

What exactly has age got to do with it? My life in critical age studies.

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Abstract

By sidesteps and accidents, by reading in too many genres and fields at the same time, by being irritable about certain tics of theory, by trying as a freelance independent scholar to overcome my lack of training as a gerontologist or a historian or an anthropologist, I slowly moved beyond literary criticism toward a more satisfying literary-cultural criticism and inter-disciplinarity. The article describes my move from analyzing the midlife alone to a more inclusive age studies, from naive devotee of the progress narrative to a critic of both positive aging and decline ideology, from wielding a high style to a more personal voice appropriate for a broader audience. Becoming more political has been an important aspect of this development. The arc of my age critique has been toward a greater sense of urgency in combating the forces that produce contemporary ageism.



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Keywords

Age as performance; Age anxiety; Age autobiography; Age classes; Age hierarchy; Cultural studies; Age as narrative; Feminism; Feminist gerontology; Age studies; Aging as a decline; Aging as a progress narrative

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