Thus, in certain cities, juvenile delinquents and Indians were thought to be one in the same. For more on juvenile delinquency and popular culture, see Biskind 197-227.

While critics were pinpointing the failures of American education, policies continued to reflect Americans' traditional faith in education as a means of social mobility and equality. Indeed, this faith in the role that education played in the American dream was inextricably connected to the critiques, and contributed to the urgency of the problem; American education was not doing what it was supposed to do. The end of World War II ushered in the G.I. Bill of Rights, which made college affordable for and accessible to veterans, and which historian James Patterson argues was "the most significant development in the modern history of education" (*Grand* 68). Although the G.I. Bill was unequally implemented and overwhelmingly benefitted middle-class white male veterans (L. Cohen 138-43, 156-60, 166-73), it meant that "for the first time, education became part of the lexicon of the working class American and key to economic and social mobility" (McGuinn 27).[88] The Brown v. Board of Education decision, which mandated integration by Supreme Court injunction in 1954, also illustrated an investment in education as the great equalizer, even though its implementation was slow and intermittent.

Thus American's attitudes towards education in the 1950s encompassed criticism and disappointment alongside investment and hope, complex impulses that mirrored those of the teacher memoirists toward the education of Native Americans earlier in the century. In addition, the Brown decision "catapulted education onto a federal stage" (McGuinn 25). Education had always been a state and local responsibility, but Brown (and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which I discuss in the next chapter) set the precedent for more federal

[88] Many Indian veterans took advantage of the free schooling offered by the G.I. Bill, but Indian veterans were not eligible for housing loans because banks would not loan money for reservation housing, and the BIA would not grant the necessary waivers to allow it (Ojibwa). In addition, the lack of educational foundations caused by poor schooling on many reservations meant that some veterans were unable to take advantage of the Bill's educational benefits. See L. Cohen for a general discussion of the limitations of the G.I. Bill for working class people (156-60). The federal government passed the Indian Claims Commission Act in 1946, which was seen as a way to pay back Native Americans for their wartime service (Parman 126).

involvement (McGuinn vii). Up until this point, the only significant long-term federal influence in education had been its role in Native American education vis-à-vis the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[89] Thus, at a moment of heightened interest in education, concern about educational crisis and expansion of the federal government's role in education in the 1950s, these memoirs emerged to illustrate how the government had earlier (mis)managed the education of Native Americans.

While each of these memoirs speaks to the singular experience of its author and contains certain unique elements, there are many striking similarities, especially between the ones that were published decades after the main action of the narrative. In many ways, these authors are essentially telling the same story: Feeling stifled, frustrated, or bored by their upbringing and seeing their opportunities limited by their gendered identities, the authors embarked on journeys west seeking adventure and fulfillment teaching Native American children.[90] Almost all of the memoirs open with scenes of travel, situating the texts as snapshots of a life: the narrative of teaching takes center stage. Likewise, most of the texts end when the memoirists leave teaching, or leave the specific reservation that serves as the focus of the text. Scattered throughout are certain key scenes: the teacher arrives after a harrowing journey to discover that her accommodations are rustic and uncomfortable, but that the landscape offers a beauty that she had heretofore never experienced. The teacher clashes with some administrators or coworkers and bonds with others. The teacher is overwhelmed and frustrated by the challenges of living on a reservation and teaching native students. The teacher celebrates her first Christmas on the

[89] As described in chapter one, the Freedmen's Bureau, which provided educational and other types of assistance to freed slaves between 1865 and 1872, was an earlier instance of federal intervention in education, if only for a short time.

[90] Reyhner and Eder also note these motivations (157-9). See Carter "Completely" for an analysis of the similarities between the texts in regards to the women's experiences of gender oppression and resistance against BIA mandates.

reservation. The teacher travels again, either on vacation or to a new post; many memoirs recount multiple journeys. The teacher observes native customs and sometimes participates in festivals or ceremonies. The teacher witnesses appalling living conditions, inequitable situations and/or the results of oppressive or racist policies. Finally, the teacher leaves, often to get married and return east.

Unlike the more expansive memoirs of the nineteenth century, these narratives are almost exclusively focused on the temporal and spatial limitations of the author's teaching tenures. Even so, they build on the nineteenth century model of the success story, which frame one teacher's success in the classroom as representative of the positive potential for a certain type of schooling. In the twentieth century, most teacher memoirists temper their success stories, but they continue to tell them. Many BIA teacher memoirists feel ambivalent about the BIA and the system of Indian education to which they are dedicating their time, and in certain cases, their lives. However, to condemn wholesale the BIA's education of native children would require teachers to both accept responsibility for their own role in it, and to judge some part of their life's work useless and/or a failure, a move that only one memoirist is completely willing to make.

From the first pages of *Stubborn Fool: A Narrative* (1952, hereafter referred to as *Stubborn Fool*), Estelle Aubrey Brown forefronts her politics and connects the events of her life to larger historical moments. This wider focus and her extreme indictment of federal Indian policy situates her as the exception that proves the rule: the language with which she excoriates everyone involved in Indian education, including herself, highlights the ambivalence of the other memoirists. Unlike them, Brown does not include even one scene of connection with her students or one moment of pedagogical success. Her insistence on her own failure frees her from the conventions of the success story; her narrative does not describe her development from

novice to expert (or at least competent) teacher. Instead it traces a developing consciousness about the oppressiveness of the system of Indian education in which she is participating.[91]

Brown's teacher memoir is the first to embrace a fully confessional mode, suggesting that exposing the corruption and oppression of Indian education is her moral duty, even though it will also expose her personal guilt.[92] Published six years before her death, the text serves as a mea culpa. In a *New York Herald Tribune* review titled "A National Tragedy," the reviewer rightly notes that "she does not aim to entertain, but by writing this autobiographical document, to raise issues of justice" and writes that Brown "wants the citizens of today to build new policies with the whole case record in hand" (Evans). Brown certainly wants the text to serve as a warning about contemporary educational policy: her failure argues against enforced assimilation.[93]

In the foreword, Brown explains her purpose in terms of the historical record: "The story these people enact is an American story, yet it is known to few Americans. Because it should be known to all, the story is here told by a woman who lived it, who found much of it infamous, and who freely confesses her own shabby part in it." The precedent of confession that Brown sets early on in the text allows her the freedom to fully condemn not only the implementation of BIA policies, but also the policies themselves. Likewise, less than 50 pages into a text that spends

---

[91] See Jacobs 389-394 for an analysis of Brown and Golden as examples of the "growing opposition to child removal in the U.S." (389). She claims that Brown is "perhaps the most articulate of white women schoolteachers who grew to oppose the policy of removing Indian children" (393).

[92] Ticker reminds us that in the context of truth and reconciliation efforts now, confession is not enough. He cautions against the acceptance of confession alone as a purging of guilt or as "incontrovertible proof of each confessor's honesty, integrity, and otherwise honorable character" (xxviii). Indeed, although Brown's act of confession is extraordinary as compared to the other memoirs, it does not absolve her of her complicity in the acts she exposes.

[93] In the context of Indian education, the terms "assimilation" and "assimilationist" are used to refer to enforced and oppressive (and generally unsuccessful) policies of education. In other contexts, for example the education of immigrants discussed in the last chapter, assimilation has different, often more positive connotations, because of the elective nature of immigrant assimilation as opposed to that of indigenous populations.

over 300 pages describing a teaching life, she admits that at the end of her first month teaching, she "knew that as a teacher of Indian children I was a failure" (42). The reasons she lists for her failure are instructive because they move from an assumption that some hypothetical other person could possibly be successful as a teacher of Indian children ("the work called for unlimited patience and I was naturally impatient") to an indictment of the system as a whole: teaching "called for a belief in the necessity of recreating Indian children in my own image. In sixteen years I did not acquire that belief" (42). The latter reason argues that the impulses behind Indian education were morally suspect, and that "success" as defined by the BIA would nevertheless be a moral failure, which is how she defines her own rise through the BIA ranks. Unlike many teacher memoirists, including most of the other teachers in this cohort, who frame teaching as a calling, Brown acknowledges the more practical considerations that led her to teach, namely that she had wanted to take the clerical test for the BIA but was banned because of her gender (23). In the stagecoach that carries her to her new post, she reflects on her new position: "teaching, like my long skirts, had been forced upon me. I hated them both" (25). A keen bureaucratic manipulator, Brown leaves teaching as soon as possible, advancing though various administrative positions in the BIA, although the memoir focuses on the earlier years when she was still teaching.[94] The length of Brown's tenure contributes to the extremity of her guilt and shame, as she recounts her developing awareness of the problems of the system even as

[94] Brown consistently comments on the sexism of the BIA and the discrimination she faced because of her gender; see Carter for an analysis of this trend across the memoirs. Nevertheless, it was more possible for women to rise up the ranks of the BIA than any other government agency. Estelle Reel, the superintendent of Indian schools starting in 1901, was the first woman nominated to a political position high enough to require Senate ratification (Child and Lomawaima 31).

she refuses to leave it.[95] She did resign for a short time (209), but asks for reinstatement within the year and is given a promotion and a position at the largest nonreservation boarding school in the country, in Phoenix (217).

Throughout the text, Brown continually indicts the federal policy of Indian education, which in the late 1880s and 1890s replaced war with education as a means to eradicate Native American culture. According to historian David Wallace Adams, "the war against savagism [was] waged" in a new way, as "an ideological and psychological" assault against Indian children (27). By the end of the 1880s, federal Indian schools operated on every reservation in the country (Hoxie 70). In dominant discourse, schools were symbols of a common faith in education's ability to convert native children to "civilization"; the goal of Indian education was to train them for citizenship and work, convert them to Christianity, instill the value of private property, and eradicate Native languages in favor of English (Adams 21-24).[96] Justified by pseudoscientific evolutionary principles and informed by bureaucratic decision making instead of Native American input, the system of education that the BIA facilitated wrenched children away from their homes and families and by in large relocated them to neglectful or abusive situations in poorly run schools. It contributed to the weakening of community bonds in indigenous communities, and created a generation of children who often did not feel like they fit into white or Indian society. While some former students were grateful for the opportunities afforded by BIA education, the system is generally considered corrupt, racist, and oppressive.

---

[95] Another memoirist, Gertrude Golden, explains that many people went into the Indian service because of a scarcity of teaching jobs and low wages for both men and women, which are also reasons why people, including Brown, may have stayed (57).

[96] Adams also points out that educating Indians relieved the government of the responsibility for feeding and clothing them and that one argument for education was that it was less expensive to educate Indians than to kill them (through warfare) (20).

According to historian David DeJong, "despite its promise and intent, the government Indian education system failed most of its students."[97]

Brown characterizes the policies of the early twentieth century as "inept and erroneous … a policy that destroyed family life, disregarded the human right, recognized by all men, of parents in their own children. It was a policy that ignored the necessity of building upon what was good and fitting in the tribal way of life. Instead it attempted to destroy what the Indians already had" (234). She laments: "What right do we have to take these children from their parents? ... Why do we deny Indians the rights we claim for ourselves?" (137). She admits that "daily in my work I helped to bring these Indians nearer a landless penury" (167) and that "we were accessories after the fact to the Indian Bureau's inhumanity" (185). Although Brown sometimes intervenes to try to advocate for certain Native Americans, she realizes "that dissent meant loss of a means of livelihood. But I saw something of the destitution and disease on the reservations. I saw sick, hungry, and overworked children. And I did nothing. I was cowardly and acquiescent" (258). Brown's repetition of "I saw" emphasizes her position of witness, and the role of her text as an exposure narrative. Brown takes this one step further by linking seeing and doing, even as she admits that she "did nothing." While other BIA memoirists decry conditions but argue that they could not have done anything (or that they did all they could), and contemporary critics acknowledge the limitations that BIA teachers experienced in terms of means of resistance (see Carter, "Completely"), Brown accepts that she may have been able to do something, but simply did not, as the addition of "cowardly" to her self indictment of

[97] For more extensive historical treatment of Native American education, especially boarding schools, see Adams; Hoxie; Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc; Child and Lomawaima; Jacobs 26-31; Reyhner and Eder; and Szasz.

"acquiescence" indicates. Brown's self indictment explicitly connects her own identity to her observation and inaction by connecting the three verbs: "I saw, I did, I was."

Brown's title, *Stubborn Fool*, invokes her father's response to her plans to travel west to teach Indians: he urged, "Go, then. Be a stubborn fool. You won't have the guts to stick it out, even if they let you stay after they find out you are no more a kindergartener than a cat" (22). His criticism of her choice underlines her own anxieties that she is an impostor. Nearly every teacher memoirist in this study expresses the feeling of having no idea what s/he is doing, and questions whether s/he should have been allowed into the classroom in the first place. However, in Brown's case, the moniker of "Stubborn Fool" is also a testament to her entire career. By the end, she realizes she has been a fool to invest her life into an education system in which she does not believe and which perpetrated a myriad of offenses against native children. In Phoenix, she feels the stirrings of the conscience that would eventually inspire her to write her memoir; she frames writing as concurrent with and sometimes even causative of her consciousness-raising. She begins writing autobiographical stories "to quiet the mental unease which overtook me from time to time. In no other way could I cast the burden from me …" (244). This exorcism through writing would also serve as a motivation for some later teacher memoirists, who feel similarly guilty about their role in oppressive educational systems.

Brown's decision to write and publish a full-scale memoir was not just a means of exorcising her demons, but also a way to make up for her earlier inaction and silence, especially in the context of the wave of public opinion in the early 1950s that was pushing toward a reengagement with all of the values that were anathema to her. While the text recounts aspects of her early life and later professional experience, the bulk of Brown's narrative covers earlier stages of her career, from around 1902-1918, when she was working at boarding schools

primarily in South Dakota, Arizona, and Idaho. Likewise, the texts of four other memoirists all take place in the early 1900s, but were not published until the 1950s. It is difficult to determine when these memoirists composed their texts and it is likely that composition was something of a process. Brown had published excerpts of her early letters home in 1912 under the title *The Indian Special*, and she published excerpts of her diary in *Sunset* in 1921.[98] In her preface, Minnie Braithwaite Jenkins explains that "this record is developed from a trunkful of letters saved by my mother" (vii). Likewise, in a prefatory note entitled "an explanation," Flora Gregg Iliff writes, "It would be folly for me to pretend that I remember, for all these years, each date, name and conversation recorded in this book. When I returned home from Truxton, at my mother's death, I found my letters, relating for her sharing the experiences I had so enjoyed … I, too, saved them, little thinking that *they* would write a book" (my emphasis). Perhaps a slip of the pen, Iliff's attribution of authorship to her letters underlines the complexity of the composition history of this cohort of teacher memoirs. At least two of the texts include long sections that the authors supposedly wrote while teaching. Inman's text is divided into a narrative account of her summer spent as a fire spotter in a national park, and a series of diary entries that were ostensibly composed during her six month teaching tenure, sandwiched by descriptive text written after the fact. Although they are not marked with a year, references throughout the text indicate that she was probably teaching (and writing) in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Reed and Arnold explain their composition process explicitly in a foreword dated July, 1955: each night they would return to their house and "write down exactly what had happened since we set out in the morning. We would then compare our two separate accounts in

[98] Brown makes disparaging asides about these early forays into writing in the memoir on pages 222 and 267. She also discusses a novel that was published in 1930 (283-4).

order to arrive, as nearly as possible, at a true statement …". They insist that their memoir "stands as it was written in 1909."[99]

The explanatory paratextual materials, along with serving to authenticate the memory content of the memoirs, also suggest that these texts were long-term works in progress, and that authors were borrowing language from their earlier selves for the body of the texts. In addition to prefatory materials, most of the memoirists conclude with additional text that flashes forward from the end of their teaching tenures to the contemporary moment of the 1950s. Most of these addenda address contemporary politics explicitly, and read like they were appended later on, especially in the case of Inman and Golden. Unfortunately, not very much is known about the publication history of these particular texts. Most of them were published by regional or vanity presses; only Iliff was published by a nationally recognized publishing house (Harper). Thus, it is difficult to determine whether their publication in the 1950s rather than closer to the time of their setting can be attributed to delays in composition, authorial decisions, or to time spent trying to get the books published through other channels.[100] Iliff's and Jenkins's references to their letters, and Brown's and Golden's comments within their texts, suggest that they were only afforded the time to write, revise, or compile a memoir after their retirement, and I suspect that Reed and Arnold were unable to get their work published through traditional channels, given that they eventually self-published with Vantage Press, which is currently America's oldest self-

[99] For an extended reading of Reed and Arnold's text, see Watson "As Gay."
[100] Jacobs notes that most teachers who "became critical of the schools" waited to voice their concerns until after their teaching tenure was up (395). Even though I view the memoirists as less critical than she does, the teacher memoirists may have been hesitant to publish while still working for the BIA.

publishing corporation (founded in 1949).[101] Nevertheless, the eruption of these texts in the 1950s means that in addition to commenting on the educational policies of an earlier era, the memoirists could also address policies regarding Native Americans that had been implemented in the first half of the twentieth century, and those that were emerging in the early 1950s. Indeed, some contemporary reviews of Brown's and Iliff's text acknowledge their contemporary resonances. For example, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Henley writes that even though Iliff's story begins in 1900, it "cannot be dismissed as comfortably remote from today" (see also Sandoz and Evans).

The 1950s marked a dramatic shift in federal policy towards Native Americans, a shift that was in many ways a return to the ideology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the setting of almost all these teacher memoirs. By the 1920s, the boarding school model of Indian education was in decline (Jacobs 169, 404).[102] In the late 1920s a Senate subcommittee held hearings on the conditions of Native Americans. They considered testimony from teachers and exposed corruption in all aspects of Indian affairs and horrible conditions in the schools (DeJong 117, 134; Jacobs 391-2). In 1934 Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), also known as the "Indian New Deal," which moved to reverse earlier policies and embraced aspects of native cultures. Guided by the tenets of progressive education and recent anthropological concepts of cultural pluralism and relativity, the new non-boarding

[101] Brooks and Kuppler self-published at Dorrance Press in Philadelphia, which printed a number of teacher memoirs during the next teacher memoir eruption in the 1960s. Inman may have also self-published.

[102] Helen Carr notes that by the early 1900s the civilization campaigns of the late 1800s "no longer seemed (to everyone at least) as good of an idea as it had seemed twenty years before" (197). By the 1920s, this attitude was reflected at the federal level.

school model was to encourage "cultural revitalization" instead of enforced assimilation (Dippie 325; Burt 52).[103]

While not always successful, the reforms instituted by the IRA lasted until World War II. However, after the war, the federal government ushered in a new policy of "termination."[104] Historians suggest a variety of reasons for this policy shift, including Native Americans' participation in the armed forces (Fixico 14; Parman 122), the nationalism inspired by the war (Burt 4), conservative backlash to New Deal policies (DeJong 161; Nash et al. 135), a Western economic boom (Burt 4), and the skyrocketing defense budget (Fixico 21).[105] Under termination certain tribes were deemed ready to be independent of their ward status, and thus their trust relationship with the government was dissolved.[106] Along with termination, the government instituted a relocation program, which subsidized adults who wanted to move off the reservation to big cities and provided education and job training (Fixico 139).[107] While the extremity of the move toward termination was new, the "paternalistic supervision" (Fixico ix) was not, and like the policies of the late-nineteenth century, termination emphasized assimilation above all else.

---

[103] For criticisms of the IRA and examples of Indian resistance to it, see Dippie 311-317; J. Patterson, *Grand* 376; and Berkhofer 175. See Embry for a 1950s critique of the IRA and an argument for termination.

[104] According to Fixico, 109 cases of termination were initiated, affecting a minimum of 1,362,155 acres and 11,466 individuals (181).

[105] When it began termination appealed to many different constituencies. Neale argues that assimilationist policies pleased both sides of the aisle in the 1950s. Conservatives embraced the concept of Americanization, and liberals saw them as a harbinger for desegregation and equal rights (20). Drinnon agrees that termination was inspired by liberal sentiments (*Keeper* 267). See also Nash et al. 129 and Hearm 137. Others argue that termination was only passed because of GOP control of both the legislative and the executive branches (Burt 19).

[106] The policy was widely opposed by Native Americans (Fixico 22; Dippie 340; Szasz 113; Burt 66) and is now overwhelmingly considered a failure (Nash et al.; Burt). However, some younger Indians supported termination (Fixico 123). Philp reminds us that "termination meant different things to different groups of Indians" (xi).

[107] Approximately 61,500 Native Americans received vocational training under the relocation program (Fixico 190).

According to historian Robert F. Berkhofer, "the whole policy of termination and relocation in the 1950s, like allotment in the 1890s, was directed at destroying the physical and legal separateness of Native Americans" (192).[108] In short, this policy replicated the ideology of the BIA at the time the teacher memoirists were teaching. Pro-termination rhetoric in the late 1940s called for English-only instruction and breaking children's tribal ties at a young age (Dippie 341). In fact, after World War II, even boarding schools became popular for policy makers again (DeJong 161; Reyhner and Eder 233), and relocation drew from many of the same ideas that inspired the earlier development of boarding schools, but this time the government targeted adults.[109]

Given this context, the attitudes that the teacher memoirists exhibit about the enforced assimilation in which they took part in the early twentieth century are applicable to debates about termination and relocation that were occurring around the time of the texts' publications. For example, Brown's assertion, "it was a policy that ignored the necessity of building upon what was good and fitting in the tribal way of life. Instead it attempted to destroy what the Indians already had," was explicitly about educational policies in the 1900s, but applies directly to the policies of the 1950s, especially given that in the interim the IRA had embraced "what was good and fitting in the tribal way of life." Indeed, after concluding her personal narrative with her husband's death in Paris in 1921, Brown includes three chapters of political commentary,

[108] For analyses of the cyclical nature of federal Indian policy and the similarities between the turn of the century and the 1950s, see also Jacobs 426; Szasz 113; Fixico; and Nash et al. 129. For a contemporary acknowledgment of this trend see Felix Cohen's work in *The Yale Law Journal* (1953) (qtd. in Drinnon, *Keeper* 263).

[109] In addition to the government's renewed ideological support of boarding schools, there were practical concerns. The lack of school facilities in the 1950s for Native American children on some reservations (epitomized by the situation of the Navajos) meant that children were forced to go to boarding schools if they wanted to take advantage of any form of federally funded schooling (DeJong 176).

praising the policies of the Indian New Deal and condemning the early iterations of relocation and termination (289-309). She even dedicates the book to John Collier, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs who spearheaded the IRA. For Brown the developments of the early 1950s contributed to the urgency of her autobiographical project, which in addition to the other motivations mentioned above, was also meant to intervene in what she saw as a dangerous reiteration of the very practices she condemns.

Regardless of their insistence that their collaborative memoir remained unrevised from its original 1909 incarnation, Reed and Arnold's *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song* (hereafter referred to as *Grasshopper Song*) would have taken on added significance in the 1950s because it is the only one of the texts that deals explicitly with a tribe that was actually terminated, the Karoks of the Klamath River Country.[110] One particular episode stands as an exemplar of the way in which this cohort of teacher memoirs resonated with 1950s policies regarding Native Americans.[111] In this episode, Reed and Arnold describe their efforts on behalf of "poor old Ruffy," explaining that, "here in this valley, where there are grain fields and fruit orchards, land is valuable and Ruffy's house is claimed by one white man, the field where he has his garden, by another, and the loft where he keeps his wood, by a third" (267-8). They hope to find Ruffy some

[110] Klamath termination was legislated in 1956, but implementation did not begin until 1961. They were reinstated in 1986. The Klamath tribes keep a detailed website with historical information, including an extensive critique of termination. See "Termination." For other analyses of Klamath termination, see Fixico 123-31 and Parman 139-41.

[111] The Karoks are not the only tribe that readers might recognize from current events. A few years after the publication of *People of the Blue Water*, the Havasupai tribe was in the news because some families had moved into the Grand Canyon National Park so they could send their children to local schools rather than having to send them to distant BIA boarding schools (Burt 77). In addition, the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1950 to address the lack of schooling facilities for those tribes that Jenkins discusses (153), and in 1954 the government addressed the failure of the provisions of that act with the Navajo Educational Emergency Program. However, the shortage of facilities in the 1950s meant that Navajo and Hopi children were still being sent to far-off boarding schools like the ones depicted in Golden, Brown, and Jenkins (DeJong 175-76).

government land where he can live once he is displaced. While Ruffy's individual predicament is emblematic of the land grabs that happened throughout the country to Indians of all tribes since the beginnings of exploration and conquest, given his tribal affiliation it is especially pertinent to what was happening in the same area in the 1950s as a result of termination policy. As one would expect, there is no appropriate land for Ruffy, and the episode ends with Reed and Arnold feeling helpless and discouraged. Throughout the four-page episode, the authors point out the institutional racism of government policy towards Indians, and the hopelessness and helplessness they and the Indians feel in the face of it: "This is the white man's country, and the Indian has a small chance" (268), "Here in this great, rich valley, what chance did the Indians have? It was bitter business" (268), "The problem of the Indian in a white man's country stared us in the face. What could Ruffy do under these circumstances? What could we do for him? We were sick at heart" (270). Finally, they conclude the episode with a longer lamentation:

> We had touched something that turned us cold. Was there any chance at all for the Indian in this white man's country? Was there any chance for the Indian where he had no legal status? It was different in the Forest Preserve. That was government land, where the rights of the Indians were protected in some measure. But here in the valley? What would become of Ruffy? Of course, we could write a report. But what good would a report do in the face of such dire human need? (271)

For Reed and Arnold, this episode leads to an acknowledgement of their own white privilege, and a crisis of faith in their work, which likely affected their subsequent decision to leave. While Reed and Arnold recount other instances of what they consider successful engagement with their

Indian neighbors and worthwhile educational endeavors, this episode resonates with Brown's systemic criticisms, since Reed and Arnold imply that there is no such thing as success in the face of such a large problem.

At the same time, the questions they ask remain pertinent to the decisions being made about Indian policy at the time of the text's publication. While Indians had finally been granted citizenship in 1924 and therefore gained the legal status that they had been denied when Reed and Arnold were writing, the question of what chance an Indian had in a white man's country was still a central political question. Relocation was supposed to encourage the success of the Indian in the white man's country, but many Native Americans returned to reservations, and those who didn't often lived in what amounted to urban reservations: impoverished, segregated communities within major cities. Likewise, termination erased the measure of government protection to which Reed and Arnold allude. Reed and Arnold do not provide any more information about the vulnerable Ruffy, but his presence in the text, along with his questionable future, stands as a stark reminder to a contemporary reader of the risks of termination for individual Native Americans.

Along with the interest in Native American education generated by the termination controversy, Americans in the 1950s were inundated with images of Indians because the TV western was in its heyday (Boddy 120; Buscombe and Pearson 5; Lusted 11-12). Westerns had been popular film fare since the invention of the medium, so audiences would have been familiar with the tropes and conventions of the genre, but the proliferation of TV westerns in the mid-late 1950s meant that Americans could conceivably watch a Western every night of the week from the privacy of their own homes. For most Americans, westerns were the primary way that they had any contact with images of Native Americans, who were always secondary to the main,

white protagonists and often depicted as treacherous or dirty (Patterson 350). At the same time, "the Indian in the Western, however oppressed or misrepresented, subverted white America's self-representation as a righteous nation" (Prats xv). The postwar revival of the western film often included more sympathetic portrayals of Indians, although they certainly did not shatter prevailing stereotypes (Hearm 126; Dippie 340; Biskind 231; French 98-100). By the late 1950s, universally recognized broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow called for networks to pay more attention to "real" Indians on television, a crusade that indicated the ubiquity of the TV western and its old-fashioned and unrealistic portrayal of Native Americans (Burt 114).

Mid-century American fascination with Native Americans was also evinced by an interested in anthropology and a return to "the Indian play" popular at the turn of the century in organizations like the Boy Scouts and the Campfire Girls (Deloria 153). The *American Indian Hobbyist* periodical was founded in 1954, and white Americans took pilgrimages to powwows and reservations, costumed themselves in "Indian dress" and held monthly meetings (Deloria 7, 137). These hobbyists would have voraciously consumed these teacher memoirs, especially those with a good deal of ethnographic content. In addition, participant-observer anthropologists like Margaret Mead became nationally recognized "heroic figures" after World War II (Deloria 141); ethnographers were seen as "sympathetic and authoritative observer[s]" (Clifford "Introduction" 9). The popular cultural context of concern about education coupled with the rise of the TV western and ethnographic interest in Native Americans created the perfect storm for the eruption of these teacher memoirs, which capitalized on popular engagement with Westerns and fulfilled the desire for "authentic" representations of Indians.

Some of the earlier writers acknowledge the difference between the time in which they worked and the time in which they are published in the popular culture landscape; Golden

reflects that her early interactions with Native Americans were especially surprising because "this was 1901, a good many years before the moving pictures had made such scenes familiar to all" (3). Just a few years later, Arnold and Reed "wonder why this part of the country is not more like the westerns you read in books and magazines" (58). They explain "but when people write westerns, although the things they write about may have actually happened, the pace they set is terrific. On nearly every page, someone gets killed or murdered or abducted. … But here on the Rivers we take things much more leisurely …" (59). Like Coppin, Marrs, and Payne, who engaged with the conventions of the slave narrative form in order to move beyond them, these teacher memoirists take advantage of the popularity of the Western even as they criticize some of its characteristics. Arnold and Reed's self-conscious considerations of genre illustrate how some of these teacher memoirists see themselves as reconceptualizing the Western form.[112]

Inman expands on this discussion of genre; by the time she started teaching in the late-1930s she would have been exposed to even more textual representations, along with some early film adaptations. Inman's most frequent reference is to Zane Grey, the popular Western writer, whose representations of the West and Native Americans in stories and novels in the first half of the twentieth century helped to shape many of the images and stereotypes of the Old West (Fiedler 142). Referring to his influential novel *The Vanishing American*, which was first serialized in *The Ladies' Home Journal* in 1922 and published in 1926, and aligned with the ideology of the Indian New Deal, Inman writes, "first of all I discovered that 'the vanishing red man' out this way had already multiplied more than three times since 1868; and that the more than 60,000 tribesmen were now rapidly outgrowing the carrying capacity of their reservation" (77). Unlike the other memoirists, whose texts treat a more distant past, Inman emphasizes the

[112] Evans' review of *Stubborn Fool* underscores this generic move. She writes, "There isn't an ounce of romance or Wild West in [the] book."

relevance of her text to the present day. Likewise, Ann Martin, whose *Around and About Alaska* was published in 1959, and Agnes Rodli, whose *North of Heaven* was published in 1963, discuss their more recent experiences with Alaskan natives, reminding the audience of the issues facing the Indians of the "last frontier."[113]

Inman is committed to challenging the pervasive images of Native Americans with which she assumes her audience is familiar. She resists what she sees as the "romantic" images of Indians and of the West, and instead focuses on the quotidian.[114] For example, she writes:

> According to the novelist, the hero is always gripped by the strangeness, the silence and the brooding mystery of the desert. To me the wonder and strangeness are that the people and animals survive at all in this hostile environment. … As for the brooding and the mystery, I figure that is me brooding over the mystery of how I am going to pass my probationary period here and eventually earn an Alaskan appointment. (148)

Inman casts herself as the hero of her new Western, one more concerned with the daily tasks of the schoolteacher than the gunfights of the cowboy, more interested in assimilating the natives through education than eradicating them with violence. While the schoolmarm played a

[113] It is fitting that this cluster of teacher memoirs ends with texts set in Alaska, which was only granted statehood toward the end of the cycle, on January 3, 1959. The United States began providing educational services in Alaska in 1884, and administration of these services was transferred to the BIA in 1931. Many BIA teachers worked in indigenous communities in the lower forty-eight states as well as Alaska. Inman writes that her ultimate goal in working in the southwest is to be transferred to Alaska (98) and ends the text in the hope that the BIA will send her there as a wedding gift.

[114] Martin does the same for Alaska, explaining that "dog-team trips are not as romantic as they are cracked up to be in story books!" (39)

supporting role in many westerns (Berkhofer 97), in western teacher memoirs, the schoolmarm takes center stage.

The authors' engagement with the Western belies the way in which they position themselves in regards to their audience, claiming a level of expertise that derives from their direct experiences with Native Americans, as opposed to their readers who ostensibly know nothing besides what they see on TV or in film, or read in the papers or in novels. At the beginning of each text, the author frames herself as a naïve innocent with no idea of what to expect, much like her readers would be. Often, the authors illustrate their naïveté through a description of their frivolous packing decisions. Brown ends her first chapter with a one-sentence paragraph meant to underscore her extreme lack of understanding of what is to come: "In my new suitcase, as aids to beauty were my curling tongs and talcum powder" (23). Likewise, the arduous journeys that begin these memoirs often require that the authors immediately adjust their expectations, as Reed and Arnold realize when it is pointed out to them that they have dramatically over packed, and will need to repack a selection of their clothing in flour sacks; they decide to leave their "elaborate, trimmed hats" behind (15). Thus, the narrative of teaching is also a narrative of learning, as the authors become accustomed to the norms and rhythms of the reservations, and begin to understand the various native cultures of their students.[115]

Although none of the teacher memoirists were trained anthropologists, the texts include lots of ethnographic description and information, which was one of their main selling points.[116]

---

[115] Iliff makes this explicit at the conclusion of her text when she writes, "The many years I spent with the Indians had proved to be more than an adventure; they were an education" (271). The review in *Booklist* cites this sentiment.

[116] Griffiths refers to early silent films about Indians as "quasi-ethnographic" because they were made by non-anthropologists with varying degrees of ethnographic insight (79), and Clifford refers to "para-ethnographic" genres of oral history, the nonfiction novel, the "new journalism," travel literature and the documentary film (*Predicament* 24 n. 3) (I would add the teacher

To different extents, all of the authors are motivated to share their ethnographic knowledge, to teach their readers about the cultures that they have experienced. Sometimes, as with Brown, this ethnographic motivation informs a type of advocacy for the Indians and a resistance to the mandates of the BIA.[117] More often it contributes to the teachers' ambivalence about their work, the tension between their ethnographic interest and their mandate to eradicate native cultures through their teaching. Ironically, it is their job to erase the cultures in the classroom that they are dedicated to preserving on the page. The teachers' experiences and their memoirs exemplify what Alison Griffiths has identified as the allochronic-coeval paradox of white representations of Native Americans, in which teachers simultaneously engage in "salvage ethnography" to record a vanishing race (allochronic), and understand that Indians continue to exist and believe they should be assimilated (coeval) (84).[118]

Iliff's memoir, *People of the Blue Water: My Adventures among the Walapai and Havasupai Indians* (1954, hereafter referred to as *People of the Blue Water*) exemplifies the ethnographic impulses of the genre as a whole. The text was the only one to have national exposure because of its publishing house; the front flap bills it as "an intimate and human account of a vanishing America … a unique story of personal adventure in a strange backwater of history." Contemporary reviews of the text acknowledge its ethnographic usefulness and underline Iliff's experiential authority. For example, one reviewer notes that "the ethnologist may obtain some valuable data from it" (E. Smith), another alludes to Iliff's "solid background

---

memoir to this list as well). While I acknowledge that these women were not professional anthropologists, I use the term "ethnographic" without qualifiers because there are very strong similarities between ethnography proper and the work these teachers are doing in the memoirs. Since anthropology was in the process of developing over the course of these teachers' careers and lives, some of the techniques they used during their teaching tenures could be considered precursors to developments like participant observation.

[117] See Carter "Completely" and Jacobs.

[118] See also H. Carr 155.

of factual accuracy" (Debo), and a third evokes a Havasupai puberty ritual as an example of Iliff's "fascinating detail" (*Time*).[119] In the same prefatory "explanation" that references her letters as source material, Iliff thanks anthropologists Leslie Spier and George Wharton James for making their materials available to her; she quotes from anthropologists' descriptions of the tribes with which she worked throughout the text (see, for example, 122-3, 193). She personally knew James and accompanied him on his research trips, recording the experience of visiting a canyon where no white person had ever been (134-7). Indeed, Iliff's choice of subject matter itself illustrates her investment in ethnography; although she worked with Native Americans for forty years, the memoir treats only the approximately four years (1900-1904) that she worked at day and boarding schools with the "most primitive" (the Walapai and Havasupai of Arizona).

At times, Iliff makes the tension between her dual positions of teacher and amateur ethnographer explicit, as in a moment during an expedition to an undiscovered canyon when "my teacherish qualms as to sanitation prevailed over my explorer's urge" (225). Iliff does not hate teaching like Brown does, but the focus of the text suggests that teaching serves as an excuse for Iliff to fulfill her desires for adventure and exploration, a feminine pursuit that can be parlayed to allow her access to other, less feminine, opportunities. The text opens with her decision to teach Native Americans, inspired by a lecturer at her teacher's college, who describes the "land of mystery and enchantment" and the Indian's "intriguing and primitive culture" (3). In this sense, Iliff's explorations lead her to find what she expects to find, and she explicates many aspects of Havasupai and Walapai culture throughout her text, which recounts her experiences teaching at a

[119] Even the one reviewer who notes that Iliff "was no trained ethnologist" adds that her "unflagging interest in [Indian] legends and customs led her to ask questions, make friends, and, always try to understand" (Jackson *Chicago*). In his review in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he also points out that when Iliff was teaching, neither ethnology nor anthropology was "anywhere as advanced as it is today."

day school for the Walapai, traveling into the canyon to serve as a temporary superintendent for the Havasupai, and then returning to teach at a new boarding school in Truxton.

One of the more common ethnographic scenes across the memoirs is a description of mourning rituals. Although the specific ritual varies across the tribes, almost every memoirist includes some comment on this. Iliff's description illustrates her ethnographic intention, as she provides not only a visual observation and emotional response to young Bela's death and the responses of the community, but also contextualizes the ritual in religious belief:

> That night from our cottage porch we looked across the low hill to the west at the reflection in the sky of the deep-red flames that consumed the neat house Grace and Boots had built for their home, the house in which their son had died. With it were burned many of their household possessions. The burning of these familiar things would help free their son's wandering soul from earth ties. The family must move to a place unfamiliar to Bela, or he would seek and find them and hover near. (78)

Iliff uses this specific instance of a death in this single family as a means to explain more generally Walapai beliefs about the afterlife. For the most part, Iliff reserves judgment, content to share her observations and new knowledge with the reader. Later she acknowledges the intrusion of ethnography, explaining that the Havasupai "despised the white man's curiosity, his prying into their sacred ceremonies," and she empathizes with this reaction, admitting "I knew they felt as I would feel if someone should enter my church and crane his neck and gawk, not with the hope of spiritual enrichment, but rather to observe the reactions of congregation and

ministry" (151).[120] In this sense, Iliff embraces a culturally pluralistic view in which the two religions are able to acceptably coexist. However, pages later, Iliff is appalled by the actions of a devastated widow, who believes she is haunted by her husband's ghost. This "encounter with a fear so deeply grounded in myth and superstition" makes Iliff reexamine her attitudes about Havasupai religion, and vow to "counteract" it through educating the next generation (174). Thus, like most of the other memoirists, the tolerance that Iliff evinces for the customs and beliefs of her students and their families is contingent on the situation.

In their investigations of their students' cultures, many of the teacher memoirists find that they prefer certain aspects of those cultures to their own, and use comparisons between the two to critique American culture; recent anthropologists have pointed to this type of work, "the relativizing of taken-for-granted assumptions," as the "the kind of cultural criticism promised by anthropology" (Fischer 199).[121] In the closing lines of *People of the Blue Water*, once she has briefly flashed forward to the time of publication, Iliff looks to the Havasupai and Walapai as models for a different type of society, posing them in opposition to the tensions of the 1950s, what Golden calls the "potentialities and perils of the atomic age" (209). The move aligns with trends in both literature and social science of the period. Berkhofer cites Hemingway and

---

[120] Jenkins echoes this attitude in her description of a Mohave burning ceremony, when she writes, "some of the employees criticized the destruction of goods and belongings as foolish and wasteful; yet it probably cost no more than the flowers at many funerals of white people, and I have heard it stated by authorities that the burning of the Mohave dead together with their personal effects has stopped many an epidemic" (311).

[121] For example, Arnold and Reed proclaim their preference for Indian company explicitly: "white people are dull after you've lived with Indians" (63). They also envy what they see as the more emancipated position of women in the Karok tribes, here in the voice of a native acquaintance: "'Woman marry white man … stay home all day and cook. Woman marry Indian, take her baby on her back when she want to, and go along trail" (163). When Reed asserts that she would rather kill herself than "live the life of some married women," the "some" indicates a particular class of white woman, not the Indian women who get to "go to all the dances while the men stay home and tend house" (163). See also Iliff 65, 182, 189, 197 and Jenkins 98, 138, and 211 for other times when teacher memoirists prefer native cultures to their own.

Faulkner as "American authors [who, post World War II,] increasingly looked to the experiences of other peoples to criticize their own society. Beginning in the 1940s, writers began to use the Western novel for probing the human condition and employed the Indian as a symbol for a more humane way of life" (107). In the social sciences, Erik Erikson explained that "Western civilization" has succeeded in "the mastery of machinery" but was also experiencing "an undercurrent of boundless discontent and of individual disorientation" (155), and posited Sioux models of childrearing as better than white ones (154).[122] For writers of the period, the carnage of World War II, along with the tensions and anxieties of the Cold War, made other cultures more and more enviable.[123] Iliff writes, "The white man, also, in these tense days, is seeking complete harmony with the Supreme Being. Perhaps, if we develop the listening ear, the serenity and the unquestioning faith that are the primitive Indian's heritage, we may become more receptive to the guiding voice of that Unseen Power" (271).

These types of moments find the authors advocating a culturally pluralist or relativist ideology much like the one that informed the passage of the IRA in the 1930s as opposed to the hierarchical view of cultures evinced by policies in the 1890s, early 1900s, and 1950s. However, this tentative alignment with cultural pluralism clashes with the civilizational work of the BIA, and most memoirists, with the exception of Brown, remain tethered to the success story paradigm, which means they have to prove their acuity in civilizing Indians. In the end, Iliff's cultural pluralism is tempered by her desire to have been a successful teacher, and her investment

[122] The strategy of comparing Indians and whites and having Indians come out ahead was not just a 1950s phenomenon. Sherry Lynn Smith notes a similar trend in her study of Indian representations through Anglo eyes from 1880 through 1940, as does Helen Carr, whose study focuses on the years between 1789 and 1936.

[123] Biskind argues that in the 1950 film western *Broken Arrow*, Apache civilization provides utopian possibilities outside of American society (231).

in civilization in the context of the schools.[124] She remains committed to the notion that "we could go on trying to help the Walapai find a better way of life" (53), and upon reflecting on her life's work in 1941, she feels pleased about her influence on the tribes, asserting that the innovations wrought by the education she provided "promised a brighter future for these people" (269). Thus, the ethnographic intention of these texts derives from both a legitimate respect for certain components of their students' cultures and the impulse to record and recount the cultures that their educational projects hope to consign to the past.

The way in which the teachers' attitudes about indigenous cultures affect their students becomes clear through embedded student writing in Golden's text. Students are relatively absent from many of these texts, whose supporting characters are more likely to be colleagues or adult Indians.[125] However, in the penultimate section of *Red Moon Called Me* (1954, hereafter referred to as *Red Moon*), which details the fifteen years she spent in the Indian service (1901-1915) working in Oregon, Arizona, Oklahoma, Montana, and South Dakota, Gertrude Golden inserts student compositions under the title "Let the Children Speak."

Golden's embedded texts are unusual because they also include autoethnographic content: in the subsection "About Navajos – Stories, Superstitions, Customs" Golden includes

[124] See Jenkins 342 for another example of a self-reflective success-focused conclusion.
[125] In recent years, scholars have tried to make up for this silence in new exhibits and texts that discuss the boarding school experience through students' perspectives (see Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima for one example). Starting in the early 1960s, and continuing to the present, Native Americans have recounted their boarding schools experiences in memoirs and autobiographies (see Churchill 91 n. 118, 92 n. 136, and 103 n. 349 for some examples). Earlier notable autobiographies that treat the boarding schools from a student's experience are Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories* (1921) and Luther Standing Bear's *My People the Sioux*, published in 1928. In 1903, *The Independent* published "An Indian Boy's Story" by Ah-nen-la-de-ni (Daniel LaFrance).

eleven short pieces composed by her students about their culture.[126] At the beginning of "Let the Children Speak," Golden explains how she convinced the students to write about their cultural beliefs and practices: "It was a long, hard task everywhere to persuade Indian children to speak freely about themselves and their people. … When I explained that white people, too, had some customs and beliefs which might seem queer, they became interested in recounting many of the superstitions of their tribe" (189). Acknowledging their reticence, which was likely caused by the overt hostility to their customs they encountered at most of the schools, Golden convinces the children to share by evoking a classically culturally pluralistic argument: we are different, but we are equal in our differences. In other words "queerness" is in the eye of the beholder. However, earlier in the text, Golden had explicitly disagreed with the Indian New Deal and registered her aversion to cultural pluralism: "Sentimentalists who hold that the Indian's natural way of living, his beliefs and practices are as good as those of the whites might inveigh against the suppression of these [dances]. The argument cannot be carried on here; suffice it to say that the government was only implementing the conviction held by the white race, generally, that Christianity is more beneficial to the individual and society as a whole than is paganism" (40). This aside completely contradicts what she tells her students.

The excerpts of ethnographic student descriptions illustrate that although Golden appealed to a culturally pluralistic ideology to persuade students to write, these students realize that Golden, and the school system she represents, view cultures hierarchically. Almost all of the

[126] *The Encyclopedia of Life Writing* defines autoethnographies as "hybrid texts that combine autobiographical and ethnographic writing practices" that are written by "the unauthorized" (Watson "Autoethnography" 83). Pratt uses the term to refer to "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms" (7). I see these excerpts as autoethnographic because they are written by the students about their own culture and stand in conversation with Golden's dominant discourse, but they are limited by the context of their creation and embedding.

students distance themselves from the "superstitions" they describe, utilizing the second or third person instead of the first. When they do include their own personal experience in the form of the autobiographical I, it is usually as a listener of legends or as an observer of customs, not as a participant. The students also situate many of these customs in a distant past. The pronominal oscillation and use of the past tense exhibits the tension that these children feel as subjects of assimilation and as Navajos; they are not quite sure to which "we" they belong. Two students in particular make a point to distance themselves from Navajo traditions and beliefs. After a paragraph in which he describes "what nearly all Navajos believed" and uses the third person plural exclusively, William Antonio starts a new paragraph: "But this is not true to me, and I don't believed [sic], but some boys and girls believe these things, which is so. The Navajos are most crazy people in this part of our country. They believed in almost anything that is not so" (204). Cecilia Bryan begins her essay with a disclaimer: "The Navajos believe all kinds of things, but we school children don't believe. This is what they believe" (205). Thus, in addition to providing "insider ethnographic information" this section is also a testament to the attempt to eradicate those very customs and beliefs through the process of education, a process that is evident when Cecilia identifies herself not as a Navajo child, but as a school child. Golden is not so much "letting the children speak" as she is telling them what to say and how to say it.

By situating themselves as the teacher and their reader as a pupil of Indian culture, the memoirists make it difficult, if not impossible, for an average reader to question the representations that they put forth. As Clifford Geertz aptly notes, like teacher memoirists, "ethnographers need to convince us … that had we been there we should have seen what they saw, felt what they felt, concluded what they concluded" (*Works* 16). This means that the authors' perpetuation of damaging stereotypes of Native Americans is even more problematic

than those circulating through popular culture at the time, since the teacher memoirists are ostensibly speaking from a more authentic place, based on their experiences.

All of the teacher memoirs reinscribe key stereotypes about Native Americans: including the "Vanishing American," the "Noble Savage," and Indian primitivism and barbarism.[127] The teacher memoirists' engagement with ethnography and their impulse to record a vanishing culture, which Reed and Arnold and Iliff make explicit in their statements of purpose and the other memoirists allude to implicitly, reinforces the notion that these tribes have disappeared and therefore undermines their political advocacy. Even though the memoirists insert political content at the end of their texts, the bulk of the content is focused on a somewhat distant past; the gap between the setting and publication reinforces the notion that these problems may not be relevant to the contemporary moment. The "Vanishing American" idea encourages sympathy rather than alliance, elegy instead of urgency.[128] It also absolves whites from any responsibility for the destruction of native cultures and Native Americans themselves, framing the "vanishing" as something ethereal and inevitable rather than violent and premeditated. For all of the teacher memoirists besides Brown, the "Vanishing American" trope would have been tempting because it justified their ethnographic projects and helped to resolve the allochronic-coeval paradox, since it made it seem like the vanishing was happening before they came along to exacerbate it.

All of the teacher memoirs utilize the image of the "Noble Savage," the long-suffering Indian who contains the wisdom of the ages. Many critics have discussed the dangers of reducing "the Indian" into a symbol, a strategy that Iliff uses intermittently throughout the text but

[127] They also condemn Indians for being lazy (Golden 9), ugly (Golden), and stupid (Jenkins 227). See Vickers for an analysis of "positive" and "negative" stereotypes of Native Americans.
[128] Dippie traces "the notion of the vanishing American" in his study of "popular attitudes toward the Indian and the formation of federal Indian policy from the late eighteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth" (xi). See also Fiedler, Berkhofer 88.

succumbs to in her closing lines, when she writes "an Indian, standing with face uplifted to the morning light, communing with his gods, has become to me a symbol – a symbol of oneness with the spiritual world" (271).[129] Here Iliff references her first descent into the Havasupai's canyon, when she "glanced up and saw a flash of crimson against a background of blue sky – an Indian standing on a white cliff, with face uplifted to the morning sun. His knee-length red blanket, tossed back, revealed strong brown shoulders and statuesque body. His long black hair, bound in a knot at the nape of his neck with strips of gay calico, and his moccasins and bright headband made a colorful picture against the clear blue" (96). This image of the noble savage is the guiding image of Iliff's text. Like the "Vanishing American," the "Noble Savage" perpetuates a stereotype that relegates Indians to the past or to the spiritual realm and makes it easier to ignore their human needs and present reality.[130]

All of the memoirists, including Brown, describe Native Americans as primitive, and some, like Iliff, compare them to children (55, 84, 129). In this period, white Americans compared Native Americans to children to justify paternalistic attitudes and policies.[131] Ironically, Iliff quotes a Havasupai man who complains of the political results of this type of infantilization, "we are no longer men, but are little children who must *ask* when we go out or

---

[129] See Smith 215, Vickers, Berkhofer. In "Thick Description," Geertz addresses what he considers a "justifiable critique of anthropology," namely the difficulty of moving "from local truths to general visions" (21), a difficulty that Iliff encounters.

[130] See Dippie 18-21 and Berkhofer 72-9 and 88 for histories and analyses of the noble savage idea. Bird pairs the "noble" and "ignoble" savage as simultaneous images in her discussion of images of Native Americans throughout U. S. history (3), and argues that the longest-lasting stereotype about Native Americans has been that the only "real" Indians are historical ones (8). Griffiths notes that "for Americans disenchanted with the physical and social transformation of the modern American landscape, the myth of the Noble Savage became a mnemonic for cultural loss" (82); this is certainly true for Iliff.

[131] Deloria points out the historical link between Indians and children (106). For examples of discursive connections between Native Americans and children, see Burt 91 and H. Carr 149 and 166. Child development guru G. Stanley Hall wrote about children as "little savages" as early as 1904.

come in!" (198), but she fails to recognize that the rhetoric she uses in her text contributes to it. In addition to individual comparisons between Native Americans and children, Native Americans were figured as children on the path toward civilization, with whites occupying the fully-civilized adult position. In the early 1950s, both Margaret Mead and Erik Erikson resisted this type of discourse, refusing to view Native Americans as child-like peoples or to study Native American cultures as a way to see what "more-developed" civilizations were like in their infancy. Nevertheless, anthropologists, political figures, and some of the teacher memoirists continued to use these strategies. Iliff's expectation that "life in the canyon might be like living among children, except when savage tempers were aroused" contains the two most common stereotypes of Native Americans circulating at the time (105).

Finally, and perhaps most damagingly, the memoirs perpetuate the image of the savage or barbaric Indian, especially in the context of Indian medicine.[132] Coming from authors who had lived among the tribes, claimed to value their cultures, and saw themselves as "friends of the Indians," these representations are particularly damning. The authors likely felt justified in their condemnations of Indian medicine because of the deaths of Indian children at the hands of medicine men, but the descriptions of healing ceremonies they provide go beyond advocating for Western medicine. Iliff and Inman describe strikingly similar scenes of demonic Indians, scenes they each look back on as a "nightmare" (Inman 154) and a "terrifying dream" (Iliff 243).[133]

Inman begins her description with her usual attitude toward native stereotypes, categorizing the experience in terms of popular images of Indians with which her audience might be familiar by explaining that their costumes make the participants "look just like comic book

[132] See also Brown 128-130. Not all representations of Indian medicine are negative: both Iliff (153) and Jenkins (213) recount times when medicine men seemed to have cured a child. However, the denunciations are so vivid and scathing that they overshadow these other scenes.
[133] See also Golden 41-2.

redskins" (156). She first expresses doubt that what she is viewing could possibly be authentic, given its similarity to these types of popular cultural representations: "they were so much like Boy Scouts playing at being Indians, it was hard for me to realize that anyone was taking them seriously" (156). However, once the ceremony begins, Inman is captivated by the scene:

> So savagely impressive did all those serious, intent faces become, so hypnotic was the dancing and chanting, that the centuries dropped away before my eyes and that smoke-grimed Hogan became a fire-blackened cave. Mrs. Tso's dark skirt changed to skin, and she herself, with her transfixed eyes and shoulders gleaming in the firelight became a Reindeer or a Cro-Magnon woman. I felt myself, too, become one of those intent, dark-visaged cave people who were taking part in that barbaric Neanderthal drama. (157)

In addition to relegating Native Americans to historical time, this scene likens Mrs. Tso (a contemporary Navajo woman) to "a Reindeer or a Cro-Magnon woman," and utilizes the two key words of evolutionary civilizational frameworks developed in the nineteenth century: savage and barbaric. In addition, Inman's obsessive focus on light and dark aligns whiteness with civilization and dark skin with savagery, as she frames her physical, racial transformation from civilized observer to barbaric participant as one of moving from light to dark.

Like Inman, Iliff describes a scene of transformation, in which she no longer recognizes "these Indians I had known so well" (242). During Iliff's participation in a secret healing ceremony, she observes an Indian colleague, with whom she works closely:

> The muscles of his face were drawn in tight ridges, sweat rolled down his cheeks and dripped from his chin; his eyes were those of an Indian, a fanatical Indian, straining with all that was in him to lay hands on that magic power. He would support with the last breath of his life that thin, mummified zealot that sucked and gurgled and screamed in a wild frenzy. (241)

Although Iliff had been eagerly anticipating the unique access that she had been granted to witness this ceremony, she suddenly feels vulnerable, and wants to "escape." In addition to testifying to the so-called barbaric rituals of Native Americans, these stories reinforce the image of the "wild Indian" and cultivate an irrational fear of Indian violence. These scenes, and others like them, undermine the connections that the memoirists feel with Native Americans, and in certain cases, their advocacy for them. If teachers like Inman and Iliff are afraid of their Native American colleagues and pupils, then their readers, who have had very little direct contact with Native Americans, would be even more wary.[134] The stereotype of the "wild Indian" also has insidious historical repercussions, since it frames Native Americans as violent aggressors, reversing and shielding the history of white violence perpetrated against indigenous peoples.

While these memoirists generally oppose the policies of termination and relocation developing at the time of the texts' publication, they do not necessarily criticize the spirit behind it. For example, the authors' references to American international relations register a critique of contemporary Indian policies at the same time that they espouse a civilizational agenda. Many of

[134] Brown intervenes in this type of disgusted description in her writing about a Navajo healing ceremony. She points out: "Outwardly the spectacle seemed merely grotesque. We were too ignorant of the ancient faith of these people to understand this ritual which, to them, was sacred. … Was it less a true invocation because the suppliants wore paint and feathers instead of clerical garb and Easter hats?" (156)

them criticize the government's involvement in civilizational endeavors outside the borders of the United States because, in their view, Native Americans have not yet been acceptably assimilated. Inman explains,

> The Navajo nation is a little have-not nation located inside our own country. It is a made-to-order situation for the practice of our leaders in attempting to understand and alleviate the problems of a backward nation. All the problems are there: ignorance, poverty, superstition, overpopulation, starvation and disease. … Should not a Point Four Plan first prove itself at home among Navajos and Puerto Ricans before being exported to Arabs and Hottentots abroad? (166-167)

In this polemic, Inman, like most of the other memoirists (with the exception of Brown), embraces the assimilatory position behind the 1950s federal Indian policy of termination without embracing the policy itself. She urges more, not less, federal involvement in Indian affairs, emphasizing what she sees as the hypocrisy of a national policy that provides aid to foreign citizens before its own.[135] Even Brown, who supported the cultural pluralism of the Indian New Deal, agrees with Inman's attitude about US foreign policy. She "wonder[s] why some of the American medical missionaries bound for China did not detour to work at home where their efforts were so urgently needed. Was it a case of distance lending enchantment or was it the national tendency to see the need for improvement in distant lands while we neglect similar

[135] Truman introduced his Point Four Plan in his 1949 inaugural address. The plan provided economic aid and technical assistance to developing countries. In 1953 the program merged with other foreign-aid programs ("Point Four").

conditions in our back alley?" (196-197).[136] Indeed, according to Burt, "the comparison of U. S. assistance to underdeveloped countries with that to American Indians … became a common tactic among the opposition" to termination around 1955 (68). In 1957, inadvertently echoing Inman, columnist Paul Harvey and Sioux reverend Dr. Vine Deloria called for "Point Four" type of programs for Indians; Deloria added that the program he envisioned would need to emphasize modernization in ways consistent with Indian tradition (Burt 84-85). One reviewer suggests that *Stubborn Fool* should inspire readers to "meditate on" "our glibness about other recipients of our charity" (Evans), and this makes sense given that Brown blames U.S. settler-state colonialism (Ticker xiv) for the contemporary problems of Native Americans. However, the teacher memoirists, including Brown, do not seem to make that connection or evince suspicion about the consequences of America's developing international intervention. Brown and Inman only condemn what they view as the focus on non-Americans at the expense of Native Americans, as do the other authors who counsel time, patience, and increased aid.

One noteworthy way in which the memoirists register their support of assimilation is through their references to miscegenation. In virtually every memoir, the author acknowledges historical and contemporary miscegenation through the description of mixed-race bodies, and almost always looks positively on the results. While the United States never codified a policy of "breeding out the color" (Jacobs 26) like Australia did, in *The Indian and His Problem* (1910) Francis Leupp, the BIA Commissioner under Theodore Roosevelt, called for red-white intermarriage as a means of assimilation, and argued that amalgamation tended to result in

[136] See Drinnon, *Facing* 278-288 for an analysis of the link between domestic policies towards Native Americans, and the United States' international policies, especially in regards to the Philippines.

offspring with the better traits of both races (343-348).[137] Brown, who has lodged the most stringent critique of assimilation, implies that "half-breeds" and "mixed-bloods" are cleverer and more educable than full-blooded Indians (108, 139, 218). While she is ambiguous about whether or not she sees miscegenation as a positive goal and for the most part opposes assimilation, she clearly believes that it works to create children who are more easily assimilated. Even representations of miscegenation that do not actively promote the process illustrate that it can result in a miraculous transformation of heredity across generations, in that Indians can produce white babies. The memoirists generally react to this realization with confused approval. For example, Iliff describes being surprised to learn that two sisters, one "a willowy girl, with abundant brown hair," and the other the "small, fair" primary school teacher, "claimed one-sixteenth Sioux blood, which we never would have suspected had they not told us" (210).[138] Only Golden, who still notes the physical difference between "mixed blood" and "full-blooded" Kiowas, argues that "in the matter of character or intellectual capacity, there was little, if any, difference between them" (110). The memoirists do not always condone racial intermixture (see Jenkins 74-6 and Golden 100), which is historically accurate, given that "acceptance [of red-white amalgamation] was almost always conditional on circumstances and the pairings involved" (Dippie 257). However, in these memoirs, as in other contemporary representations "even ambivalence set it apart from the issue of black-white intermixing, since it meant there were positives as well as negatives to be pondered" (Dippie 257). The presence of these mixed-race people in these texts illustrates the memoirists' engagement with the possibility that miscegenation might accelerate assimilation, and, for the most part, their acceptance of that goal.

---

[137] See Dippie 247-263 for a discussion of the history of amalgamation in the context of Indian policy and images.

[138] For other examples of this type of reaction, see Inman 15, 18, 107; Jenkins 166-67; and Arnold and Reed 31.

Even when the authors do not explicitly condemn educational policies, and sometimes even when they enthusiastically support them, the texts exposed the underside of the campaign for assimilation, both through descriptions of classroom practice, and discussions of students' reactions to oppressive policies. Like Golden, Minnie Braithwaite Jenkins, the author of *Girl from Williamsburg* (1951), generally supports the assimilationist education she is expected to provide, although she disagrees with some of its more extreme measures. In many instances, Jenkins embraces native customs and traditions, but she is unbending in her advocacy of English-only instruction, a basic tenet of Native American schooling, which is now considered highly oppressive. While most of the other teachers describe learning some native languages to facilitate their quotidian tasks and interactions, and some describe using indigenous words during early literacy lessons, Jenkins is emphatic in her refusal to learn Navajo (96). Indeed, most of the classroom scenes and discussions of pedagogy focus on the ways in which she taught English using pictures and the incentives she provided to students who did not speak their native languages in the classroom.

Jenkins frequently describes the use of corporal punishment to dissuade students from speaking their first language. In one description, she creates a farce out of the overwhelming responsibility to paddle the entire classroom of students, who had all spoken Mohave within the last five minutes of class. After trying to convince a colleague to beat the children for her, Jenkins rallies: "'Help, dear Lord,' I prayed. Then taking a deep breath I went in and started to spank, beginning with the child at the end of the long table. At the first lick, the entire thirty-five began to wail. This was more than I could endure" (321). Jenkins tempers the act by explaining that everyone else, including older Mohave children, found the scene hilarious, but that "there was nothing funny about it to me. … As for the children, don't think for a minute they didn't

enjoy the act they were putting on. The little rascals!" (322) While Jenkins insists on the seriousness of the situation in its telling, her tone, as well as her decision to conclude with an exclamation that the kindergarten children she was beating were in on the joke and enjoyed this scene of subjection, undermines any sense of gravity. Indeed, throughout the text Jenkins both exudes pride in her ability to encourage English speaking through the threat or use of corporal punishment, and depicts scenes of corporal punishment as comical. In reality, physical discipline at many boarding schools was applied excessively and was highly traumatic for Indian children; Churchill characterizes the punishment meted out at many schools as torture, and the horrific examples the he provides support that view (51-60). Audience reaction to corporal punishment in the 1950s would have been very different than it is today, and even today certain schools still use corporal punishment, but it was by no means universally accepted.[139] In any case, the references to beating students for speaking their first languages throughout the memoirs illustrates the physical coercion required by assimilationist policies like English-only instruction.

While Jenkins is the most assimilationist of the memoirists, regardless of the teacher's stated position on educational policy, each of these texts exposes resistance on the part of the Indian students, which either supports the author's critique (in the case of Brown) or alerts readers to deeper issues underneath the placid surface of the teacher's classroom. Jenkins describes a rampant problem at Fort Mohave, namely that young children, especially kindergartners, "become homesick for their mothers, [and] ha[ve] the habit of running home to camp" (280). Apparently, these children were collected and placed in a more secure facility, which Jenkins refers to as jail, even though parents were particularly upset over their children's unhappiness. One day, the children stage a jailbreak: "At breakfast we heard it. The

[139] New Jersey banned corporal punishment in school as early as 1867 (Farrell).

kindergarteners not in jail had, with a big log for a battering ram, broken down the jail door, let out those inside, whereupon the entire class left to hide out in the river bottom!" (283) Jenkins uses this anecdote to testify to her pedagogical prowess, as none of *her* students are involved in what she calls "the revolt," but the extended descriptions of student resistance, especially at such a young age, is telling. A few pages later, Jenkins returns to the issue of "insubordination," explaining, "Not only did the boys run away in droves, but two of the big girls also stole out and spent the night in the river bottom with the boys. Their hair was cut off as punishment, and they were confined to the storeroom. But two boys drew the bolts from the door …" (293-4). Jenkins' ellipsis and the cross-gender aspect of this escape attempt allude to illicit behavior, implying that the students may have escaped only to engage in sexual activity, but the other instances, as well as the references to "droves" indicates this was another case of anti-school resistance, perhaps combined with teenage sexual rebellion. In addition, Jenkins mentions that "some of the school's most beloved pupils" were involved and "in disgrace," which suggest that regardless of perceived success and engagement, students were tempted to run away (294).

In addition to recounting how children ran away (Iliff 214), how difficult it was to get students to come to school (Brown 235), and how some students refused to accept their diplomas (Golden 154), the memoirists detail even more extreme acts of resistance. Brown recounts the tale of Tattyin, a Navajo who gouged his daughter's eye out rather than send her to school (235). As evidence for her criticism of the head matron at Fort Yuma, Golden describes how "some of the little Indian girls contrived a means of escaping from her by being sent home. One night this desperate little group piled a lot of clothing in the middle of the floor of one of the dormitory rooms and set fire to it" (92). Like the little kindergartners that Jenkins describes, Golden's wards evince a desperation that speaks to a deep and abiding unhappiness. Although she blames

the tyrannical rule of the matron, this type of resistance was widespread at Indian schools and together these incidents illustrate that children were trying to escape not just individuals, but the institution of the Indian boarding school itself.[140]

In *Childhood and Society* (1950), Erik Erikson posited Sioux children were engaging in a type of "passive defiance" to the educational system through truancy, stealing, and apathy (131). In 1937, the BIA sent Erikson to try to determine "when came the tragic apathy with which Sioux children quietly accepted and then quietly discarded many of the values taught them in the immensely thoughtful and costly experiment of federal Indian education" (113). The white teachers were "mystified" by the children's' passivity, explaining simply, "you cannot get at them" (125). In 1942, Gordon MacGregor conducted a study of 200 Pine Ridge Sioux children (158). According to Erikson, the study found that boarding school was a pleasant place for most young children – "and yet the great majority of students who enter high school do not graduate; they sooner or later play truant and finally quit for good" (159). Erikson frames the children's' reactions to the educational system as emblematic of the tribes' options in the face of historical oppression and contemporary problems: "Otherwise there could only be passive resistance to the senseless present and dreams of restoration … the Sioux tribe as a whole is still waiting for the Supreme Court to give the Black Hills back to them and to restore the lost Buffalo" (132).[141]

Even small acts of resistance illustrate the suspicion that many Indians had toward the boarding schools, suspicions that were born out by the memoirists' accounts of neglect at many of the schools, and Brown's charges against the BIA of kidnapping and "being accessory to the

[140] For examples of Native American student resistance to imposed education, see Adams 209-239; Wall 202-209; Reyhner and Eder 185-189; Churchill 57-59; and Child and Lomawaima.
[141] The suggestion that passivity and patience was the only option for Native peoples would be countered by the American Indian Movement (AIM) of the late 1960s (Reyhner and Eder 257).

death of many Indian children" (256).[142] Thus, when Iliff tells what is supposed to be an amusing story about Walapai children refusing to eat because they suspect BIA employees of poisoning them with "coyote medicine," the students' concerns do not seem completely untenable (70). Indeed, the very fact that students would seriously believe that their teachers would poison them illustrates the antagonism at the heart of many boarding school experiences. Likewise, although Iliff brushes off the fact that the Indians do not warn her and her colleagues of the flood that nearly kills them (182), the community's silence could very well have been an act of attempted murder, especially since Iliff notes that the next schoolteacher was no better prepared, and barely survived a similar flood while watching his house be destroyed (190). While the teacher memoirists include as many or more examples of the ways in which the Indians seem to welcome their teaching and their successes in and outside the classroom, these moments of Indian resistance remind the reader of the extreme oppression of much of the education of Native Americans at the time.

In certain cases, students' acceptance of the rules and ideology of the boarding school system proffers a more stringent critique than their resistance. Both Golden and Brown tell strikingly similar stories of young Indian women who leave school for the summer and return pregnant. Terrified of the consequences of their indiscretions, particularly in the context of the ultra-Christian schools, both girls hide their pregnancies, secretly give birth, and murder their babies.[143] In Brown's text, the girl, Lucy, turns out to have been married over the summer in a

[142] See Child and Lomawaima 42-3 and Churchill 60-68 for a description of the secret history of sexual abuse in the boarding schools, and Erikson 118 for one account of the horrors of the schools, including kidnapping. Churchill also describes the use of force to get enough students to fill the schools (16-19).

[143] According to Jacobs, incidents like these "seem to have been all too common in the boarding schools" (312). She reads the episode in *Red Moon* as a moment in which teachers become

Navajo ceremony, but was too afraid to tell the school staff because it was not a Christian ceremony. When the doctor presses her to explain why she killed her baby, her answer condemns the civilization project as a whole, implying that the boarding school's ideology and curricular methods led directly to the murder: "Lucy's eyes lifted to the matron. 'So she wouldn't know. She say it is a sin, to marry so. Her God will burn me forever if He finds out. Now she will tattle to her God and he will burn me'" (226).

For Golden, a similar episode becomes emblematic of the challenges of teaching and the unexpected effects of her words on her students. The girl, Ada, soon dies of consumption; Golden suggests that the illness was brought on by "shock … shame … and separation" (156). In a moment of confessionary rhetoric, Golden "began to blame myself … I had been very, *very* emphatic in stressing the wickedness of doing anything that would bring illegitimate children into the world" (156). Golden ends the first section of her text (the chronological teaching narrative) with this tale of suffering, and with an acceptance of responsibility, even as she returns to lauding her own teaching success by including student thank you notes in later sections.

Golden's fleeting self-awareness applies, in one way or another, to all of the memoirists: "Poor Ada had taken my premonitions to heart and, paradoxically enough, what I had intended for good turned out to be evil" (156). For many of these teachers their good intentions for teaching led to horrific consequences, just as their good intentions of writing about the experience resulted in some deeply problematic representations.[144] Although the BIA memoirs

---

"uncomfortably aware of their own complicity in the colonial project of indigenous child removal" (394).

[144] The fact that these teacher memoirists were motivated by good intentions both to teach and to write does not excuse the harmful consequences that I have outlined in the body of this chapter. Additionally, as Ticker aptly notes, many postcolonial scholars have observed that Enlightenment thinking, out of which the idea for Indian education developed, "was *always* dedicated to the eurosupremacist task of rationalizing and legitimating empire" (xv-xvi). In this

focused on the education of a small American minority, the paradox that Golden captures is central to the next eruption of teacher memoirs, texts written by white men teaching in urban segregated schools in the 1960s.

---

sense the boarding school project as a whole developed out of an ethos of conquest in the guise of white benevolence.

CHAPTER THREE

Writing White Flight: Teacher Memoirs of the 1960s

The 1960s ushered in revolutionary changes in all areas of American life, and education was no exception. As Civil Rights became the focus of national concern, public awareness of the stark realities and inequities of urban schools increased. Massive migrations led critics to identify a burgeoning "urban crisis" and Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" and "War on Poverty" initiatives focused additional attention on schooling. The passage of the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964, followed by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965, represented unprecedented federal oversight of public schooling and promised extensive educational reforms. These two acts were at least ten years in the making, and a result of dedicated activism by Civil Rights supporters. Symbolically the legislation represented a commitment to equality by a hopeful populace. It contained the potential for a drastic transformation of the country and its schools.

In the same year this landmark legislation was passed, Robert Kendall's *White Teacher in a Black School* was published to little acclaim. However, Kendall's candid and often disturbing memoir of teaching in a segregated school was the first in an unprecedented eruption of teacher memoirs; almost thirty teacher memoirs were published over the course of the decade and almost half of those dealt explicitly with teaching in segregated schools. In addition to *White Teacher in a Black School* (1964), they include: James Herndon's *The Way It Spozed to Be: A Report on the Classroom War Behind the Crisis in Our Schools* (1967), Herbert Kohl's *36 Children* (1967), Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in Boston Public Schools* (1967), Sunny Decker's *An Empty Spoon* (1969), Jim Haskins' *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher* (1969), Robert Rossner's *The Year Without an*

Autumn: Portrait of a School in Crisis (1969), Steven Daniels' *How 2 Gerbils, 20 Goldfish, 200 Games, 2000 Books and I Taught Them How to Read* (1971), Richard Piro's *Black Fiddler* (1971), Alan Jones' *Students! Do Not Push Your Teacher Down the Stairs on Friday: A Teacher's Notebook* (1972), Manie Culbertson's *May I Speak? Diary of a Crossover Teacher* (1972), and Bob Moore's *Welcome to #57: Four Years of Teaching and Learning in Bedford-Stuyvesant* (1974). In a paradoxical moment both of optimistic faith in the power of education and of acknowledgement of the deep-seated problems in American schools, these memoirs emerged as a constant reminder both of the need for additional school reform and the failure of the revolutionary reforms that were just passed.[145]

By 1974, when the last memoir was published, the nation had shifted right and federal commitment to equitable educational reform had been drastically undermined by decisions handed down by a newly conservative Supreme Court. The memoirs appeared when the possibility of Northern desegregation and drastic school reform seemed possible or even likely, and disappeared when that potentiality began to fade from view. Given the centrality of education in public discourse, the publication of so many texts within a relatively short period of time, and the texts' popularity and visibility immediately upon their publication, the 1960s offer an especially fruitful case study of how teacher memoirs interact with other discourses to affect public perceptions about education.

Unlike the last eruption, which received very little coverage in the popular press, contemporary critics and book reviewers identified and analyzed the emergence of this new cohort almost immediately. In a simultaneous review of *Death at an Early Age* and *36 Children* in the January 1968 issue of *Commentary*, education critic Peter Schrag observed:

[145] Kendall, Herndon, and Kohl describe teaching before the passage of the Civil Rights Act, but all of the other memoirists describe situations that are basically illegal.

> Firsthand reports from the classrooms of the inner city are fast becoming a new literary genre in America: The writer is a teacher or – more commonly – an ex-teacher and the characters are tough but (usually) sympathetic kids, callous administrators, and a collection of fearful school types spouting hate through their pieties and educational nonsense through their apathy. … Ultimately he quits or is fired for being too successful, innovative or deviant. ("Schooldays" 71)[146]

Even though he is only describing an earlier subset of the memoirs, Schrag's assertions are largely applicable to the cluster as a whole. A vast majority of these teachers leave after one or two years in the system; Kendall, Kozol, and Herndon are fired and the rest quit. For texts in which the settings are named explicitly, they all take place in urban "inner cities": Los Angeles (Kendall), San Francisco (Herndon), Chicago (Jones), Philadelphia (Decker, Daniels), Boston (Kozol) or New York (Kohl, Haskins, Rossner, Moore, Piro).

Schrag's use of the male pronoun is no accident; compared to the demographics of teachers nationally in the period, the memoirists are disproportionately male. The percentage of male teachers increased in the 1960s in part because the G.I. Bill of the 1950s had afforded more men access to a college education (G. Clifford 309), and also because teachers were often granted deferments from being drafted to Vietnam.[147] Nevertheless, almost eighty percent of these memoirists are male, a figure that far outweighs their presence in the teaching profession. I

[146] For additional comments on the developing genre, see FMH; Farber; "Knocking Non-Responsibles"; the review of *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher* in *Choice*; Robbins; and Mathieson.

[147] About a third of public school teachers were men by 1968 (Sedlak and Schlossman 27; Clifford 309). Because of the availability of teaching positions in low-income urban schools, these schools experienced this demographic shift more than others. Haskins notes that "there are many young men in this and other ghetto schools who are teaching in order to avoid the draft" (36).

suspect that men were more likely to see their experiences in teaching as exceptional and worthy of representation; they would have also been privileged by the publishing industry at the time.

These memoirists, especially Kohl, Kozol, and Herndon, were atypical in other ways. They were acquainted with each other and with other educational critics of the period, who reviewed their work, a situation that one journalist terms almost "literarily incestuous" (Levey E6). Most of them came to teaching from other careers or from Ivy League institutions; only two attended schools of education.[148] Finally, most of these authors are not career teachers, at least not in the schools where the memoirs are set; because of this they may have been more willing to write about their experiences in a critical way. This eruption serves as a reminder that only a self-selected subset of teachers write teacher memoirs, and then only a subset of those memoirs get published, reviewed, and advertised, but their representations have an impact on the way in which their readers view teachers and schools much more generally.

By 1974, these memoirs had made it acceptable for young men to consider teaching a revolutionary act, but had also undermined the generations of women teachers who had committed to the profession by disparaging contemporary female teachers as school-marms and framing them as ineffective, racist, or out of touch (see Herndon 111; Kohl 54; Rossner 21-2).[149]

---

[148] Before becoming teachers, Kohl and Kozol became friends at Harvard and briefly lived together in Paris, Herndon spent six years in Europe, part of which was spent as an oboist in the Heidenberg symphony (Farber 54), Kendall was a character actor in Hollywood films (Bames), and Haskins was a broker on Wall Street. Haskins attended Georgetown University and Decker graduated from the University of Pennsylvania.

[149] Kozol also continually underscores the gender of the female teachers that he condemns, appending the prefix "lady-" to their titles. Perhaps the most distressing example of the gender dynamics of the period is found in Sunny Decker's *An Empty Spoon* (1969). One of the few female teacher memoirists of the period, she disdains other female teachers as "dumb co-ed types" (27) and "cutesy cheerleaders" (68). Decker's barbs locate her as an effective professional in opposition to other women. See Edelson for a discussion of Decker's attitude. It would take LouAnne Johnson's masculinist former-marine teacher to effectively reclaim "good teaching" for women in the 1990s.

Exposing appalling incompetence at their schools, as well as more institutional problems like unequal funding and substandard conditions, the memoirists ushered in some of the attitudes about inadequate teachers that are widespread today.[150] Along with programmatic developments in the period, like the Teacher Corps, which recruited high-achieving liberal arts graduates to teach in low-income communities (Ravitch, *Troubled* 257; Mathieson 94), the memoirs congealed a lasting image of good teachers in inner cities as privileged short-term visitors.[151]

Certain tropes and scenes have reoccurred in teacher memoirs since they first began, but in the 1960s popular critics and education theorists began to notice them. Because of their popularity and ubiquity, the similarities across the representations, and the canonization of some of the memoirs over the past fifty years, teacher memoirs of this era inaugurated many of the tropes, stereotypes, and clichés of the form that continue to appear today: the idealistic teacher (who eventually realizes his own earlier naiveté), the incompetent or malicious administrator (who exacerbates the structural problems of the educational system), and various student types (the secret illiterate, the motivated but underprepared student, the high achiever against all odds, the one who disappears) all interact in the decaying and decrepit school building in the dangerous and hopeless slum.

Some of these clichés were already in circulation as a result of fictional representations of teachers, especially those in the popular films *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *Up the Down Staircase* (1967). The repetition of certain scenes and character-types across the teacher memoirs

---

[150] These attitudes had been developing since the 1950s; after Sputnik, university professors designed "teacher-proof" curriculum because of their attitudes toward the (mostly female) teaching force (G. Clifford 326). Tyack characterizes 1960s teacher memoirists' attitudes towards "lower-middle-class" (and I would add female) teachers "uncharitable and insidious" (10).

[151] Federally funded, the Teacher Corps was a precursor to the much larger (and mostly privately funded) Teach for America, which began in 1990.

and the films is striking, but perhaps more importantly, the teacher memoirs of the 1960s rewrite the expected career trajectory that these films had conditioned the public to expect. 1960s teacher memoirists utilized the tropes of the burgeoning teacher film and popular novel at the same time that they reconceptualized them and perpetuated other stereotypes.

The popularity of and controversy surrounding the film version of *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) contributed to the power of its images in the popular imagination. The narrative of the idealistic white teacher (Richard Dadier) struggling against certain resistant students and burnt-out or bigoted colleagues, encountering his own deep-seated racism, and connecting across the color line with an intelligent and sympathetic black student finds parallels in almost all of the memoirs of the 1960s. Perhaps an even more powerful influence than *Blackboard Jungle* was the enormously popular, bestselling *Up the Down Staircase*, which *Time* magazine billed as "Our Miss Brooks in the Blackboard Jungle" (qtd. in Isenberg 45).[152] First published under the title, "From a Teacher's Wastebasket," in *The Saturday Review* in 1962, the novel version came out in 1964, and the film premiered in 1967. Although its author, Bel Kaufman, was an experienced teacher, the text was structured around the fictitious intra-school correspondences of its protagonist, high-school English teacher Sylvia Barrett.[153] In 1998, education journalist Samuel Freedman characterized the text as "the enduring portrait of a New York teacher," describing Barrett as "beleaguered, a bit intimidated, but capable of changing at least one student's life" (36). The reviews of the 1960s teacher memoirs illustrate that these texts emerged out of the shadow of *Up the Down Staircase*, as many reviewers directly compare the teacher memoirs

[152] Between 1963 and 1998, the text sold more than six million copies, had been translated into 16 languages, and went through 47 printings (Freedman 36).
[153] Despite the novel's generic categorization, many considered both the textual and film versions to be highly authentic, if, perhaps, exaggerated (See Farber; Gause; Grunwald).

with the novel.[154]

By far the most popular and accessible representations of urban teachers in the period, the plots of both *Blackboard Jungle* and *Up the Down Staircase* center on the teachers' internal dilemma about whether or not to continue teaching in the city. Both Mr. Dadier and Miss Barrett struggle with the question of whether or not to leave, visiting other schools and talking to colleagues about the benefits of teaching in private, suburban, or university settings; both films provide images of these "better" schools to highlight the differences and the teachers' selfless devotion. Although each teacher experiences moments of crisis and disillusionment, for the most part they retain their idealism. In the end, both teachers decide to remain because of a commitment to their students. *Blackboard Jungle* ends with Dadier and Miller (his student) making a pact: Dadier will keep teaching if Miller stays in school.[155] *Up the Down Staircase* concludes with Miss Barrett finally comfortable at the school, easily navigating the hallways and student interactions that used to give her so much trouble.

Conversely, *White Teacher in a Black School* originates a new ending for the teacher narrative, wherein instead of staying to continue the battle against some contemporary educational problem, the hero leaves. At the end of his text Kendall describes a scene very much like the Dadier-Miller pact except he cannot promise his favorite student that he will stay (248); a few pages later, he leaves the school for the last time.[156] The text ushers in the narrative of the

---

[154] See Adler; Daltry "Bystander" and "Teacher's"; "How"; Keller; Hipple; Gustainis; Hechinger E13; Holt "Comic"; the review of *Dairy of a Harlem School Teacher* in *Kirkus*. Contemporary reviewers continue to compare teacher memoirs to *Up The Down Staircase*. See, for example, DeCandido, R. Weingarten.

[155] The conclusion of *The Blackboard Jungle*, which seems to grant inordinate power to reach students and "solve" juvenile delinquency to a single individual and denies the existence of systemic racism has its own problems, which I explore in the next chapter.

[156] Kendall condenses his two years of teaching experience into one, and also renames himself "Bob Brent."

triumph of disillusionment over idealism that will characterize every teacher memoir of this era, countering the fictionalized films' inspirational endings with ostensibly true-to-life messages of despair.

Politically, the memoirists shifted the public's foci, from *Blackboard Jungle's* crisis around juvenile delinquency in the 1950s and *Up the Down Staircase's* more generalized critiques of schooling in the 1960s to the inequities of segregated schools, which was already a central concern of the Civil Rights movement (Schrag, *Village* 1-2). Reviewing *The Schoolchildren: Growing Up in the Slums*, a fictionalized teacher memoir that creates a composite teacher (Miss Burke) out of the experiences of its two co-authors, John Holt bemoans the fact that *Up the Down Staircase* is the most well-known portrayal of teaching in the period: "It is a pity, in a way that this book should have to follow *Up the Down Staircase*, because many people, having read the first, may feel that they know all about slum schools, and therefore won't need to read *The Schoolchildren*. *The Schoolchildren* … does not have a fake happy ending. Unlike the Miss Barrett of *Staircase*, Miss Burke makes few converts and saves few souls."[157] Also unlike Miss Barrett, the teacher memoirists of this era struggle with questions of race and racism, albeit to different degrees. While they engage in similar criticisms of the incompetence of teachers and administrators, the apathy and attitudes of students, the inane bureaucratic rules and regulations that Kaufman skewers in her novel, the teacher memoirists highlight race because they write from their experiences in highly segregated schools.[158] Thus, Holt's concern

[157] Daltry also hopes that *The Schoolchildren* will be as widely read as *Up the Down Staircase* ("Harlem").

[158] In Kaufman's novel, Barrett teaches at the fictional Calvin Coolidge High School (ostensibly in New York City) and has one black and one Puerto Rican student. Kaufman describes Calvin Coolidge as "as average as a large metropolitan high school can be," adding "there are some worse than this (the official phrase is 'problem-area schools on the lower socio-economic levels')" (44). The film diversifies the student body and adds in more racial tension (within the

about the "fake happy ending" of *Up the Down Staircase* also belies a concern that the representations of schooling in that novel (and to a lesser extent, film) whitewash the major issues of the 1960s, which would be spent addressing the legacies of segregation in the context of Northern urban schooling.

Holt's investment in the "true sad endings" of the nonfiction narratives indicates that he sees some political potential in the teacher memoirists' failure. However, while none of the teacher memoirs of the 1960s ends happily, like the BIA teacher memoirists before them, their authors evince a tension between exposing and criticizing the horrific situations of their schools, admitting their own limitations in the context of these conditions, and claiming some pedagogical success. The fact that these teachers are describing one or two years of teaching rather than a lifelong career frees them slightly from the strictures of the success story, but they still evince the impulse to prove that they were somewhat successful, particularly given the restrictions under which they were working. Without fail, each memoirist inserts scenes of instructional success, and often attests to his good teaching by including anecdotes of his beneficial relationships with individual students.

Depending on the definition of success, the success story narrative of the 1960s is either full of hope or utterly tragic. On the one hand, if one defines success as what happens inside the classroom over the course of a single year, these stories show that learning can occur even in less-than-perfect educational settings. Like their nineteenth century predecessors, these success stories assert the capability of all students to learn, given that the teacher's success is measured, in most cases, by that of his students. As Richard Piro tells his students, when they ask why other teachers hate him, "They say you cannot learn. You prove you can. They take it out on me for

---

student body as well as between students and faculty) than was evident in the novel, but it is still not a portrayal of an "inner-city" school in the way that the teacher memoirs are.

letting you prove your point" (99). In effect, the claims to success in each memoir lift the blame for low educational achievement from poor students of color and refocus the criticism toward bad teachers and schools.[159] The continued insistence by teachers in every period about the educability of their students distressingly highlights the consistency of low expectations about the academic potential of poor students of color across time and place in American history. While these assertions are important given the continued racist and classist assumptions about success, the danger of this kind of narrative is that personal triumphs can temper or undermine the more systemic criticisms of education that the author is putting forth, as Holt's aforementioned concern indicates.[160]

On the other hand, if educational success is defined by continued student engagement in education over the course of their teenage years, the success stories of the 1960s illustrate that even a great teacher who facilitates moments (or even weeks or months) of critical and engaged teaching and learning cannot effectively battle the larger obstacles provided by the school system at large. This reading of the success story justifies the teacher memoirists' departure, since they come to see their influence as insignificant. Rather than inspiring the political engagement that the memoirists would have wanted or expected, this realization can lead to apathy and depression

[159] These moments contradict the well-known findings of the government-sponsored Moynihan (1965) and Coleman Reports (1966). While if read carefully the reports provide much more nuanced information, the general conclusions of these reports as understood by the majority of Americans was that there was a "culture of poverty" that made it difficult for low-income students to achieve academically (Moynihan), and that socioeconomic factors were an integral factor in student achievement (Coleman). Many readers interpreted these reports as evidence that schools could not overcome the problems associated with growing up in poverty, what they termed "cultural deprivation," which easily spiraled into an argument that poor students cannot learn. See Ravitch, *Troubled* 150-156 for a discussion of the history of cultural deprivation theory and its dangers. See Schrag, *Village* 179 and Rossi et al. 138 for contemporary engagements with it.

[160] Additionally, the superhuman dedication required of teachers to cultivate success in an under-resourced system is unsustainable, as one reviewer notes of Piro: "The nagging question remains: How many teachers may we reasonably expect to be so totally involved?" (Weiner)

on the part of the reader, and raise questions about the worth of any educational reform in the face of such overwhelming problems. Ironically, a teacher memoirist being either too successful, or not successful enough, contributes to the same reader response, namely disengagement.

Herbert Kohl's *36 Children* (1967) comprises both the tragic and hopeful aspects of the success story narrative; still in print, it remains a well-known text in education circles.[161] Divided into two parts, "Teaching" and "A Dream Deferred," the text describes two years teaching sixth grade at a Harlem school and follows the trajectories of certain featured students after they leave Kohl's class. In the first section of the book, Kohl proves that he was successful in the classroom in his own terms and in the terms of educational theorists with whom he agrees.[162] He embeds a significant amount of student work to testify to his ability to encourage independent thought and creative writing, and he explains his methods for helping students to achieve better scores on standardized tests.[163] Kohl's success (and other moments of success across the memoirs) validates his own personal experience and also contributes to his positioning as an expert whose descriptions can be trusted. As contemporary reviewers noted, in isolation this relatively inspiring and optimistic section reads like *Blackboard Jungle's* heroic narrative.[164]

As much as Kohl wants to use his successes as a way to inspire other teachers and prove the potential of students like his, certain experiences throughout his two years of teaching and especially what happened afterwards prevent him from complete self-promotion. Writing about

---

[161] According to WorldCat, 27 editions of the text have been published, the most of any of these teacher memoirs. It was published concurrently in England, and translated into French in 1968.
[162] Part of Kohl's success stems from his prior experience and his position at an elementary school that seems much less chaotic and violent than the other memoirists' schools (Holt "Comic").
[163] Over half of the first section of *36 Children* is dedicated to reprinting student work, including books and pictures in the students' own handwriting.
[164] Both Friedenberg ("Requiem" 91) and Featherstone (26) comment on the difference between the two sections in terms of success. See Lennon, *Choice,* Daltry, Fremont-Smith and J. Buckley for reviews that emphasis Kohl's success.

the recent past (1963) from the vantage point of the present (1967), he observes, "my recollections of 6-1 are tinged with bitterness and too clear knowledge of the present and what I failed to give the children, what I couldn't give them." He continues optimistically, "Yet the effort was worth it. Robert Jackson and Alvin remember what we learned, however remote it is from their present lives; other kids remember too." However, he then concludes, "they remember, but that year, only four years ago, is remote. In the excitement of living through that year I forgot what a short time a year is in a lifetime of trouble" (55). Kohl's use of modifiers and qualifiers throughout this excerpt illustrates his struggle to quantify and justify his success. He begins by accepting his own failure; he admits that there was a lot that he "failed to give the children," but he immediately amends that assertion with another clause: "what I couldn't give them." Kohl's meaning is ambiguous: is he criticizing his own pedagogical skill, emphasizing the "I" in the construction and admitting that some other teacher might have been able to give it to them, or is the emphasis on "couldn't," which would absolve him of that responsibility since it was an impossibility? The latter seems more likely, particularly given that he follows this admission with a reference to his own effort. This reference begins the string of "yet," "but" and "however" that complicate his assertions about success and failure. His teaching failed, *yet* it was worth the effort. They remember, *but* it is remote. The emphasis on remoteness, only four years later, does not bode well for his students' future retention of the materials he claims to have been worth the effort.

The structure of the book mirrors the aforementioned excerpt in its qualification of the success story paradigm and has political implications, as it both traces a familiar narrative of white progressive disillusionment and shifts from a focused description of Kohl's personal experience to a more generalized critique of American education. In the second section, Kohl

recounts the next few years in the lives of his featured students, who were framed in section one as the most engaged and most promising. According to him, their life trajectories expose the "diseases of our society" (224), and at times seem to completely undermine the good work he did in part one. In this section, Kohl follows Grace, the only one of his thirty-six children who experienced conventional success; she was tracked into advanced classes and won a scholarship to a prestigious private boarding school. He embeds her letters, which veer towards precociousness, as she brags about her grades and translates the letters to practice her Spanish. Yet she seems happy and fulfilled in her new life, excited about the opportunities she is experiencing. After publishing a series of letters that narrate her middle school and early high school career in her own words, Kohl appends his reading of her life:

> Now Grace is in her second year in a New England Prep School. She fits wholly neither there nor at home in Harlem. She is one of those "school Negroes," a gifted one but still an anomaly. The other students are as open as possible and she has made several sincere friends. Yet to live simultaneously in two worlds, a rich white one and a poor black one, is to be fully a part of neither. Grace has become alienated … It is hard to know what will come of her alienation. … (223)

It is certainly possible that Grace is experiencing the alienation that Kohl describes; situations like these have been well documented by social scientists. However, the tonal shift from Grace's ebullient letters to Kohl's distressed description is jarring. It is strange not to read about Grace's alienation directly from her, and it seems that Kohl is drawing from his own assumptions and observations rather than any emotions that Grace has confided in him. Kohl had tried to reunite

Grace and her friend Pamela but it resulted in "an awkward, even hostile encounter" (223). After that, Grace stopped contacting him and lost interest in seeing him (224). This explains why he is unable to publish a more recent letter but it also suggests that his explanation of her alienation is built on hearsay and assumptions.

The larger argument about schooling that Kohl decides to make by the end of the text necessitates that Grace have the experience that he claims she did, as his last paragraph attests: "They are no special cases; there are too many hundreds of thousands like them, lost in indifferent inferior schools, put on the street *or in prep schools* with condescension and cynicism" (224, my emphasis). Like James Herndon, who wrote *The Way It Spozed to Be* (1967), Kohl eventually comes to the conclusion that the situation in his Harlem school is indicative of the larger problems of traditional schooling, so in addition to criticizing the conditions endemic to low-income schools, or growing up African American and/or poor in the early 1960s, he extends his critique to what Paulo Freire has termed the "banking method" of education, regardless of the school or the students. To further this argument, Grace would have to end up unhappy and alienated. Kohl's (and Herndon's) impulse to use their experience as representative of all schools (rather than all segregated urban schools, like the other memoirists do) locates the needs of low-income communities as secondary to generalized concerns about American education, undermining the specificity of other critiques, which are framed in terms of segregation.[165] It is impossible to determine definitively whether or not Kohl manipulated Grace's story to serve his own ends (one would have to find and talk to Grace). However it is likely that the much more generalized conclusion to which Kohl eventually comes (the need for

[165] A contemporary example of this type of positioning is Davis Guggenheim's documentary *Waiting for "Superman,"* which includes an upper-middle class suburban school alongside urban "drop-out factories" as examples of the inadequacies of all American public education.

massive school reform of a progressive nature everywhere immediately) would not necessarily be one that Grace supported; perhaps she would rather see the neediest communities attended to first, or support desegregation initiatives like busing. She might not even advocate drastic change, given that she succeeded in spite of her situation. Grace's silence leaves us with only Kohl's conclusions, which are bolstered by his interpretation of her autobiography.

Kohl's portraits of his featured students temper the optimism of the first section, and he concludes the text feeling relatively hopeless, a point not lost on contemporary reviewers. Nearly every review of *36 Children* repeats the ethos of Kohl's aforementioned conclusion, namely that "one good year isn't enough" (Fremont-Smith 41).[166] Their readings illustrate how tentatively Kohl balances between being too successful and not successful enough; according to many of them, his text shows that good teachers can make a difference in low-income communities, but that other, more institutional, interventions are also required for enduring change. However, most of the reviewers also harp on Kohl's success, which suggests that general readers might miss the need for more wide-reaching educational reform, opting instead for the replication of more and more Herbert Kohls. Throughout the period, reviewers consistently invoke the success of the teacher memoirists as a possible solution to the educational crisis, at times explicitly disagreeing with the memoirists' self-critical posture. This critical response illustrates the likelihood that readers mapped a success story narrative onto more nuanced portrayals.[167]

Although most of the memoirists address the steep learning curve of their first year and

---

[166] One reviewer insists that "the book is not a success story," because "most of his former students … later became disinterested or dropouts" ("How").

[167] See the *Choice* review of Kohl and Hipple's and Keller's reviews of Decker for especially obvious examples of reviewers who disregard the authors' admittance of failure. This strategy is particularly glaring in the introduction to *Black Fiddler,* where the author of the original book of *Fiddler on the Roof* argues that regardless of the horrors that Piro describes in his epilogue (which I treat later in this chapter), his story still contains "a residue of hope" (viii).

admit to some inadequacies, none of them are willing, like Estelle Aubrey Brown before them, to completely admit to personal failure as a means of criticizing the system of education. Instead, the memoirists, particularly those who were fired, use the terms of their conventional failure in order to redefine the meaning of success. These authors embrace their firing as a badge of honor within a system that is so ruined that to fail in it is to succeed. As Kohl writes in his introduction, "one should be proud of being a troublemaker in a troubled world" (x). For these authors, there is no shame in their firing because the people who are making the personnel decisions are the same people that are perpetuating a racist and oppressive situation. By and large, the teacher memoirists take conventionally successful teachers to task for their complicity in the corrupt system. Indeed, in his aforementioned gloss of the genre in 1968, Schrag included a qualifier, pointing out that the memoirists have lost their jobs "for being *too successful*, innovative or deviant" ("Schooldays" 71, my emphasis). Illustrating their classroom successes allows memoirists who have been fired to show how wrong their supervisors were, and memoirists who choose to leave rely on their successes to counter any possible accusations that they "couldn't hack it" in the system. Indeed, the more narratives that emerge from urban classrooms in the period, the more important it becomes for memoirists to ensure that they are viewed as a "good teacher in a bad school" instead of a "bad teacher."[168]

If any of the memoirists of this era approaches the self-excoriation of Estelle Aubrey Brown, it is Jonathan Kozol.[169] Kozol's *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts*

[168] For example, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, a well-respected educational critic, questions Kozol's abilities after reading Kohl's text, and wonders why Kozol could not achieve the results that Kohl achieved with his students ("Requiem" 92).

[169] While not quite a true teacher memoir because of its lack of narrative cohesion and consistency, Gloria Channon's *Homework: Required Reading for Teachers and Parents*, which was published in 1970, draws from her twelve years of teaching experience to make an impassioned plea for the "free classroom" curriculum and management method. Her analysis of

and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools (1967; hereafter referred to as *Death*) won the National Book Award in 1968 and is today heralded as "a classic."[170] Like Brown before him, Kozol differs from the other memoirists in his cohort. While the trajectory from new teacher to experienced teacher, or from naïve idealist to jaded pragmatist differs slightly for each memoirist, Kozol's experience is the most radical one of political awakening. Unlike Kohl and nearly all the other memoirists who become less surprised by the school's problems with each passing day and less likely to protest as the year drags on, Kozol holds on to his outrage and, rather than withdrawing, he becomes more outspoken over the course of the year.[171] Like Brown, he writes to make up for the damage he did to his students by not advocating for them enough when he was teaching, and hopes his text will somehow improve the lives of other students in his old school and schools like it.[172] In a 1985 epilogue to *Death* Kozol explores this motivation: "the shame and anguish that I felt during those early years turned easily into boundless and compensatory rage" (235). Compared to Kozol's awakening consciousness, the other teacher memoirists seem much more complacent, even as they rail at the system after they have left.

Kozol's "shame and anguish" stems from what a friend condemns as his "quiet

---

her teaching before she took up this method and her criticism of education reads, at times, like that of Brown. For example, she criticizes other teachers (and, by extension, her earlier self) thus: "they support institutions that should be, if not destroyed, then certainly radically reformed. They tolerate the destruction of children because they do not know how to fight. In the end, oppressed by their burden of guilt, they rid themselves of it, in self-defense, by participating actively in the destruction of children" (121). Channon's repeated use of the word "destruction" alludes to Kozol's subtitle.

[170] WorldCat lists 17 versions of *Death*, not including eBooks, of which there are many. It is frequently taught in college education classes.

[171] Rossner would be the exception, but that is a very specific circumstance, as I discuss later.

[172] At the same time that Kozol struggles with his own guilt, he realizes it is not particularly beneficial. Ruminating on his decision to leave a disciplinary school where he had been placed temporarily the year before, he writes, "But I know anyway that my own crisis of conscience in the matter is not the present problem for those boys or for anybody else. The problem is the waste of years, the loss of chances, the closing of avenues, the end of hopes which that institution represents" (48).

collusion" (33) with the status quo. On several occasions, he explains the way in which silence, feigned ignorance, denial, and lying perpetuate the system of education, and how much easier it is for everyone involved "to pretend as well as we could that everything was normal and okay" (33).[173] Just allowing other teachers to believe that he agrees with them amounts to a betrayal of his ideals and of his students (43, 96). His highly self-critical posture is supposed to inspire self-reflection by white middle-class readers and, hopefully, to radicalize them: "All white people, I think, are implicated in these things so long as we participate in America in a normal way and attempt to go on leading normal lives while any one race is being cheated and tormented" (12). He readily admits that "I did feel suspicious and do feel suspicious of my own motives and those of most other white people" (105).

In the last few pages, Kozol explains that his "biggest regret out of a school year filled with many disappointments is the single disappointment over my excessive concern with the feelings of a few teachers and the related disappointment that I could not have consistently have placed the claims of several hundred children above the private egotism of a handful of adults" (207). Kozol's language underscores the seriousness of his critique. Beginning with his subtitle, "the destruction of the hearts and minds of Negro children in the Boston public schools," he condemns the educational system as on par with genocide. Twice he compares the situation in his school with Nazi Germany (12, 152). He asks of a particularly bright child, ruined (in his view) by the system, "how could a child like her … ever in her lifetime find a way to forgive society and the public school system for what it had done to her?" (38)

Kozol is heavily invested in exposing his readers to the schools through his experience, and many readers would have expected this, given that the expository role of an autobiographical

[173] For examples of silence, see 27, 122, 153, 155, inaction, see 40, 58-60, 87, 126 and hypocrisy, see 12, 60.

text was a central tenet of a new type of investigative journalism emerging around the same time.[174] In form, content, and intent, teacher memoirs had much in common with the immersive, narrative New Journalism that took advantage of the public's increasing disillusionment with mainstream media (Sims, *True* 221).[175] Obviously teacher memoirists weren't reporters, but rather paid employees of the public school system, and do not seem to have entered teaching with the intention of writing about it. But in many cases their texts were indistinguishable from first-person features by the New Journalists. Both the New Journalists and teacher memoirists used strategies from fiction, including scene-by-scene construction, dialogue, multiple perspectives, and a good amount of descriptive detail (Wolfe 31).

In *Death at an Early Age,* Jonathan Kozol parallels the narrative of one particular student with his own story to further emphasize the horrors of the Boston school system. Kozol's frequent descriptions of Stephen exemplify his new journalistic literary techniques and the way that featured students can function to invoke "sympathetic outrage." In this excerpt, taken from early in the book, we find Stephen about to be beaten:

> He was skinny, with tiny arms, and he couldn't have been more than four feet tall. He had light-brown skin and a Red Sox baseball jersey. He had terrified tiny little hopeless eyes. … Up above were the pipes of the cellar ceiling. Nearby was the door to the basement

[174] Tom Wolfe dates the beginning of New Journalism to 1965, with some earlier examples published in 1962 and 1963. Marc Weingarten periodizes New Journalism's "golden era" between 1962 and 1977. For critical histories of New Journalism, see M. Weingarten, Kerrane and Sims "Art."

[175] Michael Johnson considers Kozol "a new muckraker" and "representatively New Journalistic" (103) and Kohl and Herndon as other "good examples of New Journalism" (160 n. 7). The fact that many of the teacher memoirs were published in part in periodicals further illustrates the connection. For example, Herndon published selections from his memoir in *Harper's* in 1965, two years before the book came out.

> boys' toilet. Out of that doorway urine stank. … His elbows froze at his sides. The teacher who administered the whipping gave the order to hold out his hands. He wouldn't answer. He was the image of someone in torture. … (15)

The imagery, action, and suspenseful plots of the teacher memoirs enticed readers with a good story, or at least with the morbid fascination of a horror story, as this description illustrates. But the political potential of the texts stemmed from their autobiographical status.

Tom Wolfe addressed the overlap between his movement and autobiography to stake claim to Mailer's *Armies of the Night*. He argued that "the memoir, or autobiography, is an old genre of nonfiction … but this one was written soon enough after the event to have a journalistic impact" (27). Following this line of thinking, teacher memoirs, often published quickly after the action took place and sometimes serialized in periodicals even sooner, too, had a journalistic impact. Both groups sought to expose injustices that only a person intimately involved in the story could report, the major benefit of what Wolfe called "saturation reporting" (52).

In one instance, Kozol explicitly contrasts his unfettered access with the mainstream media's ignorance. In preparation for a press visit, the administration repairs the window that had fallen on and nearly killed one of his fourth-grade students months earlier. That night on the news the principal stands in front of those windows and claims that there is no disadvantage to segregated schooling for black children. Kozol wonders "if the television station knew what a hoax had been perpetrated upon it and whether the reporter and photographer would have been surprised to know that it took their visit to our school building before we could have new windows" (136).

Kozol is likely right that this cover-up succeeded (before he exposed it), but most readers

would have already been more generally aware of the conditions in the schools. Other memoirists note that there had already been accurate coverage of urban schooling in the news.[176] Some reviewers even commented that the representations in the memoirs were becoming predictable.[177] As early as 1963, reviewers acknowledged that "we have heard the problems before," (Eckberg) and pointed out the fact that "slum children get an inadequate education is hardly news" (Rev. of *The Schoolchildren*). Indeed, only a few pages into *Death at an Early Age*, Kozol himself notes that "the injustices and depredations of the Boston school system" are "well-known" (7).

By the late 1960s, reviews indicated that white readers did not only have a vague feeling that city schools were in trouble, but they were also aware of the specific problems. Five years before the last teacher memoir of this era was published, education critic George Dennison argued: "There is no need to add to the criticism of our public schools. The critique is extensive and can hardly be improved upon. … The question is now what to do" (1969; 4).[178] Critics were disappointed that the teachers who came down so hard on the system in which they worked did not seem to know exactly how to fix it. The most frequent criticism made in reviews was the lack of proposed solutions.

Kozol's experience marks the dividing line between the teacher memoirists who taught before and after the summer of 1965 when many historians mark the beginning of the end of the racially diverse, nonviolent civil rights movement (J. Patterson, *Brown* xxi; Mann 252). Central city riots between 1966 and 1968 illustrated the movement's limitations in the context of the

[176] See Kendall 198, 218; Decker 107; and Jones 107.
[177] See Adler 101 and Fremont-Smith.
[178] Likewise, articles published in early 1968 referred to a "tide of opprobrious criticism" ("Knocking") and an "avalanche of critical books" (FMH).

urban ghettos of the North and West (Lytle 189; J. Patterson, *Grand* 448-9).[179] They also contributed to a shift in the image of the poor and of African Americans, especially in the eyes of middle-class whites, which jeopardized public support for civil rights (Mann 251-2; T. Anderson 132).[180] The earlier texts foreshadowed this turn of events, as reviewers noted upon *Death*'s publication in 1967. One reviewer noted that *Death* "stands as an easy-to-learn lesson on 'Why I Grew Up to Be a Rioter'" (Buckmaster 17). Robert Coles' *New York Times* review, also published as the preface to the paperback edition, begins with a reference to the Kerner commission, a congressional committee tasked with investigating the cause of the riots in 1967. He writes: "I hope some of those Congressman who are now looking into the cause of riots with find time to read this honest and terrifying book" (271). Indeed, the report that the committee released in 1968 cited "deep-seated, longstanding problems and hostility" as the reasons for the riots (J. Patterson, *Grand* 668), language that eerily echoes Kozol's observations of white teacher's infliction of corporal punishment on black children, which he argues evinced a "deeply seated racial hate" (18).

Even Kendall, the earliest memoirist, ends with a prescient image of rioting in Los Angeles in 1961 that precipitated the Watts riots four years later (M. Davis): "I saw Griffith Park's merry-go-round, with an angry mob of Negroes throwing bottles, brickbats, rocks … three hundred thousand Negroes ready to mob, rob, steal, or kill to get what they wanted … '*Kill the*

[179] The over 300 riots that occurred between 1964 and 1969 resulted in 250 deaths (Colburn and Pozzetta 128). After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 there was rioting in 125 American cities (Kluger 762).

[180] Isserman and Kazin argue that by the mid-1960s the vision of the poor in America as "latter-day Daniel Boones perched up high on some West Virginia mountainside disappeared from the media and popular consciousness, to be replaced by the more durable and menacing image of a black urban underclass" (196). Likewise, Graham contrasts the dominant image of the spring of 1965, a brutalized black voter, with the new image of the "rampaging ghetto rioter in watts" in the fall (234). By 1968, "crime and lawlessness" was the number two "most important problem facing America today" on the Gallup poll (Bourke 331).

white devils!'" (252) In addition to scenes like these, which explicitly connect rioting in the public sphere to the authors' disillusionment, pervasive images of student aggression, whether in or outside the schools, directed at the teacher memoirists or at someone else, would have been frightening for certain readers, particularly those who were already resistant to integration (Bourke 335), and reminded them of the developing anger and frustration that exploded in the middle of the decade in the country's urban centers.

One specific type of scene, when students either lock a teacher in or out of his classroom, illustrates the way that these texts exacerbated white anxiety. James Herndon describes how a student, Ruth, inexplicably holds some teachers hostage, and then just as inexplicably, lets them go. Ruth brandishes an office chair over her head, orders the school nurse and a teacher into an empty classroom and "lecture[s] them a mile a minute about who was doing the ordering now, and what their heads would look like if and when that chair hit them." When she lets them go, she tells them, "You going because I *let* you go" (184). In *36 Children*, one teacher, "a white Southerner, with good intentions and subtle and unacknowledged prejudice," calls his class "animals, wild animals" (187). According to Kohl, the students "rose in calm unison and slowly circled the raging trapped teacher, chanting, 'We are animals, we are animals, we are animals …' until the bell rang and mercifully broke the spell" (187-8). In these scenes, students wrest power and control away from teachers through the threat of physical violence and evince an awareness of the symbolic resonance of what they are doing, as when Ruth insists that *she's* doing the ordering now, or the students in Kohl's anecdote turn the teacher's racist speech around on him. These scenes intimate that oppression breeds the desire for revenge, and the oppressed are capable of acting on that desire, even though at this point, it is just fleetingly and with no real repercussions.

The ubiquity of these scenes across the memoirs illustrates the political significance of repetition more generally.[181] In addition to solidifying clichés, the similarities between the texts succeed in exposing the problems in America's schools, but can also be disheartening. In the case of the 1960s, when these texts reached critical mass, they may have done their job of convincing the public too well. After reading (or hearing) about the strikingly similar horrors of urban schooling time and again, whites began to retreat, both physically and politically.

Many of the later memoirists portray active rioting inside their schools, and even in the earlier subsection of memoirs, rioting within the schools is always a possibility. Two memoirists are threatened directly by a student with a knife (Kendall 164; Moore 28), and most of the later teacher memoirs portray physical fights between students and teachers and/or include references to injured teachers (Decker 122; Haskins 88; Jones 172; Moore 38; Daniels 25; Jack 84-7; Culbertson 89; Piro 191, 234-5).[182] Representations of students reflected the tensions of the wider culture. Alongside sympathetic portrayals of victimized students like Kozol's Stephen, teacher memoirists also included stories of empowered, but also threatening, students like this one in Sunny Decker's *An Empty Spoon* (1969):

> One of the gym teachers decided he didn't like that girl over there sitting on her boyfriend's lap. He grabbed her by the arm and pulled her off. She beat him up. Part of it was that he was white. Part of it was that he was a teacher. Part of it was that she was

[181] In addition to those mentioned above, Kozol describes how a class of fourth graders locked their teacher out on the fire escape (*Death* 36), Herndon narrates a riot in a colleague's classroom which culminates in the students throwing everything possible out the window (186), and Jones overhears two teachers discussing an almost identical scene at his school (34). Daniels asserts that he's seen former students spend their summers looting (21).

[182] Student antagonism against teachers is not exclusively racial; Haskins describes two incidents where he is threatened by a student's family member (70, 129).

> embarrassed in front of the other kids. But what it boiled down to was that this big gym teacher got beat up by a girl. (122)

The underlying threat here is palpable: the weaker, disadvantaged, black child rises up against the stronger, more powerful, white adult, and wins. The gym teacher's action evokes a history of racialized violence, both inside and outside the schools, but in this case, it does not work. These scenes of aggression suggest that the old ways of retaining white power and control, both in schools and in society, are coming to an end. Although, in many cases, the teacher memoirist is sympathetic to the motivations or politics of the student aggressors and inserts scenes of aggression to argue for the need for change, these portrayals frame urban schools as physically dangerous, and buttress the violent images in influential films. By aligning racial warfare and the inner city and evoking threats of physical violence across the nation, they fanned the flames of racial tension and encouraged white fear of African Americans.

The real terror of these texts lies not in the possibility of violence against teachers, but rather in their depiction of long-standing power differentials based (primarily) on race, class, and age, and the abuse of power by white middle-class adults. Many African-American parents and community members were already highly suspicious of the schools, viewing them as agents of oppression; these texts would have reinforced this opinion. Any reader should have left the texts appalled at the way in which students were treated. However, it is easy to imagine how in this period, certain readers could invoke violence against teachers as a justification to abandon both the cities and the Great Society.[183] Usually inadvertently, teacher memoirists provided specific

[183] As Joanna Bourke argues in her cultural history of fear, the moral panics over crime that developed in the same era "masked other fears about inner-city degeneration and anxiety about change more generally" (335).

examples that could be harnessed as evidence for the more generalized anxiety of the period.

The trajectory of each memoirist from idealistic and engaged to disillusioned and absent reflects a similar trend in the late 1960s when either an embrace of radical politics or a return to conservatism had emerged as the primary alternatives to civil rights and Johnsonian liberalism. At the conclusion of their memoirs, Kohl and Kozol flash forward to the moment of publication to comment on the political landscape of 1967. One might expect this temporal shift from before the passage of the ESEA to after to describe some improvements in their respective schools as a result of federal intervention, but on the contrary, the shifts occasion a more pessimistic portrayal of race relations and education by both authors. Kozol ends his text on a strange note, switching to the third person when describing himself. He writes:

> There has been increasing growth of black nationalism in the Roxbury ghetto and the Negro leadership has been speaking for the first time of withdrawing from the City of Boston and of establishing its own Negro institutions. It is not difficult to understand why this would seem desirable, and it is very hard for someone who lives among the Negro people to argue against it, as much as he might consider it unwise. (209)

It is as if Kozol cannot even associate himself with black nationalism in this last paragraph by using the autobiographical I, even though he has never before shifted the personal pronoun to the third person. Kozol capitalizes on the relationship he has built with the reader, assuming that his feeling that black isolationism is "unwise" does not need further justification or explanation. While not always willing to overtly reject the potential of black nationalism, most of the teacher memoirists feel ambivalent about its usefulness and confused about the role of whites in

fomenting revolutionary ideals beyond the earlier "rainbow coalition" of the Civil Rights movement.[184]

Texts published after Nixon's election and Martin Luther King Jr's assassination in 1968 reflect the political polarization occurring at the time. Comparing *Diary of a Harlem School Teacher* (1969, hereafter referred to as *Diary*) with the other texts illustrates the biases of the white teacher memoirists.[185] Unlike the other memoirists, Jim Haskins, the only black teacher memoirist of this period, embraces the political solutions available to him; he is relatively supportive of black power, at least in the way it is incarnated in his text, which is through protests to encourage community control and some supportive remarks for activist James Meredith, who visits his school in the winter.[186] He strongly supports parents' advocacy for appointing a black principal, and their efforts towards community control, a hot-button racial issue in New York City when he was writing. In a new introduction, written in 1979, Haskins looks back at the late 1960s as a time when, "fresh from a spate of civil rights victories and happily contemplating the future benefits of affirmative action programs, we blacks were confident that we could indeed wrest control of the institutions that held sway over us, and that we would do a better job operating these institutions than our white predecessors had" (23).

---

[184] Their ambivalence also extends to the more violent strands of social protest emerging out of youth movements against the Vietnam War.

[185] There were five versions of *Diary* published in its first year, and a tenth anniversary edition was issued in 1979, after which it went out of print. It was recently reissued (2008) in the "Classics in Progressive Education" series, published by the New Press and edited by Herbert Kohl.

[186] Although it seems like an anomaly that Haskins is the only black teacher memoirist among this cohort, statistically his presence aligns with the percentage of black teachers in 1970, which is estimated between eight (Thernstrom 187) and twelve percent (1970 Census). However, more of those teachers were women than men, which makes the absence of a text by a black woman troubling. Also, most of the black teachers at the time would have been teaching in rural or urban segregated schools, so if the memoirs were to be representative of their settings, there would be more memoirs by black teachers.

Haskins' experience as a black man in America at the end of the 1960s is quite different from that of the white teachers, who view the development of community control and black nationalism with varying degrees of concern. At the same time, regardless of how hopeful Haskins felt about the potential of community control, he left before he could experience the results of the community's advocacy.

The issue of community control was central to the New York City teacher strikes of 1968. The strikes, which centered on the conflict between centralization and community control, began in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn and quickly spread through the city.[187] Illuminating racial strife for a national audience, they underlined the fracturing of the coalition that had typified the Civil Rights movement, as the largely white and Jewish teachers clashed with African American students and parents.

Two memoirs recount teaching in New York City during these strikes. Unlike the earlier memoirists, these teachers have years of experience. Because they are not brand new teachers, they do not recount a shocking entrance into a strange land, but rather trace a transformation from belonging to alienation. Their personal development from politically-engaged community members to not, informed by their direct experiences with students, crystallized the feelings of impotence and disillusionment of many white self-identified liberals and provided some of the most damning evidence against continued involvement in urban schools.

The Year Without an Autumn: Portrait of a School in Crisis (1969) describes the strikes from the perspective of Robert Rossner, a teacher at the Bronx High School of Science. Unlike the schools described in the other memoirs, Bronx Science was, and still is, a well-respected application-based public high school with a majority white student body. The year of the strike

[187] For a detailed history of the strikes, see Podair.

coincided with a school-based movement to integrate the school. At first, Rossner aligned himself with pro-integration liberal and radical students, a disproportionate number of whom were black or Latino. However, although he agreed with much of what the students were doing, a certain radical element made him uneasy. When the strikes ended, Rossner became alienated from the student movement even as he remained generally sympathetic to it. Simultaneously, the student coalition divided along racial lines. When Bronx Science reopened and the students continued organizing without him, Rossner felt "rejected." Like many white liberals of the 1960s, he did not see a place for himself in the activist movement, even if he realized the benefits of it being student-centered (or African-American led) (Lytle 239). He writes: "if those kids had made the slightest effort to get my support for their demands, they'd have had it. But they hadn't made that effort" (262). Bitterly, Rossner groups his former allies into a mass of "those kids," rather than the featured students he had carefully described in earlier chapters. His coded language marks the transformation of his students from individuals to a group, which made it easier for him, and consequently for the reader, to create distance between "us" and "them."

The text ends with the senseless murder of Guy Oliver, a black student activist from a neighboring "ghetto high school." Rossner's last words quote his colleague urging him to leave Guy's funeral: "Come on … *We* don't belong *here*" (278, my emphasis). This assertion resonated with the feelings of many of the teacher memoirists, who left because they felt (or were told) that they no longer belonged in urban schools. What makes *The Year Without an Autumn* so significant is that Rossner worked at one of the best schools in the New York City public school system. This is emphatically not the stereotypical dilapidated school of most of the other memoirs of the period. Yet even he decides that staying and teaching there, in his words, "isn't worth it any more" (271), leaving to teach in the suburbs, where he'd moved a few years

earlier.[188] Rossner's decision is emblematic of many whites in the period, who decided that dealing with the complexities of city living or coalition politics was not "worth it any more."

In *Black Fiddler* (1971), the second of the "strike memoirs," Richard Piro, a white drama teacher, describes the process of putting on *Fiddler on the Roof* at Junior High School 275, in the heart of Brownsville, Brooklyn. Anticipating later portrayals of superhero teachers, Piro holds classes in his apartment during the strike. He is heavily invested in his pedagogical success and the minor fame it has occasioned; the setting of the memoir coincides with the filming of the documentary, *Black Fiddler, the Negro, and Prejudice,* which aired on ABC in August of 1969. The book begins with his being mugged in a subway station near the school early in the year. After this experience he realized that even he, who had "been preaching black militancy for years" and had "felt totally immune to any kind of anti-white violence," was a target because of his color (11). Although he moves past this violent beginning, he returns to it frequently, framing it as a prediction of what was to come. He details the mounting violence in the neighborhood in the spring of 1969; one memorable aside mentions a Brooklyn high school teacher who was "doused with fuel and set on fire" (191). Again, even he was not immune, although he suffered in less direct and less serious ways: vandals set fire to his supplies shortly before the play opened, and uninvited community members threw rocks at the school for the entire first act of opening night.

The text's epilogue cements the disillusionment that characterizes the majority of the memoirs of the period. After taking a brief pre-planned leave of absence because of illness, Piro is convinced by former students to return in the spring of 1970. Piro is proud of his decision to

[188] Rossner goes out of his way to explain why he and his wife decide to move to the suburbs, illustrating his acknowledgment that this could be seen as hypocritical (53). It should be noted that he accepts a position in what he characterizes as a "town with a large black population" (53).

return and refute the commonly held belief he would not be back, especially because during his leave the well-respected principal had voluntarily transferred to a new school in what Piro characterizes as an "untroubled, white, middle-class section of Queens" (231). Indeed, for an avid teacher memoir reader, his return is a striking departure from the usual script. However, he is not prepared for the Dante-esque landscape that he re-enters, which he describes as an Inferno-like hell:

> The physical condition of the building was deplorable. Stairwells were permanently marred by great splashes of paint on the tile walls. Litter spilled down the stairs in surrealistic patterns dimly illuminated by broken light fixtures. Char marks in corners indicated where fires had been set. The odor of human defecation and urine hung over the corridors. Hall clocks leered through broken, twisted faces. Sometimes we inhaled chemical Mace sprayed by hostile students. … Several times a week doors were flung open and stink bombs or firecrackers or brilliantly colored smoke bombs were thrown into classrooms. Children shouted in glee as they moved to the windows for air. (234)

Certain physical details of this scene, especially the smells, evoke Kozol's description of Stephen's beating. But there is a big difference between the two. Here, students are hostile, culpable, and seem to be enjoying the chaos. They are also grouped into a generic mob; Piro's epilogue, shorter and sadder than the main section of the book, barely mentions individual students.

A page later, he describes this scene: "On the stairwell I encountered three children from the seventh grade, each twelve years old. The girl was lying on the floor, her clothing pulled up

above her waist. One boy was kneeling on her shoulders. The other boy was penetrating her sexually" (235). Even when compared to similar representations, this description is shocking, both because it is happening inside a school building and because the breakdown of authority is so complete – the students do not care that Piro has found them. Piro insists that the sex is consensual, which means that the girl is not relieved to have been saved. None of the children are the least bit embarrassed or ashamed. The school has lost any resemblance to a school and Piro cannot recognize what it has become. Flustered, he leaves the scene how he has found it, describing his decision in militaristic terms as a "retreat." Soon he surrenders completely by submitting his resignation.

Piro's description is by far the most explicit example of fear-mongering but most of the later memoirs contain images that depict students as out of control and would alienate a reader without direct experience in the schools (and perhaps even those with that experience). The representations of urban schools across these texts clearly frame the schools as an unattractive option for people who could choose where to send their children to school, either by paying private school tuition or by moving into suburban enclaves.

White flight was not a new phenomenon; however it "seemed especially frenetic during the 1970s" and by 1974, it had become a "widely headlined issue" (J. Patterson, *Brown* 164).[189] White backlash had been evident in the 1966 congressional elections (Graham 233; T. Anderson 157), but the election of Richard Nixon in 1968 solidified that white America was panicked about the state of the nation, both at home and abroad.[190] By 1976, twenty-one of the twenty-nine

[189] Mass suburbanization in this period lead to the unequal school funding we have today (see L. Cohen 230, 240-51); J. Patterson argues that it also "transformed the partisan makeup of national politics" (*Brown* xxi).
[190] See J. Patterson, *Grand* 668, 678; J. Patterson, *Brown* 171; T. Anderson 234. Violent protests against the war in Vietnam blurred together with ghetto rioting to contribute to white anxiety.

biggest city school districts had a black majority, and eight of these had lost their white majority between 1968 and 1976 (J. Patterson, *Brown* 176). That same year, a study in *Political Science Quarterly* listed the reasons for white flight, which included "deteriorating city schools and declining achievement scores" (Rossell 688); as early as 1968 the Kerner commission had credited "better schools" as the suburbs' major draw (119).

Suburbanization did not fully address mobile whites' concerns because of the possibility of desegregation, so in the late 1960s, there was also nationwide opposition to "forced" busing. The issue came to a head with the 1974 Milliken decision, which ensured that there was no risk that suburban children would have to be subjected to the horrors of urban schools when the Supreme Court ordered that desegregation efforts be limited by district lines. Nixon-appointed justices pushed the decision through (Graham 455), but Justice Marshall's dissent blamed the "public mood" for the Court's decision (Wilkinson 227). Reading (or misreading) teacher memoirs could have supported white suburbanite's concern that "low income families would flood the school systems and reduce the quality of education" (Quadagno 108-9). In 1979, scholar J. Harvie Wilkinson described white resistance to busing in the early 1970s because "*they have heard* that blacker schools feature greater drug use, more physical extortion, less rigorous instruction" (231, my emphasis). A study published that same year defined "the mythology surrounding busing" as "the forced exposure of vulnerable little white children to quite hostile and dangerous black environments." It continued, "busing involves placing that innocent child in a far distant *blackboard jungle*, with switchblade knives, stealing of lunch money, assaults in restrooms, and terror" (Sears et al. 382, my emphasis). Indeed, the cover of the paperback edition of Alan Jones' *Students! Do Not Push Your Teacher Down the Stairs on*

According to Thernstrom, in September of 1968 81% of the public felt that "law and order has broken down in this country," and 51% identified "racial violence" as a specific fear (176).

Friday: A Teacher's Notebook (published in 1972) features a switchblade knife stuck into the heart of a shiny red apple (figure 3). Images like these, from teacher memoirs and sources like them, would have justified some whites' moving out of cities, opposing residential desegregation, and protesting busing.[191]

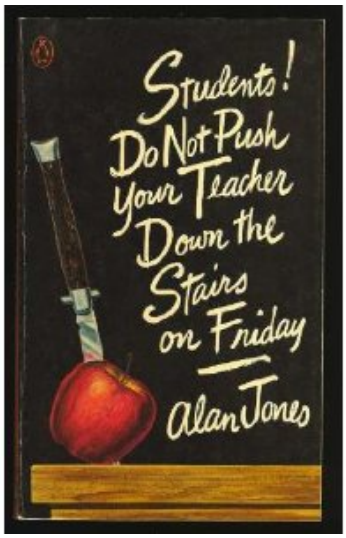

Figure 3

Reviewers from both sides of the aisle gestured at this reader response.[192] As early as 1964, well before busing debates would change the direction of educational reform, a reviewer for *The National Review*, the leading conservative journal of the period (Isserman and Kazin 211), "highly recommend[ed]" *White Teacher* "for the sanctimonious. Perhaps the mother who doesn't want her child bussed to a predominantly Negro school is not a racist; perhaps she just doesn't want her ten-year-old exposed to the first words Robert Kendall heard when he walked into his new school" (P. L. Buckley 1075). Following this line of reasoning, white readers

[191] Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo hypothesize that the reason for the decline in white support for the general principle of desegregation was a result of a "change in attitudes toward the specific issue of federal intervention … which was due largely to the sudden prominence of the busing issue" (95).

[192] Leonard makes a similar claim about the muckrakers, arguing that their exposure of corruption may have actually led to the public's retreat from political action in the early 1900s (131).

throughout the decade could use any of the texts as a justification of an abandonment of city schools. On the other side of the spectrum, liberal critic Nat Hentoff interpreted an early teacher narrative as a reminder of the white reader's good fortune, imagining this reader-response: "How lucky we are that our children don't have to go to school with *them*!" (371) Most of these memoirists are heavily invested in the assumption that exposing white audience to what is happening in these schools will inspire them to care, which will in turn inspire them to support the liberal or radical solutions to these problems that the memoirists themselves advocate, especially integration.[193] As the reviewer for *Kirkus Reviews* puts it, "Mr. Kohl cares, we should too."[194] However, this chain of causation is anything but guaranteed. For some readers, the texts may have inspired horror, revulsion, and fear, instead of sympathy, or even, perhaps, alongside it. Other may have been inspired to care but not to act, or to act in a way that the memoirists or student and community activists would judge harmful to their cause. When Steven Daniels, the author of *How 2 Gerbils, 20 Goldfish, 200 Games, 2000 Books and I Taught Them How to Read*, asserts that "those whom the educational system has completely warped are waiting around the corner with a knife, or perhaps a gun," he means to argue for educational reform but could just as easily inspire fear and flight (21).

By the early 1970s, teachers began to publish autobiographies that engaged directly with the question of integration. Two memoirists recount successful, albeit relatively unusual, experiences teaching in integrated school settings. In *P. S. Your Not Listening* (1972), Eleanor Craig describes a year of teaching "a pilot class for the socially and emotionally maladjusted"

---

[193] Kendall and Jones are exceptions in that they become more conservative over the course of the texts, although Jones would probably still support integration.

[194] For many 1960s critics, the teacher memoirs' power derived from the emotional reaction they were able to elicit, especially shock, anger, sadness, and sympathy. A number of critics described them as heart-rending (Blishen 290; Fremont-Smith) or heartbreaking (Schuman; G. Walker BR46; Coles 281).

(2). The reader knows that the class, which has only five students at its most crowded, is integrated because Craig recounts racially-based antagonism amongst the students, but the focus of the text is how best to serve the most challenging students of any race. Myrliss Hershey's *Teacher Was a White Witch* (1973) makes a more explicit argument for integration as she traces her successful semester teaching in a recently integrated Midwestern elementary school. Both the advertisement on the front flap, Hershey's introduction and comments within the text frame the unnamed school where Hershey worked as a "microcosm" of society's larger struggles with integration, but Hershey's situation is not at all representative. The school where she works is integrated through a voluntary program in which white parents offered for their children to attend the community's black school, and Hershey herself returned from the university classroom where she had been working for years as a professor of education. Many integrative settings did not include supportive parents or an expert, experienced, and willing teacher.

Manie Culbertson, the author of *May I Speak? Diary of a Crossover Teacher*, was an experienced teacher, but not a willing participant in her Louisiana parish's effort to integrate. Culbertson's memoir, in diary format, recounts her experience of involuntary transfer from an all-white to an all-black junior high school in February of 1970. Interestingly, in Culbertson's situation, students were not transferred; in this first year teachers were transferred between schools to achieve a 60/40 ratio of white teachers to black teachers in both settings, but students remained segregated. Thus, like other memoirists, Culbertson is a white teacher in a black school, but, unlike them, she is there under duress. Culbertson's experience mirrors the trajectory that social scientists of the period traced in terms of white flight. While some, most notably James Coleman (author of the 1966 Coleman Report), argued that busing should be stopped because it accelerated white flight, one study determined that if white flight increased because of

busing, it happened before the implementation of the policy and as a result of white fears and perceptions about the plan (J. Patterson, *Brown* 175; Rossell 683-4). Culbertson's diary entries support the latter interpretation, as she describes sadness, anxiety, and even terror before moving to the new school but comes to realize that "it wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be" (46).

Culbertson's expectations were likely informed by images like those in the other teacher memoirs of this period. As soon as she gets her assignment, she writes, "I keep thinking about all the things that might happen to me in an all-black school. I'm a peace-lover at heart and the thought of physical violence scares me to death. I keep recalling every horrible story that I've heard for years about the violence that characterizes the Negro community" (24). By naming violence as a characteristic of the black community rather than something that occurs in a particular neighborhood or plagues this community, she exposes her belief in the naturalness and inevitability of this alignment. She comes to school the first day armed with a tear gas gun in her purse, and admits that "Down deep I thought someone would stick a knife in my back or something else horrible would happen" (46). She and her husband even considered "moving to another state which had no such problem" (9).

Of all of the teacher memoirists, Culbertson, who probably had the worst expectations about student violence only recounts one instance of it, and that is a gang fight in the school that she blames on a group of outsiders stirring up trouble. She makes a point to mention times throughout the year when teachers were told to expect aggression or pranks and none came. If violence was the only anxiety whites felt about integration, Culbertson's text would be an effective rejoinder. However, Culbertson reinforces the other reasons for white flight and anti-busing positions, namely that white schools are academically "better."

Although Culbertson praises the behavior and capacity of her black students, her

descriptions of mismanagement of the school by administrators and staff, her condemnation of "the Negro community," and her descriptions of Negro cultural differences paint a picture of a school that is much weaker than the one that she left. In fact, although she ends her diary with an effusive argument for integration and by admitting that she had been wrong about her resistance to the transfer, the argument is actually for integration of teachers and not students. She feels that the black students and teachers at the black school benefitted from the expertise of the white teachers (like her) and that the school is on the right track now, but that having black and white students in the same classroom would not have required too much differentiation and feels that it was important to have time to "get [black] students started on the long road of adapting to more businesslike ways" (142).[195]

While Culbertson's personal safety and testimonials of the good behavior of her black students might have allayed some white anxieties about integration, her description of the education itself did not.[196] Early in her text she embeds two examples of student reactions to integration. The first is a nearly illegible missive in support of integration by a seventh grade black student at her new school. Although she comments that the message "was certainly there" even if the spelling and grammar were poor, retaining the student's mistakes adds a hurdle for the reader and invites a prejudicial reading. For example, one sentence reads: "how come Louisiane do not the posent do not want white childon to go to neagro school" (33). The second is a defense of segregation by a white senior from her former school, written in the style of Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life," replete with rhymed stanzas and advanced vocabulary (and not

[195] Comments like this one are why one reviewer suggests that "readers from an urban background my find the book naïve and my question the author's imposition of middle-class standards" (Wadsworth 2583).
[196] In addition, her patronizing attitudes about "the Negro community" stand as evidence of why many black families and students opposed integration in the period as well.

one spelling or grammar error). Given the confusion between preparation and intelligence in the period, a reader could easily misconstrue these texts as examples of differentials in aptitude between whites and blacks. Even if the reader acknowledges that the difference between these two texts is illustrative of separate but unequal educational situations (and a six year age difference), the reader would prefer that his/her children went to the school where they learn to write like the white student. At the end of the semester Culbertson is transferred back to her original placement, and although she claims to have changed her mind about the experience, she eagerly returns, enacting a different kind of white flight.

In addition to texts that engaged explicitly with desegregation plans, the early 1970s saw the publication of books with a more pronounced racist bias. Alan Jones' *Students! Do Not Push Your Teacher Down the Stairs on Friday: A Teacher's Notebook* (1972) reinvigorates the detrimental portrayal of students that Kendall (writing at the very beginning of the 1960s) began and the other memoirists' resisted to different degrees.[197] By 1972, Jones can and does contextualize his project in the previous decade's teacher memoirs, recasting his earlier self as a potential memoirist from the beginning by suggesting he "might even write a book and discuss some of the methods that made [him] a success in the inner city" (19).[198] He even experiences his first day through the lens of the autobiographical protagonists of earlier memoirs, commenting that his classroom "had all the characteristics that Herbert Kohl and John [sic] Herndon have

[197] Kendall becomes increasingly racist and politically conservative over the course of his text, eventually concluding that equality between whites and African Americans is not an achievable goal. Although many of the memoirs contain portrayals of students or parents that could be interpreted as racist or stereotypical, Kendall and Jones are by far the most egregious offenders. For one additional example, see Herndon's description of the "Plop Reflex" (75).

[198] Jones' suggestion that he may have intended to write about his experiences situates him as the most New Journalistic of the teacher memoirists. While Jones is the only author to explicitly reference other teacher memoirists, Haskins comments "I met a former teacher today whose entire time while teaching last year was spent writing a book on his class. He is doing additional research for his book now, before going into the Peace Corps to escape the draft" (36).

well documented" (3).

However, it soon becomes clear that Jones disagrees with the progressive pedagogical theories that the earlier memoirists advocated (25). Portelli, a friend and colleague, criticizes a university professor who visited the school with some progressive demonstrations, which the students resisted. According to Portelli, "that same bastard will go back to his school and tell his students how he related to the ghetto, and he may even write a book like *Thirty-Six Children* and make a lot of bread while I'm here getting my ass kicked" (50). Although not expressed in the most savory of ways, the impulse behind Portelli's comment and Jones' quotation of it is to underline the way in which at least some classroom teachers in the period did not see teacher memoirs as representative of their experiences. Kohl and Herndon may have inspired Jones to enter teaching, but once he did, he found himself ill suited to its demands, and like them, left quickly. Ironically, his distaste for their texts did not prevent him from writing his own rebuttal, a vicious cycle that has continued ad nauseam into the present day.

Jones covers what have become, by the time of his writing, the tropes of the genre but he views the students through a much more critical and resentful lens than any memoirist thus far. If the earlier memoirists were trying to prove that poor children of color can learn, he suggests that they won't. Although all of the memoirists recount difficult students, most go out of their way to offer some explanation for their behavior, or to balance the condemnation of one student with praise of many others. Jones includes almost no featured students but rather focuses on the other teachers. Since he befriends a number of teachers who hate their students and who perpetrate extreme corporal punishment, he gives the impression that the students in the school are uncontrollable and that the relationship between them and the teachers is a hostile one. In one instance, Jones describes an interaction with Mr. McCready, a colleague who "was friendly and

worked hard at his job" who he "enjoyed talking to … because he had a quiet and appealing wisdom to him" (138). McCready approaches Jones after students have burnt down his classroom; he whispers, "If you want my opinion about the whole thing, Mr. Jones, these niggers aren't worth shit around here" (138). It is unclear whether this comment marks the end of Jones' relationship with this teacher; the language of the following paragraph suggests that it might have, as he criticizes the principal by aligning the two together (138). Nevertheless, other incidents throughout the book illustrate Jones' tolerance for or support of racist rhetoric.

In a chapter entitled "The South Dakota Solution," Jones recounts his friend Feinberg's proposed solution to the problem of out of control students: "they put all these bastards on a train and ship them to South Dakota where they all could be put in camps surrounded by barbed wire. Then we would wait until they had all killed each other" (109). Later, after a run-in with a student who asks for scissors to go stab another teacher (one teacher had already been attacked), Jones turns to Feinberg and asks, "What time does the train leave for South Dakota?" (114) As in the earlier example, it is difficult to know how to read this scene. Jones is likely joking, but his invocation of this solution is troubling. Unlike most of the earlier teacher memoirists who include the racist rhetoric of other teachers to expose and shock the audience and argue for reform, Jones sometimes agrees with them, or at the very least gives their attitudes an extended hearing in his memoir.

Worried that the book will be misread and written off as either "funny" or "racist," Jones appends a postscript, where he tries to justify his earlier invocation of genocidal policies as a desperate attempt for some solution in the face of failure (177-8).[199] Like the other memoirists, Jones invokes the threat of violent retaliation from the black community as a means of inspiring

[199] He writes, "Nothing works anymore and sometimes a Hitlerite formula (the South Dakota solution) sounds attractive."

more equitable policies, urging his readers to do something now before it is too late (179). However, alerting white readers to a coming race war after disparaging his students and lauding racist teachers for almost two hundred pages would not necessarily inspire the introspection, self-reflection, personal sacrifice, and political activism that Jones seems to advocate in his postscript. Instead, white readers might close his text feeling more negative about African Americans, overwhelmed by the problem, or scared of what the future holds but paralyzed to stop it. These readers might lapse back into the "easier" solutions that he disparages, withdrawing into racially segregated communities and disengaging politically, thankful that these problems exist, for them, only on the pages of a book.

The text ends as the others do, with a combination of pessimism and apathy; observing "the ghetto neighborhood" from his seat on the bus carrying him out of it (and away from the school for the last time), Jones "wonder[s] what it all did matter" (174). Regardless of their political affiliations or ideologies, the memoirists' disillusionment can be potentially paralyzing for a reader faced with the realities of which they have just read. One critic makes this explicit, asserting that Haskins "immobilizes his readers at the bottom of the down stair-case" (*Kirkus*). If someone with such intimate knowledge of the schools feels that nothing is likely to change, why should the reader feel any differently? If all of the teacher memoirists are walking, or riding, or driving, away from the ghetto at the end of their texts, how can they expect their readers, either actually or metaphorically, to run toward it and engage with the problems that they expose? If the authors' exposure of the inadequacies and dangers of public urban education supported certain readers' physical abandonment of the schools, their widespread pessimism and conclusions that nothing can be done to address these problems granted other readers the permission to intellectually disconnect and politically disengage.

While none of the teacher memoirists address these potential consequences, they do discuss their disappointment with the way things went after their texts were published in other venues. In a 1972 review of *P. S. Your Not Listening*, Herndon comments on the current state of the educational reform movement. Agreeing with his colleague Edgar Z. Friedenberg, a professor and frequent reviewer of teacher memoirs, he notes that it is "impossible to write about schools any more, since everyone in America already knew everything, quite possibly understood everything, and most certainly wasn't planning on doing anything about anything." He continues, "the school movement was over. The spokesmen for the movement and their list of brilliant books, among the best written in America during the last 10 or 12 years, hadn't done it, no one had listened (or having listened, shrugged) …". Ironically, Herndon is arguing that Craig's book could potentially reinvigorate the movement, but his flip characterization of reactions to the memoirs and writings like them is striking.

Perhaps the most devastating comment comes from Haskins. In his 1979 afterword he writes, "white America seems eager to return to the way it was before 1960, to the good old days before it had a conscience. … I say that white America lost its sense of commitment, which was not wholehearted at the outset … it appears that the time in the sun for blacks in this country is coming to an end …" (160-1). In Kozol's 1985 epilogue he claims that his text may have helped accelerate the eventual court-ordered desegregation of the Boston schools, but that this may have been a "Pyrrhic victory" since the result is "an integrated under-class … [where] poor white, poor blacks, and poor Hispanics now become illiterate together" (234). Indeed, on the twentieth anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education in 1974, a decade after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, many were distressed by the dire situations in many (still) segregated urban schools (J. Patterson, *Brown* 164).

By 1976, only two years after the publication of the final teacher memoir in this cohort, Diana Divoky decried the teacher memoirists' lack of impact in *The New York Times*, writing:

> Just a decade ago – although it seems like history – American education was feeling the rumbles of revolution. Journalists rushed to describe what was – or was not – going on in classrooms. … Ousted teachers wrote best-sellers about what they saw as the shabby treatment of youngsters in even shabbier schools. Federal and foundation funds flowed. … Then, before the reforms and ideas had a chance to take hold, the optimism and the excitement were gone. (443)

Divoky's lament underlines the limitations of the teacher memoir in the period. While they were only one component of a plethora of discourses around education in the 1960s and early 1970s, they were influential because of their immediacy and perceived authenticity. Naively or not, their authors and reviewers expected that these texts would, in some way, make a difference. Unfortunately, rather than inspiring commitment to improving education for everyone, the texts seem to have done almost the opposite, providing justifications for abandoning urban schools and giving up on school reform.

Perhaps the most influential role that these memoirs have played since the 1960s is literary: their consolidation of certain clichés of the genre, like the image of the urban ghetto school and the teacher-deserter who leaves at the end of the text. Whether or not the teacher was fired, pregnant or fed-up, the constant leave-taking of the teacher memoirists legitimized the notion that someone could teach for a few years at a high-needs school, leave for a "better"

situation or for another career, and then write a book about it.[200] As a result, the problems of urban schools are available for privileged teachers and readers to engage and disengage with at will, and longer-term representations that address more complex issues are relatively unavailable within the genre. Teacher memoirs have become modern day odysseys: the teacher-hero embarks on a journey of self-discovery, encounters dangerous and exciting situations and characters, learns a lot, but always returns "home" in the end. The bulk of 1960s readers, experiencing this odyssey vicariously, also decided to retreat to the familiar: to the homogenous geography of the suburbs, to the politics of conservatism, and to separate and unequal schooling.

[200] G. Clifford notes that "the image of short-lived teaching careers with the talent creamed off early has been an enduring one," since before the 1950s women left teaching to marry and men went on to other, more prestigious careers (326). The difference in the 1960s is that many of these writers remain in education, just teaching or writing somewhere else.

CHAPTER FOUR

Celebriteacher Memoirs: *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers*

In the 2011 film *Bad Teacher* (Kasdan), instead of teaching, Cameron Diaz, who plays the titular role, shows her middle school students the classics of the teacher movie genre: *Stand and Deliver* (Menendez 1988)*, Lean on Me* (Avildsen 1989)*,* and, finally, *Dangerous Minds* (Smith 1995)*.* The recent film's explicit evocation of these intertexts, along with its more general engagement with parodying the genre, underlines the reach of these now classic films; although over twenty years have passed since the first film came out, audience members are still expected to recognize their key scenes, characters, themes, and motifs.[201] The joke, of course, is that the protagonist of *Bad Teacher* is the polar opposite of the good teacher of the traditional teacher movie and teacher memoir, whose successes are the reason his or her life story is worthy of representation in the first place.

Most teacher memoirists experience a limited amount of exposure upon their text's publication, but not until the adaptation of LouAnne Johnson's 1992 memoir *My Posse Don't Do Homework* into the 1995 film *Dangerous Minds* could teacher memoirists realistically consider the possibility that the publication of their memoirs might catapult them to a type of celebrity status: a celebriteacher.[202] The visibility and popularity of that film, compounded by the adaptation of Erin Gruwell's *The Freedom Writers Diary* (1999) (co-written with her students) into the 2007 film *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese)*,* changed the stakes of writing a teacher

[201] Readily available on the internet, Mad TV's "Nice White Lady" sketch, a fake trailer for a teacher film with the tagline "When it comes to teaching inner-city minorities, they don't need books, they don't need rules, all they need is a nice white lady," also parodied the conventions of the genre when *Freedom Writers* came out. See also the *Dangerous Minds* parody, *Dangerous Wands*, available at www.collegehumor.com, which images a grown-up Hermoine as a young teacher at an inner-city American Hogwarts.

[202] Rafe Esquith, author of two recent memoirs, charges admission to his classroom visitors, which he reinvests in supplies.

memoir. The adaptation of these texts into films, and the increased attention to the stories as a result, widened the audience exponentially, which magnified the potential political effects. The purchase and adaptation of these teachers' memoirs enabled both Johnson and Gruwell to become serial teacher memoirists, expanding their teaching narratives beyond a single text, and into multiple genres, like curricular professional development texts. At the same time, both of these teachers saw their lives and texts distilled, condensed, and adapted in other ways that sometimes left them beyond recognition, even as their simplified stories became shorthand for the plight and power of the modern American teacher.

Teacher films, which are often based on autobiographical novels, have had an enormous impact on public perceptions of teaching and learning throughout the twentieth century, and teacher memoirists have often situated their texts in conversation with those films.[203] In the late-1980s, in the wake of another educational crisis precipitated by the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 and the perceived failure of the US educational system in an international context, two key films emerged that once again altered the image of teaching in America, especially in its urban schools: *Stand and Deliver* and *Lean on Me*. Both films were based on real-life experiences of educators in struggling districts, but neither man had written an autobiography at the time of the film's production.[204] In each of these films, a male educator of color comes to a

[203] In the last quarter of the twentieth century films became much more accessible due to the advent and expansion of the VCR and home video rentals (Gomery 71), which would have further expanded the reach of the teacher movies of the period. Since the late 1980s, technological developments in media have only increased the number of people able to view these films, and has allowed for the rerelease of the classics of the genre as well. In 2007 (the year *Freedom Writers* came out), Warner Brothers released a DVD that contains both *Stand and Deliver* and *Lean on Me* on one disc.

[204] Clark published his autobiography, penned with co-author Joe Picard, *Laying Down the Law: Joe Clark's Strategy for Saving Our Schools*, in July of 1989; the film had come out in March of the same year. Journalist Jay Mathews' biography *Escalante: The Best Teacher in America* was published in August of 1989, but Escalante never wrote an autobiography.

school, finds it unsatisfactory in some way, and vows to change it. In *Stand and Deliver*, Jaime Escalante implements a successful AP Calculus program at an under-resourced East Los Angeles high school, inspiring his black and Latino students with a combination of extreme commitment, determination, and tough love. When the students are accused of cheating, Escalante becomes briefly demoralized but then rallies around them; they retake the test and score even better than they did on the first try. *Lean on Me* recounts the story of Joe Clark, a renegade teacher who is tapped to transform a failing New Jersey High School. Through a combination of extreme measures, determination, and tough love, Clark gets the school back on track and earns the respect of his black and Latino students. When a local parent tries to have Clark fired, the students rally behind him, and at a climactic moment he finds out that enough students have proved proficiency on the Basic Skills Test to avoid takeover by the state.

Although these films' settings, atmospheres, portrayals of students, and eventual conclusions mirror those of *Blackboard Jungle* and *Up the Down Staircase*, they differ from those earlier films in some important respects. Filmmakers had billed *Blackboard Jungle* as a realistic (albeit fictional) portrayal of juvenile delinquency, but the additional authenticity of the 1980s films stemmed from the fact that their stories were based on a real person's biography, leading the way for the adaptation of teacher memoirs in the 1990s and 2000s. In addition to the "inspirational true story" component, these films also altered some of the traditional characteristics of American teachers on film. Because Escalante and Clark are both men of color (although they are not necessarily of the same class or from the same neighborhood as their students), they capitalize on their racial and ethnic identifications with their students to forge connections and sometimes make arguments that would seem racist if suggested by a white person. Although teachers in films and who write memoirs have long been disproportionately

male, the filmic representations of Escalante and Clark emphasize their masculinity as part of a tough love program in which Escalante motivates his students by goading and insulting them, and Clark continuously wields a baseball bat through the school's hallways, and, in a pivotal scene, nearly pushes a child off of a rooftop in the name of motivation.[205] These two films also revised the definition of success: while their driving narrative remains one of experiencing preliminary idealism, overcoming hurdles and temporary dejection, and eventually triumphing, in the 1980s the turning point centers on standardized assessments and test scores.[206] Both a reaction to A Nation at Risk, and a harbinger of the emphasis on standardized testing that would emerge in the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, these two films emphasize a particular type of academic success endemic to the period in which they premiered, and one that continues into the present day.

The phenomenon of "celebrity educators" began in the late-1980s with these two films.[207] While it is not unheard of for teacher memoirists to capitalize on the publication of their memoirs to seek out other professional opportunities, until the 1990s, even the most famous teacher memoirists were far better known in education circles, and only remained in the public eye if they continued writing other types of books.[208] Perhaps the most well-known teacher memoirist before the "celebriteacher" phenomenon emerged in the mid-1990s, Kozol used his early success to cultivate his educational crusader persona and facilitate his emergence as a leading

---

[205] Farber and Holm persuasively illustrate that both these films frame women as either obstacles or supporting characters who offer comfort but have insignificant roles, and ignore the role of women in education (171; see also Ayers 228). I would add that female students are depicted as weak and in need of saving.

[206] Bulman notes that the emphasis on academic success is limited to films about urban schools; in films set in suburban high schools, academics are rarely mentioned (254).

[207] I use the term educator here since Clark was a principal for most of the film.

[208] The other very well known teacher memoirist, Frank McCourt, parlayed his huge success in coming-of-age/immigration memoir writing to secure a teacher memoir book deal. *Teacher Man* (2005) was his third foray into memoir writing, after *Angela's Ashes* (1996) and *'Tis* (1999).

educational journalist, but the personal details of his teaching experience have long been overshadowed by the profiling and polemics that have characterized his later texts. While not every viewer would be able to name Escalante and Clark, many would remember the characters played by Edward James Olmos and Morgan Freeman, two well-known actors, or be able to refer to them by the title of the film ("you know, that teacher from *Stand and Deliver*").[209] Likewise, although LouAnne Johnson and Erin Gruwell are likely not household names, the versions of their stories that the film adaptations of their memoirs tell are relatively well-known, and they are recognizable through the actors who portrayed them: Michele Pfeiffer in *Dangerous Minds* and Hilary Swank in *Freedom Writers*.[210]

The celebriteacher is a unique kind of celebrity whose story is more recognized than her name, which is in turn more recognized than her face. However, as scholar Leo Braudy notes, all famous people are at the mercy of the stories people tell about them, and as such "the famous person is not so much a person as a story about a person" (592).[211] The celebriteacher memoirist's fame stems from the filmic narrative of her success in the classroom, which while based on the memoir she penned, differs from it dramatically.[212] According to P. David Marshall, "the power of celebrity status … operates as a way of providing distinctions and definitions of success within [different] domains. Celebrity status also confers on the person a certain

---

[209] Olmos was nominated for an Oscar for his performance as Escalante.
[210] Pfeiffer's performance in *Dangerous Minds* marked a turning point in her career, demonstrating that she possessed the name recognition to "open a movie" without a well-known male co-star (C. Taylor). Hilary Swank is a two-time Oscar-winning actress known for accepting challenging roles. She provided a blurb for the back of Gruwell's *Teach with your Heart.*
[211] See also P. Marshall's discussion of how what he calls "celebrity signs" overshadow the actual famous person (57).
[212] Braudy's seminal definition of fame is instructive in the case of celebriteachers: "fame is made up of four elements: a person and an accomplishment, their immediate publicity, and what posterity has thought of them ever since" (15). Most celebriteachers fit Rojek's categorization of the "celetoid," what he calls "any form of compressed, concentrated, attributed celebrity" (20).

discursive power: within society, the celebrity is a voice above others, a voice that is channeled into media systems as being legitimately significant" (x). While celebriteachers experience far less renown than people in other domains, their stories, particularly the film adaptations, do wield a certain discursive power and legitimacy because of the perceived authenticity of their experiences. In addition, the visibility afforded to their stories by the films sometimes inspires a surge in readership of the source text, as was evidenced by the appearance of *The Freedom Writers Diary* on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 23 weeks in 2007, almost immediately following the film's release; when it was originally published in 1999 it never made the list, even though the book got some press on television programs like *Oprah* and *Primetime Live.*

Narratives by and about celebriteachers have been influential in discussions of education, as their stories are used to frame debates, their representations of American schooling are often taken at face value, and their images are invoked as laudable or unrealistic. As Farber, Provenzo, and Holm argue, "such stories can be instrumental in the way perspectives crystallize and issues are articulated" (151).[213] Increasingly, teacher educators have begun to use popular culture texts in the classroom as a way to interrogate the ideas and images that preservice and new teachers have internalized from representations of celebriteachers.[214] The author of one such study, Deborah Dubose Brunner, asks, "Without exposing some of our most popular myths, how will

[213] Dalton 2-3, 22, Brunner 87, Bulman 251-2, and Farhi 157 make similar arguments about the influence of the films, as does Giroux, specifically about *Dangerous Minds* (46). Patrick Ledesma, a teacher and recent guest blogger for *The Washington Post,* extends the influence of these films into the current moment, suggesting that stories about charismatic outsiders have contributed to the undermining of longer-term, nuanced, teacher-driven reforms in favor of quick, but ineffective, solutions.

[214] See Trier "Cinematic" (139) for a summary of scholars who call for this type of classroom work, and D. Freedman, Paul, Trier "Teaching," and Robertson for examples of practitioners that do it. Interestingly, Brunner observed that student-teachers are resistant to traditional textbooks because they report "only success stories … [students] wanted to know what teachers did when things went wrong" (4).

our prospective teachers be prepared to do more than play school?" (115) For many white suburbanites, future teachers or not, the way that they get their information about poor urban communities or people of color more generally is through media images, including popular films (Paul 22; McCarthy et al. 203).[215] The access that what *New Yorker* film critic David Denby refers to as "teacher-goes-to-the-ghetto" films provide to supposedly true to life experiences renders them more reliable than purely fictional fare, even when they are only very loosely based on truth (122; see also Chennault 385; D. Freedman 75).

In the 1960s, the sheer number of teacher memoirs published in a short period of time, the social capital of their authors, and the controversies surrounding education in the period contributed to their visibility in popular and academic discussions of education. Since the 1980s, although there have been more teacher memoirs published in this period than ever before, there is a clear dividing line between celebriteachers, whose stories can be easily invoked and recognized in discussions of education, and everyone else. Celebriteachers and their stories wield a great deal more power than the average teacher memoirist, and their opinions and experiences are often given more weight both in popular culture and in politics. For example, President Reagan offered Joe Clark a post as an education policy advisor in 1983 (Gordon 1), and Erin Gruwell and her students have testified before Congress. At the same time, just as in the past, the lessons the public learns from these memoirs are not always the ones that the teacher memoirists intend to teach.

While *Freedom Writers* is the most recent example of a filmic adaptation of a teacher memoir, the success of *Dangerous Minds* solidified the celebriteacher as a phenomenon and

[215] Rubinstein confesses that "before I started teaching, I expected my classroom experiences to be similar to what I had seen in teaching movies like *Dangerous Minds*" (46). American teachers are still disproportionately white; 32 percent of k-12 students are of color, while only 13 percent of teachers are (Grant and Murray 11; Paul 21; Murnane et al. 11).

slightly revamped the teacher movie for the twenty-first century.[216] Not a total break from the past, the film follows the trajectory of *Blackboard Jungle* and *Up the Down Staircase*, tracing Johnson's trials and tribulations; filmmakers, following the oft-hewn path of teacher movies that came before, manufactured a crisis of faith in which she decides to quit, only to be lured back by motivated students who convince her that she needs to stay. Likewise, after the brief interlude of teachers of color in the late 1980s, *Dangerous Minds* returned to the figure of the white teacher. However, the images of Escalante and Clark still linger in the film's portrayal of Johnson, who inhabits a white female version of their tough personas (D. Freedman 74); the filmmakers show her teaching her students karate and using her prior experience as a U.S. Marine to instill discipline. After the humiliating and demoralizing first day of school when she shows up in a dress and pearls, Johnson adopts an androgynous uniform of jeans, boots, and a leather jacket. Johnson may be a white female teacher, but she fits into the tough masculine mold carved out by Escalante and Clark.[217] Drawing on representations from throughout the twentieth century, the figure of LouAnne Johnson in *Dangerous Minds* would become the archetype of the American superteacher moving forward: a white woman surrounded by needy, difficult, but reachable high

[216] While *Stand and Deliver* and *Lean on Me* had been relatively successful, *Dangerous Minds* was a surprise hit in the summer of 1995, exceeding expectations for a relatively low-budget (and female-centered) film (Peterson 33; Chennault 388). It opened at number one and went on to gross almost 85 million dollars domestically and 179 million dollars worldwide (Peterson 33), ranking second only to *Dead Poets Society* on the Internet Movie Database's list of top-grossing "Inspirational Teacher Movies." The film was also popular television fare, rerunning on MTV throughout the late 1990s and into the 2000s. Not since *Blackboard Jungle* had a teacher film reached this level of cultural saturation.

[217] In *My Posse* Johnson quotes her cooperating teacher, Hal, who cautions her, "We can't all be Jaime Escalante." In the film, Emilio taunts Johnson: "'I come from a broken home and we're poor. I've seen the same fucking movies you saw … how the fuck you gonna save me from my life, huh?"

school students of color, isolated by hostile administrators and indifferent colleagues, willing to do whatever it takes to help her students succeed.[218]

Comparing the memoirs with the films illuminates some key revisions that effectively transform Johnson and Gruwell from very good teachers into teachers with superhero-like powers.[219] First, adaptation begets condensation: both Johnson and Gruwell taught for five years including their training, yet the films cover a much shorter period of time: six months in *Dangerous Minds* and two years in *Freedom Writers* (Paul 21; Freedman and Easley 74). As a result, the films shorten the length of both teachers' professional development, and also lessen the severity of early difficulties and struggles. Both authors dedicate a significant portion of their memoirs to their first year of teaching, in which Gruwell taught one class as student teacher, and Johnson taught two as a teaching intern. Although both teachers felt unprepared and somewhat unsupported in their first/trial years, the year of training served its purpose in that it allowed them to experiment with curricular and classroom management techniques that would become central to their later years in the classroom. The limited classroom time required in a training year allowed both Gruwell and Johnson the time to dedicate inordinate energy to those individual classes, which helped them to develop some of the more unique components of their teaching that they replicated with more students the next year. By folding these training years into the first full-time classroom year, filmmakers erased important experiences of trial and error, and elided the way in which structures of professional development benefited both teachers. In each film, the turning point comes about fifty minutes in, when the students begin to change their attitudes

[218] Although she criticizes the film for other reasons, Keroes praises it for "chang[ing] the portrayal of women teachers to allow then to be heroines instead of monstrous or ditzy" (8).
[219] The choices that filmmakers made in both cases also mirror those made by Menendez and Avildsen. See, for example, Hyman 29, who details how test scores at Clark's Eastside High were far lower than they were portrayed in the film.

towards the teacher, seemingly overnight (Farhi 158). In their memoirs, Johnson and Gruwell recount fits and starts of connection and antagonism, and while they both identify turning points in their efforts, they are not so neatly experienced, or so easily or quickly won. In effect, the films portray their subjects as much better teachers than they actually were, because they are able to become master teachers in a much shorter period of time with little or no training or practice.

In addition to condensing the length of time that these teachers needed to forge connections with students, the films condense the number of students with whom they forged those connections (Swetnam 31; Taubin 52; T. Moore; Rubinstein 46). The limitation of the numbers of students on screen meant that filmmakers created composite characters out of the real students who populate the memoirs. Johnson and Gruwell had likely already taken some liberties with their students' lives, but filmmakers took even more, eliminating the less exciting stories and focusing on the more violent or tragic ones in *Freedom Writers* and inventing a subplot that culminates in the death of a student in *Dangerous Minds*, a student who in real life is not only alive, but thriving. In targeting and sensationalizing the student narratives, the films perpetuate stereotypes about students of color and their lives (Ayers et al.; Bulman 257; Chennault 388; Giroux 46).[220] Like the temporal condensation, the focus on certain students and the composite nature of their stories also contributes to an inflated portrait of Johnson's and Gruwell's success. In these films, the teachers become masters of their profession in a short period of time, with students who all have severe personal problems that contribute to their difficulties in the

[220] In *The Culture of Fear,* Glassner describes how, in the mid-late 1990s, the media manufactured fear of "superpredator" young people emerging out of America's cities. The title of "Dangerous Minds," and the exaggeration of Johnson's students' involvement with violence would have both reflected and contributed to this trend (xiv, Chennault 386). This mirrors *Blackboard Jungle's* relationship to the hysteria over juvenile delinquency in the mid-1950s.

classroom, in the face of exaggerated racialized antagonism from students and their parents (Taubin 52; Chennault 394).[221]

Finally, the last key characteristic of adaptation is the extreme isolation of the teacher character from any sources of support. Although Johnson condemns some other teachers in her memoir, she also mentions numerous administrators and colleagues who help her become a better teacher, mentor her students, and cooperate in the development of the Academy program. On her website, Johnson points out this difference: "I didn't fight with my administrators all the time -- it was my principal who gave me the support and encouragement I needed to become an effective teacher" ("My Thoughts"). The film transformed Johnson's master teacher, Hal, into a colleague who is just a personal friend; although he provides personal support to her throughout the film, his professional capacities from the memoir have been eliminated. In the director's commentary of the *Freedom Writers* DVD, writer-director Richard LaGravenese explains an epiphany he had while writing an earlier version of the script. He had originally included a supportive teacher character (ostensibly drawn from conversations with Gruwell), but he decided that this character was "superfluous," that it would be more effective to show Gruwell realizing everything on her own, and learning only "from herself and from the kids," not from a more experienced educator. The Gruwell of the film is therefore unbelievably able, resourceful, and successful, and the other teachers provide hurdles for her to overcome. In addition, Gruwell's memoir illustrates how Gruwell's success was facilitated by monetary donations from corporate sponsors, the support of a dedicated group of parents, and help from former students from her student-teaching year, none of which is explained in the film, except for a brief mention of the donations of computers.

[221] Johnson takes issue with this in both of her public responses (see note 229).

As a result of these adaptations, these films are best understood as success stories on steroids, as well as on celluloid. Unlike the teacher memoir cluster of the 1960s, which included representations that ranged from highly successful to self-described failure, celebriteacher narratives (including the 1980s films) exclusively portray supposedly transformational educational situations facilitated by teachers who work insane hours, sacrifice everything for their students and are able to make unbelievable academic gains in a very short time with very little resources.[222] In addition, the films end with these teachers staying on, ostensibly continuing their heroic work.

The characteristics of adaptation, specifically condensation and isolation, contribute to what many critics consider the very damaging image of the "teacher-hero" that emerges out of the teacher movies of the twentieth-century.[223] While scholars have historically ignored teacher memoirs, the films have inspired a spate of academic and popular responses, alongside reviews.[224] Unlike the critics of the 1960s who, looking hopefully toward the future, generally praised and lauded the success stories of the memoirists of that period, contemporary critics, with an eye on the demoralizing past, view these filmic success stories suspiciously, cautioning that

[222] Interestingly, this trend was reflected in the various adaptations of another classic teacher narrative, *To Sir With Love.* According to Adam Farhi, the 1967 film depicted Sir as simply a good teacher, not extremely successful. However, by the time the made-for-television sequel came out in 1996, Sir had been transformed into what Farhi calls "a superteacher." Recently some smaller films have tried to counter the hero-teacher image, most notably *Half Nelson* (Fleck 2006), the French film *The Class* (Cantent 2008), and *Detachment* (Kaye 2011).
[223] Coined by David Considine in his seminal study, the notion of the "teacher-hero" has been adopted by many critics of the form.
[224] William Ayers' "A Teacher Ain't Nothing But a Hero: Teachers and Teaching on Film" has become something of a classic of the field, and has been widely anthologized. I am indebted to Robert C. Bulman's "Teachers in the 'Hood: Hollywood's Middle Class Fantasy," in my view the best treatment of teacher films to date.

they are unrealistic, unsustainable, not replicable, and politically problematic.[225] This critical backlash against the pedagogical success story highlights some of the inherent tensions of the form since its inception. While success stories, especially those that focus attention on poor students of color, illustrate that these students can achieve at the same level as other students and might raise the profile of teaching as a career, I concur with the critical consensus that these films, especially their exaggerated depictions of success, have had a damaging influence on public perceptions about education.[226] Because they portray issues in education as individual problems to be solved by talented teachers, and divorce their analyses of education from larger systemic issues, the films allow the viewer to ignore policy issues and political solutions and instead invest in a few good (wo)men to solve the problems of American urban education.[227] The films' explicit condemnation of other teachers and administrators (Farhi; Bulman; Considine), exemplified in *Dangerous Minds* when the principal's reliance on inane rules and regulations leads to a student's murder, allows other educators to be blamed for the system's failure (T. Moore), and elides more complex analyses that take into account the challenges that poverty, institutional racism, and inequitable funding structures have levied on urban educational systems for at least fifty years. The easy, isolated, and condensed success story suggests that simply recruiting motivated yet inexperienced new teachers is a viable method of widespread educational reform. In addition, the framing of the teacher-hero as "white savior" in *Dangerous*

[225] Some critics argue that these representations frame teaching as a type of "professional martyrdom" (Burbach and Figgins 66), and worry that they might dissuade people from choosing teaching as a career. Others point out that the self-sacrifice that the films portray as necessary is ridiculous to expect from teachers, and that the exaggeration endemic to the genre is depressing for real teachers who can never live up to the image (Swetnam 31).
[226] Although most responses to the films have been negative, some critics have praised individual films, usually *Stand and Deliver* or *Freedom Writers* (Hill; G. Kaplan), and others look to celebriteachers as models of good teaching (Shouse) or school reform (Finn).
[227] See Chennault, McCarthy, Moore, Bulman, Giroux, Farber and Holm, and Dalton.

Minds and *Freedom Writers* problematically locates solutions in the body of a white outsider, suggesting that communities of color are unwilling or unable to participate in movements for change.[228]

The adaptations of *Freedom Writers* and *Dangerous Minds* contributed to the issues I have sketched above, and underscore the paradox of fame for these memoirists, who experienced extremely wide exposure but lost some of the control over their self-representations.[229] In their written form, the memoirs are more complex, especially given that each memoirist published multiple memoirs and professional development books; as a result of their movie-induced fame and celebriteacher status, these teachers became serial teacher memoirists. The numerous iterations of their stories across multiple texts could potentially allow the two memoirists more nuance and complexity than any other teacher memoirists in history. Ironically, even though these additional texts exist, the popularity and ubiquity of the films means that the lasting image of these teachers for most people is still those filmic portrayals. Do these texts perpetuate the same damaging images and ideas that the films do? Does text offer the memoirists a means to escape from the simplifications endemic in the Hollywoodization of their lives, or is the political commentary offered by the films a valid representation of each authors' attitudes about American education?

---

[228] See Ayers; Chennault; Garon; Taubin; and Peterson.

[229] Johnson came forward in 1996 on the National Public Radio program *This American Life* to criticize the television version of her life, and also commented on the film ("Faustian"). She has also published an essay on her website, which she wrote in 2007 in response to a graduate student inquiring about the authenticity of the film ("My Thoughts"). She writes: "I had very little input to the movie and much of it is fiction, at times so far removed from fact as to be ridiculous." Conversely, Erin Gruwell and her students, a few of whom consulted on the film, have publicly supported all aspects of the film version of *Freedom Writers*. Gruwell appears in interviews on DVD extras, and her students are quoted extensively on the film's promotional website.

The twenty-year gap between the publication of the last of the 1960s memoirs (in 1974) and the publication of *My Posse Don't Do Homework* in 1992 saw the waxing and waning of education as a political hot topic. In the 1970s education lost some of its prominence as resistance to busing meant that the promise of desegregation was unlikely in the near future. However, the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983 refocused the national agenda on education; the concerns of the period were very much like the ones in the 1950s, when education was linked to America's international reputation and leadership potential (Tyack and Cuban 44). Since 1983, education has remained a prominent fixture in discussions of national goals, in elections, and in policy discussions. The popularity of the teacher films, coupled with the memoir boom of the mid-1990s, inspired a spattering of teacher memoirs published from the late-1980s through the 1990s, but the real eruption of contemporary teacher memoirs began at the turn of the twenty first century, around the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). While not a cluster like those of previous chapters, the multiple iterations of *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers* made available to the public between 1992 and 2007 remain highly influential in informing ideas about teaching and learning in contemporary America.[230]

Johnson's teacher memoir was not her first foray into autobiographical writing; in 1986 she had published *Making Waves: A Woman in This Man's Navy*. In 1992, Johnson's second memoir was published under the title *My Posse Don't Do Homework.* Editors at St. Martin's Press renamed the text *Dangerous Minds* in or around 1995, and reissued a new paperback

[230] Johnson taught between 1988 and 1993, and Gruwell taught from 1993 to 1998, so the setting of both of these texts pre-dated NCLB. Although *Freedom Writers* came out five years after that legislation was passed, it is very self-consciously constructed as an early 1990s period piece, with footage of the Rodney King riots playing over the title cards, and a soundtrack that makes use of hip hop music of the period.

edition with the movie poster on the cover.[231] Within a year, the text was translated into Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, German, and Polish, and distributed as an audio book. Johnson's follow-up to *My Posse*, titled *The Girls in the Back of the Class*, was also published in 1995 (hereafter referred to as *Girls*). She has since written two professional development texts published by Jossey-Bass, entitled *The Queen of Education: Rules for Making Schools Work* (published in 2004) and *Teaching Outside the Box: How to Grab Your Students by their Brains* (published in 2005 and revised and reissued in 2011), a book for parents called *School is Not a Four-Letter Word: How to Help Your Child Make the Grade* (Hyperion, 1997) and a young-adult novel, *Muchacho* (Knopf, 2009; Ember, 2011). In addition to its adaptation into the 1995 film *Dangerous Minds, My Posse* was also adapted (even more freely) into a short-lived television series starring Annie Potts as Johnson, which ran on ABC for one season (1996-1997).[232]

My Posse covers a four-year period of teaching high school English at fictionalized "Parkmont High." Her first year, Johnson was a teaching intern, and taught two English classes, one regular and one accelerated. For the next three years, Johnson taught in a dropout prevention program called "the Academy," a "school within a school," with smaller classes, more personal interaction between students and teachers, and more support for students. In order to qualify for the Academy, students must have had at least average standardized test scores, although they often had low GPAs and attendance issues. Although the film briefly describes the Academy as a school within a school, filled with "bright kids with little or no skills, and personal problems," the film version of Johnson wonders "who are these kids, rejects from hell?" (a line quoted frequently in the reviews) Viewers of the film do not have the context that the book provides about the rationale and day-to-day functioning of the Academy, which contributes to Johnson's

[231] I will refer to Johnson's original text as *My Posse* and to the film as *Dangerous Minds.*
[232] For discussions of the TV series, see D. Freedman; Giroux; and Freedman and Easley.

success in the classroom because of the support it provides for teachers and the way it facilitates personal connections between students and staff. Johnson credits both her success and the success of her student to the structure provided by the Academy, arguing explicitly in the introduction and implicitly throughout the text for the implementation of similar programs in schools throughout the country. Unlike the 1960s memoirists who generally throw up their hands and provide few concrete solutions, Johnson tries to suggest how her experience could be replicated.

Johnson's first year experiences, which were completely excised from the film, simultaneously argue against racialized tracking practices and exhibit a powerful message about a teacher's expectations. Frustrated by the attitudes of other teachers, and the students' themselves, about the record of achievement in tracked classes, Johnson decides to teach the same book and the same lessons to both her regular and accelerated classes. She discovers that both classes are capable, but that the students in the regular class are afraid to formulate and share their opinions about literature, so she institutes an activity of "timed responses," helping students practice this skill. Like those in earlier memoirs, anecdotes like these illustrate that all students, regardless of race, class, or perceived level, can achieve if provided with the right support and held to the same high standards. The fact that more than twenty years have passed since Kozol and others felt the need to make this same point illustrates the slow pace of both educational reform and public attitudes about poor children of color.[233] However, Johnson's memoir does not just show this by recalling instances of student achievement, she provides a road map for a teacher-reader to follow. She also models the process of reflective practice, detailing the creative problem solving techniques that she uses to determine how best to teach

[233] Howard argues that there is still "a widespread culture of disbelief in the learning capacities of many of our children, especially children of color and the economically disadvantaged" (83).

different students. Johnson reinvigorates the nineteenth-century practice of using her text as both memoir and handbook for other teachers. One could easily implement many of Johnson's assignments, lessons, and classroom management techniques after reading her memoir, because many of them are provided, as are verbatim conversations between Johnson and her students that could be adapted by teachers wondering how best to interact and connect. The film, on the other hand, shows very little actual teaching (Farhi 158), and the teaching that it does show is invented and not taken from the memoir (and therefore not tested in actual classrooms) (Chennault). Without the context and details that the memoir provides, a struggling new teacher would likely run into some problems if she decided to impersonate Pfeiffer's depiction of Johnson in her high school classroom.

Johnson describes the challenges that she had in teaching the accelerated class her first year, illustrating that learning to teach is difficult regardless of the so-called ability grouping of the students, or their racial and class locations. The more antagonistic student relationships that Johnson includes in the memoir are those with these accelerated (predominantly white) students, and with summer school students with whom she has very little time to forge connections. The tensions between herself and her students are not framed as racial in the memoir, as opposed to the film. In fact, Johnson seems resistant to addressing the racial differences between herself and her students at all, ignoring her own white privilege and instead claiming the oppression of her gender and class locations when she tells her students: "the white boys have all the money and all the power and that's the way it is. And they aren't going to give it up – to you or to me" (231). In addition, Johnson's emphasis on her students' personal choice and responsibility sometimes ignores the challenges that they are facing, and suggests that larger societal issues can

be overcome simply through desire and hard work.[234] Her own self-expectations follow this same logic; even when she approaches a more institutionalized analysis of education, she returns to herself first. The political take away of *My Posse* is that teachers like Johnson can have a profound effect on students' lives in the contemporary school system as it stands. Her engagement with the Academy emphasizes the need for programs like these (instead of just good teachers operating in isolation), but that suggestion could easily go unnoticed by readers unfamiliar with traditional high school education.

Johnson wanted to counter the negative media around schooling, especially regarding students of color, and she succeeds in doing so. She writes: "for every student who slips through the cracks, a dozen – or two dozen – step over the cracks and walk out of high school with a diploma in one hand and a dream in the other" (129). Although the text recounts moments of frustration and doubt, and a few times when Johnson failed to connect, inspire, or even "save" a particular student, overall it depicts a relatively positive educational experience for most of Johnson's students. Everything seems to be fine in American education when you close the book; even the challenges associated with poverty and racism can be overcome with the help of Johnson's ministrations. While the film provides no evidence of long-term student achievement (which is how Johnson measures success in the memoir) it ends on a similarly triumphant note – the audience is to assume that since Johnson is staying everything will be okay. The conclusions of both *My Posse* and *Dangerous Minds* are unrealistically positive; invested in the power of one

[234] The issue of choice is a major point of contention for many critics of the film, who argue that this particular moment is representative of the decontextualized and/or neoconservative tenor of the entire film (see Freedman and Easley 79; Bulman 253; Chennault 392; and Giroux 46). Emphasis on choice echoes the bipartisan language of free market educational reform that developed in the early 1990s and remains popular today.

good teacher to overcome what Kohl had called "a lifetime of trouble" (55), they render more radical educational reform and political measures unnecessary (Bulman 273).

The celebriteacher narratives of the late 1980s and 1990s reflect the ineffectual nature of educational reform in the period. Like these narratives, which begin with a putative crisis in the schools, the 1980s began with A Nation at Risk and an acknowledgement of the problems in American education.[235] Also like these narratives, which conclude with a single educator miraculously solving the crisis with tough love, legislators opted for easy answers, like setting impossible goals or advocating small-scale solutions.[236] The experience of watching one of these films in a theatre, wherein the viewer witnesses the limitations of American education for certain groups, only to be convinced two hours later that these major problems can be solved relatively cheaply, easily, and independently, was replicated on a mass scale over the course of almost two decades, as representatives from both parties embraced improving education as part of their platform, and simultaneously did little to actually improve it (Howard 82; G. Kaplan K5). Clinton's Goals 2000 legislation exemplifies the similarities between the two parties in the period in regards to education; basically a repackaging of Bush's America 2000 education reform platform that had failed in 1991, it passed in its revised form in 1994 (McGuinn and Hess 308). An important development in the rhetoric of school reform and illustrative of a theoretical commitment to excellence, its standards-based reforms were, in the words of one scholar, "toothless and unenforced" (McGuinn 7, 91, 95). Although it did sow the seeds for the consensus

[235] See Smith et al. for an interesting argument about how the rhetoric of crisis develops out of political expediency; they argue that the so-called educational crises of the past thirty years have been overblown in order to "undermine public institutions and divert resources in other directions" (213).

[236] For example, the 1990 State of the Union address set six impossible goals and used purposefully vague language to rally citizens behind a generally positive message (better education) without providing strategies (or funding) to achieve those goals (McGuinn 61-2).

required to pass NCLB in 2002 (McGuinn 46), the significant narrowing of differences between the left and the right in terms of educational policy in the late 1980s and 1990s amounted to a tacit policy of what Michael Apple terms "benign neglect of inner-city schools" (24).[237]

Johnson's second teacher memoir, *The Girls in the Back of the Class,* radically revises her earlier attitudes about her own whiteness, school reform, and even her teaching successes. In embarking on the project of serial teacher memoir writing, Johnson resists the finality of the film version of her life and the conclusions drawn by viewers. As Leigh Gilmore, who first theorized serial autobiography, observes, "that there will always be (another) autobiography means that there will be no last words" (96). Johnson used this text to respond to the problems she had with the adaptation, in effect to regain control over the last words of her story, and her right to continue to write and re-write them.[238] In addition, by 1995 it would have been evident to Johnson that Clinton's "third way" was very much in line with Republican policies about schooling; her more radical attitudes about school reform in the second text contradict the prevailing notions of the period.[239]

Girls covers much of the same temporal territory as *My Posse* (the first intern year, the three years teaching in the Academy), fills in some blanks from the first book, and also discusses

---

[237] The Clinton era saw the development of strange bedfellows in education reform, a phenomenon that Ravitch explores in the present day in her most recent book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System.* For example, both conservative republicans and liberal democrats opposed standardized testing in the 1990s, but for very different reasons: conservatives opposed increased federal oversight of and intervention in schools, and liberals worried that the tests disadvantaged poor students of color (McGuinn 134).

[238] Although the book was published in August of 1995 and the film came out in June, the film had been completed for over a year before its release (Hill 45) and its likely that Johnson would have seen it while she was drafting *Girls*.

[239] The Democrats won the presidency in 1992 with education reform a central component of Clinton's new Democrat philosophy, which emphasized "expanding opportunity and shared responsibility" rather than the tax-and-spend philosophy associated with Johnson and Carter (McGuinn and Hess 309; McGuinn 75).

Johnson's fifth year at Parkmont, which would be her last. *Girls* ends with Johnson moving to New Mexico, where she was planning to teach college but wound up teaching high school. The fact that Johnson leaves Parkmont at the end of this memoir alters the significance of her successes; they are still commendable but her commitment seems less sustainable, less easy to invoke as a model for all teachers everywhere. In *Girls,* Johnson expresses the exhaustion and pain she felt throughout her teaching career, exploring the sacrifices she made in order to be the "teacher-hero" of *Dangerous Minds*. She also interrogates her beliefs about herself as a successful teacher.

In *Girls,* Johnson acknowledges the powerful pull of teacher film mythology, writing, "I admit it. I had visions of one child, a shy kid who rarely spoke out, taking my hand and thanking me for teaching him. No, the boys were too cool, it would be a her – 'right from wrong, weak from strong,' a scene straight out of *To Sir with Love*. I needed that scene" (37). By "admitting" or confessing to this desire, Johnson underlines the internal conflict of teacher audience members, who both scoff at and secretly envy the portrayals of teachers on screen (Rubinstein 47); ironically, a new generation of teacher-viewers would have a similar relationship with her story. However, Johnson almost immediately tries to prevent this type of emulation by expressing doubt about her own self-perception of her teaching prowess. She recounts a party she planned for her graduating seniors, many of whom do not show up, and comments, "I thought I had taken a tough bunch of teenagers and turned them into scholars. But I hadn't taught them anything. I wasn't the brilliant teacher I had thought I was" (40). In her fifth year, Johnson is still proud of her connections with certain, often male, students, but is horrified to realize that she has completely ignored most of her female students, and is ashamed that she cannot remember many of them as she thinks back on her time in the classroom. She determines that the

graduation rates of girls, especially girls of color, in the Academy are much lower than those of the boys, and repeats her earlier conclusion: "I was a fraud. Certainly I was not the teacher I thought I was" (85). These experiences underline the fits and starts of teaching and the lifelong learning that is impossible to represent in a finite memoir. Johnson's assertion that she is a fraud is particularly striking in the context of her celebriteacher persona; if she is not the teacher she thought she was (and portrayed in the first memoir), then she is also not the teacher that the audience of *Dangerous Minds* probably still thinks she is.[240] In *Girls*, Johnson begins to realize the dangers of the representation of the success story. Engaging in a feminist reading of her earlier practice, she contextualizes her self-reflection about her limitations in the classroom and innate sexism with studies about gender dynamics and education and begins to view what happens in her classroom as influenced by larger societal structures.

Johnson's feminist awakening is coupled with an increased awareness of structural racism and her own white privilege. A brief romantic interaction that leads to a sustained friendship with a black colleague opens her eyes to the way in which her whiteness affects her perception of the world (107) and to the experiences of racism that people of color deal with daily (128). Ruminating on why so many of her students are attracted to gangs, even those with strong family backgrounds, "made me question all the newspaper and magazine articles I'd read that attribute gang activity to the breakdown of the family unit among minorities in America"; she determines instead that it is a response to racism (133). Finally, she condemns the educational system, engaging in a radical Marxist critique of American society:

[240] Each of the movies freezes a moment in time, and therefore does not include additional information that might change a viewer's opinion about the representations. For follow-up reports on *Stand and Deliver* and *Lean on Me,* see Jesness and Hyman.

> Nothing in my past had prepared me for the pain of watching eager, ambitious children have the love of learning squeezed out of them slowly, one *dangerous* day at a time, until they finally learned the lessons our education system teaches: America needs poorly educated poor people to serve its well-educated wealthy people. (159, my emphasis)

For Johnson, the danger comes not from the minds of her students, but from the limitations of the system. Reclaiming the word "dangerous" from its imposed position as the title of her first book, she emphasizes that her students are the ones who should be most afraid of being crushed in the machinations of what scholar Doug Massey calls a "post-industrial economy" with increasing levels of income inequality (*Categorically* 31); they are endangered, not dangerous. Increasingly depressed, Johnson seeks counseling and recounts her frustrated response to the doctor's questions:

> Maybe I won't be able to be a teacher forever because I can't understand why we don't have any paper in our school, and no money for books, and they cut the library hours in half and then turned around and painted all the railings and landscaped an acre in front of the school, and when I asked them why, the answer was: it's a different budget. Maybe I'm crazy because I can't understand that kind of thinking. (254)

Johnson still believes in the value of good teaching, but she no longer portrays it as the single factor in student success, or the silver bullet in educational reform.

Unfortunately, even though Johnson is clear in the text about her altered ideology, some readers continue to miss the systemic analysis; the back cover of the paperback edition quotes a

reviewer who characterizes the text as "inspiring" and determines "what the system needs most are more LouAnne Johnsons." Echoing the many 1960s reviewers who called for more Herbert Kohls, this reviewer's suggestion (along with the publisher's decision to highlight it on the paperback's cover) undermines Johnson's actual arguments. It flies in the face of what Johnson is saying between the covers of the text, that there needs to be drastic school reform, redistribution of funding, and a reexamination of class structures and education's role in social mobility in order to improve the educational system, and that her superteacher position was unsustainable and ultimately made her deeply unhappy.

Girls is a much more nuanced analysis of Johnson's experience as a very skilled but still developing teacher, and of the state of American education as she sees it from the vantage point of her own position. Ironically, the success of *Dangerous Minds,* the least nuanced of all the iterations of Johnson's experiences, likely made it possible for Johnson to return to and revise her earlier representations. Unfortunately, while some readers may have read all of Johnson's output, that is relatively unlikely; the representations in the film, followed by the stories of *My Posse,* continue to be the most well-known and invoked images of Johnson's teaching experiences. Writing about teacher films more generally, Keroes cautions, "These images tend to take up so much space in our imagination that they blur or blot out entirely the real conditions of teachers' daily lives, diminishing the difficult and extraordinarily varied and complex world of teaching" (135), which is precisely what occurred in Johnson's experience. For most of the American public, Johnson's legacy is the image of the white super-teacher swooping in to save poor students of color, a concept that, among other things, contradicts the systemic analysis that she comes to in *Girls*. However, far from serving as a cautionary tale or inspiring hesitance on

the part of future teacher memoirists, the publication and film adaptation of *Dangerous Minds* ushered in an unprecedented eruption of teacher memoirs that continues into the present day.

In some sense, every teacher memoir published after 1995 emerges out of the shadow of *Dangerous Minds,* but this is even truer in the case of filmic adaptions of texts. In the process of adapting *Freedom Writers,* LaGravenese, Gruwell, and various students made explicit their desire to reconceptualize Pfeiffer's portrayal of Johnson. In his conversation with Hilary Swank on the DVD, LaGravenese recounts how the Freedom Writers "begged [him] not to make *Dangerous Minds*; they found it degrading, disrespectful to them." He explains that this was difficult because all the studios wanted to make a movie like *Dangerous Minds* because it was a hit. In an interview, Maria Reyes, whose life provided much of the inspiration for Eva, the main student character in *Freedom Writers*, commented "we don't want another—no disrespect to the woman who did that thing *Dangerous Minds* and no disrespect to any of them, but we knew our stories. We knew it was going to be different, and we wanted it to be real" (Lybarger).[241] In the same interview, Gruwell comments on her role in the film production as ensuring that the filmmakers kept pushing themselves not to "make it something [the audience has] seen before." Gruwell and her students' investment in originality and realness is characteristic of many of the teacher memoirists of the 1990s and 2000s, who acknowledge the history of the genre, either written or visual, and yet still feel their text or film will add something new to representations.

Less criticized than *Dangerous Minds* in reviews and scholarly publications*, Freedom Writers* improves slightly on the teacher film genre and, to some extent, provides a more

[241] Both LaGravanese and Reyes invoke the image of Pfieffer throwing candy bars at her students as the prime example of both the inauthenticity and the disrespect of *Dangerous Minds*, but Johnson disputed the candy bar throwing in both her online statement ("My Thoughts") and on NPR ("Faustian").

politicized perspective and analysis.[242] However, it remains firmly entrenched in most of the major generic conventions, as many (even positive) reviews, noted.[243] Pointedly meant to be "grittier" than *Dangerous Minds*, *Freedom Writers* explores the lives of children who are homeless, heavily involved in gang warfare, taking care of drug-addicted family members, and dealing and using drugs themselves. Both the text and the film illustrate how these students credit their experiences with Ms. G with helping them imagine a different trajectory for their lives, and making it happen. This is, of course, inspirational, and an exceptional outcome for these students. However, like *My Posse* and *Dangerous Minds*, as well as *Stand and Deliver* and *Lean on Me, The Freedom Writer's Diary* and *Freedom Writers* suggest that a wonderful teacher is enough to overcome structural inequities.[244] Unlike Johnson, Gruwell does not take the opportunity to revise her teacher-hero image in any later text; all of her texts, with the exception of *Teaching Hope*, embrace and perpetuate the heroic teacher model.[245]

The publication history of the *Freedom Writers* brand of texts and films is even more complicated than that of *Dangerous Minds* et al. In 1999, the first edition of the text was published under the title, *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Group of Extraordinary Teens*

---

[242] *Dangerous Minds* received a score of 47 on metacritic.com, which is considered "mixed," (based on 18 reviews), while *Freedom Writers* received a score of 64, which is considered favorable (based on 29 reviews). For information about how metacritic.com determines their ratings, see http://www.metacritic.com/about-metascores.

[243] One key difference is that Gruwell insists on keeping on her pearls, which, along with an array of brightly colored skirt suits, becomes her uniform, much to the chagrin of her students and other teachers. Gruwell's insistently feminized self-portrayal yet again revises the teacher-hero model, this time away from Johnson's masculinized image in *Dangerous Minds.*

[244] Tom Moore, a high school history teacher, provided a cogent overview of the problems of the film in his op-ed in *The New York Times.* See also Peterson.

[245] *Teaching Hope* collects mini-memoirs of teachers in the same way that the *Diary* collects those of students. It avoids the hero-teacher model to some extent because some of the stories are confessions of failure and frustration, and certain teachers call for more broad education reform than Gruwell usually does. Gruwell has also edited *The Gigantic Book of Teachers Wisdom* (2007). The model of the anthology of mini-teachers memoirs usually organized around a theme became popular in the mid-1990s (see, for example, Jennings and Kane).

Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them by "The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell" (hereafter referred to as *Diary*). The same year another edition was published with a slightly altered subtitle, which reads "How *a Teacher* and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them" (my emphasis). A movie tie-in edition was published in 2007, followed by a tenth anniversary edition in 2009. After the film came out, the text was translated into Spanish, German, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese. In 2007 Gruwell also published a teacher's guide for the text, which has become a popular and somewhat controversial reading in high school English classes. *Diary* is not a conventional teacher memoir, but rather a compilation of anonymous diary entries penned by Gruwell's students organized chronologically through their high school careers, with introductory sections written by Gruwell. Gruwell's short introductions to each semester follow a relatively conventional teacher memoir trajectory, but share the plot of the book with a number of autobiographical narratives of students. The movie tie-in edition of the *Diary* includes a "sneak peak" at Gruwell's conventional teacher memoir, *Teach With Your Heart: Lessons I Learned from the Freedom Writers* (hereafter referred to as *Teach With Your Heart*), which came out in 2007. There is a significant amount of overlap between the film and the memoir, including scenes and events that were not covered in the *Diary*, so I suspect that Gruwell was in the process of composing her memoir while LaGravenese was working on the screenplay.[246]

The complex history and multiple iterations of the Freedom Writers and Erin Gruwell brands illustrate the power of the teacher memoir narrative in the contemporary film and publishing industries. In *Teach with Your Heart*, Gruwell recounts the process of the *Diary's* publication, which began in part because Gruwell had received significant attention from

[246] According to Reyes, LaGravanese had been in talks with Gruwell and her students since 2000 (Lybarger).

television and print journalists throughout her time teaching. The book of stories that Gruwell's students wrote and compiled was originally titled *An American Diary: Voices from an Undeclared War*, and did not include any text by Gruwell. However, when her editor read this early draft, she characterized it as "a collection of horror stories [with] a compelling story lurking inside"; she suggests to Gruwell that "the reader will want to know what happened in *your* classroom over the past four years" (184, my emphasis). Although in the memoir Gruwell agrees with this assessment and explains how she encouraged her students to edit their entries by focusing on their academic journeys and their eventual triumph, the editor was actually suggesting ways to make the book more like a teacher memoir by focusing the stories on the classroom and therefore emphasizing the role that Ms. G. played in each student's eventual triumph. *Diary* is in this sense an accidental teacher memoir, constructed by the demands of a publishing industry used to the conventions of a genre in which, to quote Carolyn Kay Steedman, children are rarely anything more than "episodes in someone else's narrative" (qtd. in Eakin, *How* 53). Indeed, in her memoir, Gruwell explains, "I wasn't planning to even be in the book" (210).

The shift in the text's subtitle from the first edition to the second reflects the revised focus; while the first iteration of the *Diary* only mentions "a group of extraordinary teens" ever since the first edition the subtitle has included a reference to the teacher. If from pre-publication to publication the *Diary* became more and more like a traditional teacher memoir, its adaptation from book to film drastically accelerated this process. The image reprinted on the cover of the movie tie-in edition (and used as a movie poster) is a huge close-up picture of Hilary Swank's face, above much smaller shots of five of the actors playing students (figure 4). Although the film's tagline emphasizes the students' experiences ("their story, their words."), it assumes a

singular story and elides the multiplicity of perspectives that the text actually provides. Their story becomes not only the story of the freedom writers, which is already a collection of 150 stories, but also the cliché that audiences are used to seeing; in effect, it becomes *her* story through *their* words.[247]

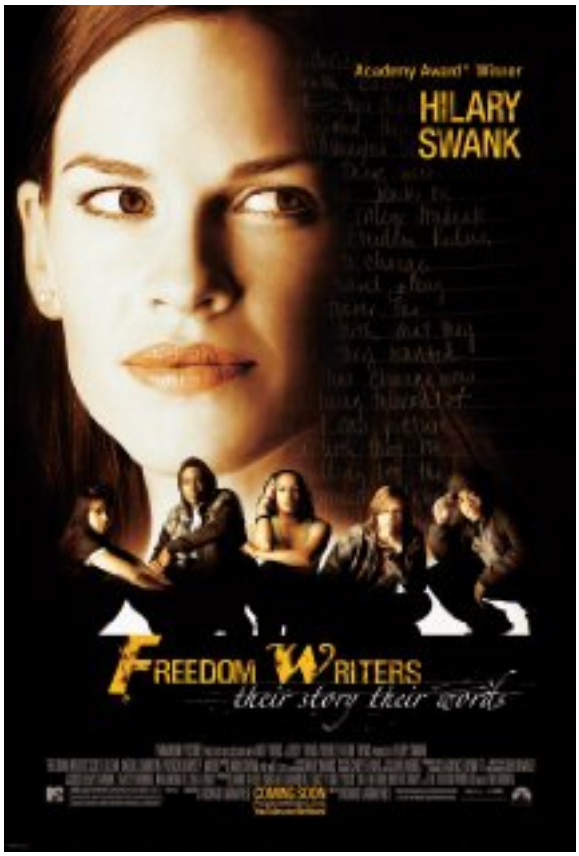

Figure 4

The emergence of Gruwell's life as the narrative thread in both the *Diary* and *Freedom Writers* and the way in which her story eclipses those of her students in branding the Freedom Writers underlines some of the ethical concerns of the celebriteacher phenomenon. Because the publication process transformed the *Diary* from autobiographical fragments of individual students into a cohesive narrative of educational triumph, the students' accomplishments were

[247] Peterson's title, "*Their* Words, *Our* Story," also suggestively invokes and revises the use of pronouns in the film's subtitle.

subsumed to Gruwell's success story, serving as evidence more of her aptitude as a teacher than of the students' own personal journeys, supported by family and friends, along with their teacher.

In addition, even though the text contains first-person mini-memoirs by students, their anonymity prevents the students from actually being credited as true co-authors, regardless of the fact that the *Diary's* author on record is "The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell." Before the first student entry in the *Diary* is this note: "Each teenager played an integral role in developing the diary entries – reading, editing and encouraging one another. To protect their anonymity and illustrate the universality of their experiences, we decided to number each diary entry rather than assign a name." In her memoir, Gruwell goes to great lengths to elaborate on and justify the decision of student anonymity, which stems from her desire "to protect students … and create a safe environment."[248] Later, once Gruwell and her students have gotten some media attention, she slightly amends her original justification for the anonymity: "by binding all their stories together anonymously, no one would be overlooked and there would be no stars" (178). Except, what actually happened was that Gruwell emerged as the star.

The *Diary* mentions only two students' names. Entry 54, a description of racial tokenism, explains that Gruwell "had the eraser that took 'National Spokesperson for the Plight of Black People' off my forehead. She replaced it with 'Spokesperson for Joyce Roberts.'" Ironically, for Roberts to claim her own individuality, which she credits Gruwell with helping her do, she has to break the code of anonymity governing the *Diary*. Eight years later, the use of student names in Gruwell's memoir provided the serial reader the opportunity to match up those names and stories

[248] Ironically, in the same sentence she literally names one of her students. Gruwell also reminded her students that she was a mandated reporter, which implies that she would of course know the identity of the student writers.

with the anonymous *Diary* entries. Although Gruwell likely did this with the student's permission and support, it undermines much of the reasoning for the anonymity in the first place.

Diary 121 exclaims "The Freedom Writers are finally being published!" The student is proud of the accomplishment, sharing that her family is "thrilled because I will be added to the short, but ever growing list of African American female writers" (234-5). Unfortunately, the larger public cannot add this student's name to that list, because we don't know it. While I am sure that some students, perhaps even many of them, embraced anonymity because of the intimacy of their revelations, the blanket approach to this rule robbed certain students of the recognition that they may have wanted. Conversely, the success of the projects might have also contributed to the silencing of opposing voices. For example, students' parents might have felt uncomfortable about the texts and film, which frame most parents as absent or neglectful, or students whose entries were excised from the *Diary* to make room for continuing arcs by recurring, albeit anonymous voices, might have felt betrayed by that decision.

The continuous visibility of the class, first in newspapers and then in the published texts and the film, afforded Gruwell multiple opportunities to wrestle with questions of representation. Gruwell dealt with the success of her texts thoughtfully and sensitively, including students in the process of consultation on the film, donating all of the proceeds from the various texts to a foundation dedicated to furthering her students' education and replicating her curriculum, and even bringing students to various speaking engagements. Nevertheless, she retained control of the proceeds, deciding how her students could spend the money that their stories generated. The experience of the student Freedom Writers, whether rendered anonymous, invisible, or exposed, highlights the vulnerability of students in the process of publishing and adapting a teacher memoir. Gruwell and Johnson consistently emphasize the choices that their students have on an

everyday basis, but the choices whether to be included in their memoirs, how they were represented, and how the profits were distributed, were not among those.

Decisions made by Gruwell, her publishers, filmmakers, and student advisors on the film indicate that Gruwell's students' stories were so intimately linked with her own life narrative that it was impossible to separate them, and that the exposure of personal information about certain students, even in her memoir proper, *Teach With Your Heart,* was deemed appropriate. Gruwell's star status was first cultivated by editorial decisions around the *Diary's* genre, and then by the film adaptation, which dedicates as much as time to her narrative as it does to all of the students combined. It is to be expected, particularly in the contemporary age of memoir, that she would compose a more developed autobiographical narrative of her years in the classroom. *Teach With Your Heart* provides fans the opportunity to fill-in the gaps of her brief autobiographical interludes in the *Diary* and compare her own recollections with those of the filmmakers. It also serves as a type of sequel to the *Diary,* alerting readers to what happened after the students graduated.[249]

Juxtaposing the *Diary, Freedom Writers,* and *Teach With Your Heart* exposes a key shift in the trajectory of the celebriteacher. The films of the late 1980s depicted their protagonists as steely and determined to remain at their schools, but when revising *Dangerous Minds* for the screen, filmmakers returned to the narrative of *Blackboard Jungle* and *Up the Down Staircase*

[249] The advertisement of *Teach With Your Heart* as a follow-up to the *Diary* is somewhat odd, since many of the *Diary's* readers are high school students, and Gruwell's memoir does not seem to be written for that audience. Readers who want to know what happened to the student protagonists of the first book are forced to read a conventional teacher memoir about Gruwell to get that information.

where the driving conflict is whether or not the teacher will remain.[250] *Freedom Writers* pointedly avoids this framework; most of Gruwell's struggles in the film are depicted in a few classroom scenes of dialogue, and then as an extended musical montage, after which the students come around. The film version of Gruwell never expresses any desire to give up or leave the school. However, in the *Diary*, she describes how after her first year teaching she had interviewed at another high school and been offered a job there, and "was inches away from a clean getaway" (48) when the principal convinces her to stay on. Tellingly, Gruwell does not include this moment in *Teach With Your Heart*, even though that text provides much more detail about her personal life and decisions. Unlike Johnson, whose final teacher memoir thus far positions herself in opposition to the LouAnne Johnson that the filmmakers created, Gruwell's more recent statements align more directly with the film than with her earlier writings. Her excision of this detail from her memoir, like the filmmakers' excision of it from the film, intensifies the image of Gruwell as superhuman.

The film and *Teach with Your Heart* portray Gruwell's extraordinary commitment to her students as a necessary component of being a good teacher. In one extreme instance, Gruwell compares herself and other teachers to Miep Gies, who hid the Frank family in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam: "As she described her sacrifice, it reminded me of all the things teachers do behind the scenes for their students – driving across town to Target to save fifteen cents on markers, or staying up all night to grade papers. Just as Anne had no idea how much Miep sacrificed, my students had no idea how much their teachers sacrificed for them" (124). The comparison obviously does not hold because of the historical circumstances and difference in stakes between

[250] Johnson criticized the film for manufacturing this plot, pointing out that she never actually quit, although in *My Posse* and *Girls* she recounts moments of extreme disillusionment and near surrender.

the two invoked sacrifices; no teacher in the contemporary U.S. is in danger of being killed as a result of the efforts she makes on behalf of her students. However, that Gruwell even suggests the correlation underlines the exaggeration endemic to the teacher memoir genre and the power of the teacher-hero myth.

While Gruwell's sacrifices are not life or death ones, her commitment to her students has personal repercussions. In her memoir, Gruwell provides more information about the dissolution of her marriage, and her own feelings of failure about her personal life. Clearly, her work was not the only reason for her divorce, but her professional obligations were a major source of contention in the marriage; she hypothesizes that the marriage would not have ended had she "poured [her] passion into being the perfect wife instead of the perfect teacher" (142).[251] Gruwell implicitly suggests that to be an amazing teacher one has to sacrifice everything else, and that the primary emotional relationships for the teacher should be those with her students. After her divorce this seems to work for Gruwell, but it sets a dangerous precedent, since many people are not willing to do this.

Gruwell works multiple jobs to fund classroom projects and trips, sacrifices her marriage and spends all of her free time consumed by her professional obligations. Beyond the fact that these expectations are undesirable for many and unsustainable for most, these practices conceal the problems in American education and allow them to continue. As Mary Dalton observes about the earlier iterations of celebriteachers, "Time and again as we watch individual teachers do battle with the hierarchy, we have the satisfaction (as an audience) of an implied win on some

[251] Johnson also admits that she used her students to fill the void left by a divorce, and that she felt abandoned when her first group of students graduated. In *Girls* she addresses that this was a mistake, and describes her attempts to "establish some sort of balance between work and play in my life" (76). Celebriteachers notoriously cannot achieve this balance; for example, in *Stand and Deliver,* Escalante suffers a heart attack while teaching, and then sneaks out of the hospital to return to class, even though the doctor has ordered weeks of bed rest.

small front while the collective organizations remain largely in tact" (17). If teachers pay for everything out of their own pockets, budgets never have to increase; if teachers take over the role of social service agencies, those agencies can continue to be underfunded and phased out of existence.

According to Gruwell, her efforts on behalf of her students inspired hostility from other teachers at the school (*Diary* 47-48; *Teach* 168, 186); she credits this unpleasant work environment as a major reason for leaving Wilson. Quoting her father's advice when she is offered a college teaching position, she writes: "'After all the crap some of the teachers at your school have put you through in the last five years, I think you should go for it,' he said. 'They put nasty notes in your mailbox, they've tried to penalize your students, and now they're accusing you of sleeping with your boss. I can go on and on. It's not a healthy environment for you'" (188). The decision to leave, which is complicated for any teacher and especially for teacher memoirists, was made even more fraught for Gruwell, who had achieved fame as a type of miracle worker and worried that she might be "selling out" (188). Emphasizing her victimization by other teachers justifies her decision for some readers, but also frames teachers as a major problem in education more generally. In the *Diary,* Gruwell universalizes her experience, assuming that the treatment she suffered is the norm in schools across the country; invoking a moment where other teachers accused her of trading sexual favors for funding, she writes, "at that moment I understood why almost half of new teachers leave the profession within the first few years" (47). Teacher retention is an enormous problem in American education, but most teachers do not leave because of personal attacks levied against them by other

professionals, but rather because of a variety of other factors that stem from institutionalized issues in the education system at large.[252]

Like teacher memoirs of previous eras, both the *Diary* and *Teach with your Heart* contribute to the important work of exposing bad teachers and attitudes that need to be purged from the system. Gruwell consistently invokes examples of teachers who use veiled racist language such as "those kids" or "students like yours" to limit her students' opportunities (*Teach* 7, 24), and she retells students' stories about being disrespected and considered lazy or stupid (*Teach* 19, 150).[253] In one repeated example, she explains how other teachers hold low expectations for her students, believing that they are too stupid to read *Catcher in the Rye* (*Teach* 33, 58). Later she aligns these other teachers with a much larger system, writing "hardened kids who had been told that they were 'stupid' by the educational system began to feel smart, and now they had the grades to prove it. Why should the system want to impede their progress?" (73) By personifying "the system" and depicting it as something that tells students they are stupid and wants to impede their progress Gruwell illustrates that when she says system she really means other teachers. This slippage between other teachers and the system is representative of Gruwell's attitude toward reform, which hinges on better professional development for teachers, i.e., replicating what she did in her classroom on a larger scale, what she refers to as "giv[ing] both teachers and students our blueprint" (237).

---

[252] There is a large body of social science research that examines teacher recruitment and retention; see Ingersoll and Guarino et al. for an overview. According to these reports, a desire for higher salaries and improved working conditions including better student discipline and smaller class sizes were the primary reasons for teacher attrition. See also Murnane et al. for an analysis of promising incentive polices to increase retention.

[253] Well before *Freedom Writers* came out, Considine noted that "the teacher-hero format by necessity resulted in reducing the principal and other teachers to villains" (145). He also sketched the exact trajectory of *Freedom Writers* as the prototypical formula of the teacher-hero format: "teacher meets class, teacher wins class, teacher loses class, teacher wins class back."

While her analysis of education includes intermittent criticisms of segregation, tracking, and testing, her most sustained critique is of bad teaching and low expectations. She describes how she opens a speech at the National Principal Association Conference by advocating "teaching to a kid and not to a test," but closes the same speech by telling them "Hilary Swank was going to play me in the *Freedom Writers* movie and I hoped she would help bring the passion back to our profession by reminding people how important it is to believe in all kids" (258). Gruwell does not provide the speech verbatim, but how she describes these excerpts illuminates the tension between political and individual solutions to contemporary educational problems. Her condemnation of testing, which she repeats on her website, could translate to a larger political solution because high-stakes testing derives from federal law. However, Gruwell does not seem to advocate a reworking of those parameters, but rather that teachers alter their individual teaching styles to protest them, a strategy that can backfire for students since their test scores determine promotion and placement. In the conclusion of her comments Gruwell alludes to a dispassionate teaching force with low expectations for students as the major impediment to student achievement. While there is no excuse for teachers holding attitudes like these, placing so much emphasis on these attitudes elides other possible causes for low student achievement and obscures solutions that address those other issues. Both the text and film do fulfill Gruwell's hope of reminding people to believe in all kids, but they also provide fodder for those who argue that teachers are the major problem in American education, and excuse other structural inequities, like, on a smaller level, the inequitable use of funds in Gruwell's school, and, on a larger level, the impact of poverty for many of her students.[254] Oddly, while a few chapters of the

[254] Beyond the many well-documented effects of growing up in poverty for children's educational achievement, high-stakes tests have been criticized for evincing middle-class bias in questions and grading criteria.

book address Gruwell's failed attempt to run for office in California, she never details a political platform, which would have provided more information about her specific attitudes toward educational reform.

Gruwell's educational philosophy as depicted in the *Diary* and her memoir, the narrative traced in the film and both texts, and the work that she does with the Freedom Writers foundation, focuses on developing individual connections and empathy as a way to "change the world" (*Teach* 241). Gruwell's motivation to enter teaching was overtly political; after the 1992 riots, she changed directions from pursuing law to education, explaining her thought process that "maybe the best way to equalize the playing field wasn't in a courtroom but in a classroom" (*Teach* 13). However, what Gruwell describes and what she achieves as a teacher is not an equalized playing field but rather the cultivation of a super-team of highly supported players, her students, who can succeed even though the playing field remains unequal. A longitudinal perspective of school reform would need to develop measures to facilitate the success of real students in real classrooms now (like Gruwell does) alongside longer-term structural efforts to revamp the system as a whole so that student achievement becomes the rule, not the exception.

Gruwell's focus on individual solutions to structural problems is inspiring to some and many teachers have testified to the power of the *Diary* for their students, and the way in which Gruwell's story and strategies have revitalized their own teaching.[255] However, the triumphant conclusions of the film, the memoir, and the *Diary*, like the end of *My Posse* and *Dangerous Minds,* paints too rosy a picture of solving the problems of American education in the period. One critic imagines a typical reaction to the film: "there are people like Erin Gruwell out there – she really exists! – who are dedicated to the cause … white hegemony? No longer an issue. Guilt

[255] Testimonials like this abound on the internet; see Choi for one opinion about how *Freedom Writers* provides a good model for pedagogical practice.

over privilege? Gone" (Peterson 42). Just as the narratives of the 1960s contributed to an exaggerated fear when they were meant to inspire empathy, *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers* (and the constellations of texts around them) promote complacency rather than the hoped-for call to action.[256] Even if the books do inspire some sort of desire to act, it is not exactly clear what the reader is supposed to do.[257] Although they engage in an analysis of systemic racism, especially vis-à-vis the prison industrial complex, each of Gruwell's texts urges personal responsibility and an increased commitment to social justice and tolerance as a viable solution to entrenched social problems. Developing empathy and forging connections across race and social class are laudable goals that could have political reverberations, especially given the young adult audience of the *Diary.* However, these changes will not sufficiently level the playing field of education about which Gruwell is concerned. Even though the student stories in *Diary* repeatedly illustrate how external factors like poverty and racism affect the educational experiences of students, there is very little discussion in any of Gruwell's text about addressing those issues in any way besides interpersonally.[258]

Taken together, the educational philosophies and solutions that emerge from *My Posse,* the *Diary,* and *Teach with Your Heart* are not so different from the damaging messages scholars have identified in their film counterparts. Many of the themes that emerge in these texts are indicative of the atmosphere around education in the 1990s and 2000s and the educational reform movement that developed after A Nation at Risk. Although educational failure was back in the

---

[256] The back cover of *Teach with your Heart* characterizes the text as a "call to arms."
[257] If the suggestion is to replicate Gruwell's success under the same conditions, Peterson rightly notes that this "solution will fail in broad application: few teachers are willing to sacrifice their personal lives, their income, and the lives; even fewer districts are willing to support programs such as Gruwell's" (43).
[258] Although not specifically in regards to Gruwell, critics have written extensively about the dangers of positing individual solutions to structural problems. See Dalton; Bulman; Chennault; and Giroux.

American political spotlight in the 1980s, the backlash against the statist solutions of the Great Society meant that politicians and the public sought solutions that narrowly targeted schools and teachers, rather than addressing foundational problems of poverty and inequality (McGuinn 111). Scholars continue to explore the devastating ways in which poverty affects student achievement, and politicians continue to decry the failure of American schools to educate all children, but school reform efforts have mostly been divorced from the (limited) attempts to narrow income gaps since the late 1970s. In a recent public letter, scholar Doug Massey wrote, "Inequalities of wealth and income have risen steadily for three decades, racial segregation continues, class segregation has deepened, and middle and working class families are fracturing in the face of this economic onslaught, but rather than face these fundamental realities politicians keep pandering to the public and putting forth an endless stream of quick fixes that don't cost any money and don't require real change – as if cosmetic changes in schools are somehow going to offset decades of disinvestment in the public sphere and rising concentrations of poverty" (see also Briggs, "Introduction" 7). When stories like Gruwell's enter into this milieu, they provide the perfect fodder for advocates of the quick fix, even though they have not been proven to be sustainable or scalable.

By focusing on individual success stories of both teachers and students, the films and texts (with the exception of *Girls*) embrace the ethos of a Reagan-Bush era conservative egalitarianism. The *Diary*, for example, rewrites the quintessential American success story in the form of a myriad of mini-memoirs, illustrating that if a student of any race or class tries hard enough, and is lucky enough to end up in Ms. Gruwell's class, they can succeed without any other support, especially from the government. Although the stated intertext of the *Diary* is *The Diary of Anne Frank,* the students' stories exhibit many more parallels with the immigrant

success stories of the turn of the century (Braudy 512); they support the contemporary popular nostalgia for the bootstrap mentality of an earlier era. The neglectful and abusive parents, when they make a brief appearance, evoke the 1980s specter of the "welfare queen." In positioning themselves against their parents, many of the student-writers, perhaps inadvertently, argue against what conservatives would consider "bad welfare," like food stamps and Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and for "good welfare" programs like education (Edsall 152).

Similarly, although segregation has steadily increased since the 1980s (Clotfelter 36; Minow 25; Green 244; Orfield and Eaton 1; Briggs, "More Pluribus" 32), educational reform initiatives in the past three decades have consistently ignored this fact (Noguera 141). Efforts have been focused on improving segregated schools, rather than desegregating across the board. Both Gruwell and Johnson taught in California schools undergoing voluntary desegregation that were resegregated within the school under a tracking system, and their texts address the problems and challenges inherent in that situation.[259] However, because they are writing about a relatively rare occurrence, their texts cannot address the increase in fully segregated schools in the US, which is much more common. In addition, their filmic classrooms looked very much like fully segregated schools, and are likely mistaken as such.[260] In *Dangerous Minds,* the filmmakers changed the racial composition of the Academy, "darkening" Johnson's students, and transforming a classroom which was by her account in the memoir, one third white, one third black, and one third Latino (130), into a class that is predominantly populated by students of

[259] See Green for an analysis of tracking as a new form of segregation.
[260] Very few critics note the suburban locale of Parkmont High in *Dangerous Minds*, and many state or imply an urban setting. Giroux mentions the voluntary desegregation, but does not address it at length.

color (Chennault 389).[261] Although Johnson is careful in the text to explain that her students are "at-risk" for a myriad of reasons, the visual imagery of the film aligns the term "at-risk" with racial minority.

For some viewers, these narratives attest that desegregation is unnecessary, since these students succeed regardless of the fact that they are segregated or tracked. According to Orfield and Eaton, "a noticeable shift toward separate but equal philosophy was manifested by the end of the 1980s" (16); they argue that earlier films like *Stand and Deliver* "celebrate successful segregated education [as] a model easy to copy rather than an extraordinary accomplishment" (86). Johnson's support for the Academy in the memoir is emphatically not an argument for resegregation through tracking, but a viewer could easily conclude that isolation is the only way to make gains with at-risk students of color based on the imagery of *Dangerous Minds*. In *Freedom Writers,* the presence of a single white student is mined for laughs but also continuously underlines the not-whiteness of Gruwell's class. By portraying successful examples of education in separate but equal settings, the more recent films do the same thing, even though both authors decry segregation and years of research has demonstrated that it is detrimental to students of all races.

The educational initiatives embraced in the mid-1990s reflect the implicit suggestions offered by the celebriteachers. The "resurgent emphasis, at least rhetorically, on individualism," "a corrosive distrust of public institutions" (Fischer and Hout 250), and the investment in the free market, competition, and choice endemic to the late-twentieth century influenced educational policy as well, as reformers latched on to privatization, vouchers, and charters as a way to reform

[261] It should be noted that the teacher memoirs of the 1990s are the first to engage with a much more multiethnic student population, reflecting the demographic growth of Hispanics and Asians in the US, especially in Western and Eastern urban centers, the usual settings for the texts (Clotfelter 33-6).

the system, even as these programs encouraged students to exit traditional public schools (Fuhrman 15). Again, the experiences of Gruwell and Johnson align with this movement.[262] Gruwell essentially privatizes her public school classroom, relying on outside financial support to fund school supplies and class trips and creating a non-profit organization to manage the details; she eventually left the classroom to run this venture full-time. Johnson's Academy program pre-dates the charter school movement but its "school within a school" model is virtually identical to it.[263] Some charter schools have had amazing results, while others perform worse than the traditional public schools on standardized assessments, but they have received bipartisan support, in part because the movement is invested in traditionally conservative values of governmental non-intervention alongside a liberal commitment to providing quality public education. Although charters have received a lot of publicity, they still serve only a small fraction (2.3%) of American public school children (Minow 113).[264] Many of the most successful charter schools expect teacher-hero performance from their staff, and have been accused of promoting unsustainable models. In *Losing My Faculties,* Brendan Halpin describes three years at "Better Than You" Charter School (a humorous pseudonym), an experience that was so demoralizing he left teaching in low-income communities for good (145-234).[265]

---

[262] The films of the 1980s also anticipated the charter schools movement; Clark's expulsion of nearly a third of his students at the beginning of *Lean on Me* is similar to some charter schools' policies of suspending or expelling "difficult" students.

[263] The first charter was issued in Minnesota in 1992 (Fuhrman 12). Charter schools allow school leaders to create smaller schools that receive public funding but are not necessarily bound by the restrictions of neighborhood schools. The Academy differs from a charter only in that charter school students must be selected by lottery.

[264] The embrace of charter schools also reflects the move toward "separate but equal" educational settings, as charters are much more highly segregated than public schools (Briggs, "More Pluribus" 33).

[265] Thomas Bloch published a charter school teacher memoir in 2008 which provides a positive view of the charter movement.

The notion of the teacher-hero has also driven other influential reforms in the past twenty years. Alternative certification programs, especially Teach for America (TFA), which began in 1990, have expanded exponentially, relying on the premise that good teaching is the most important factor in a child's education, and that conventional teacher preparation is not necessary.[266] Reforming education by reforming teaching makes sense, but can easily spiral into blaming hardworking and dedicated teachers, along with those who need extra support, or perhaps should not be teaching in the first place. Good teaching is a huge contributive factor in student success, but these programs have not dramatically improved student achievement or narrowed the achievement gap in the past twenty years, although they have graduated some amazing teachers who have positively affected many students' lives (Minow 7).[267] Attitudes about bad teachers cultivated in part by teacher films like *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers* have also contributed to more recent developments like the return to discussions of merit pay, mass firings of teachers in the nation's capital, and general anti-union and anti-teacher malaise around the country and in discussions of educational reform. While real live classroom teachers, like members of any other profession, fall on a spectrum of excellent to poor, many people still seem to have the image of the single master teacher surrounded by drones, racists, and morons, an image that Gruwell does not dispel. In some sense, both alternative certification programs and the charter movement are ways to replicate more "LouAnne Johnsons" and "Erin Gruwells" without addressing the huge numbers of children who will not be able to benefit from

[266] Teach for America has been a controversial program, lauded by some and condemned by others. For the theoretical underpinnings of the organization and its impact over the past twenty years, see Kopp. Linda Darling-Hammond has been the most vocal critic of the organization. See, for example, her co-authored 2005 article "Does Teacher Preparation Matter?: Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America and Teacher Effectiveness." The collections edited by Ayers et al. condemn new short-term teacher credentialing programs for dispatching white college graduates to inner cities as if they are missionaries or Peace Corps volunteers.

[267] Two former TFA teachers (Pappas and Johnston) have penned memoirs.

these somewhat limited programs, or the failed teachers and schools that the programs have created alongside the successes.

Although Gruwell and Johnson are excellent teachers, some of their success is a result of highly unusual staffing arrangements, wherein they were able to spiral with their students, teaching the same group of students for many years. Johnson's Academy also provided much-needed support services focused on personal and professional development, and Gruwell created a college course of study for her students after they graduated and she became a professor. Both of their experiences exemplify the importance of long-term connections and mentoring relationships for students. Although the skills of the teacher are certainly important, the successes of both teachers were directly related to the fact that they were able to work with one group of students over the course of many years, which could serve as possible model for innovative school design.[268] Unfortunately, many reviewers (and probably viewers and readers) remember the impact of the teacher-hero (and the unattainable standards this sets for individual teachers) decontextualized from the structures that facilitated it.

The case studies of *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers* illuminate the same paradox that has been endemic to the success story throughout the twentieth century. In order to change the perception that "students like theirs" cannot succeed, these authors made their students' triumphs, which were inextricably linked to their own, available for public consumption. When adapted for the screen, their experiences were heightened, condensed, and exaggerated. Leaving the theatre or closing the books, audiences concluded that poor students of color can succeed in the system as it currently stands, as long as they have a caring, committed, preferably white, teacher to help them through. Unfortunately, the more radical analysis that Johnson comes to

[268] Their long-term association with a single cohort of students provided an easy opportunity for both teachers to leave without seeming like they were abandoning the school.

later has had little place in the recent cultural conversation about education. Nor have the specific suggestions that she and Gruwell provide for achieving these types of results. Contemporary educational reformers have, for the most part, embraced the notion of the heroic teacher with high standards at the expense of more transformational social policy that addresses poverty alongside education.

Since the early 1980s, there has been no question of whether *some* teachers and students can be successful under extraordinarily trying circumstances.[269] Instead the question remains, even in the current moment, how these successes can be replicated for *all* children, a goal implicit in the renaming and reconceptualization of the ESEA into No Child Left Behind. Nevertheless, the inspirational true story of that single teacher who makes a difference has continued to be a box office draw, and rather than highlighting the problems in education, their stories often blind us to them.[270] Contemporary teachers continue to write their individual tales of triumphs and tribulations, now perhaps with the hope that they too might become a celebriteacher.

---

[269] Mostly remembered for its apocalyptic rhetoric, The Nation at Risk report, which is at least partially responsible for the flowering of the celebriteacher phenomenon of the past thirty years, reported: "Many individual, sometimes heroic, examples of schools and colleges of great merit do exist … but their very distinction stands out against a vast mass shaped by tensions and pressures that inhibit systematic academic and vocational achievements for the majority of students."

[270] Boxofficemojo.com's top 25 total grossing "Inspirational Teacher Movies" since 1980 include *School of Rock* (Linklater 2003), *Coach Carter* (Carter 2005), *Take the Lead* (Friedlander 2006), and *Half Nelson* (Fleck 2006). Some of these films, along with *Music of the Heart* (Craven 1999) and *Mr. Holland's Opus* (Herek 1996), compose a sub-genre of music teacher films. This narrow focus is indicative of some of the issues with the films more generally, as many urban school districts are overcrowded and underfunded, and music is often the first program to be cut, but the films suggest that American music education in America is thriving.

CODA

No Memoir Left Behind

The 2000 presidential campaign was characterized by a concerted effort by both parties to claim education reform as central to their platforms, in part because for the first time it was the dominant issue for voters, who ranked it as their top priority (McGuinn 146).[271] In January of 2001, shortly after taking office, President George W. Bush submitted "The No Child Left Behind Act," (NCLB) to Congress. The bill was passed by a bipartisan vote in May and signed into law the following January; it took effect in schools across the nation at the beginning of the 2003 school year.[272] Although NCLB was technically a reauthorization of the ESEA, entrenching the role of the federal government in education that that legislation had originated, it shifted the focus of educational policy in significant ways. The original ESEA focused on disadvantaged students by providing resources to specific schools and involved few federal mandates. NCLB applied to all schools and students, was highly proscriptive in terms of curriculum, and emphasized assessment, specifically high-stakes standardized testing (McGuinn 1).[273] The debate over educational reform in the twenty first century has been heavily influenced by this shift.

NCLB highlighted the role of teachers in educational achievement by requiring that every classroom in America have a "highly qualified" teacher by 2005. Even though at face value the legislation valued teachers, it also undermined the professionalism of teaching, which, as we have seen, has been under attack since the beginning of common schooling. Teachers quickly became NCLB's most vocal critics, explaining that it was underfunded, disorganized, and set

---

[271] According to an archived press release, education was Bush's number one domestic priority ("Fact Sheet").
[272] The events of September 11, 2001 also solidified bipartisan and congressional support of the act – its passage was invoked as evidence of a functioning government (McGuinn 176).
[273] See Cohen and Moffitt for a detailed analysis of the development of the ESEA's Title I, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged districts.

impossible goals.[274] They complained that it limited their pedagogical freedom by instituting scripted curricula and regimented scheduling, eradicated social studies, science, physical education and the arts by placing so much emphasize on math and literacy, and forced them to teach to the test rather than to the student. In addition to their presence in education publications and periodicals, these critiques also rang out in a new eruption of teacher memoirs. We have entered the era of No Memoir Left Behind.

Nearly twenty teacher memoirs have been published since 2001, and more than ten more have been self-published. Since the passage of NCLB education has remained central to both parties' domestic political agenda, but along with the increased interest in and visibility of education in the political realm, this eruption is also a result of major shifts in the publishing industry in favor of autobiographical writing, brought on by the memoir boom of the mid-1990s (Gilmore, *Limits* 16). Nonfiction now consistently sells better than fiction (Sims, *True* 231), and memoir has been a financial boon for an increasingly threatened industry. The increased availability of self-publication and the ability to self-promote on social media, print on demand, and market directly to consumers on sites like Amazon has made it even easier for people, including teachers, to tell (and sell) their stories.

The contemporary teacher memoir eruption contains a wide range of interesting additions to the genre. Familiar names pepper the list: Frank McCourt, who is widely credited with starting the memoir boom with the huge success of his memoir *Angela's Ashes* (1996), published his teacher memoir *Teacher Man* in 2005, and Jonathan Kozol published a tentative return to the teacher memoir form, his epistolary *Letters to a Young Teacher,* in 2007. The 2000s saw the publication of memoirs about teaching in the tundra, in prison, in a segregated elementary school

[274] 100% of American students were expected to reach proficiency in math and literacy by 2014.

in the 1970s, and in contemporary public, private, charter, and parochial schools. Self-published texts include a graphic memoir, a number of diaries, and even the "memoirs of a teenage substitute teacher." At the same time, certain sub-categories have emerged, in particular memoirs by new teachers and memoirs that blur the boundaries between teaching and other professional pursuits.

The contemporary category of the "new teacher memoir" is an extension of the teacher memoirs of the 1960s that discussed the first one or two years of teaching, after which the teacher memoirist often left the profession for good.[275] These texts include Michael Johnston's *In the Deep Heart's Core* (2002), Leslie Baldacci's *Inside Mrs. B's Classroom: Courage, Hope, and Learning on Chicago's South Side* (2004), Ric Klass's *Man Overboard: Confessions of a Novice Math Teacher in the Bronx* (2006), Christina Asquith's *The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational True Story of a New Teacher in an Inner-City School* (2007), and Dan Brown's *The Great Expectations School: A Rookie Year in the New Blackboard Jungle* (2007).

Like their precursors, these texts paint an outrageous picture of education in low-income urban public schools. They portray violent, chaotic settings in which teachers have little to no control, gang violence bleeds into the classroom, and students torment each other with impunity. Blackboards fall off the walls, books are covered with graffiti, and teachers teach in closets, auditoriums, and rooms meant for classes half their size. Incompetent, corrupt or downright evil administrators harass teachers about inconsequential details, encourage them to falsify grades, waste large amounts of money on ill-conceived or impractical educational programs, and orchestrate elaborate shams to cover up their lack of compliance with educational mandates.

[275] In his *New York Times* review of three of these types of memoirs, Charles McGrath terms them "foxhole memoirs" because they provide "first-person accounts of what it's like to be there in the trenches."

Certain scenes and descriptions echo from the 1960s into the present moment. Asquith's depictions of rioting and arson in her Philadelphia middle school could have easily come off the pages of Piro's book. Describing a special education class, she writes, "For these kids, setting curtains ablaze and pulling the fire alarm were too basic. They had pushed down the principal, knocked over the music teacher, assaulted Ms. Fernanda with scissors, screamed obscenities at Mr. Whitehorne, and openly committed sex-related acts so vile for twelve- and thirteen-year-olds it was too upsetting to contemplate" (157). Baldacci recounts the "mad crapper" – an anonymous student who defecates in public throughout Baldacci's first year of teaching. At Johnston's Mississippi high school, a student is raped under the bleachers at a faculty-chaperoned football game (50); the year before he arrived there was a razor blade fight in the hallways, which, according to other witnesses, "looked like Watts in 1965" (48). When Johnston returns from a morning appointment, his students are out of control and pin him up against the blackboard (47), a modern-day version of the 1960s scenes where students wrest physical control over classrooms from their teachers.[276] These consistencies between the two eruptions distressingly illustrate the persistence of violence in the country's low-income areas. The contemporary memoirists focus explicitly on danger outside of the schools as well, vividly recounting the violent deaths of students over the course of their first year or two of teaching.

Although there are these marked similarities, thirty years have passed between the two eruptions and in the interim depictions of celebriteachers have reached a wide audience, so teacher memoirs work somewhat differently in the contemporary moment. For one thing, having entered into the realm of cliché in part because of scenes like the opening of *Lean on Me,* where

[276] Having no contemporary example of this to report, Poizner cites Kozol's description of the teacher locked out of his classroom by "angry and distrustful" students, catapulting it into the present moment (98-99).

students trash the school accompanied by the Guns N' Roses song "Welcome to the Jungle," portrayals of violence in urban schools have lost much of their potential to shock today's readers. Analysis of public opinion polls in the mid-1990s indicate that although violence in the schools is a serious concern, people actually overestimate the dangers (Grant and Murray 28; Glassner xiv-xv, 76). Representations of violence in contemporary teacher memoirs reinforce perceptions of school violence with personal experience, but do not surprise many readers. Given this and the fact that segregation has become much more entrenched since the 1970s, teacher memoirs no longer have the same potential to contribute to white flight as did the memoirs of the 1960s because it has already happened.[277]

Perhaps most significantly, the teachers leaving at the end of the text has a different valence in the contemporary moment because many of these memoirists very explicitly did not intend to remain at the schools longer than two years. A response to a national teacher shortage in high-needs areas in the 1990s, the expansion of Teach for America, various city-specific teaching fellows programs, and other fast-track means of teaching well into the 2000s contributed to a transitory teaching force of young, white, highly-educated teachers, including Asquith, Brown, and Johnston, who taught for a few years (at most) before leaving the profession. Although certain programs hoped to convince their participants to stay in teaching for a longer time period, and some recruited mid-career professionals, like teacher memoirists Baldacci or Thomas Bloch, into teaching as a second career, turnover from these programs

[277] For treatments of contemporary resegregation, see Minow; Kozol *Shame*; Darling-Hammond 25-40; Briggs "Introduction"; Smrekar and Goldring.

remains very high. Thus, unlike the experience of the authors of the 1960s, leaving the schools is a foregone conclusion for many of the new new teacher memoirists.[278]

This lack of long-term commitment to the school allows, and perhaps even encourages, a highly critical attitude toward experienced teachers, institutional culture, and administrators. As recent coverage of rubber rooms, transfers rather than dismissals of bad teachers (known as the "Turkey Trot" or the "Dance of the Lemons"), and widespread cheating and statistical tampering suggests, there has been real corruption and incompetence at all levels of schools that serve America's neediest children. Teacher memoirs by new teachers add to this growing evidence of practices at the school level that have since been exposed by journalists as endemic to the high-stakes testing regime ushered in by NCLB.[279] Unsurprising to most teacher-readers, the exposure of torturous processes of test preparation, corruption in grading, cheating by teachers and administrators, and the bastardization of curricula has contributed to the more generalized criticisms of NCLB currently. As one reviewer notes, these texts tell the "dirty little secrets of the education bureaucracy" (Wildavsky).

However, the memoirists rarely balance these portrayals with descriptions of good experienced teachers, so the texts contribute to the demonization of experienced teachers endemic to coverage of schools today. The impulse to tell a success story remains in the current moment. Even though these teachers depict trying and difficult first few months, they all claim at least a modicum of pedagogical success, which supports the damaging conclusions of celebriteacher depictions, namely that all students need is some motivated, underprepared, naïve new teacher to help them see the light. Large-scale, long-term research suggests that teacher

[278] Brown leaves his school after a year, effectively breaking his two-year commitment to the New York City Teaching Fellows.
[279] See Darling-Hammond's chapter three for descriptions of how schools have manipulated test results.

quality, including their academic background, certification status, preparation for teaching and experience affect student achievement (Darling-Hammond 43), but these texts undermine this finding with claims to success as novices and anecdotes about experienced but horrible teachers in sub-par schools.

Unlike the 1960s memoirists who were accused of not suggesting solutions to the problems in the schools or telling their readers "what to do," contemporary memoirists offer a surplus of suggestions. These include: eliminating or deemphasizing standardized testing (Baldacci, Brown, Klass), mandating smaller class sizes (Klass, Asquith, Brown, Baldacci), opening more charter schools (Bloch, Poizner), hiring more social workers (Klass), eliminating bilingual education (Asquith), instituting mentoring programs (Poizner), providing expanded early education programs and support for new parents (Brown), and paying teachers more (Asquith, Brown, Klass). Some memoirists include an extended rumination on the state of the public schools (Brown) or a point-by-point platform for educational reform at the end of their texts (Poizner). This excess of suggested solutions is not just a result of reading so many texts; even in just one text the reader is likely to encounter a plethora of suggestions for reform, usually without any indication of what it would take to implement them. The number of ideas put forth by these authors attests to the complexity of educational reform; only one author, Bloch, claims a silver bullet (charter schools), the rest understand that there is no single way to address the myriad of issues facing the schools. However, because of their individual, autobiographical, and narrative focus, teacher memoirists do not provide persuasive evidence for most of their suggestions.

The sheer number of suggested solutions overwhelms the average reader, who experiences a type of "decision fatigue" when faced with so many choices (Tierney). Readers

suffer from "high information processing costs"; economist Jenny Anderson compares the feeling to being faced with a ridiculous variety of choices in the cereal aisle. Most contemporary teacher memoirs leave their readers experiencing what I call "sympathetic paralysis": they feel bad but they do not know how to transform their sympathy into action. This either encourages a retreat from political solutions altogether or leaves an uninformed reader grasping at the educational panacea offered by one particular author. The response is similar to the "sedentary agitation" that Newark mayor Cory Booker has condemned.[280] Booker describes the political responses of the majority of Americans as getting upset about the problem but not inspired enough to do anything about it. My conception of sympathetic paralysis and Booker's sedentary agitation both center on an experience of emotional response without political action. In Lauren Berlant's terms, contemporary teacher memoirs are "'juxtapolitical' because [they] thrive in proximity to the political, occasionally cross over into political alliance, even more occasionally do some politics, but most often not; they act as a critical chorus that sees the expression of emotional response and conceptual recalibration as achievement enough" (x). In his author's note, Brown writes, "one year with class 4-217 in the Bronx's P.S. 85 can illuminate the mushrooming crisis in lower-class America and the individual specks of hope that may propel us to act, or at least to care" (ix). The pervasive notion that caring is enough exemplifies the juxtapolitical positioning of contemporary teacher memoirs; by inducing sympathetic paralysis the texts sacrifice political urgency for affective attachment. Feeling bad – for the teachers, for their students, over the state of the schools – allows us to feel better about ourselves but fails to inspire political action or generate meaningful reforms.

[280] I first heard Booker use this term in an interview with Oprah Winfrey on September 24, 2010, but he has also used it in various speeches across the country.

One contemporary teacher memoir did spur a political response but in a way its author never expected. In 2010, Steve Poizner, who was running in the Republican primary for the governorship of California, released a teacher memoir, entitled *Mount Pleasant: My Journey from Creating a Billion-Dollar Company to Teaching at a Struggling Public High School*, that was also a campaign book. In between anecdotes about Poizner's family and history as an entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, the text told a familiar story about first-year teacher in a "struggling public high school." Actually, Poizner, who had no training or coursework in education, volunteered to teach one section of one semester of American government at a relatively average public high school. Almost immediately upon the text's publication, teachers and students at Mount Pleasant criticized Poizner's characterization of the school, picketing bookstores and talking to the press. The controversy culminated in an investigation by Ira Glass of *National Public Radio's* "This American Life," which contradicted Poizner's characterization of the neighborhood and uncovered that Poizner had selectively utilized statistics to construct an extremely negative view of the school ("True Urban Legends").

Poizner's failed bid to use the conventions of the teacher memoir for personal and political ends brings up some of the more insidious aspects of the genre. Glass was suspicious of Poizner in part because of Poizner's Republican political affiliation; he points out that Poizner supported anti-immigrant legislation that would surely have negatively affected many of the students at Mount Pleasant. Glass' concerns gesture at the potentials that I have detailed throughout the history of the genre: that memoirists might use students' stories for ends that do not actually help the students or that teacher memoirs might be invoked to buttress political platforms that students or their families might not support.

As part of his investigation of Poizner's book, Glass visited places where certain key scenes occurred and compared his reactions with Poizner's, concluding that Poizner framed the area as much more impoverished, dangerous, and uninviting than Glass did. The distinction between these two individual experiences underlines the significance of perception in the process of teacher memoir composition. Two teachers teaching in the same school in the same year would write completely different memoirs, depending on the students in their class, their relationship with colleagues, their personality, their preparation, and a host of other factors. However, teacher memoirists across time have consistently claimed their singular experience as universal, as have a myriad of reviewers. The claim to universality invests memoirs with much more weight. Poizner's author's note illustrates how many memoirists transform their singular story into an archetype that merits a more serious response: "I believe that the struggles at Mount Pleasant are echoed at other public high schools in California and across the nation. I can only hope that my chronicling of real emotions and frustration brings about positive change in the country's education policies" (xii). Like Poizner, contemporary teacher memoirists continue to claim that their experience is characteristic of all teachers at a particular "type" of school, in most cases low-income urban settings with a majority of students of color. This move elides significant local differences that might be helpful to solving specific issues and simplifies complex relationships and issues that stem from specific localized histories and concerns. Claiming one's experience as universal also ignores how the very specific individual interactions between the teacher, students, parents, and administrators influence the lived and narrated experiences of the teacher, and the way in which the teacher's individual background and identity plays into his or her success and failure in the classroom and perception of the neighborhood, the students, and the school.

Parents, teachers, and students accused Poizner of misrepresenting, stereotyping, and attacking Mount Pleasant students. Martha Guerrero, an associate principal at Mount Pleasant whose two children attended the school, worried that "my community, my school, my family – because we live here – are being used. … It makes it hard for students who come from here to go out there, because there is a belief that if they come from here, they may not be good enough" (qtd. in Rothfeld). The excerpt that drew the most ire and that was invoked in much of the news coverage of Poizner's book signing and at a protest staged by the Mount Pleasant community appears on page 90: "From an intellectual standpoint, I absolutely knew not to expect Silicon Valley-caliber ambition and smarts from East San Jose schoolkids. Yet emotionally, I grappled with the students' unresponsiveness to nearly any question I posed. The differences weren't only in our expectations or zip codes. They were in our wiring."[281] This assertion, a return to racial pseudo-science that claimed intellectual capacity was genetic, undermines the single most politically progressive component of teacher memoir history – the experiential evidence that low income children can and do learn when given the opportunity to do so.[282]

The *Mount Pleasant* phenomenon crystallized the ethical issues of teacher memoir writing in the contemporary moment because it was such an extreme case of manipulation and misrepresentation by a politician in an election year. However, certain strategies utilized by Poizner are disturbingly prevalent in many contemporary teacher memoirs. Throughout the book, Poizner makes a variety of assumptions based on his own stereotypes of the community. Instead of investigating the realities of his students' lives, Poizner hypothesizes what they might be like.

---

[281] See Greene, Gulezian, and "Poizner's Book."

[282] Similarly, Ric Klass outlines his "rules of teaching urban high school underclassmen," which asserts, "most of the kids have the intellectual firepower to learn – they just can't/won't […] teachers can reach 20 percent of the kids – 80 percent won't/can't listen, even for a few minutes" (280-1).

Wondering why his students are resistant to writing, he considers, "Maybe the students were first generation Americans, and English wasn't spoken in their homes. Or it was spoken poorly, or there wasn't one book to be found in their bedrooms. … Or perhaps the kids figured they'd ultimately be working in hair salons or machine shops and saw no need to learn anything so challenging …" (136). Poizner assumes that his students lack ambition, and defaults to a deprived home life as the reason for students' resistance to his writing assignments, never considering that his teaching might be part of the problem. He routinely resorts to stereotypes, admitting that he isn't sure whether one particular student is in a gang, "but he sure looked the part" because "he usually appeared angry" (95) and speculates that an uninvolved parent might be depressed, or maybe he never graduated from high school (100-1).

Many teacher memoirists perform this type of amateur psychoanalysis and stereotyping when discussing students' parents or when jumping to conclusions about student performance in the classroom and its relationship to their home lives. When Erin Gruwell (of *Freedom Writers* fame) notices a student bonding with an adult male, she assumes he craves the attention because of his absentee father (53). Asquith's first impulse when she observes one of her failing students is to wonder if he is a crack baby (74). Michael Johnston, now a state senator in Colorado, whose teacher memoir also served as an, albeit unintended, campaign book, hypothesizes about the psychological underpinnings of a former student's criminal record, spending over a page making the argument that the child's educational neglect beginning in the second grade spurred his rape of a seven year old when he was a teenager (110). These amateur psychoanalytic profiles and asides reinforce stereotypes through unproven assumptions in the name of character development and raise an additional ethical issues in terms of student representation.

In general, representations of parents and families in contemporary teacher memoirs are troubling. Most of the texts portray parents as either neglectful or abusive, if they portray them at all. Ironically, in an effort to provide a complex portrait of their student characters, many memoirists insert one dimensional descriptors of their parents: the addict, the ex-con, the absentee parent. Condemnation of poor parenting would be less politically significant if these texts depicted a cross-section of educational experiences, but since they are mostly describing low-income parents of color, the criticism reinforce attitudes about educational inequality that blame poor child-rearing or "a culture of poverty" for low student achievement (Darling-Hammond 30; Howard 83).

Unlike earlier eras, when parents and students were unlikely to read or respond to their representations in teacher memoirs, in the contemporary moment community members have voiced their concerns about representations on the pages of these books. Although the controversy around Poizner's text was the most visible example in the past decade, other teacher memoirs have occasioned similar responses. Reviewing Johnston's memoir in *The English Journal*, Carey F. Applegate explains that:

> The publication of Michael Johnston's *In the Deep Heart's Core* caused controversy among students, teachers, and administrators in the Mississippi Delta. New teachers were warned by some principals during orientation meetings not to come to the Delta to "write a book and try to get famous." … Some parents and students began to approach Northern teachers with a heightened sense of hesitancy. How would this new young teacher from the North tell their children's stories? Would he or she focus on the gang member or the

> honor student? Would the students be real or just another caricature of small-town African American life? (120)

Community members are rightly concerned about both intention and representation in terms of teacher memoir publication.

The question of whether or not a teacher memoirist entered teaching with the intention of writing about it has been an issue since at least the 1960s, when Jim Haskins condemned a teacher in his school for doing just that (35). McCourt also recounts the story of an ex-girlfriend who was counseled by a professor in the same period to "teach for a year and write a book about it. … Education in America was a mess and a muckraking book from inside the school system would be a best-seller. Teach a year or two, complain about the terrible state of the schools, and you have a big seller" (49). However, the intentions and motivations of contemporary teacher memoirists are harder to determine in part because of their multiple professional roles. A number of contemporary teacher memoirists are professional writers in some capacity. Leslie Baldacci left a job as a journalist in order to teach but continues to publish articles on education. Brendan Halpin had published a novel and a memoir about his wife's diagnosis with cancer before *Losing My Faculties: A Teacher's Story* came out in 2003. Robert Wilder is the author of a weekly autobiographical newspaper column and had written a parenting memoir before he published *Tales from the Teacher's Lounge: An Irreverent View of What It Means to Be a Teacher Today* (2007). On the one hand, these professional writers may have approached writing a teacher memoir in a more systematic way, and thus avoided some of the ethical minefields of teacher memoir writing that I detailed in the introduction. However, the presence of these teacher-writers in this cohort raises the question of whether the authors (and perhaps even other teacher

memoirists) went into teaching simply for a good story.[283] In the aforementioned cases I think not – Baldacci, Wilder, and Halpin are still teaching and both Wilder and Halpin did not write their books until they had each taught for nearly a decade.[284] However, there is at least one case of what I would consider an undercover teacher memoir: Christina Asquith's *The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational Story of a New Teacher in an Inner-City School* (2007).[285]

As her subtitle indicates, Asquith did not advertise her position as a reporter; in fact she actively obscured it. Asquith was certainly aware of the ethical components of this decision and the fact that readers, as well as other teachers at the school and her students and their parents, might not look kindly on this project, particularly because it meant that her students would have an unprepared teacher who was also engaged in reporting on them. As such, in addition to Asquith's waffling throughout the book about her intentions for teaching, the text also provides two parallel paratextual tracks: one that frames Asquith as a model new teacher and the book as a tool for other beginning educators, and another that depicts Asquith as an embedded journalist and the book as a triumph for education reporting.

---

[283] Brown, who one reviewer describes as a "budding filmmaker" (R. Kaplan), notes that his experience "was more vivid and twisted than anything I could have concocted in fiction" (5). Upon hearing his plans to teach a friend suggested that it would give him "good material" (4).

[284] Baldacci includes a description of her colleagues' and administration's anger when she began to publish articles during her time in the classroom. When she leaves her first school she makes sure to warn her new bosses that she will be writing while teaching, explaining, "I was a teacher first now, but I would always be a storyteller" (223). The memoir's flap asserts "Baldacci's dual career makes for an entertaining and informative tale, which weaves together her teacher's knowledge of the system and a reporter's eye for detail." Baldacci wrestles with the ethics of her role: "was it good or bad for my students to see their teacher's picture in the paper, writing about our experiences? You could argue both ways" (105).

[285] Emily Sachar's memoir *Shut Up and Let the Lady Teach: A Teacher's Year in a Public School* is an earlier example of what appears to be an undercover teacher memoir. The front flap of Sachar's memoir suggests that she decided to teach for a year to get an insider's look at the schools "after years as a prizewinning reporter." Walsh groups her text with Tracy Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren* and Samuel B. Freedman's *Small Victories* as "reports from the classroom from *non-teachers*" (6, my emphasis).

The foreword and introduction illustrate how two different readers interpret her intention. Reflecting Asquith's dual personas, the foreword is written by Mark Bowden, a journalist colleague of Asquith's (and author of *Black Hawk Down*), and the introduction is written by Dr. Harry Wong, the educator with whom Asquith co-wrote a 2002 article, and the author *The First Days of School*, a well-known professional development text for new teachers. Bowden's foreword frames Asquith as his "young colleague, the reporter" who was "taking a leave" from reporting (ix). After visiting Asquith's classroom, Bowden sees the situation as one destined to be written – he encourages her to keep notes and think about shaping them into a book, and when asked his opinion of her class he responds, "at least you have a great story to write" (xi). For Bowden, Asquith's failure as a teacher facilitates her success as a journalist. According to Wong's introduction, Asquith quits her job (as opposed to taking a leave). He quotes only the section of the text where Asquith frames her desire to make a difference, and writes "Christina was just like so many of the new teachers I meet and train each year. Full of energy and determined … she dreamed of giving low-income children a chance in life through education" (xiv). Wong implies that Asquith left teaching, her chosen career, wholly because of a lack of support, rather than because she decided to return to journalism. Both Wong and Bowden use Asquith to support their suggestions for education reform by interpreting her intention. Their readings illustrate the stakes of this autobiographical act, since many current conversations around urban education revolve around teacher recruitment and retention, precisely the two aspects of Asquith's experience that are the most obscured.

Undercover teaching raises significant concerns. Did students receive the same focus and attention in the classroom as they would have from a teacher not engaged in simultaneous reporting? Given the teacher shortage in Philadelphia when Asquith was teaching, it is unlikely

that, had Asquith not decided to teach her students would have received a more qualified teacher, but they may have gotten someone who intended to stay for longer, and was therefore more interested in professional development. In an article in the *Columbia Journalism Review* Greg Marx argues, "Undercover reporting can be a powerful tool, but it's one to be used cautiously: against only the most important targets, and even then only when accompanied by solid traditional reporting." The availability of information about the schools in traditional journalism, along with narratives of personal experience in the many teacher memoirs of the period, meant that Asquith did not add anything new to the depictions of schooling circulating in the period but she may have done a disservice to her students in the process.

The internet has made every teacher into a potential undercover teacher memoirist, and personal narratives by teachers published in blog format or on Facebook occasionally inspire heated debate.[286] In February of 2011, Pennsylvania high school teacher Natalie Munroe was suspended from her position for posting disparaging remarks about her students on her blog (Webley). The case got national coverage and engendered a discussion about the state of American education; some felt that Munroe's frustration illustrated the difficulties of twenty first century teaching, while others pointed to teachers like her as part of the problem (Webley). A few months later an elementary school teacher in New Jersey was suspended for making similarly offensive comments about her students on Facebook (Hu).[287]

[286] Unsurprisingly, teacher blogs have exploded in the past decade. For popular coverage of this phenomenon, see Santos; Strauss; Toppo; and W. Wallace. Respected resource websites for teachers (EdWeek, Edwize) hire teacher-bloggers and include links to personal blogs on their sites (Scholastic, Gotham Schools). At least one teacher memoir, Sophia E. Pappas' *Good Morning, Children*, has been published as a result of the author's online writing.

[287] See also Toppo for a discussion of a blogger who depicted his Chicago high school as "a dangerous, chaotic school where students showed up stoned, skipped class to sell drugs, trashed teachers' cars and had sex in the hallways." He quit after students discovered his identity.

The emergence of blogging emphasizes the ethical issues endemic to published teacher memoirs because it eliminates the gatekeeping mechanism of the publishing industry. In addition to these extreme examples, discussions about what it is appropriate to blog about raise similar questions about representations of schools in teacher memoirs through the ages.[288] Teachers who are blog readers often express identification with frustrated blog posts and find comfort and relief in knowing that they are not alone (Webley). At the same time, others, like blogger and teacher Dennis Fermoyle, caution that "sometimes we shoot ourselves in the foot. If you're in public education, you've got to understand that when you do things like that you're really adding to the load against us. Bad things happen, there's no question, but a lot of good things happen, too" (qtd. in Toppo).

As critics have noted, the central focus of the current memoir boom is trauma.[289] Contemporary teacher memoirists provide the requisite survival narrative, either representing their early years of teaching as traumatic and celebrating their survival or borrowing their students' more serious narratives of neglect, abuse, and survival and telling those stories along with the classroom narrative. Most contemporary teacher memoirs do both. According to Sara Nelson, editor in chief of *Publishers Weekly,* "The bar [for representations of trauma in contemporary memoir] keeps going higher … you were a drug addict, but did you kill anybody? Well, you killed somebody, but did you do it with your bare hands? Well, you were hungry, but were you as hungry as Frank McCourt? The more that's written, the harder it is to come up with something new or dramatic to say" (qtd. in Ward). One can observe a similar raising of the bar in

[288] According to a recent *New York Times* article, the New York City department of education has no official policy on teachers' online output, but a spokesperson was quoted as saying "teachers must not disclose personally identifiable information about students or cause disruption in the school" (Santos).
[289] See Addley; Zinsser; Gilmore *Limits*; Yagoda; Couser *Memoir* and *Vulnerable*.

teacher memoirs, as the Poizner debacle illustrated. Had Poizner described Mount Pleasant as an average high school with average academic problems would the text have been published?

More and more, the realities of the modern memoir market dictate not only what kinds of books get published but what those books say inside their covers. While most of the negotiations that occur between editors and authors remain private, recently some memoirists have discussed the process. Perhaps most famously, James Frey has described the acceptance of *A Million Little Pieces* after he changed the genre from novel (which had been rejected) to memoir, and the controversy over this book illuminated the lack of fact-checking of memoirs at most major publishing houses. Erin Gruwell's experience of having her collection of her students' stories shaped into a teacher memoir, discussed in the last chapter, illustrates the power of a particular type of educational narrative in the contemporary moment.

Serial teacher memoirist Torey Hayden's website exposes the role of the market in the composition and publication of her teacher memoirs. Responding to a reader's question about why she always writes success stories, she writes, "Because not many people would want to read about failure. Consequently, my publishers wouldn't publish it! This doesn't mean I don't have failures. It simply means that success makes a nicer story." Another reader comments: "Your book jackets always make you sound like you are a miracle worker – 'The world needs more like Torey Hayden' and all that." Hayden responds: **"**Blame my publishers for this one. Unfortunately, this is the way books are marketed and ordinary authors have little say about those dreadful tag lines that appear on each book or the hyperbolic flap copy. The sales people demand these things and they are more powerful. I hate the tag lines and flap copy and wish it would be different." Hayden also describes how her "home publisher" Harper Collins insists (based on market research) that all her books take place in the United States even though she

now lives in Great Britain, so she routinely changes the setting of her more recent books. In addition, the publisher prefers the format of classroom tales and has resisted Hayden's interest in writing about what goes on outside of the classroom. In Hayden's experience, the editorial process has rendered her stories more optimistic and depicted her as more successful than she has been in real life. She writes, "In one book I had to change the race of the child. In several instances I had to cut from a story real events which were seen as too grim or too 'unpromising.' In *Ghost Girl* I was under enormous pressure to come up with an 'answer' to the main characters' behavior in order to resolve the story happily, when there simply wasn't a resolution, happy or unhappy." Hayden asserts that "these are typical changes which virtually all nonfiction writers run up against," and it is certainly possible that other teacher memoirists have faced similar pressures (Hayden).

The similarities between teacher narratives over time and especially in this latest eruption are not just a result of editorial manipulation. This study has shown that the success story is an incredibly compelling plot both for readers and for the memoirists themselves. Recent memoirists frequently exhibit a fraught tension between a desire to inhabit the dominant script of the teacher memoir and film and the recognition that it is a problematic portrayal for all of the reasons discussed in the last chapter. Asquith, Klass, Halpin, and Poizner all reference teacher-movies and admit to having fantasies that they would inhabit the role of Jaime Escalante, LouAnne Johnson, or Mr. Chips. As much as these memoirists realize that "this kind of unrealistic thinking leads to teacher burnout" (Asquith 68), they also cannot seems to escape from the script. Even though Asquith insists that her eventual successes were not immediate like those in *Dangerous Minds* and *Lean on Me*, the text follows the same conventional trajectory; the more complex details of her narrative cannot compete with this powerful plot. Halpin

describes enjoying the accolades he gets from peers in a teacher preparation program because he has decided to teach in an urban environment; he "needs" for them "to see [him] as the Heroic Inner City Teacher" (12). Later, he describes his attitude after deciding to teach in the suburbs: "Well, fuck it. I'm through trying. So much for the Great Urban Educator" (227). This repeated reference suggests that Halpin experiences his teaching through the lens of the dominant teacher memoir script. Even though he knows that these images are unrealistic in some sense, demonstrated by the capitalization and ironic tone, he still feels disappointed that he cannot live up to them. Contemporary memoirists evince a temptation to identify with or emulate the teacher-heroes of the 1980s and 1990s alongside their criticism of these representations.

Jonathan Kozol's *Letters to a Young Teacher,* which contains Kozol's side of a yearlong correspondence with a new teacher in Roxbury, exhibits this tension as well. Kozol and the "young teacher," whose pseudonym is Francesca, become close and Kozol frequently visits her classroom. Thus, the text is an auto/biography where Kozol retells and reflects on some of his early teaching experiences, while also describing Francesca's first year. Francesca's story is a by-now familiar one, the trials and tribulations of a teacher's first year, but she seems especially competent and effective. Even though Kozol explicitly criticizes the "super-teacher" concept when retelling his own story, he replicates it when recounting hers.[290] Francesca takes issue with his characterization of her in the afterword, "A Conversation with Francesca," in which she urges Kozol not to sugarcoat her experience:

[290] About his first year of teaching, he writes, "I don't want you to imagine that I was immediately successful. There are too many stories about 'super-teachers' who walk into hopeless situations and work instant miracles. Those stories make good movies but don't often happen in real life; and I know that, in my own case, anyway, I did not work any miracles that spring" (11).

> I went through a time when I felt very vulnerable, and fallible, and I think you need to make this clear because all teacher will go through those periods of insecurity, and they'll recognize when they have made mistakes and temporarily may lose their confidence. If you leave this out, it gives the incorrect impression that I was, right from the starting gate, one of those 'super-teachers' that we used to joke about who allegedly turn everything they touch to gold. We both know that wasn't so. It's never so. And I think beginning teachers need to know this, so they won't berate themselves too much when things go wrong but will accept their imperfections, take a little time to rethink what they have been doing, then move on … (246-7)

Nevertheless, Kozol continues to emphasize her abilities, admitting that "he may have been a bit too hesitant about expressing observations that might have discouraged her" (247). This hesitance, which continued as he crafted their correspondence into book form, replicated the super-teacher narrative that both he and Francesca realize can have negative effects, especially on teacher-readers.

Other teachers have expressed similar impulses to tell the success stories which contribute to how we talk about teaching today. In a column in the Teach for America alumni magazine, former teacher Ting Yu describes how the longer she is away from the classroom, the more triumphant her narrative of teaching becomes:

> When I talked about my teaching experiences to others, I mostly discussed the successes and breakthroughs. Listening to me one night, my dad said, "Don't you remember crying every night your first year?" It wasn't every night, but he was right: My story was

> starting to sound a little like a feel-good movie. I talked about my students winning second place in the Bronx-wide poetry slam as a point of pride. I didn't mention that we should have won first, but our star performer let the whole team down – squandering months of after-school practice – by skipping the finals for a gang fight. I had never been so angry or disappointed in my life, but I don't often talk about that part …

Yu references a similar experience, recounted by another Teach for America alumni, Michael Copperman in an article in *Guernica.* Copperman describes how he returns to the Mississippi Delta to speak to an incoming group of new teachers and plans to discuss his most triumphant student success story, a girl named Serenity. Arriving early, he drives around the neighborhood and finds Serenity's childhood home burnt down, which occasions a reflection on his perspective of Serenity's life: "I'd made Serenity into a success story: the girl from the poor family who made good on the opportunity of my classroom. In my telling, I'd reached her, lifted her from her small circumstances into a bright, boundless future. I'd made her an anecdote and so forgotten her."

Copperman's and Yu's experiences suggest that memory and audience expectations, along with the way in which the experience reflects on the self-image of the teller, have a lot to do with how teachers tell their stories. Perhaps Yu is right that "it's natural to sand down the raw edges of our [time in the classroom] and repackage them into something neater, a story to tell," but the process that these two teachers describe, and their honest engagement with the dangers of this "sanding down" provides an important ethical and political context for understanding the process of teacher memoir composition. These reflections bring up Eakin's question about all autobiography: "How much of what autobiographers say they experience is equivalent to what

they really experience, and how much of it is merely what they know how to say?" (*How Our Lives* 4) Engagements with the teacher-hero image in contemporary memoirs, authorial comments on the process of memoir publication, and testimonies by teachers who inadvertently "sand down" their experiences illustrate the entrenchment of the success story in modern notions of teaching; it is what teacher memoirists know how to say.

The persistent drive to exposure in teacher memoirs across time and place is, I think, also a function of what teacher memoirists know how to say. Nearly every contemporary teacher memoirist, like nearly every teacher memoirist before them, claims exposure as the primary goal of his or her text. Brown wants to "pull back a curtain on a sector of our society that is largely invisible" (ix); Baldacci characterizes the South Side of Chicago as the "forgotten backwaters of my gleaming city on the lake" (22). Blurbs on book covers underline this objective as well: according to these advertising materials, "*Mount Pleasant* should open plenty of eyes," *Tales from the Teacher's Lounge* is "eye-opening." And yet, the American public knows, at least in a vague sense, about the problems in the schools. The problem now is not a lack of exposure, but disagreements about how best to proceed. The assumption espoused by the memoirists, that if people knew about what was happening the situation would have to change, has been disproved by the history of teacher memoirs in the United States. Exposure does not necessarily bring about change. In fact, each new teacher memoirist's repeated insistence that s/he will tell a story that has never been told before locks readers in a cycle of ignorance and epiphany that almost encourages a willed amnesia about the problems facing our schools.

At the ten year anniversary of the passage of NCLB, education is still in the news and suggestions abound about how we might improve American education more generally and, perhaps, move closer to the goal of educational equity conceived in the Brown vs. Board of

Education decision and the ESEA. The Obama administration recently granted waivers to ten states that will not meet the goals set forth in the NCLB, and more states are expected to follow suit. Education remains central to the major issues of our day: wars on the international stage and economic instability at home. We are now seeing the largest influx of immigrants since the early twentieth century (J. Wallace 4). A recent report released by a committee chaired by former New York City school chancellor Joel Klein and Condoleeza Rice, once again linked failures in the schools with threats to national security ("U.S. Education Reform and National Security"). Education remains the major means of effecting social mobility in the United States (Massey 196; Fischer and Hout 250), even as achievement gaps widen based on income levels (Tavernise).

Teachers are again front and center in discussions of educational reform: Race to the Top, which is replacing NCLB, contains provisions for merit pay and extensions of teacher accountability. 2010's immensely popular documentary *Waiting for "Superman"* placed the blame for bad schools squarely on teachers' unions and championed charter schools as a silver bullet. According to a recent article, "There may be no more vilified profession in our culture these days than teachers … even *Newsweek* recently concluded that the main problem with schools is that teachers can't be fired" (Kolker).[291]

The trend can be observed in one of the most accessible forms of memoir production today: the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. Characterized by its democratic content (often submitted by readers) and its inspirational tone, this series published two collections of teacher narratives in the 2000s: *Chicken Soup for the Teacher's Soul: Stories to Open the Hearts and Rekindle the Spirits of Educators* (2002) and *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Teacher Tales, 101*

[291] See also Warren 2 and Apple 27.

Inspirational Stories from Great Teachers and Appreciative Students (2009), which included mini-memoirs from every 2009 State Teacher of the Year. The introduction of the 2002 text was directed at teachers by the editors and thanked them for all their hard work, hoping the text would feel like a "giant thank you" (Canfield and Hansen xx). By 2009, the tone had changed dramatically. This time, the foreword was penned by a contributor, Anthony J. Mullen, the 2009 National Teacher of the Year, and it decried the current state of education. Mullen wrote, "For the perspective of an experienced teaching professional, the state of American education has become a data-driven system concerned more with standardized test scores than the social and emotional needs of children" (xi). Instead of simply inspiring its readers, Mullen hopes that it can "reinvigorate teachers who are suffering from mental and physical exhaustion … used as a balm for the weary teachers [he] encounter[s] while traveling across the nation" (xii). Mullen's somber portrayal is a response not only to standardized testing, but to a decade of much talk but very little action in terms of making real gains in student achievement, especially in the neediest schools.

Educational historians and others who write about teacher memoirs have decried the lack of teacher voices in educational coverage and decision-making, but recently teachers have begun to talk back, and journalists and some reformers have called for teachers' voices to be part of the conversation.[292] Grass roots teacher-activists in New York City recently produced and distributed a documentary calling for teacher-driven transformational education reform, entitled *The Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting for "Superman"* (Cavanaugh et al. 2010), and another documentary, *American Teacher* (Roth and McGinn 2011), has provided insight into the daily lives of teachers across the country. Recently, New York State released its first round of teacher

[292] See Jalongo and Isenberg xxii; Rousmaniere 7-8; Warren 3; Fraser 188; and Altenbaugh 1.

rankings, which occasioned almost immediate autobiographical responses in *The New York Times* (William Johnson) and *New York* (Berman). *The New York Times* essay was entitled, fittingly, "Confessions of a 'Bad' Teacher."

In addition to the eruption of teacher memoirs in this period, there has also been a marked increase in journalistic portrayals of classrooms.[293] These texts, which are usually written by journalists embedded in a single school for at least a school year or who spend a significant amount of time in a number of classrooms focusing on a specific educational issue, stand as insider reporting with the cooperation of the schools and knowledge of the students and their parents.[294] Although there is always the risk that individuals misrepresent their experiences for the eyes or ears of the reporter, these accounts are by no means glowing reports of American education by journalists that have been fooled, but rather complex representations of schools, teachers, and students. Completed by people who are not also supposed to be teaching at the same time and who do not have access to confidential documents, they avoid some of the ethical issues raised in this study.

Surveys of American teachers also seek to investigate issues in education from the teachers' perspective. This year's MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, which surveys a random sample of one thousand public school teachers, determined that teacher job satisfaction

---

[293] Teacher memoirs are sometimes bunched together with these texts in reviews (see Tyre; R. Kaplan; and Wildavsky).

[294] See, for example, *Tested* (2007) by Linda Perlstein, about the perils of standardized testing; *Work Hard, Be Nice* (2009) by Jay Mathews, about the successful network of KIPP charter schools; *Relentless Pursuit* (2008) by Donna Foote, about first-year Teach for America corps members; *Whatever It Takes* (2009) by Paul Tough, about Geoffrey Canada and his Harlem Children's Zone; and *Stray Dogs, Saints, and Saviors* (2011) by Alexander Russo, about the Green Dot charter school takeover of a public high school. Earlier examples of this genre include Kozol's prodigious output, most notably *Savage Inequalities* (1992); Tracy Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren* (1990); Mike Rose's *Possible Lives* (1995); and Samuel G. Freedman's *Small Victories* (1990).

is at its lowest level since 1989 ("MetLife"). A larger-scale study was recently completed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which had often been criticized as an arm of the "corporate reform" movement that ignores the expertise of experienced teachers. This study collected data from more than 10,000 teachers and focused on teachers' opinions of "student and teacher performance and … the ways it should be evaluated, supported, and rewarded" ("Primary Sources" 1). Although I would heed Mary Smith's warning in *Political Spectacle and the Fate of American Schools,* that objective research can also have a political agenda, especially given the political advocacy role of that particular foundation, the move toward listening to teachers in educational reform movements is encouraging.[295]

Certainly these other ways of getting at teacher opinions, ideas, and voices have their own challenges. However, the history of the teacher memoir form and its various recent iterations has shown the risks inherent in the continued investment in this type of autobiographical writing. The story of the, for the most part, altruistic intentions of earlier teacher memoirists and the unintended consequences of their texts might serve as a cautionary tale for future teacher memoirists. Perhaps contemporary teachers, looking back at the complicated, and often disturbing, reception history of these texts might consider other ways, besides writing a memoir, to harness their expertise, access, and desire for educational improvement.

[295] Donor's Choose, one of the most visible educational nonprofits, has monetized teacher's autobiographical stories. Teachers post a description of their classroom, students, and needs, linked to a specific project, and donors give money based on these writings.

APPENDIX

Bibliography of American Teacher Memoirs, 1839-2010

I have organized this list chronologically to illustrate the development of the genre over time. For ease of use, memoirs that I have cited directly in the body of the text appear alphabetically in the bibliography that follows as well as chronologically here. Only full-length texts are included and I have not included texts that I know to be self-published; those that I suspect are self-published are marked with an asterisk. If annotations of these texts can be found in other bibliographies, I indicate that with the following abbreviations in brackets after the entry:

A	Addis
BRI	Briscoe
BRU	Brunner
C	Clarkson
K	Kaplan
M/W	Maldonado and Winick
N/S	Newman and Schulz

Alcott, William A. *Confessions of a School Master.* 1839. New York: Arno Press and The NY Times, 1969. [K]

Stewart, Ellen (Brown). *Life of Mrs. Ellen Stewart.* Akron: Beebe & Elkins, 1858. [K]

Griscom, John. *Memoir of John Griscom, LL.D. Late professor of chemistry and natural philosophy; with an account of the NY High School; Society for the Prevention of Pauperism; the House of Refuge; and other institutions.* Compiled from an autobiography and other sources by John H. Griscom, MD. New York: Robert Carter, 1859. [K]

King, Mary B. (Allen). *Looking Backward; or, Memories of the Past.* New York: Anson DF Randolph & Co., 1870. [K]

Tevis, Julia Ann. *Sixty Years in a School Room: An Autobiography of Mrs. Julia A. Tevis.* Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern, 1878. [K]

Emerson, George Barrell. *Reminiscences of an Old Teacher.* Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, 1878. [K]

Hubbard, Jeremiah. *A Teacher's Ups and Downs from 1858-1879.* Richmond, IN: Palladium Steam Printing House, 1879. [K]

Riggs, Steven Return. *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux.* Chicago: 1880.

Holbrook, Alfred. *Reminiscences of the Happy Life of a Teacher*. Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Company, 1885.

Marrs, Eijiah P. *Life and History of Rev. Elijah P. Marrs.* Louisville: Bradley & Gilbert, 1885. [BRI]

Payne, Daniel Alexander. *Recollections of Seventy Years.* Nashville: Publishing House of the AME Church, 1888.
Lope, Mary E. Clary. *Life, Reminiscences and Travels of MEC Lope.* Maysville, KY: Fred W Bauer, 1890. [K]
Waterbury, Maria S. *Seven Years Among the Freedmen.* 1890. New York: Arno Press and the NY Times, 1968. [K]
Pelton, John Cotter. *Life's Sunbeams and Shadows.* San Francisco: Bancroft, 1893. [K]
Botume, Elizabeth Hyde. *First Day's Amongst the Contrabands.* Boston: Lee and Shephard, 1893.
Marshall, Ann James. *The Autobiography of Mrs. A. J. Marshall.* Pine Bluff, Ark.: Adams-Wilson, 1897. [K]
Orcutt, Hiram. *Reminiscences of School Life.* Cambridge: University Press, 1898. [K]
Whitney, Barney. *Fifty Years a Teacher.* Syracuse: CW Bardeen, 1902. [K]
Knowlton, William Smith. *The Old Schoolmaster or Forty-Five Years with the Girls and Boys.* Augusta: Burley and Flint, 1905. [K]
Ames, Mary. *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie in 1865.* Norwood, ME: Plimpton, 1906.*
Krusi, Johann Heinrich Hermann. *Recollections of My Life.* NY: Grafton, 1907. [K]
Magill, Edward H. *Sixty Five Years in the Life of a Teacher.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1907.
Mowry, William Augustus. *Recollections of a New England Educator, 1838-1908.* New York: Silver, Burdett, and Co, 1908.
Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House with Biographical Notes.* 1910. New York: MacMillan, 1934.
Sheldon, Edward. *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon.* New York: The Ives-Butler Co., 1911.
Wight, John Green. *Autobiography and Miscellanea.* Utica: Press of LC Childs, 1912. [K]
Coppin, Fanny Jackson. *Reminiscences on School Life and Hints on Teaching.* 1913. New York: GK Hall and Co, 1995.
Harley, Lewis R. *Confessions of a School Master.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1914.
Ives, Ella Gilbert. *The Evolution of a Teacher.* Pilgrim Press, 1915. [K]
Patri, Angelo. *Schoolmaster of the Great City.* New York: Macmillan, 1917. [M/W]
Orgain, Druscilla (Johnston). *From Dawn to Eventide.* NY: Eaton & Gettinger, 1918. [K]
Turner, James William. *Half a Century in the School Room, or Personal Memoirs of Jas. William Turner.* Carrier Mills, IL: Turner Pub. Co., 1920. [K]
Cole, Thomas R. *Learning to Be a Schoolmaster.* New York: Macmillan, 1922. [K]
James, John. *My Experience with Indians.* Austin, TX: Gammel's Book Store, 1925. [K]
Hall, Isaac Freeman. *In School from Three to Eighty: Pictures of an American Life, 1825-1925.* Pittsfield, MA: Press of the Eagle, 1927.
West, Leoti. *The Wide Northwest…As Seen by a Pioneer Teacher.* Spokane: Shaw and Borden, 1927. [K]
Laylander, Orange Judd. *The Chronicles of a Contented Man.* Chicago: A Kroch, 1928. [K]
Patterson, William H. *Letters from a Hard-Boiled Teacher to His Half-Baked Son.* Washington DC: Daylion, 1931. [C]
Yale, Caroline Ardelia. *Years of Building; Memories of a Pioneer in a Special Field of Education.* NY: L. MacVeigh, The Dial Press, 1933. [K]
Hanus, Paul H. *Adventuring in Education.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1937. [K]

Forrest, Elizabeth Chabot. *Daylight Moon.* New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1937. [K]
Chase, Mary Ellen. *A Goodly Fellowship.* New York: MacMillan, 1939. [BRI, K]
Washington, Lawrence Daniel. *Confessions of a Schoolmaster.* San Antonio: Naylor, 1939. [K]
Kennedy, Millard Fillmore, and Alvin F. Harlowe. *Schoolmaster of Yesterday: A Three-Generation Story, 1820-1919.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1940. [K, M/W]
Patterson, James Howard. *Of Me I Sing; or, Me and Education.* Nappanee, Ind: E. V. Pub. House, 1940. [K]
Stong, Philip Duffield. *If School Keeps.* New York: Stokes, 1940. [K]
Major, Gertrude E. *Reminiscences of an Elementary Teacher.* Kansas City, Mo: Burton Pub. Co., 1940. [K]
Lutes, Della T. *Country School Ma'am.* New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1941. [BRU, K]
Dodge, Chester C. *Reminiscences of a Schoolmaster.* Chicago: Ralph F. Seymour, 1941. [K]
Johnson, Henry. *The Other Side of Main Street: A History Teacher from Sauk Centre.* NY: Columbia UP, 1943.
Scott, Margaret McAvoy. *Memories.* Boston: Meador, 1943. [K]
Everett, Syble (Byrd). *Adventures with Life; an Autobiography of a Distinguished Negro Citizen.* Boston: Meador, 1945. [K]
Smith, Ruth. *White Man's Burden: A Personal Testament.* New York: Vanguard, 1946. [A]
Gordon, Julia Weber. *My Country School Diary: An Adventure in Creative Teaching.* New York: Dell, 1946. [M/W]
Ransom, Lucy Sophia, and Jay Ellis Ransom. *Country School Ma'am: An Autobiography.* 1947.
Erskine, John. *My Life as a Teacher.* New York: William Morrow and Co, 1948. [BRI, BRU]
Templeton, Joseph Crittenden. *Chronicles of a Pedagogue.* Sebastopol, CA: Sebastopol Times, 1948.
Pratt, Caroline. *I Learn from Children.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948. [M/W]
Stuart, Jesse. *The Thread That Runs So True.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949. [N/S]
Holley, Joseph Winthrop. *You Can't Build a Chimney from the Top: The South through the Life of a Negro Educator.* New York: William-Frederick Press, 1949. [BRI]
Richards, Eva Alvey. *Arctic Mood: A Narrative of Arctic Adventures.* Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1949. [BRI]
Hardy, Martha. *Skyo.* Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1949. [BRI]
Covello, Leonard. *The Heart is the Teacher.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950. [BRI, M/W]
Jenkins, Minnie Braithwaite. *Girl from Williamsburg.* Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1951.
Brown, Estelle Aubrey. *Stubborn Fool: A Narrative*. Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1952.
Cattell, Ann. *Sixty Miles North: Saga of a Country Schoolteacher.* New York: Comet Press, 1953. [A]
Rasey, Marie I. Garn. *It Takes Time: An Autobiography of the Teaching Profession.* New York: Harper, 1953. [A, BRI]
Golden, Gertrude. *Red Moon Called Me: Memoirs of a Schoolteacher in the Government Indian Service.* San Antonio: Naylor, 1954.
Iliff, Flora Gregg. *People of the Blue Water: A Record of Life Among the Walupai and Havusupai Indians*. New York: Harper and Co., 1954.
Ingram, Margaret Fogelsong. *Toward an Education.* New York: Comet Press, 1954.
Ellison, Eugenia. *Teacher, Teacher Don't Whip Me.* Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1955.
Nathan, Beatrice Stephens. *Tales of a Teacher.* Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1956. [A, M/W, N/S]

Davis, Jesse Buttrick. *The Saga of a Schoolmaster: An Autobiography.* Boston: Boston UP, 1956. [BRI]
Arnold, Mary Ellicott and Mabel Reed. *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song: Two Women in the Klamath River Indian Country 1908-09*. 1957. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980.
Nichols, Nina Belle Suits Hurst. *Vinegar Pie: Being the Story of a Teacher who Taught 45 Years in the Public Elementary Schools of the USA.* San Antonio: Naylor, 1957. [A]
Whitney, Frank P. *School and I: The Autobiography of an Ohio Schoolmaster.* Yellow Spring OH: Antioch Press, 1957.
Jones, Violet Druck. *"Hooray! PE Today!": Memoirs of a Physical Education Teacher.* New York: Pageant Press, 1959. [N/S]
Dunaway, Hazel Berto. *North to Alaska's Shining River.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959. [A]
Sheppard, Lila. *Dancing on the Desk Tops.* Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1960. [A]
Davis, Jehiel Shotwell. *A Teacher's Story: An Autobiography.* Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1961. [BRI]
Hannon, Joseph. *Never Tease a Dinosaur.* Troy, MO: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962. [M/W]
Clark, Septima Poinsette, with LeGette Blythe. *Echo in My Soul.* New York: Dutton, 1962. [A, BRI]
Rodli, Agnes. *North of Heaven: A Teaching Ministry Among the Alaskan Indians.* Chicago: Moody Press, 1963. [A]
Kendall, Robert. *White Teacher in a Black School*. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964.
Carlson, Gerald F. *Two on the Rocks.* New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1966. [BRI]
Beam, Lura. *He Called Them by the Lightening: A Teacher's Odyssey in the Negro South, 1908-1919.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967. [A]
Kozol, Jonathan. *Death at An Early Age*. 1967. New York: Penguin, 1985. [C]
Kohl, Herbert. *36 Children*. New York: The New American Library, 1967. [M/W]
Cullum, Albert. *Push Back the Desks.* New York: Scholastic, 1967. [M/W]
Bourne, Eulalia. *Woman in Levi's.* Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1967. [BRI]
Herndon, James. *The Way It Spozed To Be: A Report on the Classroom War Behind the Crisis in Our Schools*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965. [C]
Rousculp, Charles. *Chalk Dust on My Shoulder.* Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1969.
Rossner, Robert. *The Year Without an Autumn: Portrait of a School in Crisis.* New York: Baron, 1969.
Decker, Sunny. *An Empty Spoon*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. [C]
Haskins, Jim. *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher*. 1969, 1979. NY: New Press, 2008. [C]
Browne, Rose Butler, with James W. English. *Love My Children: An Autobiography.* New York: MacMillan, 1969. [A]
Stuart, Jesse. *To Teach, To Love.* Chicago: World, 1970. [M/W]
Rothman, Esther P. *The Angel Inside Went Sour.* New York: McKay, 1970. [A]
Daniels, Steven. *How 2 Gerbils, 20 Goldfish, 200 Games, 2000 Books and I Taught Them How to Read.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971.
Engleman, Finis Ewing. *The Pleasure Was Mine: 70 Years in American Education.* Danville, IL: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1971. [BRI]
Piro, Richard. *Black Fiddler*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1971. [N/S]
Channon, Gloria. *Homework.* New York: Dutton, 1971. [M/W]
Culbertson, Manie. *May I Speak? Diary of a Crossover Teacher.* Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing

Co, 1972. [A, BRI, M/W]
Elfman, Blossom. *The Girls of Huntington House.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972. [A]
Conroy, Pat. *The Water is Wide.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972. [C]
Craig, Eleanor. *P.S. Your Not Listening.* New York: Baron, 1972.
Jones, Alan. *Students! Do Not Push Your Teacher Down the Stairs on Friday: A Teacher's Notebook.* New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972. [C]
Hershey, Myrliss. *Teacher Was a White Witch.* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973. Mary
MacCracken, Mary. *A Circle of Children.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1973.
Moore, Bob. *Welcome to #57: Four Years of Teaching and Learning in Bedford-Stuyvesant.* New York: G. P. Putnam, 1974. [M/W]
Anderson, Edna M. *From Sunflowers to Bluebonnets.* San Antonio: Naylor, 1974. [BRI]
Bourne, Eulalia. *Ranch Schoolteacher.* Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1974. [BRI]
MacCracken, Mary. *Lovey: A Very Special Child.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1976.
Nicholson, Lillie M. *Vagabond Schoolmarm.* North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, 1977. [BRI]
Kenworthy, Leonard Stout. *Worldview: The Autobiography of a Social Studies Teacher and Quaker.* Richmond, IN: Friends United P, 1977. [BRI]
Robinson, Dorothy Redus. *The Bell Rings at Four: A Black Teacher's Chronicle of Change.* Austin: Madrona Press, 1978. [BRI]
Jones, T. *Where the Rainbow Waits.* Chicago: Playboy, 1978. [M/W]
Rothstein, Margaret. *And Other Foolish Questions I Have Answered.* Ann Arbor: Arbor Publications, 1979. [BRI]
Paley, Vivian Gussin. *White Teacher.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1979. [C]
Hardy, Irene. *An Ohio School Mistress: The Memoirs of Irene Hardy.* Ed. Louis Filler. Kent, OH: The Kent State UP, 1980. [BRI]
Lillard, Paula Polk. *Children Learning: A Teacher's Classroom Diary.* New York: Schocken, 1980.
Huckaby, Elizabeth. *Crisis at Central High: Little Rock, 1957-58.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State P, 1980. [N/S]
Hayden, Torey. *One Child.* Boston: Little and Brown, 1980. [M/W]
---. *Somebody Else's Kids.* Boston: Little and Brown, 1981.
MacCracken, Mary. *City Kid.* New York: Signet, 1981.
Meisel, Edna. *Between the Eggheads and the Potheads.* New Jersey: Gordonian Printing, 1983.
Rofes, Eric. *Socrates, Plato, and Guys Like Me: Confessions of a Gay Schoolteacher.* NY: Alyson, 1985.
Palonsky, Stuart B. *900 Shows a Year: A Look at Teaching from A Teacher's Side of the Desk.* NY: Random House, 1986. [C]
Malloy, Ione. *Southie Won't Go: A Teacher's Diary of the Desegregation of South Boston High School.* Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986. [N/S]
Welsh, Patrick. *Tales Out of School: A Teacher's Candid Account from the Front Lines of the American High School.* New York: Viking, 1986.
Cohen, Frederic L. *From the Classroom to the Principal's Office: Growing Pains.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1987. [C]
Carter, John Marshall. *Confessions of a Space Cadet: The Transformation of a Teacher.* Lanham, MD: UP of America, 1987. [M/W]
Hayden, Torey. *Just Another Kid.* Boston: Little and Brown, 1988.
Hillman, Carol B. *Teaching Four Year Olds: A Personal Journey.* Bloomington, IN: PDK, 1988.

[M/W]
Keizer, Garret. *No Place But Here: A Teacher's Vocation in a Rural Community.* NY: Viking Penguin, 1988. [M/W]
Natkins, Lucille G. *Our Last Term: A Teacher's Diary.* Lanham, MD: UP of America, 1988. [M/W]
Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared.* New York: The Free Press, 1989. [C]
Polk, Sarah Gibson. *For All Those Pupils Whose Lives Touched Mine.* College Station: Texas A & M UP, 1989. [C]
Warbelow, Marvin and Willy Lou. *Empire on Ice.* Anchorage: Great North West, 1990. [M/W]
Sachar, Emily. *Shut Up and Let the Lady Teach: A Teacher's Year in a Public School.* New York: Poseidon, 1991.
Hayden, Torey. *Ghost Girl.* Boston: Little and Brown, 1991.
Johnson, LouAnne. *Dangerous Minds.* [Previously published as *My Posse Don't Do Homework*]. 1992. New York: St. Martens, 1993.
Tompkins, Susie P. *Cotton-Patch Schoolhouse.* Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1992. [C]
Nehring, James. *The Schools We Have, The Schools We Want: An American Teacher on the Front Line.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992. [C]
Cutuly, Joan. *Home of the Wildcats: Perils of an English Teacher.* Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993. [M/W]
Ayers, William. *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher.* New York: Teachers College P, 1993. [C]
Glover, Mary Kenny. *Two Years: A Teacher's Memoir.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993. [C]
Garris, Susan. *Paper Franchise: Memoir of a Woman, Journal of a Teacher.* New Jersey: Gordonian Printing, 1994.*
Finser, Torin M. *School as a Journey: The Eight-Year Odyssey of a Waldorf Teacher and His Class.* Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1994. [C]
Ohanian, Susan. *Who's in Charge? A Teacher Speaks Her Mind.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1994. [C]
Williams, Cratis D. *I Become a Teacher: A Memoir of One-Room School Life in Eastern Kentucky.* Ashland, KY: The Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1995.
Johnson, LouAnne. *The Girls in the Back of the Class.* 1995. New York: St. Martens, 1996.
Shoemaker, Verl Crow. *Tales Out of School.* Ames: Iowa State UP, 1995. [C]
Shipla, Otto J. *One-Room School Days: An Autobiography of Life as a Pupil, Teacher, Teacher-Trainer in a One-Room School.* New York: Carlton, 1995.
Hoffman, Marv. *Chasing Hellhounds: A Teacher Learns from His Students.* Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed, 1996. [C]
Hong, Laraine K. *Surviving School Reform: A Year in the Life of One School.* New York: Teachers College P, 1996. [C]
Schmidt, Patricia K. *Beginning in Retrospect: Writing and Reading a Teacher's Life.* Teachers College P, 1997. [C]
Steuben, Michael, with Diane Sandford. *Twenty Years Before the Blackboard: The Lessons and Humor of a Mathematics Teacher.* The Mathematical Association of America, 1998.
Michie, Greg. *Holler if You Hear Me.* New York: Teachers College P, 1999.
Codell, Esme Raji. *Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year.* Chapell Hill: Algonquin, 1999.
Gust, John. *Round Peg, Square Hole: A Teacher Lives and Learns in Watts.* Portsmouth, NH:

Heinemann, 1999. [N/S]
The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell. *The Freedom Writers Diary.* 1999. Broadway Books: New York, 2007.
Robb, Daniel. *Crossing the Water: Eighteen Months on an Island Working with Troubled Boys – A Teacher's Memoir.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001.
Osbourne, Emma. *We Learned from Each Other: A Teacher's Memoir.* Brockport, NY: Lift Bridge Press, 2001.*
Hayden, Torey. *Beautiful Child.* Boston: Little and Brown, 2002.
Johnston, Michael. *In the Deep Heart's Core.* New York: Grove, 2002.
Foley, John. *Tundra Teacher.* Alaska: Epicenter, 2003.
Walker, Jan. *Dancing to the Concertina's Tune: A Prison Teacher's Memoir.* Boston: Northeastern, 2003.*
Halpin, Brendan. *Losing My Faculties: A Teacher's Story.* New York: Random House, 2003.
Baldacci, Leslie. *Inside Mrs. B's Classroom: Courage, Hope and Learning on Chicago's South Side*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.
McCourt, Frank. *Teacher Man.* New York: Scribner, 2005.
Brown, Oral Lee, and Caille Millner. *The Promise: How One Woman Made Good on her Extraordinary Pact to Send a Classroom Full of First-Graders to College,* New York: Doubleday, 2005.
Klass, Ric. *Man Overboard: Confessions of a Novice Math Teacher in the Bronx.* Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press, 2006.*
Gruwell, Erin. *Teach With Your Heart: Lessons I Learned from the Freedom Writers.* New York: Broadway Books, 2007.
Esquith, Rafe. *Teach Like Your Hair's On Fire: The Methods and Madness Inside Room 56.* New York: Viking, 2007.
Diehl, Huston. *Dream Not of Other Worlds: Teaching in a Segregated Elementary School.* Iowa: U of Iowa P, 2007.
Asquith, Christina: *The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational Story of a New Teacher in an Inner City School.* New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2007.
Brown, Dan. *The Great Expectations School: A Rookie Year in the New Blackboard Jungle*. New York: Arcade Publishers, 2007.
Wilder, Robert. *Tales from the Teacher's Lounge.* New York: Delacorte, 2007.
Kozol, Jonathan. *Letters to a Young Teacher.* New York: Crown, 2007.
Bloch, Thomas R. *Stand for the Best: What I Learned After Leaving My Job as CEO of H & R Block to Become a Teacher and Founder of an Inner City Charter School*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
Pappas, Sophia E. *Good Morning, Children: My First Years in Early Childhood Education.* Beltsville: Gryphon House, 2009.
Poizner, Steve. *Mount Pleasant: My Journey from Creating a Billion-Dollar Company to Teaching at a Struggling Public High School*. New York: Portfolio, 2010.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, Philip. *States of Perfect Freedom: Autobiography and American Political Thought.* Amherst: U Mass P, 1987. Print.

Adams, David Wallace. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875 – 1928*. Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1995. Print.

Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House with Biographical Notes.* 1910. New York: MacMillan, 1934. Print.

Addis, Patricia K. *Through a Woman's I: An Annotated Bibliography of American Women's Autobiographical Writings, 1896-1976.* Metuchen: Scarecrow P, 1983. Print.

Addley, Esther. "So Bad It's Good." *The Guardian.com.* Guardian, 15 June 2007. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.

Adler, Doris. "One More Up the Down Staircase." Rev. of *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher* by Jim Haskins. *Journal of Negro Education.* 40.1 (Winter 1971): 100-1. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.

Alcott, William A. *Confessions of a School Master.* 1839. New York: Arno P and The NY Times, 1969. Print.

---. *Forty Years in the Wilderness of Pills and Powders: Cogitations and Confessions of an Aged Physician.* Boston: Jewett, 1859. Print.

Altenbaugh, Richard J., ed. *The Teacher's Voice: A Social History of Teaching in Twentieth-Century America.* London: Falmer P, 1992. Print.

Alvine, Lynne. "Shaping the Teaching Self Through Autobiographical Narrative." *High School Journal* 84.3 (2001): 5-13. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.

American Teacher. Dir. Vanessa Roth, Brian McGinn. Teacher Salary Project, 2011. Film.

Ames, Mary. *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie in 1865.* Norwood, ME: Plimpton, 1906. Print.

Anderson, Jenny. "Adam Smith, Marriage Counselor." *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 11 Feb. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.

Anderson, Terry H. *The Movement and the Sixties.* New York: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

Andrews, William L. "The Representation of Slavery and the Rise of Afro-American Literary Realism, 1865-1920." *African American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Ed. Andrews. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993. 77-89. Print.

Apple, Michael W. "Constructing the 'Other': Rightist Reconstructions of Common Sense." *Race, Identity, Representation and/in Education.* Ed. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow. New York: Routledge, 1993. 24-39. Print.

Applegate, Carey F. "Personal Reading: Finding Truth in the Deep Heart's Core." Rev. of *In The Deep Heart's Core* by Michael Johnston. *The English Journal* 94.4 (2005): 120-123. *JSTOR.* Web. 30 Mar. 2012.

Archuleta, Margaret L., Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsiannina Lomawaima, eds. *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences.* Phoenix: Heard Museum, 2000. Print.

Arnold, Mary Ellicott and Mabel Reed. *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song: Two Women in the Klamath River Indian Country 1908-09*. 1957. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980. Print.

Asquith, Christina: *The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational Story of a New Teacher in an Inner City School.* New York: Skyhorse, 2007. Print.

Aubrey, Timothy. "The Pain of Reading *A Million Little Pieces*: The James Frey Controversy

and the Dismal Truth." *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* 22.2 (Winter 2007): 155-180. *Project MUSE.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Ayers, William. "A Teacher Ain't Nothin' But a Hero: Teachers and Teaching in Film." *City Kids, City Teachers: Reports from the Front Row.* Ed. Ayers and Patricia Ford. New York: New Press, 1996. 228-240. Print.
Ayers, William, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Gregory Michie, and Pedro Noguera, eds. *City Kids, City Schools: More Reports from the Front Row.* New York: New Press, 2008. Print.
Ayers, William and Patricia Ford, eds. *City Kids, City Teachers: Reports from the Front Row.* New York: New Press, 1996. Print.
Baldacci, Leslie. *Inside Mrs. B's Classroom: Courage, Hope and Learning on Chicago's South Side*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004. Print.
Bames, Mike. "Actor Robert Kendall Dies at 82." *Hollywood Reporter.com.* Hollywood Reporter, 27 Jan. 2011. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
"The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research." *Ohsr.od.nih.gov*. National Institutes of Health, 18 Apr. 1979. Web. 3 Apr. 2012.
Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present.* New York: Knopf, 1978. Print.
Berlant, Lauren. *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture.* Chapel Hill: Duke UP, 2008. Print.
Berman, Andrei (as told to). "Middle School is Just Like High School." *NewYorkMag.com.* New York Media Group, 2 Mar. 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Bidinger, Elizabeth. *The Ethics of Working Class Autobiography: Representations of Family by Four American Authors.* Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2006. Print.
Bird, S. Elizabeth. "Constructing the Indian, 1830s - 1990s." Introduction. *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture.* Ed. Bird. Boulder: Westview, 1996. 1-12. Print.
Biskind, Peter. *Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties.* New York: Henry Holt, 1983. Print.
Bjorklund, Diane. *Interpreting the Self: Two Hundred Years of American Autobiography.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. Print.
Blackboard Jungle. Dir. Richard Brooks. MGM, 1955. Film.
Blishen, Edward. "Stolen Freedom." Rev. of *Death at an Early Age* by Jonathan Kozol and *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *New Statesman* 6 Sept. 1968: 290. Print.
Bloch, Thomas R. *Stand for the Best: What I Learned After Leaving My Job as CEO of H & R Block to Become a Teacher and Founder of an Inner City Charter School*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008. Print.
Bloom, Lynn Z. "Living to Tell the Tale: The Complicated Ethics of Creative Nonfiction." *College English* 65.3 (Jan. 2003): 286-289. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
---. "Single-Experience Autobiographies." *A/B: Auto/biography Studies* 3.3 (Fall 1987): 36-45. Print.
Boddy, William. "'Sixty Million Viewers Can't Be Wrong': The Rise and Fall of the Television Western." *Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western.* Ed. Edward Buscombe and Roberta E. Pearson. Suffolk: BFI, 1998. 119-140. Print.
Botume, Elizabeth Hyde. *First Day's Amongst the Contrabands.* Boston: Lee and Shephard, 1893. Print.

Bourke, Joanna. *Fear: A Cultural History.* 2005. California: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2006. Print.
Bowden, Mark. Foreword. *The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational Story of a New Teacher in an Inner-City School.* By Christina Asquith. New York: Skyhorse, 2007. ix-xii. Print.
Braudy, Leo. *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History.* New York: Oxford UP, 1986. Print.
Brant, Claire, and Max Saunders, eds. *The Work of Life Writing.* Spec. Issue of *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies.* 25.2 (Winter 2010): 157-311. *Project MUSE.* Web. 19 Apr. 2012.
Briscoe, Mary Louise, ed. *American Autobiography, 1945-1980: A Bibliography.* Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1982. Print.
Briggs, Xavier de Souza. Introduction. *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America.* Ed. Briggs. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005. 1-16. Print.
---. "More Pluribus, Less Unum? The Changing Geography of Race and Opportunity." *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America.* Ed. Briggs. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005. 17-44. Print.
Brodzki, Bella and Celeste Schenck, eds. *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988. Print.
Brooks, Alice M., and Willietta E. Kuppler. *The Clenched Fist.* Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1948. Print.
Brown, Dan. *The Great Expectations School: A Rookie Year in the New Blackboard Jungle*. New York: Arcade Publishers, 2007. Print.
Brown, Estelle Aubrey. *Stubborn Fool: A Narrative*. Caldwell: Caxton, 1952. Print.
Brunner, Deborah Dubose. *Inquiry and Reflection: Framing Narrative Practice in Education.* New York: SUNY P, 1994. Print.
Buckley, James. "Kohl: Best of the New Critics." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Phi Delta Kappan* 49.10 (June 1968): 614-15. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Buckley, P. L. Rev. of *White Teacher in a Black School* by Robert Kendall. *National Review* 1 Dec. 1964: 1075. Print.
Buckmaster, Henrietta. "The Teacher Flunked His School." Rev. of *Death at an Early Age* by Jonathan Kozol. *Christian Science Monitor* 5 Oct. 1967: 17. Print.
Bulman, Robert C. "Teachers in the 'Hood: Hollywood's Middle Class Fantasy." *The Urban Review* 34.3 (September 2002): 251-275. *Academic Search Complete.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Burbach, Harold J. and Margot A. Figgins. "A Thematic Profile of the Images of Teachers in Film." *Teacher Education Quarterly* 20.2 (Spring 1993): 65-75. *ProQuest.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Burt, Larry W. *Tribalism in Crisis: Federal Indian Policy, 1953-1961.* Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1982. Print.
Buscombe, Edward and Roberta E. Pearson, eds. Introduction. *Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western.* Ed. Buscombe and Pearson. Suffolk: BFI, 1998. 1-7. Print.
Butchart, Ronald E. *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875.* Westport. CT: Greenwood Press, 1980. Print.
Campbell, Elizabeth. *The Ethical Teacher.* Campbell, UK: Open University Press, 2003. Print.
Canfield, Jack, and Mark Victor Hansen, eds. Introduction. *Chicken Soup for the Teacher's Soul.* Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, 2002. xix-xx. Print.
Cantiello, Jessica Wells. "Pedagogical Acts: Teaching and Learning in Jane Tompkins' *A Life in*

School and Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons.*" *Academic Autobiography.* Ed. Rocio G. Davis. Spec. issue of *Prose Studies* 31.3 (December 2009): 190-201. Print.
Carr, David. *The Night of the Gun: A Reporter Investigates the Darkest Story of his Life – His Own.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008. Print.
Carr, Helen. *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936.* New York: New York UP, 1996. Print.
Carter, Patricia A. "'Completely Discouraged': Women Teachers' Resistance in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, 1900-1910." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 15.3 (1995): 53-86. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
---. "The Social Status of Women Teachers in the Early Twentieth Century." *The Teacher's Voice: A Social History of Teaching in Twentieth-Century America.* Richard J. Altenbaugh, ed. London: The Falmer Press, 1992. 127-138. Print.
Channon, Gloria. *Homework.* New York: Dutton, 1971. Print.
Chase, Mary Ellen. *A Goodly Fellowship.* New York: MacMillan, 1939. Print.
Chennault, Ronald E. "The Minds Behind a Dangerous Film." Rev. of *Dangerous Minds. Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies.* 18.4 (1996): 385-396. *Academic Search Complete.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Child, Brenda J. and K. Tsiannina Lomawaima. "Life at School." *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences.* Ed. Margaret L. Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima. Phoenix: Heard Museum, 2000. 13-53. Print.
Choi, Jung-Ah. "Reading Educational Philosophies in *Freedom Writers.*" *The Clearing House* (May/June 2009): 244-248. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Churchill, Ward. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools.* San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004. Print.
Clarkson, Mary Cervantes. "Teacher Stories and Teaching Wisdom for Teachers: A Selected Bibliography." *Journal of Teacher Education* 50.3 (May-June 1999): 220-230. *Academic OneFile.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
The Class [Entre les murs]. Dir. Laurence Cantent. Haut et Cort, 2008. Film.
Clifford, Geraldine Joncich. "Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family and Career in American Educational History." *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work.* Ed. Donald Warren. New York: Macmillan, 1989. 293-343. Print.
Clifford, James. "Partial Truths." Introduction. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* Ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986. 1-26. Print.
---. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988. Print.
Clotfelter, Charles T. *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004. Print.
Coach Carter. Dir. Thomas Carter. MTV Films, 2005.
"Code of Ethics." *NEA.org*. National Education Association, 1975. Web. 3 Apr. 2012.
Cohen, David K. "Practice and Policy: Notes on the History of Instruction." *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work.* Ed. Donald Warren. New York: Macmillan, 1989. 393-407. Print.
Cohen, David K., and Susan L. Moffitt. *The Ordeal of Equality: Did Federal Regulation Fix the Schools.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2009. Print.
Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar*

America. New York: Knopf, 2003. Print.
Cohen, Rosetta Marantz and Samuel Scheer, eds. *The Work of Teachers in America: A Social History Through Stories.* Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997. Print.
Cohen, Sol. *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education.* New York: Peter Lang, 1999. Print.
Coia, Lesley. "Pedagogy and Life Writing." *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms.* Ed. Margaretta Jolly. London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001. 692-694. Print.
Colburn, David R. and George E. Pozzetta. "Race, Ethnicity, and the Evolution of Political Legitimacy." *The Sixties: From Memory to History.* Ed. David Farber. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1994. 119-148. Print.
Cole, Thomas R. *Learning to Be a Schoolmaster.* New York: Macmillan, 1922. Print.
Coleman, James S. et al. *Equality of Educational Opportunity.* Washington DC: US Department of Health, Education and Welfare: 1966. Print.
Coles, Robert. "Do They Know What They Do?" Rev. of *Death at an Early Age* by Jonathan Kozol. *New York Times* 1 Oct. 1967: 281. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
"Confessions of Public School Teachers." *The Atlantic Monthly* 78.465 (July 1896): 97-110. *Making of America.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
Considine, David M. *The Cinema of Adolescence.* Jefferson: McFarland, 1985. Print.
Cooley, Thomas. *Educated Lives: The Rise of Modern Autobiography in America.* Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1976. Print.
Copperman, Michael. "Hurt to Read." *GuernicaMag.com.* Guernica, June 2009. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Coppin, Fanny Jackson. *Reminiscences on School Life and Hints on Teaching.* 1913. New York: GK Hall, 1995. Print.
Couser, G. Thomas. "Authority." *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms.* Ed. Margaretta Jolly. London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001. 73-75. Print.
---. *Memoir: An Introduction.* New York: Oxford UP, 2012. Print.
---. *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. Print.
Craig, Eleanor. *P.S. Your Not Listening.* New York: Baron, 1972. Print.
Cremin, Lawrence. *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876 – 1957.* New York: Knopf, 1969. Print.
Crocker, Ruth. "Unsettling Perspectives: The Settlement Movement, the Rhetoric of Social History, and the Search for Synthesis." *Contesting the Master Narrative: Essays in Social History.* Ed. Jeffrey Cox and Shelton Stromquist. Iowa City: University of Iowa P, 1998. 175-209. Print.
Cross, Christopher T. *Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age.* New York: Teachers College, 2004. Print.
Cuban, Larry. *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1990.* 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993. Print.
Cubberley, Ellwood Patterson. *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919. Print.
Culbertson, Manie. *May I Speak? Diary of a Crossover Teacher.* Gretna: Pelican, 1972. Print.
Dalton, Mary M. *The Hollywood Curriculum: Teachers and Teaching in Movies.* New York: Peter Lang, 1999. Print.
Daltry, Patience M. "Bystander in the Classroom." Rev. of *The Way It Spozed to Be* by James

Herndon. *Christian Science Monitor* 21 Mar. 1968: 13. Print.
---. "Harlem Report Card." Rev. of *The Schoolchildren: Growing Up in the Slums* by Mary Francis Greene and Orletta Ryan. *Christian Science Monitor* 31 Mar. 1966: 15. Print.
---. "Teacher's Dilemma." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Christian Science Monitor* 8 Feb. 1968: 11. Print.
Danahay, Martin. "Success Stories." *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms.* Ed. Margaretta Jolly. London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001. 850. Print.
Daniels, Steven. *How 2 Gerbils, 20 Goldfish, 200 Games, 2000 Books and I Taught Them How to Read.* Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971. Print.
Dangerous Minds. Dir. John N. Smith. Hollywood, 1995. Film.
Darling-Hammond, Linda. *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future.* New York: Teacher's College P, 2010. Print.
Darling-Hammond, Linda, Deborah J. Holtzman, Su Jin Gatlin, and Julian Vasquez Heilig. "Does Teacher Preparation Matter?: Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America and Teacher Effectiveness." *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 13 (2005). Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Davidson, Cathy N. and Ada Norris, eds. Introduction. *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings.* New York: Penguin, 2003. xi-xxxvi. Print.
Davis, Rocio G., ed. *Academic Autobiography.* Spec. issue of *Prose Studies* 31.3 (December 2009): 159-315. Print.
Davis, Mike. "Wild Streets: *American Graffiti* vs. the Cold War." *International Socialism Journal* 91 (2001). Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Debo, Angie. "At the Floor of the Canyon." Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *The New York Times* 31 Oct. 1954: BR26. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
DeCandido, GraceAnne A. Rev. of *Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year* by Esme Raji Codell. *Booklist* 15 Mar. 1999: 1263. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 20 Mar. 2012.
Decker, Sunny. *An Empty Spoon*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. Print.
DeJong, David. *Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States*. Golden: North American, 1993. Print.
Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1998. Print.
Denby, David. "School Spirit." Rev. of *Waiting for "Superman." The New Yorker.* 11 Oct. 2010: 122-3. Print.
Dennison, George. *The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School.* New York: Random House, 1969. Print.
Detachment. Dir. Tony Kaye. Paper Street, 2011. Film.
Dippie, Brian W. *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy.* Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1982. Print.
Divoky, Diane. "Where are the Reformers?" *New York Times* 14 Nov. 1976: 443. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Drinnon, Richard. *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1980. Print.
---. *Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987. Print.
Eakin, Paul John, ed. *The Ethics of Life Writing.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. Print.
---. *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999. Print.

---. *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2008. Print.
Eckberg, Carol A. Rev. of *The Schoolchildren: Growing Up in the Slums* by Mary Francis Greene and Orletta Ryan. *Library Journal* 15 Jan. 1966: 249. Print.
Edelson, Edith. "Another Hostile Colleague." Rev. of *An Empty Spoon* by Sunny Decker. *Journal of General Education* 22.3 (July 1970): 149-51. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Edsall, Thomas Byrne, with Mary D. Edsall. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics.* New York: Norton, 1991. Print.
Education Week staff. *Lessons of a Century: A Nation's Schools Come of Age.* Bethesda: Editorial Projects in Education, 2000. Print.
Egan, Susanna and Gabriele Helms. Introduction. "Autobiography and Changing Identities." Spec. Issue of *Biography* 24.1 (2001): ix-xx. *Project MUSE.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Embry, Carlos. *America's Concentration Camps: The Facts About Our Indian Reservations Today.* New York: David McKay, 1956. Print.
Emerson, George Barrell. *Reminiscences of an Old Teacher.* Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, 1878. Print.
Enoch, Jessica. "Resisting the Script of Indian Education: Zitkala Sa and the Carlisle Indian School." *College English* 65.2 (2002): 117-41. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society.* 1950. New York: Norton, 1963. Print.
Evans, Ernestine. "A National Tragedy." Rev. of *Stubborn Fool* by Estelle Aubrey Brown. *New York Herald Tribune Book Review.* 25 Dec. 1952: 10. Print.
"Fact Sheet on the Major Provisions of the Conference Report to H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act." *Ed.gov.* U.S. Department of Education, 23 Aug. 2003. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Farber, M. A. "Teachers Critical of Modern Schools are Turning into Authors." *New York Times* 25 Mar. 1968: 54. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Farber, Paul and Guinilla Holm. "A Brotherhood of Heroes: The Charismatic Educator in Recent American Movies." *Schooling in the Light of Popular Culture.* Ed. Farber, Holm, and Eugene P. Provenzo, Jr. Binghampton: SUNY Press, 1994. 153-172. Print.
Farber, Paul, Guinilla Holm, and Eugene P. Provenzo, Jr., eds and introduction. *Schooling in the Light of Popular Culture.* Binghampton: SUNY Press, 1994.
Farhi, Adam. "Hollywood Goes to School: Recognizing the Superteacher Myth in Film." *The Clearing House* 72.3 (1999): 157-9. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Farrell, C. "Corporal Punishment in US Schools." *Corpun.com.* World Corporal Punishment Research, Aug. 2010. Web. 6 Sept. 2010.
Featherstone, Joseph. "Ghetto Classroom." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *New Republic* 23 Dec. 1967: 23-8. Print.
Fiedler, Leslie A. *The Return of the Vanishing American*. New York: Stein and Day, 1968. Print.
Finn, Chester E., Jr. *We Must Take Charge: Our Schools and Our Future.* New York: Free Press, 1993. Print.
Finkelstein, Barbara J. "Schooling and Schoolteachers: Selected Bibliography of Autobiographies in the 19th Century." *History of Education Quarterly* 14.2 (Summer 1974): 293-300. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Fischer, Claude S. and Michael Hout. *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years.* New York: Russell Sage, 2006. Print.
Fischer, Michael M. J. "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory." *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* Ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus.

Berkeley: U of California P, 1986. 194-233. Print.
Fixico, Donald L. *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960.* Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1986. Print.
Flesch, Rudolph. *Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It.* 1955. New York: Perennial, 1986. Print.
Foote, Donna. *Relentless Pursuit: A Year in the Trenches with Teach for America.* New York: Vintage, 2008. Print.
Forrest, Elizabeth Chabot. *Daylight Moon.* New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1937. Print.
Forten, Charlotte. "Life on the Sea Islands." *The Atlantic Monthly* 13.79 (May 1864): 587-596. *Making of America.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
---. "Life on the Sea Islands." *The Atlantic Monthly* 13.80 (May 1864): 666-676. *Making of America.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
Foster, Frances Smith. *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives*. 2nd Edition. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1979. Print.
Foster, Michele, ed. *Black Teachers on Teaching*. New York: The New Press, 1997. Print.
Foster, Sarah Jane. *Sarah Jane Foster: Teacher of the Freedmen.* Ed. Wayne E. Reilly. Rockland: Picton, 2001. Print.
Franklin, Cynthia. *Academic Lives: Memoir, Cultural Theory, and the University Today.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2009. Print.
Fraser, James W. "Agents of Democracy: Urban Elementary-School Teachers and the Conditions of Teaching." *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work.* Ed. Donald Warren. New York: Macmillan, 1989. 188-156. Print.
Freedman, Debra M. "Images of the Teacher in Popular Culture: Preservice Teachers' Interpretations of *Dangerous Minds.*" *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 15.2 (Summer 1999): 71-84. Print.
Freedman, Debra and Jacob Easley II. "It's my way or the highway: Academic Success and Social Mobility in *Dangerous Minds* and *Boston Public.*" *Race Ethnicity and Education* 7.1 (March 2004): 73-83. *Academic Search Complete.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Freedman, Samuel G. "A Century of Art on a Blackboard Canvas." *New York Times* 17 May 1998: AR1, 36. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
---. *Small Victories: The Real World of a Teacher, Her Students, and Their High School.* New York: HarperCollins, 1990. Print.
Freedom Writers. Dir. Richard LaGravenese. Paramount, 2007. Film.
The Freedom Writer Teachers and Erin Gruwell. *Teaching Hope: Stories from the Freedom Writer Teachers.* Broadway Books: New York, 2009. Print.
The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell. *The Freedom Writers Diary.* 1999. Movie Tie-in Edition. Broadway Books: New York, 2007. Print.
Freeland, Chrystia. "How to Succeed in Business Journalism." *New York Times Book Review* 22 Aug. 2010: 23. Print.
Freire, Paulo. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* 1970. New York: Continuum, 2000. Print.
Fremont-Smith. Eliot. "One Good Year Isn't Enough." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *New York Times* 10 Jan. 1968: 41. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
French, Philip. "The Indian in the Western Movie." 1972. *The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies.* Ed. Gretchen M. Bataille and Charles L. P. Silet. Ames: Iowa State UP, 1980. 98-105. Print.
Friedenberg, Edgar Z. "Requiem for the Urban School." Rev. of *Death at an Early Age* by

Jonathan Kozol and *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Saturday Review* 18 Nov. 1967: 77-9, 92-4. Print.
---. "The Way We Live Now." Rev. of *The Way It Spozed to Be* by James Herndon. *New York Times* 23 May 1968. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Fuhrman, Susan H. "Riding Waves, Trading Horses: The Twenty-Year Effort to Reform Education." *A Nation Reformed?: American Education 20 Years after A Nation at Risk.* Ed. David T. Gordon. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. 7-22. Print.
Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. Print.
Garon, Ilana. "Lessons from the Bronx." *DissentMagazine.org.* Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Spring 2010. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Gause, C. D. Rev. of *Up the Down Staircase* by Bel Kaufman. *America* 6 Feb. 1965: 198. Print.
Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays.* Ed. Geertz. NY: Basic Books, 1973. 3-30. Print.
---. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1988. Print.
Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method.* 1972. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1980. Print.
Giles, James R. *The Naturalistic Inner-City Novel in America: Encounters with the Fat Man.* US: U of South Carolina P, 1995. Print.
Gilmore, Leigh. "American Neoconfessional: Memoir, Self-Help, and Redemption on Oprah's Couch." *Biography* 33.4 (Fall 2010): 657-679. *Project MUSE.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
---. *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001. Print.
Giroux, Henry. "Race, Pedagogy and Whiteness in *Dangerous Minds.*" *Cineaste* 22.4 (March 1997): 46. MasterFILE Premier. *EBSCO*. Web. 5 May 2011.
Giroux, Henry A. and Roger I. Simon, eds. *Popular Culture, Schooling and Everyday Life*. Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1989. Print.
Glassner, Barry. *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things.* New York: Basic Books, 1999. Print.
Glover, Mary Kenny. *Two Years: A Teacher's Memoir.* Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993. Print.
Golden, Gertrude. *Red Moon Called Me: Memoirs of a Schoolteacher in the Government Indian Service.* San Antonio: Naylor, 1954. Print.
Gomery, Douglas. "The Theater: If You've Seen One, You've Seen The Mall." *Seeing Through Movies.* Ed. Mark Crispin Miller. New York: Pantheon, 1990. 49-80. Print.
Goodlad, John I., Roger Soder, Kenneth A. Sirotnik, eds. *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching.* San Francisco and Oxford: Jossey-Bass, 1991. Print.
Gordon, David T. Introduction. *A Nation Reformed?: American Education 20 Years after A Nation at Risk.* Ed. Gordon. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. 1-6. Print.
Graham, Hugh Davis. *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972.* New York: Oxford UP, 1990. Print.
Grant, Geraldine, and Christine E. Murray. *Teaching in America: The Slow Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999. Print.
Griffiths, Alison. "Science and Spectacle: Native American Representation in Early Cinema." *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture.* Ed. S. Elizabeth Bird. Boulder: Westview, 1996. 79-95. Print.
Green, Paul E. "Separate and Still Unequal: Legal Challenges to School Tracking and Ability

Grouping in America's Public Schools." *Race Is…Race Isn't: Critical race Theory and Qualitative Studies in Education.* Laurence Parker, Donna Deyhle, Sofia Villenas, eds. Colorado: Westview Press, 1999. 231-250. Print.
Greene, Jessica. "Outraged Protestors Confront Poizner at Book Signing." *NBCBayArea.com* NBC Universal, 29 Sept. 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Griscom, John. *Memoir of John Griscom, LL.D. Late professor of chemistry and natural philosophy; with an account of the NY High School; Society for the Prevention of Pauperism; the House of Refuge; and other institutions.* Compiled from an autobiography and other sources by John H. Griscom, MD. New York: Robert Carter, 1859. Print.
Grunwald, Beverly. Rev. of *Up the Down Staircase* by Bel Kaufman. *New York Times Book Review* 14 Feb. 1965: 42. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Gruwell, Erin and Maria Reyes. "Riding the Trojan Horse: Erin Gruwell and Maria Reyes of *Freedom Writers.*" Interview by Dan Lybarger. *eFilmCritic.com* 5 Jan. 2007. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Gruwell, Erin. *Teach With Your Heart: Lessons I Learned from the Freedom Writers.* New York: Broadway Books, 2007. Print.
Guarino, Cassandra, Lucretia Santabañez, Glenn Daley, Dominic Brewer. "A Review of the Research Literature on Teacher Recruitment and Retention." *Rand.org.* Rand, 2004. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Gulezian, Lisa Amin. "Steve Poizner Under Fire Over Bluntly Worded Book." *Abclocal.go.com* KGO-TV/DT, 1 Apr. 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Gustainis, J. Justin. Rev. of *Students! Do Not Push Your Teacher Down the Stairs on Friday* by Alan Jones. *Best Sellers* 1 Apr. 1973: 14-5. Print.
H., H. Rev. of *In the Deep Heart's Core* by Michael Johnston. *Harvard Educational Review* 74.1 (Spring 2004): 98-100. Print.
H., F. M. "Again Sharp Controversy Over the Public Schools." *New York Times* 18 Feb. 1968: 167. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Hacsi, Timothy A. *Children as Pawns: The Politics of Education Reform.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2002. Print.
Half Nelson. Dir. Ryan Fleck. Hunting Lane, 2006. Film.
Hall, Isaac Freeman. *In School from Three to Eighty: Pictures of an American Life, 1825-1925.* Pittsfield: P of the Eagle, 1927. Print.
Halpin, Brendan. *Losing My Faculties: A Teacher's Story.* New York: Random House, 2003. Print.
Hanus, Paul H. *Adventuring in Education.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1937. Print.
Harley, Lewis R. *Confessions of a School Master.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1914. Print.
Haskins, Jim. *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher*. 1969, 1979. NY: New Press, 2008. Print.
Hayden, Torey. "FAQ." *Torey-Hayden.com.* Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Hearm, Joanna. "The 'Ache for Home': Assimilation and Separatism in Anthony Mann's *Devil's Doorway.*" *Hollywood's West: The American Frontier in Film, Television, and History.* Eds. Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 2005. 126-159. Print.
Hechinger, Fred M. "I – Failure of a System." *New York Times* 14 Jan. 1968: E13. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Henley, Helen. "From the Sky-Blue Water." Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *Christian Science Monitor* 4 Nov. 1954: 4. Print.

Hentoff, Nat. Rev. of *The Schoolchildren: Growing Up in the Slums* by Mary Francis Greene and Orletta Ryan. *Commonweal* 17 Jun. 1966: 371-3. Print.
Herndon, James. *The Way It Spozed To Be: A Report on the Classroom War Behind the Crisis in Our Schools*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967. Print.
---. Rev. of *P. S. Your Not Listening* by Eleanor Craig. *New York Times* 19 Nov. 1972: BR42. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
Hershey, Myrliss. *Teacher Was a White Witch.* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973. Print.
Hill, David. "Tinseltown Teachers." *Teacher Magazine* (March 1995): 40-5. Print.
Hipple, Theodore W. Rev. of *An Empty Spoon* by Sunny Decker. *The English Journal* 60.4 (April 1971): 518-19. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Hoffman, Nancy, ed. *Woman's "True" Profession: Voices from the History of Teaching.* 1981. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. Print.
Holbrook, Alfred. *Reminiscences of the Happy Life of a Teacher*. Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Company, 1885. Print.
Holt, John. "Comic Truth on an Urgent Problem." Rev. of *The Way It Spozed to Be* by James Herndon. *Life* 64.12 (22 Mar. 1968): 3. *Google Books.* Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
---. Rev. of *The Schoolchildren: Growing Up in the Slums* by Mary Francis Greene and Orletta Ryan. *Book Week* 6 Mar. 1966. Print.
Holte, James. "The Representative Voice: Autobiography and the Ethnic Experience." *MELUS* 9.2 (Summer 1982): 25-46. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
"How to Get Through." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Time* 19 Jan. 1968: 42. *Gale.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
Howard, Jeff. "Still at Risk: The Causes and Costs of Failure to Educate Poor and Minority Children for the Twenty-First Century." *A Nation Reformed?: American Education 20 Years after A Nation at Risk.* Ed. David T. Gordon. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. 81-98. Print.
Howes, Craig. Afterword. *The Ethics of Life Writing.* Ed. Paul John Eakin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. 244-264. Print.
Hoxie, Frederick E. *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880 – 1920.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. Print.
Hu, Winnie. "Paterson Teacher Suspended Over Post on Facebook." *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 1 Apr. 2011. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Hubbard, Jeremiah. *A Teacher's Ups and Downs from 1858-1879.* Richmond, IN: Palladium Steam Printing House, 1879. Print.
Hyman, Irwin. "The Make-Believe World of *Lean on Me.*" *Education Week* 26 April 1989: 27, 29. Print.
Iliff, Flora Gregg. *People of the Blue Water: A Record of Life Among the Walupai and Havusupai Indians*. New York: Harper, 1954. Print.
The Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting for "Superman." Dir. Julie Cavanaugh, Darren Marelli, Norm Scott, Mollie Bruhn, and Lisa Donlon. Grassroots Education Movement, 2010. Film.
Ingersoll, Richard M. "Is There Really a Teacher Shortage?" *Depts.washington.edu.* Center for the Study on Teaching and Policy, 2003. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Inman, Dee. *Don't Fence Me In: Life of a Teacher in a Navajo School Hogan.* New York: Exposition, 1955. Print.
Intrator, Sam M. *Stories of the Courage to Teach: Honoring the Teacher's Heart.* San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass, 2002. Print.
Isenberg, Joan. *Going by the Book: The Role of the Popular Classroom Chronicle in the Professional Development of Teachers.* Westport: Bergin and Garvey, 1994. Print.
Isserman, Maurice and Michael Kazin. *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s.* New York: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
Ives, Ella Gilbert. *The Evolution of a Teacher.* New York: Pilgrim Press, 1915. *Google Books.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Jack, Eula O. *Hey, Teach.* Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1972. Print.
Jackson, Joseph Henry. "Girl in Love with Indian Heaven of the West." Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *Chicago Sunday Tribune* 12 Sept. 1954: 4. Print.
---. "With the Havasupai Half a Century Ago." Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *San Francisco Chronicle* 3 Sept. 1954: 19. Print.
Jacobs, Margaret D. *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880 - 1940.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2009. Print.
Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917.* New York: Hill and Wang, 2000. Print.
Jalongo, Mary Renck and Joan P. Isenberg, with Gloria Gerbracht. *Teachers' Stories: From Personal Narrative to Professional Insight.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1995. Print.
James, John. *My Experience with Indians.* Austin: Gammel's Book Store, 1925. Print.
Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetics of Reception.* Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982. Print.
Jenkins, Minnie Braithwaite. *Girl from Williamsburg.* Virginia: Dietz, 1951. Print.
Jennings, Kevin, ed. *One Teacher in 10: Gay and Lesbian Educators Tell Their Stories*. Boston: Alyson, 1994. Print.
Jesness, Jerry. "*Stand and Deliver* Revisited." *Reason.com.* Reason, July 2002. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Johnson, LouAnne. *Dangerous Minds.* [Previously published as *My Posse Don't Do Homework*]. 1992. New York: St. Martens, 1993. Print.
---. "Faustian Bargains." Interview by Ira Glass. *This American Life.* National Public Radio, 22 Nov. 1996. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
---. *The Girls in the Back of the Class.* 1995. New York: St. Martens, 1996. Print.
---. "My Thoughts on the Movie *Dangerous Minds*." *LouanneJohnson.com.* June 2007. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Johnson, Michael L. *The New Journalism: The Underground Press, the Artists of Nonfiction, and Changes in the Established Media.* Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1971. Print.
Johnson, William. "Confessions of a 'Bad' Teacher." *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 3 Mar. 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Johnson, William R. "Teachers and Teacher Training in the Twentieth Century." *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work.* Ed. Donald Warren. New York: Macmillan, 1989. 237-256. Print.
Johnston, Michael. *In the Deep Heart's Core.* New York: Grove, 2002. Print.
Jolly, Margaretta, ed. *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms.* London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001. Print.
Jones, Alan. *Students! Do Not Push Your Teacher Down the Stairs on Friday: A Teacher's Notebook.* New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972. Print.

Jones, Jacqueline. *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873.* Chapell Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1980. Print.
Joseph, Stephen M., ed. *The Me Nobody Knows: Children's Voices from the Ghetto.* New York: Avon, 1969. Print.
Kaestle, Carl F. *Pillars of the Republic: Commons Schools and American Society, 1780-1860.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1983. Print.
Kane, Pearl Rock, ed. *My First Year as a Teacher*. 1991. New York: Signet, 1996. Print.
Kaplan, George. "TV's Versions of Education and What to Do About It." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 71.5 (Jan. 1990): K1-K12. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Kaplan, Louis. *A Bibliography of American Autobiographies.* Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1961. Print.
Kaplan, Roger. "Blackboard Bungle: Glimpses into the Unhappy State of American Education." Rev. of *Tested* by Linda Perlstein, *The Great Expectations School* by Dan Brown, and *The Emergency Teacher* by Christina Asquith. *The Wall Street Journal* 29-30 Sept. 2007: 8. *LexisNexis.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Karr, Mary. *The Liars' Club.* 1995. New York: Penguin, 2005. Print.
Kass, Amy. "Who Am I?" *College Teaching* 43.3 (1995): 93-100. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Kaufman, Bel. *Up the Down Staircase.* 1964. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969. Print.
Kaufman, Polly Welts. *Women Teachers on the Frontier*. London: Yale UP, 1985. Print.
Keller, Marcia. Rev. of *An Empty Spoon* by Sunny Decker. *Library Journal* July 1969: 2687. Print.
Kendall, Robert. *White Teacher in a Black School*. Chicago: Henry Regnery: 1964. Print.
Keroes, Jo. *Tales Out of School: Gender, Longing and the Teacher in Fiction and Film.* Carbondale: S. Illinois UP, 1991. Print.
Kerrane, Kevin. "Making Facts Dance." *The Art of Fact: A Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism.* Ed. Kevin Kerrane and Ben Yagoda. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 17-20. Print.
Kidder, Tracy. *Among Schoolchildren.* New York: HarperPerennial, 1990. Print.
Klass, Ric. *Man Overboard: Confessions of a Novice Math Teacher in the Bronx.* Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press, 2006. Print.
Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality.* New York: Knopf, 1976. Print.
"Knocking Non-Responsibles," *Time* 9 Feb. 1968: 106. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 16 Nov. 2010.
Knowlton, William Smith. *The Old Schoolmaster or Forty-Five Years with the Girls and Boys.* Augusta: Burley and Flint, 1905. Print.
Kohl, Herbert. *36 Children*. New York: The New American Library, 1967. Print.
Kolker, Robert. "Get Kotter: How Teachers Became the New Lawyers." *New York* 12 Jul. 2010: 10. Print.
Kopp, Wendy. *A Chance to Make History: What Works and What Doesn't in Providing an Excellent Education for All.* New York: PublicAffairs, 2011. Print.
Kozol, Jonathan. *Death at An Early Age*. 1967. New York: Penguin, 1985. Print.
---. *Letters to a Young Teacher.* New York: Crown, 2007. Print.
---. *Savage Inequalities: Children in American Schools.* New York: Crown, 1991. Print.
---. *Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America.* New York: Crown, 2005. Print.

Kramer, Mark. "Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists." *Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Short Nonfiction.* Ed. Norman Sims and Mark Kramer. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995. 21-34. Print.
Laylander, Orange Judd. *The Chronicles of a Contented Man.* Chicago: A Kroch, 1928. Print.
Lean on Me. Dir. John G. Avildsen. Warner Brothers, 1989. Film.
Ledesma, Patrick. "Do We Need Another Hero?" *WashingtonPost.com.* Washington Post, 31 July 2010. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Lejeune, Philippe. *On Autobiography*. 1975-1986. Ed. Paul John Eakin. Trans. Katherine Leary. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989. Print.
Lennon, Lawrence J. Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Best Sellers* 1 Feb. 1968: 417-18. Print.
---. Rev. of *The Way It Spozed to Be* by James Herndon. *Best Sellers* 15 Mar. 1968: 479. Print.
Leonard, Thomas. "Did the Muckrakers Muck Up Progress?" Reprinted from his book *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (1986). *The Muckrakers: Evangelical Crusaders.* Ed. Robert Miraldi. Westport: Praeger, 2000. 131-155. Print.
Leupp, Francis E. *The Indian and His Problem.* New York: Scribner's, 1910. Print.
Levey, Robert. "Leave the Kids Alone!" *Boston Globe* 17 Mar. 1968: E6+. *LexisNexis.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Lissak, Rivka Shpak. *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrant, 1890-1919.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989. Print.
Lortie, Dan C. *Schoolteacher.* 1975. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002. Print.
Loureiro, Angel G. *The Ethics of Autobiography: Replacing the Subject in Modern Spain.* Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2000. Print.
Lusted, David. *The Western.* Edinburgh Gate: Pearson, 2003. Print.
Lytle, Mark Hamilton. *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon.* New York: Oxford, 2006. Print.
MacGregor, Gordon. *Warrior Without Weapons.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1946. Print.
Magill, Edward H. *Sixty Five Years in the Life of a Teacher.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1907. Print.
Maldonado, Nancy S. and Mariann P. Winick. "Annotated Bibliography of Teachers' Stories." *Teachers' Stories: From Personal Narrative to Professional Insight.* Mary Renck Jalongo and Joan P. Isenberg, with Gloria Gerbracht. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1995. 219-235. Print.
Mann, Robert. *When Freedom Would Triumph: The Civil Rights Struggle in Congress, 1954-1968.* Louisiana State UP, 2007. Print.
Marrs, Eijiah P. *Life and History of Rev. Elijah P. Marrs.* Louisville: Bradley & Gilbert, 1885. Print.
Marshall, Margaret. *Contesting Cultural Rhetorics: Public Discourse and Education.* Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1995. Print.
Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997. Print.
Martin, Anna. *Around and About Alaska.* New York: Vantage Press, 1959. Print.
Marx, Gary T., ed and introduction. *Muckraking Sociology: Research as Social Criticism.* New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1972. Print.
Marx, Greg. "The Ethics of Undercover Journalism." *CJR.org.* Columbia Journalism Review, Feb. 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.

Mason, Mary. "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers." *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Ed. James Olney. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980. 207-237. Print.
Massey, Douglas S. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System.* Russell Sage: New York, 2007. Print.
---. "Douglass Massey on Diane Ravitch and Jonathan Alter's Attack." *NYCPublicSchoolParents.Blogspot.com.* 4 June 2011. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Mathews, David. *Is There a Public for Public Schools?* Dayton: Kettering Foundation Press, 1996. Print.
Mathews, Jay. *Work Hard, Be Nice: How Two Inspired Teachers Created the Most Promising Schools in America.* Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2009. Print.
Mathieson, Moira B. *Beginning Teacher in the Inner City: A Study of the Literature on Their Problems and Some Possible Solutions.* Washington DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1971. Print.
McCarthy, Cameron, Alicia P. Rodriguez, Stephen David, Shuaib Meecham, Heriberto Godina, K. E. Supriya, and Carrie Wilson-Brown. "Danger in the Safety Zone: Notes on Race, Resentment, and the Discourse of Crime, Violence, and Suburban Security." *Power/knowledge/pedagogy: The Meaning of Democratic Education in Unsettling Times.* Ed. Michael W. Apple and Dennis Carlson. Boulder: Westview, 1998. 203-225. Print.
McCarthy, Todd. "'Dangerous' Urban Tale lacks the proper punch." Rev. of *Dangerous Minds*. *Variety* 14 Aug. 1995: 55, 59. *LexisNexis.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
McCourt, Frank. *Teacher Man.* New York: Scribner, 2005. Print.
McGrath, Charles. "From the Foxhole." Rev. of *Educating Esme* by Esme Raji Codell, *Man Overboard* by Ric Klass, and *The Great Expectations School* by Dan Brown. *New York Times* 22 Apr. 2007: 35. *LexisNexis.* Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
McGuinn, Patrick J. *No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal Education Policy, 1965-2005.* Lawrence, KA: UP of Kansas, 2006. Print.
McGuinn, Patrick and Frederick Hess. "Freedom from Ignorance?: The Great Society and the Evolution of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism.* Ed. Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2005. 289-319. Print.
McPherson, James M. Introduction. *Two Black Teachers During the Civil War.* New York: Arno Press and the NY Times, 1969. i-vi. Print.
Mead, Margaret. *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World.* New York: William and Morris, 1949. Print.
Menand, Louis. *The Metaphysical Club.* New York: Farrar, 2001. Print.
Mendelsohn, Daniel. "Stolen Suffering." Op-Ed. *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 9 March 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
"MetLife Survey of the American Teacher." *MetLife.com.* MetLife Insurance Company, 7 Mar. 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Michie, Greg. *Holler if You Hear Me.* New York: Teachers College P, 1999. Print.
Miller, Nancy K. *But Enough About Me: Why We Read Other People's Lives.* New York: Columbia UP, 2002. Print.
---. "The Entangled Self: Genre Bondage in the Age of Memoir." *PMLA* 122.2 (2007): 537-548. Print.

---. "The Ethics of Betrayal: Diary of a Memoirist." *The Ethics of Life Writing.* Ed. Paul John Eakin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. 147-160. Print.
Mills, Claudia. "Friendship, Fiction, and Memoir: Trust and Betrayal in Writing from One's Own Life." *The Ethics of Life Writing.* Ed. Paul John Eakin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2004. 101-120. Print.
Minow, Martha. *In Brown's Wake: Legacies of America's Educational Landmark.* New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.
Moore, Bob. *Welcome to #57: Four Years of Teaching and Learning in Bedford-Stuyvesant.* New York: G. P. Putnam, 1974. Print.
Moore, Tom. "Classroom Distinctions." Op-Ed. *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 19 Jan. 2007. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Mowry, William Augustus. *Recollections of a New England Educator, 1838-1908.* New York: Silver, Burdett, and Co, 1908. Print.
Mr. Holland's Opus. Dir. Stephen Herek. Hollywood, 1996. Film.
Mullen, Anthony J. Foreword. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Teacher's Tales.* Eds Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Amy Newmark. Cos Cob: Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing, 2009. Print.
Murnane, Richard J., Judith D. Singer. John B. Willett, James J. Kemple, and Randall J. Olsen. *Who Will Teach?: Policies that Matter.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991. Print.
Music of the Heart. Dir. Wes Craven. Miramax, 1999. Film.
Nasaw, David. *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States.* New York: Oxford UP, 1979. Print.
Nash, Philleo, Sol Tax, R. David Edmunds, Gary Orfield and Ada Deer. "Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960." *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan.* Ed. Kenneth R. Philp. Salt Lake City: Howe, 1986. 129-141. Print.
A Nation at Risk. 1983. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Neale, Steve. "Vanishing Americans: Racial and Ethnic Issues in the Interpretation and Context of Post-War 'Pro-Indian' Westerns." *Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western.* Ed. Edward Buscombe and Roberta E. Pearson. Suffolk: BFI, 1998. 8-28. Print.
Nelles, William. *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narration.* New York: Peter Lang, 1997. Print.
Newman, Katherine and Merryellen Towey Schulz. "Books by Teacher-Authors about Their Teaching Experiences." College of Saint Mary, January 2002. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Noguera, Pedro. Introduction to Part Three. *City Kids, City Schools: More Reports from the Front Row.* Eds. William Ayers, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Gregory Michie, and Noguera, New York: New Press, 2008. 140-3. Print.
Nunes, Mark. "A Million Little Blogs: Community, Narrative, and the James Frey Controversy." *Journal of Popular Culture.* 44.2 (April 2011): 347-366. *Humanities Full Text.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Ojibwa. "World War II and American Indians: After the War." *Native American Net Roots.* 7 Aug. 2010. Web. 6 Sept. 2010.
Olney, James. "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status, and Autobiography as Literature." *The Slave's Narrative.* Ed. Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. 148-75. Print.
Orcutt, Hiram. *Reminiscences of School Life.* Cambridge: University Press, 1898. Print.
Orfield, Gary and Susan E. Eaton. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v.*

Board of Education. New York: New Press, 1996. Print.
O'Rourke, James. *Sex, Lies, and Autobiography: The Ethics of Confession.* Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2006. Print.
Osbourne, Emma. *We Learned from Each Other: A Teacher's Memoir.* Brockport, NY: Lift Bridge Press, 2001. Print.
Pappas, Sophia E. *Good Morning, Children: My First Years in Early Childhood Education.* Beltsville: Gryphon House, 2009. Print.
Parini, Jay, ed. *The Norton Book of American Autobiography.* New York: Norton, 1999. Print.
Parman, Donald L. *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994. Print.
Parker, Emily. "To Be Read by All Parties." *The New York Times Book Review* 19 Feb. 2012: 27. Print.
Pascal, Roy. *Design and Truth in Autobiography*. London: Routledge, 1960. Print.
Patterson, James T. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy.* New York: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
---. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974.* New York: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.
Patterson, William H. *Letters from a Hard-Boiled Teacher to His Half-Baked Son.* Washington DC: Daylion, 1931. Print.
Patri, Angelo. *Schoolmaster of the Great City.* New York: Macmillan, 1917. Print.
Paul, Dierdre Glenn. "Blackboard Jungle: Critically Interrogating Hollywood's Vision of the Urban Classroom." *Multicultural Review* (March 2001): 20-60. *Education Research Complete.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Payne, Daniel Alexander. *Recollections of Seventy Years.* Nashville: Publishing House of the AME Church, 1888. Print.
Pelton, John Cotter. *Life's Sunbeams and Shadows.* San Francisco: Bancroft, 1893. Print.
Perl, Sondra. *On Austrian Soil: Teaching Those I Was Taught to Hate.* Albany: SUNY Press, 2005. Print.
Perlstein, Linda. *Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade.* New York: Holt, 2008. Print.
Peterson, Anne Helen. "*Their* Words, *Our* Story: *Freedom Writers* as Scenario of Pedagogical Reform." Spec. Issue of *Film and History:* Education 39.1 (Spring 2009): 31-44. Print.
Philp, Kenneth R. *Termination Revisited: American Indians on the Trail to Self-Determination, 1933-1953.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999. Print.
Piro, Richard. *Black Fiddler*. New York: William Morrow, 1971. Print.
Podair, Jerald E. *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownville Crisis.* New Haven: Yale UP, 2002. Print.
"Point Four Program." *Britannica.com*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010. Web. 6 Sept. 2010.
Poizner, Steve. *Mount Pleasant: My Journey from Creating a Billion-Dollar Company to Teaching at a Struggling Public High School*. New York: Portfolio, 2010. Print.
"Poizner's Book on San Jose Students Sparks Protests." *KTVU.com.* Cox Media Group, 1. Apr. 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Porter, Roger J. *Self-Same Songs: Autobiographical Performances and Reflections.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2002. Print.
Prats, Armando Jose. *Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002. Print.
Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* London: Routledge,

1992. Print.
Preskill, Stephen L. and Robin Smith Jacobvitz. *Stories of Teaching: A Foundation for Educational Renewal.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001. Print.
"Primary Sources 2012, America's Teachers on the Teaching Profession." *Scholastic.com.* Scholastic, 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Quadagno, Jill. *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty.* New York: Oxford, 1994. Print.
Rachman, Anne-Marie. "Alcott, William Andrus." *Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project.* MSU Digital Library. Web. 3 Apr. 2012.
Ravitch, Diane. *Left Back: A Century of Battles Over School Reform*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000. Print.
---. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System.* New York: Basic, 2010. Print.
---. *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980.* New York: Basic, 1983. Print.
Reilly, Wayne E. Introduction. *Sarah Jane Foster, Teacher of the Freedmen, A Diary and Letters.* Ed. Reilly. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1990. 1-27. Print.
Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Choice* Sept. 1968: 842. Print.
Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *KirkusReviews.com.* Kirkus Reviews, 15 Jun. 1967. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Rev. of *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher* by Jim Haskins. *Choice* Sept. 1970: 904. Print.
Rev. of *Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher* by Jim Haskins. *KirkusReviews.com.* Kirkus Reviews, 2 Feb. 1969. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *Booklist* 15 Oct. 1954: 79-80. Print.
Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *Time* 13 Sept. 1954: 122. *Academic Search Complete.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Rev. of *The Schoolchildren: Growing Up in the Slums* by Mary Francis Greene and Orletta Ryan. *The New Yorker* 23 Apr. 1966: 194. Print.
Reyhner, Jon and Jeanne Eder. *American Indian Education: A History.* Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2004. Print.
Richards, Eva Alvey. *Arctic Mood: A Narrative of Arctic Adventures.* Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1949. Print.
Riggs, Steven Return. *Mary and I: Forty Years with the Sioux.* Chicago: 1880. Print.
Robb, Daniel. *Crossing the Water: Eighteen Months on an Island Working with Troubled Boys – A Teacher's Memoir.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001. Print.
Robbins, Richard. "Is Every Man His Own Poet?" Rev. of *The Soft Revolution* by Ned Postman and *How to Change Colleges* by Harold Taylor. *Boston Globe* 6 Jun. 1971: A30. *LexisNexis.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Robertson, Judith P. "Screenplay Pedagogy and the Interpretation of Unexamined Knowledge in Pre-Service Primary Teaching." *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* 1 (Spring 1997): 25-60. Print.
Rodli, Agnes. *North of Heaven: A Teaching Ministry Among the Alaskan Indians.* Chicago: Moody, 1963. Print.
Roithmayr, Daria. Introduction. *Race Is…Race Isn't: Critical Race Theory and Qualitative Studies in Education.* Laurence Parker, Donna Deyhle, Sofia Villenas, eds. Colorado: Westview Press, 1999. 7-30. Print.
Rojek, Chris. *Celebrity.* London: Reaktion, 2001. Print.
Rose, Mike. *Possible Lives: The Promise of Public Education in America.* New York: Penguin,

1995. Print.
Rossell, Christine. "School Desegregation and White Flight." *Political Science Quarterly* 90.4 (Winter 1975-1976): 675-695. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Rossi, Peter H., Richard A. Berk, David P. Boesel, Bettye K Eidson, and W. Eugene Groves. "Between White and Black: The Faces of American Institutions in the Ghetto." Supplemental Studies for the *National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Department of Social Relations, Johns Hopkins U., June 1968. 71-216. Print.
Rossner, Robert. *The Year Without an Autumn: Portrait of a School in Crisis.* New York: Baron, 1969. Print.
Rothfeld, Michael. "Steve Poizner's Book about Mount Pleasant High School Offends Subjects." *LATimes.com.* Los Angeles Times, 3 Apr. 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Rousmaniere, Kate. *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective.* New York: Teacher's College P, 1997. Print.
Rubinstein, Gary. "Mixed Media." *Teacher Magazine* (August/September 2003): 46-7. Print.
Russo, Alexander. *Stray Dogs, Saints, and Saviors: Fighting for the Soul of America's Toughest High School.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.
Ryan, Kevin, ed. *The Roller Coaster Year: Essays By and For Beginning Teachers.* New York: HarperCollins, 1992. Print.
Sachar, Emily. *Shut Up and Let the Lady Teach: A Teacher's Year in a Public School.* New York: Poseidon, 1991. Print.
Salazar, James. "Democratic Habits of Jane Addams's 'Charitable Effort.'" *Our Sisters' Keepers: Nineteenth-Century Benevolence Literature by American Women.* Ed. Jill Bergman and Debra Bernardi. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2005. 249-281. Print.
Sandoz, Mari. "Classroom on the Grand Canyon's Edge." Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *New York Herald Tribune Book Review.* 18 Sept. 1954: 3. Print.
Santos, Fernanda. "What Teachers Reveal When They Blog." *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 18 Jan. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Sayre, Robert F. "Autobiography and the Making of America." *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Ed. James Olney. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980. Print.
School of Rock. Dir. Richard Linklater. Paramount, 2003. Film.
Schrader, Claudia. "The Power of Autobiography." *Changing English: Studies in Reading and Culture* 11.1 (2004): 115-124.
Schrag, Peter. "Schooldays." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl and *Death at an Early Age* by Jonathan Kozol. *Commentary* Jan. 1968: 71-3. Print.
---. *Village School Downtown: Politics and Education – A Boston Report.* Boston: Beacon, 1967. Print.
Schuman, Howard, Charlotte Steeh, Lawrence Bobo. *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985. Print.
Schuman, Patricia. Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *Library Journal* 1 Sept. 1967: 2921. Print.
Sears, David O., Carl P. Hensler, Leslie K. Speer. "Whites' Opposition to 'Busing': Self-Interest or Symbolic Politics?" *The American Political Science Review* 73.2 (Jun 1979): 369-384. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Sedlak, Michael and Steven Schlossman. *Who Will Teach?: Historical Perspectives on the Changing Appeal of Teaching as a Profession.* Santa Monica: Rand, 1986. Print.

Sharkey, Judy. "Lives Stories Don't Tell: Exploring the Untold in Autobiographies." *Curriculum Inquiry* 34.4 (2003): 495-512. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Sheldon, Edward. *Autobiography of Edward Austin Sheldon.* New York: The Ives-Butler Co., 1911. Print.
Shouse, Roger C. "Beyond Legend: *Stand and Deliver* as a study in School Organizational Culture." Spec. Issue of *Film and History:* Education 39.1 (Spring 2009): 45-52. Print.
Sims, Norman. "The Art of Literary Journalism." *Literary Journalism: A New Collection of the Best American Short Nonfiction.* Ed. Norman Sims and Mark Kramer. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995. 3-19. Print.
---. *True Stories: A Century of Literary Journalism.* Chicago: Northwestern UP, 2007. Print.
Small, Deborah A., George Loewenstein, and Paul Slovic. "Sympathy and Callousness: The Impact of Deliberative Thought on Donations to Identifiable and Statistical Victims." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 102.2 (March 2007): 143-153. *ScienceDirect Journals.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Smith, Elenore Taney. Rev. of *People of the Blue Water* by Flora Gregg Iliff. *Library Journal* 1 Sept. 1954: 1498. Print.
Smith, Mary Lee, with Linda Miller-Kahn, Walter Heineke, Patricia F. Jarvis. *Political Spectacle and the Fate of American Public Schools.* New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
Smith, Sherry Lynn. *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans Through Anglo Eyes, 1880 – 1940.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide to Interpreting Life Narratives.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001. Print.
Smrekar Claire E. and Ellen B. Goldring. Introduction. *From the Courtroom to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation.* Ed. Smrekar and Goldring. Cambridge: Harvard Education P, 2009. ix-xxvii. Print.
Stand and Deliver. Dir. Ramon Menendez. Warner Brothers, 1988. Film.
Stone, Albert E. *Autobiographical Occasions and Original Acts: Versions of American Identity from Henry Adams to Nate Shaw.* Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1982. Print.
Strauss, Valerie. "Blackboard Blogging: Web Journals Become the New Fly on the Wall of Teachers' Lounges." *WashingtonPost.com.* Washington Post, 4 Apr. 2006. Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Strike, Kenneth A., and Jonas F. Soltis. *The Ethics of Teaching.* New York: Teacher's College Press, 1985. Print.
Sullivan, Shannon. "Reciprocal Relations Between Races: Jane Addams's Ambiguous Legacy." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 34.1 (Winter 2003): 43-60. Print.
Swetnam, Leslie A. "Media Distortion of the Teacher Image." *The Clearing House* 66.1 (1992): 30-2. *JSTOR.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Szasz, Margaret. *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination Since 1928*. 3rd ed. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1999. Print.
Takaki, Ronald. *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America.* Revised Ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
Take the Lead. Dir. Liz Friedlander. New Line, 2006. Film.
Taylor, Charles. "The Dazzling Versatility of Michelle Pfeiffer." *Salon.com.* Salon Media Group, 25 May 1999. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.
Taylor, Yuval, ed. *I Was Born a Slave: An Anthology of Classic Slave Narratives*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999. Print.

Taubin, Amy. "Girls in the Hood." Rev. of *Dangerous Minds. Village Voice* 22 Aug. 1995: 52. Print.
Tavernise, Sabrina. "Education Gap Grows Between Rich and Poor, Studies Say." *NYTimes.com.* New York Times, 9 Feb 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
"Termination." *Klamathtribes.org.* Web. 6 Sept. 2010.
Tevis, Julia Ann. *Sixty Years in a School Room: An Autobiography of Mrs. Julia A. Tevis.* Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern, 1878. Print.
Thernstrom, Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom. *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. Print.
Ticker, George E. Preface. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools.* By Ward Churchill. San Francisco: City Light Books, 2004. xiii-xli. Print.
Tierney, John. "Do Your Suffer from Decision Fatigue?" *NYTimes.com.* New York Times Magazine 17 Aug. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Toppo, Greg. "Teachers Speak Out of Turn." *USA Today* 18 Sept. 2006, final ed.: 1D. *LexisNexis.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Tough, Paul. *Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Print.
Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1982. Print.
---. "Stephen Crane's City Sketches." *American Realism: New Essays.* Ed. Eric Sundquist. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982. 138-154. Print.
Trafzer, Clifford E., Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, eds. Introduction. *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2006. 1-33. Print.
Trier, James D. "The Cinematic Representation of the Personal and Political Lives of Teachers." *Teacher Education Quarterly* 28.3 (Summer 2001): 127-142. *ProQuest Education Journals.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
---. "Teaching Theory Through Popular Culture Texts." *Teaching Education* 18.2 (June 2007): 151-165. *Education Research Complete.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
"True Urban Legends." Narr. Ira Glass. *ThisAmericanLife.org.* National Public Radio, 23 Apr. 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Turner, James William. *Half a Century in the School Room, or Personal Memoirs of Jas. William Turner.* Carrier Mills, IL: Turner, 1920. Print.
Tyack, David B. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974. Print.
Tyack, David and Larry Cuban. *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995. Print.
Tyre, Peg. "The Blackboard Bungles." Rev. of *Tested* by Linda Perlstein, *The Great Expectations School* by Dan Brown, and *A Class Apart* by Alec Klein. *Newsweek.* 3 Sept. 2007. *LexisNexis.* Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Up the Down Staircase. Dir. Robert Mulligan. Park Place, 1967. Film.
"U.S. Education Reform and National Security." *CFR.org.* Council on Foreign Relations, Mar. 2012. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Vickers, Scott B. *Native American Identities: From Stereotype to Archetype in Art and Literature.* Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1998. Print.

Wadsworth, Carol Eckberg. Rev. of *May I Speak?: Diary of a Crossover Teacher,* by Manie Culbertson. *Library Journal* Aug. 1972: 2583. Print.
Waiting for "Superman." Dir. Davis Guggenheim. Electric Kinney, 2010. Film.
Walker, Greta. "In and Out of School." Rev. of *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl. *New York Times Book Review* 14 Jan. 1968: BR46. *Historical Newspapers.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
Walker, Jan. *Dancing to the Concertina's Tune: A Prison Teacher's Memoir.* Boston: Northeastern, 2003. Print.
Wallace, James M. *The Promise of Progressivism: Angelo Patri and Urban Education.* New York: Peter Lang, 2005. Print.
Wallace, Wendy. "I'm Not Sure People Realise What's Going On." *Guardian.com.* The Guardian, 16 Apr. 2007. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Walsh, Edwina. *Schoolmarms: Women in America's Schools*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap, 1995. Print.
Ward, Kate. "So You Want to Write a Memoir?" *EW.com.* Entertainment Weekly, 30 May 2008. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Warren, Donald, ed. *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work.* New York: Macmillan, 1989. Print.
Washington, Lawrence Daniel. *Confessions of a Schoolmaster.* San Antonio: Naylor, 1939. Print.
Waterbury, Maria S. *Seven Years Among the Freedmen.* 1890. New York: Arno Press and the NY Times, 1968. Print.
Watson, Julia. "'As Gay and Indian as They Chose': Collaboration and Counter-ethnography in *The Land of the Grasshopper Song.*" *Biography* 31.3 (Summer 2008): 397-428. *Project MUSE.* Web. 23 Apr. 2012.
---. "Autoethnography." *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms.* Ed. Margaretta Jolly. London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001. 83-85. Print.
Webley, Kayla. "How One Teacher's Angry Blog Sparked a Viral Classroom Debate." *Time.com.* Time, 18 Feb. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Weiner, Howard R. Rev. of *Black Fiddler* by Richard Piro. *Library Journal* 96 (July 1971): 2309. Print.
Weingarten, Marc. *The Gang That Wouldn't Write Straight: Wolfe, Thompson, Didion and the New Journalism Revolution.* Westminster: Crown, 2005. Print.
Weingarten, Randi. Foreword. *The Great Expectations School: A Rookie Year in the New Blackboard Jungle*. By Dan Brown. New York: Arcade Publishers, 2007. Print.
West, Leoti. *The Wide Northwest…As Seen by a Pioneer Teacher.* Spokane: Shaw and Borden, 1927. Print.
Whitney, Barney. *Fifty Years a Teacher.* Syracuse: CW Bardeen, 1902. Print.
Wildavsky, Ben. "Tales from the Classroom Updated for the Testing Era." Rev. of *Tested* by Linda Perlstein, *Letters to a Young Teacher* by Jonathan Kozol, *The Great Expectations School* by Dan Brown, and *A Class Apart* by Alec Klein. *Washington Post* 2 Sept. 2007: BW11. *LexisNexis.* Web. 30 Mar. 2012.
Wilder, Robert. *Tales from the Teacher's Lounge.* New York: Delacorte, 2007. Print.
Wilkinson, J. Harvie. *From Brown to Bakke: The Supreme Court and School Integration, 1954-1978.* New York: Oxford UP, 1979. Print.
Wolfe, Tom. "The New Journalism." *The New Journalism.* Ed. Wolfe and E. W. Johnson. New York: Harper and Row, 1973. 3-52. Print.

Wong, Harry K. Introduction. *The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational Story of a New Teacher in an Inner-City School.* By Christina Asquith. New York: Skyhorse, 2007. xii-xix. Print.
Yagoda, Ben. *Memoir: A History.* New York: Riverhead Books, 2009. Print.
Yu, Ting. "Getting Back in Touch with Your Inner Outrage." *Teach for America Alumni Magazine* (Fall 2010): 2. Print.
Zinsser, William, ed. *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir.* Rev. Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998. Print.
Zitkala Sa. "Impressions of an Indian Childhood." *The Atlantic Monthly* 85.507 (Jan. 1900): 37-47. *Making of America.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
---. "An Indian Teacher Among Indians." *The Atlantic Monthly* 85.509 (Mar. 1900): 381-387. *Making of America.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.
---. "Schooldays of an Indian Girl." *The Atlantic Monthly* 85.508 (Feb. 1900): 185-194. *Making of America.* Web. 20 Apr. 2012.