ORIGINAL ARTICLE

WILEY

# Becoming Jane Barney: Developing a generative identity as an engaged citizen

Nicky J. Newton[1] | Abigail J. Stewart[2]

[1]Psychology Department, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada

[2]Departments of Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies, University of Michigan, Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

**Correspondence**
Nicky J. Newton, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Ave W, Waterloo, ON N2L 3C5, Canada.
Email: nnewton@wlu.ca

## Abstract

**Objective:** We propose that analysis of the life of Jane Lockwood Barney provides insight into the notion of a "generative identity"—an integrated sense of self constructed around caring for others and the world. During her 104 years, the socially prescribed roles for women grew in range; Barney's own roles included minister's wife, mother of four, theological philosopher, social work student and professional, and community activist. We outline her life, focusing on three periods defined by her time at Parishfield, a Christian 'think tank' that focused on community-engaged advocacy for structural change, based in Brighton, Michigan.

**Method:** Using thematic analysis, we identify three main themes from documents written by and about Barney, as well as interviews conducted later in her life.

**Results:** Consistent with Erikson's notion of epigenesis, these themes—belonging, self-reliance/self-expression and generative identity—are evident throughout Barney's adult life to varying degrees. However, we show that the first two themes, belonging and self-reliance/self-expression, act as precursors to the development of her generative identity.

**Conclusion:** Barney's experience at Parishfield in midlife was pivotal to her generative identity, acting as a sort of crucible and turning point; from that time forward the focus of her activities broadened to caring and working tirelessly for the underserved in her community.

**KEYWORDS**
community activist, generative identity

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Many middle-class American women whose adult lives were defined by World War II and the immediate postwar period embraced the then-celebrated domestic role postwar prosperity offered them, despite the limitations it imposed (Schuster, 1993). Over the period of the 1950s and 1960s some, however, began to chafe at the confining nature of the role, and sought various life changes or took advantage of opportunities that might offer them a broader scope. Only a few members of this generation were able fully to reinvent themselves, and to develop a deeply satisfying career in the context of the new opportunities freed up in the 1960s/1970s due to economic prosperity and second-wave feminism (Ginzberg et al., 1966; Stewart & Healy, 1989; Stewart & Malley, 2004; Yohalem, 1993). Jane Barney was one of those few: a woman who managed to live two very different—and happy—adult lives in one long lifetime, along the way creating for herself a generative identity as an engaged citizen. We examine her life both as it illuminates one solution to the identity dilemma that her generation of educated women in the

U.S. experienced, and the phenomenon of "generative identity."

We got to know about Jane Barney in an unlikely context: our research on educated women who came into adulthood in a later generation, the 1960s. She participated in a sample of women that eventually became part of the ongoing Women's Life Paths Study initiated by Tangri (Tangri & Jenkins, 1986; see also Cole et al., 1998), a study of the class of 1967 at the University of Michigan (UM). Our research group at UM was interested in broadening the sample to include *women students who had been politically active* during the late 1960s and early 1970s; Barney's name came up because she was a student at the university from 1968 to 1970, and was active in Detroit and Ann Arbor with the People Against Racism organization. However, Barney was more than 30 years older than the cohort in general—a fact that drew our attention to her unique life story, partly because one of us was an older non-traditional-age graduate student, and the other was her advisor, whose own mother had been part of Barney's generation and had struggled with the same issues Barney did. We decided that Barney's story—both emblematic of a particular generation of women's difficult challenges and utterly unique—was so interesting that we began to assemble accounts of her life, beginning with an interview with her initiated in 2008, when Barney was 94 years old, and the first author and interviewer was 47. Barney was a willing collaborator in reconstructing the story of the process of her development of a generative identity; in fact, she was voluble about her life, particularly the time after she discovered the satisfactions of engagement as a community activist at midlife. Moreover, she was a charming and affable interviewee. As a result of intensifying interest after her death, we wondered about the parts of her life that might be (and were) documented in other places.

In thinking about Barney's psychobiography, we draw from Erikson's eight stage developmental theory, focusing on the idea of epigenesis, as well as identity (the 5th stage) and generativity (the 7th stage), to show how the construct of a generative identity illuminates the long life of a community activist. We also draw on Stewart and Healy's theory about the links between individual developmental changes and social changes, in the context of the process of reshaping identity in middle age (Stewart & Healy, 1989; Stewart & Ostrove, 1998).

## 1.1 | Identity and generativity

Developing a personal identity—who we are and where we fit in society—is a life-long occupation (Erikson, 1959/1980), though Erikson thought it might peak in early adulthood with commitment to a vocation and an ideology or guiding philosophy. Kroger (2016) described individuals with a well-established identity as having "a sense of direction in life, finding satisfaction in matching one's own vocational, ideological, and relationship interests and values with those opportunities afforded by one's social context" (p. 623); recognition by significant others plays an important role in validating one's identity choices (Kroger, 2002). In addition to a commitment to a vocation, having a strong sense of identity allows for occupational self-representation, an articulated ideology or world-view, and a level of inner sameness or continuity that can facilitate navigating changes as one moves through adulthood (Kroger, 2016; Whitbourne & Skultety, 2006). There is evidence that women's sense of identity—perhaps because of the obstacles they face to developing an occupational identity—increases with age during adulthood, which Erikson did not anticipate (Stewart et al., 2001), but also that work participation provides a fundamental source of identity for many people, including women (Calvo, 2006). Because of the centrality of both work and philosophical perspectives in Barney's life, we anticipated that identity would be a core preoccupation throughout adulthood.

Erikson defined the main task of generativity versus stagnation as "... the establishment, the guidance, and the enrichment of the living generation and the world it inherits" (Erikson, 1974, p. 123). Generativity can manifest in multiple ways, not only as childbearing and rearing, but also as involvement in people's work lives as mentors and creators, in local and wider communities (MacDermid et al., 1998), and civic engagement (Jones & McAdams, 2013). McAdams et al. (1993) elaborated Erikson's theory of generativity as being comprised of four components: generative concerns, actions, commitment, and narrative experiences, all of which can be seen in Barney's life.

It is important to note that Erikson stressed that these developmental preoccupations—though dominant on average in certain life stages—were present in one form or another throughout the life course (Erikson, 1959/1980; 1974; 1982). Thus, for example, children can be understood as generative in their activities; many enjoy taking care of younger children, and express caring impulses toward dolls, animals, and even their parents. Equally, adolescents and young adults may engage in many generative activities, including those that arise in the context of young parenthood, political and social movement engagement, their work lives, and relations with those younger and older than themselves (Espin et al., 1990; Lawford et al., 2005; Peterson & Stewart, 1993). At the same time, issues of identity can arise very early (e.g., Anne Frank's, 1953 diary is deeply concerned with issues of identity). They can also be re-aroused later in life (Josselson, 2003; Whitbourne & Skultety, 2006),

when provoked by life circumstances, or political and social events (see e.g., Stewart & Healy's, 1986 study of the development of Vera Brittain's identity as a pacifist in response to the world wars in the first half of the 20th century). Thus, we take seriously Erikson's notion of epigenesis and freely consider the expression of two key issues in psychosocial development—identity and generativity—at all ages, as they are expressed in Jane Barney's life. Moreover, we note that Franz and White (1985) convincingly argued that in fact Erikson's theory could be best represented as a lifelong struggle to integrate the human needs for individuation and attachment. Generativity offers a particular opportunity for that integration (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1998), but clearly other periods include felt pressures to reconcile them (e.g., in the context of early adult pressures to reconcile occupational identity expression with the demands of intimate relationships).

We propose that for some, generative identity may provide an integrated personality structure that involves commitment to vocation and leadership (where work provides a fundamental source and expression of identity), with community or civic engagement (as an expression of generativity) as a particularly apt way of describing one individual's life. We build on efforts by researchers who have recognized themes of generativity in personal identity narratives (e.g., Singer et al., 2002), and others who use the term 'generative identity' in the context of childhood, representing a child's recognition of an identity as a potential parent (Raphael-Leff, 2009) or as epitomizing dual mother and feminist identities (Rittenour & Colaner, 2012). For our purposes, a generative identity is one in which one's sense of self and vocation rests on, and is defined by, generative concerns, commitments, and acts. The concept combines what Sabir (2015) refers to as global generativity, or "the continued investment of one's most productive time and one's most creative, intellectual, and material resources toward ... one's life's work, which is to positively impact society in some idiosyncratic way" (p. 14), as well as Singer et al.'s (2002) concept that some people develop an identity that integrates community service "into their very sense of self and personal identity" (p. 553).

## 1.2 | Midlife

In Stewart and Healy's (1989) theory of the linkage between social changes and individual development, the period of middle adulthood stands out as one when identities formed in early adulthood may be open to renegotiation, if external changes prompt that kind of renegotiation. While they emphasize macro-social changes (like the Depression, World War II, and the social movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s), they note that other kinds

of changes (such as divorce, immigration, or pursuit of a new career) can also prompt identity renegotiation during this period.

Drawing on Erikson's notion of epigenesis, Stewart and colleagues (Stewart et al., 2001; Stewart & Ostrove, 1998) outline the centrality of both identity and generativity for many women at midlife. Developmentally, middle age is often a period that demands caring for the next generation, and "... an enhanced sense of personal identity, an enlarged vision of the self in the social world, and a capacity to be effective and have an impact" (Stewart & Ostrove, 1998, p. 1189). Midlife has also been termed the prime of life for women (Mitchell & Helson, 1990), and a time of role change, when children have been launched and energy can be spent on new opportunities for learning (Lear, 2017) and community work. Additionally, midlife political participation is related to having both a politicized identity and relatively high levels of generativity (Cole & Stewart, 1996). In Barney's case, both changes in her personal life and in the social world that coincided with her midlife period—as for others in her cohort of educated women—provided her an opportunity for identity renegotiation and a new, generative integration of her worldview or guiding philosophy, vocation, and commitment to contribute to a better world.

## 2 | METHOD

Our approach to psychobiography is both typical and atypical. Like most psychobiographers, we consider features of individual personality—the ongoing preoccupations and characteristics of the individual—as central motives in their lives, while attending to shaping, constraining, and enabling features of the personal and larger social historical environment. Moreover, as most psychobiographers normally do, we will show how the past persists in later stages of life, and as some psychobiographers do, how the individual exercises her capacity to change direction and grow. Perhaps less typically, we ground our account in the narratives our subject wrote herself—in her autobiography and other written and spoken material in which she discussed herself, her life, and her work. This is partly a matter of the publicly-available material (there is little other material we could rely on—indeed we are fortunate there is so much of this sort!), and partly a matter of our own experience with many kinds of content analysis, especially the type adopted here: thematic analysis. We construct our inevitably partial understanding of Barney's life based on our thematic analysis of the materials she generated in her life, with minimal speculation about matters she did not discuss. These practices are compatible with the values of open science.

It is important to note our own social identities, as they likely enable and limit our understanding. We are both White, educated women, like Barney. However, we are from a different generation, i.e., we are both members of the baby boom (those born 1946–1964), and therefore benefited earlier in life than Barney from the changes in opportunities for educated women. One of us is in late middle age and the other is now young-old; perhaps for these reasons, we were particularly interested in the model of active, satisfied aging that Barney exemplified.

As noted earlier, Barney was recruited for the 1989 wave of a sample of women that became part of the ongoing Women's Life Paths Study initiated by Tangri (Tangri & Jenkins, 1986; see also Cole et al., 1998), and eventually offered to her collaborator, the second author, for continued stewardship. We decided that Barney's story was so interesting that we began to assemble accounts of her life beyond the survey responses, beginning with an interview with her (by the first author) that was conducted in 2008. Barney signed informed consent as part of the study, which was given ethics approval by the University of Michigan's Institutional Review Board (Study ID: HUM00020729). Barney's psychobiography was preregistered with the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/25sgq/).

## 2.1 | Materials

Two main sources of data are used in this study: Archival documents from the Bentley Historical Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and interviews with Barney in 2002 and 2008. In 2002, Barney was interviewed extensively by Mimi Ayres Sanderson, the daughter of Fran Ayres, a co-founder of Parishfield (see below). The subsequent manuscript was never published, but a copy resides at the Bentley along with Barney's personal papers. The first author conducted a two-part interview with Barney in October/November 2008, and the documents from this and the 2002 interview are used as original sources. Additional data include a 65-page typescript of an autobiography written by Barney in 1990, a chapter she wrote that appeared in an edited volume of essays about life after work (Barney, 1999), and observations on Barney's life and personality from her daughter and a close colleague. The first author also spent many hours at the Bentley library becoming acquainted with Barney's life through her archived documents.

## 2.2 | Thematic analysis procedure

Thematic analysis is a particular kind of content analysis that often relies on written documents—sometimes generated in the laboratory, but often generated in the course of individual lives—as we do in this study (Boyatzis, 1998; Smith, 1992). We employed the particular six-stage systematic inductive analysis of text, or thematic analysis, advocated and explicated first with fairly rigid prescriptions by Braun and Clarke (2006), to explore the documents created by and about Barney. Our approach includes both inductive and deductive elements, which is common, as Braun and Clarke (2013, 2021) note in their later advocacy of a more flexible approach to the analysis than their initial account. In the first step of this process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and revised in Braun and Clarke (2021), we first both carefully read all of the relevant documents associated with Barney's life (including interviews) without reference to any particular construct, but with a general interest in how and why this accomplished woman reinvented herself in middle age. We proceeded to annotate the sources with our own notes about valuable material illuminating particular ideas and potential interpretations. We shared these ideas and discussed how to structure the initial "codes" or notes into broader superordinate themes. We identified the emerging themes as we proceeded, comparing notes. In this case, three main themes emerged: (1) the theme of belonging, exclusion, inclusion; (2) self-reliance, self-expression, resilience, resourcefulness; and the most frequent and broadest theme, (3) generative identity.

There is no simple quantitative "test" of validity or reliability in this method; while we must converge to agree on themes, it is assumed in this method that researchers' separate perspectives are valuable and contribute to a more complete understanding, so indexes of reliability are not calculated. Instead, researchers are expected to demonstrate the validity of their claims by offering evidence (in quotations or accounts of actions) to support them. The goal of the analysis is not some universal truth, or identification of a mechanism that should work across all people, but instead a set of propositions about how the identified constructs might operate together in this person, and potentially in some others. Broad standards for qualitative methods were outlined by an APA Task Force in 2018 (Levitt et al., 2018) and we adhered in this project to their general recommendations about how best to conduct and describe qualitative analyses.

## 3 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 | Background information

We provide a brief overview of Barney's long life, to provide a framework for our analysis and help the reader

follow the timing of social and personal changes in her adult life. Jane Lockwood was born in 1914, and grew up on a farm in rural Virginia. She described herself as a very religious child (Barney, 2002). She gained a Bachelor's degree (majoring in Biblical History) from Wellesley College in 1937, and a Master's degree in Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 1940, where she also met her husband. They were married in 1941. Barney was in the midst of teaching seventh and eighth graders at a girls' private school in Dobbs Ferry, but did not want to be employed once she was married. After a year of long-distance relationship, the couple moved to New Hampshire where her husband was minister, and had four children. Roger Barney served in World War II from 1943–1945. In August 1955, he contracted polio, and did not get out of hospital until October of 1956. In 1957, the couple and their children moved to Parishfield (see below), located in Brighton, Michigan, and lived there from 1957 to 1964, subsequently moving to Detroit in 1964 when the Parishfield community relocated there. This period as part of the Parishfield community provided Barney with new opportunities to develop her own thinking as well as a new approach to action, that defined much of the second part of her life. Parishfield disbanded three years later, and the Barney family moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1967, where Barney's husband took a position at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. In 1970, at age 56, Barney earned her MSW at the University of Michigan (UM). From 1970–1989, she worked at the UM Institute of Gerontology, focusing on increasing community involvement in nursing homes.

After her paid employment years, Barney became increasingly involved in providing low-cost housing for underserved people, particularly through Avalon Housing (which she helped found). She also became more involved with the Turner African American Services Council, an organization dedicated to ensuring that African Americans received access to medical services, culminating in the New Hope Outreach Clinic, which opened in 2000. She remained active in various communities until a few years before her death in 2018 at age 104.

Barney engaged in a wide variety of community activism during her 104 years, from her modest and narrowly-defined work as a minister's wife and mother of four children to a much broader engagement with opposing racism, lobbying for better conditions in nursing homes, working to provide accessible health care to African Americans, and creating housing for low-income individuals. Connected by her underlying self-concept as a generative individual, her long adulthood appears to have had two distinct halves. During the first half, she served as a minister's wife, working alongside her husband in an egalitarian partnership. In the second half of her adult life, she was both a paid and an unpaid community activist. We focus on the connections between these two parts of Barney's adult life. In order to do this, we examine three time periods in her life: before (up to age 43), during (1957–1964, at ages 43–50), and after (1964–2004, after age 50) Parishfield. We focus on the continuities and changes in the development of her generative identity during this period that also included intensive social changes in the 1960s and early 1970s. Our motivating research questions revolve around the association between Barney's midlife transitions and further personality re-assessment and development, against the backdrop of the changing social environment. Specifically: How does the process of one educated woman's midlife transition from mother, minister's wife, and church community volunteer/thought leader to credentialed, influential community activist contribute to the development of her generative identity? How do the first two themes we identify from accounts of her life – belonging and self-reliance—relate to the development of our third identified theme, generative identity?

## 3.2 | Thematic analysis and discussion

Three themes emerged in the materials that Barney generated about her life during its course. *Belonging* was an issue that emerged as a preoccupation for Barney, both in terms of positive experiences of feeling "at home," like fitting in and having a role, and negative ones of feeling excluded, like an outsider, or different. *Self-reliance/self-expression* was a second theme, articulated in the context of feeling both constraints on independence, self-expression, and enjoying opportunities for exploring her own resourcefulness and capacity. The third theme, *generative identity*, included aspects of Erikson's notion of providing needed support to an expanded "circle of care" (including both family and the wider community), and enjoying the experience of meeting others' needs. Of course, belonging and self-reliance/self-expression are two powerful impulses that can sometimes converge, and sometimes are in tension with each other; we note throughout both how they worked separately and sometimes in conflict, and how they increasingly converged in the context of generative identity. We argue that Barney constructed a personal identity in which these preoccupations provided her with a strong personal identity by examining evidence for each of the three themes—belonging, self-reliance, generative identity—during each of the three periods in Barney's life: early life, during her time in the Parishfield community, and after Parishfield disbanded.

### 3.2.1 | Before Parishfield: The first 40 years

In her autobiographical writing, Barney did not address her early life (childhood and adolescence, or early adulthood prior to Parishfield) as much as she did later stages of her life. Nevertheless, the three themes we uncovered were all articulated in these earlier life stages in some way.

*Belonging/inclusion/exclusion*

The issue of belonging was the theme most clearly expressed in her account of her early life. Her father was originally from Boston and her mother from England; however, they raised their family on a farm in Virginia. Recalling the period when she grew up alongside five siblings, Barney commented very clearly on her sense of not fitting in with the larger community, or being like other people. For example, she mentioned that "We were brought up to believe that we were not like the other people down there so we never felt like Virginians" (Barney, 2002, p. 2). She noted, too, that as a result "I was socially starved. I wished for friends."

This theme of social isolation and differentness—perhaps inevitable for this unusual family in rural Virginia, despite the presence for Barney of several siblings—recurred often in the early period. Barney noted that during her period in graduate school at Union Theological Seminary, she was one of only four women getting those degrees, and the other women differed from her by aiming for degrees in religious education in churches (Barney, 2002, p. 4). During the one year that she took a teaching position after that time, she noted that she "didn't really have any friend because all the teachers in the school were matched up by twos pretty much" (Barney, 2002, p. 4). Thus, during this early period Barney mainly emphasized her isolation and lack of belonging, and although she described herself as a religious child, majored in Biblical History and went to graduate school in theology, she did not elaborate on her religious life during early life stages.

In her accounts of her early adulthood, Barney often commented, in contrast, on contexts where she felt included (in Roger's career, and in the Fellowship of Reconciliation or of Socialist Christians; Barney, 2002, p. 6). She also expressed her enthusiasm for being or living in community, which she felt she had never experienced. She wrote of Parishfield as she imagined it in advance, "I was always excited about the whole thing, and I thought it would be the most wonderful thing to live in a community like that" (Barney, 2002, p. 11). This idealization of belonging in community, perhaps growing from early experiences of isolation and exclusion, was her initial stance toward Parishfield.

*Self-reliance/self-expression*

Barney did not articulate much about early experiences of self-reliance and self-expression in her accounts of her early history; for that reason, she may not have expected to experience tension between impulses toward self-expression and toward belonging. In late adolescence and early adulthood, she did describe two periods when she found resources in herself to cope with difficult circumstances. We suspect they were formative as this theme gained more prominence only later in life.

The first period was during her time at Wellesley, when this historically successful student found that she was floundering academically. When informed that she might not be allowed to continue, Barney recalled, "that was a great blow." But her response was: "I assured them that I would work harder … and I did … I ended up doing fine, but it was a gruelling (sic) experience" (Barney, 2002, p. 3). Discovering her capacity to control her own fate by redoubling her efforts over a protracted period surely increased her confidence, and demonstrated to her that she could handle difficult situations through her own efforts. Her persistence and eventual academic success were rewarded with a place in graduate school, and a lifelong and deeply-meaningful search for intellectual stimulation both from people and from books.

During her husband's military service during World War II, Barney's capacity for self-reliance came into play again. She started out, as many women in that period did, bringing her children with her to move in with her family of origin in Virginia. She did not elaborate the reasons this arrangement did not suit her, but she quickly decided to make a change, and instead set up a household back at Wellesley with a friend who was in a similar situation. They split a job between them in the Biblical History Department (where she had gained her undergraduate degree), and also equally split responsibility for childcare. She recalled this time as "very anxious," but also "interesting and fun" (Barney, 2002, p. 6). This solution is an interesting one, in that it offered her an opportunity for a small community where she belonged (by combining two families), as well as a work community, and a chance for self-expression and self-reliance in her work.

In short, even in this early period, Barney experienced self-reliance as a source of pleasure, pride, and freedom, as well as access to some level of belonging. Like many well-educated women of her cohort, she spent long years of early adulthood caring for home and children (in which she took pleasure and pride), when the opportunities for independence and achievement outside the domestic sphere were few. Consistent with her embrace of the domestic role, she did not complain about this at all, but in later life she actively pursued the kinds of intellectual efforts at self-expression that

became a hallmark of her adulthood even during these pre-Parishfield days:

> I always worked closely with Roger, and he talked over with me whatever was going on, what he was *thinking*, what he was doing. ... [T]he diocese started a new periodical, and Roger was on the editorial board. I thought of a lot of the ideas for articles, and I wrote a few things, not exactly theological... I think one reason I was so content with my life was that I had a channel for expressing all I was thinking and doing. (Barney, 2002, p. 7)

*Generative identity*

Enthusiasm for partnering with her husband in his ministry allowed Barney considerable opportunity to express the sort of generative caring that Erikson (1950) describes as central to midlife generativity. However, as was expected of women in marriages like hers, during early adulthood Barney engaged in these activities very much as a wife and partner, rather than forming a clear personal identity around them. For example, she wrote in one account of her life,

> I could use the strong, scholarly education I had had in Wellesley and in graduate school to work in partnership with my husband as he carried out his several assignments in the ministry. He always respected me and welcomed my participation in the work he was doing. (Barney, 1990, p. 1)

It is clear from this account that Barney understood herself as a partner of equal capacity with Roger, but he was the lead member of the partnership; she was aware of her own strengths, and appreciated Roger's recognition of them. We note that there were at least two empirical studies and one autobiography of ministers' wives during this period that explicitly focused on the unique nature of the role (Denton, 1962; Douglas, 1965; Oden, 1966). In fact, Douglas (1965, p. 68), who conducted a large study of ministers' wives, identified three major types: those who were "detached-in-principle" (15.1%); those who were "background supporters" (63.9%); and those who were "team-workers" (20.6%). Barney was very much a member of the third group during the pre-Parishfield period, and her work and family life reflected a kind of solution that was socially acceptable for women like her in this period. This life structure worked well enough until Roger's long struggle with polio (hospitalized for 14 months in 1955, with four children aged 4 to 12) changed his work life and therefore everything. The move to Brighton, Michigan to take up a new role in

Parishfield altered their lives in several ways, and prompted the parents to send the older two children to boarding school, leaving only the two younger ones at home.

### 3.2.2 | Parishfield: Moratorium and turning point

In 1957, when Barney was 43 years old, Parishfield provided an opportunity—and obstacle—to her continued development of a generative identity. Ironically, perhaps the biggest initial challenge at Parishfield was to her sense of belonging, although Parishfield also presented challenges to her self-reliance and self-expression, because the norms of the community required her to shift her role from an intellectually equal "team member" to one of "background supporter" in Douglas's (1965) typology of minister's wives.

*The Parishfield context*

Parishfield was described by Mimi Ayres Sanderson, daughter of one of its founders, as "... a twenty-year experiment in redefining what it means to be a Christian" (Sanderson, 2002). Formerly a farm property, Parishfield was located in Brighton, Michigan, and was purchased by the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. The name was chosen to describe a parish in the fields, thus representing the founders' mission as:

> a community or center of renewal for the Church–concentrating on the "training of the laity" by developing the implications of the Christian faith in social, occupational, and political life through the sponsoring and directing of conferences, discussions and study courses (both here and away) for men and women from every field of endeavor and all walks of life. (Sanderson, 2002, preface)

The core idea was to move away from a focus on dogma and toward community-engaged advocacy for structural change; as Barney related it, their purpose was "to make Christianity relevant to the modern world" (Barney, 2002, p. 29); to be intellectually and theologically grounded, but not confined to "the closed life of the church itself" (Barney, 2002, p. 35).

The Barneys were recruited to join the Parishfield community by then-leader Fran Ayres, for whom Roger had served as curate in Connecticut before getting his own parish in New Hampshire. Their lives before Parishfield— their training in theology, and their service as minister and minister's wife—naturally led to this point. Barney anticipated that Parishfield would be a natural extension of her

past life, and she was excited to be a part of shaping the philosophy and ideas of the community. At Parishfield, she developed her ideas on community involvement even further, so that when this part of her life came to an end, she was able to move on to other activities that consolidated her self-concept as generative, and gave her an outlet for its expression.

### Belonging/inclusion/exclusion

While Barney's personal egalitarian relationship with her husband continued on an intellectual level, it was made clear at the beginning of their time at Parishfield that women were not to be involved in philosophical discussions or policy-making in the larger community. For Barney, this clear disappointment was fresh in her mind over 40 years later:

> What I remember most vividly is ... being told that the wives would not be part of the staff. It was very mysterious, or not explained, why. ... Anyway they didn't want the wives to be part of the staff. So that was it ... So when I went back with Roger to our apartment, I was very angry and upset. Because of course, coming out there and being part of this work was what was so interesting to me. (Barney, 2002, pp. 12, 13)

The types of tasks allocated to Barney provided further frustration. Her experience as a pastor's wife had taught her to provide food for many on a limited budget; what's more, she enjoyed doing so. Thus, another slight was delivered when, as she recounted,

> I was never allowed to touch anything to do with food when we were out at Parishfield; that was ... a high-status business. And I was more interested and more familiar with how to feed a lot of people on little money ... [and] feed them well. (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008)

Barney gradually gained a foothold in Parishfield's Christian community through her own reading, joining discussions of ideas, and engaging in small tasks such as organizing the books in the library. Eventually, she realized at least a limited version of her vision of community, given the lack of full equality between men and women—one that entailed a group of people who felt they belonged to one another, who trusted, communicated, and cared for each other, and had the same general purpose or goal (Barney, 2002, p. 32).

### Self-reliance/self-expression

Parishfield unexpectedly constrained the opportunities for Barney's self-reliance and self-expression, which she articulated in the paragraph partially quoted earlier. She went on to say about her distress at exclusion from working in the same way the men did:

> If we were coming, that would be the arrangement. And it wasn't as though this was a feminist issue at that time, it wasn't. For me it was more that this was my type of work, career and I was not going to be able to be part of it. (Barney, 2002, p. 13)

Nevertheless, reflecting on the centrality of self-reliance and self-expression in her personality, there are examples of both in domestic and theological spheres also during this period. She had inherited her father's enthusiasm for cooking, but she preferred that her children did not help her because "I just liked to do it myself" (Barney, 2002, p. 23). She was also aware of her need to help the community realize complex goals, even when she did not have the specific skills for a task. Knowing that playing tennis was "something that most people liked to do ... we tried to build a tennis court ... It was my idea and don't ask me why because I don't know. I must have desperately needed something to be responsible for" (Barney, 2002, p. 27). Clearly Barney was conscious of needing more ways to contribute, more ways to test herself and her capacities.

In the intellectual domain, Barney did much of her own reading and thinking. She was very interested in making Christianity relevant in the modern world, and enjoyed discussing and sharing ideas with Roger and Parishfield founder Fran Ayres. Throughout many of her papers, she mentions how much she was influenced by the philosophical writings of Hannah Arendt; for example

> I did more thinking on my own, and often wrote just to get my own ideas going. I would really get into some of the books we were reading like Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, that changed my life ... I was interested in developing and trying to figure things out and move ahead in what we were trying to do. Always working on some new way of changing the world. (Barney, 2002, pp. 29, 30)

Barney's intellectual engagement with philosophers and theologians during this period—some of whom visited Parishfield—nourished her developing intellectual framework for her identity and her later work. She singled out Hannah Arendt, Jacques Ellul and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as

theorists whose work influenced her—most of all Arendt, who she also met. In fact, she discovered in Arendt's writing a gratifying emphasis on activism that she could use to construct a guiding philosophy compatible with her needs. It was grounded in Arendt's conception of action, which she defined as "the one miracle-working faculty of man[sic]" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 246). For Arendt it is actions "into the web of human relationships … that form the very source from which meaningfulness springs into and illuminates human existence" (p. 324). In this linking of action, the web of relationships and meaning-making, Barney found inspiration.

*Generative identity*

The themes of belonging and self-reliance began to come together as Barney's personal identity around her community activities developed further during the Parishfield years. The importance of both her immediate community and the idea of building a sense of cohesion in other communities that needed a voice went hand-in-hand with her need to contribute and her commitment to the work, as well as the tension she felt between private faith and public recognition for her leadership. In many ways, generative identity first became predominant for Barney when the Parishfield community moved from Brighton into Detroit in 1964 to continue its work there, a move prompted by the need to be where people needed practical help, advice, connections, and social justice:

> That was influential in our moving into Detroit, the notion that the metropolis is where the action is happening, not out in the country in a conference center … Moving into Detroit was more than just a physical move. It was carrying out our mission which was being relevant in the modern world and being in touch with what was developing. (Barney, 2002, pp. 43, 44)

The Parishfield community as leading and motivating change are constants in her narrative, both during its heyday (late 1950s-mid 1960s) and later, when Barney reflected on this period in her life. She wrote, "All my life at the back of my mind there was this expectation of making a significant change in the world, and especially when I was at Parishfield" (Barney, 2002, p. 1) … "I wanted Parishfield to be a leader, to change society and I was always thinking about how that could happen" (Barney, 2002, p. 30). During Parishfield's Detroit years, her passion for community activism emerged, as she discovered that she could be effective and take satisfaction in it. For example, her enthusiasm is clear in her descriptions of a march the group attended in New York that was "wonderful" and "amazing, yes. Great,

great days" (Barney, 2002, p. 48), and of mid-60s Detroit, where "everywhere there was a wonderful sense of optimism and power-to-change-the world. I found I loved living in Detroit and being involved in all these affairs" (Barney, 1990, p. 1).

However, woven throughout this period and later in life, Barney expressed the tension between her private faith and public opportunity for community service, which she predicated on Arendt's notion of action, according to which,

> you are becoming a leader and an example, a model, in the world. And therefore it's appropriate that … you become a person that's known and respected in society. It's totally different from the Christian teaching where you conceal good works. Don't pray on the street corner; pray in your closet … in Arendt's view you're active and trying to accomplish whatever it is in society openly. And therefore, if people want to give you awards … that's fine. (Barney, 2002, p. 54)

These ideas about social action emerged for Barney at Parishfield and in the context of the civil rights movement, particularly vividly observable in Detroit community engagements.

### 3.2.3 | Life after Parishfield as an engaged citizen

The civil rights and anti-poverty movements continued to animate Barney's thinking, but during this period she also found new resources—and of course also some new opportunities—as the developing women's movement began to have effects. While themes of belonging and self-reliance were still prominent in Barney's accounts of her life after Parishfield, they were gradually further integrated into the predominant theme of generative identity.

*Belonging/inclusion/exclusion*

After Parishfield disbanded, Barney's husband gained a post as Associate Rector at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Barney did not want to be involved in the affairs of the church as an institution, having enjoyed working hard to bring the church into the community through community activism. Still seeking a "second career in Ann Arbor" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008), she chose to vocationally distance herself from her husband, whose physical constraints and new role limited his authority and activities within the church. This required

her to find where she might belong and find an avenue for self-expression. Initially, she worked as a hostess at Canterbury House, a student chaplaincy, but found it to be "a difficult adjustment. Here I was going to a place with nothing but students, and I felt very conscious of my image [as a mother figure]" (Barney, 2002, p. 53). Additionally, the chaplain who had hired her did not include her in theological discussions, and left her "sort of hanging out there talking with the junior chaplain" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008). In truth, she was—as at Parishfield—relegated to a rather domestic role within this religious environment, a role that might emphasize belonging but without a chance for self-expression.

After three months, Barney left Canterbury House wanting to do more, and after a period of further exploration and consultation with family members and colleagues, decided a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW) from UM would help her attain more meaningful positions within the community. Here again, issues of belonging arose: "You know, I was in my mid 50s ... so I was a bit of an anomaly" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008); "people were so serious about this work ... which looked to me as though it was just glorified housework or glorified social activity" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, November 24, 2008). Many years later, belonging was still an important theme in Barney's life; looking back on her involvement with the Turner Advisory Council and its work to provide African Americans with accessible social services, she commented, "a great source of pride to me is the fact that ... one of the leaders of that group [of African Americans] said, 'Jane, you aren't like other White people'" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008). Belonging in this much more stimulating, diverse world in which she could also develop and express her own talents was new and satisfying.

### Self-reliance/self-expression

In an obvious expression of Barney's desire for self-expression and her self-reliance—with her four children grown and her husband "busy at his job"—Barney took it upon herself to talk with a consultant at the Center for the Continuing Education of Women, itself a new resource for women in Ann Arbor enabled by the women's movement and the increased opportunities for women in education and the labor force. This consultation eventually led her to enroll in the graduate program in Social Work. Moreover, it is clear that her understanding of women's situation was now informed by the women's movement. For example, in a paper she wrote for her program in 1970 that focused on the "elderly woman," she noted that "Women now 65 years and over have, for most

of their lives, enjoyed the advantages won by the suffragette movement ... but the mass of women underwent no change of consciousness" (Barney, 1970, p. 3). She analyzed the gendered nature of retirement experiences, and concluded that "That elderly generation so little aware of continuing female oppression is, nevertheless, by no means exempt from its consequences" (Barney, 1970, p. 3). Presumably she was well aware those consequences applied to her as well.

As part of her degree work, she regularly returned to Detroit on her own, with a view to community organizing; she commented, "I discovered that I enjoyed ramming around the city, meeting people, assessing conditions, planning change tactics, and even writing papers about it all" (Barney, 1990, p. 2)—heady opportunities after the many constraints she had felt in earlier contexts. It was also during this phase of her life that she "came up with my own idea of what I believed might make a change in [the] deplorable institution [of nursing homes], and had the opportunity to write up the idea and have it published" (Barney, 1990, p. 2). The work that her MSW enabled her to do clearly provided her with new outlets for her independent self-expression, both in action and in writing.

In 1978, Roger died, and Barney's self-reliance was put to a new test. By that time, she was working at the UM Institute of Gerontology, and found solace in the fact that her work provided elements of both belonging and self-expression; as "something to take up my interest, give myself to ... put me in touch with friends" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008). However, she also commented (for that moment ignoring the period of Roger's wartime experience and his hospitalization for 14 months with polio):

> I'd never lived alone. I mean with Roger with his polio, he never was away. So getting used to living alone, and managing my own life, and taking care of all the things that he took care of. He did all the family's financial affairs and a lot of the keeping in touch with people. So I had to learn to do all that. (Barney, 2002, pp. 59, 60)

Another test of her resilience came in the form of a stroke at the age of 88, necessitating some adaptation of her living space and lifestyle: "it took me quite a while to get back to living normally; walking around and returning to living by myself ... but I'm well and strong enough to live alone in this two-story house" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008). At all points of her life, Barney showed evidence of a strong sense of her capabilities and her capacity to gain new ones to add to her developing sense of self.

### Generative identity

Barney's generative identity was most fully developed during the time after Parishfield, perhaps because this period represents almost half of her 104-year lifespan. The concept of community, not just her involvement in it, but its maintenance at a grass roots level, remained deeply important to her; she believed that,

> to be fulfilled ... human beings of whatever age and ability want to move outside their own personal sphere to share in some ways with others in shaping their community ... to be out there with others doing something about the world we have in common. (Barney, 1999, pp. 106, 107)

In the world of new work opportunities for women in the 1970s and 1980s, Barney gathered data from nursing homes statewide and prepared a report on the issues. As she wrote, she wanted to "make sure my research could provide genuinely useful information for the three departments responsible for long term care in Michigan ... For many years thereafter the State used my findings" (Barney, 1990). Eventually Barney retooled the Parishfield motto of a "Christian presence in the community" to apply to her work with nursing home restructuring, revising the phrase to "community presence in nursing homes." Barney's vision was for each nursing home to have a community council composed of community volunteers and residents' family and friends who could provide advocacy and increased responsibility for nursing home operations. She worked tirelessly to bring it to fruition; eventually, the importance of this concept was recognized both in Michigan and at the federal level.

Barney also devised a program to enhance the role of nurse's aides in nursing homes, arguing that "that's the person who does all of the work" (Barney, 2002, p. 58) without real training or reward. Eventually she designed a training manual that was widely adopted (Barney, 1987). She later noted that none of these changes altered the fact that nursing homes are "terrible institutions" (Barney, 2002, p. 59); nevertheless, her work succeeded in making them better. In reflecting on her involvement in community action, despite the frustrations, she recognized that she "was actually doing what [Hannah Arendt] recommends ... I'm convinced that this kind of a group action in a community, attempting to make change for the better, is a very good life" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, November 24, 2008).

Barney reveled not only in making a difference, but also in the new recognition she received for her expertise. In a general comment about her new identity at this time, Barney wrote, "I was shocked to discover that I was ambitious ... Yes, I enjoyed it all, it was great. And I knew that I really wanted to succeed, I wanted to be seen as succeeding" (Barney, 2002, p. 54). Clearly Barney also enjoyed the involvement in political and city affairs that being a community leader entailed, as well as the public recognition and affirmation that went with it:

> it was during ... negotiations with a variety of State bureaucrats that, so late in life, I discovered that I enjoyed being involved in public affairs ... I realized that this was my opportunity to make my name in Lansing and I knew now that this was important to me. (Barney, 1990, pp. 2, 3)

At the age of 75, Barney left the Institute of Gerontology. In describing how she preferred to think of life after paid employment, she wrote:

> The word volunteer has come to suggest 'not serious', 'not dependable', not competent', not a fully-fledged member of the team. When applied to me I find I resent the word almost as much as I do the word retired ... I wish ... to propose a course of engaged citizenship ... taking an active role in shaping our society ... It's much more than offering an extra pair of hands or an hour behind the wheel. (Barney, 1999, pp. 104–106)

Barney continued to be motivated to work in the community to provide help where people needed it, whether in nursing homes, or the Turner African American Services and related development of the New Hope Baptist Clinic. At age 94, when asked what a high point of the last ten years had been, Barney spoke of her work with Avalon Housing, a low-income housing corporation she helped create from the St. Andrews church homeless shelter, which housed "homeless people, or people who have trouble maintaining stability in their housing because they don't take care of them, so Avalon both helps people find housing but also ... has a visiting program" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, November 24, 2008).

Barney's later reflections on her post-Parishfield life continued to affirm her solid identity as a generative person. Of her many awards for community service, she wrote, "You don't achieve anything without passion" and "I'm happier if I'm being productive" (Barney, 2002, pp. 64, 65), also observing "my life since Parishfield has been a real example of what Parishfield taught, I think" (Barney, 2002, p. 64). These statements provide clear evidence of the integration of her need for self-expression

and her need for community/belonging into her generative identity—as well as her continued idealization of the Parishfield vision, despite her disappointing experience until the Detroit move.

# 4 | CONCLUSION

We have outlined evidence of the three themes of belonging, self-reliance, and generative identity in three periods of Barney's life—before, during, and after her time at Parishfield—and their integration late in life. We have shown that the Parishfield experience—taken up after polio altered her husband's career—offered the pivot point in her midlife transformation from a "teamworker" in her husband's ministry to an independent professional with her own mission. Moreover, both the movements for social justice aimed at African Americans' civil rights and addressing urban poverty and the women's movement afforded Barney both a focus for her efforts, and increased opportunities to pursue them. The transition from rural Parishfield to its urban incarnation in Detroit and then to Ann Arbor occurred when Barney was middle-aged, and provided context for her midlife identity renegotiation (Stewart & Healy, 1989; Stewart & Ostrove, 1998), thus illustrating Erikson's relatively understudied concept of epigenesis (Erikson, 1959/1980; 1974; 1982), which specifies that earlier stages are reworked in light of later resolutions of issues. As Kroger notes, "However, Erikson did not detail exactly how this process occurs" (2018, p. 334). We see in Barney's life, consistent with the logic of epigenesis, all three themes were present to different degrees at different times of her life. Franz and White (1985) argued that two core elements of human personality (understood in different theories as attachment and individuation, agency and communion, and attachment and separation) are present in all of the Eriksonian stages (see also McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1998; Stewart & Malley, 1987, 1988). They suggested that in each stage, issues of individuation and connection required new resolution. Indeed, the themes of belonging (attachment) and self-reliance/self-expression (individuation) converged in the gradual development of a generative identity as a community activist throughout Barney's life, albeit differently in each period. Observing the developing structure of generative identity and the way it incorporated these two themes helps demonstrate how the pressures associated with a later stage (middle age and generativity in this case) can lead to reworking the resolutions of an earlier one (early adulthood and identity here). We suspect that although the themes we uncovered may not always be associated

with the integration Barney accomplished, they may often be, reflecting as they do a lifelong tension between the desire for connection and the desire for independence and self-reliance.

In Barney's life, *belonging* encompassed fitting in or having a role, as well as feeling excluded or like she was an outsider. This theme is evident in all three periods of Barney's life: first in her description of her childhood in Virginia, then studying as one of only four women at theological college, and her pre-Parishfield longing for community; second in her anger at the initial exclusion of women from the work of Parishfield and her eventual inclusion in the discussion of ideas and community life there; and third in her post-Parishfield search for a meaningful occupation involving engagement in the world (also obviously an expression of self-expression) that included a focus on building strong communities.

*Self-reliance/self-expression*, the second theme, was reflected in Barney's feelings of constraint in terms of independence and self-expression, as well as her enjoyment of her own resourcefulness and capability. Again, we see this theme in Barney's life before Parishfield through her descriptions of her college experience at Wellesley and during Roger's military service. At Parishfield, it was constrained by the community's gender role rules, but was still evident in her skill at effectively cooking on a budget, willingness to lead the building of a tennis court, and motivation to expand her intellectual understanding of ways to bring Christian values into the world outside of the church. After Parishfield, we see it in both her resourcefulness in pursuing a graduate degree in her fifties and finding a new career, and her resilience after Roger's death in 1978 and recovery from her stroke in 2002.

The theme of *generative identity*, which we offer here as a concept that might have applicability beyond this one analysis, combines elements of both generativity and identity (Erikson, 1950): providing support to both family and the wider community, gladly meeting others' needs, and a strong personal identity built around making a contribution by fulfilling these preoccupations. Before Parishfield, this was mainly achieved as a minister's wife and partner to Roger in serving the Church community. However, Parishfield provided the crucible for the other two themes – belonging and self-reliance – to coalesce and solidify more clearly into generative identity through her drive to contribute to communities by supporting their development of a much-needed voice of their own, and recognition of her leadership within the community. After Parishfield, Barney's generative identity was embodied in her professional work with underserved communities: attempting to improve nursing home conditions, providing much-needed services to African Americans, and

providing low-cost housing for homeless individuals. She also enjoyed the awards and recognition she received.

Regardless of the ebb and flow of these three themes running through her life, there is one constant that observers close to her articulate: she was always caring about and taking care of others. While Barney's generative identity may have been nascent prior to Parishfield, her daughter commented, "She was always a social worker; I mean, in her life, she would always look after waifs and strays" (A. Aronow, personal communication, February 8, 2021). Those who spoke at her funeral in 2018 referenced her dedication to making a difference, and remarked on the legacy she leaves behind. Consistent with the first author's experience interviewing her, one of her close colleagues described her as "honest, direct, diplomatic, generous, gracious, humble and always ready to take a stand against injustice," while going on to say she was well aware that

> a woman of her age and charm could say and get away with things that others couldn't ... I saw her use that strategy again and again as we tried to persuade developers ... or city council members to fund us or adopt good housing policy. (C. McCabe, personal communication, February 8, 2021)

Barney was the epitome of a woman who renegotiated her identity in midlife due to a change in occupation or circumstance, but she was also an exemplar of a generative person. She was 43 when the family first moved to Parishfield in Brighton, Michigan, having raised four children and served at her husband Roger's side as a minister's wife. As Stewart and Ostrove (1998) comment, developmental theories suggest that "middle-aged people are the responsible pillars of society, confidently in command and filled with concern about the next generation" (p. 1186). However, midlife for women can also include development of a stronger sense of personal identity and capacity to contribute to society (Stewart & Ostrove, 1998).

Additionally, Barney's renegotiation of identity occurred during the time of life that Mitchell and Helson (1990) described as a woman's prime (although, arguably, Barney's prime continued well beyond her 50s): often a time of role change, with adult children beginning their own lives, and energy that can be spent on other opportunities (Lear, 2017). She also embodied Cole and Stewart's (1996) idea of midlife political participation as related to generativity and a politicized identity. Barney turned her focus from caring for her own immediate community (her family) to caring for the wider community, strategically using the status enabled by her MSW degree for community activism. She readily admitted that the degree was a "qualification that would give me entry to all kinds of job possibilities" and "it would open most doors. [A] social work degree ... gives you some legitimacy in ... any of those social fields" (J. L. Barney, personal communication, October 21, 2008). Thus, while Barney had always unofficially been a social worker, she formalized this identity in midlife, and continued her work to reach the broader community. Finally, consistent with Stewart and Healy's (1989) argument, her midlife identity renegotiation was likely facilitated by the coincidence of the social movements supporting personal liberation, including the women's movement, as well as the opportunities they opened up.

The present study is not a full psychobiography because it covers a small aspect of Barney's life, with particular focus on the development of her generative identity as an engaged citizen. No doubt there are other facets of her personality that could be studied more deeply, within different contexts and times over her long lifespan, although the aspects on which we focus are the ones most visible in the personal documents available to us. Because many of these come from the second half of her life, inevitably we have little direct evidence of her earlier life, except her occasional comments. We note that our approach to constructing a psychobiography hewed close to evidence provided in the documents available to us; some might prefer a more speculative strategy.

Of course, the concept of a generative identity is not the sole dominion of Barney. There are undoubtedly other individuals for whom a sense of self and vocation rests on their generative concerns, commitments, and acts; those who work their entire lives for the betterment of society. These might include widely-recognized public figures, such as philanthropists, political and business leaders, and environmentalists, or lesser-known individuals such as teachers, healthcare workers, church leaders, and other "engaged citizens": anyone whose self-identity is defined by caring for others. Self-identification and identification by others as having a generative identity can aid in the pursuit of finding purpose and meaning in life, both pre- and post-working life (as Barney did): in finding a vocation and in aging optimally.

In this paper, we have argued that although Barney's generative identity was present throughout adulthood, it was further distilled in midlife. Her belief in and need to be part of a community (*belonging*), as well as her capability and resourcefulness (*self-reliance and self-expression*), were integral to the continuing development of a sense of self based on the pleasure she experienced in providing care and access to services for the underserved (*generative identity*). We wonder whether longer and healthier lives on average are affording more people the chance to develop a generative identity later in life. Jane Barney was a remarkable woman who dedicated her life to social change in the

communities in which she lived. This paper documents just some of the manifestations of her generative identity as an engaged citizen.

Study was pre-registered at https://osf.io/npwxv/files/

## ORCID

*Nicky J. Newton* https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4242-1359
*Abigail J. Stewart* https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4736-0815

## REFERENCES

Arendt, H. (1958/1998). *The human condition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Barney, J. L. (1970). *Liberation for the elderly woman* [Unpublished manuscript]. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Barney, J. L. (1987). Community presence in nursing homes. *The Gerontologist*, *27*(3), 367–369. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/27.3.367

Barney, J. L. (1990). *My life before gerontology* [Unpublished manuscript]. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Barney, J. L. (1999). Unpaid-for work. In Z. Curtis (Ed.), *Life after work: Stories of freedom, opportunity, and change* (pp. 103–108). The Women's Press.

Barney, J. L. (2002; as told to M. A. Sanderson). *The Parishfield community: The experience of one of its members* [Unpublished manuscript]. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Sage.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*, 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counseling and Psychotherapy Research*, *21*(1), 37–47. https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12360

Calvo. E. (2006). *Does working longer make people healthier and happier?* Issue Brief No. 5606. Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA.

Cole, E. R., & Stewart, A. J. (1996). Meanings of political participation among Black and White women: Political identity and social responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*, 130–140. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.1.130

Cole, E. R., Zucker, A. N., & Ostrove, J. M. (1998). Political participation and feminist consciousness among women activists of the 1960s. *Political Psychology*, *19*(2), 349–471 https://www.jstor.org/stable/3792052

Denton, W. (1962). *The role of the minister's wife*. Westminster Press.

Douglas, W. (1965). *Ministers' wives*. Harper & Row.

Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1959/1980). Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers. *Psychological Issues*, *1*, 1–171.

Erikson, E. H. (1974). *Dimensions of a new identity*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Erikson, E. H. (1982). *The life cycle completed*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Espin, O. M., Stewart, A. J., & Gomez, C. A. (1990). Letters from V: Adolescent personality development in sociohistorical context. *Journal of Personality*, *58*(2), 347–364. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1990.tb00233.x

Frank, A. (1953). *Anne Frank: the diary of a young girl*. Pocket Books.

Franz, C., & White, K. M. (1985). Individuation and attachment in personality development: Extending Erikson's theory. *Journal of Personality*, *53*(2), 136–168.

Ginzberg, E., Berg, I. E., Brown, C. A., Herma, J. L., Yohalem, A. L., & Gorelick, S. (1966). *Life styles of educated women*. Columbia University Press.

Jones, B. K., & McAdams, D. P. (2013). Becoming generative: Socializing influences recalled in life stories in late midlife. *Journal of Adult Development*, *20*, 158–172. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-013-9168-4

Josselson, R. (2003). Revisions: Processes in development in midlife women. In J. Demick & C. Andreotti (Eds.), *Handbook of adult development* (pp. 431–441). Kluwer.

Kroger, J. (2002). Identity processes and contents through the years of late adulthood. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *2*(1), 81–99. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532706XID0201_05

Kroger, J. (2016). Identity. In S. K. Whitbourne (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of adulthood and aging* (pp. 623–626). John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118521373

Kroger, J. (2018). The epigenesis of identity—What does it mean? *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *18*(4), 334–342. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1523730

Lawford, H., Pratt, M. W., Hunsberger, B., & Pancer, S. M. (2005). Adolescent generativity: A longitudinal study of two possible contexts for learning concern for future generations. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *15*(3), 261–273. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2005.00096.x

Lear, G. (2017). Midlife awakening: An emergent transformation of the self. *Journal of Transformative Education*, *15*(4), 277–295. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344616670264

Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board Task Force Report. *American Psychologist*, *73*(1), 26–46. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000151

MacDermid, S., Franz, C. E., & de Reus, L. A. (1998). Generativity at the crossroads of social roles and personality. In D. P. McAdams & E. de St. Aubin (Eds.), *Generativity and adult development* (pp. 181–226). American Psychological Association.

McAdams, D. P., & de St. Aubin, E. (1992). A theory of generativity and its assessment through self-report, behavioral acts, and narrative themes in autobiography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *62*, 1003–1015.

McAdams, D. P., de St. Aubin, E., & Logan, R. L. (1993). Generativity among young, midlife, and older adults. *Psychology and Aging*, *8*(22), 221–230. https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.8.2.221

McAdams, D. P., Hart, H. M., & Maruna, S. (1998). The anatomy of generativity. In D. P. McAdams & E. de St. Aubin (Eds.), *Generativity and adult development* (pp. 7–43). American Psychological Association.

Mitchell, V., & Helson, R. (1990). Women's prime of life: Is it the 50s? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *14*, 451–470.

Oden, M. B. (1966). *The minister's wife: Person or position*. Abington Press.

Peterson, B. E., & Stewart, A. J. (1993). Generativity and social motives in young adults. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *65*(1), 186–198. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.1.186

Raphael-Leff, J. (2009). The "dreamer" by daylight: Imaginative play, creativity, and generative identity. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, *64*(1), 14–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/00797308.2009.11800813

Rittenour, C. E., & Colaner, C. W. (2012). Finding female fulfillment: Intersecting role-based and morality-based identities of motherhood, feminism, and generativity as predictors of women's self satisfaction and life satisfaction. *Sex Roles*, *67*, 351–362. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0186-7

Sabir, M. (2015). Personalized and global generativity: A prevalent, important, but unlabeled distinction in the literature. *Journal of Adult Development*, *22*, 14–26. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-014-9197-7

Sanderson, M. A. (2002). *Preface to The Parishfield community: The experience of one of its members* [Unpublished manuscript]. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Schuster, D. (1993). Studying women's lives through time. In K. D. Hulbert & D. Schuster (Eds.), *Women's lives through time: Educated American women of the twentieth century* (pp. 3–31). Jossey-Bass.

Singer, J. A., King, L. A., Green, M. C., & Barr, S. C. (2002). Personality identity and civic responsibility: "Rising to the occasion" narratives and generativity in community action student interns. *Journal of Social Issues*, *58*(3), 545–556.

Smith, C. P. (Ed.). (1992). *Motivation and personality: Handbook of thematic content analysis* (pp. 481–488). Cambridge University Press.

Stewart, A. J., & Healy, J. M. (1986). The role of personality development and experience in shaping political commitment: An illustrative case. *Journal of Social Issues*, *42*(2), 11–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1986.tb00222.x

Stewart, A. J., & Healy, J. M. (1989). Linking individual development and social changes. *American Psychologist*, *44*(1), 30–42. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.1.30

Stewart, A. J., & Malley, J. E. (1987). Role combination in women: Mitigating agency and communion. In F. Crosby (Ed.), *Spouse, parent, worker: On gender and multiple roles* (pp. 44–62). Yale University Press.

Stewart, A. J., & Malley, J. E. (1988). Case studies of agency and communion in women's lives. In R. K. Unger (Ed.), *Representations: Social constructions of gender* (pp. 61–76). Baywood.

Stewart, A. J., & Malley, J. E. (2004). Women of "the greatest generation". In C. Daiute & C. Lightfoot (Eds.), *Narrative analysis: Studying the development of individuals in society* (pp. 223–244). Sage.

Stewart, A. J., & Ostrove, J. M. (1998). Women's personality in middle age: Gender, history, and midcourse corrections. *American Psychologist*, *53*(11), 1185–1194. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.53.11.1185

Stewart, A. J., Ostrove, J. M., & Helson, R. (2001). Middle aging in women: Patterns of personality change from the 30s to the 50s. *Journal of Adult Development*, *8*(1), 23–37. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026445704288

Tangri, S. S., & Jenkins, S. R. (1986). Stability and change in role innovation and life plans. *Sex Roles*, *14*(12), 647–662. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00287695

Whitbourne, S. K., & Skultety, K. M. (2006). Aging and identity: How women face later life transitions. In J. Worell & C. D. Goodheart (Eds.), *Handbook of girls' and women's psychological health* (pp. 370–378). Oxford University Press.

Yohalem, A. M. (1993). Columbia University graduate students, 1945-51: The vanguard of professional women. In K. D. Hulbert & D. Schuster (Eds.), *Women's lives through time: Educated American women of the twentieth century* (pp. 140–157). Jossey-Bass.