

metacognitive skills and processes to directly teaching domain-specific strategies or procedures designed to facilitate knowledge access, transfer, and strategy utilization. A similar trend from general to more specific structures has occurred in the developmental literature, where Piaget's *structure d'ensemble* has been replaced with constructs such as central conceptual structures, domain-specific knowledge structures, and domain specific theories.

Against this backdrop of theorizing and empirical evidence supporting the domain-specific position, it is difficult to understand why Ashman & Conway advocate a general approach. Although there is little doubt that planning is the hallmark of expert performance in all domains, it does not automatically follow that a general planning framework will transfer across all scholastic situations. What seems to be in order is an extended analysis of how planning differs given the particular nature of the knowledge domain and the conceptual understanding of the planner. Such a discussion is essential in order to bring this work in line with the current *zeitgeist*. As the situation stands, teachers are left on their own to make this important and essential adjustment, thus placing them in the untenable position highlighted by the authors, that of linking research and practice, given their already heavy work loads and full schedules.

Anne McKeough
University of Calgary

Casey, K. (1993). *I answer with my life: Life histories of women teachers working for social change*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall. 196 pp. (softcover) \$15.95.

Kathleen Casey's analysis of the life histories of women teachers working for social change, a recent addition in the Routledge *Critical Social Thought* series, is purposefully presented "to celebrate [these teachers'] alternative progressive versions of education, and in doing so, to recreate the possibility of public debate which has actually been suppressed" (p. 3) in current official and conservative reports on the state of education in the United States.

Theorized within the context of M.M. Bakhtin's formulation of the dialogical relationship of discourses and explored through oral history research are detailed narrative data from a span of fifty years in the life histories of teachers whom Casey names and categorizes as Catholic women religious teachers — nuns, secular Jewish women teachers and Black women teachers. Focusing on prevailing metaphors and motifs within each group, Casey organizes these life histories through discourses of *existentialism* (Catholic women religious teachers), *pragmatism* (secular Jewish women teachers) and *signifying* (Black women teachers), devoting a full chapter to each. Casey hopes, that in the telling of such life histories, the ongoing progressive struggle in education may be both revitalized and directed by the examples of political will exercised by these teachers in their daily lives.

Against a historical backdrop in which teaching is largely associated with and carried out by women who nevertheless have only a marginal voice in how the work of teaching is formulated, Casey's book is an important contribution to the reclamation of women's work and women's history from the points of view of women teachers. The detailing of this historical backdrop would appear to be a crucial aspect of the content of the book. But for a brief encapsulation, in the introduction by series editor Michael Apple, such details are sorely missing from the book. This problem is compounded when, in Casey's concerted effort to document women teachers as *makers* of history and meaning, the socio-historical contexts in which this meaning-making occurs — the tumultuous post-war decades in the United States — are presented incidentally, through the data and through what are little more than passing references in the text. While such gaps may not actively encourage historical amnesia, they do discourage a sharply focused historical view of the work of progressive women teachers. Inadequate historicizing is a significant obstacle in any efforts toward effective revisioning and contemporary envisioning, both of which are explicit aims of the author.

Such an obstacle can be of mammoth proportions when a notion of *discourse* is used to organize the presentation of life histories. Discourses, themselves, are products of the historical milieu out of which they are formed in language; their existence and their content are neither arbitrary nor fixed. Nor do we occupy a single discourse, or a single subject position. The availability of specific discourses, and the subject positions

possible within them, are contingent on the limits and possibilities embodied in a specific historical moment and are, therefore, deeply political. Casey attempts to couch these life histories in political terms yet in her emphasis on language as expressive (p. 3), rather than, or as well as, constitutive, and her insistence on presenting women teachers only as meaning-makers, as "authors of whole new volumes of social text" (p. 165), she chooses to ignore the ways in which language and discourses also and, perhaps, more so, *make*, form and delimit the possibilities for these very meanings. Further, despite her efforts to articulate clearly Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, Casey does not acknowledge sufficiently the ways in which discourses intersect with one another, contaminating any perceived homogeneity. Instead, Casey urges upon the data and the life histories a (pseudo-) "coherence" (p. 23) and an "integrity" (p. 24; p. 110) which are unfaithful to Bakhtinian dialogism and which cannot be sustained apart from the researcher's own homogenizing tendencies toward "coherent discourse" (p. 111). The (seemingly) simply directive of the research, "tell me the story of your life," itself begs dominant narrative conventions which aid and abet this homogenizing process.

The suppression of the struggle within and between established discourses stands as a major disappointment of Casey's book on two specific fronts: the missed opportunity to articulate the *intersections* of the discourses of women teachers located differently in history; and the failed opportunity to investigate the complex relationship of researcher to researched. Despite persistent reminders, largely through quotations from Bakhtin, of the interrelationships of discourses, Casey allows only the speakers *within* a given discourse to speak to one another. While interesting enough, more effort to articulate collective struggle *across* difference, an urgent contemporary need of progressive educators, would have added substantially to the strength of the book. The final chapter, devoted to hope forged around Gramsci's evocation, "pessimism of the intellect; optimism of the will," seems a fitting place for such necessary but unforthcoming discussion.

Early in the book, Casey inserts her own partial history into the content of her chosen research, an increasingly common practice among progressive researchers. However, Casey accomplishes more than autobiographical testimony in this book; indeed, she wrestles with a difficult and complex research issue — the inscription of a researcher who represents a dominant

group into research meant to represent the lives and interests of a nondominant group. This research tension is epitomized in the chapter in which she discusses the life histories of Black women teachers. Yet, rather than address the complexities of this difference as it effects the gathering, naming, and relaying of the life history data, Casey chooses, instead, to dissolve the tension and to rationalize the validity of her research position. Disappointingly, difference is subverted, ironically in a chapter where "signifying" and interpretive struggle, as practices to establish and retain racial autonomy and difference, are the dominant sites of struggle for these Black women teachers, struggles in which this book, too, must surely be implicated.

Casey draws the title of her book from Bakhtin: "What is it that guarantees the internal connection between the elements of personality? Only the unity of responsibility. For what I have experienced and understood I answer with my life" (p. 160). Appropriately, this reference captures the common motif of the lives and hopes of those whose voices are at the center of Casey's book. These 'life answers,' despite the restrictive framework within which they are voiced, do constitute a worthwhile contribution to the formulation of the important educational project of teaching for social transformation while, at once, paying tribute to some of those teachers whose legacies of progressive struggle create and sustain the very possibility of "ongoing struggle," itself.

Ursula A. Kelly
Saint Mary's University

Kerckhoff, A.C. (1993). *Diverging pathways: Social structures and career deflections*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 254 pp. (hardcover), \$49.95.

Alan Kerckhoff, a sociologist with Duke University, set out to determine the extent to which social institutions have an impact on the nature of individual achievement. His goal was "to illuminate the extent to which individual lives are channeled, deflected, shaped by the structural organizational settings in which they are lived" (p. 1). The specific focus