Eble, Michelle F and Lynée Lewis Gaillet. *Stories of Mentoring: Theory and Praxis.* West Lafayette: Parlor Press, 2008. Print.

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For a scholar of my generation (Ohio State Ph.D. 1975) this fine collection of essays on the theory and praxis of mentoring in rhetoric and composition evokes strong memories. As an undergraduate student at Ohio State University I was lucky if I could find an advisor to talk with me about my schedule, much less a mentor. As a Ph.D. student, much of my mentoring came via informal peer networks. I remember one and only one formal mentoring experience during my years as a Ph.D. student, a meeting to help Ph.D. students getting ready to go on the job market to prepare. The only thing I remember from this meeting is a statement by Richard Altick—a distinguished and to my eyes somewhat scary Victorianist (he never spoke to me until the day after I passed my preliminary exams in that area)—that if he read a letter of application that misused the word "presently" he immediately threw that applicant's letter in the trash. I still have a phobia about the correct usage of that term.

Two English department faculty members did play a key role in my development in graduate school, though at the time I would not have used the terms mentor and mentee to characterize our relationship. James Kincaid, my dissertation advisor, had the perfect (for me) blend of support and rigor. Susan Miller, who came to Ohio State to direct the writing program when I was completing my dissertation in Victorian literature, gave me leadership opportunities in the program's Teaching Assistant Advisory Council and encouraged me to take a scholarly, as well as a pedagogical, interest in the teaching of writing.

I could narrate additional mentoring (or non-mentoring) stories from my career as an academic, but I will just note that in the 40 years since I received my Ph.D., it was only recently that my department established a formal peer mentoring program for tenure-line faculty. This says something important, I believe, about the need for and value of Stories of Mentoring, which breaks new ground in its exploration of this topic and its role in our field.

I hope my trip down memory lane, however abbreviated, does not seem self-indulgent. (The Victorianist in me can't help noting that this is for you, dear reader, to decide). It is certainly in line with the commitment to stories—to

narrative—that is evident in Michelle F. Eble and Lynée Lewis Gaillet's Stories of Mentoring: Theory and Praxis. This is not to say that this collection is limited to stories. Stories do indeed play a powerful role, quite appropriately, in this inquiry, for they provide windows into the diverse forms of mentoring that can occur—and just how much can be at stake in mentoring relationships. But the essays included in this collection—the bulk of which are coauthored (more on this later)—also theorize and historicize. Many also raise powerful and thought-provoking questions about the role of power, authority, and control in mentoring and the potential benefits and challenges of formal mentoring systems.

Stories of Mentoring: Theory and Praxis builds upon earlier research by Theresa Enos and Janice Lauer, both of whom in the late 1990s challenged the master/apprentice model of mentoring and argued for the necessity of developing alternatives to this model. The editors of and contributors to Stories of Mentoring have clearly heeded their call. Many essays address this issue explicitly. Jenn Fishman and Andrea Lunsford's "Educating Jane," for instance, discusses their discomfort with the term "mentor"—they prefer the term "colleague to mentor"—and argue for mentoring that is "radically reciprocal, mutually supportive, and characterized both by trust and risk-taking" (29). The question of what constitutes appropriate and ethical power relations in mentoring situations is also addressed in Diane Ashe and Elizabeth Ervin's "Mentoring Friendships and the 'Reweaving of Authority,'" Doug Downs and Dayna Goldstein's "Chancing into Altruistic Mentoring," Barbara Cole and Arabella Lyon's "Mentor or Magician: Reciprocities, Existing Ideologies, and Reflections of a Discipline," Amy C. Kimme Hea and Susan N. Smith's "Transformative Mentoring: Thinking Critically about the Transition from Graduate School to Faculty through a Graduate-Level Teaching Experience Program," Krista Ratcliffe and Donna Decker Schuster's "Mentoring Toward Interdependency: 'Keeping It Real,'" Joan Mullin and Paula Brown's "The Reciprocal Nature of Successful Mentoring Relationships: Changing the Academic Culture," and Cinda Coggins Mosher and Mary Trachsel's "Panopticism? Or Just Paying Attention?"

Issues of control, power, authority, reciprocity, and risk are woven throughout this collection and constitute one of its strengths. But Mentoring Stories addresses other subjects, as the organization of this collection makes clear. Part I "Definitions and Tributes" comprises five essays, all but one of which—Winifred Bryan Horner's "On Mentoring"—were written by coauthors. In her essay, Horner reflects on her early experiences as a graduate student and young professor who was decidedly not mentored—but who over the course of her career mentored many, including Gaillet.

As Jennifer Clary-Lemon and Duane Roen point out in "Webs of Mentoring in Graduate School," mentoring can extend outward in powerful ways. The mentoring relationships of Horner, Gaillet, and Eble are a good example of this phenomenon. As Eble notes in the essay that concludes the collection, "Reflections on Mentoring," Horner's mentoring of Gaillet was carried on via Gaillet's mentoring of Eble. Together Eble and Gaillet created a mentoring program for new TA's at Georgia State. And Eble now engages in a variety of formal and informal mentoring relationship at East Carolina University. The power of these and other experiences—such as the mentoring that takes places via the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition—led Eble and Gaillet to undertake Mentoring Stories, which itself represents a form of textual mentoring.

Three of the essays in Part I constitute multi-voiced reflections on mentoring webs. Some of these webs are grounded in particular places and times. In "Their Stories on Mentoring: Multiple Perspectives on Mentoring" Janice Lauer and seven former graduate students who entered Purdue's program in 1994 weave together reflections on the multiple ways that mentoring (including peer mentoring) occurred and on the power of these relationships. Similarly, in "Mentorship, Collegiality, and Friendship: Making Our Mark as Professionals" Steven Bernhardt and nine former Ph.D. students from New Mexico State University (1988-2001) explore the relationships that sustained them during and after graduate school. But there are different kinds of mentoring webs, as "Wendy Bishop's Legacy: A Tradition of Mentoring, a Call to Collaboration"—co-written by Anna Leahy, Stephanie Vanderslice, Kelli L. Custer, Jennifer Wells, Carol Ellis, Meredith Kate Brown, Dorinda Fox, and Amy Hodges Hamilton—demonstrates. Several of the authors of this essay, for instance, never met Bishop in person but instead communicated with her over email. Nevertheless, they emphasize, her mentoring was both essential and generous.

Part II "Mentoring Relationships" continues to explore the complex web that mentoring relationships can take. These explorations take diverse forms and are situated in a variety of contexts—from friendship, mothering, and collaborating to conducting research and observation. "Performing Professionalism: On Mentoring and Being Mentored" continues the emphasis in Part I of exploring situated mentoring webs: in this case the relationships among Cheryl Glenn and her former students Jessica Enoch and Wendy Sharer. In another essay in this section, "Mentor, May I Mother?," Catherine Gabor, Stacia Dunn Neeley, and Carrie Shively Leverenz look at the role of mentoring in the context of the decision of whether to bear children are not. The stakes, they argue, can be high, as the title of Carrie Shively Leverenz's section of the essay attests: "I Guess," Shively recounts after learning that she

is (as she and her husband wished) pregnant, "I'll Never Be Andrea Lunsford." (All three coauthors were mentored by Lunsford and emphasize her un-qualified support during their pregnancies and afterward.) The final essay in this section, Doug Downs and Dayna Goldstein's "Chancing Into Altruistic Mentoring" is particularly thought-provoking for the position the authors take about mentoring. While a number of other essays in the collection argue for the value and importance of formal mentoring systems (even as they acknowl-edge the tensions and contradictions that such systems can create), Downs and Goldstein argue against required, formal mentoring, observing that "To us this feels analogous to requiring volunteerism, establishing by fiat what may be best left to ecology and time" (149). Their essay describes how their relationship—that of an undergraduate and third year Ph.D. student—at the University of Utah developed.

Part III. "Mentoring in Undergraduate and Graduate Education," continues the emphasis of Downs and Goldstein's essay on the relationship between students and faculty mentors. As is the case throughout Stories of Mentoring, contributors discuss a variety of situations and mentoring relationships. Lisa Cahill, Susan Miller-Cochran, Veronica Pantoja, and Rochelle L. Rodrigo discuss "Graduate Student Writing Groups as Peer Mentoring Communities." Angela Eaton and seven undergraduate students from her Introduction to Research Methods class describe a collaborative research project they undertook in "Mentoring Undergraduates in the Research Process: Perspectives from the Mentor and Mentees." At the time this collection was published, this collab-oration had resulted in "two student conference presentations, one national conference presentation, and an article manuscript currently under review" (159). Nancy A. Myers "Textual Mentors: Twenty-Five Years with The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook" (hereafter TWTS) is particularly interesting for the way it expands conventional notions of mentoring. Myers narrates her connection with TWTS in her essay, observing that "For the publication of the first two . . .[editions] I was a member of the intended teacher-audience; for the last two, I was teacher-editor" (230).

Two central essays in Part III of Stories of Mentoring take on the issue of the opportunities and challenges that formal mentoring can pose. In "Webs of Mentoring in Graduate School" Duane Roen and Jennifer Clary-Lemon make a case for the value of formal mentoring relationships and projects. They also argue that mentoring should be viewed as a scholarly activity and that mentoring can and should be evaluated in systematic ways. Barbara Cole and Arabella Lyon do not necessarily disagree with Roen and Clary-Lemon, but in examining "a specific set of obstacles to forming mentoring relationships within an English composition practicum" they call attention to the challenges that a formal required mentoring program can face, such as potential conflicts

between some students' commitment to literary studies and their affiliation with the teaching of writing as new graduate students. Cole and Lyon's essay reminds readers of the role that ideological conflicts can play in mentoring efforts, and that "the process of becoming is a process of struggle and trail-blazing" (202).

Part IV "Mentoring in Writing Programs" appropriately is the concluding section in Mentoring Stories. For as Gaillet notes in the introduction to this collection, given their responsibility to train and mentor teaching assistants, writing program administrators (WPAs) have made particularly significant contributions to research on mentoring and mentoring programs. Several strands emerge in this section. Two of the essays—Alfred E. Guy, Jr. and Rita Melenczyk's "A New Paradigm for WPA Mentoring? The Case of New York University's Expository Writing Program" and Holly Ryan, David Reamer, and Theresa Enos's "Narrating Our Revision: A Mentoring Program's Evolution"—provide detailed case studies. Particularly valuable in both essays is the situated nature of the analysis, which emphasizes the importance of attending to local constraints and opportunities. Other essays continue the critique of the master/apprentice model of mentoring and emphasize the importance of reciprocity and trust. These include Krista Ratcliffe and Donna Decker Schuster's "Mentoring Toward Interdependency: 'Keeping It Real,'" Joan Mullin and Paula Braun's "The Reciprocal Nature of Successful Mentoring Relationships: Changing the Academic Culture," and Cinda Coggins Mosher and Mary Traschel's "Panopticism? Or Just Paying Attention?" The final essay in Mentoring Stories, Michelle F. Eble's "Reflections on Mentoring," describes the mentoring genealogy that in part motivated this collection: Win (to whom Mentoring Stories is dedicated) mentored Lynée, who mentored Michelle—and together they engendered other acts of mentoring, including the mentoring that Gaillet and Eble enacted as editors of this collection, which given the many scholars who will read and use it, itself represents a powerful form of textual mentoring.

In her essay Eble joins other contributors in arguing that effective mentoring—or what Lunsford and Fishman call collegial mentoring—is based on mutual benefit and respect. The essays in this collection demonstrate, I would argue, these two characteristics. Collectively, the essays in Mentoring Stories provide a rich portrait of collegial, reciprocal mentoring in action. In so doing, the collection clearly, as Eble notes, "moves beyond the common strategies and practices for professional development … and provides new ways of thinking and reflecting on mentoring metaphors and historical uses of the term" (306).

The essays in this collection demonstrate respect in a number of ways. They are respectful of the necessity and power of stories—and of reflection

and of theoretical critique. They are respectful of the importance of attending to the politics of location (Adrienne Rich). As a reader, I appreciated the diverse contexts in which various analyses of mentoring were situated: Ph.D. programs, writing centers, writing programs, personal and professional friendships, textual mentoring, and more. As an advocate, with my friend and co-author Andrea Lunsford, of collaborative writing I was thrilled to see the high percentage of collaboratively authored essays in this collection. It is heartening to see the editors and authors of this collection enacting—performing—a critique of single authorship and the academic norms that support it. But equally important are the benefits that accrue when, as Gaillet notes in the introduction, "a chorale of seventy-eight voices … depict current theories and practices of mentoring" (3). These voices sometimes speak generationally, and sometimes they speak out of a common experience, as (for instance) the graduate students writing with Janice Lauer and Steve Bernhardt do.

Collectively, these essays expand our notion of mentoring—stretching it to include mentoring via email (as in the case of Wendy Bishop) and textual mentoring (as in the case of Nancy A. Myers' experience of textual mentoring via her engagement with The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook). The essays also raise significant questions. What are the opportunities and challenges inherent in formal mentoring relationships and programs versus mentoring that happens in different ways—through friendship, for example? What would it take to successfully challenge the ideologies in the academy that disvalue mentoring as merely service: a good and nice thing (just as, alas, some view strong teaching as a good and nice thing), but in no way comparable to scholarly work?

Some questions strike me as particularly important—if also particularly challenging. Might there be ways in which formal mentoring programs (programs that are most often limited to Ph.D. students and tenure-line faculty) deepen the chasm that already exists between tenure-line and hope-to-be tenure-line scholars and contingent and adjunct faculty? In her essay, Eble acknowledges this issue, noting that Stories of Mentoring provides only a few options for those who don't have access to mentoring" (309). Eble also calls attention to the need for more work on mentoring that focuses on "fostering mentoring relationships that occur across boundaries of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and disability" (309).

In raising questions such as these, and in assembling such a fine collection of essays, co-editors Michelle F. Eble and Lynée Lewis Gaillet carry on the work of such earlier scholars as Janice Lauer, Theresa Enos, and Win Horner—even as they and their authors chart new ground for future work on mentoring.

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About the Author

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