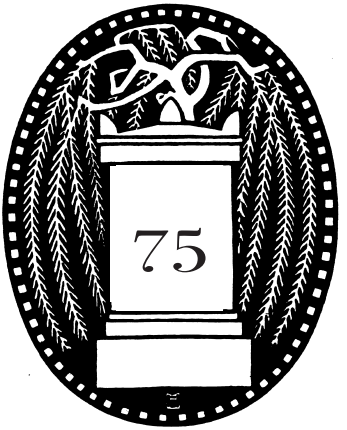
JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY & HISTORY OF EDUCATION



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The Journal of the Society of Philosophy & History of Education

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Membership in the Society is open to anyone interested in the profession of education. Only members may present papers at the annual meeting. Dues vary in accordance with the vote of the membership and may be mailed to the Secretary–Treasurer or the current Program Chair. Other SoPHE information may be obtained by visiting http://sopheconference.com

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Journal of Philosophy & History of Education

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Table of Contents

The History and Philosophy of Education

In Memoriam

Joe Green, Martha May Tevis, & Lloyd Williams in 1977 at the SWPES meeting.

Dr. Martha May Tevis

1940–2024[1]

Where is Martha? Martha never misses a SoPHE conference, so a glance around the meeting room or walk through the lobby without meeting Martha jostles the equilibrium, unbalancing one even more when hearing one's voice involuntarily escape, echo across the lobby: Where is Martha?

Professor Martha May Tevis has contributed to the Society of Philosophy and History of Education (SoPHE) from its earliest days when it was a regional branch of the Philosophy of Education Society (PES), the Southwest Society of Philosophy and Education.

> [S]he was a valued and respected member of the organization…[2] [in] a time when the field had yet to realize the important contributions…women faculty could make to educational philosophy, but one could not deny the qualifications…Martha was bringing to the study.[3] [Equally important, she got] things done and…[got] people involved, even when they…[might] be…hesitant.[4]

Dr. Martha Tevis served as the Southwest Society of Philosophy and Education's president, helped guide its transition to the international society, SoPHE, has consistently served as the SoPHE conference site chair when the membership meets in San Antonio, TX (she loved The Menger!), contributed articles to its journal, *Journal of Philosophy and History of Education* (*JoPHE*), and served annually on its editorial board.

> Martha has contributed to the growth of the organization by encouraging people to join and to become active members of the association. Her warmth and graciousness…[make] even the newest members immediately feel welcome[d] and a part of the group. … She gives freely of her time and energy in a thousand ways, not just to SoPHE, but also to its individual members.[5]

Martha knew you. She looked at you and into you with those enormous eyes, taking in your every word and gesture, answering back, still holding your eyes in hers. After a single encounter, you were hers. She did not forget.

Martha remembered more than people in her current circle; she remembered and honored those who had guided her and others on their paths and passed on those mentors' legacies of generosity throughout her career. One remembrance and act of generosity directly influencing the SoPHE membership is a named, endowed, annual lecture: The William Drake Lecture. Martha studied under William Drake, Philosophy and Cultural Foundations of Education, when working on her doctorate at The University of Texas at Austin, the time she first began presenting at Southwest Society of Philosophy and Education. Martha personally funded this named, endowed lecture not only to perpetuate Professor Drake's legacy but to support current scholars as they made their way through ever-more-tumultuous academic waters. It was Martha, too, who ensured the Foundations of Education Society (FES) remained intact—"Don't forget to pay your dues!"—directly connecting FES to The Drake Lecture, and, indeed, to SoPHE.[6]

> Martha has style and grace beyond compare. … Her skill, thoughtful planning, and attention to even the smallest details have resulted in outstanding opportunities for the sharing of scholarly and informative papers as well as opportunities for social interaction.[7]

Only one other education organization enjoyed Martha's presence and contributions from its beginnings until Martha's death: the International Society for Educational Biography (ISEB), a society she helped found after meeting L. Glen Smith and Joan Smith and contributing work on George I. Sánchez, Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Aquinas to their book, *Lives in Education: A Narrative of People and Ideas* (1991).[8] Having met Martha through the Southwest Society of Philosophy and Education and knowing how she worked with Glen and Joan on *Lives in Education*, Glen asked

Martha to help organize an association whose scholarly focus would be educational biography. Not only did Martha assist, she consistently served as officer, working as ISEB's first secretary/treasurer, then president, then secretary/treasurer for most years thereafter, further contributing in whatever capacity her fellows asked of her. Mary Lou Aylor recalled

> Dr. Tevis could hold her own with seasoned professors while offering encouragement and support to colleagues who were new to academia. In fact, Martha Tevis exhibited considerable kindness when she showed me the ropes as I sought to publish my first scholarly essay in *Vitae Scholasticæ*.[9]

Indeed, Martha's "persistent dedication to ISEB…has steered…[the Society] through some rough waters to its present place as a respected international society for the study of biography."[10]

Although Martha may have contributed to SoPHE and ISEB for longer than she was able to continue her work in other professional societies and associations, they are certainly not the only organizations to which Martha dedicated her time, energy, and intelligence. She was member and Fellow of the Philosophy of Education Society (PES), served as secretary/treasurer for the Society of Professors of Education (SPE), secretary/treasurer for the American Educational Studies Association (AESA), and member of the John Dewey Society (JDS). She edited the American Educational Studies Association's journal, *Educational Studies*,[11] edited the International Society for Educational Biography's journal, *Vitae Scholasticæ*, and served on the editorial boards of *Educational Studies*, *Journal of Philosophy and History of Education*, and *Vitae Scholasticæ*.

A Texan through and through, Martha May graduated from Wichita Falls Senior High, earned her B.A. in Latin with an English minor from Texas Christian University, her M.A. in Education with a Latin specialization from Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, and her Ph.D. in the History and Philosophy of Education from The University of Texas at Austin where she studied with George I. Sánchez and William Drake. Groomed for academe at a time when Greek, Latin, and European languages were prerequisites for conducting scholarly research, this Latin scholar began her higher-education career as a new assistant professor in 1967, at Pan American College, Edinburg, TX, a school with 3,500 students, 100 faculty, and 6 buildings. This small college on the Texas–Mexico border became Pan American University in 1971, entered The University of Texas system in 1989 as The University of Texas–Pan American, and, in its fourth life, with 34,343 students enrolled, became The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in 2015. Even during the first 3–4 years of her career in southwest Texas, Martha was a driving force for adjusting the traditional college environment to support the school's predominantly Mexican-American students:

> We didn't have many students living around here. Almost everybody was a Commuter…. So, the way you keep people involved was to give them a time during the day [an Activity Period]…so they could be active. The only thing[s] that could be scheduled [during the Activity Period] were student organizations.[12]

Martha served in ways that positioned her to incite positive changes that would make big differences across the university. While her administrative roles included Department Chair of Curriculum and Secondary Instruction, Grant Director, Graduate Coordinator, and Secondary Education Coordinator (graduate and undergraduate), Dr. Tevis also worked with pre-service and in-service teachers, served on the University of Texas Press' editorial Advisory Board, served as Vice-Chair of the University Alumni Association, as Parliamentarian in the school's first Faculty Senate, member of the school's first Honors Counsel, member of the school's first Equal Opportunities Committee, member of the University Admissions Committee, Counselor for the international honor society in education, *Kappa Delta Pi*, Graduate Advisor for the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum, and as many doctoral students' Dissertation Chair, Co-Chair, Advisor, or Committee Member. Indeed, "For the past 50 years…[her] work with graduate students has been outstanding."[13]

In part, Professor Tevis spread her gospel of freedom, legal and political equality, equal education opportunities, and justice beyond the university through her scholarship, often educating her readers on the historical bases for the injustices various individuals and populations face. Examples of her scholarship include her work on President Lyndon B. Johnson and education, for which "Lady-Bird" Johnson personally wrote her a thank-you letter, on such pioneers for legal and political equality as John Dewey, Julius Rosenwald, George Sánchez, and Kamil Jbeily, on initiating tuition pay for local teachers to earn masters' degrees and improve their understanding and teaching of Mexican-American students, and on court cases and on-going legal battles for equal legal rights for Mexican-Americans, among others. Recognizing her as a key senior researcher in her field, The University of Texas at Austin named her a difficult-to-earn Ellis Fellow,[14] and William Flores, Scholarly Communications Librarian, University Library, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, has collected Professor Tevis' more than 50 years' scholarship, including her *JoPHE* articles, into a designated section housed at University Library.[15] Especially memorable, Martha appeared as one expert in "A Class Apart: We Serve Whites Only, No Spanish or Mexicans" within the Public Broadcasting Service's series, *American Experience, The U.S. Latino Experience Collection*, airing February 23, 2009.[16]

Although one might think Martha had a plateful with her university teaching, scholarship, and service and an overflowing plate when she added her work in professional organizations, "Miss Martha" took still another plate to fill, working to further her larger community's well-being. She worked

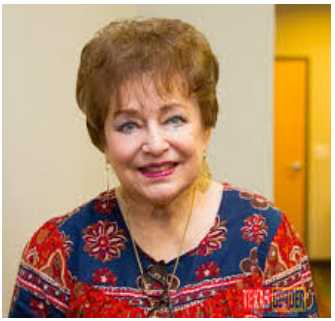
as member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, on Canterbury School's Steering Committee Board, Edinburg, TX, the Trinity Episcopal School Board, and as Vestry member at Trinity Episcopal Church. Always striving toward achieving justice and equity and to support underserved individuals, Martha helped found the Texas Council of Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Centers (MHMR), Inc., coordinated all Texas Board of Trustees' training sessions for in-coming board members of MHMR community centers from the first training conference in 1980 until 1993, and edited *The Curriculor*, a publication of the Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers, 1977–2001. Also a member and officer of the Tropical Texas Community Center for Mental Health and Mental Retardation, 1969–1992, Martha became Board Member Emerita when she stepped down after 23 years' service.

Although generous, perceptive, smart people, hard workers, good teachers, and activists like Martha often pass through life without recognition, I am pleased to say, not only did Martha's university and its students recognize her, awarding her the Outstanding Faculty Award for Research, Outstanding Faculty Award for Teaching, Outstanding Faculty Award for Service, and the Alumni Association's Distinguished Professor Award and honor her by endowing a graduate scholarship in her name, the Martha May Tevis Endowed Scholarship,[17] but upon her May 31, 2017 retirement, the Texas State Senate, 85th Legislature, presented her with a personal copy of SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 786, signed, certified, and adopted May 15, 2017.

> *WHEREAS*, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize Dr. Martha May Tevis, who is retiring on May 31, 2017, after 50 years of exceptional service with The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley…
> …
> …be it
> *RESOLVED*, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 85th Legislature, hereby commend Dr. Martha May Tevis on her commitment to excellence in education and extend to her best wishes for continued success in all her endeavors; and, be it further
> *RESOLVED*, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for her as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.[18]

Few will know or identify all the ways Martha helped enact change in southern Texas, for students and families along the Texas–Mexico border. Few will recognize how her pioneering work as educator, scholar, and community member has paved the way for the many students, scholars, and everyday people who have come after she had cleared the way. Many will recall that even when her polio returned and she became less mobile each year, Martha May did not complain, speak with bitterness or resentment,

did not lose her spunk, did not lose her passion and energy to drive positive change toward greater freedom, justice, and legal and political equality for all—her life's work. She did not stop working for others in the here-and-now or for those yet to come. Although most will never know the extent of Martha's work over her lifetime, many of us realize first how Martha enriched us individually, we with whom she interacted one-on-one, and then know how much she enhanced SoPHE, its membership writ large, boosted, it seems, everyone and every venture she touched. Martha died September 24, 2024. Her memorial service transpired November 16, 2024, at Trinity Episcopal Church, Pharr, Texas.



So, where is Martha? Martha is in us and our actions, for Dr. Martha May Tevis continues circulating as a powerful force through her legacy, through her voice sounding in our heads, spurring us to press forward toward realizing freedom, legal and political equality, equal opportunities for education, and justice for all people, beginning in our own neck of the woods. Thinking back on her life and the many changes she witnessed and to which she contributed, Martha noted, "A lot of people don't like change. I liked change because it was always exciting."[19] I find it difficult to absorb that this current change means I will not be seeing mover-and-shaker change-maker, Martha May Tevis, will not see her again, taking me in with those big eyes. We miss you dear Martha; I miss you. We remember you, your work, and your spirit, will keep remembering. Having internalized your teachings, we embrace and pass on your passion and spirit, will drive and enact positive change, teach others to teach and act for freedom, legal and political equality, equal education opportunities, and justice, to behave kindly and generously to our earthly companions. We will make a difference.

Virginia Worley
Professor Emerita
Oklahoma State University

Endnotes

1 I thank Dr. Linda Morice for kindly sharing her research and writing on Dr. Martha Tevis and her life's work. Please see *Vitae Scholasticæ* 41, nos. 1 and 2 (2024) for Linda's "In Memoriam."

2 Mary Lou Aylor, "Martha Tevis: An Appreciation," *Journal of Philosophy and History of Education* 59, (2009).

3 Joan Smith, "Martha Tevis Dedication," *Journal of Philosophy and History of Education* 59, (2009).

4 Aylor, "Martha Tevis."

5 Ibid.

6 In the wake of Martha's passing, The Foundations of Education Society's members have renamed the society in her honor: the Martha Tevis Foundations Society.

7 Aylor, "Martha Tevis."

8 L. Glen Smith and Joan Smith, *Lives in Education: A Narrative of People and Ideas* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991).

9 Aylor, "Martha Tevis."

10 Smith, "Martha Tevis Dedication."

11 "In Memoriam: Martha May Tevis," *Women in Academe Report*, November 11, 2024, https://wiareport.com/2024/11/in-memoriam-martha-may-tevis/. I have been unable to corroborate W*omen in Academe*'s report that Martha edited *Educational Studies*, for neither the American Educational Studies Association nor *Educational Studies* makes available a list of past editors. Multiple sources do verify her contributions as editorial board member for the journal.

12 Rolando Avila, "César Chávez's Pan American College Campus Visit and Its Aftermath," *New Studies in Rio Grande Valley History* 16 (2018): 187–188, https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/regionalhist/16; this quotation is from Rolando Avila's interview with Martha May Tevis, May 15, 2017, quoted in Avila's article.

13 "Honoring Our Retirees, Teaching and Learning: Dr. Martha May Tevis," *College of Education and P–16 Integration*, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 2017, https://www.utrgv.edu/cep/_files/documents/cep-reports/annual-report-cep-2016-2017.pdf

14 For information on Ellis Scholars and Ellis Fellows, please see: https://ellis.eu/guidelines-for-evaluating-fellow-and-scholar-nominations

15 William Flores, MLIS, Scholarly Communications Librarian, University Library, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, email message to *JoPHE* editors, November 1, 2024.

[16] *American Experience, The U.S. Latino Experience Collection*, "A Class Apart: We Serve Whites Only, No Spanish or Mexicans," directed and produced by Carlos Sandoval and Peter Miller, written by Tom Weidlinger, Public Broadcasting Service, February 23, 2009. Although one needs to have "PBS Passport" to watch the entire episode, one section with Martha appears in "Deleted Scenes from the Film," and her name, of course, appears in the credits. This episode of *American Experience* stories the *Hernandez v. Texas Supreme Court* case. Please see: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/class/ and https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/class-deleted-scenes/

[17] To contribute to the Martha May Tevis Endowed Scholarship (graduate student scholarship) please visit: https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1953/lg21/form.aspx?sid=1953&gid=2&pgid=482&cid=1151&dids=751&bledit=1

[18] Please see "Texas Legislature Online" (.gov) for the complete text of TEXAS RESOLUTION NO. 786, https://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/85R/billtext/html/SR00786F.htm

[19] Martha's comment to Linda Morice in Morice, "In Memoriam."

From the Editors

The [JoPHE] Torch Is Passed

Greetings and glad tidings, good SoPHE colleagues and supporters of *JoPHE*! As Virginia and I phase out of our co-editorship we welcome our new, incoming editorial team—Donna Sayman of Wichita State University and Frank Giuseffi of William Woods University. Beginning with *JoPHE* 76 they begin their turn at the helm, so in this our last issue we want to take time sincerely to thank everyone who has contributed to *JoPHE*'s dynamic past, present, and future. When we became co-editors 16 years ago, we had a vision for *JoPHE* that would challenge the kind of peer-review and editorial mistreatment and hijinks we too-often experienced as early-career scholars. We were extremely fortunate indeed to have an organizational membership and leadership enthusiastically support our vision.

Knowing *JoPHE* regularly received submissions from early-career scholars and graduate students, we reasoned our editorship should concentrate on benefiting members' learning and growth as part of the editorial process rather than mimicking so many peer-reviewed journals where an opaque, "I dare-you-to-succeed" editorial culture not only prevailed but thrived. We came to our editorial philosophy after having received many sets of wildly contradictory peer-reviewers' responses along with letters from editors unwilling to give even a hint, much less guide us through reviewers' disparate comments. Our conundrum then, one likely familiar to many of you, was to be told by journal editors, "make of it what you will…and good luck!" Each of us, though, had also experienced what we recognized and admired as strong editorship: an editor who took time and made sense of contradictory peer-reviews—some of which bordered on rants. You know the type. Virginia and I each had the good fortune to have pieces that became very important to our careers, our faculty rank, and our reputations as scholars in our subfields shepherded through the back-and-forth process of peer review and publication by generous, wise editors.[1] Not only were we grateful to them, we were inspired.

Sixteen years later both of us are ready to move on to other challenges and new facets of our intellectual journeys. We have learned so very much from our work with you all, and we see evidence each year your receptiveness to our developmental editing philosophy and methodology. So, while it's difficult to move on, we are confident the next era of *JoPHE* editorship will stand strong under Donna and Frank's leadership. Both our

colleagues are firmly committed to Social Foundations of Education as a discipline and to enacting justice in educational and social contexts through Foundations scholarship. We have worked closely with them over the past year to transition the editorship and this 75th issue of *JoPHE* attests to our work together. Virginia and I warmly and gratefully welcome Donna and Frank; indeed, we cannot wait to see their editorial vision enacted.

Finally, we wish to express our heartfelt thanks to *JoPHE*'s extraordinary Editor Emeritus David Snelgrove, to all those who entrusted us with their submissions and worked to make our vision of developmental editing a success, to our hardworking and talented Editorial Board, to Ralph Olliges our dedicated SoPHE magician/webmaster, and to the whole team at Illinois State University's Printing Services. Your steadfast support of our work and our vision over the term of our editorship has meant and continues to mean the absolute world to us.

Stacy Otto
Illinois State University

Endnotes

[1] Our deep gratitude and respect goes out to Nick Burbules of *Educational Theory* and to Peter Stearns of the *Journal of Social History*.

The 2024 SoPHE Presidential Address

Place: The Quest to Find It, to Shape It, and to Do Your Thing

Carolyn Fridley,
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Introduction

Good afternoon, friends and colleagues; I am so happy to be with you! It was at this annual meeting last year that Lucy Bailey[1] planted a seed that would take root and become the presidential address that I am honored to deliver today. Last year, William[2] and I attended Lu's session, *Transformations and Reflections: Becoming through Inquiry*,[3] and before introducing her co-presenters, Lu did something I found moving—she invited us to pause, and to acknowledge the SoPHE space we were sharing. It was an invitation to be present, aware, and conscious of this space. The moment was reminiscent of the beautiful Native-American tradition of honoring place, representing a Tribe's historic relationship with the land.[4] Closing my eyes, memories of my first SoPHE came to me. It was 2008, and I had earned my master's degree that May. William was submitting a proposal and suggested that I submit one, too. I resisted the idea because I considered SoPHE to be out of my league. I was a master's-level academic, a lightweight among real-deal, Ph.D. scholars. William described SoPHE as an academic community that welcomed a variety of ideas and encouraged grad students and Ph.D.s alike. The space, he continued, was warm and accepting. Well…maybe? There was only one way to find out—I got to work. I started writing and submitted a proposal. It felt like Christmas when I received an e-mail from David,[5] assigning a day and time for my presentation! When we arrived at the historic Menger Hotel (talk about a special space!) I was greeted by fellow SoPHE attendees who were thoroughly delightful—and no one asked for my credentials! Nerves akimbo, the time came to present my paper. I got through it and then came the feedback. I was anxious. To my delight, the comments were fair, and helpful. They were nice to me! Lucy's thoughtful attention to space led me to realize that in that moment, sixteen years ago, I had found my *place* in this SoPHE space.

Since then, I have done a lot of thinking about how I found my *place* in the spaces of my life. I wondered what made those places mine, and what was important about finding them. How had other people found their place? I recognize that the notion of *place* is not new. *Place* has been well-

considered in academic literature, suggesting that there are a host of factors, like geography, culture, and economics, for example, that influence, and are influenced by *place*. The focus here, however, is the way we find—the way we figure out—our unique *place* in the many spaces we inhabit. For this address, I share two examples of finding my *place*: one that is personal—the earliest memory of knowing my *place*, and one that is professional—my most recent and, since I have retired, my last *place* in the academy.

Finding My Place

Growing up, I knew my place. I was born in the South and as a female child I was trained in the social niceties of being a Southern lady: to speak when spoken to, to curtsy, to never cuss, and to respond to elders with "yes, ma'am," or "yes, sir." I referred to adults as Miss, Missus and Mister. Close friends of my parents who were not relatives were given the honorific titles of Aunt and Uncle. I was to dress modestly and, for goodness' sake, to sit with my legs together.

I grew up a proud Southerner. My grandfather's people came to St. Augustine, Florida in the 1760s as indentured servants from Minorca, Spain. My grandmother's people were sharecroppers in Hortense, Georgia. I grew up hearing stories of my grandmother picking cotton alongside African-American children who, like her, had to leave school to tend the fields. My grandfather was a shrimper, and the fishing village where my mother was born included white and Black families who helped each other. My grandmother contracted scarlet fever right after the birth of my mother, and as a result, she could not produce milk. The Black family living next door had recently welcomed a newborn and the baby's mother offered to nurse my mother, which she continued to do until my mother was weaned. My grandmother told me that without the generosity of her neighbor lady, my mother may have died.

Within the context of *this* community, as a member of *this* family, I knew my *place* to be warm and welcoming, inclusive and genteel. And yet, the nightly news with Walter Cronkite[6] told a very different story. My seven-year-old self watched as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led non-violent marches promoting civil rights and housing rights. Despite their peaceful approach, the protesters faced violent police who beat them and used fire hoses and dogs to attack them. I was horrified—and confused. There, in front of the T.V., I realized that my *place* was not a *place* that everyone experienced.

In school I learned about the injustice of slavery, the Civil War, and Jim Crow laws. What was I to do with the glaring contradiction between the *place—my place*—that I loved for its embrace of others, and the *place* that had a history of hatred and discrimination? I believed that the history of the South was true *and* that my Southern experience was, too. Could both be true at the same time? In my struggle to reconcile the history of the South with my *place* in it, I turned to the work of Southern historian Drew Gilpin

Faust, and to understand my *place* in the academy I consulted the work of labor organizers and the American Association of University Professors, the professional organization that has defined the fundamental values and standards for higher education since 1915.

Necessary Trouble: Growing Up at Midcentury

Drew Gilpin Faust, President Emerita of Harvard University, focuses her research on the Civil War and the antebellum South. In her 2023 memoir, *Necessary Trouble: Growing up at Midcentury*,[7] Faust describes growing up in the segregated South and how her childhood shaped who she was to become.

Born in 1947, Faust was raised in Clarke County, Virginia, a time and place she describes as one "of roles and rules, of revered traditions and rigid expectations."[8] Drewdie, as she was known in her youth, rebelled loudly and persistently against the unequal expectations in dress and behavior between males and females. Faust's relationship with her mother was contentious, with frequent protests about wearing "girly" clothes, so it is no surprise that a quotation from *To Kill a Mockingbird* is included in her book's opening pages: "You want to grow up to be a lady, don't you? I said not particularly."[9]

Faust was raised in wealth and, coupled with her distinguished family lineage, the Gilpin family enjoyed a privileged place in the community. Mrs. Gilpin employed African-American men and women to manage the house and the children and spent her time on social events to maintain the family's proper standing. Faust viewed this as a contemptuous display of extraordinary privilege and an abdication of her maternal obligation, writing that "…domestic workers ensured that my mother never had to cook or clean or take direct responsibility for her own day-to-day needs or those of her children."[10]

Drewdie was an excellent student, and a voracious reader who found refuge from her mother in books. Mrs. Gilpin, like many women of her generation, saw little value in education; the path for a Southern lady was to be married, to bear children, and to assume her rightful place in white society. Mrs. Gilpin believed that "it was not only dangerous for girls to have good minds, it was unnecessary—even wasteful."[11]

In 1957, Faust experienced what she describes as an "epiphany:"

> …I was nine years old, in fifth grade, and in the car with Raphael,[12] being driven home from school when I heard something on the radio that startled me: Black children were, by Virginia law, not permitted to go to school with white children. It had never occurred to me. I asked Raphael if what I had understood was true, whether I would be excluded from my school if I was a different color, if I painted my face black. I remember that Raphael never answered my question. My probings about rules

> of racial interaction made him acutely uncomfortable. He was evasive, but for me his evasion was answer enough.[13]

Nine-year-old Drewdie Gilpin set about getting into necessary trouble. Unbeknownst to her parents, she wrote a letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower expressing her outrage at the injustice of segregation and implored him to do something about it.[14] Drewdie was also angry that no one had explained segregation to her and wondered why she did not notice what should have been obvious in her own household.

Realizing that she could not depend on her parents to teach her about issues facing the country, Drewdie was determined to educate herself on the world that existed beyond the fences of her family farm. She took advantage of the information available: television, radio, magazines, books, and school. Inspired by an article in *My Weekly Reader*,[15] she wrote a play dramatizing a family's plight in the Hungarian Revolution which was performed by her fifth-grade class. She was gratified knowing that, because of her play, her classmates now had a small understanding of the struggle of good versus evil taking place across the globe. The larger world continued to creep in Drew's consciousness: Sputnik, the Cold War, and the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Adolescence also creeped in during the late 1950s and early 1960s and was punctuated by Elvis (and his pelvis), Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Motown and rock 'n' roll.

In 1960, Drew left Virginia to attend an all-girls boarding school in Massachusetts. Concord Academy was an escape from her mother's diatribes dismissing the value of educating females. It was an escape from a paternalistic vision of the world that was "a dangerous place for women, their bodies and their reputations" that required a man's protection.[16] Concord provided a rigorous curriculum and encouraged intellectual curiosity. Students were told that it was their duty and responsibility "to make a better world," which Drew said, "was a message that had a lasting effect on me—justice, truth, mercy, love: these were meant to be my purposes and the purposes of my education."[17] Away from her mother, Drew was confident that in this new space she would find her place.

In 1963, students were invited to attend a lecture featuring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Drew signed up to go. In Dr. King's words, Drew recognized that she had been blind to the effects of social injustice and was ashamed that in her ignorance she had been complacent and silent. Dr. King's lecture ended with an invitation to join him.

Drew responded to King's invitation by participating in two summer programs to learn about people who lived very different lives from her own. The first was an international experience where she, along with other American high-school students, traveled 7,000 miles across Russia and Eastern Europe to meet young people behind the Iron Curtain. In

bringing together youth from the East and West, the goal was to stimulate conversation about the tensions that exist between each side and propose peaceful resolutions. It was Drew's hope that this group of young people "could help to end the threatening standoff…by getting to know and understand one another."[18] The next summer program took her to the American South and, like the previous summer, was designed to stimulate conversation—this time focusing on race. This was the summer of 1964, when racial tension among Black and white communities was high. The goal among the young participants was to support each other in their common struggle for civil and human rights. Reflecting on her summer in the American South, Drew said that the experience "had given me proximity. I had gotten close, and I could not see stories of racial injustice and white violence in the same way again."[19]

In the fall of 1964 Drew enrolled in Bryn Mawr College and promptly joined "Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)," an organization that promoted and supported an engaged citizenry. Once or twice a week Drew and fellow SDS members knocked on doors in south Philadelphia to encourage residents to meet, organize, and strategize so that together they could improve their community. Like her experience in the South, Drew's work in south Philadelphia gave her proximity; she got close and could not see poverty (or the poor) in the same way again.

Scenes of the brutal beatings of peaceful civil rights protestors in Selma, Alabama were televised on March 7, 1965. Seeing those images, Drew "…knew I had to do something. If I did not stand up, if I did not act after witnessing this, I would be ashamed forever."[20] Faust left campus and drove the 1,000 miles from Philadelphia to Selma to join protestors on the March to Montgomery. Faust writes, "I knew I had not made much of a contribution to the civil rights cause, but I had done something important for myself. I had gone to Selma, as Dr. King had requested, to bear witness."[21] A month after Selma, Faust attended her first antiwar rally in Washington, DC, where she was among 20,000 people protesting the Viet Nam War.

Dr. Faust and I are both G.R.I.T.S.—**G**irls **R**aised **i**n **t**he **S**outh—yet our Southern experiences are *very* different. I was not born into wealth, and my family lineage was certainly not "distinguished." My family moved—a lot—from one rental house to another. My people were indentured servants and sharecroppers who felt a kinship with their Black neighbors. When I was an adult with a family of my own, I got a glimpse—a brief but powerful glimpse—of what it might have looked like to grow up in the Gilpin household. I traveled to Woodbine, Georgia to visit my husband's distant relatives whom we had never met. We were greeted by an African-American woman, dressed in a uniform, who was ironing. The woman of the house rushed in and whisked us away to a different part of the house, where we visited. My son asked if we would be joined by the nice lady who

met us at the door. He was told, "Oh no, she knows her place." Until that moment I had never considered that to *know your place* could be pejorative.

Like Dr. Faust, I had an "epiphany" when I was nine years old. I was riding my skateboard in our driveway, up and down, up and down, for what seemed to be hours. The Cold War was on my mind, (although I wouldn't have called it that, then). My nine-year-old self wondered why the Russians hated Americans so much. On my skateboard, up and down our driveway, I wondered what we could have possibly done to people we never met that would cause them to hate us so much.[22] Mama opened the kitchen door and called out, "Carolyn, are you still out there? Everything okay?" I said, "Yes, ma'am." When mama checked on me, I made a connection: Russian mamas love their children like my mama loves me. (This was 1966, long before Sting expressed a similar sentiment in his song "Russians."[23])

It is not the similarities or differences in our stories that attract me to Dr. Faust's life. What I find compelling is the way she approached circumstances and events that were not of her making, but most certainly affected her *place*. Injustice was her call to action. In action she created her *place*; a *place* made right, and true, and authentic by her work for racial justice. Dr. Faust said,

> Partly it was that youthful clarity and determination about doing the right thing [that drove my work]. But perhaps even more fundamentally, it was necessary for me—necessary to enable me to survive amid the stifling silences that threatened to define my life.[24]

Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War

Environments—the spaces we inhabit—are dynamic; they change. For women of the slaveholding South during the Civil War, "necessity, not choice, would prove to be the source of change—what they would have called the 'mother of invention.'"[25] These women found themselves in a situation for which they were not prepared: a war with armies of nearly a million men fighting on Southern soil. These privileged and educated women from the slave-owning class wrote diaries, letters, and memoirs that meticulously chronicle what they were thinking, feeling, and experiencing during those four years of war. In the voices of more than 500 Confederate women, Drew Gilpin Faust tells their stories in *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*.

"The farm or plantation was the central economic institution of the Old South,"[26] and men served as the South's organizing principle. So, when three out of four white men of military age left for war, the women from slaveholding families assumed complete responsibility for the management of the plantation. Some women found that they had the aptitude and temperament for their profound war-borne responsibilities.

For others, worry was consuming; they questioned their abilities and became paralyzed with fear. One woman questioning her abilities was Lizzie Neblett, a plantation mistress from Texas, who knew nothing about finance, agriculture, or managing slaves. Only months into the war, Lizzie wrote, "I am so sick of trying to do a man's business when I am nothing but a poor contemptible piece of…human flesh [who is] looked upon as belong[ing] to a race of inferior beings."[27] Lizzie's sentiments reflected the pre-war status of this class of Confederate women who were privileged yet subordinated as women.

Southern privilege is an understood but unwritten collection of rules, expectations, and traditions that regulates behavior. Privilege is not earned, it is bestowed, it is generationally conferred. It is a lifestyle, a way of interacting with the environment. War dramatically changed everything about privilege. The work required of them in wartime would have been considered unfeminine, undignified, and unacceptable—even prohibited—prior to the war. As the weight of their new, war-borne responsibilities grew heavier, it is no surprise that Confederate women reported feeling disoriented and confused. Their *place*, as they had known it, was disappearing. Women began to realize that the familiar, privileged place they once enjoyed was now an obstacle to the work being required of them. In the quest to find their new place came a more significant realization: womanhood had to be re-defined.

Women began participating in the forbidden practice of discussing politics and doing so in the public sphere. A Florida newspaper, *The Jacksonville Standard*,[28] published a letter in support of secession written by a group of women calling themselves the "Ladies of Broward's Neck, Florida."[29] Aware of the real possibility that as women their opinions would be dismissed, the letter preemptively states that their views, "were not frivolous or ill-founded but were supported in fact and argument."[30] They assert it was precisely their female identity that made politics "peculiarly appropriate to [a] woman's sphere."[31] A new definition of womanhood was emerging.

Troops needed a host of supplies, including winter socks, gloves, and underwear, so women throughout the South organized hundreds of groups to help in the war effort. The governor of Alabama distributed raw goods to these "ladies'-aid associations" in his state to be sewn into tents and uniforms.[32] To supply troops with items that could not be homemade, women organized money-raising events: concerts, fairs, and dramatic performances, with *women* as the featured performers! One of the performers, Clara MacLean of South Carolina, confided to her diary that she was "astonished at her sense of pride in her first theatrical effort. 'I feel quite important,'" and she experienced "a new sense of self emerging."[33] Not surprisingly, there were those who found the theatrical efforts of these women to be brazen and unacceptable. For some Southerners, public

performances were an assault on the long-held notion of femininity, and a disturbing departure from the image of a Southern lady who should be delicate, modest, refined, and seen but not heard. In a letter to *The Confederate Union* newspaper, a soldier from Georgia asked readers whether it was "… right for young ladies to appear in public on the stage?"[34] Most respondents insisted that, "There is no immodesty in young ladies doing that which a whole community approves."[35] Women were empowered by their new work and were receiving a measure of support from their communities. The new definition of womanhood was expanding.

As clothing became scarcer, women began to weave, make, and wear homespun dresses. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, "celebrated homespun," but many Southern men were "deeply disturbed that their wives had taken up textile production."[36] Will Neblett wrote to Lizzie, "I do not like the idea of your weaving. It is mortifying to me. I wish you not to do it." In response to her husband's admonition, Lizzie said that she, "wasn't happy about adding yet another responsibility to her already heavy burden, but she was 'forced' to in order to clothe her children."[37] This exchange between Will and Lizzie reflects the war-borne change in marital relationships. When husbands left for war, they left wives who were subservient, docile, lady-like, and proper. While they were gone, their wives learned some things: sewing, weaving, and managing a farm. They entered the public sphere as organizers and performers and became political. Wives changed, and husbands like Will Neblett were not too happy about it.

Out of financial necessity, many Confederate woman began working outside the home, for renumeration, for the first time in their lives.[38] These women became teachers, nurses, and office workers—jobs that had been traditionally held by men. Adelaide Stuart, who had taken a job with the Treasury Department wrote that circumstances, "had pushed her into the workforce which was 'the best thing that could have happened for me—it is strengthening all the best parts of my character.'"[39] Necessity drew women into the public realm: the workforce, political activism, and organizing to support the war effort. In their letters and through their diary entries, they describe how they were evolving not only "toward a newly valued self, but [made] a more explicit and bolder claim to a public voice and a political identity."[40]

Women of the slaveholding South knew their place—until it wasn't. In 1861 war came to their land and took their men. The wealth they had once known was gone, along with the privilege that their wealth had purchased. Amid all the loss, something was found; a *new place*; a *place* women defined and created *for themselves*. Through their work women had earned the right to be heard. Their voices had power that had not come from privilege. These Confederate women could not have known then that a century later the new *place* they had created would contribute to the foundation of a women's movement.

Finding My Place in the Academy

A funny thing happened to me when I was working in the lawn-and-garden department at Lowe's—I was offered a job teaching at a university. Really. You know how most academics spend countless hours scouring *HigherEdJobs.com* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for an opening in their field? You know how most academics write a cover letter, submit a CV, and hope upon hope to get a call from the chair of a search committee requesting a phone interview, then an on-campus interview, then a job offer? Not me. There I was, watering the variegated pittosporum when the Chair of the English, Humanities, & Languages (EHL) department at Southeastern Oklahoma State University offered me a job teaching freshman composition, right there in the outdoor lawn-and-garden department of Lowe's Home Improvement Store in Durant, Oklahoma!

Of course, there's more to the story. I knew the EHL Chair, Dr. Randy Prus.[41] We had first met through my brother, Dan,[42] who was a Spanish professor in that department. As a professor at Southeastern, William also knew Randy, and we had all become friends. Randy knew that I had recently earned my master's degree at Southeastern, but what he did not know was that I had been looking for a teaching position for months. After writing 186 cover letters and submitting 186 CVs to colleges and universities within a 300-mile radius of Durant, I couldn't find a job, so, I went to work at Lowe's. Randy desperately needed an adjunct, and I desperately needed a job.

Teaching is my jam. After 15 years teaching middle school in public and parochial schools, I resigned from a job I loved to attend graduate school, hoping to experience teaching at the college level. Now I had my shot. I began by investigating what it meant to be an adjunct at *this* university because I knew that the role and responsibilities of adjuncts vary widely across institutions. As a schoolteacher, I had been involved in writing policy, so reading policy, specifically as it relates to adjunct faculty, seemed a logical place to begin. It helped that William was a longtime member of the Faculty Senate and for years had been intimately involved in writing and revising policy at the university.[43]

After getting my policy fix, I investigated ways to get involved in my new academic community. Our campus had recently established an AAUP Chapter, that included William as a founding member. The AAUP welcomes (and encourages) adjuncts to join—so I did. It didn't take me long to realize that in the space of this professional association, I had found my *place*. In this space I had purpose, agency, and I was empowered to do my own thing. I became president of our Chapter, served two terms, and became an officer at the state level. Our Chapter developed relationships with administrators and made our presence known around campus. We introduced the AAUP to faculty at symposiums and to new faculty at their orientations. Our Chapter members were elected to the Faculty Senate in noticeable numbers.

For six years we organized and hosted regional conferences featuring nationally recognized scholars, activists, and leaders from the AAUP, headquartered in Washington, D.C. Our conferences attracted faculty representing eleven colleges and universities from six states. In a remarkable show of support, our university administration financially contributed to these AAUP events, which helped to make this professional development opportunity free of charge for Southeastern faculty, and an opportunity for which there was no travel involved—the event was held on their own campus. Additionally, we were given use of university facilities free of charge and free advertisement on the university's website.

When appropriations for public education were cut at the state and federal levels,[44] our Chapter moved beyond our campus. We visited the local Rotary Club[45] to discuss the budget situation taking place in their beloved hometown university (locally referred to as "the college") and invited the community to attend a candidates' forum we hosted,[46] which was advertised on local television news channels.[47] We held a letter-writing soirée, and filmed one-minute videos that we sent to 175 state legislators explaining the impact that their cuts would have on our campus and on our work in our classrooms. Chapter members traveled to Oklahoma City and met with state representatives, senators, and the Lt. Governor to put a face on the professoriate and a face on the consequences of their budget decisions. William and I met with our U.S. Representatives and Senators in Washington, D.C. to explain how cuts in federal appropriations would affect faculty and students at our regional institution in rural, southeastern Oklahoma.

These activities were remarkable for several reasons, beginning with the fact that I was leading the charge to organize faculty *as an adjunct*. I had no protection from the real possibility of reprisal from what could be considered subversive behavior: rabble-rousing, pot-stirring, dissent from the established role of adjunct—I don't know…behavior unbecoming an adjunct? Is that even a thing? I wasn't afraid, I had so little to lose.

Also remarkable was the unique relationship we forged with our university president. As you well know, history is rife with examples of adversarial relationships between administrators and faculty. This contentious relationship is so common that the AAUP has an expression: administrators are their best recruiters. To be honest, we were not pleased when Sean Burrage[48] was named Southeastern's president. He was a prominent attorney, former politician, with limited experience in higher education from a wealthy, well-connected Oklahoma family. I thought, "great, another 'good ole boy.'" William said, "we're going to have to work with him, so we need to figure out how." And we did. We worked hard. We communicated frequently with President Burrage, in public and in person, through e-mails and in hand-written notes. We were honest with him and let him know when we disagreed with his decisions (in public and in

private). What was more effective was that we complimented him when we agreed (in public and in private). Over time we developed mutual respect and trust. President Burrage realized that we could help him; we could speak to Regents and legislators about budget cuts in ways he could not. He was beholden to them in ways we were not, which expanded our freedom, and earned us his gratitude. William and I never thought we would feel affection for an administrator, but we did, and when he resigned, we were genuinely sad.

When the Regents met to form a presidential search to replace President Burrage, our Chapter requested[49] and was granted a spot on the agenda to make a presentation to the Regents and presidents of our six sister institutions. Our presentation was entitled: "The Success of Shared Governance at Southeastern."[50] We wanted to let the Regents know what was possible when a president works with his faculty. We had done great things together and we wanted the Regents to know about it. When my presentation was over, I looked at President Burrage and he had tears in his eyes. He sprang from his seat and gave me a hug. I won't soon forget that moment, or the possibilities for a university and a faculty when they work together.

Teaching was my job, but teaching is also my art and my craft. I worked hard to prepare lessons that were challenging, creative, and fun for me to teach. In my department, I acted "as if" I was *real* faculty by doing what was required of faculty but not required of adjuncts: I held office hours, attended academic conferences, wrote and presented papers, and even published a few. I attended department meetings, got myself assigned to committees, and helped write accreditation reports. The tenured and tenure-track faculty treated me as their colleague, and my chair, Dr. Prus, supported us all—as equals. In his words and deeds, no faculty was "less than." At the university level, my work in the AAUP was known, and competing against Ph.D.s, this master's level adjunct even won a few awards for excellence in teaching and for meritorious service. I reflected on my good fortune, which I attribute, in part, to the intercession of the patron saint of contingent faculty, St. Precaria,[51] whose likeness hung in my office, and to whom I offered regular novenas.

Involvement in the AAUP provided a window into the nationwide status of contingent faculty, and through that window I saw that my experience at Southeastern was an exception, rather than the rule. In the many AAUP meetings we attended across the country, the message from contingent faculty was consistent: things were bad for them at their university—and their numbers were growing.

In their *2024 Bulletin*, the AAUP reports that "in fall 2022, less than one-third of faculty were on tenure lines, and that the proportion of faculty who are appointed each year to tenure-line positions is declining at an alarming rate. Sixty-eight percent of faculty held contingent

appointments."[52] Joe Berry and Helena Worthen provide a history of the proliferation of contingent faculty in their book *Power Despite Precarity: Strategies for the Contingent Faculty Movement in Higher Education*. One reason Berry and Worthen give for decades of increased reliance on contingents is cuts in government appropriations for higher education.[53] I suspect that your campus, like Southeastern, has experienced significant cuts, too. Budgets cuts cause institutions to set new priorities. Many chose to increase spending on athletics, physical plant, new technologies, and administrative costs and *reduce instructional budgets*, "which they accomplished by hiring more contingent faculty instead of tenure-track faculty."[54] Over-reliance on contingent faculty creates an unfair system in the academy. Tenured and tenure-track faculty should be providing 68% of the instruction in universities, *not* contingent faculty. Terminal degrees matter, expertise matters, academic freedom matters. Without a majority of tenured and tenure-track faculty, the academy becomes less than it could be, and there is no shortage of examples of what has happened in higher ed, due, in part, to the steep reduction in tenure-track lines.

Environments act on us, and to find our place we must act on it. Unjust systems, like that of contingency, create environments that are difficult to act on. To act means to risk losing *place* before it can be found. For some, the risk may seem too great. For others, action is the work that is necessary to create a just place within an unjust system. Action may not fix it, but it is the only way to affect it. It was through my action that I found—no—I *claimed* my place at Southeastern. It was a dogged pursuit. In action I had agency, purpose, and meaning. I learned which tools were available to me as an adjunct, and I used them. Policy was my friend, and precedence didn't matter. Unless explicitly forbidden in policy, I claimed what I needed to do my thing and, in doing so, I created a place for myself that was authentic and just. I boldly went where no adjunct had gone before.

Endnotes

1 Lucy E. Bailey, Ph.D., is Professor of Social Foundations and Qualitative Inquiry at Oklahoma State University, OSU's Director of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies, and a longtime SoPHE member and past-President.

2 William Fridley, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, longtime member and past-President of SoPHE, and Carolyn's husband.

3 Lucy E. Bailey, Stacie Lynn Warner, and Amanda Kingston, "Transformations and Reflections: Becoming through Inquiry," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of History and

Philosophy of Education, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, October 6, 2023).

[4] "A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement," National Environmental Education Foundation, 2025, https://www.neefusa.org/guide-indigenous-land-acknowledgment

[5] David Snelgrove is faculty at Oklahoma State University's School of Teaching, Learning and Educational Sciences, and longtime SoPHE member, site coordinator, and program chair.

[6] Walter Cronkite anchored the *CBS Evening News* from 1962 to 1981. "Walter Cronkite," *Wikipedia*, January 29, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Cronkite

[7] The term "necessary trouble" is taken from a March 1, 2020 speech by U.S. Representative John R. Lewis of Georgia commemorating the Selma, AL to Montgomery, AL civil-rights march that became known as "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965. The complete quotation reads, "Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America." In response to Dr. Faust's request for permission to use his words in her book's title, Congressman Lewis replied that, "he would be honored."

[8] Drew Gilpin Faust, *Necessary Trouble: Growing Up at Midcentury* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023), 17.

[9] Ibid., v.

[10] Ibid., 25.

[11] Ibid., 21.

[12] Raphael Johnson was an African-American man employed by the Gilpin family.

[13] Faust, *Necessary Trouble*, 84.

[14] This letter is now the official property of the U. S. National Archives and Records Administration and is housed in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas.

[15] *My Weekly Reader* was an educational pamphlet used in classrooms from 1928 to 2012, initially published by the American Education Press of Columbus, OH. It featured current national and international events, written in age-appropriate language. Weekly issues included copious photographs designed to appeal to school children and enhance their understanding of people and issues from around the world. Dr. Faust credits this publication for her idea to write to President Eisenhower (p. 85). "My Weekly Reader," *Wikipedia*, November 1, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weekly_Reader

[16] Faust, *Necessary Trouble*, 23.

[17] Ibid., 135.

[18] Ibid., 145.

[19] Ibid., 215.

[20] Ibid., 217.

[21] Ibid., 225.

[22] My adult-self wonders how my nine-year-old-self knew about the Cold War or that Americans distrusted and feared the Russian people. Dr. Faust wondered the same thing (*Necessary Trouble*, 91).

[23] "Russians" was released as a single in 1985 and appeared on Sting's debut solo album "The Dream of the Blue Turtles." Written by Sting, the song used the *Romance* theme from the *Lieutenant Kije Suite* by Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev, with whom Sting shares writing credit. The music video, directed by Jean-Baptiste Mondino, followed the single's release: https://youtu.be/wHylQRVN2Qs?si=96npoVahzRnRxyIz

[24] Faust, *Necessary Trouble*, 90.

[25] Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 195.

[26] Ibid., 31–32.

[27] Ibid., 65.

[28] *The Jacksonville Standard* was a weekly newspaper which began publication sometime in the early fall of 1858, published by Ramon Canova and edited by Dr. Holmes Steele. Samuel Proctor, "The Call to Arms: Secession from a Feminine Point of View," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 3, article 8 (1956): 266, https://stars.library.ucf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2614&context=fhq

[29] Ibid. Broward's Neck was the name given to the property owned by Colonel John Broward and members of his family along Cedar Creek and the Trout River in the northern part of Duval County, Florida.

[30] Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 11.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 24.

[33] Ibid., 27.

[34] Ibid. *The Confederate Union* newspaper was published in Milledgeville, GA by publishers Boughton, Nisbet & Barnes between 1862 and 1865. https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn85034083/

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 47.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 80.

[39] Ibid., 91.

[40] Ibid., 162–163.

[41] Randy Prus, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

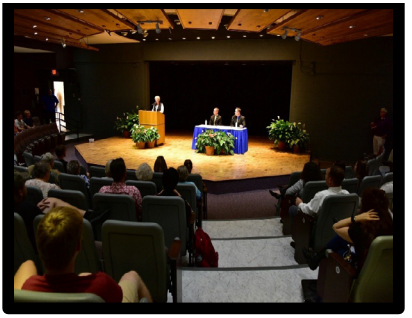
[42] Daniel Althoff, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

[43] The definition of *bliss* is when two policy wonks find each other.

[44] Kathryn S. McNutt, "Oklahoma Budget Shortfall Hammers Higher Education," *Tulsa World*, April 17, 2016, https://tulsaworld.com/news/education/oklahoma-budget-shortfall-hammers-higher-education/article_a21ddfef-b4ed-5a39-9128-e27eeeaf778f.html; Kathryn S. McNutt, "Oklahoma Last in Nation in Funding for Higher Education," *The Oklahoman*, June 16, 2017, https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/politics/2017/06/16/oklahoma-last-in-nation-in-funding-for-higher-education/60593189007/

[45] Visit to Durant, OK Rotary Club, September 9, 2019. Pictured (left to right) are AAUP members Doug Wood, William Fridley, Carolyn Fridley, Stan Alluisi, and Rotarian Mike Davis.

[46] Forum featuring Oklahoma House Candidates (District 21), Dustin Roberts (R, left) and David Northcutt (D, right). Moderated by Carolyn Fridley (at podium). Southeastern Oklahoma State University, September 8, 2016.

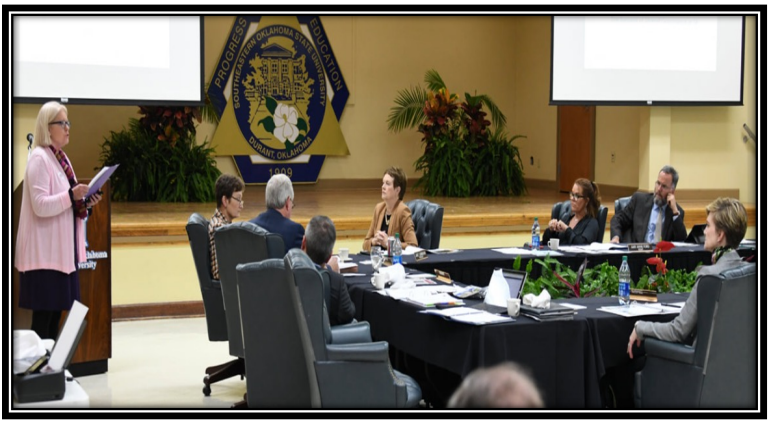


47 "Free House Representative Candidates Forum at Southeastern," KTEN ABC 10 TV, September 7, 2016, https://www.kten.com/free-house-representative-candidates-forum-at-southeastern/image_412717a1-d5e9-5bb5-88d4-e18c793923df.html

48 Sean Burrage, J.D., Director of State and Federal Relations at the University of Oklahoma (1993–1996); Attorney at Taylor, Burrage, Foster, Mallett, Downs & Ramsey, Claremore, Oklahoma (1996–2006); Oklahoma State Senator (2006–2014); President of Southeastern Oklahoma State University (2014–2019); Vice President for Executive Affairs at the University of Oklahoma (2019–2024); Chancellor of the Oklahoma State System for Higher Education (2024–present). "Sean Burrage," *Wikipedia*, December 18, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean_Burrage

49 Letter to Sheridan McCaffree, Executive Director of the Regional University System of Oklahoma, posted on the Southeastern Oklahoma State University website: Faculty Senate Documents, Fall 2019 (September 12), "A second letter from the AAUP to McCaffree (9-10-19)." https://www.se.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/2019/09/AAUP-Request-to-RUSO-9-10-19.pdf

50 Meeting of the Regents of the Regional University System of Oklahoma Regents, October 11, 2019, Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Text of the presentation can be found on the Southeastern Oklahoma State University website: Faculty Senate Documents, Fall 2019 (October 16), "Speech given by AAUP SE Chapter president Carolyn Fridley," https://www.se.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/2019/10/AAUP-RUSO-Board-Meeting-10-11-2019-1.pdf



[51] St. Precaria is a fabricated saint that I read about in Chris Hables Gray's article, "Saint Precaria at the University of California," *ACW* (*Adjunct Commuter Weekly*), October 24, 2015, https://adjunctcommuterweekly.com/2015/10/24/saint-precaria-at-the-university-of-california-by-chris-hables-gray/. Intentionally mis-labeled "St. Precaria," the image adorning my office wall was actually that of St. Philomena (c. 291–304 A.D.), a real saint, canonized in 1837, https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=98

[52] American Association of University Professors, "Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession," *2024 Bulletin*, July 2024, 60, https://www.aaup.org/file/2024Bulletin_ContingentAppts_0.pdf

[53] Joe Berry and Helena Worthen, *Power Despite Precarity: Strategies for the Contingent Faculty Movement in Higher Education* (London: Pluto Press, 2021), 81.

[54] American Association of University Professors, "Contingent Appointments," 64, https://www.aaup.org/file/2024Bulletin_ContingentAppts_0.pdf

The 2024 William Drake Lecture

"To Calm the Tempests of the Soul": Examining Michel de Montaigne's "On the Education of Children"

Francesco Giuseffi, William Woods University

Introduction

Good day educators, scholars, and admirers and students of the philosophy and history of education. I am honored to deliver The William Drake Lecture at this year's annual meeting of the Society of the Philosophy and History of Education. As I was preparing my remarks, I was reminded of Professor William Fridley's wonderful William Drake lecture last year (Fridley, 2024), reminding us of the thoughtful work of Israel Scheffler (1973). As with Montaigne, Scheffler also valued philosophy and judgment in education, so I am heartened that this paper continues with the same themes. I would also like to voice remembrance to William Drake, scholar, educator, loyal friend, and loving family man. As the first "Drake Lecturer," Professor Drake also touched upon a theme Montaigne prized—individual freedom.

Michel de Montaigne's educational philosophy presented in his essay "On the Education of Children" centers on children learning to judge rightly (Worley, 2012). To "judge rightly" means to understand, analyze, and question the given world—the everydayness of life—and to act virtuously in it. Hence, the pupil's judgment is strengthened by scrutinizing opinions through dialectic ultimately to judge their efficacy and strength of argument (Foglia & Ferrari, 2019). Montaigne (1993) declares, "The tutor is to judge his pupil's progress by Plato's dialectical method" (p. 55). For Montaigne the philosophical endeavor offers learners a path to learn how to judge astutely and live virtuously. But Montaigne's notions of philosophy, greatly influenced by Socrates, also raise questions and stimulate further discussion about philosophical activity and how such activity affects the experiences of learning. In further elucidating and analyzing this idea, I shall first discuss Montaigne's understanding of philosophy and its connection to Plato's spokesperson Socrates. I then explore how this understanding influences Montaigne's philosophy of education. Lastly, I consider how Montaigne's suggested use of philosophy enhances what I call a "serenity of learning," augments the philosophical life, and continues the conversation about its application in teaching and learning experiences.

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533–1592) wrote his essays (the French word *essais* translates as *attempts*) during a time of political and civil upheaval in his native France. Civil wars between Catholics and Protestants (Halpin, 2015; Hansen, 2002) forced Montaigne to remain loyal to the Catholics, while at the same time, at the behest of princes of both religious factions, to negotiate between the warring religious parties. Montaigne served two terms as Mayor of Bordeaux, held a judicial position in Bordeaux's Parliament, and, at the age of thirty-nine—leaving a life of action—retired to his family's château to study and write.

Philosophy, Socrates, and Dialectic

Montaigne is a thoughtful writer who observes and writes about life's occurrences—occurrences both consequential and inconsequential (Hartle, 2003). It proves only fitting that Montaigne referred to his works as "attempts." He often meanders, questions himself, and changes his mind, sometimes even on the very next page of a particular essay (Bakewell, 2020). Sarah Bakewell, author of *How to Live, or a Life of Montaigne in One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer*, argues that Montaigne "lets his material pour out, and never worries if he has said one thing on one page and the opposite overleaf, or even in the next sentence" (p. 7). It is as if he allows the reader to witness a writer in action: to experience his dynamic, perceptive, but at times, confounding thoughts about life. Montaigne expresses his solitary thoughts about the world in the form of the written word. This dual intellectual activity—the isolated thinker and public engager—reminds one of Socrates in the *Symposium* (Plato, 385–370 BCE/1997), before the wide-ranging dialogue on *eros*, when Apollodorus notices that Socrates "began to think about something, lost himself in thought, and kept lagging behind" (Plato, 385–370 BCE/1997, 174e). Socrates will eventually enter Agathon's home, enjoy the festivities, and philosophize with others, but not before he engages in private reflection. In this same vein, while Montaigne writes about the world around him (Bakewell, 2010), he also probes his own inner world, exemplifying the Socratic endeavor to strive for self-knowledge and uphold the Delphic maxim of *gnoti seauton* (know thyself) (Foglia & Ferrari, 2019). A major theme for Montaigne in his *Essays* (1580–1587/1993) is to know oneself and possess oneself.

Montaigne's essay "On the Education of Children" was written to Madame Diane de Foix, Comtesse de Gurson (1540–1587), who at the time of Montaigne's writing was due to give birth. Indeed, Montaigne says he wishes to impart some educational thoughts "to that little man who threatens shortly to make a happy departure from your womb" (Montaigne, 1580/1993, p. 52), opining that, with the aid of a conscientious tutor, the future child must be taught to learn through the free exchange of ideas, becoming able to interrogate the great thinkers and to create self-meaning out of the world. This essay caused others to advance an accepted, though at times contested, assertion that Montaigne is the "first modern" because

of his essay's focus on individual judgment and, by extension, freedom and self-authorship (Sterling, 2020). Indeed, it can be convincingly evidenced that this Montaigne essay promotes an education that prizes individualism, freedom of thought, and self-possession (Sterling, 2020). In what is roughly three segments divided into three volumes—the first and third detailing Montaigne's own education and the second his educational philosophy and programming—Montaigne reveals himself within *Essays* as a student and educational thinker, recounting to his readers the education his father gave him, his feelings of intellectual mediocrity when compared to the ancients, his difficulty learning languages, his experience with the liberal arts, his criticism of the authoritative schooling of his day, and his learning through demonstration and action.

But to understand *Essays* broadly, one must realize Montaigne's contention that the central purpose of education is to develop one's judgment; this, he argues, comes by way of reading history and philosophy (Hartle, 2003). Montaigne cites countless ancient thinkers, particularly Plutarch and Seneca. In fact, Montaigne recognizes his own weakness when he compares his thoughts to theirs, writing: "I realize how weak and poor, how heavy and lifeless I am, in comparison with them, and feel pity and contempt for myself" (Montaigne, 1580/1993, p. 50). From an instructional standpoint, Montaigne references Plato, and Plato's mouthpiece, Socrates. For Montaigne, Plato's, or more specifically Socrates' dialectical method, offers learners (in this case children) a path to a noble and virtuous life and, by extension, wisdom.

Montaigne expresses great admiration for Socrates. In his essay "On Physiognomy," Montaigne (1588/1952) reminds readers how Socrates philosophized on the nature of things by first applying relatable examples found in our everyday experiences. Montaigne writes, Socrates "moves close to the ground" and "discourses on the most useful subjects" (p. 312). This commonsense understanding of reality is paradoxically the content and context in which philosophy does its work. It is Socrates, argues Montaigne, "who brought human wisdom down again from the skies where it was wasting its labour, and restored it to man, with whom its most normal, its most toilsome, and its most useful business lies" (p. 313). Montaigne's Socrates is not one who contemplates the forms, but one who explores topics that affect life (Hartle, 2003). By understanding Socrates and his work in this way, Montaigne redeems philosophy from its arrogance and rescues it from only existing within the superior, remote mind of the philosopher (Hartle, 2003).

Dialectic or philosophy, then, becomes a palpable, efficacious instructional strategy for the tutor and pupil. The tutor encourages the pupil to "sift everything and take nothing into his head on simple authority or trust" (Montaigne, 1580/1993, p. 56). While Montaigne does not go into detail concerning Plato's dialectic, one can assume his familiarity with

the method's challenging nature. Of course, there has been a plethora of philosophical writing on Socrates' teaching method. Socrates' method was a negative learning experience in the sense that he disabused interlocutors of their assumptions by asking probing questions (Woodruff, 2005). The so-called "Socratic method" has been named by some as a "negative dialectical questioning" strategy (Fullam, 2015, p. 56). The method is negative in that it does not lead to the discovery of new information but rather destroys or eradicates one's original idea, claim, or position. This, of course, has also been identified as the *elenchus*—the dialogic exchange where an interlocutor's claim is refuted when, and only when, its negation results from the interlocutor's own opinions (Vlastos, 1991). As I indicate, Montaigne does not go into detail about the intricacies of Socrates' dialectic, but one can imagine the tutor's use of the dialectic, would, as it did with Socrates' interlocutors, lead pupils to *aporia* (Candiotto, 2018).

Aporia (perplexity) may initially be painful to the learner since it is designed to confront the learner's faulty logic or false assumptions, yet in consciously knowing one's ignorance, one is set on the path to knowledge and self-improvement (Ionescu, 2008). Moreover, as one commentator has expressed of the *elenchus*, the interlocutors "would eventually have to admit that the certainty of their knowledge was pretty flimsy and that doubt, in fact, replaced their certainty" (Tubbs, 2005, p. 104). In the experience of the dialectic, Montaigne ostensibly endorses a "common-sense" skepticism that includes a healthy and balanced dose of self-doubt that guards against dogmatism, intellectual stubbornness, and expression of mere opinion (Hartle, 2003). At this point, we can already see how this 16th-century thinker speaks to many of the learning goals and desires modern-day educators have for their students, additionally appreciating the role doubt plays in the learning process.

Montaigne understands the intellectual challenges that come with philosophizing—"sifting through everything" can be excruciatingly difficult for students. But such challenges free the mind, even during times when the learner is forced to suspend judgment. An individual learns through the mental discomfort philosophy prompts. Remaining in doubt, then, becomes a stage in the process of learning. As evidence of this, Montaigne (1580/1993) points to Dante's *Inferno*, specifically Canto XI, verse 93, where Dante (1321/2000) states "It pleases me as much to doubt as to know." (p. 56).[1] For Montaigne, Dante's (1321/2000) simple experience of sharing his queries about transgressors' eternal consequences with Virgil is as pleasurable as receiving from the ancient Roman poet the answers he craves.

The Tools of Philosophy

But what does the tutor utilize for content? Both at the beginning and toward the end of "On the Education of Children," Montaigne (1580/1993) credits ancient thinkers and books for his education. Early in his essay,

Montaigne points out the guidance he received from Seneca and Plutarch, and toward the end of his essay he tells readers of his introduction to certain great books: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the works of Terence and Plautus. But these books are not to be poured into the student's head as if to fill a void, only to have the student regurgitate quotations from these and other authors without understanding them, analyzing them, or reflecting on them. In his essay "Of Pedantry" (Montaigne, 1580/1952a), an essay written before "Of the Education of Children," he criticizes the prevailing educational system of his day, asserting:

> We only labour to stuff the memory, and leave the conscience and the understanding unfurnished and void. Like birds who fly abroad to forage for grain, and bring it home in the beak, without tasting it themselves, to feed their young; so our pedants go picking knowledge here and there, out of books, and hold it at the tongue's end, only to spit it out and distribute it abroad. (p. 57)

Whether tutors or pupils, educators or learners, we do not read books, philosophize, or learn in general as a kind of ornamentation to show others. Seriously reflecting on the educational content's pragmatic use in life is a proper education. According to Montaigne, the whole world is the content; it is the "pupil's book" (Montaigne, 1850/1993, p. 64), meaning human events are subject matter *par excellence* for those who philosophize. Montaigne includes a famous story told by Pythagoras to emphasize his point:

> Our life, said Pythagoras, is like the great and crowded assembly at the Olympic games. Some exercise the body in order to win glory in the contests; others bring merchandise there to sell for profit. There are some—and these are not the worst—whose only aim is to observe how and why everything is done, and to be spectators of other men's lives, in order to judge and regulate their own. (p. 64)

Interestingly, Pythagoras' allegory has traditionally been understood to view the philosopher as the spectator who engages in *theoria* (Burger, 2013; Duarte, 2010). But Montaigne uses Pythagoras' allegory to remind readers that a philosopher does not solely ponder abstract concepts but ponders, too, concrete examples. One sees such evidence when, shortly after Pythagoras' story, Montaigne offers readers the example of Anaximenes the pre-Socratic philosopher, who asked Pythagoras, "How can I meditate on the secrets of the stars when I have death or slavery always before my eyes?" (Montaigne, 1850/1993, p. 66). Montaigne understands that the tutor and pupil must philosophize about what truly matters. This is why Montaigne opines, shortly after sharing what Anaximenes tells Pythagoras, that every person should ask themselves the question: "Beset as I am by ambition, avarice, temerity, and superstition, and having so many other enemies of life within me, shall I start speculating about the motions of

the world?" (p. 66). Montaigne asks his readers, the Comtesse's future child, future tutors and pupils, first to come to terms with their fallibilities, and then to probe deeply and carefully into themselves to reflect on what kind of learning, what kind of education, they strive for. Will that education develop one's virtue and judgment? Here again, Montaigne's thoughts evoke struggles and goals we as educators and learners experience in coming to know ourselves, as we as imperfect human beings help one another, and as tutors serve the world through education. Hence, the pressing issues of educational philosophy reside in one's soul (Miner, 2017), and developing a healthier soul can only come via philosophical activity on what others do; on the world that has been given to us. As educationist Brann (1979) remarks:

> Philosophy is indissolubly dependent on the conservation of a grown and given realm. If we were ever to succeed in transforming our whole world, including ourselves, into a "second nature," the intellect and its theory would indeed have to cease. (p. 144)

For Montaigne, the tutor's philosophical activity with the pupil is not about contemplating universals, but particular, concrete circumstances (Hartle, 2003). Ann Hartle, author of *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher* (2003), argues Montaigne rescued philosophical practice from its vanity and understanding of itself as only being practiced within the superior, distant mind of the philosopher. To Montaigne, philosophy must be examined in the world. Philosophy must engage with the "given realm."

Often a courageous thinker, Montaigne's conception of philosophy differs from many philosophers of his day, surmising,

> It is a great pity that things have reached such a pass in our age, and that philosophy is now, even to men of intelligence, a vain and chimerical name, a thing of no use or value either in the popular opinion or in reality. (Montaigne, 1580/1993, p. 66)

Montaigne believed the philosophers of his time exerted their energies quibbling about the cosmos as opposed to examining human issues. Along with his criticisms of philosophy's obstruse subject matter, Montaigne also suggests philosophy has been perceived as a severe, remote, and bleak practice. But this is far from the truth of philosophy if understood rightly, for indeed, for Montaigne philosophy is agile, cheerful, joyous, and coltish. Drawing from one philosophical exemplar, one is reminded that the Platonic dialogues are dramas that often exhibit the characters' mental agility, repartee, emotion, and playfulness. Consequently, Montaigne reminds one of the humanness of philosophy. Engaging in Montaigne's notion of the philosophical life brings forth wisdom and, to Montaigne, the surest manifestation of a wise person is their positive, happy outlook on life, since such an outlook "calms the tempests of the soul" (p. 67).

Impact Today

I have so far discussed Montaigne's own views of philosophy based on his understanding of Socrates and dialectic, connecting that understanding to his philosophy of education and educational programming. I now recount how Montaigne's proposed practice of philosophy vis à vis the work between tutor and pupil (educator and learner) develops a serene sense of learning, while also raising further questions concerning its activity in educational pursuits.

Before I go on, I do want to say in passing, however, that several educationists do indeed espouse the practice of teachers philosophizing with children. Educator and philosopher Mortimer J. Adler, founder and architect of the Paideia schools and author of *The Paideia Proposal* (1998) considers Socratic dialogue an important instructional strategy to children's education. Adler views all children's humanness as the great proof that they can learn through philosophizing, specifically through Socrates' dialectic (Adler, 1998). In Matthew Lipman's (2003) *Philosophy for Children* educational approach (P4C) he posits children can engage in and learn from sustained philosophical discussion (McCall, 2009). Along with his colleague, Ann Margaret Sharp, Lipman also maintains philosophical practice can improve children's entire educational experience, including in critical thinking skills and judgment (Gregory, 2011). Students of the Neo-Kantian German philosopher Leonard Nelson developed a nuanced version of the Socratic method in the early-20th century, which incorporates Socratic discussion with primary and secondary students, specifically including material on ethics and justice (Delgehausen, 2004; Saran & Neiser, 2004). Finally, noted philosopher Gareth Matthews theorizes a child's confusion or puzzlement as a stage in their development toward philosophical sophistication (Backhurst, 2023).

According to these educationists, especially Matthews and Lipman, children naturally philosophize about ethical and moral issues (Pritchard, 2022). While proponents of philosophizing with children are many, criticism about the possibility of children philosophizing stubbornly remains. Besides claims of developmental psychologists working in the tradition of Jean Piaget that children cannot think abstractly or reflect until reaching Piaget's fourth operational stage (Bakhurst, 2023), others note the "pure versus practical distinction" of philosophy: to wit, philosophy focuses on exegetical work and theory and should be left to professional philosophers as opposed to those outside the academic philosophic world (Gregory, 2011). Other objectors claim more practical reasons—overcrowded curriculum, a lack of teacher training, etc. in their arguments against the practice of children philosophizing.

When accepting Montaigne's idea that children philosophize and continue to do so throughout their education and lives, one should then

consider how Montaigne's assertion that philosophy, "calms the tempests" of one's soul relates to teaching and learning. I previously considered Dante's, one might argue, educational doubt, as instructive and edifying to his learning. To Dante, querying, wondering, and doubting about why, in the 6th circle of hell, a group of wrongdoers are not condemned to the same area as others, is a pleasurable, arguably serene exercise—an exercise not solely based on utility or outcome, but in its very practice.

At this point, I wish to offer two other examples of philosophers who speak to the promise of philosophizing with children—Socrates and Augustine. According to Brann (1999) both experienced wonder, awe and perplexity throughout their lives—for Socrates the subject was Being and the nature of the whole. For Augustine, it was the workings of God. However, both exhibit, as one commentator has claimed—a kind of stressless inquiry. There is no anxiety about arriving at answers or immediacy in discovering the truth, while at the same time, both Socrates and Augustine do not lose hope that an answer can be discovered.

Arguably, the learner enjoys hearing or asking the question as much as finding the answer. The queries and struggles people grapple with through the dialectic bring pleasure; learning through philosophy is pleasurable. Dialectic also assuages needless anxiety for knowledge of the whole. To doubt in this sense is not to question in such a way as if to hold all of reality suspect or to suffer anxiety about one's confusion. The confusion occurs when a tutor or educator attempts to quell their pupil's confusion by degrading wonder, awe, and the questioning that wondering and awe inspires (Brann, 1999). Such harm would not be allowed in Montaigne's classroom rather, in the spirit of Montaigne's earlier thought experiment which he employs often in his *Essays*, I offer this question that I argue educators should ask themselves:

> As the facilitator of the dialectic and instructor of the lesson, shall I opt to give the answer immediately to address the student's perplexity or give the student the space to wrestle with the topic even if the experience is uncomfortable?

The answer may seem obvious, and as good moderns and educators committed to learner-centered instruction, we choose the latter, but if we think of education today, with its managerial class dictating mandates and external demands from pressure groups, how cognizant is the teacher of making room for philosophizing? Do we still offer that space for inquiry and wonder considering the challenges wrought by education today?

As Montaigne posits, the tutor allows the student to doubt or suspend judgment if they cannot arrive at a definitive answer. This view of education—one that differed from the prevailing view of education in Montaigne's day—offers the opportunity for learners to ponder, wonder, and grow as individuals; for the pupil eventually to fulfil Montaigne's amazing comment in Book 1, of his Essays, "The greatest thing in the

world is for a man…to know that he is his own" (Montaigne, 1580/1952b, p. 109).

As noted previously, Montaigne's philosophy is not the esoteric, snobbish, grim activity philosophy is commonly characterized as. As Montaigne begins to end the section on his specific educational program and philosophy, he proclaims a poetic and naturalistic description of philosophy as the path to virtue, saying, "But anyone who knows the way can get there by shady, grassy, and sweetly flowering paths, pleasantly and up an easy and smooth incline, like that of the vault of heaven" (Montaigne, 1580/1993, p. 68). Dante's pleasure in doubting as much as knowing reflects this serenity of philosophizing and, by extension, learning. One comes to see how such an activity cares for the pupil's soul and offers a calming, renewing experience not unlike Socrates' discussions with his interlocutors in that the more they discussed virtue, justice, piety, and courage, the more they encountered themselves, encountered their own self-knowledge (Hakim, 1992). Should not educators who employ philosophy in learning experiences want this for their students? While Adler, Lipman, Sharp, and Matthews saw the promise of important outcomes from philosophizing with children, it is no less essential to keep in mind the serene and pleasurable experience philosophy affords and the way its practices care for learners' innermost selves.

However, for philosophy to calm the tempests, as Montaigne gracefully expresses, is to see philosophy as more than a practical strategy that leads one to virtue and correct judgment. For Montaigne, philosophy's worth is its practical effects. Knowing that *philosophy qua philosophy* is enjoyable in and of itself, its practical effects may then be considered secondary. Returning to philosophy's "pure versus practical" distinction, is philosophy more of a theoretical enterprise reserved for professional philosophers, or is it what Aristotle asserts in Book 10 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (335–322 BCE/1941), a contemplative activity that leads to complete happiness or *blessedness*? And if this is the case, then is the philosopher's role merely to be the spectator at the Olympic Games involved in solitary reflection? By following these lines of argument, educators may consider philosophizing difficult to maintain in teaching and learning situations. These ruminations about philosophy raise questions about Montaigne's understanding of the activity, but also challenge educators to wonder about the possibilities of philosophy in education.

Conclusion

Educators may still wonder whether children can truly philosophize or if philosophy finds its true home in practical outcomes, such as attaining virtue and correct judgment as Montaigne thought it did. Nevertheless, a lasting question for me remains: does Montaigne rob philosophy of reaching the highest plains of life—the level of pure contemplation? Is Socrates lagging behind the others, lost in thought, the philosopher's true home? These are important questions to consider. But educators can at least now know that Montaigne's educational philosophy in the essay "On

the Education of Children" has the potential to calm those tempests that, for us, come from the demands of modernity—exactness, immediacy, and certainty; calms the tempests engendered by authoritative forms of education; and calms those tempests that come from our own anxiety, confusion, anger, or incorrect judgment. Educators may also take delight in how Montaigne's educational philosophy opens doors to a classroom full of wonder and freedom, a place suitable to live out the maxim, "The greatest thing in the world is for a man…to know that he is his own." As educators, let us commit ourselves to doing the same.

Endnote

[1] Looking more deeply into this oft-attributed line from Dante quoted in Montaigne's essay reveals a misattribution I can only partially unravel. Despite Montaigne's "quotation," Dante never uses these exact words according to any standard translation (this phrase Montaigne attributes to *Inferno*, Canto XI, verse 93), so this "quotation" is most likely a misattribution which focuses upon the themes of *Inferno*. Grok kindly reminds us—and Grok's take dovetails well with Bakewell's (2011) characterization of Montaigne's writing style and modus operandi—"Montaigne was known to quote from memory and sometimes took liberties with sources, as he himself admits in his *Essays* (e.g., enjoying "mental playfulness" and occasional misquoting)" (xAI, 2025). So, while this Dante phrase is "quoted" in Montaigne's Essays, its sentiment is well aligned with Dante's intent, and it has been *widely* attributed as a verbatim quotation, the phrase "It pleases me no less to doubt as to know" does not match with any known line in any Dante text.

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In Search of the American Dream

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Introduction

Many, today, refer to "the American Dream." Some say they came to the U.S. to realize this dream; some say they want the dream but have not discovered how to realize it; others declare the dream was never meant for them, and still others that it no longer exists if it ever did. From where did this supposed dream come? For whom was it meant? Has it ever been real and obtainable? Although key thinkers throughout history have examined the relation between individuals and society, theorized, and compiled thought experiments reflecting their conceptions for the ideal or good society, in his 1931 thematic people's history, *Epic of America*, historian James Truslow Adams (1878–1949) first coined the now familiar term, "American Dream," defining the Dream as

> …that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. … It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.[1]

Adams wanted his readers to understand that although the American Dream is a society, each generation within that society must struggle to hold onto "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Later that decade, in the newly named John Dewey Society's first yearbook, The Teacher and Society (1937), philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952) applies Adam's term to education, asserting the teacher to be American's dream-keeper: "The American dream has not been of a golden age of the past…but of a better life possible of attainment in the…[not-too-distant] future."[2]

Here, I neither argue an American Dream exists as possibility, is alive and well, or is pie in the sky, nor do I posit a new vision for such a dream, mapping a path toward realizing it. Instead, I take the reader with me on my journey to identify and define the American Dream. I begin my journey highlighting key thinkers in philosophical history who examine society and individuals in society to discover the relation between the two. I then note

when many thinkers began moving away from philosophy to form the new disciplinary category, the social sciences, and how this social science perspective altered how thinkers conceptualized the Dream. I outline this history to underscore the American Dream's roots stretching thousands of years' deep into human history and philosophy—revealing the human desire and goal to achieve freedom, equal opportunities, and equal legal and political rights—before scholars began breaking from philosophy and the doubts philosophical reflection raises. Next, I zoom into colonial America and the early United States. To exemplify commonalities among the nation's founders, I examine Thomas Jefferson's (1743–1826) "dream" for the future United States before turning to early French tourist Alexander de Tocqueville's (1805–1859) wanting to see a utopian dream realizing itself before him or at least glimpse the possibility of its fulfillment on the landscape. I then weigh Josiah Royce's (1855–1916) desire to found and fulfill the Dream in Christian faith, a faith in which all might unite in loyalty, amidst the reality of a citizenry rife with differences: cultural, educational, economic, and religious to name a few. From Royce's faith- and loyalty-based model, I move to a human- and social-psychology-based model with Graham Wallas' (1858–1932) dual-public, Great or Mega Society, Walter Lippmann's (1889–1974) politically based Good Society, built upon the authority of centuries of Greek and European philosophical thought, and John Dewey's (1859–1952) reliance on the mutual influence between individuals and society to create community life, the symbol of his Great Community. Finally, after scattering contemporary political events before the reader, I ask the reader if those in the U.S. are living the American Dream, can see it on the horizon, believe it was or is possible. I ask readers to face the ongoing impact of mass communication, social media, and multiple technologies before asking themselves, "Is Adams' American Dream still viable?" and "What kind of community best serves our needs?"

From Philosophy to the Social Sciences

In *John Dewey, An Intellectual Portrait*, Sidney Hook (1902–1989) asserted:

> In one form or another, all the classic figures in ancient and modern philosophy have devised criteria for their concepts for a good society. The perplexities, fears, and hopes of their time and groups with which they associated themselves entered even into metaphysical constructions whose speculative towers disappeared, lost in the sky.[3]

If Hook was correct, all societies about which we have information have sought the Good Society we know as the "The American Dream," lands where people dream "speculative towers…in the sky." Indeed, since civilization's development after the agricultural revolution more than 10,000 years ago and the subsequent food surplus that made social institutions' creation possible, humans have interested themselves in how kinship groups, communities, societies, and larger social and political organizations function. In the *Republic* Plato (428/427 B.C.E.–348/347 B.C.E.) reports on

the Socratic concept of society. Socrates (384–322 B.C.E.) envisioned an egalitarian state of educated citizens whose happiness depended primarily upon fitting the citizen's nature, appetites, energy, creativeness, spirit, and desire for wisdom to the citizen's position in society.[4] Plato's student, Aristotle (384 B.C.E.–322 B.C.E.), rejected Plato's thought experiment in the *Republic* as utopian and too far removed from peoples' personal experiences to be viable. He desired, instead, a constitutional state where moral political leaders would lead morally equal citizens.[5]

Later writers often examined social life, writing utopian or dystopian literature and investigating the human condition via religious and philosophical texts.[6] After the Romans no longer dominated the British Isles (410 C.E.) and Europe (476 C.E.; 1453 C.E. for Eastern Roman Empire), Roman civilization's history, its development from kingdom to republic and from oligarchy to empire alongside Christianity's rise, created a blueprint for a successful society others could follow.[7] That blueprint did not deter thinkers living after Rome's decline from reconceptualizing the meaning and value of a good or ideal society. Renaissance political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1597) not only critiqued society but suggested how to improve social order.[8] As bases for "the universal reform of human society," John Amos Comenius (1592–1657) introduced ideas of churches' ecumenical cooperation and governments' cooperation toward achieving international peace and equal, universal education for all children.[9] Unsurprisingly, Enlightenment thinkers also reconceptualized the ideal society. John Locke (1632–1704) argued for natural rights;[10] Montesquieu (1689–1755) advocated for distributing governmental powers;[11] Voltaire (1694–1778) criticized oppressive authority, intolerance, and the problems inherent in state religion;[12] Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) broke the "common man's" social, political, and economic chains to position individual liberty within a society with a social contract.[13] Immanuel Kant (1722–1804), emphasized the role of reason, the good will, the categorical imperative, and duty.[14] Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) asserted sex-segregated education denies boys practice for their adult reality living in a dual-sex society and denies women their educational, political, social, and economic rights, negatively affecting the whole society.[15] G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) contended one can only be free in a society of others within a state minimizing lordship and bondage.[16] These philosophers repeatedly analyzed and critiqued society and the individual in society, theorizing how society and its individuals would function best while enjoying the most contentment. This repeated emphasis on society and the individual in society evolved into the subfield of social philosophy to which such early social philosophers as David Ricardo (1722–1823), Adam Smith (1723–1790), Johann Herbart (1776–1841), Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), Tomas Masaryk (1850–1937), and Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) contributed. Although such thinkers as Karl Marx (1818–1883), Friedrich Engles (1820–1895), Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936), and Max Weber (1864–1920) maintained strong connections to philosophy, they

supported a new analysis of society manifested in positivism's rise and the social and political revolutions of their times.[17] Signaling an even stronger shift to the social within philosophy, the 1908 International Conference for Philosophy in Heidelberg included seven disciplinary sections, the social-science sections of philosophy, "Psychology" and "Ethics and Sociology" among them.[18] As social analysis took new forms, these forms evolved into psychology, sociology, economics, and anthropology, forever separating from philosophy to become the new field of social science.[19]

Whether Plato, reporting on Socrates or speaking for himself, Aristotle, disagreeing with his teacher, the Renaissance Machiavelli, known for his unflattering assessment of his own society, the many Enlightenment idealists and pioneers, or those 19th- and 20th-century philosophers moving toward something not quite philosophy, thinkers throughout history have analyzed and critiqued society and the individual in society, always envisioning the good society, a society varying according to social and political circumstances, a society and individuals in that society who nevertheless would want to strive to realize their "American Dream."

Colonial American, Early U.S. Society, and the American Dream

When considering colonial America and the early U.S. in the context of a "good society," one turns first to Thomas Jefferson who conceptualized the new nation, the United States of America, as a good society, a society realizing many people's American Dream even in forming these United States. Just as Jefferson embraced such English and French political philosophers' ideals as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's when drafting the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson continued to draw from these thinkers when conceptualizing and translating his own ideas into the new nation's plan for expansion, governing the new territories, and opening the land for individuals' purchase. When assembling this governing and land-ownership plan for the nation's expansion, Jefferson also drew from less-lofty sources, listening attentively to French revolutionaries' ideas and impressions and information the French press disseminated about the fledgling nation, some of which first appeared in his *Notes on Virginia*.[20] He then carefully considered them alongside Locke and Rousseau's political philosophies when planning the good society he envisioned for the Western Territories.[21] Jefferson wanted to shape the new nation's future as a good society by creating pre-planned communities easily organized as the republic expanded west, communities where all have opportunities, communities that would educate all at the public's expense because democracy relies upon it, and communities with a militia, government infrastructure, freedom from slavery, and statehood opportunities as the territory's population increased.[22]

Zooming in more closely, the ideas contributing to Jefferson's envisioning this good society, this dream, blur and recede as slavery comes into full view. How can one have

> …that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement…[?] … a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position…[when slavery exists, excluding so many from this better, richer, fuller life, indeed imprisoning many in the institution, blocking them from the dream?][23]

The slavery reality indeed stared the founding fathers in the face, the obliteration of which all would not agree, its eradication pushed aside in favor of union against the British.[24] Nevertheless, it was as ever-present then as are its haunting shadows today. Jefferson worked to end this institution first in colonial America, then in the newly formed United States of America. In addition to speaking against slavery, Jefferson made anti-slavery provisions in "A Summary View of the Rights of British America" (1774), his draft of the Constitution of Virginia (1776), the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America (1776), and his book, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785).[25] His fellows rejected each provision. Inconsistent and flawed as he was, Jefferson nevertheless repeatedly tried to effect slavery's end, only for powerful Southern landowners to thwart and cut him and his proposals back until finally silencing him. Slavery would block the nation's becoming a good society, prevent the American Dream, for, as Fredrick Douglas maintained, if even one person remains enslaved, all humankind are in shackles.[26] Passing the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 banning slavery west of the Ohio river was a rare win, though others, not Jefferson, received the credit.

Fifty years later, French historian, political philosopher, and diplomat, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859), drew particularly from Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* (1787) when structuring and composing his two-volume *Democracy in America* (1835; 1840).[27] Familiar with Jefferson's writing from an 1833, two-volume, French-published anthology,[28] de Tocqueville, like Jefferson, tried to describe the newly formed United States but with the additional task of explaining the various social organizations and economic provisions in place during Andrew Jackson's presidency (1829–1837). In the first volume (1835), writing an America which largely mirrored Jefferson and the nation's other founders' visions, an America in which "the equality of conditions is the fundamental fact which from all others seem to be derived, and the central point at which all…[his] observations constantly terminated,"[29] de Tocqueville tried to write an unbiased view of the new United States. In the second volume (1840), he expressed his views on democratic, egalitarian, and libertarian thinking's impact on social institutions, arts, literature, sciences, technology, and education, venting his feelings about U.S. democracy and its influences on its citizens'

lifestyles and world views. When defining U.S. philosophy early in *Volume II*, de Tocqueville even anticipated what became Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910), and John Dewey's (1859–1952) Pragmatism.

> The Americans have no philosophical school of their own; and they care but little for all the schools into which Europe is divided, the very names of which are scarcely known to them…. I discover, that in most of the operations of the mind, each American appeals to the individual exercise of his own understanding alone. America is therefore one of the countries in the world where philosophy is least studied, and where the precepts of Descartes are best applied. Nor is this surprising. The Americans do not read the works of Descartes, because their social condition deters them from speculative studies; but they follow his maxims, because this very social condition naturally disposes their understanding to adopt them.[30]

In subsequent chapters of *Volume II*, de Tocqueville analyzes the impact of the American ethos on personal feelings, manners, and political participation in U.S. society.

To his credit, de Tocqueville looked to learn if injustices perpetuated in Europe continued in the newly proclaimed democracy, or if, as aimed for, the new nation had eradicated injustices or was in the process of dissolving them. He specifically addresses women's, African slaves', indigenous peoples', and the minority's plight in the new nation. For example, de Tocqueville reveals himself a forward-thinking, "liberated" man (for 1835) as he views women's position in U.S. society:

> I do not hesitate to avow, that, although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is in some respects one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position.[31]

Looking further into the nation's social conditions, de Tocqueville noted the new nation's "superior" European majority's tyrannizing both the African slaves and the indigenous population: "Both of them occupy an inferior rank in the country they inhabit; both suffer from tyranny; and if their wrongs are not the same, they originate at any rate with the same authors."[32] Because this tyrannical behavior did not align with the nation's proclaimed democratic values, de Tocqueville agreed with Jefferson when identifying slavery as the most divisive, dangerous issue for the new, growing nation. Slaveholders remained unwilling to evolve their farms and businesses into a wage-labor economy; even many abolitionists maintained Black Africans to be intellectually inferior to Europeans; and John Dryden's (1672), and more contemporaneously, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1754), François-René de Chateaubriand (1801), James Fenimore Cooper (1826), Herman Melville (1851), and painter George Catlin's (1832) "noble savage" lived not in the everyday American's mind.

Despite the new nation's deficiencies, de Tocqueville comprehensively described the new nation, offering a model for societies' trying to build democratic social, political, legal, and economic systems in Europe while having to overcome centuries of aristocratic, social stratification under monarchic rule, similar to the French system with which he was most familiar.[33] The United States did not have centuries of class divisions, monarchic rule, and the same kind of political, legal, social, and economic inequities persisting in Europe, but the new nation did have its own tyrannies to overcome to realize the good society it imagined for itself, for it stratified its people by gender, race, economics, religion, and majority vs. minority opinions, among others. In the decades following publication of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, the United States continued to expand west, even as slavery and attempts to exterminate the indigenous peoples persisted. After the 1860 election, the secession of states whose populations embraced slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and segregation violently disrupted the Dream for democracy from flowering into a good society.

Loyalty to a Cause-Based Community, Universal Community, and the Unrealizable

As early as the 1880s, Josiah Royce (1855–1916) had attentively examined the nexus of religion and philosophy, for he steadfastly strove to identify and reconcile the relations between faith and reason, theology and philosophy.[34] In his *Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885), for example, Royce applied philosophical principles to religious problems, thereby recognizing doubt as necessary within one's philosophical reflections.[35] Reviewing Royce's book, Charles Sanders Peirce noted that while Royce recognized doubt as necessary to philosophic inquiry, he failed to realize that working to locate religion's origins is abductive, fallible act-seeking.

> Dr. Royce admits in words that belief is what a man will act from, but does not seem to have taken the truth of this proposition home to him, or else he would see that the whole end of inquiry is the settlement of belief.[36]

Later Royce contrasted various conceptions of Truth's source. He argued personal experience to be the source of human knowledge, a source and outcome that cannot approach the universal, absolute, or ideal—the "real" or "absolute" Truth.[37]

Although Royce could never fully divest himself from religious Truth's superseding his philosophical studies with its doubts and problems, he conceived his version of the good society[38] at the point he studied for years, at the problematic crossroads where religion and philosophy meet: community as personal loyalty to a cause.[39] Recognizing theories about communities rely upon unity, that many people from many different backgrounds comprise the United States, and that a society of such varied members tends to limit unity, forcing individuals to confront themselves, their stances, and their society's social units, Royce acknowledged and accepted that many selves constitute community, allowing for such community

variations as the political, geographic, religious, and ethnic.[40] Thus, Royce's community, emerging from personal loyalty to a cause, evolved into the universal community which depends upon the "metaphysical interpretation and foundation of the community," a universal community of mankind:[41] his version of the American Dream.

To educate children for personal loyalty to a cause, this superordinate goal that unites people in community, Royce proposed schools systematically include studies of heroes and adventures that would exemplify the kind of community that would emerge from personal loyalty to a cause.[42]

> First, our loyalty is trained and kept alive by the influence of personal leaders. Secondly, the higher forms of training for loyalty involve a momentous process which I shall call the Idealizing of the Cause. Thirdly, loyalty is especially perfected through great strains, labors, and sacrifices in the service of the cause.[43]

In his *Philosophy of Loyalty* (1914), Royce further developed the underpinnings for this concept of community, relating his concept of community to religion, affirming "devotion to God is inseparably bound up with his loyalty to the mystic union of the faithful in the church."[44] Anticipating Max Weber's (1864–1920) description of charismatic leaders and their importance, Royce expanded his notion that those sharing personal loyalty to a cause unite in community to include personal loyalty to a leader. Noteworthy, neither Royce nor Weber anticipated blind loyalty to leaders and their causes or accounted for charismatic organizations' doom when these organizations failed to integrate into society.[45] Surely unexamined loyalty might be noticeable as an eighth deadly sin, for even in 1914, lost causes and misplaced trust in leaders abounded!

Although the West teetered on the cusp of WWI when Royce published *The Problem of Christianity* (1913), by mid-1915, WWI was reality. Germany patrolled the Atlantic and torpedoed the Lusitania (May 7, 1915), virtually assuring the United States would enter the war. Having lost several friends and students on the Lusitania, a disheartened Royce defined the war as a fight for the "community of mankind" to achieve victory against the "enemy of mankind."[46] Royce nevertheless rallied in his vision for community, claiming "The hope of the community lies in trying to keep before us a vision of what the community of mankind may yet become despite this tragic calamity,"[47] noting with chagrin, "there seems to be some opposition between the political power of a nation and its power to contribute to the ideal goods of the community of mankind."[48] Indeed, blind leadership to such powerful nations' charismatic leaders and their causes weighed heavily toward the religion side of Royce's philosophy–religion nexus. Despite his acknowledging and accepting that many selves comprise community and despite his allowing for such community variations as the political, geographic, religious, and ethnic, Royce ultimately grounded his American Dream for all in faith, specifically Christian faith. Thus, his concept of community united in loyalty toward a cause could

not become the universal community he idealized, for his ideal was loyalty to a monistic—not pluralistic—community of humankind grounded in Christian faith whose single, charismatic-leader's good was probably the only reliable one he could imagine. Royce had created an American Dream doomed to failure because the country for which he envisioned it had never been monistic and, if adhering to the nation's constitutional foundations, never should be.

The Great Society

At Harvard in 1910, Graham Wallas (1858–1932) taught a seminar in politics. In this seminar sat Walter Lippmann (1889–1974) who found disquieting Wallas' defining politics as neither rational nor thoughtful but entrapped in personal prejudice, habit, and instinct.[49] Not unlike Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) and Max Weber (1864–1920), Wallas surveyed modern industrial society in light of the social sciences. Interested in applying psychological constructs previously focused on individuals to the early-20th-century's changing societies, Wallas investigated the relation between human nature and political processes, concluding the relation to be more than "intellectual inferences" but also human memory, habit, and thought.[50] For Wallas, memory, habit, and thought modified humans' instinctive and impulsive behaviors that in turn interacted with political processes: human behaviors—human nature—in relation to the political.[51]

Concerned human socialization before the industrial revolution poorly prepared society for modernizing conditions, Wallas called modern life, in all its scientific and technological complexity and all its international interdependence and communication, a Great Society.[52] Wallas conceptualized this Great Society, this American Dream, as requiring thoughtful, reliable, and continuous leadership without which its future would be unsafe.[53] Wallas contended social psychology could guide human action based on "simple" and "complex" dispositions.[54] His simple dispositions included "Habit, Fear, Pleasure–Pain, Thought, and the intricate psychological facts covered by the terms Imitation, Sympathy, and Love and Hatred."[55] His complex dispositions included instinct and intelligence and dispositions "normally if not invariably" requiring intelligence: thought and language.[56] Apparently emerging from the scientific method, particularly positivism, Wallas' Great Society was less ideal than a predictable means of anticipating masses of humans' behaviors, and, based on their predictable behaviors, how to herd those humans into manageable groups.[57] Wallas perceived these manageable groups' developing by increasing disciplinary specialization: intellectual, religious, social, scientific, and technological.[58] Specialists compartmentalize, communicate with others like them who share the same knowledge base and communication patterns. To thwart these limiting tendencies, Wallas proposed a robust "science of social psychology [which] aims at discovering and arranging the knowledge which will enable us to forecast, and therefore to influence, the conduct of large numbers of human beings organised in societies."[59] Although this social

psychology's positivism, this removing philosophy and therefore doubt accompanying philosophical reflection from the equation for the Dream, would disturb Royce in his idealism, Wallas' positivism-steeped Dream seems no less doomed to failure than Royce's monistic society.

The Good Society

Because Walter Lippmann (1889–1974) caught William James' (1842–1910) attention through an article in which Lippmann questioned elitism in contemporary society, James located Lippmann, congratulated him on his writing, and instigated what became a lasting friendship.[60] Perhaps because of his friendship with James and Wallas, Lippmann, having helped found Harvard's Socialist Club in 1908, ultimately moved from his socialist worldview toward a democratic one.[61]

> [James]…was tolerant; he was willing to listen to what seems preposterous, and to consider what might, though queer, be true. And he showed that this democratic attitude of mind is every bit as fruitful as the aristocratic determination to ignore new and strange-looking ideas. James was a democrat. He gave all men and all creeds, any idea, any theory, any superstition, a respectful hearing.[62]

While James influenced Lippmann's tolerance and pragmatic attitude, George Santayana (1863–1952) kept him grounded in Greek and European philosophy's moralism: "our current statements of morality have their basis in authority rather than in human nature, and their goal in salvation rather than in happiness."[63] Built from centuries of Greek and European philosophical thought, this grounding in moralism and philosophical authority alongside the social climate of the 20th-century's first decade formed Lippmann's worldview.[64]

Thus, focusing on developing new ways to investigate and new ways to understand,[65] Lippmann conceptualized his Good Society by focusing on political rather than psychological themes, wielding the authority of centuries of Greek and European philosophical thought rather than brandishing the new social science of fickle human nature to drive political decisions.[66] As the fulcrum of power, politicians serve government, "a body of officials, some elected, some appointed, who handle professionally, and in the first instance, problems which come to public opinion spasmodically and on appeal."[67] Not statesmen *per se*, most such officials, familiar with government's workings, know how to compromise and locate the common good in new rules and laws. Indeed, Lippmann held no illusions about the efficacy of public opinion on public affairs. He observed ordinary citizens had little interest in government's larger concerns if those affairs did not directly interest or involve them. Therefore, Lippmann devised tests for aligning public opinion with action on governmental issues, the test for government's success being the public's assent and willing conformity. When

lacking the public's assent and conformity, politicians must investigate the rule or law's particulars to explicate to citizens its strengths and weaknesses before trying again to win their assent and conformity.[68]

Because he observed ordinary citizens took little interest in government affairs, Lippmann left little to chance when structuring his Good Society. Dividing citizens' responsibilities between government officials and the public at large, Lippmann delegated four tasks to politicians and three tasks to the public. He assigned politicians responsibility for 1) executive actions, 2) knowing an issue's intrinsic merits, 3) anticipating, analyzing, and solving a problem or an issue, and 4) identifying an issue's specific, technical, and intimate details. He charged the public with responsibility for 1) judging politicians' actions as self-interested or for the common good, 2) generating criteria for analyzing the government's actions, and 3) determining if the government's making, enforcing, or amending a rule reflects reasonable behavior.[69] Noting Lippmann's argument "turns essentially upon a distinction between the few insiders and the many outsiders, the insiders being the active forces, the outsiders being spectators, bystanders," John Dewey found Lippmann's analysis wanting.[70] He agreed with Lippmann's view of pluralistic tendencies, supported the idea that intelligence works to relieve conflicts and surmount difficulties while doubting Lippman's supposition that the many publics in the nation appeared only when they needed to hold political, social, and economic leaders accountable.[71] Lippman's supposition did not align with democracy as Dewey conceived it. Dewey underscored that Lippmann's 1925, *The Phantom Public*,

> expresses a revolt not against democracy but against a theory of democracy which…has distracted the understanding and inflamed the passions, and thereby enormously increased the difficulties of democratic government. For to be workable[,] democracy demands allayed passions and clarified understanding.[72]

Dewey perceived such an analysis as constructive, even though it resulted in Lippmann's truncated view of the public's role in a democracy:[73] "Executive action is not for the public. The intrinsic merits of a question are not for it."[74] Instead, Lippmann considered the public remote and "not…a fixed body of individuals. It is merely those persons who are interested in an affair and can affect it only by supporting or opposing the actors."[75] For Dewey, neither Wallas' conception of social psychology nor Lippmann's view of plural publics could adequately assuage the Great or Good Society's inherent causal problems and dangers to democracy.[76]

Responding to authoritarian and totalitarian states' rise in 1937, Lippmann analyzed the Industrial Revolution's impact and organizational requirements for social change. Inciting movement from small-scale, rural communities and self-sufficient lifestyles toward large-scale, interdependent communities in cities, the Industrial Revolution significantly altered U.S.

society into a Good Society where "the increasing division of labor in ever-widening markets; the machine, the corporation, the concentration of economic control and mass production" dominated.[77] Asserting Liberalism to be the philosophy of the Industrial Revolution, Lippmann was concerned modern,

> …latter-day liberalism had changed from the historic liberalism of Adam Smith (1723–1790) [whose] basic insight into the division of labor was a genuine and a momentous scientific generalization which cannot be obsolete until some radically new mode of production comes into being…. The purpose of liberal reform is to accommodate the social order to the new economy; that end can be achieved only by continual and far-reaching reform of the social order.[78]

The tenets of modern liberalism consisted of free-market enterprise with a robust division of labor, democracy, the inviolability of individuals, personal equality before the law, protection of individual rights, access to education, and equal opportunity.[79] He found most modern liberals to be "collectivists in their conception of the economy, authoritarians in their conception of the state, totalitarians in their conception of society."[80] For Lippmann, the Industrial Revolution caused the reaction to the social change, stirred collectivism's emergence.[81] This collectivism consisted of differently based ideas of the state.[82] Although the gradual collectives might be the corporate structures of private enterprises, workers' unions, or political movements that worked legally to change the economy's structure,[83] authoritarian collectivism dominated societies' employing it, "abolish[ed] the diversity and contrariness of human purposes,"[84] taking control of society's every aspect. In contrast, recognizing "all men are persons, and are not to be treated as things"[85] meant

> [T]he liberal state is not to be conceived as an earthly providence administering civilization. That is the essence of the matter. To the liberal mind the notion that men can authoritatively plan and impose a good life upon a great society is ignorant, impertinent, and pretentious.[86]

Therefore, Lippmann's liberal state's task was to protect rights and dispense justice among individuals and enterprises.[87] Unlike Wallas, who focused on the social sciences to inform the development of society,[88] Lippmann's American Dream, the Good Society, required recognizing social institutions, government, corporate enterprises, and individuals' roles in making society more equitable and humane than it currently was. He suggested one avenue for achieving this Dream to be charting citizens' place in democratic society by focusing civics education on society's structural components.[89]

From Great Society to Great Community

In *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), John Dewey posited the key to social psychology lies not in the operation of instincts but in understanding the importance of habit: "seemingly instinctive, feeling of the direction and end of various lines of behavior is in reality the feeling of habits working below direct consciousness."[90] Indeed, "the experience upon which…[our ideas and sensations] depend is the operation of habits—originally of instincts."[91] Thus, for Dewey, social psychology should focus on collective habits and customs and their impact upon individuals they affect.[92] Although human nature, its instinct, impulse, and intelligence work secondarily to habits and customs, understanding human nature remained vital to that understanding, inciting Dewey to examine its modifiability, role in social arrangements, and relation to cultural behaviors.[93] Because Dewey also wrestled with the distinction between "democracy as a social idea and political democracy as a system of government,"[94] he kept democracy before him during his investigation into social psychology and human nature, for he contended effective democracy must "affect all modes of human association, the family, the school, industry, religion."[95] To investigate social psychology and human nature, Dewey identified four questions: 1) How does human nature affect social arrangements? 2) How modifiable is human nature? 3) Does a fixed range of human natures among individuals or groups exist? 4) Are some individuals or groups' natures superior or inferior to others?[96] Significant to understanding the American Dream Dewey ultimately constructed, Dewey's four questions touch upon the relation between the individual and society, for social contacts and associations influence an individual's habits, and "All…actions of an individual bear the stamp of his community."[97] In Dewey's American Dream,

> The life of the community in which we live and have our being is the fit symbol of this [symbolic] relationship. The acts in which we express our perception of the ties which bind us to others are its only rites and ceremonies.[98]

Dewey proposed community life as his alternative to Wallas' Good and Lippmann's Great Society, conceptualizing the Great Community as missing from the Good and Great Societies that "invaded and partially disintegrated the small communities of former times without generating a Great Community" to replace them.[99] Perhaps it was in the neighborhoods and boroughs of New York City that Dewey found his optimism for the Great Community. Those neighborhoods served the same function as former rural communities with formal and informal local associations and interactions, social and economic functions, religious and moral ideas, and institutional and political functions. What are the conditions "under which the Great Society may become the Great Community[?]"[100]

Individual involvements in social groups and those groups' responses to individuals' needs created the conditions for Dewey's concept of community life, life in which "genuinely shared interest in the consequences of interdependent activities may inform desire and effort"[101] thereby directing action. Dewey found "association itself is physical and organic, while communal life is moral, that is emotionally, intellectually, consciously sustained."[102]

> We are born organic beings associated with others, but we are not born members of a community. The young have to be brought within the traditions, outlook and interests which characterize a community by means of education: by unremitting instruction and by learning in connection with the phenomena of overt association. Everything which is distinctively human is learned, not native.[103]

For Dewey one derives knowledge through lived experience, social interaction, and education.

Continuing by expanding upon education's role in forming and sustaining the Good Community, Dewey identified formal and informal education as localized activities, responsive to social relations and dependent upon the social and intellectual environments' communication to the young.[104] He saw improving communication in the social and intellectual environments as essential, especially for the young, for he observed a "state of imbalance, of profoundly disturbed equilibrium between our physical knowledge and our social–moral knowledge" existed.[105]

The American Dream Today

Thomas Jefferson envisioned a growing, agricultural United States with workers and tradespeople organized in townships with their own schools for all children paid at the public's expense, their own militia, and their own governments designed equally to serve, protect, and support their citizens. Increasing industrialization, big business, sectionalism, and, as he foresaw, slavery's debilitating stronghold soon made the specifics of his vision unviable while its democratic underpinnings remained.[106] Adding his observations to Jefferson's, de Tocqueville noted the new nation had indeed freed itself from European aristocratic and monarchic structures, endowing all citizens with political power while still remarking obstacles to the nation's achieving its declared democratic goal—legal and political equality, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" for all people on U.S. soil—an unrealizable dream as long as slavery and indigenous peoples' oppression remained intact.[107] Josiah Royce conceived community as quasi-religious, absolutist, and united in loyalty to a common cause and then to a leader for that cause. Given the many differences across U.S. society, he could not fathom how so many people with so many differences could or would sustainably unite in loyalty to both cause and leader, especially

once he realized he could not separate his vision from his Christian morals and beliefs. Graham Wallas constructed his Great Society to embody the Industrial Era's ever-increasing emphasis on specialization that social psychology not only informed but drove. Walter Lippmann extended Wallas' analysis of the Industrial Revolution (1790s–early 1900s) and the division of labor through specialization to the political sector. When dividing public responsibilities into politicians' and the general public's duties, Lippmann assigned politicians an exalted place, something Dewey could not rationally align with democracy. Instead, Dewey emphasized the mutual exchange between individuals and community that created community life, conceptualizing that Great Community as "a society in which the ever-expanding and intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities shall be known in the full sense of that word, so that an organized, articulate Public comes into being."[108] Leaping the approximately 75 years since Dewey's death, I ask, "What of the American Dream today? Is Adams' American Dream still viable? What kind of community best serves our needs?"

Today, the latest desire within U.S. government seems to be to create a new, monistic and authoritarian society. The constitutional mandate for separation of powers—not Lippmann's dual publics—into executive, legislative, and judicial now exists in print only, not practice. Loyalist Republicans dominate Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court justices, in conservative majority, impede the executive unwillingly and neither much nor often. The Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation increasingly investigate the executive branch's political rivals, drawing attention away from their public obligations to solve such nationally occurring crimes as human trafficking, child exploitation, and drug-cartel activities. Seemingly, only the most conservative members of the deteriorating two-party system feel free seriously to challenge their less-conservative conservatives with the so-called liberals, the Democrats, offering little organized resistance. Under the guise of efficiency and economy, a *blitzkrieg* of executive orders overwhelms political opponents and government professionals, force dismantling governmental infrastructure, and replace civil servants with loyal cronies.[109] Consolidating government departments and eliminating unprofitable or unwanted international and domestic programs create a government format in which the unchecked Chief Executive curtails or eliminates unprofitable, if compassionate and "nation-healthy," social services and public health care while revoking or cutting research funding after a "word search" for, I would argue, democratic language, investigates private speech, arrests participants peacefully assembling, revokes and restricts students and tourists' visas, revokes rights and denies care for the gender different, all repeatedly underscoring the Compassionless Society, the For-Profit Society, the society honoring the most vulnerable with the least compassion, care, and vision for the nation's future.

Federal administrators turn away emigrants and systematically remove immigrants. Having created an offshore gulag for expatriating undesirable and/or unwanted immigrants without due process, the government authorizes immigration arrests by quota, encouraging officers to neglect cartel, human trafficking, and child exploitation investigations, instead detaining and deporting most anyone within their reach.[110] This Executive-designed and -instigated process negates immigrants' desires and opportunities for a better, safer life even at the bottom of U.S. society. As part of editing and rewriting history, not-so-anonymous powers are erasing women's and minorities' accomplishments and contributions and eliminating uncomfortable truths from the record. Government forbids Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in language and action along with limiting or crushing verbalized opinions in discord with those it authorizes, often punishing such institutions as public schools and universities by withholding funding, representation, and recognition should they fail to comply. Although as a social institution, public education has always been at the public's service, it has also been subject to the needs and desires of governing representatives. That subjugation now noticeably extends beyond public common schools and public higher education institutions to private schools, universities, and career-tech centers. The federal government increasingly supports private and home schooling and controls public schools, long considered a state and local province granted in the U.S. Constitution, mandating their philosophies, curricula, and teaching methods and strategies.[111] Thus is the new American Dream.[112] If teachers remain America's dream-keepers, not-so-anonymous powers are forcing them to keep it to themselves, killing the dreams, killing the dreamers, killing the dream-keepers. Do you have a dream, an American Dream? Is it a dream cast within democracy or one democracy cannot recognize? Critically, is your American Dream a society welcoming "we the people" to come together in legal and political equality, justice, and in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

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An Analysis of Decolonial Studies in a Time of Conflict

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Introduction

An old phrase, often attributed to China, reads, "May you live in interesting times." It is intended as a curse more than anything else. If so, we might consider ourselves cursed given the conditions of recent events. The last presidential election from 2020 ended with an unprecedented attempt to overturn Congress's validation of the electoral count by rioters who forced their way into the nation's capital. Russia invaded Ukraine in a war of aggression that threatens all the efforts since 1945 to create a peaceful Europe. China continues to build military installations on shallow-water areas of sea to project their hegemony over international shipping lanes while continuing to menace Taiwan and threatening to bring that nation under its authoritarian control. There have been two assassination attempts of a former President while a candidate for re-election. In the Middle East, Israel was the victim of a surprise attack on 7 October 2023 that left 1,179 dead and about 250 taken as hostages. Beginning in early 2024 anti-Israel protests on university campuses in the United States escalated beginning with the Columbia University campus occupation. Student protests spread to 45 out of 50 states with encampments, occupations, walkouts, or sit-ins occurring on 140 campuses. Riots and demonstrations have erupted across the U.S. in opposition to President Trump's efforts to deport undocumented immigrants and abrogation of due-process laws. Most recently Israel and Iran engaged in direct warfare as Israel tried to destroy the latter's nuclear-weapons program.

In light of these and other global events, my purpose here is to examine the central tenets of Decolonial Studies and how these tenets have fueled antisemitism through its analysis of the conflict between Israel and Gaza.[1] I first examine the works of leading Decolonial scholars, their advocacy of violence, how they have addressed the conflict in Gaza, and how their ideas have fueled antisemitism. My argument is not intended as an apology for or defense of the State of Israel. To be perfectly clear, both Israel and Hamas have made horrendous policy decisions, treated each other with less than the minimum standard of human dignity, squandered numerous opportunities for peace, and left future generations an inheritance of animosity and

warfare. It is also not my intent to address the Israeli government's seizure of Palestinian land or to debate the occupation of Palestinian land. Rather, my goal is to understand how an academic school of thought embraced and encouraged violence against a particular group, and in doing so ignored similar behavior by other groups that they have otherwise condemned.

Postcolonial studies serves as the analytical lens to analyze Decolonial studies by providing critical tools, historical context, and theoretical frameworks to assess, challenge, and enrich decolonial approaches and help groups to reclaim their identity in a postcolonial world.[2] I intend my analysis be used to highlight both the continuities and differences between the two, particularly whether its central tenets are justified or productive.[3] The anti-Israel protests are of central issue to my argument. These protests have arguably constituted the greatest level of unrest in higher education since the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations of the late 1960s and early 1970s. One field of study that has fueled the demonstrations and been used to justify opposition to Israel has been Decolonial Studies.

Decolonial Studies is an academic field that arose from the 1955 Bandung Conference which produced theory used to explore ways to oppose colonialism in Africa and Asia.[4] Its scholars examine and critique the legacies of colonialism and imperialism, particularly focusing on the ways in which colonial power structures, knowledge systems, and modes of domination continue to shape the modern world.[5] Its creators meant for it to be used to dismantle such structures and suggest alternative futures that resist colonial domination.[6] Decoloniality is defined by its radical delinking from modernity and identity with a revolutionary spirit opposed to coloniality.[7] It is deeply intertwined with activism, indigenous rights, and efforts to challenge the enduring legacies of colonialism in contemporary society. This theory has been used to frame and analyze a broad range of topics in the fields of history, politics, culture, epistemology, race, and identity, and was conceived to center experiences and perspectives of colonized and marginalized peoples.[8] One of the goals of decolonization is the actual return of land and resources to indigenous peoples, and the dismantling of colonial structures.[9] It is important to note these goals have been commonly expressed during the 2024 protests. There is debate as to what extent the protests were organic in nature or were driven by outside agencies with an anti-Israel agenda, however, most consider it a largely grassroots movement.[10] The question of the origins of the 2024 protests, however, I see as secondary to a critical examination of the rhetoric surrounding them.

Many scholars view the conflict in Gaza as a colonial-type struggle, comparing it to other settler societies like Australia and the United States.[11] This perspective challenges the notion of Israeli identity and self-determination while focusing on the idea of colonial dynamics.[12] Decolonial

scholars who engage with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict often critique the Israeli state through the lens of settler colonialism and focus on the colonial nature of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, viewing Israel as a settler-colonial state that has displaced and continues to dispossess the Palestinian population similar to other global anti-colonial and decolonial movements.[13]

The ability critically to analyze current events is essential to understanding what ideas and perspectives influence different groups. Critical discourse analysis is one of the methodologies used in Postcolonial Studies to examine how literature is used to challenge colonial power structures and shape national identities.[14] This methodology is most often used to investigate how language reflects and reinforces structures and ideologies, and serves as a powerful tool in comprehending the complexities and nuances of current affairs.[15] Unlike traditional discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis is used to critique and challenge social injustices by exposing how language contributes to the reproduction or transformation of social problems.[16] Using the methodology of critical discourse analysis, one can unpack underlying power dynamics, social constructs, and ideological narratives that shape the narratives surrounding current events.[17] This methodological approach allows one to move beyond surface-level understanding of what is being reported and instead to delve deeper into implications and sociopolitical contexts informing these events.

The critical discourse analysis emphasizes the role of language in constructing and perpetuating social phenomena. By scrutinizing the language used in media coverage, political discourses, and public debates, one can identify the ways in which power is exercised, dominant perspectives are reinforced, and marginalized voices are suppressed or overlooked.[18] Such a critical examination of the linguistic elements of current events can help one unveil hidden agendas, biases, and power structures that influence the public's understanding and interpretation of societal issues.[19]

Defining antisemitism is challenging due to its diverse manifestations and the contested politics surrounding it. It encompasses ideological, attitudinal, and practical elements, and is often linked to broader phenomena like ethnic prejudice.[20] The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance uses a *Working Definition of Antisemitism*, a non-legally binding definition.[21] Antisemitism specifically targets the state of Israel as a notion of Jewish collectivity, denying Jewish people the right to self-determination by advocating the elimination of Israel, applying double standards or expectations not demanded of other nations, comparing the actions of the Jewish people or Israel to Nazis, or holding Jewish people collectively responsible for the actions of Israel.[22] There is another important definition, Zionism, which needs to be articulated clearly because while antisemitism and antizionism are similar, they are not the same and the

distinction is important. Zionism originated in the late-19th century as a movement to fulfill the national aspirations of the Jewish people.[23] It was intended to be used to establish and maintain a Jewish nation in Palestine, a region corresponding to ancient Israel.[24] This could only be accomplished by securing as much land as possible for Israeli inhabitants and removing as many Arab citizens who lived there as possible.[25] Antizionism and antisemitism are related but distinct concepts. Antisemitism is hostility or prejudice against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or cultural group, while antizionism is opposition to Zionism or the idea of a Jewish state in Israel. While the two terms contain overlap, they are not inherently the same.[26] The expansion from antizionism to antisemitism takes place when an individual's position evolves into a more direct anti-Jewish attack, often specifically in relation to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.[27]

Double Standards

Double standards in decolonialism can manifest in various ways, often leading to inconsistencies in how principles are applied. One way this double standard has been evidenced is through the romanticization of indigenous knowledge. Decolonialism may romanticize indigenous practices and knowledge systems, potentially overlooking the complexities and contradictions within those traditions while at the same time focusing on flaws in the perceived dominant culture or state. Some critiques of colonialism focus heavily on specific historical instances while overlooking other forms of oppression or colonial-like practices occurring elsewhere, leading to a biased understanding of justice. A frequent subfield of study in decolonialism has been the conquest and colonization of Central and South America by the Spanish. The history and legacy of Spanish colonialism has been widely critiqued; however, the legacy of the Aztec and Mayan civilizations' widespread practices of human sacrifice, child sacrifice, cannibalism, rule through autocratic monarchies, and wars of conquest have been given far less attention by comparison.[28] Conversely, much of the legacy that colonizing nations left behind are criticized even though they remain adopted long after the colonizing powers have left, such as language, religion, and other social institutions.[29]

There can also be a double standard in how violence is interpreted; actions by marginalized groups may be justified as resistance, while similar actions by dominant groups are condemned, even when the contexts may be comparable. For example, Hamas set up a one-party state that crushed political opposition within its territory, bans same-sex relationships, represses women, and openly espouses the killing of all Jews.[30] The double standard is a central element of Decolonial Studies. It holds that Israel is a foreign colonizing force, and that Palestinians have a right to eliminate their oppressors.

Frantz Fanon has argued that decolonization is a violent process, as it involves dismantling the structures of colonialism deeply embedded in society. He viewed violence as a necessary means to achieve genuine decolonization.[31] He maintained that violent struggle could serve a cathartic function, and be culturally and psychologically beneficial to those oppressed by colonialism.[32] Fanon concludes in *The Wretched of the Earth* that non-violent resistance was ineffective, dismissing it as merely preserving of the capitalist, colonialist state.[33] The Hamas attack was therefore, viewed through Fanon's argument, a natural consequence of Israel's history of oppression.[34] Walter Mignolo's work has focused on delinking knowledge from coloniality through epistemic disobedience. His approach encourages disruption as a means to deconstruct colonial institutions.[35]

The words and actions of other self-identified Decolonial Studies scholars reveal how the principles of Decolonialism influence contemporaneous behavior. The most powerful examples of how decolonial scholars view violence are evidenced on social media, such as on X (formerly known as Twitter). Ameil J. Joseph of McMaster University wrote on 8 October 2023, "anticolonial, and decolonial are not just words you heard in your EDI workshop." The same day, Mahvish Ahmad of the London School of Economics posted, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," calling for the complete elimination of Israel. And at Texas Tech University's College of Education, Jairo Fúnez-Flores wrote, "PALESTINIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO RESIST SETTLER COLONIAL GENOCIDE, PALESTINIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO RESIST OCCUPATION & APARTHEID, PALESTINIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY IN THEIR OWN LAND."[36] He furthermore criticized other not-as-vocal decolonial scholars, characterizing them as "white ladies" with "fuzzy bunny" views or "Karens."[37] In an April 2024 post he wrote, "Israel is a garbage country that's only loved by garbage people. It was founded on ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and settler-colonialism. Its flag is a symbol of white supremacy."[38]

One of the main assumptions among decolonial scholars is that Israel is a "white" or "white-adjacent" nation and Palestinians are "people of color."[39] In fact, Israel has a large community of Ethiopian Jews, and 21% of Israelis are Mizrahi, descendants of Jews from Arab and Persian lands, and therefore native to the Middle East.[40] They are neither settlers nor colonialists nor European.[41] Decolonialism's double standard is made more evident when considering how immigrants are regarded in nations like the United Kingdom or the United States where immigrants are regarded as British or American within a lifetime. However, both countries have prominent leaders such as Suella Braverman, David Lammy, Kamala Harris, and Nikki Haley, whose parents or grandparents migrated from India, West Africa, or South America. No one would describe them as "settlers." Yet

Israeli families who have resided in Israel for a century are nevertheless designated as "settler-colonists."[42]

Collective Guilt

Decolonial studies scholars frame the role of the colonial settler in terms of universal guilt, suggesting that focusing on innocence can undermine moral responsibility and obscure widespread complicity in structural injustices like settler colonialism.[43] Collective guilt refers to the shared feelings of guilt experienced by members of a group for actions committed by the group, often relating to historical injustices or collective wrongdoing. Instead of evaluating responsibility across a spectrum in terms of individual actions where some can be considered innocent of colonial settler behaviors, everyone is rendered guilty.[44] The result is that people are treated as members of a group rather than as individuals.

The work of Jordan Abel emphasizes the importance of settler groups to recognize their collective role in ongoing injustices. His work is heavily influenced by Walter Mignolo and, in addition to collective guilt, he advocates for the use of decolonial violence as a form of resistance.[45] Robyn Bourgeois emphasizes the importance of collective blame as an essential step in the process of decolonialization. She urges privileged groups and organizations to recognize their roles in perpetuating colonial systems.[46]

The act of holding an entire group responsible for the actions of a few individuals is often considered unfair and harmful for several reasons. Collective guilt can unfairly assign blame to individuals who did not participate in or support historical events, leading to a sense of injustice and feelings of personal guilt even if not directly involved in the wrongdoing.[47] Such guilt can perpetuate cycles of hostility, lead to unjust retribution, and undermine social cohesion. Collective guilt is often hypocritical, as it tends to target outgroups while excusing similar behaviors within one's own group.[48] It also fails to admit its own mistakes while demanding others to admit theirs.[49] Collective blame can perpetuate stigma and negative stereotypes about entire groups, potentially fostering resentment and hostility rather than promoting understanding and healing. It also can be challenging to determine who is responsible for historic events that happened several generations before, making it difficult to implement meaningful reparative actions.

As evident in the 2024 protests, the notion of collective guilt can be exploited for political purposes and used to mobilize support for agendas that may not genuinely address historical injustices. These criticisms highlight the complexities surrounding the concept of collective guilt and suggest that approaches to addressing historical injustices should promote constructive engagement rather than simply assigning blame.[50]

Fueling Antisemitism

In many activist circles, expression of solidarity with Palestinian rights has been framed in ways that dismiss or ignore Jewish experiences of trauma, particularly in contexts where antisemitic rhetoric is present.[51] This situation highlights the need for careful, nuanced discussions to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes and to foster genuine solidarity that recognizes the complexities of multiple histories and identities. The portrayal of a binary struggle between "colonizers" and "colonized" can erase the complexities of Jewish history and identity, potentially leading to adoption of a one-dimensional worldview that positions Jews solely as oppressors rather than acknowledging their own complex history. In this way, Jewish identity is effectively erased and Jewish peoplehood is denied. Jews are frequently depicted as "Europeans" or "whites," notwithstanding that Mizrahi Jews, largely from North Africa and with no actual connection to Europe, outnumber Ashkenazi Jews in Israel.[52]

Framing Israel as a colonial state leads to the dehumanization of Jewish people or conflation of Jewish identity with the state of Israel which can feed into antisemitic narratives. While decolonialism is used to address historical injustices, some critiques can overlook the unique historical experiences of Jewish communities, particularly in relation to persecution and displacement. More recently antisemitism has spread via social media and the internet.[53] Criticisms of Israel by decolonial scholars have been grounded in the idea that colonialism is rooted in whiteness.[54] Other Decolonial scholars have critiqued Zionism, the ideological foundation of the Israeli state, as a form of settler colonialism. These scholars argue that Zionism, in seeking to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, involves the displacement of the indigenous Palestinian population. Edward Said, a Palestinian-American intellectual, critiqued Zionism in *The Question of Palestine*. Said views Zionism as a colonial project, analogous to European imperialism, used to create a state for Jewish people at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population. He highlights how Western powers supported this project, treating the Palestinians as invisible or irrelevant to the colonial ambitions of the Zionist movement.[55]

"From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is an antisemitic slogan commonly featured in anti-Israel campaigns and chanted at demonstrations. This rallying cry has long been used by anti-Israel voices, including supporters of terrorist organizations such as Hamas, which seek Israel's destruction through violent means.[56] It is an ugly and cruel phrase that implicitly endorses the killing or deportation of 9.5 million Israelis.[57]

Decolonial Studies represent a one-sided view of the Middle-East's history and casts one group as oppressors and another as victims through vast oversimplification. It also encourages one to view the people involved as members of a group, rather than as individuals who all deserve the same

level of human rights, dignity, and consideration. In this worldview, Jews moving to Israel in the 19th and 20th centuries, many of whom were fleeing from oppression by European powers, were actually engaged in a sinister "structural process of territorial dispossession, demographic displacement, and political erasure" on behalf of European powers.[58]

Conclusions

Highlighting past injustices can reignite historical grievances, leading to renewed tensions between groups that may have been working toward reconciliation or understanding especially if the expectations for those historical injustices are completely disconnected from political reality. Advocating unrealistic solutions to extremely complex problems makes meaningful communication and progress impossible. Many historians agree the Mexican–American War (1846–1848) was an act of aggression and a land grab. However, it would be unrealistic to think the United States government would ever consider returning the southwest states to Mexico. Likewise, it is completely unrealistic to think the 9.5 million citizens of Israel will evacuate their nation—and where they would go if that were to happen?

After watching the recent unrest on college and university campuses, the question arises: Will Decolonial Studies continue to foster divisiveness and antisemitism rather than encouraging groups peacefully and constructively to engage with each other better to understand the complex history of the past 80 years? Scholars need critically to examine Decolonial Studies in order to answer this question and to come to some agreement as to whether as a discipline Decolonial Studies provides a balanced view of history and encourages us to treat people as individuals, or if it sets the stage for pitting groups against each other in divisive and demeaning conflict, providing people with a one-sided list of historical grievances without any realistic solutions. Have we in fact turned our critical thinking skills toward Decolonial Studies with the same rigor as we have examined and critiqued any other ideology, methodology, or social theory?

It should not be surprising that Decolonial Studies scholars appear hostile to Europeans and Western culture because their focus is defined through opposition to others. A review of its leading thinkers reveals their work and ideas framed in terms of opposing something, rather than putting forward a framework to advance or advocate for realistic solutions. Fanon, in addition to his advocacy for violent uprising, targets European ideas and values for underlying the structure of global capitalism.[59] Achille Mbembe's work extends Fanon's analysis of colonial violence by suggesting colonial structures exert political power through control over life and death.[60] Boaventura de Sousa Santos and and Antoni Aguiló critique the global dominance of Western knowledge systems and advocate for acknowledging epistemologies of the South, the recognition of non-Western ways of

knowing, and questioning the hegemony of Eurocentric science, law, and governance.[61]

Its critics argue that decolonialism often oversimplifies the diverse experiences and histories of colonized peoples. A careful review of scholarship reveals a pattern of inconsistencies in how Decolonialism addresses Israel compared to other global conflicts. Its scholars can neglect variations within different contexts such as Jewish voices and experiences, resulting in some being marginalized or excluded. This is particularly the case when discussions about colonialism focus solely on specific geographic or cultural contexts, neglecting the diversity of narratives, including Jewish history.

When individuals are viewed solely through the lens of their group identity (e.g., as "colonizers" or "colonized"), that view can overshadow an individual's personal experiences, agency, and complexity, reducing them to stereotypes. The oversimplified binary of oppressor versus oppressed can erase nuances of individual motivations and histories, leading to a lack of empathy and understanding for those perceived to be on the wrong side of the divide.

One criticism of Decolonial Studies is that it opposes modernity by treating it the same as colonialism, when the two are actually very different.[62] While Decolonial Studies scholars aim to address colonial legacies and promote social justice, some argue for alternative approaches that may foster more-constructive dialogue and inclusivity. The settler-colonial paradigm has counter-hegemonic implications for understanding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and prescribes decolonization, but its limitations make it less effective than other approaches.[63] The decolonial framework can sometimes create divisions between groups which may hinder constructive dialogue and reconciliation efforts. The concept can oversimplify complex social and historical dynamics by reducing individuals' identities and actions to group membership, ignoring personal agency and diversity within a group.

I argue a more suitable theory for understanding the effects of colonialism and imperialism while emphasizing the complexities of identity, power, and resistance in a postcolonial world is Postcolonial Theory. Postcolonialism and Decolonialism share similar origins in that both emerged in the mid-1900s, as scholars from previously colonized countries began to focus on the lasting and continuing effects of colonialism. Its central ideas are grounded in critical theory, particularly in analysis of the history, culture, and literature of European governments. Its theory is considered more adaptable and inclusive, while Decolonial Studies emphasizes a more-radical, violent break from colonial legacies.[64] Decolonialism emphasizes breaking away from Western epistemologies and institutions, while Postcolonialism focuses more on cultural critique and representation.[65]

This methodological alternative can enhance dialogue around colonial legacies and social justice, promoting a more inclusive, multifaceted approach that recognizes the complexities of identity and history. Postcolonial theory is noted for its strong embrace of the notion of difference or Otherness, which allows those who employ it to resist polarities of power and prejudice, promoting the idea that culture is dynamic and evolving.[66] Postcolonialism's greatest strength lies in its scholars' willingness to move beyond conflict to find a practical solution in facilitating the founding and stabilizing of postcolonial societies.[67] Other advantages include its flexibility, focus on cultural difference, and constructive engagement with Western thought.[68] Its scholars specifically encourage the adoption of human commonalities to promote negotiation rather than negation.[69] Postcolonial theory can help frame discussions around reconciliation by acknowledging the blending and coexistence of cultures, which can foster mutual understanding and respect among diverse groups, while rejecting positioning adversarial to Western institutions.[70]

Endnotes

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Sanctioning the Sooner State: Revisiting Oklahoma's Educator Revolt of 1963–1965

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Introduction

"The National Education Association announced today the end of its war with the education authorities of Oklahoma" ("N.E.A. lifts sanctions," 1965, p. 3); so declares a *New York Times* article of September 24, 1965. The "war" began when Henry Bellmon, Oklahoma's newly elected Governor, vetoed legislation that would have raised Oklahoma teachers' salaries for the first time in nearly two decades (Fuson, 1969; Hubbell, 1970). Though Bellmon professed there to be "no crisis" in teachers' salaries when blocking the legislation, Oklahoma's teachers disagreed (Fuson, 1969, p. 33; Hubbell, 1970, p. 322). Bellmon's action triggered 28 months of concerted response by Oklahoma teachers that included political organization, teacher walkouts, voting campaigns, and, ultimately, sanctions against teachers by the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) and the National Education Association (NEA). During the summer of 1965, Oklahoma's teachers succeeded in winning historic increases to educational funding—including teacher pay raises—via legislation, appropriations, and through the introduction and adoption of an Oklahoma constitutional amendment. These actions brought Oklahoma's nearly three-year educational crisis, including enduring three months of sanctions, to an end.

We situate this paper in a wider lineage of teacher activism and collective teacher action by recounting the Sooner State's educator revolt between 1963 and 1965 that culminated in the imposition and eventual resolution of NEA sanctions. We first present a review of relevant literature, we then trace the OEA's response to Bellmon's veto, the NEA's subsequent investigation and its imposition of sanctions, and, finally, the events that ultimately led to the sanctions' removal. We argue that, despite the controversy and limitations sanctions created, they functioned as an important tool for exercising collective action in 1965, one that, in the end, produced meaningful educational gains. We conclude this historical episode contains contemporary relevance as well, providing today's teachers with inspiration, motivation, and a legacy of activism that continues to shape Oklahoma's teaching profession.

Today, nearly six decades after Oklahoma was subjected to NEA sanctions, amidst the modern context of stunted teacher salaries, chronic school underfunding, teacher deprofessionalization, and associated teacher flight to other states or out of the profession entirely, Oklahoma's teacher battles continue, although the war of 1965 remains largely forgotten. In revisiting the 1965 sanctions, we seek to bring renewed focus to one of Oklahoma's key moments of statewide educational crisis while providing historical context for future political actions of those advocating for educational change in Oklahoma and elsewhere. Amid Oklahoma's recent sharp decline in educational rankings and increasing hostility toward teachers by elected officials, we think this historical act of teacher advocacy particularly ripe for reexamination.

Literature Review

We draw extensively from archival sources, including contemporary newspaper accounts, records from the OEA and NEA archives, the gubernatorial archives of Henry Bellmon, and relevant books, theses, and dissertations. Although local and, at times, national press reported on the sanctions as they unfolded—and a handful of scholars examined the issue in the immediate aftermath—recent scholarly engagement with these events has since been virtually nonexistent. We find the existing literature coalesces around three interrelated themes: (1) debates over the effectiveness of sanctions, (2) sanctions manifesting within a larger NEA/American Federation of Teachers (AFT) competition to represent teachers, and (3) teacher activism as a response to educational neglect and injustice.

Scholars offer conflicting assessments as to the efficacy of sanctions. Both the NEA (1965) and Fuson (1969) conclude that, while the 1965 sanctions were successful in improving the state's education conditions, such conditions were necessitated by a prolonged history of neglect, indifference, and general lack of leadership among state leaders—structural issues sanctions alone could not resolve. Similarly, Hubbell (1970) acknowledges that although sanctions facilitated the immediate goal of teachers, those sanctions came "at a cost many feared was too high" (p. iv), noting that sanctions alienated some stakeholders who considered themselves allies of public schools. Schnaufer (1966) contends that sanctions ultimately proved counterproductive because they gave "a school system and a community a bad name" (p. 16). Resulting public shaming associated with sanctioning, according to Schnaufer, in effect works to counteract any local politician's desire which is to present their school system and community in a positive light. However, Lieberman (1965) counters that sanctions may be less polarizing than alternative measures, such as teacher strikes.

Both Schnaufer (1966) and Stinnett (1968) place sanctions within the larger contest between the NEA and the AFT to represent teachers. The AFT was emboldened when, Stinnett argues, public sector workers

gained the right to unionize in 1962. As such, the AFT turned from the NEA's ally to its adversary as the AFT attempted to siphon teachers from the NEA's ranks. This competitive move by the IFT required the NEA to adopt more-forceful tactics, which, in Oklahoma ultimately culminated in sanctions. While Stinnett argues the NEA's sanctions were an effort to avoid the AFT's strike tactics, Schnaufer (1966) counters that the NEA's sanctions "don't work" (p. 17). Stinnett argues the AFT's tactics and goals more appropriate for working-class laborers than for teachers.

Finally, in the case of teacher activism, sanctions function as tools for collectively addressing systemic educational neglect (Fuson, 1969; Hubbell, 1970; Shamblin, 1970). Shamblin evidences how Oklahoma's annual teachers' salaries at the time of NEA sanctions were "nearly $1000 below the national average" (p. 560). He argues that in the U.S. teacher militancy (in the form of strikes and sanctions) are driven by economic insecurity, poor working conditions, classroom overcrowding, and perceptions of diminished teacher agency (i.e., deprofessionalization), the very conditions affecting Oklahoma's teachers at the time. Hanneman (1985) argues Bellmon's governorship[1] was characterized by an inability to find common ground with Oklahoma's teachers; sanctions, then, provided a much-needed tool to help teachers rally, find their voices, and advocate for the profession.

Background: The State of the State

After WWII, Oklahoma's educational investment steadily lagged neighboring states and national averages. By 1962, despite being ranked first in the nation for teacher professional preparation, the state ranked below 30th in teacher pay (Hodenfield, 1964; Miller, 1964). Oklahoma teacher salaries had dropped to 85% of the national average, and post-war baby-boom enrollments coupled with inadequate school construction had led to overcrowded classroom conditions (Shamblin, 1970).

To help correct these deficiencies, in 1963 Oklahoma-school-superintendent-turned-state-senator Clem Hamilton (D) introduced SB146 designed finally to produce pay raises for the state's teachers—their first in nearly two decades. Though widely celebrated by Oklahoma's teachers, other stakeholders balked at the cost; an inside source told the state's leading newspaper, *The Daily Oklahoman* (Sullivant, 1963, p. 8) the bill's "pay scale can't be financed with revenue in sight for the next two years." Whatever arguments existed for and against the bill, it overwhelmingly passed the state legislature only to be immediately vetoed by the Governor (Duncan, 1963; Hall, 1963).[2] An outraged Hamilton, who also served as chairman of Oklahoma's Senate Common Education Committee, declared he would call up the bill the next day if he had the necessary votes ("School pay bill tops legislative agenda," 1963, p. 1). He did not, nor would he ever.[3] The Governor's veto ignited a wave of resistance, setting the stage for an educator revolt in the Sooner State.

After the veto, relations between teachers, their legislative allies, and the governor's office steadily deteriorated, and reconciliation seemed unlikely. As a result, the OEA sought new approaches to improve teacher salaries and working conditions. With the intent of developing and approving a statewide salary schedule, it held a widely attended "Salary School" for its members in December, 1963. Salary School provided more than a place to learn, it was also a site of teachers' political organization and debate, serving a broader purpose to connect teachers while equipping them with tools to agitate and to understand activism as a necessary part of the profession. At Salary School, teachers discussed a myriad of potential responses to the veto, including boycotts, contract refusals, direct voter appeals, and the pursuit of sanctions. Tangibly, the School's attendees produced a recommendation that a "$4,600 minimum base pay scale be pushed either through initiative petitions or the legislature" ("Teachers plan salary appeal," 1963, p. 1).

In January 1964, invigorated by the solidarity-building experience of attending Salary School, the OEA legislative council met to discuss further action. From this meeting, four state questions (SQ) emerged (Gibson, 1981). State questions had several attractive features for the OEA. As opposed to legislative bills, they could be enacted even while the legislature was in recess.[4] Additionally, Oklahoma's constitution prevented the governor from vetoing measures voted on by the people, and so—unlike Senator Hamilton's doomed teacher-pay-raise bill—these proposals would bypass the governor's office entirely (OK Const. Veto referendum, 2024).[5] Collectively dubbed the *Better Education* proposals, they focused upon local school levies (SQ421), state aid (SQ422), school consolidation (SQ423), and county superintendents (SQ424). Of the four, the question of state aid directly addressed teacher salaries and was considered "the heart of the educational questions" (Allard, 1964, p. 2).

When the *Better Education* proposals failed to pass, thanks in part to election shenanigans by the Governor, outraged teachers across the state threatened shutdowns and walkouts (Fuson, 1969; Sebree, 1964). OEA President, Dr. Raymond Knight, told teachers that they needed to take an interest in "practical politics" in order to accomplish their goals ("Teachers urge tax boost to meet salary demands," 1964)—in other words, teachers had to stop relying on assumed goodwill of both legislators and voters to advance their education agenda; both were fickle and had failed to provide requested support. Finding they had few allies, Oklahoma's teachers would instead need to advocate for themselves. Setting a deadline, Oklahoma City teachers declared that they would "seek sanctions if [their] demands were not met by 1 March, 1965" (Stinnett, 1968). Teachers realized activism was the way forward.

While the Governor ignored teachers' calls for a special legislative session or another special election, the teachers' virulent response to the

failure of the *Better Education* proposals concerned him enough to meet with them. There, Bellmon unveiled *Operation Giant Stride*, fundamentally a highway-bond proposal that would free general funds for education (Stinnett, 1968). While many Oklahoma teachers would see gains under this plan, others would not. Finding its uneven salary increases inadequate, OEA rejected *Operation Giant Stride* and state legislators formally killed it ("'With regrets,' OEA won't support Bellmon's plans," 1964). Having no remaining prospects for meeting teacher demands, the OEA and NEA began steps to escalate action by imposing sanctions.

Sanctions

In the 1960s sanctions were a relatively new approach for the NEA, first adopted at their 1962 national convention. Since that time only one state, Utah, had been subjected to sanctions, and those were enacted to address deficiencies similar to Oklahoma's, including inadequate teacher pay (Wyatt, 1964). As a professional organization, the NEA advocated for education broadly, and sanctions, it argued, could play a role by discouraging what it considered "unethical or arbitrary policies or practices" (Hodenfield, 1962) by a state. Sanctions provided a means of impelling a community (including politicians, business leaders, and voters) to support its schools (NEA, 1963). "As envisioned by top NEA officials," an Associated Press report from the national convention conveyed, "sanctions would have the effect of blacklisting offending schools or school districts" (Hodenfield, 1962). It was argued public attention could shame political and local leaders to make improvements, but in a way that did not cause schools to shut down while negotiations took place, as a strike would. Sanctions also were seen as a way to place economic pressure on a region since poor schools reliably deter business leaders from expanding into areas with dismal educational facilities and outcomes.

NEA Investigation

The OEA also requested the NEA conduct a full-scale investigation into Oklahoma's educational system. In December 1964, a NEA special committee spent several days in Oklahoma collecting data, including conducting interviews with more than 300 people—among them representatives from local Parent–Teacher Associations, Oklahoma teachers and administrators, and members of the Governor's own study committee ("NEA selects 3 for probe," 1964; "Oklahoma schools grossly inadequate, reports NEA," 1964). Rather than waiting until March to revise and release its final report, as initially expected, the NEA special committee found conditions so dire that it issued an early interim report. The report's authors contended "grossly inadequate schools" were found throughout the state and detailed "detrimental" educational conditions including "non-competitive teacher salaries, … gross deficiencies in school buildings," and other "subminimal" conditions such as "health and safety

standards, textbooks, teaching aids, libraries, special education, counseling," and unsatisfactory teaching loads ("Bellmon not surprised by NEA," 1964, p. 4; "Oklahoma schools grossly inadequate, reports NEA," 1964, p. 1). Especially troubling for the NEA special committee was an absence of any foreseeable resolution to Oklahoma's deteriorating educational conditions. Without additional aid and resources, the downward trend was expected to continue; therefore the prospect of sanctions gained increasing traction.

OEA Sanctions

Despite the NEA's interim report and the convening of the state's biennial 1965 legislative session, Oklahoma's educational woes compounded, and its leaders still were failing to find solutions that met teachers' satisfaction. As with the previous session, both the House and Senate signaled support for increased educational spending but were unable to reconcile competing proposals. Further intensifying the legislative impasse, the NEA released its finalized "Oklahoma report" in February, reaffirming the state's schools were in crisis and emphasizing that the decline could be reversed through an expansion of the state's tax base. Oklahoma, the report authors noted, fell far below the U.S. average in per capita tax revenues. The authors' finalized report's recommendations included "an immediate increase in state taxes" through additional *ad valorem* taxes and/or larger mill levies ("OEA may invoke 'crisis' sanctions," 1965). Unlike many U.S. states with educational deficiencies—some facing even more dire conditions—the report's authors note that Oklahoma possesses the financial capacity adequately to support its schools; nevertheless, the Governor, the legislature, and the electorate repeatedly choose inaction (Cromley, 1965).

At a March 6 OEA directors meeting, OEA President Knight warned of an "impending catastrophe" in the state's educational system and announced that the OEA would take the drastic step of invoking sanctions until conditions improved. OEA's sanctions applied pressure by quarantining the state, declaring it "unethical" for prospective out-of-state teachers to take jobs there, and threatening letters of censure to those who took teaching jobs in Oklahoma. The OEA also asked placement organizations to "withhold services for Oklahoma schools," and requested national accrediting agencies re-examine Oklahoma's school conditions. Sanctions effectively escalated publicity around Oklahoma's educational crisis ("OEA clamps sanctions on schools," 1965).

Another Failed State Question: SQ425 State Sales Tax

With OEA sanctions in place, a new state question was proposed, offering potential resolution through increased tax revenue. State Question 425 proposed a one-cent sales tax increase with public schools receiving the bulk of the benefit. Fearing another gubernatorial veto, supporters again took the issue directly to voters. Oklahoma House Speaker J. D. McCarty and OEA President Knight urged teachers actively to work to

support the hike, while the civic group *Oklahoma Progress* led a publicity campaign ("M'Carty tells teachers finances key to reform," 1965). "Yes, Oklahoma is worth a cent," declared ads across the state, making the case for support of the question. With the OEA's encouragement, and as with the failed *Better Education* proposals, teachers again took part in a statewide campaign. Despite their advocacy the question was overwhelmingly defeated.[6] Recognizing its efforts at the state level were failing to advance its educational agenda, the OEA appealed to its national affiliate for assistance.

NEA Sanctions

On May 11, 1965, the NEA agreed formally to sanction the state of Oklahoma. NEA and OEA representatives justified their organizations' action; "It's a disappointing situation," said NEA Executive Secretary William Carr, adding "…somehow the people of Oklahoma must come to their senses and realize they are neglecting the education of their children" (Cromley, 1965, p. 4). R. E. Carleton, a public-school superintendent and member of the OEA executive committee, likened the sanctions to assigning a failing grade: it "records the failure of the state to pass the test of providing education for our children." Like a failing student, he continued, "we know you can and will improve," but "…we cannot sit by while [the people of Oklahoma] toss political spitballs and ignore [their] most important duty" ("Teachers' patience worn," 1965, p. 4). In an impassioned presentation to a cheering audience of teachers, the OEA's Executive Secretary, Ferman Phillips, declared "I'm not willing to wait [another] two years to solve this problem in education…. We want it solved in this session of the legislature" (p. 4). Phillips argued escalating teacher activism to the national level had become a necessary, strategic, next step.

In addition to supporting and reinforcing the OEA's existing measures, the NEA established five relocation centers to help Oklahoma teachers find jobs in other states. The NEA also stepped up negative publicity against the state. Nationwide, newspapers ran articles highlighting the NEA's action.[7] "Teachers told not to take jobs," declares a Hagerstown, MD paper; "Oklahoma schools placed on blacklist," states the *Miami Herald*. On June 11, WTOP-TV, a Washington DC CBS affiliate, aired a story on Oklahoma's sanctions ("Effects of NEA sanctions on Oklahoma," 1965).

Resolution

When OEA/NEA educator–activists stood firm on sanctions, signs of progress slowly began to materialize. By week five of sanction implementation, buoyed by projections of increased state revenues, legislators considered a nearly $30 million boost to Oklahoma's educational funding—an amount one reporter described as "the greatest [school] funding increase in history" (Culver, 1965, p. 1). Notably, the projected revenue increase stemmed from existing tax structures rather than new taxes, so Bellmon would not oppose it on strict ideological grounds. Despite

this promising development, however, teachers kept up the pressure. In the eighth week of sanctions, at its national convention, the NEA reinforced its support for Oklahoma teachers, unanimously adopting a resolution pledging full support for their fight against the state's "steadily deteriorating school conditions" (Currivan, 1965, p. 8).

In week ten, legislators sent Governor Bellmon a far-reaching new school code which he signed into law. The code dramatically restructured Oklahoma's school-spending calculus, shifting state funding to a per-pupil, rather than per-district, basis. The new code also guaranteed teachers an immediate $380 salary increase ("State school code signed," 1965), with even more state money going to districts that approved local school levies.[8] Representative Lonnie Abbot (D), chair of the House Education Committee, called the code "a new era for school finances" ("Sanctions vote gets delayed," 1965). Even Governor Bellmon would later reflect on the code as "without question the greatest advance ever made for common [i.e., public] schools in Oklahoma" (Bellmon, 1965, p. 6).

In the eleventh week of sanctions—on the final day of the legislative session—Bellmon signed the landmark school appropriation bill into law. Driven by teacher activism and professional organization support, the 1965 legislative session produced the greatest fiscal gains for Oklahoma's public schools since statehood, increasing educational appropriations by over 30% from the previous biennium.[9] The $29 million increase marked a stark reversal from the prior session, when Bellmon had vetoed a teacher pay raise with a cost estimated at just $10 million. While Oklahoma's legislature and Governor had now responded to educators' demands, it remained to be seen whether the electorate would follow suit by approving a corresponding state question to secure additional educational funds.

State Question 430 (SQ430) provided Oklahoma voters the opportunity to increase local levies in support of public schools and teacher salaries. The NEA maintained sanctions for another nine weeks, awaiting the results of this special election; the issue passed by a wide margin.[10] When voters returned to the polls two weeks later to determine their local district millages, many school districts saw substantial increases in funding. More importantly, however, both the statewide appropriations and the local levies demonstrated that Oklahomans were finally committed to improving the "subminimal" conditions of their state's schools. Once the results of the school levy votes were clear, the NEA announced on September 24 that conditions had improved to the point where sanctions could be lifted.

Discussion and Conclusion

Sixty years after Oklahoma's 1960s teacher revolts, by recounting these events we propose there are implications for the revolt's immediate aftermath as well as enduring lessons for the present. Evidence shows sanctions ultimately delivered a significant win for Oklahoma's teachers

in 1965, and we posit today's educators might draw both inspiration and motivation from this historic episode.

In the immediate aftermath of sanctions, some questioned whether sanctions were worth the animosity they provoked, particularly towards teachers and the OEA. Editors, journalists, and political leaders across the state characterized the sanctions as "ill advised," "unnecessary," a "black eye," a "slap in the face," and damaging to the state's reputation, since accusations that Oklahoma received were "the kind of bad name that takes years to erase" ("Goodbye sanctions," 1965, p. 6; Sullivant, 1965, p. 3; "Two leaders still smarting over sanctions," 1965, p. 3; Woodcock, 1965, p. 12). We instead think that while sanctions did indeed bring negative attention to Oklahoma, it was not the sanctions themselves but rather the longstanding "subminimal" conditions of Oklahoma's public schools that warranted such action and national attention. Sanctions did not create the crisis, rather sanctions exposed the crisis to the broader public—and, in doing so, generated political momentum needed for meaningful change. Importantly, sanctions were not the OEA's and NEA's initial course of action, they were a measure of last resort, deployed only after repeated legislative attempts to resolve the crisis had been exhausted. At each juncture, teachers faced a choice: acquiesce to existing conditions or escalate their activism. We argue that without sustained escalation, it is unlikely educators would have benefited from changes to school code that enabled the dramatic funding increases enacted in 1965.

Though the new revenues fueling the increase were generated from existing tax structures rather than new taxes, history also suggests that teacher activism provided an impetus for finding those revenues; that is to say that if teachers had not revolted, and sanctions had not been invoked, teacher salaries would have remained subminimal, as would overall school funding. The OEA/NEA sanctions forced legislators, voters, and even the state's tax assessors to make education *their* issue, and Oklahoma's number-one appropriations issue.[11] Sanctions ultimately served as a strategic tool for exercising collective political power to produce impressive gains for teacher salaries and Oklahoma's public-school infrastructure.

Although not all teacher demands were met—most notable was the failure to enact a statewide teacher-salary schedule—teachers still achieved substantial gains. The increases in appropriations and local levies resulted in significant salary improvement for many teachers, in some cases surpassing the amounts proposed in the vetoed 1963 pay raise bill (SB146), the legislation that initially ignited the revolt. On balance, the 1965 pressures enacted by sanctions yielded unprecedented fiscal improvements for Oklahoma's public schools and teachers.

Additionally, the Oklahoma teachers' revolt of 1963–1965 offers today's teachers a precedent. This revolt and its aftermath helped sustain—if not

establish—a professional legacy of educational activism in the Sooner State from which today's teachers can draw both inspiration and resolve. These teachers' experience reveals a persistent truth: formal political institutions—governors, legislators, even the electorate—rarely deliver educational gains spontaneously. Education's allies may be intermittent and unreliable; and accordingly, teachers must be prepared to engage in organized agitation and self-advocacy for their students, their schools, and their profession, perhaps for prolonged periods. While professional association sanctions proved an effective strategy in 1965, sanctions may not be appropriate for every political moment. Each generation of teachers must discern the forms of activism suited to their context; what remains constant, however, is the necessity of teacher activism itself.

Importantly, this teacher revolt evidences that Oklahoma teachers possess a legacy of collective resistance and organized action. In the 1960s they fought for fair pay, adequate resources, and more-humane working conditions. Today's teachers, facing renewed challenges in a familiar landscape, can find inspiration for their own movement by remembering and considering that legacy. In so doing, today's teachers preserve not just a memory of resistance but continue a living tradition of teachers' educational advocacy.

Endnotes

1 These statements refer exclusively to Bellmon's 1963–1967 gubernatorial term. Bellmon would later serve a second term as Oklahoma's Governor from 1987–1991.

2 SB146 passed the Senate (38–3) on a Saturday (April 27, 1963) and the House with a "whopping majority" (Duncan, 1963, p. 1) (111–6) on the following Tuesday (April 30) (Hall, 1963). On Monday, May 6, it was vetoed by the Governor.

3 Per Hall's (1963) reporting, a veto override would have required fewer supporting votes than the bill's passage. Specifically, an override would need 33 votes in the Senate and 90 votes in the House (it passed with 38 and 111 respectively). Though beyond the scope of this paper, a lingering question is why, given SB146's overwhelming legislative support, Senator Hamilton could not subsequently muster enough votes to override the Governor's veto. We speculate that many legislators may have initially cast a "yes" vote to signal their pro-education stance but were then later (silently) relieved that the Governor's veto checked the bill's fiscal impropriety, and they did

not want to overturn his decision. This aspect of the phenomenon remains open for further research.

[4] At the time, Oklahoma's biennial legislature met for roughly six months every two years so would not convene again until January 5, 1965.

[5] Per Oklahoma's Constitution, Article 5 (Legislative Department), Section V-3, Veto power: "The veto power of the Governor shall not extend to measures voted on by the people" (OK Const., 2019, p. 28).

[6] SQ425 of April 27, 1965: 171,123 (37%) "yes" to 293,278 (63%) "no" (Oklahoma 1965 ballot measures, n.d.).

[7] A few of many national headlines include: from the AP, "Oklahoma is blacklisted for school deficiencies," (1965), *Spokane Chronicle*, p. 1; "Oklahoma schools placed on blacklist," May 12, 1965; *Miami Herald*, p. 5-A. From UPI: "NEA Raps Oklahoma Schools," May 12, 1965, *Independent* (Long Beach, CA), p. 1; "NEA puts sanctions on Oklahoma schools," May 11, 1965; *The Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa, CA), p. 11; "NEA invokes sanctions against Oklahoma," May 12, 1965, *The Daily Inter Lake* (Kalispell, MT), p. 3.

[8] "Oklahoma's new school code puts state aid on a per pupil basis for the first time and offers a $25 per pupil per year incentive bonus to all school districts voting the full 5-mill levy. The first $15 of that money has been earmarked for teachers' salaries and the second $5 for additional teacher pay or for hiring new teachers to reduce classroom load" ("Sanctions vote gets delayed," 1965).

[9] From $98 million in 1963 to $127 million in 1965.

[10] SQ430 of September 14, 1965: 68% in favor (125,779), 32% against (59,535). Of note, this was the smallest number of favorable votes, in terms of actual numbers, of any of the education related questions (Oklahoma 1965 ballot measures, n.d.).

[11] Education would have been Oklahoma's overall top issue except for a 1965 judicial scandal in which three state Justices were forced from office (Burke, 2023).

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