

End Notes

How I Got Started

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I doubt I would have become an academic if I had not gone to Reed College. There were two reasons I went to Reed. First, my friend Tim Cross was planning to go there. If Tim had been planning to put jello in his ears, I would have thought that ear jelloing must be pretty cool. Second, Reed admitted me despite my mediocre grades. I told myself 'I probably won't be able to cut it at Reed, but there'll be no shame in trying yet failing so I'll give it my best shot.' Surviving Reed's work-hard/play-hard culture gave me decent critical thinking and communication chops and boosted my confidence.

One thing was clear to me when I graduated from Reed in 1981: I was never going to grad school. A year later, Carol Creedon, my advisor at Reed, invited me to spend the summer in Portland conducting research under her supervision. Carol was a tremendous positive influence throughout my years at Reed, and I had a great time that summer testing young children's Piagetian conservation. I built my own apparatus and jury-rigged some funky old equipment to videotape sessions at elementary schools. I rewarded my participants with chocolate chip cookies I baked the night before (blithely, with no thought of diabetes or allergies). I ate a lot of those cookies between sessions.

At the end of that summer, Carol suggested that even though I was not planning to go to grad school, I might as well apply to a few places just to keep my options open. I returned to Anchorage and worked on a construction crew. I liked the job in many ways, but often it was boring (sometimes literally so: I spent weeks hand-drilling holes in roof decking). So I followed Carol's advice and set about working on grad-school applications.

Applying to grad schools is no small task, even today. I was lucky to have access to my dad's IBM Selectric typewriter, which had a special spool of correcting film that could be used to (mostly) white out typos. Completing the applications was such a pain that by the time they were submitted, I was dead keen to be accepted. Following Carol's advice, I had selected universities by choosing prospective supervisors, and I sent them letters in which I strove to demonstrate my insightful appreciation of their research. I guess it worked because I was accepted by several schools.

Princeton's offer was irresistible. In the summer of 1983, I flew from Anchorage to Seattle and took Amtrack across

country. New Jersey in July is hot and humid, and I was ill-prepared for it. I had brought only what I could stuff into my backpack, including a mummy-style sleeping bag rated to -10°F . I lived in the Graduate College, which Bertrand Russell described as being 'As much like Oxford as monkeys could make it' and which, even worse, was not air conditioned. I could not afford to buy sheets or a fan. I remember some miserable middle-of-the-night hours lying naked on my equally naked little mattress with the windows open wishing for a breeze.

I was super excited to start working with my new supervisor. Within hours of arriving at the Graduate College, I called her from the hallway pay phone. It was the first time we had spoken. I can still remember the sinking feeling in my stomach during that awkward, stilted, brief conversation. We just did not click, somehow, and we never did. She is a brilliant scholar and was never unkind, but I could not get on her wavelength. I completed a Masters thesis in her laboratory, but it was a slog and I was not sure how to move forward from there.

Renowned memory researcher Marcia Johnson spent a sabbatical at Princeton in 1984. She participated in Bill Hirst's grad seminar on unconscious influences, and she was the coolest (and smartest) student in the class. Subsequently, Princeton wooed Marcia away from SUNY Stony Brook. The night of the day that my Masters supervisor rejected my third dissertation idea, I walked home through the cicada-shrilling dark feeling lower than whale shit. Suddenly, it occurred to me that maybe I could change supervisors. Hot damn, maybe I could work with Marcia! Turns out that I could, and I did, and lo it was good.

My first year with Marcia, I was the only student in her laboratory so I had extraordinarily abundant resources. I totally 'got' the issues Marcia was studying, and she was unfailingly supportive and engaging. She communicated her expectations clearly, and she imparted practical tips. She was an inspiring example of how to work hard grappling with difficult problems and yet keep perspective and humour.

Initially, my dissertation was to be a spin on DeLoache and Brown's ingenious work on children's memory for spatial location. In the basic version of their task, the child watched the experimenter hide a toy and later the child was asked to search for the toy. My variant involved interpolating an imagination phase in which children were coached to imagine moving each of several toys from where the child had hidden them to other locations. I hypothesized that at test young children would more often search in the imagined

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location than in a third control location. I eventually abandoned the project because I could not get adequate control over what the kids did during the imagination phase.

Partly inspired by this methodological challenge, I got very excited about generalizing the reality monitoring model of Johnson and Raye (1981) (which focused primarily on differentiating between memories of external episodes versus memories of fantasies and inferences) to the broader issue of 'source monitoring'. My dissertation, *Whence Comes this Memory*, reported evidence that people (and especially children) are more likely to confuse memories from two external sources that are similar to one another perceptually and/or conceptually.

Meanwhile, I became obsessed with McCloskey and Zaragoza's (1985) attack on Beth Loftus's claim that misleading suggestions impair witnesses' memory for event details. I thought the more important question was whether or not (and under what conditions) witnesses come to believe that they had witnessed things that were only suggested to them.¹ Also around this time, Marcia was asked to write a chapter for a book, edited by Ceci, Toglia and Ross, on children's eyewitness memory. She generously put me on that project, which led me into the burgeoning field of children's suggestibility. These more or less random influences put me on track for the astonishing honour of being invited to write this piece, but I was not out of the woods yet.

When I cut my hair and started applying for jobs in late 1986, I had only two publications. Well into the spring of 1987, my only solid offer was for a post doctorate with Lance Rips at Chicago. It was a wonderful opportunity and I planned to take it, but when a tenure-track job at Williams College came along, I could not turn it down.

Williams was, in most respects, a 3-year train wreck. Williams' teaching standards are very high, and my teaching skills were pathetic. In the winter of my third year, I was told that my contract would not be renewed. I left Williamstown as soon as I could, quoting Cabell's

Jurgen, 'Upon my word, I think this is a delightful place to be leaving.'

BUT, there was a terrifically positive upside to Williams, and that was Colleen Kelley. Colleen had graduated from Reed 2 years before I did, but took 2 years out of grad school to return to Reed for a term position, and I took her excellent stats and cognitive psychology courses. When I got to Williams, she had just returned from a study leave with Larry Jacoby at McMaster University. Colleen is extraordinarily smart. We had a productive shared laboratory, and when I left Williams in the spring of 1990, I went to McMaster for a post doctorate with Larry.

My year in Jacoby's laboratory was transformative. He is an extraordinary thinker. His ground-breaking 1991 article introducing the process-dissociation procedure (PDP) was in press when I arrived, and his laboratory was abuzz. He generously fed me the idea of adapting the PDP to Stroop-task performance and included me on several other projects and papers, and he wrote a powerful letter that doubtless played a huge role in landing me a job at UVic. There I met Don Read (visiting Victoria on sabbatical). The next summer, Don and I participated in a NATO Advanced Studies Institute on child witnesses. That cemented my friendship with Don (and also introduced me to Deb Poole, another wonderful collaborator). And that is about as far as I can go and still pass this off as being about how I got started. The fact is, it was a rough and protracted start, luck played major roles, and I owe huge debts to the many people who kept me afloat.

REFERENCES

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¹ Maria Zaragoza independently worked on the same issue.