

Eric, Brian and Harriet: Autobiography as (discourse, inter-textuality, triangulation, bricolage.....)

Gaby Weiner, Umeå University, Sweden¹

*This presentation draws on three autobiographies - those of Eric Hobsbawm, Brian Simon and Harriet Martineau – in order to explore the claims of advocates of autobiography concerning its validity as a research approach or genre and how it can be used to illuminate educational settings. However, autobiography is problematic, and cannot be understood merely as a straight-forward, descriptive record of a life, but rather as a form of truth-production. It is a conscious and judicious production of a usually linear narrative giving the appearance of truthfulness (Weiner 2003). The value of autobiography to education is explored through the analysis of the autobiographies of two male historians and contemporaries – Brian Simon (1998, *A Life in Education*) and Eric Hobsbawm (2002, *Interesting Times: a twentieth century life*) - and feminist writer and historian, Harriet Martineau (1877, *Autobiography*, vols. 1 & 2).*

There is a crisis in Auto/biography similar to that in History, as indicated in the AERA symposium, Theory, Method and the History of Education in Chicago 2003 which involved a number of people at this conference.² The challenge of poststructuralism and post modernism has rendered problematic the telling of historical (and autobiographical) truths. The crisis lies in the claims of historians that they can reveal the facts about events long gone. If this position can no longer be defended, what use is history to educational or other kinds of research? While auto/biography has always had a more tenuous claim to research with its marginal positioning between history and literature, auto/biographical research methods including life and oral history, have also been utilised for the modernity research project – of telling it like it really is or was. The question raised in this paper, drawing on three specific autobiographical accounts, is what can we make of them? How can we interpret the truths so skilfully portrayed in the texts? How can we divide off; fact from perspective, participation from posturing, right from wrong? As Said pointed out, there is a difficulty in holding a conception of 'true' knowledge from which scholars can maintain detachment?

No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society. (Said, 1978: 10).

This point is especially relevant when it comes to autobiographical writing. To what extent is any kind of detachment possible? The paper draws on the interpretative framework of 'social constructionist discourse analysis' (Phillips and Jørgenson , 2002: 1), which takes as its starting point that:

¹ Paper presented at annual conference, theme: 'Education and the Social Order: Re-visioning the legacy of Brian Simon', History of Education Society, Cambridge University, 12-14 December 2003

² The main speakers in the symposium Theory, Method and the History of Education at the annual meeting, American Educational Research Association, Chicago, USA, 22 April 2003, are listed in the programme as follows: Richard Aldrich, Joyce Goodman, Phil Gardner, Ruth Watts, Derrick Armstrong, Jane Martin, Gary McCulloch, Barry Franklin and Kate Rousmaniere.

our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but, rather, play an active role in creating and changing them.

According to Phillips and Jørgenson (p4), social constructionism ‘is an umbrella terms for a range of new theories about culture and society’ of which discourse analysis is one. More precisely, Burr (1995:2) argues that social constructionism is based on four premises:

- a critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge
- consciousness of historical and cultural specificity
- links between knowledge and social processes i.e. our ways of understanding the world are created and sustained by social processes
- links between knowledge and social action i.e. the extent to which some forms of action are perceived as natural and others unthinkable.

However, discourse analysis (which is a popular theoretical/methodological framework in Sweden currently), merely, it seems to me, offers a reworking of older theories relating to the problem of language and meaning (ref. Saussure, F.R & Queenie Leavis , Bahktin, MacLuhan, Fish, Joan Wallach Scott and others) in ways acceptable to new generations of scholars. Indeed in the 1970s, the great communicator Marshall McLuhan referred to the fractured nature of communication between individuals where ‘all people tend to misunderstand each other almost totally all of the time’ (quoted in Marchand, 1989: 39).

The paper has a particular focus on what autobiography can offer educational history/the history of education. In fact, education is treated rather differently in the three autobiographies. Eric Hobsbawm (2002) refers somewhat dismissively to his educational experiences in Austria and Britain, suggesting a rather more conservative perspective on what formal education has to offer compared with his fellow Marxist and contemporary, Brian Simon. For Brian Simon (1998), education provides his autobiography’s main terrain, on which actions, campaigns and policies are staked out. However, Simon’s own education and that of his wife and children has little place in this work.

But in this book the focus is directly on *educational* issues and how these have been treated down the years. This is no autobiography dealing with personal feelings, family affairs, friends. Drawing on contemporary experience at different stages it attempts to unravel how opinions were formed, what kind of investigation and research was undertaken at different levels and why. All these matters and many others, were closely relevant to the education of students – their preparation as teachers – my task when I moved to university work in 1950 (4-5, original emphasis).

By contrast, Harriet Martineau (1877) produces a more personal account of her educational experiences, focusing in particular on the benefits and contribution they made to her subsequent successes and fulfilment in work and later life. Her portrayal, however, needs to be read alongside her passionate arguments for female education in a period when education was largely denied to women. Likewise, Simon’s lack of attention to his own school education denotes, perhaps, discomfiture with its elite nature in relation to the ‘equal education for all’ campaigns with which he was engaged. And

Hobsbawm's denial of the impact of his own formal education despite its evident importance in assuring him entry to an elite university education reflects, possibly, the detached nature of his memories of personal events during a time of trauma.

Introduction to the Protagonists: Eric, Brian, Harriet - and Gaby

Biography can be useful in situating as well as interpreting autobiography, as I have noted elsewhere (Weiner, 1996). This section provides a short biographical snapshot of each of the main protagonists as a backdrop to the main section of the paper which focuses on their educational perspectives.

Eric Hobsbawm was born in June 1917 in Alexandria, Egypt. His mother, daughter of a 'moderately prosperous Viennese jeweller and father, 'fourth of eight children of an immigrant Jewish cabinet-maker' from London (pp 2-3) were married in neutral Zurich by means of special dispensation from Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, at a time when their respective countries were at war. The family eventually settled in Vienna, where in the late 1920s, Hobsbawm 'acquired political consciousness as naturally as sexual awareness'. On the early death of his father and then his mother, the young orphan moved to another part of the family in Berlin where he was well placed to observe the death throes of the Weimar Republic. The months in Berlin made him 'a lifelong communist' – interestingly, he was recruited to the German Communist Party (KPD) at his Gymnasium (high school). With the advent of the Third Reich, Hobsbawm and his sister emigrated to Britain (having British passports and relatives in London) and he took up an academic career, first winning an Open Scholarship to read history at King's College, Cambridge and later as a senior academic at Birkbeck College, London University. He wrote a number of important and much respected histories from a Marxist perspective (Hobsbawm, 1962, 1975, 1987, 1994). Judt (2003) suggests that but for his Communist Party membership, Hobsbawm would probably have held a distinguished chair at an earlier age. In the event, he eventually gained a professorship at Birkbeck where he remained until he retired. Out of step with what he terms 'the cultural revolution' of the 1960s, he came to wider public prominence as an incisive analyst of the Thatcher period, and was particularly trenchant in his criticism of the failure of the Left in halting Thatcherism.

Brian Simon was born into a prosperous English family in 1915, two years earlier than Hobsbawm. Simon's father, who became the first Lord Simon of Wythemshawe, owned two large engineering firms and his own education was at a Norfolk independent school and later, like Hobsbawm, at Cambridge. His mother Shena D. Simon was an active member of the Labour Party and Chair of the Manchester Education Committee for 40 years (Martin & Goodman, 2004). Among close family friends was R. H. Tawney and throughout Simon's autobiography a sense is given of the strength of his family networks in sustaining his subsequent career and life's work. Simon became a communist at Cambridge University in the 1930s, a member, he writes, of the generation of students which was faced with the horrors of fascism. However according to Simon, it was not because the students were interested in politics in the abstract, but rather:

because of ... the actual problems confronting them [which] 'forced them steadily though hesitatingly to a revolutionary position', to a recognition of the need for fundamental change... They saw food destroyed when people went

hungry; children suffering from rickets failing reparable action... This is why interest in political and social development led to Marxism 'which gives tools for such an analysis', and so to support for the Communist Party (p4).

Like Hobsbawm, Simon never renounced Marxism nor publicly left the Communist Party, yet also like Hobsbawm his membership of the Communist party served to marginalise him and 'provided valuable ammunition for his critics and detractors' (Chitty, 2002). Simon became best known for two specific aspects of his academic work: a long-term advocacy of comprehensive schooling with a parallel critique of the instruments of educational selection – Searle (2002) refers to Simon as 'the great ideologist of the comprehensivisation movement' - and the author of a much respected, four-volume history of the English education system covering the period 1780 to 1990 (Simon, 1960, 1965, 1974, 1991).

Harriet Martineau, born 1802, was the sixth of eight children of a Norwich Unitarian family. Her parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Martineau, belonged to the Dissenting professional and manufacturing middle classes and were direct descendants of the Huguenots, driven out of France in the seventeenth century by the withdrawal from non-Catholics of freedom of worship. At the time of her birth, Martineau's father was a manufacturer of textiles, but later his death and the failure of the business was to lead her to take up a literary career. In 1832, at the age of thirty, she published a hugely popular introduction to the new nineteenth-century science of political economy. It made her a national celebrity overnight, provided her with financial security, and earned her the reputation of 'popular educator'. Thirty years later, in 1863 at the age of 61, she came out of retirement to publish four letters in the Daily News alerting the public to the dangers of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which were to constitute the first shots in one of the most important British feminist campaigns of the nineteenth century. In the years between, she exerted a degree of influence that is difficult for us to understand today, with our perceptions of the fixed, patriarchal nature of nineteenth-century England. Martineau produced an impressive number of books, articles, letters and other forms of writing, becoming a pioneer in a number of emerging nineteenth-century disciplines and fields including economics, politics, journalism, sociology, women's rights, travel writing and autobiography (and history). She died in 1876, at the age of 74, in the house that she had built for herself in the Lake District.

Another protagonist. At this point it is, perhaps, important to declare my own position as the fourth protagonist in this paper. Born a century and a half after Martineau and 30 years after Simon and Hobsbawm, my interest in all three derives from my fascination with autobiography as a genre, as well as my historical and cultural circumstances. As the child of refugees fleeing from Nazism at the end of the 1930s, though born some years later in Britain, I can identify with Hobsbawm's Jewish refugee middle-European status and position of insider-outsider observer and commentator. Further, Hobsbawm fills in gaps in my personal history and recollection of left-leaning intellectual politics in Britain from the late 1950s onwards, of which I was a part – even if on the outer fringes. Simon likewise provides a context for my career in education from the mid 1970s onwards and Martineau, who was the topic of my doctoral thesis, and who wrote a noted autobiography, originally stimulated my interest in, and doubts about, the genre of autobiography, as well as offering illuminating, nineteenth-century perspectives on marginality, feminism and struggle.

Because of the nature of this conference, Simon and Hobsbawm must take centre stage in this paper, given their similar ages, shared political ideals and contributions to history, though divided by birthplace, ethnicity and social class. The question I restate here is: is there anything we take from their autobiographical comments about education, which help to illuminate the past, explain the present or predict the future? Martineau's account is used more tangentially, as a prism through which is inflected the importance of women's experience, largely missing from the other two accounts.

Autobiographical perspectives on education

This section offers one of many different possible readings of how education is treated by the three protagonists. The autobiographies are taken in turn.

Interesting Times: a twentieth century life – Eric Hobsbawm

Judt (2003) claims that the early pages of the Hobsbawm's autobiography are perhaps the most intensely personal and the finest that he has written, a testimony to the quality of the writing given Hobsbawm's reputation as a master of English prose despite his linguistic beginnings elsewhere. Hobsbawm claims his autobiography as an historical analysis offered by an intellectual which serves as:

an introduction to the most extraordinary century in the world's history through the itinerary of one human being whose life could not possibly have occurred in any other (Hobsbawm, 2002: xiv).

Identification as an 'intellectual' is utilised over and over again to elucidate Hobsbawm's ability to eruditely describe, order and explain the hitherto unexplicable. Interestingly, he refers to his most recent previous book, *The Age of Extremes: the short twentieth century* (1994) as benefiting from 'participant observation' and personal memories of 'being there', and as the flip side to the autobiography. The autobiographical eye of the historian is seen by Hobsbawm as particularly tuned to the nuances of fact and fiction.

In another sense the autobiography of a historian is an important part of the construction of his or her work. Next to a belief in reason and the difference between fact and fiction, self-awareness, that is to say, standing both in one's body and outside it, is a necessary skill for players of the game in both history and the social sciences, particularly for a historian who, like myself, has chosen his subjects intuitively and accidentally, but ended up by bringing them together into a coherent whole (xiii-xiv)

However, whilst Hobsbawm is unsurpassed in his containment of complexity, his views on education are less remarkable. He reports that his mother wanted him to complete his education in England because 'most central European middle-class Jews tended to idealize Britain, so stable, strong, boring and lacking in neuroses'(p. 34). His first years of education in Vienna are noted only in passing, while he was being passed between family's friends and relatives as his mother's health deteriorated. He suggests that he survived the years of trauma over the loss of his parents and home, because he was largely removed from the real world – 'not so much in a world of dreams, but of curiosity, enquiry, solitary reading, observation, comparison and experimentation' (p.

41). Of his 13 years spent in educational establishments before Cambridge, he writes that the 19 months at Prinz-Heinrich's-Gymnasium (PHG) had the greatest impact. While there, it was not the content of schooling which impressed him most but the experience of knowing that he was living through a decisive moment in the twentieth century, an adolescent for which 'the very experience of living is unforgettable' (p. 49). He asks whether his schooling was indeed an important influence since it was outside its walls that he learnt the Brechtian songs, read the newspapers, saw the posters, and experienced the great events. PHG, it seems, was a 'perfectly conventional school in the conservative Prussian tradition' with military connections – 'yet it provided a wonderful opportunity for junior and senior boys to meet on equal terms' (p. 52). Indeed, pupils were able to protest against the dismissal of a popular Jewish mathematics and science professor and the head was viewed suspiciously by the Nazis as overly imbued with the 'socially suspect spirit of Weimar' (p. 53). Hobsbawm admits that some of the books that he was expected to read 'shaped my life' including the works of Brecht. Yet:

What I learnt in the formal classroom is less clear ... life was too interesting to concentrate essentially on school work... We were on the *Titanic* and it was hitting the iceberg (pp. 54 & 5).

On arrival in Britain in 1933, Hobsbawm was forbidden by his adoptive family from participating in politics. This, he argues, contributed to his 'ultra-intellectualisation' over the next few years. Nevertheless, he had to work hard to master the new language, culture, society, and ways of behaving, and in this he was helped by attendance at St. Marylebone Grammar School in central London until he went up to Cambridge. The fact that the school is no longer there, as Hobsbawm points out, is not due to enemy bombing but to:

the ideology of the 1970s, a bad era for secondary education. It [the school] refused the choice it was given – to turn itself into a non-selective 'comprehensive' school for all comers or go private – and was consequently shut down. It gave me as good an education as any available in England... (p. 92).

A self-admitted snob, socially and politically isolated and too intellectual for the rest of the boys, Hobsbawm recalls that he nonetheless benefited from the quality and 'devotion to their calling, of the masters', who introduced him to 'the astonishing marvels of English poetry and prose' and helped him survive 'the no-man's land' in which he lived since leaving Berlin.

For three years Marylebone was my intellectual centre – not only the school, but also, a few yards away, the splendid Public Library... I certainly did not get my education only at school (p. 95).

A Life in Education – Brian Simon

As indicated earlier, Simon's autobiography is devoted primarily to education, but not to his own experience as a school and university student, but rather as an activist in the fight for the comprehensive school and opponent of selection. His description of his progressive independent school is brief and to the point.

However my own education was experienced in the ‘independent’ sector. I had been sent, with an elder brother, to a recently established, modernised ‘public school’ ... a school which at the time appealed to the more radical middle class. Here the forceful head...set out to create a humanist environment with no school *rules*, only ‘traditions’; corporal punishment was excluded, friendly relationships between teachers and pupils were encouraged, and also between older and younger boys (p.8, original emphasis)

While there, Simon took up the opportunity of visiting a mixed-sex ‘progressive’ school in Salem, in Germany where he was able to observe the importance of having an imaginative and creative head-teacher.

This certainly stimulated my thinking about education, particularly his stress on human potentiality as well as his imaginative approach to its release, which depended on a close knowledge of the individual. (p.9)

Arriving several days after the Nazis came to power in 1933, he also witnessed the headteacher, Hahn, being ‘hauled off to jail’ by ‘Brownshirts’ because he had previously spoken out against Nazi leadership and policies. Hahn later escaped to England before setting up his famous, boys-only school Gordonstoun in Scotland.

The Salem experience had a deep impact on Simon as did his involvement while at Cambridge in the Education Society aimed at improving university teaching, which in turn led to his later involvement in the National Union of Students. It was at this stage, Simon says, that he decided to head for a career in education which took him from a year’s teacher training course at the Institute of Education, London to Salford Grammar where he taught the actor Albert Finney, to Leicester University where he was interviewed by the Principal Frederick Attenborough (father of the media brothers Richard and David) and where he stayed to pursue an academic career.

The autobiography is an account in the heroic tradition – with opportunities taken up, retreats and regroupings, attacks and counter attacks – yet all the while strongly rooted in a chronological account of a lifetime’s work. Although the narrative is personal in the sense that the reader gains a glimpse of the events that led to the development of Simon’s thinking and his academic development, the focus is rarely on the personal. Simon instead uses the narrative form of autobiography to reflect on the issues that gave meaning to his chosen life’s work, and perhaps to provide the final word on his range of intellectual, political and educational achievements. He devotes considerable attention to the importance of the study of teaching and learning and, in particular, the ORACLE study with which he was involved for a decade or so, and which sought to map scientifically the inside of classrooms. This was an urgent matter for, as streaming went out of fashion, new problems were created. Non-selective schools demanded new forms of pedagogy.

What it did was create a new situation, in which the genuine educational problems of young children could at least begin to be tackled and not swept under the carpet through a simplistic categorisation of children on questionable criteria. The new task was to direct research towards the psychology of learning, especially the role of language in mental development, and to facilitate learning in mathematics and

science...Research should be such as 'to provide a scientific basis for classroom practice' [quote from Forum submission to Plowden]. (95)

The autobiography also details Simon's studies of educational policy historically and contemporaneously; his fine-tuned local historical studies of schooling; the campaign for comprehensive schools and parallel critique of psychological testing; his work with Russian Marxist psychologists and their translation into English (with the help of his wife Joan); and finally, his role in the creation of the journal FORUM as a campaigning journal on behalf of comprehensive education.

Individuals, whether friends or enemies, are treated courteously so that the reader needs all the skills of deconstruction, to discern Simon's personal views on anyone. For example, his reference to collaboration with Caroline Benn (whom I also knew personally) on the book that made most impression on me in my initial teacher training, *Half Way There* (1972), is curiously stunted and unrevealing: 'It is good to remember the three years work with Caroline Benn; cooperation was harmonious and all our targets met'. So much more could have been written on the most important collaborator of one of his most important books! If as Corbett (2002) suggests, Simon deliberately 'pruned ...the personal to focus on educational issues', what was the reason? Fear of causing offence or of revealing too much or perhaps because of an under-appreciation of the importance of the personal in politics and activism. While Simon's aim in the autobiography is evidently to set the record straight on the parts of his life that held most professional and political meaning for him, we, who have some familiarity with his other writing, perhaps, would have preferred more personal insights into the human side of his activism.

Harriet Martineau's Autobiography, vols. 1 & 2- Harriet Martineau

Harriet Martineau's autobiography was written in 1855 when she thought she had not long to live. However it was not published until 1877, after her death. She says that she wrote it out of duty 'when my life became evidently a somewhat remarkable one'. The aim, according to the introduction, is to offer a whole 'from one point of view, and in a consistent spirit' (Martineau, 1877, 1, pp. 1-2). In it, she reflects on her education, which she saw as largely beneficial, and in particular, offers her schooling experiences as a model for female education of the future. Like other Unitarian families, the Martineau children received an exceptionally broad education compared with their contemporaries (Watts, 1998). By the age of nine, Martineau was being taught at home by her mother, older brothers and sisters, and tutors of one kind or another, about a wide variety of subjects, including household skills and sewing, Latin, French, writing, arithmetic and literature, and piano and singing. At eleven, her 'delectable schooling' began, when she attended an 'excellent' local school run by an ex-minister Isaac Perry. Here Martineau and her sister Rachel were taught Greek and Latin so well that they 'got into the habit of thinking in Latin' (p. 63), and also English poetry and 'verse making', French grammar and pronunciation, English grammar and composition, and arithmetic. Of this, she wrote that it proved an invaluable and formative experience. 'Our two year's schooling seemed like a lifetime to look back upon: and to this day it fills a disproportionate space in the retrospect of my existence, - so inestimable was its importance' (Martineau, 1877, 1, p. 69). For Martineau, her period of 'delectable'

schooling, home tuition on a wide range of subjects and her own auto-didacticism, were all viewed as among the most important factors in enabling her to take up a prominent place in the public sphere as a writer, scholar and reformer.

Reflections on reading autobiography

How can the above discussion of the three autobiographical accounts which are the focus of this paper and which thus far, have been treated separately, be brought together into some kind of reflection on what autobiography can offer to our understanding of education?

First, all three autobiographers were clearly organic intellectuals in the Gramsci mould, using their writing and formidable intellects to argue for greater equality and social justice in society as a whole and in their chosen fields of expertise, in particular. They each had a message to convey and the ability to do this well. Nevertheless, Hobsbawm's self-portrayal suggests a Mannheim-ian detachment that allowed him to take in a broader sweep of intellectual horizon. And Martineau's relative greater attention to the personal and to individuals as actors in her own life, denotes the greater significance of such factors in women's lives.

Second, as skilled writers, there is little that these authors reveal that they do not want to reveal. This means that reading 'beneath' their texts requires considerable skills of deconstruction and interpretation on the part of the reader. How to do this? One way is to carry out a form of 'triangulation' exercise in which such accounts can be read together with/against other evidence of the period plus contemporary accounts, all necessarily filtered through the perceptions and experiences of the reader. In my case, I knew Simon personally although not well and heard him lecture several times. Hobsbawm was essential reading for me during his time with *Marxism Today* in the 1980s and early 1990s, as a means of understanding the huge ideological shifts of the period. Moreover small fragments from Hobsbawm resonated with my memory of youthful political activism. For example, he mentions the Partisan coffee bar in London's Soho, which was the brainchild of Ralph Samuel who 'dreamed of replacing Stalinist authoritarianism of the Party with a free-wheeling creative mobilization of minds, and better centre for doing so than a café?' (p. 212). However I knew it only as *the* place for leftist teenagers like myself to go, in order meet 'real' intellectuals.

Simon's more focused work, with so much of the personal removed – it has been intimated that a longer, more personal memoir is, perhaps, in existence somewhere – provides an important context for my own educational experience, as a schoolgirl in the 1950s and early 1960s and as a teacher and educationist from the early 1970s onwards. His critiques of intelligence testing and works advocating comprehensive schooling were part of my initial teacher education course work literature at Sidney Webb College and later at the Institute of Education where I was a postgraduate. Like many people at this conference, I shared his commitment to the comprehensive ideal, and have little doubt that history will challenge current perceptions of its failure (viz. Brighouse 2002). However unlike Simon and Hobsbawm, my youthful political struggles which took place in mid period of their academic journey, were deeply embedded in what Hobsbawm calls the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. movements

relating to gender and 'race') which took in also 'the new sociology of education' of which Simon is so critical. In this respect, 'my' story is largely missing from theirs.

Third, the fact that Hobsbawm and Simon had different views on education while sharing a similar general and historical outlook is possibly more to do with where they started than where they ended up – both noted scholars, professors and commentators of their generation. It is the discrepancies in their accounts as much as their shared perspectives that make analyses that I have tried to carry out, so fascinating yet ultimately so tenuous.

Fourth, the process of analysis adopted in this paper attempts to reveal the complex processes at play in unpacking autobiographical texts. On the one hand, I suggest that such analyses are worth the effort because they force reflection both on historical events and on the perspectives of those involved in the production of identity, subjectivity and discourse i.e. what it is possible to say and do. On the other hand, the bricolage produced is messy and chaotic and perhaps no match for the elegance of writing and chronological rationality that conventionally attract readers to autobiography.

Fifth and finally, autobiography, without application of triangulation or discursive analytic frameworks as mentioned above, is no more than a fiction, equivalent to the fairytale, romance story or crime novel. Autobiography can only be useful to research, it seems, if it is able to provide a 'web of identity' (Griffiths, 1995; Martin & Goodman, 2004) as part of a wider array of multi-perspectival evidence on historical and educational settings. This is its strength and also its limitation.

References:

Benn, C. & Simon, B. (1972) *Half Way There - Report on the British Comprehensive School Reform*. Harmondsworth : Penguin.

Brighouse, T. (2002) Part 1: Comprehensive Schools, then, now and in the future. The Caroline Benn, Brian Simon Memorial Lecture. 28 September.
[Http:// education.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4509462-...](http://education.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4509462-...)Downloaded 16.10.2003

Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Sage.

Chitty, C. (2002) Brian Simon 1915-2002: An appreciation of his life and work. *Education for Tomorrow*. 74. 5-7. [Http://eddie.idx.com.au/2002/74simon.html](http://eddie.idx.com.au/2002/74simon.html).
Downloaded 16.10.2003

Corbett, A. (2002) Brian Simon: Communist party educationalist who advocated the comprehensive system and wrote a classic history of British schools. *The Guardian*. 22 January, [Http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/education/story/...](http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/education/story/...)Downloaded 16.10.2003

Griffith, M. (1995) *Feminism and the Self: the Web of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Hobsbawm, E. J. (1962) *The Age of Revolution. Europe 1789-1848*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1975) *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1987) *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1994) *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*. Penguin
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (2002) *Interesting Times: a twentieth century life*. London: Allen Unwin/ Penguin Books.
- Judt, T. (2003) The Last Romantic. *New York Review of Books*. November 20. 43-5
- Marchand, P. (1989) *Marshall McLuhan: the medium and the messenger*. Toronto, Canada: Vintage
- Martin, J. & Goodman, J. (2004) *Women and Education 1800-1980*. Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan
- Martineau, H. (1877), *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, 2 vols. London, Smith, Elder & Co
- Phillips, L. & Jørgenson, M. W. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism: western conceptions of the Orient*. Reprinted 1991. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Simon, B. (1960) *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure, 1780-1870*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Simon, B. (1965) *Education and the Labour movement, 1870-1920*. London: Lawrence & Wishart
- Simon, B. (1974) *The Politics of Educational Reform, 1920-1940*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Simon, B. (1991) *Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Simon, B. (1998) *A Life in Education*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Searle, C. (2002) Brian Simon 1915-2002: An appreciation of his life and work. *Education for Tomorrow*. 74. 2-5. [Http://eddie.idx.com.au/2002/74simon.html](http://eddie.idx.com.au/2002/74simon.html). Downloaded 16.10.2003

Scott, J. Wallach (1988). *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Watts, R., (1998) *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England: 1760-1860*, London, Longman.

Weiner, G. (1996) Biography, Subject and the Construction of Self: the illuminating case of Harriet Martineau. *Vitae Scholasticae*. 14, 2, 37-48.

Weiner, G. (2003) The Truth and Harriet Martineau: Interpreting a Life. Paper presented in the symposium Truth and Auto/biography, annual conference, American Educational Research Association, Chicago, USA, April 2003.