

In Celebration of Virginia Olesen's Uncanny Sociological Eye

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Symbolic interactionism dwells deep in the intellectual bones of Ginny Olesen, manifest in sundry ways across a long and ambitious academic career. Here, we briefly sketch her background and then trace her scholarship featuring her interactionist and feminist contributions in four main areas: professional socialization, women, health and healing studies, qualitative methods/feminist methodologies, and the sociology of emotions/interactionist social psychology of illness. We conclude with cherished memories.

Keywords: professional socialization, women, health and healing studies, qualitative methods, feminist methodologies

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Looking back over the Editorial Invitations that we have published while I have been editor-in-chief, I realised that we had celebrated many of the men who had played a key role in the recent history of symbolic interactionism – and none of the women. Correcting this has given me particular pleasure in acknowledging one of my personal debts. Ginny Olesen's book, with Elvi Whittaker, *The Silent Dialogue* was the first sociology book I ever bought that wasn't a text or on a reading list. I was looking for a PhD topic and my undergraduate adviser suggested that I should read the study and think about doing a UK replication. Things did not work out quite like that, but the book was an absolute inspiration in terms of what sociological research could be. Given how much it advanced the study of professional socialization, its relative neglect, compared with *Boys in White*, should provoke some embarrassment among our community about uncritical gender hierarchies in the influence of authors and the status of topics. Of course, Ginny has made important contributions on other topics and these are

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fully documented here by two of her most influential students. However, they also note the other kind of legacy that she has achieved — and which is often undervalued — through her personal acts of kindness, her encouragement of early career scholars, and her continuing support for innovative thinking. Great scholars model character as much as intellect — and Ginny's challenge to us is to match her actions as much as to read her words.

Robert Dingwall

The first major celebration of Virginia Olesen's scholarly contributions was sponsored by the Society for Applied Anthropology in 2000, organized by Adele at the behest of Tom May who emphasized "When I was very young and very obnoxious, Virginia was very kind in a couple of instances." This celebration of Ginnie in her most cherished journal was triggered by Robert Dingwall who wrote, "I would be unhappy if Ginnie's experiences were lost to the record and her significance, as one of the leading women working in the interactionist tradition in her time, was forgotten while we were preserving... the relevance of the work of her male contemporaries... She was very kind to me." When we (Sheryl and Adele) embarked on our academic careers, Ginnie was also supportive in consummately considerate ways.

We hope this celebration will remind everyone not only of Ginnie's personal and intellectual generosity but also of her significant and incisive scholarship that pushed the envelope theoretically, substantively, and methodologically, setting new agendas that continue to reverberate today across multiple specialties. We begin with a brief background section, brief because Ginnie published a lovely autobiography with the theme "Becoming a Sociologist: One Woman's Journey" (Olesen 2009). We then turn to Virginia Olesen's sociological eye and focus on the four main areas of her scholarly contributions, concluding with brief personal reminiscences.

BACKGROUND

Virginia L. Olesen was born on July 21, 1925 and raised with her cherished younger sister Barbara in Lovelock, Nevada. Her father lost his job and her family their home in the Great Depression, surviving through her mother's employment via the WPA. Her mother's mantra became "You have to be able to earn your own living when you grow up." Likely sensitized by those experiences, Ginnie (Olesen 2009:76) wrote of Lovelock, "The everyday life in that little town encouraged perception of subtle, but nevertheless very sharp social, cultural, economic, racial, gender and class differences among its residents."

Thanks to her mother's scrimping and saving, both Ginnie and her sister went to the University of Nevada, and she took her B.A. in 1947. Like our interactionist forbearer Robert E. Park, Ginnie then did a seven-year stint as a journalist, becoming editor of the weekly paper of the Mare Island shipyard in California. She "was doing ethnography, but did not know it" (Olesen 2009:77), developing a sharp eye

for what Park called “the big news” which she later used unerringly in sociology and women’s health.

Recommended for a fellowship by a former professor, Ginnie then pursued an M.A. in communication at the University of Chicago (with her sister sending helpful checks out of her modest teacher’s salary). At Chicago, she discovered sociology. Her first course was “Sociological Social Psychology” with Anselm Strauss, “that I recall with pleasure to this day ... Symbolic Interactionism (SI) literally turned the lights on” (Olesen 2009:78). She found in the work of Mead and the symbolic interactionists a framework for understanding her experiences in Nevada and Mare Island (Olesen 2009). Ginnie worked in David Riesman’s office and also took courses with Everett Hughes, Lloyd Warner, Sol Tax, and Robert Redfield, completing her degree in 1954.

The promise of a Ford Foundation Fellowship propelled her west to Stanford University to pursue a doctorate in communication. Gravely disappointed and missing the intellectual excitement she had enjoyed at Chicago, she chafed at the conservatism on campus, slept poorly, and didn’t perform well in classes that held little interest for her. After prolonged worrying about how to rescue her career and end up with a marketable degree, she managed to transfer into Stanford’s Department of Sociology. There, in a demanding, stimulating, and rich program, she regained her earlier excitement, though she sorely missed Chicago interactionism. The faculty encouraged taking courses in other disciplines, exposing her to the work of psychologists and anthropologists, including Gregory Bateson. A valued advisor, Edmund Volkart, taught among the earliest courses in medical sociology in the country, and Ginnie began to consider it a possible specialty (Olesen 2009). She became Dr. Olesen in 1961.

After a “memorable” day-long interview with Anselm Strauss and Fred Davis for which she flew to Chicago, Ginnie was hired as an Assistant Research Sociologist in the School of Nursing at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) in 1960. Strauss had just been hired to spearhead a new research initiative in the School at the behest of Dean Helen Nahm who not only foresaw the future professionalization of nursing as linked to research, but also committed the School to pioneering in qualitative inquiry despite the near complete dominance of quantitative approaches in medicine and related health fields. Strauss and Nahm obtained an NIMH grant for an ethnography of how students become nurses, part of the professionalization studies characteristic of that era. Fred Davis was hired to direct the nursing ethnography team including Ginnie and Elvi Whittaker. At thirty four, Ginnie was an “older graduate” in a “thin job market” and she was “elated” to be part of it: “[T]his was not only a good chance for me to get in on the ground floor of medical sociology ... but also to work with Chicago interactionists” (Olesen 2009:80). At about the same time, sociologists Lenny Schatzman, Egon Bittner and Barney Glaser also joined the broader research initiative.

In 1966, Ginnie became an Assistant Professor of Sociology with tenure, and “For the first time in my professional life, I felt anchored” (Olesen 2009:82). She moved

to Associate in 1967, Professor in 1973, and Professor Emerita in 1993. The School of Nursing departmentalized in 1972, with sociologists and others gathered into the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The PhD in Sociology at UCSF was approved in 1978, thanks to intensive contributions by sociologists to the School and to the health sciences campus more broadly.

This was not your normal university setting, and Ginnie's generosity of spirit and collaborative mode of working were fundamental to the success of the Doctoral Program in Sociology and the department. To give a taste of the difference, Ginnie was the very first woman to *ever* attend a Faculty Senate meeting at UCSF. She described it, using her favored alliteration, as "pale and male" (Olesen 2009). She served for years on the UCSF IRB, usually the only woman and the only social scientist, enduring relentless contempt that "sorely tested" her.

Despite retirement, Ginnie continued teaching and mentoring well into the twenty-first century, actively serving UCSF for over forty years. Although she felt UCSF "lacked the intellectual vivacity of a general campus" (Olesen 2009:82), she did much to foster such an environment. Eschewing the limelight to avoid feeling like "the prize pig at the fair," Ginnie refused a retirement party. Instead she asked the department to sponsor a conference on feminist theory and women's health — which of course led to a book (Clarke and Olesen 1999). Her final publication, on feminist research, appeared in 2011 in the *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry*, notably when she was 86.

Ginnie's contributions have been recognized by many academic bodies. Most significant here, she received the George Herbert Mead Career Award from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction in 1996, and that society's Feminist Mentor Award in 2000. The Medical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association honored her with the Leo G. Reeder Career Award in 1988, and in her acceptance speech she challenged her colleagues to pursue emergent issues in caregiving, many of which she had pioneered and which are again today at the forefront. She was honored by being asked to deliver the plenary address to the British Sociological Association's Medical Sociology Group not once but twice! In 1990, she used the occasion to urge that group to move in new research directions in the sociology of emotions.

Ginnie's contributions at UCSF were well recognized by the School of Nursing, honoring her with the Helen Nahm Award for Distinguished Research in 1992 and Mentor of the Year Award in 1993. She received the Chancellor's First Faculty Award for the Advancement of Women in 1994, and became an Honorary Member of Theta Sigma Tau in 1997. Signaling the transdisciplinary as well as transnational travels of her work, the Society for Applied Anthropology sponsored a day-long "Celebrating Ginnie Olesen" Conference in 2000, a festschrift including talks by many people with whom Ginnie had collaborated since the 1960s. Culminating her career, Virginia Olesen won the Constantine Panunzio Distinguished Emeriti Award of the entire University of California system in 2005 in recognition of her many *postretirement* contributions.

Virginia Olesen was known for extraordinary service to the profession. She served as an Associate Editor of *Symbolic Interaction* from 1994 to 1999 and on the Editorial Boards of twelve major journals: *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Sociological Quarterly*, *Sociological Inquiry*, *Health and Society*, *Health Care for Women International*, *Women and Health*, *Sociology and Social Research*, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Social Science and Medicine*, and *Social Problems*. Knowing Ginnie, this assuredly meant intensive service. She was also UCSF representative to the University of California Press's Faculty Editorial Committee for many years. And in 1991, Ginnie and Adele organized the Couch-Stone Symposium at UCSF, raising considerable funding.

Ginnie is exceptionally proud of the Doctoral Program in Sociology she helped to create. It centers appropriately on medical sociology, and Ginnie made sure that the full scope of that specialty was attended to in the curriculum, from the social psychology of health and illness to Parsonian, (neo)Marxist and poststructural approaches. She has called it "the little Doctoral Program that could" and "the mouse that roared" and is especially gratified that six alums have won the ASA Medical Sociology Section's Roberta G. Simmons Outstanding Dissertation Award.

Somehow, between researching, writing and teaching, Ginnie undertook a daunting schedule of conference presentations and invited lectures. Crisscrossing the United States and the globe, she held visiting professorships in the United Kingdom working with close colleague Margaret Stacey, in Egypt working with Cynthia Nelson, as well as major sojourns in Canada, Finland, and Sweden. Young scholars everywhere were attracted to her calls for a broader range of academic inquiries and consequentially asked her to serve as an external member of many doctoral and postdoctoral committees.

In Ginnie's 2000 Feminist Mentor Talk to the SSSI, as in her autobiography (2009), she spoke movingly of those who had helped her along the way. She reflected on how mentoring "like symbolic interaction, speaks to the continual dynamics of *mutual* being and becoming over an extended period of time" (Olesen 2000). Her own early experiences of generative interaction laid the groundwork for her "mutual being and becoming" as she mentored several generations of scholars across disciplines and across the globe.¹

VIRGINIA OLESEN'S SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Ginnie's early disciplinary and geographical excursions foreshadowed the full blossoming of her uncanny sociological eye. Throughout her career, she wove her way through disparate settings and situations, consistently tackling intellectual issues at the margins of many disciplines and moving them to their cores. Reflecting on her intellectual legacy, we are struck by how much that we take for granted as central to medical sociology, anthropology and women's studies became so because of Ginnie's efforts to expand the boundaries of our imaginations for over half a century. Ginnie transformed multiple bodies of academic knowledge by sharpening

and applying a gender lens and keen sense of social stratification across a dazzling array of topics.

As a sociologist, Ginnie has consistently viewed the world through the lenses of symbolic interactionist theory, but also pushed its focus of inquiry in new directions. A pioneering feminist, she would not settle for what she called "overheated and undercited" work. Instead, she explored new terrains with excellent empirical tools and exceptionally sophisticated theoretical vision. Her deep trust that complexities and contradictions are part and parcel of everyday life added a rare level of nuance to her work.

UCSF provides a superb home to people who relish collaboration, deeply valuing publishing with students and colleagues. And as her publication record quickly reveals, collaboration is Ginnie's real middle name. Throughout her career, she took advantage of her many collaborations within and across disciplines to break new ground using ethnographic methods: in professional socialization, in women's health, in qualitative research methods, and in the study of emotions.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION AND WOMEN WORKERS: A LENS FOR GENDER ANALYSIS

Ginnie's uncanny sociological eye was always drawn to what others had overlooked, and heretofore marginalized topics in sociology. In the 1960s, when medical sociologists were largely preoccupied with the organization of medicine and medical careers, Ginnie and her colleagues, sociologist Fred Davis, and Elvi Whittaker, a Canadian anthropologist who joined them, trained their eyes on nurses and nursing careers (Davis and Olesen 1963, 1964, 1965; Olesen and Whittaker 1966). In 1968, she and Elvi published *The Silent Dialogue: A Study in the Social Psychology of Professional Socialization* (Olesen and Whittaker 1968). Based on their three-year ethnographic study of how students become nurses, they not only informed us about the complex processes of socialization that nurses underwent, but also alerted us that our concepts of professional socialization, primarily based on studies of male doctors, needed serious revision.

In follow-up studies, Ginnie explored longer-term issues of socialization in the health professions (Olesen 1973), including militancy in a nursing strike (Olesen 1973). In subsequent research on lateralness in nursing careers conducted with anthropologist Ellen Lewin, they broke important new ground by identifying how nurses, primarily women, perceived career mobility in terms that were strikingly different from the dominant view that had been based entirely on studies of men's careers (Lewin and Olesen 1980). At a conference on women's leadership in the health professions, she addressed how low status workers exercised power in health fields (Olesen 1977). Later, she tackled the phenomenology of aging in mid-life women, addressing the relationship between the self and changes in one's profession (Olesen 1991).

Recently looking back at her work on professional socialization, Ginnie lamented that this body of research did not make a difference in higher education in nursing. She speculated it went unheeded because they depicted students as agentic rather than passive participants in the learning experience, at considerable odds with then prevailing views. Alternatively, she mused, interest in nursing education had shifted to narrow questions of minimal requirements for entry-level positions (Olesen 2009). However, the broader project on nursing did have quite a large impact on nursing education and research at UCSF through their advice and consultation with nursing faculty and graduate students. They had clearly realized Dean Helen Nahm's vision of upgrading baccalaureate nursing education by incorporating the social sciences and research (Olesen 2007:418).

Last here, in a pioneering paper on what is today called "the gig economy" titled "Urban Nomads: A Study of Temporary Clerical Employees," Olesen and Katsuranis (1977) found a greater sense of autonomy over work life than generally assumed. Significant too, they found the workers had valued identities far beyond those of workers, often based in creative endeavors such as pianist, artist, and craftsperson. Ginnie regretted not pursuing this topic further.

WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HEALING: THE GENDER LENS GOES GLOBAL

Ginnie's research and teaching were inextricably linked and strengthened by her keen observational skills and journalist's instincts for finding "the big news." When her undergraduate social psychology course for student nurses, modeled after one she had taken from Anselm Strauss at Chicago, stopped working well in the early 1970s, she turned her sociological eye on changes in both her students and society. Shifting ethnic, racial, sexual, marital, social class, and educational differences, she diagnosed, necessitated radical reconceptualization of the course. Ginnie's growing awareness of the women's movement and the women's health movement led her to refocus the course on the social psychology of women's health in hopes it would engage her highly diverse in student population. She later reflected, "By moving my feminism from the background to the forefront of myself, I was able to rescue my tattered teaching reputation and restore my self-confidence" (Olesen 2009:85). Doing so also set her on a path of trailblazing that propelled her into international arenas, where academic women's health and healing studies intersected with a growing global social movement.

Convinced that she was onto something important, Ginnie pursued initiatives she believed had potential to enhance social justice for women. Thus, in the early 1970s, while colleagues concerned themselves with the sociological aspects of medicalization, medical specialization, and the technological imperative, Ginnie didn't. Interactionist to the core, she instead honed in on women's lived realities: everyday health concerns, self-care, use of low-technology healthcare, and mundane aspects of aging.

In spring, 1974, responding to developments outside academe, Ginnie offered one of the first university-based social science courses on women's health. Titled "Women's Roles as Providers and Receivers of Care," it reflected her interactionist grasp of the dynamic and co-constitutive nature of healthcare and healing. By the following year, she had obtained federal funding for the first U.S. conference on *Women and Their Health: Research Implications for a New Era*.

The Conference Proceedings (Olesen 1977) documented women scholars' assessments of the social science knowledge based on an array of issues at the time. Their work clarified the gaps in academic endeavors to date, and foreshadowed what was to become Ginnie's extraordinary intellectual leadership in women's health and healing across disciplines and transnationally. Her efforts spurred and legitimated national efforts to ensure that federal research funding addressed gender differences, righted funding inequalities, and propelled both gender analysis and gender equity into the core of the social and behavioral sciences and health professions.

Ginnie's clarion call caught the imagination of many younger women scholars in the early 1970s, when few women held tenured positions in colleges and universities and scholarly interest in women's health was barely a glimmer in the social and behavioral sciences. Spurred by the emergence of feminism and grass-roots self-help movements, doctoral students and junior colleagues at and well beyond UCSF turned to her for intellectual leadership and mentoring. And she was assuredly there for us.

By the late 1970s, Ginnie had fully embraced international perspectives on feminist analysis (Nelson and Olesen 1977; Olesen and Nelson 1977) and, closer to home, she envisioned women's health studies as a distinct intellectual enterprise with global implications. At UCSF, Ginnie developed new courses on women's health in collaboration with anthropologists Lucile Newman and Ellen Lewin and sociologist Sheryl Ruzek. These included feminist theory, policy, and research methods which both seriously criticized and diverged from conventional medical views of women and their health.

In the heady days of women's studies catching on in academe, but largely confined to liberal arts programs, Ginnie spearheaded an initiative with Ellen and Sheryl to obtain support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) to establish the Women, Health and Healing Program that included not only the social sciences but also the health professions. Adele Clarke joined the endeavor in 1985, having taught women's health since 1973 and completed the doctorate in sociology at UCSF.

The FIPSE Women's Health Initiative focused on national and international curriculum development efforts designed to include "lost, forgotten and marginalized women," including the first bibliography on the health of minority women of color in the United States (Ruzek et al. 1986), an extensive syllabi set (Ruzek, Olesen and Clarke 1986), and teaching materials developed at UCSF and other institutions (Clarke, Olesen, Ruzek 1986).

It also involved organizing international Women, Health and Healing Summer Institutes held on the campus of UC, Berkeley each summer from 1984 to 1986. These institutes brought together women faculty and others from disparate disciplines: nursing, public health, women's studies, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history — not only from the United States but from Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. For example, Sheila Tlou, a Botswanian nurse educator who attended, went on to become a Member of Parliament and Minister of Health for Botswana from 2004 to 2008, pioneering in human immunodeficiency virus prevention.

We coped with running these arduous, nearly two-week long residential institutes (essentially a *very* long speaker series interspersed with working sessions on curriculum development) by having a BPA (Biggest Pain Award) decided each year by the faculty and staff. Driving back and forth, we related the horrid things people had done and debated whether they were nearing the top of the awards list. Then we would laugh, tell another story of horror and laugh some more! Celebrating everything with lots of wine was the core tradition, and happily there was a lot to celebrate.

During years of long-distance collaboration, Ginnie and Ellen also coedited *Women, Health and Healing: Toward a New Perspective* (Lewin and Olesen 1985). This work set forth many of the theoretical issues and frameworks involved in the new scholarship on women's health, problematizing everyday assumptions about women's health (Olesen and Lewin 1985). It became a major theoretical teaching resource through which Ginnie began to radically decenter reproduction as the sole focus of women, health and healing. In that work and elsewhere, she reframed the female body as socially, culturally, and politically constructed in very diverse ways, influencing the then emergent sociology of the body as well.

But the FIPSE Initiative and summer institutes revealed huge gaps in available materials on substantive issues for teaching “new” women's health and healing courses across the disciplines. Furthermore, most university curriculum committees had limited budgets, providing little support at best for course development compared to what we enjoyed at UCSF. Ginnie, Sheryl and Adele then envisioned a coedited volume to “fill the gaps” in teaching materials. *Women's Health: Complexities and Differences* took nearly a decade to complete (Ruzek, Olesen, and Clarke 1997). But twenty years later, that book is still in active use in large part because of the intensity with which it engages health issues of women of color, lesbians, rural woman, and other traditionally marginalized and excluded groups — including differences within and among those groups.

Ginnie's efforts to push women's health further into social theory, including recent poststructural theorizing, next resulted in the volume she coedited with Adele, *Revising Women, Health and Healing: Feminist, Cultural and Technoscience Perspectives* (Clarke and Olesen 1999). They succeeded in recruiting such renowned scholars as Donna Haraway (on ways of seeing women's health issues), Pat Hill Collins (on racism and stratified mothering), Emily Martin (on the woman in the flexible body), Patti Lather (on feminist poststructural methodology), Rayna Rapp (on feminist multi-site research), Marjorie Devault (on public health nutrition), Anne Balsamo

(on public surveillance of pregnancies), François Vergès (on [post]colonial psychiatry), Jennifer Terry (on lesbian health), Sheryl Ruzek (on women's health movements), and many others.

Ginnie also drew upon symbolic interactionist theory and ethnographic methods to study numerous health issues particular to women, including estrogen replacement therapy (Olesen 1982) and toxic shock syndrome (Olesen 1986). This phase of her research culminated in her collaboration with Nancy Fugate Woods, a prominent nurse-scholar. Their coedited *Culture, Society and Menstruation* (Olesen and Woods 1986) addressed issues of concern not only to researchers, but also to policymakers and activists. Ginnie's sociological eye also expanded across ever-wider arenas, to include gender and bureaucratic institutions in western societies (Stacey and Olesen 1993) and women's caring work (Olesen 1993).

In sum, in the litany of Ginnie's accomplishments, major components are her empirical and theoretically guided reconceptualizations of women, health and healing which forever changed that domain.

QUALITATIVE METHODS AND FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES

Across the full duration of her career, Ginnie Olesen was deeply engaged with qualitative inquiry — researching, teaching, and publishing in this area from the late 1950s to 2011. Her earliest engagements emerged from her long collaboration with Elvi Whittaker (now at University of British Columbia) on the professionalization of nursing (discussed above). This was the era of qualitative inquiry when reflexivity about the self as researcher was just emerging as a valued endeavor. Anthropologist Laura Bohannan had “come out” as the pseudonymous Eleanor Smith Bowen, candid author of *Return to Laughter* (1954) about lived experiences in the field.

Thus, in Goffmanian terms, one of the hot topics of the day was “presentation of self” as researcher. Olesen and Whittaker's (1968) contribution here, titled “Role-Making in Participant Observation,” scrutinized the processes by which observational roles are developed *and* the consequences of the roles chosen for the data gathered. Having taken qualitative courses with Ginnie, Adele sees something utterly Ginnie about the sensibility operating here, where research ethics are fully grasped *both* in terms of the interactional consequences with and for participants, *and* as consequential for the research data per se. Despite decades of work on reflexivity, such sophistication remains rare.

Ginnie was always sensitive too about the awkwardnesses, ambiguities, and challenges of actually being in the field, and we can sense her struggling to manage graciousness and politeness with the role of interrogator. In “Immersed, Amorphous and Episodic Field Work: Theory and Policy in Three Contrasting Contexts” (Olesen 1990), she described an interdisciplinary research project that included David Riesman, based in sites across the United States that had pursued educational reforms. Ginnie was very pleased to learn she could use symbolic interactionism and qualitative methods to study policy issues. Given the extent of intensive research

collaborations across her career, it is no surprise that Ginnie was also lead author of an article on team analysis of data (Olesen et al. 1993).

To provide a glimpse of Ginnie in an interior conversation about intellectual change, we turn to a paper she wrote about coming to terms with poststructuralisms, postmodernisms, and cultural studies in symbolic interactionism during the agonistic 1990s. She had attended about a decade of SSSI sessions on such topics, when the following occurred (Olesen 2001:268):

January 2000, San Francisco. Message from Denzin in the morning e-mail: “Ginnie, can I twist your arm and place your name on the SSSI Cultural Studies Panel for the Washington meetings?” I shriek, “Oh, my God! To get up there with those talented, brilliant people who have been doing this together for years? This is a good chance to make a fool of myself in front of a national audience. Am I crazy or what?” Raw fear, anxiety, and panic cascade through my brain and stomach. As this emotional tsunami subsides, guilt and hubris arise. Guilt: Denzin has been a staunch supporter and good colleague for years, and I want to do something for him. Hubris: Unseemly dreams of glory surge. Hell, I could do something: As beautiful as Laurel Richardson’s narratives? As passionate and full of desire as Patricia Clough’s tales? As emotionally and sociologically compelling as Carolyn Ellis’s presentations? As thought provoking as Denzin’s performances? As evocative of connections to larger economic and cultural structures as Michal McCall’s and Alan Shelton’s histories? “Snap out of it,” I say to myself . . .

[and much later . . .] *Slowly, uneasily, unsurely, I thread words, sentences, and ideas together, clipping and snipping, advancing and retreating, worrying and rejoicing, slipping and sliding, anticipating and despairing. Text begins to emerge. If it occasionally reads and feels more like Peter Rabbit than A. S. Byatt, it nevertheless comes into existence.*

As we can see, Ginnie pushed herself relentlessly as a scholar and she pushed students hard too, urging them onward and upward, hoping they would achieve what she called “liftoff” with their ideas, jacking up tired prose and prosaic data through incisive theoretical insights. Like many of us who did not come from academic backgrounds or anticipate scholarly lives, Ginnie often seemed surprised about where she had gotten, a bit aghast at what she had dared. This was most freeing for us as her students and colleagues. We learned to dare both from her and together with her.

For three decades, Ginnie Olesen taught qualitative inquiry at UCSF, usually in collaboration with Anselm Strauss and Lenny Schatzman. However, in terms of the curriculum and syllabi, it was Ginnie who created one of the most ambitious and intellectually sophisticated qualitative training programs at the doctoral level in the United States. Fighting valiantly for decades against the dismissiveness of some faculty, it was offered in *both* sociology and nursing, consisting of at least three (required for sociology students) and often four courses. Ginnie generated syllabi of such depth that people relied on them for their own development as researchers for years after completing the PhD. When Adele took over two of these courses and their syllabi in 1990, she had to work very hard to maintain Ginnie’s exceptionally high standards.

Again, not surprisingly, Ginnie's culminating writings on qualitative inquiry were her articles on feminist qualitative research for the first *four* editions of Norm Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994, 2000, 2005, and 2011). Not merely updating but starting afresh each time as the flood of such work deserved serious attention, Ginnie traced developments in feminist methodologies and research well into the new millennium. As poststructuralisms began to be integrated into research, she focused on feminisms and emergent epistemological complexities. A decade before handbooks of feminist research were published, Ginnie led with topics such as "Who can know?" and "Frameworks unframed" (Olesen 1994). Documenting the amazing scope of work, including ethical and theoretical concerns, she cited richly and transnationally. Ginnie especially examined how issues posed by deconstructionism and postmodernism were taken up in terms of voice, experience, and disciplinary boundaries — still hot feminist topics.

Ginnie's (2000, 2005, 2011) later articles centered on research by women of color, postcolonial feminist thought, lesbian and disabled research. She analyzed "unrealized agendas" and documented "deeper exploration of how meanings of race, class and gender emerge and interlock." She explored "endarkening, decolonizing and indigenous feminist research" as these emerged, tracing roots in earlier work. Each article offered an invaluable table specifying transformative developments, critical trends, and key issues — with ambitious citations for each entry.

In an article titled "Not Without a Shout: Acts of Activism ... Politics of Possibility," Ginnie (Olesen 2011:403) wrote: "At a time of dark and darkening events and changes and in a climate of unimagined incivility and anger in the United States ... , how can critical methodologists move through acts of activism to a politics of possibility?" She urged fresh approaches to research that would address "the complexities and fearful injustices of our time," sadly still desperately needed.

Ever the teacher, ever the resource, ever the program builder, Ginnie's legacies in qualitative inquiry include not only her own research but also her teaching, mentorship, and writings *about* research read around the world.

SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS AND THE INTERACTIONIST SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF ILLNESS AND SELF-CARE

Demonstrating her avid intellectual curiosity and pushing on boundaries of her established interests, additional scholarly domains in which Ginnie pioneered largely in the 1990s are the interactionist social psychology of illness and self-care and the sociology of emotions. In both (overlapping) domains, the articles she published set new agendas for research in major journals. Her intervention in medical sociology was "Caregiving, Ethical and Informal" in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (Olesen 1989). Collaboratively including students as was often her wont, Ginnie first authored "The Mundane Complaint and the Physical Self: An Area

for Analysis in the Social Psychology of Health and Illness” for *Social Science and Medicine* (Olesen et al. 1990). She also contributed on this topic to Carolyn Ellis and Michael Flaherty’s *Windows on Lived Experience: Research on Subjectivity* (Olesen 1992).

Then, an epiphany. Postmodernisms, poststructuralisms, and cultural studies “met” symbolic interactionism and Ginnie was “literally swept away” by a panel Norm Denzin organized: “From the podium began to flow words, ideas, revelations and emotions so daring, so stimulating, so divergent from the usual desiccated presentations that I feel intellectual jubilation . . . I fly home, a phoenix risen from the ashes of a sociology that seems out of step, out of tune and strangely old fashioned” (Olesen 2001:267–268).

Out of those ashes, Ginnie began crafting an intervention in the emergent sociology of emotions. Invited to speak to the prestigious British Sociological Association Medical Sociology Group in 1990, she presented “The Neglected Emotions: A Challenge to Medical Sociology.” Taking her early nursing research into unplowed territory on emotions in rationalizing organizations, Ginnie saw “emotional lag” as a consequence of bureaucratic insistence on physical care at the expense of previously valued emotional care. She also collaborated with her student Debora Bone, a nurse sociologist focused on emotion work under early neoliberal hospital management systems (Olesen and Bone 1998/2009), and explored gender and emotions in U.S. healthcare (Olesen 2000). Across this work, Ginnie blurred boundaries between the emergent and often poststructural sociology of emotions and the kinds of sociological social psychology that had characterized medical sociology, especially in patient-oriented work, to set new agendas for both specialties.

Drawing on her Chicago roots, Ginnie followed Simmel’s suggestion to pursue seemingly negligible social forms in an ambitious keynote for the Couch-Stone Symposium in Las Vegas (Olesen 1994). Ginnie linked changes in forms of hospitality in domestic, airline, and hospice situations to social and economic shifts, noting that the selves of interactants are also changed. She further suggested interactionists attend to dynamics of social forms as a means of linking situated activity and larger social and economic forces toward “waylaying the criticism of symbolic interaction as astructural” (Olesen 1994:187).

Ginnie’s keen eye for “the big news” was manifest in her paper “Working it Through: Interpretive Sociology After 9/11.” She concluded: “Norm and Yvonna’s invitation asked ‘How have you worked through these issues?’ I have only begun to work them through. That is a project for the rest of our lives” (Olesen 2002:182). As so often the case, Ginnie was prescient about the ramifications of the events of 9/11, which remain terrifyingly with us to this day.

As we were finishing this article, a book coedited by Ginnie’s former student Monica Casper on *Critical Trauma Studies* (Casper and Wertheimer 2016) arrived. On page one, we found the following epigraph: “As the problematic became absorbed into the taken-for-granted, the vulnerable self merged into biography. Body and self

were mutually implicated in that biography of vulnerability" (Olesen 1992:210). Ginnie continues to inspire others to pioneer in yet new areas, the cherished goal of generous scholars.

CONCLUSIONS

Each of us has a personal memory of working with Ginnie that we want to share here. Adele notes, as Ginnie mentored me from her student to assistant, associate and then full professor as a colleague, and then helped me prepared for retirement, I grew to understand how deeply she had become my moral and political compass. I turned to her for guidance on many and divergent occasions. She had successfully negotiated respectable and responsible pathways through the dense and thorny politics common in the department, the School of Nursing, UCSF more broadly, American sociology and symbolic interactionism during trying times. I then realized some years ago that when I am unsure how to proceed, I ask myself, "What would Ginnie say or do?" This makes me pause, step back to get a broader view, and "let the problem percolate a bit," as she would say. The answer is always insightful, useful, and often deeply solacing.

Sheryl fondly recalls, in addition to hiring me as a visiting lecturer to teach her women's health course in 1975, Ginnie graciously agreed to be the external reader of my PhD dissertation and later drummed up the idea of applying for the FIPSE grant, a grueling process that most people regarded as a long-shot. Although Ellen Lewin and I were decidedly her junior colleagues, at every turn she insisted we were equal partners. Although FIPSE tried to require a single director and two codirectors, Virginia refused, got her way, and made certain all three of us were codirectors and included in the national directors' meetings. Her efforts to credit our contributions and make sure we were recognized for them stood in stark contrast to common academic horror stories of senior faculty appropriating students' and junior colleagues' work. After forty years, I still cherish this aspect of her character as much as I do her friendship, intellectual rigor, inquisitive mind, and fascination with the world around her.

In sum, Ginnie has long reminded us of dauntless nineteenth century feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. No matter what, they persevered. Ginnie is precisely such a "keeping on" kind of person. "Aging isn't for sissies" is her modest response to over forty years of living with severe and disabling arthritis. We have studied with her, taught with her, worked on conferences with her, collaborated on writing projects, and grown up to become her colleagues and friends. With Anne Davis, Elvi Whittaker, and Ellen Lewin, we gleefully celebrated Ginnie's ninetieth birthday with her in 2015. Very few people ever have the privilege of working with anyone as intellectually provocative, foresightful, innovative, fair, and reliable as Ginnie Olesen. Her generosity of spirit can take your breath away. She is elegant, sophisticated, unerringly gracious and, as Carl Couch might well have intoned, "damn smart."

NOTES

1. Ginnie mentored so many people that we cannot list them all here. Eventually, her cv recognizing them and additional accomplishments will be posted on the UCSF website, along with her autobiography and this article.

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Sheryl Ruzek, PHD, MPH, is a Professor of Public Health Emerita at Temple University where she was also Affiliated Professor of Women’s Studies, College of Liberal Arts, and Codirector of the Center for Women’s Health Research, Leadership and Advocacy. Her research focus is gender issues in risk communication, cancer communication, and the role of patient advocacy organizations in health promotion, especially women’s health. Dr. Ruzek has consulted for the WHO, FDA, and numerous public health organizations. In 1996, she received the University’s Great Teacher Award and, from 2000 to 2002, served as Acting Dean of the Graduate School. Sheryl is a colleague and friend of Ginnie Olesen’s.