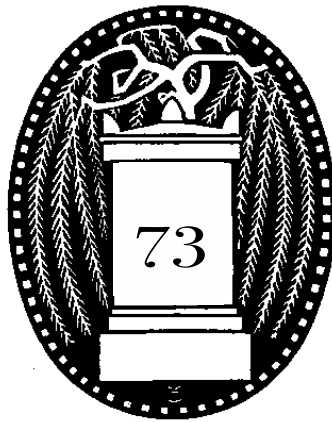


**JOURNAL OF
PHILOSOPHY &
HISTORY
OF EDUCATION**



2023

The Journal of the Society of Philosophy & History of Education

In the Face of Normality: An Analysis of One Person’s Encounters with School Power across a Lifespan¹

**Thomas V. O’Brien, University of Southern Mississippi, and
Tommie Killen, University of Southern Mississippi**

Introduction

In the last century, scholars have paid much attention to the role formal education played in “Americanizing” immigrant and first-generation children and carrying them into mainstream culture.² Joining this scholarship are memoirs and novels about early schooling experiences, often written later from the viewpoint of the adult.³ Many accounts speak to the pain, isolation, and sometimes even the rewards the authors encounter as they negotiate their way in settings with customs far different than those in their homes and communities.

In contrast, fewer accounts examine how immigrant and first-generation children—who stayed in the education enterprise over the course of a lifetime—fare in their long-term relationship with modern schooling.⁴ How did their sense of self and identity adjust with their increased familiarity with—or mastery of—the official and hidden school curriculum? How did they reckon, over time, with the public “knowledge” and “know-how” gained at school? If schools are powerful, sanctioned sites of regulation, how do those who developed in them over a lifetime, “make sense” of and manage schooling’s normalizing powers? Given one’s increased cognitive command and selective memory over time, what does one say, as an adult, about one’s reckoning with the enterprise? What other normalizing factors beyond the school are in play?

In an attempt to shed some light on these questions, in this paper we focus on one person, Catherine Angela Chessa: a first-generation U.S. citizen and daughter of Italian immigrants. We follow her as she enters public school and later college in the mid-20th century. Relying on unrecorded accounts about Catherine’s family and using evidence from a diary she kept as an adult in 1981, we analyze her later reflections on schooling, and her contemporaneous thoughts and experiences as a public school teacher, and later as adult outsider studying the Montessori method in her parents’ country of origin.⁵ In our analysis, we also consider these experiences as they intersect with her personality and identity as a youth, mother, wife, and adult learner.

To help guide our analysis, we turn to Michel Foucault and his writings and lectures in which he theorizes the dynamics of institutional power/knowledge. Foucault's concept of normalization refers to the processes through which societies and powerful actors use institutions to establish and enforce norms, standards, and expectations that shape people's behaviors, identities, and thought processes. Foucault documents how people in institutions tend to accommodate themselves to an institution's/actor's normalizing powers, and internalize existing norms, standards, and expectations. Foucault argues this process systematically reduces an individual's agency and sense of self, is used to control the behaviors of individuals, and leads to the reproduction of institutional power and social hierarchies.⁶

We also are guided by critical studies scholar Susan Douglas Franzosa, who studies the power of normalization on children in the school setting. Franzosa draws from Foucault's theory, interpreting normalization as harmful to the individual, also recognizing that individuals do not always submit to normalization; as Foucault documents, individuals sometimes resist or subvert an institution's normalizing forces.⁷ Franzosa theorizes the concepts *accommodation* and *resistance* as relating to stories adults tell about their early schooling. She and other educational scholars problematize the influence of universal schooling on the individual and highlight the "coercive and partisan nature [of schools'] socialization practices."⁸ These scholars focus on the "the legitimacy of the school's traditional warrant to regulate individual identities."⁹ As an intervention, Franzosa suggests recorded memories of prior schooling episodes, told later by adults in their own voices, might open a pathway toward self-authenticity. Also important, Franzosa asserts telling such stories can help expand and clarify our understanding of the normalizing powers of schooling.¹⁰ Using her theoretical concepts of accommodation, resistance, and normalization, we turn our attention to analyzing one woman's history, Catherine Angela Chessa, and examine her lifelong relationship with formal schooling. Beginning with the time during which she was a child, through her high school and college years, and into adulthood, Catherine's story offers compelling insights into processes of self-reckoning given the power of normalizing forces. Catherine's educational biography across her lifespan is a nuanced variation on what Franzosa, drawing from Foucault, and others conclude about the effects of schooling's normalization.

Catherine Angela Chessa

Catherine Angela Chessa was born in Greenwich, Connecticut in 1932 to immigrant parents from Siligo, a village (then with a population of roughly 600 inhabitants) in the region of Logudoro in northern Sardinia. Catherine grew up in an Italian home and neighborhood and eventually assimilated into the English-speaking American mainstream. She came of

age in Italian-American culture—and transitioned away from that language and culture—eventually becoming an elementary school teacher, and later a special-education teacher in a public school system on eastern Long Island, New York. En route, in the 1970s she earned a master's degree in special education. In 1979, she won a sabbatical and Rotary International scholarship to live in Bergamo, Italy (August 1980–July 1981) where she studied the Montessori method with native connoisseurs of the approach.¹¹ Remarkably, during her sabbatical she kept a diary. Along with stories and artifacts from her past remembered and collected by her family,¹² her diary allows us to explore themes of accommodation and resistance as she negotiated her formal education over key moments in her lifetime.

In what follows we briefly provide additional background on Catherine's family and early schooling in the U.S. Here we find parallels between her experiences and those of Mary Antin, a Jewish-American immigrant from what now is Belarus, and whose family settled in Boston in the 1890s.¹³ Like Antin, Catherine's recollections of institutional normalization were initially unsettling and confusing, but later transitioned into mostly positive memories that integrated to a considerable extent into a larger sense of personal and desired identity. Her transition also grew her sense of purpose and agency. After a bumpy start, Catherine adjusted to school culture and seemed, in retrospect, to embrace it. This acceptance of the school *in all its power*, however, was accompanied by a significant rejection of her ethnic home life and may correlate with the onset of particular dispositional traits. To the extent that Catherine accommodated the school's normalizing influence, she seems to have partially resisted her parents' authority, and this resistance persisted into adulthood.

In the second part of the paper we attend to Catherine as an adult, first as a teacher and then an adult student. Unlike her relationship with formal education in the first half of her life, when accommodation was her *modus operandi*, her approach to education as an adult involved elements of redirection, refereeing, and resistance. These strategies operated powerfully in her relationship with schooling. For example, comparable to Leonard Covello's work as a teacher in New York City,¹⁴ during Catherine's work as a special educator, she developed a type of instruction that offered hope and direction to her students. She gave support and concrete guidance to many, especially those most vulnerable. Her work as a teacher stands out because Catherine was able to channel and redirect the institution's well-established socialization powers into realistic lessons and relatable opportunities for her students. In contrast to much of the critical scholarship about the oppressiveness of formal schooling, Catherine filtered and used aspects of schooling's normalization as a form of empowerment, both for her students and herself. Also, in her capacity as an adult student, she resisted aspects of schooling she found unjust. For example, rather than fully comply with unwritten school rules about a dress code for teachers, she confronted her

supervisors, and was pivotal to achieving a policy change. Later, rather than fully comply with Montessori professors and adjust to normalization's forces in Bergamo, she chose to resist, openly, but also unobtrusively. Her inner and outer journey as an adult learner was one of agency and purpose. But it also came with rebellion and sometimes with anger, impatience, and self-doubt. The contrast between the younger Catherine's accommodation of school norms, on the one hand, and the older Catherine's redirection and challenge of these norms on the other, is significant because it suggests that addressing schooling's normalizing power requires experiences in the setting. Likewise, Catherine's approach suggests that normalization's power may not always be as toxic or iron-clad successful as is often portrayed in literature.¹⁵ Indeed, normalization can sometimes be accommodated for survival or refereed for "the greater good."

While her early agency as a child cannot be ruled out, our analysis suggests that when compared with her early educational experiences, Catherine's later educational encounters both as a special educator and adult studying Montessori occurred with agency, "truth to self," and with a keener, more-conscious understanding of the school's power to normalize. Her encounters also resulted in success, stability, and upward social mobility. However, the evidence suggests that her experiences as an adult student in a different learning environment prompted moments of self-doubt and perceived failings as a learner, and as a mother and wife.

Filial Influence

Catherine's parents were born into large families in the village of Siligo on the island of Sardinia: Vittorio Chessa in 1900, and Biagina Manca in 1910. Vittorio attended primary school through grade 4, and Biagina through grade 6. As such, Catherine's parents' early schooling was only a small part of their socialization into Sardinian culture. In their youth both worked for the family, Vittorio as a goat herder, and Biagina as the primary caretaker for her younger siblings (due to the premature death of their mother during the birth of her youngest sister, Nangela). Vittorio, alert for better options and unsatisfied with his days in the pasture, enlisted in the *Arma dei Carabinieri*, a service of the Italian armed forces, at the basic level. Then, at age twenty (c. 1920) Vittorio—like many Italians others who left during the Great Migration—ventured to North America to try his luck along the U.S. northeast coast, eventually rooming with his older brother in New York City.¹⁶ Unsuccessful and in need of resources and a new plan, Vittorio returned to Siligo in the late 1920s, where he courted Biagina. In May 1929, shortly after their marriage, he reentered the U.S. with proceeds from the dowry but without his wife.¹⁷

After living alone for two years in Siligo, Biagina, age 20, boarded a vessel in Porto Torres to Genoa, and then an ocean-liner to Ellis Island.¹⁸ In November 1930 she reunited with Vittorio in New York City, where he

had been working odd jobs yet not acquiring the money or advancement that he sought. When she arrived, he was tending bar at a speakeasy in lower Manhattan. They soon relocated to Greenwich, Connecticut, where Vittorio worked seasonally on private estates as a “yard boy” and tended bar at a small tavern near the town center in the evenings. Fifteen months after Biagina’s arrival, Catherine was born.¹⁹

The Young Catherine

The Chessas, like most Italian immigrants, remained Catholic, at least in culture. Little is known about Catherine’s first four years of life. She recalled her father as a harsh disciplinarian, while her mother undertook the daily tasks of preparing meals and housekeeping.²⁰ Biagina practiced a style of childrearing she had witnessed in Siligo. Rules and chores were set forth. Physical punishment—mostly by Vittorio—was typical for all, but less so for Catherine’s only sibling, Maria (born c. 1933).²¹ With limited resources and minimal ability self-assuredly to speak or write in English, her parents never invested in a car or secured drivers’ licenses. Consequently, as the older child, Catherine was called on to run errands for the family. As early as age seven she regularly boarded the city bus to go to buy groceries and other necessities. Catherine’s early memories of her journey to integrate into American culture also reveal a sense of apprehension. Living within the confines of an immigrant family of four with few resources only heightened her sense of worry. Her parents were the only two in their families to immigrate abroad; Biagina was the only sibling of five to move away from the village of Siligo permanently.²² While the family befriended other Italians (but relatively few Sardinians) nearby, they were less successful at replicating the community of family and *paesanos* from Siligo. Italians who were financially or situationally better-off tended to stay home in the old country and usually maintained regular family ties. Those with less security and fewer resources or opportunities (like Vittorio) left with ambitions for promised lands—places like Argentina, Australia, and U.S. For those who left, travel back to the homeland was costly, both in terms of money and time away from paid labor. Only once, for three weeks in 1957, did Biagina and Vittorio return to Siligo to reunite with family.²³

At age 5 or 6, Catherine began half-day Kindergarten in a progressive, child-centered classroom at a public school in Greenwich. Catherine later recalled her sense of opportunity and delight in her new learning environment. Though she could not speak English (like most of her classmates), she recalled her teacher as kind and encouraging; Catherine loved to play in the sandbox. Not knowing how to request permission to use the restroom at school, Catherine would race to the bathroom to relieve herself once back in the family flat. One school day, however, she could not wait, and, in tears and to her great embarrassment, she wet herself. The teacher, she recalled, was quick to assist and provided a change of clothing,

but the episode stuck with the young girl. Upon returning home, she cried again, and in anger yelled to her parents that she would not speak another word of Italian, ever. Over the years, Catherine broke this promise many times. But at that moment, and as a child she faced a most challenging situation; one that she did not fully understand, but one that would have lifelong consequences. She felt compelled to choose between a new culture or staying true to her parents and their culture. Before her were two paths.



Catherine Clessa (seated, right) with her sister, Maria (standing, left), Greenwich, Connecticut, c. 1937. Photographer unknown.

Catherine lived day-to-day. Any school building functions to unify a disparate group of youngsters, functioning as a closed system, and complete with normalizing routines: attendance requirements, clocks, periodic bells, hallway lines, and grading systems among those. For young Catherine, school was not a place to resist, but instead to settle into: to study, to become familiar with. At home, with few ways to dodge the full influence of her parents and neighbors, she took time to reimagine herself as less-Italian.²⁴

Later at school, when pupils shared family stories about meals, Catherine once fibbed about eating a satisfying American breakfast of pancakes, syrup, bacon, and orange juice that her mother served, rather than her actual breakfast of bread and leftovers from the night before.²⁵ These types of experiences must have been distressing. School experiences negotiated this way can be seen as indicators of the normalizing power of public schooling in mid-century America. They parallel the recollections

of other immigrant and first-generation adults about their early schooling, notably those of Mary Antin, but also Richard Rodriguez and Leonard Covello. Also, they contrast sharply with stories that Vittorio and Biagina would likely have reported about *colazione* (breakfast at home) at primary school in Siligo (if asked).

More Schooling for Catherine Chessa

About 1946, Catherine's family relocated to the city of Waterbury, Connecticut where Vittorio took a job in maintenance with the city and Biagina found employment on the floor of the Scovill Brass Works. This doubled the family income.²⁶ Catherine soon enrolled in the college preparation track at Crosby High School on East Main Street. She recalls being tracked with "the "bright students," studying Latin and struggling with Algebra. She graduated in 1950 and then matriculated at Teachers College of Connecticut, New Britain (now Central Connecticut State University), 25 miles northeast of Waterbury. In her first year of college, Catherine's Italian accent had disappeared, assisted by distance from family and an unspoken word to herself that schooling was a force of good, which she would continue to prioritize and accommodate. Her husband recalls her as "outgoing" and a member of "a few of the women's clubs" on campus.²⁷ Along the way, she fell in love with reading, and this too accelerated her transition. Catherine was well on the way to her goal.

Unlike the recollections Franzosa references in her important article, where resistance was the common theme in response to the school's normalizing power, we do not find much evidence in Catherine's recollections that she contested the power of school's normalizing forces in her teenage and college years. For example, in sharp contrast with Dick Gregory's reflection on the wickedness of school and the sanctity of home ("I never learned hate at home, or shame. I had to go to school for that," writes Gregory²⁸), Catherine's recollections about school carried no animus. Although she found the college preparatory track at Crosby (and perhaps some of her classmates) intimidating,²⁹ school remained, implicitly or not, her chosen path into the U.S. middle class; she acquiesced to its power to get her there.

In college, she noticed clear differences between immigrant and first-generation Italian-Americans and other first- and second-generation college-goers, but processed these variations as a normal part of mid-20th-century college life for those, like her, who sought advancement and stability.³⁰ Although we can only speculate, in Catherine's mid-century mind, questions about the legitimacy of school normalizing powers were likely not fully considered or entertained, at least not consciously. To the extent Catherine recognized normalization at all, she may have presumed that the school's authority was legitimate, and its power benevolent and advantageous for all who could find a means to run with it. The subconscious dimension

of Catherine's school experiences may add to our understanding of the power of normalization. Notably, it is possible that well into adulthood one may not realize normalization's power because it is invisible and often unstated. It may appear simply natural.

During her time student teaching in New Britain after earning a bachelor's degree and securing a teaching license in early childhood education, Catherine worked in the college's "child-centered" laboratory school, and afterward in Waterbury, teaching children in a public primary school one mile from her parents' house on Town Plot. Her future husband (an Irish-American Catholic man whose last name she took upon marriage) whom she met in her second year of college, was still completing his elementary-school teaching degree in New Britain. Upon his graduation they moved to eastern Long Island and carved out long, successful teaching careers in public schools: Catherine for 33 years (with time off to give birth, mother five children, and earn a master's degree in special education), and her husband for 35 years.³¹



In 1979, at age 47, Catherine was well-respected as a tenured special-education teacher and elected representative of the teachers' union. Three of her children were in college, one in high school, and one in middle school. (Notably, none spoke Italian or Sardinian.) By this time, she and her husband were homeowners. Also, because of his self-described "wanderlust," they started traveling the world. First, they lived on Oahu, Hawai'i (where he was an exchange teacher and where she gave birth to their fifth child) from July 1967 until August 1968. After returning to Long Island for work, the family traveled in the summers of 1973 and 1974 to southern and northern Europe. Travel in 1973 included short visits with Catherine's aunts, uncles, and cousins and their families in Italy, people whom Catherine had never met, but had spoken to on the telephone and heard much about from Biagina. Catherine saw these encounters with Italians in their homeland as educational, and enriching for her boys, but, perhaps due to her ambivalence with her ethnicity, taxing on herself.³² Later, and with her husband's encouragement, she applied for and received a Rotary International scholarship to study the Montessori method in Bergamo, Italy for the 1980–1981 academic year.³³



Initially, the school milieu was foreign and sometimes puzzling to Catherine, but over the years she accepted the institution's power exercised to normalize her behavior and shape her identity in exchange for what she perceived to be upward social-class and economic mobility. As we note previously, she perceived schooling as the superior path forward, but also saw schooling as largely incompatible with her parents' culture, social class,

and home life in Connecticut. In Catherine's mind, Italian-American culture was part of a class to which she did not want to belong: factory workers, mechanics, maids, bricklayers, janitors, restaurant and hotel workers, bus drivers, and the like.³⁴ We now turn to the second half of her educational life.

Catherine as Teacher

From the mid-1960s until her retirement in 1997, Catherine seems to put much of her ethnic identity and first language on the back burner. To be sure, her nuclear family encountered her extended family in Italy during the summer of 1973. They also visited Catherine's parents in Waterbury for short stays (and substantial family meals) twice a year.³⁵ But otherwise, Catherine steered clear of her Italian-ness. During these years, her family life was demanding. She periodically gave birth and took time away from teaching to care for young children. As a practicing Catholic until the early 1970s, Catherine took no birth control until after her fifth child was born and subsequently left the church.

Throughout her busy years of young motherhood Catherine also blossomed into a committed and engaged teacher. Starting in the early '70s, Catherine returned to the classroom full-time and taught special-needs children at the central county facility (Board of Cooperative Educational Services, BOCES) in eastern Suffolk, Long Island. After her first year, she took the bold step of wearing pants to school instead of a dress or skirt and, after some turmoil, other women faculty began to do the same. This successful protest helped make Catherine the unanimous choice for representing her unit in the New York State Union of Teachers.

Her work at BOCES started before the passage of PL 94-142 in 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and she continued at BOCES afterward, shifting to teaching special-needs teenagers and adults. In her various roles, she worked with students with moderate-to-severe physical, developmental, and emotional disabilities—students deemed inappropriate for more-integrated environments in mainstream classrooms. In addition to her work in the classroom, she earned a reputation for going the extra mile for her students and undertook activities that few others at BOCES dared. For instance, after school hours she visited her students' homes—many of them in Riverhead's so-called "rough neighborhoods." She showed great sympathy, particularly for her students of color. She would sometimes resort to a "tough love" approach when she thought necessary.

Catherine's work as a teacher sharpened her personality and identity as an adult and gave her life meaning. It was a means for expressing her agency.³⁶ Teaching also formed a bridge between her accommodation of formal schooling in her early life with clever use of and sometimes resistance to its authority during the second half of her life.³⁷ Significantly,

through her work as a teacher (rather than her obedience as a youngster), she channeled the school's normalizing influence into opportunities for her students to achieve success—some victories were of course more substantial than others—in and outside of school, as learners and as wage-earners. Some lessons were simple, like learning to tie one's shoe, or counting to make sure you received the correct change back from a cashier, and, if necessary, confronting the cashier if the change returned was incorrect. Some were more complex, such as completing a work/leisure schedule for various chores and activities at home. Other tasks carried greater consequence, such as practicing for a job interview, or routinely preparing a meal for the family. These lessons, while requiring compliance and normalizing to some degree, were positive and productive in value, and far more empowering than coercive for her special-education students. This part of Catherine's story suggests that if adjusted to, mediated, redirected, or refereed, normalization may prove helpful to the individual and society. As many scholars have concluded, schools can be sites of oppression, in part, due to its normalization powers.³⁸ We do not disagree with this assessment. But our analysis of Catherine's life story suggests that schools can also be sites that offer opportunity and space for growth, as well as for status and social mobility. Although we consider only one person, our work suggests that those who hold some power in an institution can play a key role in reckoning with schooling's power to normalize.



Catherine at John F. Kennedy Airport, Queens, New York, circa 1974. Photograph by her husband Tuck.



Through her extensive reading and while earning her master's degree in the late '70s, Catherine encountered the Montessori method, and saw it as a way to enhance her professional work at BOCES. Maria Montessori

(1870–1952) was a Roman physician and pedagogue and by the 1930s had become world-famous for her work in the capital city teaching children with learning impairments (cognitive delay, illness, or disability; students with these conditions were at the time called “phrenasthenic children,” which refers to weakness of the diaphragm). She also gained renown for her later work at *Casa dei Bambini* with youth from economically disadvantaged families. Throughout her life, Montessori developed, applied, and lectured widely on innovative, hands-on, student-focused learning and materials; these became central features of her method of instruction.³⁹ The evidence suggests that Catherine-the-Teacher wanted to improve her pedagogical strategy and options by incorporating the Montessori method into her pedagogy.⁴⁰

Catherine as Adult Learner

Catherine spent the academic year 1980–1981 in Bergamo, Italy, where she resumed the role of a student and studied Montessori under the direction of Italian practitioners. During her residency she maintained a diary, which we use to evidence our argument.⁴¹ Our analysis of her diary—using Franzosa’s theoretical concepts of accommodation and resistance—yields three prominent foci related to her experiences in Bergamo: (1) Catherine’s academic insecurities as a student, (2) her reflections on acclimation to the residency, mothering, and separation from family, and (3) her reactions to the andragogy of Montessori professors. Unlike her life narrative to this point—a retrospective account based on school stories that Catherine told her family and friends—the diary gives us a means to access to her immediate voice as an adult learner in an unfamiliar setting.

Catherine’s Academic Insecurities

Catherine’s diary reflects moderate-to-extreme degrees of academic insecurity and uncertainty about her ability to pass the Montessori method course of study. She frequently expresses concerns over the events in class and fears that she will not be able to master the material. Many times, she raises the possibility of switching her status to “audit” and several times mentions she will contact Rotary International for permission forgo her official diploma:

[M]aybe I can't deal with this because I'm not up to par. I was beginning to think I was on top of it all. I am beginning to understand most of it and am beginning to see the order, organization etc. I am also starting to extrapolate out the important parts, etc. But now after the Geo charts and poor album check, I can't deal with it. And auditing is not the answer. I will be a flunk out. A loser. God what a feeling. Can't sleep. 1:20 A.M. Depressed, worried, am undecided.

I think I've made up my mind to audit—audit I think it's final. Not sure can't put up with bullshit thrown around in spite of all that's said. I don't want to cop out....

Here we see Catherine-the-Teacher as a resistant learner—*Not sure... can't put up with the bullshit thrown around*—and an impulse to escape—*I've made up my mind to audit*—a characteristic not uncommon among those in the profession.⁴² We also speculate that her preoccupations with content mastery and grades link back to anxieties she may have experienced as a child: in grade school when he was learning to speak English, or in high school when she was in the competitive college-prep track.⁴³ Despite her ultimate academic successes, childhood and adolescent strains may have persisted into adulthood. Whether they did or not, her comparison of self to others, her feelings of not being “up to par,” and her doubts about making the grade reveal schooling’s continual power over a learner—even an adult student. Catherine’s diary evidences how her first encounter with the Montessori method instructors undermined her academic self-confidence.

Catherine’s Reflections on Acclimation, Mothering, and Separation from Family

In other parts of her diary Catherine compares her adjustment to her new educational environment to her oldest son’s recent move to New York City.

Thought about David and how he had to acclimate to N.Y.C. I wonder if he had as hard a time as I did here in Bergamo?

She also reconsiders her parents’ plight as immigrants; perhaps with newfound empathy for them, she reimagines their struggles to persist in the new world:

Thought about my parents and their immigration. My God that must have been difficult. I almost flipped out the first few days here and I understood & spoke the language. How did they manage?

Catherine also writes frequently about her children, her past child-rearing practices, and her loneliness and desire to reunite with her family.

Tomorrow is Thom’s 23rd birthday and David’s 24th May 14 and I am sitting regretting my loss of patience with them when they were little. I remembered severely spanking (no beating) David when Tuck’s [her husband’s] aunts visited—a summer day when his curiosity prevented him from sleeping and I being nervous and impatient went up [to] the room on Soundview Ave and beat the shit out of him. I did same thing to Thom once on the way to the beach. He grabbed his bathing suit and I lost patience and spanked hard. I can’t begin to tell how often I attempted to really spank Chris but his tenacity prevented me. I wonder what they remember of my battles, my spanking hands. Douglas once told me or was it Greg that I beat him and I thought I never touched the younger two. Oh had I to do it over again. I wouldn’t touch them. I lost a youth somewhere. I lost my patience.

Here we see Catherine's misgivings about her use corporal punishment as a young mother. Notably, while she resisted the Montessori pedagogy, she was nevertheless being affected by it, which led her to reexamine her mothering on some occasions. Catherine's sons remember her saying in her later years as a grandparent, statements such as, "don't criticize the child, criticize the behavior."⁴⁴ These lessons learned—that distinguish between criticisms directed against a person rather than the position the person is maintaining or the action they are taking—came not from her home, but from Catherine's training as a teacher.

These last two sentences of Catherine's seem to speak to her loneliness and her sense of loss as a youth.

May 4 1981, Happy Birthday Thom I love you.

Tomorrow is David's Birthday, May 14. I love you David.

I write that above especially for David. I was very harsh on Him. I didn't know any better. I wasn't trained to be a mother. I wasn't trained to unite. No one has training, some do a better job than others. May David and Thom and Chris (Oh did I get mad at Chris) Doug and Greg forgive me.

Catherine's words here further detail her insecurities and self-doubts as a mother. She also hints that training for motherhood, perhaps, if it was something akin to teacher training, would have helped her as a caregiver.

Catherine's next words confirm her independent streak, a salient feature of her distinctiveness. *I've had enough of a being alone & proving my independence.* As a child, she also demonstrated autonomy refused to speak her parents' language and as a teacher in defiance of BOCES's policies, she resisted the system's dress code for female teachers. She also found confidence and agency as an adult in the school setting as a teacher who would not cow to superiors. Notably, over her educational lifespan, Catherine resisted forces of normalcy that originated in her home and her school.

Yet, confrontation and independence—as allies of resistance—sometimes came with a price; she encountered what might be described as emotional side-effects, such as loneliness, impatience, anger, a quick temper, heightened reactions, regret, and more. These aspects of resistance, perhaps, filtered into her adult identity and affected her reflections on childrearing and relationship with her husband:

I feel blue. I miss my family. I want to go home. I can't sleep and want the reassurance of Tuck. God help me. 2 more months to go. I hate weekends. Too much time on my hands.... I want my family. I regret wasting my time when I was with them. Shall I change from now on? Shall I be more patient—less angry, less hostile? I don't know.

Here Catherine refers to her nuclear family in New York, not her family in Waterbury. It is notable that in the diary she expresses no lonesomeness from her distance from Biagina, Vittorio, or Maria.

Montessori Professors' Andragogy

Diary entries about the professors' methods for teaching Montessori suggest that Catherine was periodically caught off-guard by their approach to instructing adults. Perhaps she mistakenly anticipated their instruction would be an extension of her earlier experiences with progressive education as a pupil in kindergarten, or later as a progressive teacher at the New Britain Teachers' College laboratory school. In contrast, lessons at Bergamo were delivered top-down by self-described "experts." Consistent with the founder's approach, her professors kept tight control over how the method was practiced, absorbed, and taught to teachers, as well as over the production and use of learning materials.⁴⁵ This precision presented a challenge for Catherine:

I start tomorrow & we are to be kept very busy. It's an extensive course—Montessori is an -ism—almost a cult I was warned not to say anything at all at the lecture or in class—no comments—questions.

She describes the Montessori professors as "fanatics," obsessed with perfection, and dismissive and rude to students:

Montessori[ans] are compulsive, paranoid and so dedicated to specific tiny details. Grazzini is a bantam cock. Strutting around with his tail feathers. Yesterday he humiliates [sic] the Japanese men and today he tried to awe us by his math.

Tonight Grazzini victimized us for 3 hours by dictating very fast a story about the Mayan civilization. He was absolutely obtuse—speaking too fast and taking great liberties with the story, I think Wish I could check—anyway when asked to slow up he only went faster or so it seemed. ... How can he have expected all of us to sit & write for 3 hrs. is beyond me—why couldn't he have xeroxed [his lecture notes] at least. I'm fed up—with the GD Montessorians. They're full of it.

As an experienced and accomplished teacher of children and adults, Catherine refused to accept the delivery of the content whole-cloth. As noted above, teachers often make resistant learners just as doctors sometimes make the worst patients.⁴⁶ She saw Montessori andragogy in Bergamo as bullying and belittling of learners even as she names herself a bully in her own mothering. In her criticism, Catherine also shows empathy for her classmates whom she felt were also beaten back by the professors' andragogy.

...the people (students) are all really (with few expectations) cowed by him, his assistant Mrs. Honiger (another horror) and all the Montessori mat[erial]. It is, I'm convinced, a cult & religion. The materials are great—Sequential, clear and adaptable, but the prescribed presentation is a bit much. Too stilted. Maybe it's because I'm undisciplined myself—but the method grates on my nerves.

Catherine's comments are not inconsistent with the critical (and even dismissive) views on aspects of Montessorism that earlier-20th-century U.S. pedagogical progressives held.⁴⁷ They also stand out as statements of resistance to an authoritarian teaching method and instruction style that Catherine, as an adult learner, labeled illegitimate and absurd. Yet, even as she pushed back, the power of the Bergamo program's normalizing qualities were potent. Those qualities led Catherine to question her academic prowess: *Maybe it's because I'm undisciplined myself.*

Catherine's Adult Classmates in Bergamo

Catherine had classmates from the U.S. and beyond to whom she, at times, complimented, criticized, and compared herself.

The young people are nice: John (Phil. Major) from Chicago. Linda from Cleveland, Betsy from Philadelphia. Phil and Sherrie from Kentucky going to Houston. John bright, Linda, bright, Betsey bright—Phil and Sherrie ok too. O.K. I'll be the dumbest in the class.

Along with self-doubt, Catherine's entries are evidence of a social life she experienced with her peers. As such, the entry below points to the power of the peer group to normalize, and illustrate instances that Catherine an adult, selectively accommodates and resists.

Went to get together with Montessorians and friends—had a good time. Elveria went with us—She told me that she had terrible sex with a man—It didn't go any further but rumor has it that she was married and must stay here because of annulment protocol. Too bad, she's pretty and nice. Sheila drank too much and arrived here quite inebriated [from Japan]—gave a magic show doing a takeoff on Honig's black thing. (the phallic-like carbon experiment). Met some Italian students. The boy and girl were very snotty, but one girl was very nice—The Italian boy really only wants to get into Betsy's pants—& I think he just may do that—I've changed my mind about a couple of these people. John Fowler—a real do-nothing guy who really isn't as nice as he wants everybody to believe. They tell me he's after Betsy, instead of the other way around. Betsy—has been on pill since she was 16—been around and I think she's got moxie. Sheila—really mixed up about lots of things—mostly men. She's got no money to live on. I give her money to borrow & she blows it all in a few days. I think she does this a lot. Very mixed up emotionally immature. . . . Damine 30—who, lives with Helen 56 yrs. old & is he being kept by her? Who knows—I like him. He's effeminate but may or may not be gay. Christina (Sandy's roommate) a real cool—distant Swede only 21 yrs. old & very cool. Has been many places—Is cute but chubby—Bright—Sandy can be dogmatic but I like her most of the time. Very pretty no make-up. 30 yrs. old. The Swedes Gumila and Britt I don't especially care for they're very aggressive with the Mont. material.

Perhaps reflecting on her own her outsider status a moments of her educational life, Catherine expressed understanding for her classmates from Japan.

Went to another get together last nite for 1 hr. People are lovely. The two Japanese men don't speak Italian or English. They really feel lost. Wonder why they were accepted. Nama should marry Takene and go to Japan to live—She could do worse.

Tanabe Japanese men Quiet—Was humiliated by Grazzini and I felt for them.

Catherine's diary entries reflect her personality and provide us with insights about her identity. They also express a challenging, yet meaningful time in her adult life. Importantly, her residency gave her time to write and reflect about her experiences in Bergamo and her circumstances as a mother, wife, and adult learner. These immediate reflections map nicely onto her other school stories that relate to her childhood, family, and Italian-American culture. Episodes from Catherine's diary document how the program in Bergamo tested her determination and self-confidence and threatened her sense of belonging. Despite these doubts and moments of indecision (that seemed to interfere with her success), she accomplished her goal and gained her Montessori credential.

Conclusion

Catherine's recollections and diary entries speak loudly. However, even taken together, they give us only a glimpse of her life and identity in education over a lifetime. Because the evidence in play is imperfect—finite, subjective, dated, and much of it unrecorded, readers may call the accuracy of our narrative into question. That said, Catherine's life-long experiences in school provide a distinctive example of the still not-well-understood power of normalization in formal schooling.

On a macro level of analysis, Catherine Chessa's educational story fits nicely into Foucault's archeology of modern social institutions' normalizing powers. To a large extent, Catherine accommodated herself to these powers and internalized some of the institution's norms, standards and expectations. Also at the macro level, even as Catherine resisted the school's normalizing powers as an adult, her actions seemed to do little to alter the reproduction of prevailing power structures and social hierarchies in schooling writ large. The evidence suggests that on a micro level Catherine accommodated many of these forces early on and internalized them into her sense of self as a white, middle-class American. Thus, Catherine's story has parallels with Foucault's and Franzosa's examinations of schooling's powers of normalization. Notably, as Catherine accepted schooling's normalizing powers and partially rejected or deflected much of her family's way of living, she missed an opportunity to integrate these two "pulls" into

a holistic one. To the extent that this divide resulted in pain, loss, and a sense of isolation in order to “become educated,” Catherine’s story can be read as heartbreaking, as a tragedy.

Employing this thesis across Catherine’s educational biography no doubt has its advantages. By placing our analysis in this context, the value of our effort becomes clear. Importantly, this approach sends a vital message to teachers and teachers-to-be that there are potentially grave consequences for students who adopt an accommodation-only approach as a means to “becoming educated.” In 2023, students should not have to choose between their family and culture vis-a-vis the school’s culture. There is much evidence that there need not be choice at all.⁴⁸ Well-trained teachers can and should help students who desire it take a route toward integration. Notably, teachers should realize their significance as mediators of power in school settings and their position to deliver on both fronts. All school personnel play a powerful role in schools. Although they may do otherwise, they can help students develop tools of critical literacy to understand and act upon the society in which they live. Educators can also contribute to the construction of positive identities on students’ own terms and their sense of agency and collective responsibility.

But school personnel who do take this route, and who not embrace an inclusive partnership that connects home, culture, and school may inadvertently (or even willfully) press children to choose between home/culture and school; in other words to become educated through compliance but alienated from their roots rather than educated and integrated with their roots. Such teachers may place their students at risk, especially those whose home lives and cultures appear to be a mismatch between the home/culture and the school. This is some of what Catherine experienced across her educational lifespan.

Yet reading Catherine’s story through the concepts we chose also runs the risk of homogenizing it; placing it *a priori* in line with the observations of Franzosa, Roland Martin, and other educational researchers. Said another way, this approach “normalizes” Catherine’s story by paradoxically placing it securely into the critical scholarship on schooling’s overbearing, rigid normalizing powers. As we note, our analysis confirms much of what appears in critical research on the effects of schooling’s normalization. However, our work also provides an example of how the power of theory can simplify or restrict the narrative, or perhaps more accurately over-emphasize parts of the narrative that “ring true” with previous conclusions about the tragic consequences of giving into schooling’s normalizing power. Catherine’s life story challenges such a conclusion because, among other things, it complicates one’s understanding of the nature and contours of normalization. Forces of normalization that compete with those of the school rarely are made explicit in critical scholarship on schooling’s normalizing’s powers, but may have been salient in Catherine’s story. One

can argue, then, that Catherine felt forced to behave and think a particular way at home, yet claimed agency to counter the power of home. Her strategy was in her partial rejection of a home life; and she is likely to have done so justifiably because her home life was far from idyllic. It is quite possible that the young Catherine found school culture and its normalizing powers preferable to her home culture and its normalizing powers. Or to the extent that she understood both to be limited or potentially damaging options, she may have picked the lesser poison. Also, Catherine erred in her resistance to home by bundling together her home life and her family's ethnic culture. The two, of course, are related and for a while may have appeared undistinguishable, especially to a child. But over time, it became apparent they were not the same. The adult Catherine recognized this distinction but nevertheless struggled to reconcile the two. Although we can only extrapolate from the thin evidence on hand, with regard to accommodation of her early schooling, it is possible that Catherine felt more comfort as a child in school than at home or in her neighborhood. And this relative comfort might this have persisted into her later school experiences. As far as resistance goes, it is also possible that Catherine's confrontation with the school dress policy as a teacher and her resistance to the top-down instruction in Bergamo connected to her earlier sense of agency when partially rejecting her home life. Also, as an adult, is it possible that her feelings of alienation and self-doubt came from other sources, including but not limited to schooling. Exploring these possibilities takes us beyond our chosen frame, broadens Catherine's distinctive narrative.

Catherine's life as a teacher deserves attention. In a position of relative power as a teacher, Catherine found a sense of purpose and honed her identity in a space between her students and the school administration. She did this, in part, by attending to those in the social hierarchy below her. By channeling schooling's normalizing powers into learning opportunities that gave her students a chance to succeed, a chance to feel the joy of reward that comes with completing a task, Catherine-the-teacher mediated the school's power over her students and highlighted for them clear and manageable steps to advance. To complement her work in the classroom, she made visits to families and met with guardians, blurring the divide between her student's home lives and her classroom. She accomplished all of this without taking an explicit position on cultural pluralism (defined as a condition in which minoritized groups participate fully in the dominating society, yet maintain cultural difference). Catherine's story as a teacher shows that adults in schools bear a great responsibility in mediating a school's normalizing power for the learner's greater good.

Moreover, Catherine as a teacher looked both ways at the intersections in the school's social hierarchy. As a teacher, she challenged those above her, and successfully resisted the school's normalizing power. She also

used her relative power as a union representative to advocate for teachers and students in her school. Her actions helped to keep BOCES teachers' salaries on par with other public-school teachers in the county. While this aspect of Catherine's education story aligns with Foucault's description of the outsider who resists the power of social institutions, it also adds nuance because it provides an example of resistance and survival *within the school culture*. At key moments, Catherine resisted and redirected certain of the school's normalizing powers, but she did not leave the school, nor did she reject the school and all its powers. In her actions, Catherine sought to maintain the good parts of school culture, but challenge or deflect what she critically saw as problematic. Catherine's story suggests that those who work in schools are positioned to intercede, redirect, challenge, or even soften schooling's powers in relation to their impact on student behavior, interactions, and identity at both the individual and collective levels. Additionally, teachers may be able to identify, reckon with, and rebalance other forces of impact outside of a school's walls.

Catherine's story, then, provides nuance to Franzosa's theory, and to calls for culturally sensitive approaches to teaching. It raises questions and possibilities that can expand our understanding of the nature and sources of normalization, accommodation, and resistance in schooling. And, beyond these aspects, Catherine's story tells the tale of one person's distinctive educational journey across a lifetime in the U.S.; getting to forks in that road, walking on, making mistakes, and claiming victories. Catherine experienced challenges, setbacks, and triumphs in the school setting in ways shaped by history and culture, but she also undertook much of her journey on her own terms.

Endnotes

- ¹ We are grateful for the feedback and suggestions received on earlier drafts of this study from Nicolle M. Jordan, Joseph A. O'Brien, and the editors and blind reviewers of this journal.
- ² Julius Drachsler, *Democracy and Assimilation: The Blending of Immigrant Heritages in America* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1920); Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1993); Laurie Olson, *Made in America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools* (New York, NY: New Press, 1997); Pedro A. Noguera, "Social Capital and the Education of Immigrant Students: Categories and Generalizations," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 77, no. 2, (2004): 180–183; Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

- 3 Michael Gold, *Jews without Money* (New York, NY: Horace Liveright, 1930); Richard Coe, *When the Grass Was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Virginia Hampl, *A Romantic Education* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1981); Valerie Walkerdine, "Dreams from an Ordinary Childhood," in *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing up in the Fifties*, ed. Liz Heron (London, UK: Virago Press, 1985); Kate Douglas Wiggin, *My Garden of Memory* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1923).
- 4 Among the best-known memoirs that cover a lifetime of education are Leonard Covello's *The Heart is the Teacher* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2013); Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (New York, NY: Bantam, 1983); and Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1912).
- 5 The original, handwritten diary is in the possession of the first author. A transcription of the diary is available upon request. For much of the first section of this paper, we rely on unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others in the Chessa family, and remembered by family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- 6 See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1977).
- 7 Specifically, Franzosa attends to how adults—writing about their early experiences in schools—later express resistance to schooling's NSEs (by questioning authority, expressing dissenting opinions, adopting different ways of thinking, etc.), which she argues allows them to recapture a sense of agency and self-expression. She names this process "authoring the educated self."
- 8 Susan Douglas Franzosa, "Authoring the Educated Self: Educational Autobiography and Resistance," *Educational Theory* 42, no. 4, (1992): 395–412. Citations in our paper correlate with the reprint of Franzosa's article at <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/education-facultypubs/4/>, 14. See also Jane Roland Martin, "Becoming Educated: A Journey of Alienation or Integration?," in *Critical Social Issues in American Education*, 3rd ed., eds. H. Svi Shapiro and David. E. Purpel (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 195–209.
- 9 Franzosa, "Authoring the Educated Self," 14. Also informing our study is work undertaken in the multidisciplinary field of "normology." For more on the general concept, see Michael W. Morris et al., "Normology: Integrating Insights about Social Norms to Understand Cultural Dynamics," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 129 (2015): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2015.03.001>
- 10 "A story [that] is written or told to explain, [or] to make sense of some problematic [past] event or experience," she writes, can possess value and meaning. The story's worth, Franzosa concludes, is that

- it “can tell us about an individual’s inquiry into what it means to become an educated self” and, in addition, *bring the rest of us to a greater understanding of the “continuity of schooling’s power of normalization.”* Franzosa, “Authoring the Educated Self,” 14.
- 11 Riverhead News-Review, *Obituary for Catherine Chessa O’Brien*, February 14, 2014, <https://riverheadnewsreview.timesreview.com/2014/02/51514/catherine-chessa-obrien/>
 - 12 Much in the first half of our paper draws on unrecorded stories from and about the Chessas, Mancas, and the first author’s family.
 - 13 Mary Antin, *The Promised Land* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1912).
 - 14 See Covello’s *The Heart Is the Teacher*. Covello describes a pedagogical strategy he developed to meet the needs of Italian immigrant students. Covello differs from Catherine in his explicit embrace of cultural pluralism and his call for language and cultural retention for the first-second- and third-generation children of immigrants.
 - 15 For example, see James Ryan, “Observing and Normalizing: Foucault, Discipline, and Inequality in Schooling: Big Brother is Watching You,” *Journal of Educational Thought* 25, no. 2 (1991): 104; Cristina L. Lash, “Making Americans: Schooling, Diversity, and Assimilation in the Twenty-First Century,” *Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 4, no. 5 (2018): 99–117, <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSE.2018.4.5.05>; Lisa M. Wexler, “Learning Resistance: Inupiat and the U.S. Bureau of Education, 1885–1906: Deconstructing Assimilation Strategies and Implications for Today,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 45, no. 1 (2006): 17–34.
 - 16 Discendenti di vecchi parenti, *Discendenti di vecchi parenti tuttogenealogia*, <https://www.tuttogenealogia.it/viewtopic.php?t=4855>
 - 17 Ibid.
 - 18 Ibid.
 - 19 Ibid.
 - 20 Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others in the Chessa family, and remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
 - 21 Discendenti di vecchi parenti.
 - 22 Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others in the Chessa family, and remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
 - 23 Ibid.
 - 24 In the kitchen, when she warned her mother she would only speak English (after she wet herself at school), Catherine provided Biagina with a few examples: “*Questo non è un tavolo, è un table! Questa non è una*

- sedia, è una chair!*” Catherine Chessa, unpublished and unrecorded oral statements remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- ²⁵ Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others in the Chessa family, and remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- ²⁶ During WWII, Biagina continued working at Scovill Industries, which pivoted to making bombs and munitions to drop on enemy combatants. Although they were on opposing sides, Biagina wrote regularly to her sisters in Siligo, and they to her.
- ²⁷ Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others in the Chessa family, and remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- ²⁸ Dick Gregory, *Nigger: An Autobiography* (New York, NY: Dutton Press, 1964), 114.
- ²⁹ Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others in the Chessa family, and remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ Riverhead News-Review. *Obituary*.
- ³² One of her sons studied French in high school; he communicated with a few of the Sardinian relatives who also spoke French. But as the only speaker of Italian, Catherine was put in the laborious position of translating for her family. She expressed relief when the visits ended. Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others, circa 1973–2014.
- ³³ Catherine C. Chessa O’Brien, *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/124702349/catherine-c-o'brien/photo>
- ³⁴ Unpublished and unrecorded oral statements told by Catherine and others, circa 1973–2014.
- ³⁵ During these visits, Bengina would often speak with her daughter in Italian, but Catherine would typically answer in English. Briefer exchanges with Vittorio—who unlike Bengina, never mastered English—were in Italian. Loud exchanges were common, arguments not infrequent and the latter erupted in Italian. Also, among her adult friends in New York, Catherine became known as a maestro in the kitchen, preparing Italian food. Catherine Chessa, unpublished and unrecorded oral statements remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- ³⁶ Said another way, her teaching allowed her to exercise agency and be truer to herself.

- ³⁷ Catherine Chessa, unpublished and unrecorded oral statements remembered by her family and friends, and colleagues, circa 1973–2014.
- ³⁸ See for example, Rita Kohli, Marcos Pizarro, & Arturo Nevárez, “The ‘New Racism’ of K–12 Schools: Centering Critical Research on Racism,” *Review of Research in Education* 41, no. 1 (2017): 182–202; Gregg D. Beratan, “Institutionalizing Inequity: Ableism, Racism and IDEA 2004,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2006): 3–33; Barrie A. Irving, “Career Education as a Site of Oppression and Domination: An Engaging Myth or a Critical Reality?,” *Australian Journal of Career Development* 20, no. 3 (2006): 24–30.
- ³⁹ Piotr Podemski, *Against Two Titans and Three Prejudices? John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, and the Reasons behind the Initial Rejection of the Montessori Method in America (1912–1918)* [preprint], (2021), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348298677>
- ⁴⁰ Catherine Chessa, unpublished and unrecorded oral statements remembered by her family and friends, and colleagues, circa 1973–2014.
- ⁴¹ A comprehensive analysis of Catherine’s Bergamo diary is beyond the scope of this paper; scholars of gender studies, feminism, and sociology, for example, might produce compelling work in the future.
- ⁴² This point comes from one of the editors of this journal. See for example, Alberto J. Rodriguez, “Teachers’ Resistance to Ideological and Pedagogical Change: Definitions, Theoretical Framework, and Significance,” in *Preparing Mathematics and Science Teachers for Diverse Classrooms Promising Strategies for Transformative Pedagogy*, eds. Alberto J. Rodriguez and Richard S. Kitchen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).
- ⁴³ See endnote 24 regarding Catherine’s embarrassment at age 5 after she wet herself in kindergarten. Catherine Chessa, unpublished and unrecorded oral statements remembered by her family and friends, circa 1973–2014.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976).
- ⁴⁶ This point comes from one of the editors of this journal.
- ⁴⁷ Such comments came from members of the National Kindergarten Association and, notably, progressive educator and Dewey disciple William H. Kilpatrick. Faultfinders like Kilpatrick allege that, among other things, the method is overly rigid; gives a narrow allowance for imagination, social interaction, and child play; and is “thirty years behind our time.” Kramer, *Maria Montessori*; Podemski, footnote 81.

- ⁴⁸ See for example, James A. Banks & Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds., *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 10th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2019); Gloria Ladson-Billings, *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2021).