

4-1-2018

My Exaggerated Life

Carol Walker Jordan

Retired Writer and Educational Consultant

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln>

Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jordan, Carol Walker (2018) "My Exaggerated Life," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 66 : Iss. 1 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol66/iss1/7>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Southeastern Librarian by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

just a bad soul, trying to get as good as possible, before I'm called". (p. 196)

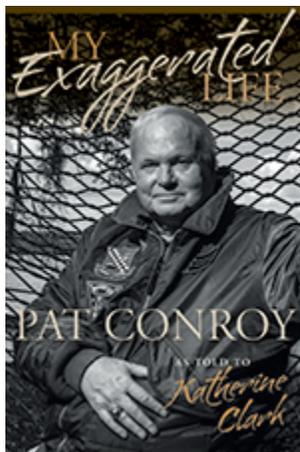
John Hayes is an excellent story teller and a painter of deep feelings and emotions through his words and phrases. For a look into the various ways folk Christianity adapted the rituals and practices of traditional Christian faith, Hayes' research reveals distinct adaptations in music, preaching, funerals, burials and graveyards.

A conclusion chapter, notes, bibliography and index provide a student or faculty member with excellent resources to investigate. There are black and white illustrations to illuminate the narrative. Recommended for public libraries, academic libraries and church and seminary libraries.

Carol Walker Jordan

Retired Writer and Educational Consultant

My Exaggerated Life. Pat Conroy as told to Katherine Clark. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018. ISBN 978-1-161117-907-1 (hardcover - \$29.99); 978-1-61117-908-8 (Ebook - \$19.99). 352 p.



My Exaggerated Life is the product of a special collaboration between the great American author, Pat Conroy, and oral biographer Katherine Clark, who recorded hundreds of hours of conversations with Conroy before he passed away in 2016. No subject was off limits including aspects of his tumultuous life he had never revealed." (Suzanne Axland, Marketing Director, USC Press) This revelation by Ms. Axland piqued my curiosity and I realized I was to experience the work of an oral biographer, possibly my first venture into an oral biographer's world

where conversation gave revelations unexperienced in other types of biographies.

Certainly I did not expect the revelations that an oral biography could produce until I opened the book and on page 1, I was confronted with the realism of Conroy's words, "I had the greatest childhood on earth, because Santini beat the shit out of me, then the Citadel beat the shit out of me. So I was ready for life. The Great Santini taught me everything I needed to know about how the world would treat me. He taught me everything life could hurt me with, crush me with, throw at me; there were no surprises that life got to throw at me because I'd grown up with the Great Santini." (p. 1). Conroy confides further to Clark, "and if that wasn't enough I was sent to the Citadel, where I got my nose rubbed in shit for four straight years". (p.1). Clark revealed that Conroy was a person who liked to talk about himself. He was someone who would call a friend and talk for one to two hours and had no trouble keeping the conversation going. For her, his style of revealing his thoughts, past experiences and his love of story telling, provided "over 200 hours of conversations which she recorded to provide this oral biography".

Clark organized her interviews and Conroy's conversations into significant places where Conroy lived and worked (intertwining significant life events and people who were critical to his life story) : Beaufort, SC, (1967-1973), Atlanta (1973-1981), Rome (1981-1988) , San Francisco (1988-1992), Fripp Island, and Beaufort, SC, (1992-2016), where he died in 2016.

To encourage readers of this oral biography, I can promise one will have an unforgettable experience reading and feeling Conroy's words. My second paragraph in which I reveal his words: "I had the greatest childhood on earth..." (p.1) sets the tone for the following 313 pages. Expect to find that Bronwen Dickey's words are perfect to describe Pat Conroy, as "big-hearted, wickedly funny, and completely unforgettable, even when his demons threatened to get the better of him. No one was more generous toward other writers, or more encouraging to those who sought his counsel. No one better understood the power of stories to save lives. A great light went out on March 4, 2016 but Katherine Clark has done the world a profound service by rekindling it in these pages." (Bronwen Dickey press reviewer)

Recommended for public, academic and liberal studies libraries. 2018

Carol Walker Jordan.

Retired Writer and Educational Consultant