A Study of John Kendall, Peripatetic Pedagogue

By

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Introduction

This document stems from my research of the Music Special Collection of the John Kendall Papers at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Lovejoy Library. The collection contains letters and documents related to John Kendall, the most important pioneer of the Suzuki violin method in America. At Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), Kendall established the first college program for Suzuki teachers. SIUE retained copies of the letters Kendall received, carbon copies of letters he wrote, business documents, and personal notes. Among the collections are materials from the early years of the American Suzuki movement in the 1960s. Kendall also saved articles, teaching materials, and programs from many workshops and conferences at which he appeared. An in-demand clinician, Kendall traveled widely to hold clinics for teachers and students. In addition, he kept contracts that detailed the scope of his work.

For this project, I highlight parts of the archive that show interesting facets of Kendall and his methods. Beyond looking at archive materials, I cross-reference other publications to provide depth to the public perception of Kendall. I also verify and enhance some of the information in the archived materials through interviews. The paper is organized in parts: (1) Kendall's biography, (2) his discovery of Talent Education, and his experience visiting Japan through archival documents, (3) his adaptation of the Suzuki Method for American audiences called *Listen and Play, (*4) workshop activities, (5) his work as a professor at SIUE, (6) his pedagogical principles, (7) letters regarding students, and (8) concluding implications for teachers and students.

Part 1: Biographical Overview

Kendall adopted values of resourcefulness and industriousness because of his time and place in history and his family background. John Dryden Kendall grew up on a farm outside of Kearney, Nebraska. Born in 1917, Kendall grew up during the Depression Era. His father worked in various trades, such as reselling refurbished bricks and running a farm. Also, Kendall worked on the family farm which instilled in him a love of the outdoors and a connection to nature.

His young adulthood was marked with a university education, teaching, and public service. He attended Oberlin Conservatory to study violin with Raymond Cerf (who was also a teacher of notable pedagogue Dorothy DeLay). In 1939, he began teaching at the college level immediately after graduating from Oberlin. During World War II, Kendall joined the Reconstruction and Relief Corps and later was inducted into the Civilian Public Service as a Conscientious Objector. He took various odd jobs assigned by the government. While in the service, he received a master's degree in education from Columbia Teachers College by taking summer and evening courses.

In his middle age, Kendall continued to teach and discover for himself and others Talent Education (later referred to as the Suzuki Method). In 1946, he began teaching at Muskingum College in Ohio. It was in 1959 that he made his now-famous trip to Japan to learn about Talent Education. In 1963 he accepted a position at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, a new university at the time, where he blended university teaching with other Suzuki related activities.

The skill and values Kendall cultivated in his early years would reveal themselves throughout his life. During adulthood, he would continue to build with reclaimed materials and

support environmental projects. He sought creative means and resources for his projects, whether it be material or labor. Using the same principles of resourcefulness from his upbringing, Kendall utilized old houses on the university property to carry out his teaching projects. This culminated in the "string house" which was where he did much of his teaching during his time at SIUE. Kendall retired from SIUE with honors in 1998, moved to Maryland, and eventually settled in Ann Arbor, Michigan. While in Ann Arbor, Kendall continued to teach master classes to those in the local Suzuki community and visiting teachers.

Kendall passed away in January of 2011. His influence is still felt in the Suzuki community, and his former students continue to espouse and revere his teaching ideas.

Part 2: Discovering Talent Education

Kendall is best known as the pioneer of the Suzuki movement in America, and in his autobiography, he called himself the "Johnny Appleseed of the Suzuki Method." Kendall's 1959 trip to Japan was the impetus for this movement. He was prompted to make the trip after viewing a film of Japanese students playing a graduation concert. A Japanese colleague of Kendall brought a film to the 1958 American String Teachers Association conference held at Oberlin College. The film, from 1955, featured children playing the Bach Double Concerto, and left Kendall impressed and intrigued. He was curious because, during the 1950s, it was uncommon for most children to play pieces of that level. The film, however, showed a large group of children playing the Bach concerto in synchrony. Skeptical at first, Kendall thought that it might be a fake video. His Japanese colleague suggested that Kendall travel to Japan to see the students for himself. As a result, Kendall sought funds to make an exploratory trip.

Kendall, ever resourceful, wrote to many organizations requesting travel grants. He stated that he wrote to forty-one different organizations requesting travel funds. Of the forty-one, he received two grant awards (Kendall saved both the acceptance and rejection letters). The grants came from the Bok and Presser Foundations which were music philanthropy organizations. The funds allowed Kendall to make his exploratory trip to learn more about Talent Education and its leader Shinichi Suzuki.[1]

Kendall documented his trip. He typed up an itinerary that gives us insight to the nature of his travel. Mostly, he spent his time in Japan with the Talent Education community. Because Kendall used the past tense and typed the trip details, it is probable that Kendall wrote this document after he returned to the United States. According to this record, Kendall arrived on June 25th in Tokyo and began observing classes by the Talent Education organization. He also attended private lessons taught in Yokohama, the second largest city in Japan. He continued his trip by attending a conference for mothers in Tokyo and met with the board of Talent Education. In late June, he stayed with a host family in Fujisawa and noted that he observed Japanese family life and students practicing with parents. In July, Kendall was able to observe Suzuki teacher classes and private lessons in Yugawara. While there, Kendall attended yet another parents' conference. Then from July 9th to July 15th, Kendall was in Matsumoto observing Talent Education activities and he taped individual lessons. Last, he went to Nagoya to conduct similar activities: lesson observations and attending student concerts. I should also note that in each case, Kendall wrote that student concerts were large groups (100 performers in Matsumoto, 120 in Osaka, and 230 in Nagoya). In Kendall's summarizing report, he stated that group performance

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[1] Ross, Gloria, "Obituary for John Kendall: Founded American Suzuki Movement," January 14, 2011, https://news.stlpublicradio.org/arts/2011-01-14/obituary-for-john-kendall-founded-american-suzuki-movement.

sizes ranged from 4 to 400.[2] These joint concerts were possible because students from different areas memorized the same repertoire with identical bowing and fingerings.

Kendall specified when he interacted with Shinichi Suzuki, the founder of Talent Education. For example, Kendall documented that he observed lessons taught by Suzuki on July 4th and discussed the method with Suzuki on July 9th. Kendall's itinerary implies that most of his time was spent not with Suzuki, the leader, but with people affiliated with Talent Education. For instance, Joseph Suk (no relation to Czech violinist Josef Suk) was Kendall's first interaction with a Talent Education teacher. Suk discussed the Suzuki manuals with Kendall in Matsumoto. Also, an individual referred to only as "Hoshino" helped Kendall translate the Suzuki manuals. These people deserve much credit for supporting Kendall during his trip because other accounts generally assumed that he studied primarily with Suzuki while in Japan. For instance, according to Masaaki Honda, a member of Suzuki's inner circle, Kendall primarily studied with Suzuki for six weeks.[3] Kendall's *Observations and Report* of his trip recount 46 days spent in Japan, with most of his exchange taking place with multiple members of the Talent Education community other than Suzuki.

The itinerary also clarifies how long Kendall stayed in Japan. According to the Suzuki Association website, Kendall said, "In 1959, I began the adventure that undoubtedly changed the course of my life…it proved impossible to have had an experience such as those three remarkable months in Japan without re-evaluating my values." Kendall's interview implies that he was there for three months in 1959, but since it does not match the itinerary, it is likely that

[2] Kendall, John, "Observations and Report," 1959, box 2, folder 29, John Kendall Papers, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

[3] Honda, Masaaki, *The vehicle of music: reflections on a life with Shinichi Suzuki and the Talent Education movement*, (Miami: Summy-Birchard) 2002, 107.

Kendall was referencing the three months he spent in Japan during his spring sabbatical in 1962.[4] My impression is that dates and trip durations were mixed up in the Suzuki Association article, Kendall lumped his time in Japan together in his mind, or Kendall presented it this way for ease of explanation. In sum, the itinerary is valuable because it is a reliable source as to what Kendall did and with whom he interacted during his now-historic trips to Japan.

Kendall quickly became the spokesperson for Talent Education during the trip and also upon his return to the states. While in Japan, Kendall was interviewed by a reporter with *Time* magazine, and the resulting article was published while Kendall was in Japan. Kendall stated that this helped to establish his reputation.[5] Upon his return, Kendall got busy giving presentations and writing about Talent Education. Because he was the first western violin teacher to visit Japan and meet Suzuki, he had exclusive knowledge and credentials compared to other American music educators. Many teachers were very interested and Kendall was generous with his knowledge. Kendall's report was presented at multiple venues, the first of which was for a National School Orchestra Association (NSOA) at Fish Creek, Wisconsin. Doris Preucil recounted how Kendall shared his information with her and other teachers:

> What he did for me I'm sure he did for hundreds of people. He returned phone calls and sent me a copy of what he had written for his grant to get to Japan. That is what I had to start teaching on… it was called Observations and Report something like that. He had traveled over (to) Japan and observed these various teachers and spoke to Suzuki as much

[4] John Kendall, *Recollections of a Peripatetic Pedagogue*, 97.

[5] Kendall, 93.

> as he could, and wrote this report. It included all of the pieces through the ten books as well as other things about what he saw while he was there.[6]

Carol Smith, a colleague of Kendall, said that "it took someone with incredible energy, charisma, and communication skills to spread the word about the Suzuki Method. That someone was John Kendall."[7] Suzuki himself recognized that Kendall was a vocal supporter of the method. In a letter that Suzuki wrote to Kendall, Suzuki called Kendall his "oldest and best sympathizer in foreign countries."[8] To this day, Kendall's *Observations and Report* is available for interested teachers to read. It is now the revised and republished booklet *The Suzuki Violin Method in American Music Education*. In conclusion, we can see how Kendall was an influential spokesperson for Talent Education following his trip to Japan.

In 1962, Kendall made his second trip to Japan. During this trip, Kendall did more observations and taught lessons. What is more, he also proposed bringing Japanese Suzuki students to America to play on tour. Kendall had been busy introducing American musicians to the Suzuki Method through an adapted method book, and interest was growing for the method. Masaaki Honda, Suzuki's close colleague, was enthusiastic about the concept, but Suzuki himself was tentative. After discussions, however, the project went forward and Kendall raised money from the Presser Foundation to fund the tour, which took place in 1964. According to Kendall, he was responsible for planning this tour.[9] Ten Japanese students toured nineteen

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[6] Oviatt, Merietta, "The Preucils: A Legacy of Music, Pedagogy, and the Suzuki Viola School," DMA diss., (University of Oregon, 2015).

[7] John Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki, (Music Educators National Conference, 1966), 6.

[8] Shinichi Suzuki, "Letter to John Kendall," December 4, 1967, box 1, folder 32, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

[9] Lorraine Fink, "Violinists Retreat in Flagstaff, AZ," *American Suzuki Journal* 25, no. 1 (1996): 21.

locations in the United States and presented workshops which were a blend of lecture and demonstration. Kendall gave introductory speeches for the group promoting the Suzuki Method. Before the Music Educators National Conference, Kendall stated “Suzuki's ideas have struck fire in America because they go directly to the heart... In understanding this process, as Suzuki points out, lies the future of the human race."[10]

Kendall further promoted Talent Education through an article he wrote for a mainstream magazine in 1963. He sought to bring Talent Education to the attention of American mothers by submitting an article to *Woman’s Day* magazine. His article summarized Talent Education for the magazine in the March issue of 1963. Kendall also kept records of his letters to the *Woman’s Day* editors as early as November of 1962, offering to provide photographs to accompany the article. This *Woman’s Day* article explained the concept of the “mother tongue” approach and Suzuki’s teaching philosophy. As a result, Kendall received reader mail, which is now housed in the archive. Mothers from around the United States showed high levels of curiosity and requested follow-up information. For example, one mother wrote, “We were [so] impressed with your article… and would like more information about the teaching process.” Others gave more details on their reaction to Talent Education, such as, “I, as a mother of 65 [years], grandmother of 13, and just a Gold Star Mother who lost a lovely son at 24, in 1944. He crashed over Germany in World War II... It would be wonderful instead of bombs and guns they would use musical instruments that would sooth instead of kill! Best regards to Mr. Suzuki.” Kendall found this letter to be moving and wrote in a lower margin, “Touching, isn't it?” His commentary shows that he was an empathetic person that cared about his readers’ responses. All in all,

[10] Honda, 129.

Kendall was proactive in promoting the Suzuki Method through multiple channels and was interested in others' reactions to the method.

Kendall's early efforts helped to bring information to westerners and create a way for Talent Education to gain traction outside of Japan. In short, we can see how Kendall created an opportunity for himself to explore Talent Education in Japan and proactively share this knowledge with eager American audiences.

Part 3: *Listen and Play:* Adapting the Suzuki Books for Western Audiences

When Kendall returned from his first trip to Japan, he undertook the task of adapting the Suzuki materials for westerners. The Suzuki literature was not yet available in the United States, so Kendall worked on an English adaptation. Kendall stated in his autobiography that Suzuki had insisted Kendall be listed as the author of these books since they were an adaptation of the Japanese materials. What is more, in a 1991 interview, Kendall stated that Suzuki had asked him to adapt the books in English.[11] The archive contains a letter from Kendall's publisher in 1959 requesting permission to publish the method in English.[12] Kendall's method books were published by Summy-Birchard, a publishing company in Illinois. Kendall published *Listen and Play*, a series of violin teaching manuals based on the Suzuki Violin School, that gave American students, parents, and teachers musical materials with which to begin Talent Education in North America.

[11] Fink, 21.

[12] Robert Olson, "Letter to Suzuki," September 10, 1959, box 1, folder 32, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Kendall's adaptation was suited for Americans. *Listen and Play* included not only the music for the Suzuki pieces but also supplementary photographs and instructions produced by Kendall. He added additional written instructions and photographs. Kendall stated that he used American students as models to avoid criticism that the method was only suitable for Japanese students.[13] Like the books by Suzuki, *Listen and Play* contained Baroque pieces and German *Volkslied*; these works were chosen by Suzuki because of their familiarity to many Japanese children and Kendall simply reproduced them in his book. Kendall added photographs of western children, explanations of the method, teaching points, and group exercises to *Listen and Play* to make it easier for students and parents to use. Doris Preucil noted that Kendall helped to Americanize the Suzuki Method:

> He was a thinker in many ways. His mind worked in many different directions… I think the Suzuki method needed to be a little bit Americanized or Europeanized to work outside of Japan, and I think he realized that and brought a lot of the thinking.[14]

Kendall indeed realized that and implemented many ideas in the Summy-Birchard publication to make the Suzuki Method successful to Americans. In *Listen and Play,* Kendall wrote in a practical manner and succinctly described principles of good playing through prose and images to a general, American audience. In its opening pages, Kendall described how to hold the violin, bow, and basic playing positions. There are pages of group activities and pedagogical advice for how to teach the bow and instrument hold. All these would be useful for the non-instrumentalist parent who would be coaching a young child at home. Kendall also included

[13] John Kendall, *Recollections of a Peripatetic Pedagogue*, 96.

[14] Oviatt, 57.

many photographs of young American children playing, demonstrating, and participating in activities. It is worthy to note that the children photographed for *Listen and Play* look to be between the ages of five to seven years old, and all were Caucasian.

Listen and Play opened violin education to a large new market of young children. The method encouraged children to begin studying music years earlier than was previously thought possible. Students in the United States at that time usually began string study at age nine or ten. But according to Kendall, the Suzuki approach recommended that students start at age three. The intent of *Listen and Play* was to bring violin instruction to a new category: the toddler age group (and their parents). Kendall, like Suzuki, suggested that children use reference recordings from as early as two or younger. Kendall also advocated that after early music exposure, by age three, parents should introduce children to playing a small violin. This was unheard of at that time, as traditional approaches to violin instruction had students begin to learn the violin during the average reading age which was approximately age six. This would eventually open a new market for instruments, specialized teachers, teacher training, summer clinics, and other supplementary books and recordings. Suzuki's family operated a music instrument-making business, which still runs to this day, and sold many violins in fractional sizes to children. Kendall states in the introduction of *Listen and Play* that "we must investigate methods through which *all* children can develop their various talents." In sum, this method brought string education to a new category of consumers: young American children and their parents.

The Kendall archive contains other interesting items that relate to *Listen and Play*. In it, there are sketches of the *Listen and Play* cover art that Kendall drafted (his design was not used). Also, there are letters in which Kendall and Summy-Birchard discuss copyright issues of folk songs accompaniment. In these correspondences, Summy-Birchard editor Robert Olson hinted

that there was little communication from Suzuki. In fact, I found no letters from Suzuki in regards to the *Listen and Play* books. Suzuki is mentioned, however, in the royalty contract. From the contract, Suzuki would receive a 5% royalty for every copy of the book sold, and 25% for any licensing or sale of "printing instruments," which I understand as the mechanisms or designs for publishing the books. I argue that Suzuki's English was not good and that he was not entrepreneurial-minded at that point in his career, therefore allowing Kendall to work freely during this period. In an interview with Doris Preucil by Merietta Oviatt in 2015, Preucil stated that Kendall "was a thinker in many ways." Preucil stated that Kendall had an innovative mind and that the "Suzuki method needed to be a little bit Americanized or Europeanized to work outside of Japan."[4] Hence, Kendall would have been a good point person to introduce the Suzuki method books to Americans.

Much of the innovation of the method can be understood as deeply technological. Inside each book, glued to the cover was a "45" vinyl record. The small record contained listening examples for each piece. Also, large LP's ("long-playing record") were available for separate purchase. Integral to the method, *Listen and Play* was paired with a LP that provided an aural model for students. In Book One of the curriculum, Kendall writes: "the whole concept is learning by listening," and says that the child will not actually use the book or a music stand which was a benefit. The music on the LP was recorded by Cuban concert violinist Ángel Reyes, a violin professor at Northwestern University from 1955 to 1965 (Reyes was also the teacher of UW-Madison violin professor Tyrone Greive, who studied with Reyes at the University of Michigan). According to Kendall, using a recording rather than reading music simplified the learning process. Although this concept was not new to American music teachers, it was particularly emphasized in the teachings of Suzuki, who stated that children should listen to the

reference recordings every day. Kendall expressed his agreement with this practice stating, "The success of the teaching would be greatly weakened by eliminating or minimizing the use of recordings. There may be situations where extensive use of recordings is difficult… Such teaching, however, could hardly be called the 'Suzuki Method.'"[15] Kendall explored the use of recordings and some of his suggestions will be covered in a later section of this study.

Listen and Play breathed the air of its times because it met the needs of American families seeking music lessons while taking advantage of modern technology. The early 1960s was a golden age for record players, and high-fidelity and moderate cost of ownership made record players popular. It was during this period that record players were in vogue and commonplace for middle-class families. Suzuki's method represented music education's first combination of daily use of sound recording and instrument pedagogy at the home. Hence, this strong emphasis on listening to reference recordings also stems from the availability of technology. *Listen and Play* is an example of Kendall's entrepreneurial and pioneering spirit in the field of string education and paved the way for a revitalization of string education in America. It utilized new technologies available to typical American families and satisfied the desire of parents to educate young children.

Kendall's promotion of his book series was met with success and enthusiasm. This first book was successful and a second book was published in 1962. The third book followed in 1965. He went on a promotional tour throughout the United States to encourage the adoption of the *Listen and Play* method books. His letters show that he made contact with teachers all around the United States by presenting string workshops. For example, an archived letter by Kent Perry

[15] Kendall, John, "Some of Your Questions Answered," Listen and Play News Exchange, January 1974, box 10, folder 11, John Kendall Papers, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

from 1962 is an example of the enthusiasm and curiosity with which teachers responded to Kendall's presentations. Perry wrote:

> As a pupil of Angel Reyes, I attended your string pedagogy workshop this summer. At Northwestern, you will remember me as the doorkeeper… let me congratulate you for the inspiring new direction you are providing for string teaching in this country. This is something we have long needed, and I hope it will revolutionize public school string teaching. We at Maryville College are experimenting with strings in two nearby elementary schools and expect to use 'Listen and Play' this year.[16]

Perry also sought promotional material. He asked Kendall for rental information for a film called "Happy Children in Japan," a Japanese documentary, and for photographs of Japanese Suzuki students performing in groups. Kent Perry mentioned his teacher, Ángel Reyes, because he was a mutual contact. Perry would later join Kendall as faculty at SIUE and teach there for 33 years.

At this point, the curriculum was not yet referred to as the "Suzuki Method," and Kendall's books and workshops were the only sources of this information for most teachers on Talent Education. Kendall was not the only early adopter of Talent Education but was a curriculum evangelist. Early articles suggest that many schools in America were taking up *Listen and Play* and integrating it into their curriculum. Kendall's correspondence reveals planned tours throughout the U.S. So effective was his advocacy that within a few years, over 150 teachers traveled to Japan to learn from Suzuki. Kendall arranged demonstrations of the method's

[16] Kent Perry, "Letter to John Kendall," 1962, box 1, folder 23, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, https://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/musiclistening/special_collections/title/kendall/kendall.shtml.

effectiveness by organizing a tour of Japanese students to play violin throughout the states. He also arranged workshops with Suzuki coming from Japan to train American teachers. Camps and summer programs developed as a result. Kendall promoted the method with great energy and enthusiasm, but this success would in turn result in the discontinuation of *Listen and Play*.

Eventually, Zen-On, the Japanese publishers of the Suzuki Method books, decided to release an English version apart from Kendall. Zen-On worked with Summy-Birchard to publish Suzuki Method books separate from *Listen and Play* hoping to meet the increasing demand and interest of American teachers. More teachers were aware of Suzuki, had visited Japan, or seen Suzuki on his trips to the US. The publishers projected that teachers at an upcoming Suzuki event would want to purchase materials from the Japanese publisher. Letters in the archive document the Japanese publisher cutting ties with Kendall. Zen-On in 1968 stated that they would "prefer" the original Suzuki books over Kendall's as the definitive edition.[17] This spelled the end for the *Listen and Play* books.

Today, *Listen and Play*, is a forgotten method book by most; only teachers who were active during the 1960s or those interested in Suzuki history know of it. These books, however, are worth reviewing not only for historical context but also for their clear instructions which is a feature that the modern editions lack. In a letter from 1974, Kendall lamented that the new Suzuki books lacked the instructional tips that he provided in *Listen and Play,* and expressed his frustration with it. Kendall also hoped that Suzuki would write a manual for the Suzuki Method

[17] Zen-On Publishing LTD, "Letter to John Kendall," January 18th, 1968, box 1, folder 10, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, https://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/musiclistening/special_collections/title/kendall/kendall.shtml.

books, but said that he didn't think Suzuki would ever do so.[18] All in all, Kendall's adaptation had made it possible to pave the way for the Suzuki Method to become popular and profitable in the United States. It is still worth studying today for its advice for instructors and unique recordings of the beginner repertoire.

In the context of Talent Education, Kendall constituted "knowing the music" as being able to play violin pieces in a polished way, from memory. According to the method, students continued to review and play every learned piece in the method book from a core curriculum. Important to note, however, is that students were not required to know how to read music notation until later developmental stages. Learning and performing by ear was sufficient for early to intermediate levels. After reaching an intermediate level, that is, playing Vivaldi and Bach concerti, students are taught how to read notes (after roughly the fourth year of instruction).

In terms of methodology, Suzuki espoused an approach that offered music education to children of varying abilities and believed that talent could be educated. His beliefs stemmed from his upbringing as a Buddhist; Suzuki read the teachings of Dōgen, a Japanese Buddhist priest, writer, and philosopher. Suzuki believed in the potential of every child and a philosophy of love.[19] There were several central ideas to the method, namely, repetition, using a recording as a teacher, involving parents in the learning process, and the notion that every child could be a talented musician. A core philosophy of "love education" was integrated into music instruction. The Suzuki Method was also the first widespread approach to learning an instrument in which

[18] Kendall, John, "Letter to Mary Carroll," May 6th, 1974, box 1, folder 3, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, https://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/musiclistening/special_collections/title/kendall/kendall.shtml.

[19] Hendricks, Karin, "The Philosophy of Shinichi Suzuki: 'Music Education as Love Education,'" Philosophy of Music Education Review 19, no. 2 (2011): 139-149.

sound recordings were central. This stemmed from Suzuki's own experience teaching himself violin by using records.

The approach also capitalized on the support of a parental coach, which was available at that time due to the end of World War II. Due to federal and civilian hiring policies for veterans and societal norms, many women were at home rather than part of the workforce. Further, the birth rate increased during the postwar baby boom; it was the largest crop of young children in the history of the nation. Many ambitious mothers were interested in using their time and energy to bolster their children's education. With the Suzuki Method, mothers could be responsible for editing recordings for repeat listening, creating a musical home environment, music activities, inspiring children to practice, following the teacher's directives, plus other duties as needed. The method enlisted the help of mothers and gave them a huge responsibility in their child's music education.

Much of Suzuki's methodology resonated with Kendall. Nicholas Kendall, John Kendall's grandson, stated in a Facebook interview in 2016 that his grandfather's quaker background and closeness to nature provided a connection to Suzuki's method. Quakerism stresses the importance of God being present in each individual, and hence the worth of every person.[20] Most importantly, John Kendall and Suzuki both saw music as a means of nurturing students as people. Suzuki was known for teaching students of various abilities and being a loving teacher. John Kendall, too, worked with a wide range of students, each unique with his or her own idiosyncrasies. According to a former student of Kendall that I spoke with, Louise Scott, Kendall was a patient teacher who worked with all kinds of students. For example, one of his

[20] "Religions - Christianity: Quakers," July 3, 2009, https://tinyurl.com/yh7r7tmm.

students liked to make animal sounds during the lesson, and rather than forcing the child to stop, Kendall took the student outside to make noises, then they would return indoors to finish the violin lesson. Kendall stated that Suzuki welcomed every person that came to him as a human being. Hence, we can see that both Kendall and Suzuki had common values in terms of working with students.

It is also important to note that Suzuki's method had problematic issues of which Kendall was aware. In his writings, Kendall alluded to one potential issue. In the preface of the updated version of his *Observations and Report* on Suzuki, Kendall wrote that for 25 years the contents of his report stood the test of time, but there was controversy and criticism of the method and dangers of "cultism." The Suzuki movement had progressed in some areas to extremes, such as religious-like devotion to Suzuki the person and over-the-top use of group performances of advanced repertoire such as the Tchaikovsky or Sibelius concertos.[21] Despite the issues, most of Kendall's conclusions were that the Suzuki movement was a positive force in the field of music.

Kendall was aware of Suzuki's critics. He saved an article critical of the Suzuki Method in the archive called "Examining the Suzuki Approach," which was written by Louis Gabowitz, a violinist in the Philadelphia Orchestra. Gabowitz was a former student of Ephrem Zimbalist and came from a traditional violinistic background (Kendall noted in a 2001 interview that Zimbalist's playing left a profound impact).[22] Gabowitz provided a wide range of criticisms such as problems with note reading, improper technical foundations, and self-serving financial motivations of Shinichi Suzuki. It is possible that Kendall preserved this piece because it

[21] Perry, David. (Principal advisor, UW-Madison), in discussion with the author. June 2021.

[22] Buckstead, Brian, "A Maverick Pedagogue," DMA diss., (UW-Madison, 2001), 6.

appeared in *The Strad* magazine, which is a prominent trade magazine. From my investigation, this was the only article of criticism that Kendall kept. Kendall was an ardent and intelligent supporter of Suzuki, so I infer that Kendall studied this article to understand and answer critics.

On one occasion, Kendall wrote a letter to Suzuki regarding criticism stemming from the use of accompaniment recordings. In the letter from 1988, Kendall wrote that the use of taped accompaniments for a public group performance of advanced literature was "not understood by many, and results in a great deal of criticism which in some cases carries considerable weight and influence because of the stature and importance of the critics."[23] Among major critics was violinist Isaac Stern, who vocally criticized the Suzuki Method as "an automated procedure" and "the weakest and most criminal method in music education today."[24] Kendall, in his autobiography, also noted that Stern was critical of the Suzuki Method. Kendall's letter was a way to relay critical information to Suzuki, and prompt adjustments to the use of recordings.

Admittingly, Kendall stated in early articles that he had some worriment with the overuse of recordings. In one of his earliest articles on Talent Education, Kendall stated that "repeated listening to recordings of music being learned will result in mechanical 'imitation' on the part of a student."[25] Later, however, Kendall would adjust his position, and encouraged the use of recordings in moderation.

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[23] John Kendall, "Letter to Suzuki," November 28, 1988, box 1, folder 32, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, https://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/musiclistening/special_collections/title/kendall/kendall.shtml.

[24] Matt Schudel, "John D. Kendall, Who Brought Suzuki Violin Training Method to U.S., Dies at 93," John D. Kendall, who brought Suzuki violin training method to U.S., dies at 93 (Washington Post, February 6, 2011), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/music-teacher-championed-suzuki-method/2011/02/05/ABLmY5E_story.html.

[25] John Kendall, "Violin Teaching for Three-Year-Olds," *The Instrumentalist* 14, no. 7 (1960): 64.

In an interview with NPR, Kendall also stated that some local critics said that Suzuki students "couldn't read." Kendall revealed in a later interview that these critics were players in the St. Louis Symphony. Once players saw, however, that many advanced Suzuki students were participating in the St. Louis Youth Symphony, their attitude changed. Another criticism of the Suzuki movement was that teachers were often low-level performers, and were not required to hold a degree or have had any formal training on their instrument. Kendall stated that excessive early promotion of the Suzuki Method was a problem because there would be more people interested in the method than capable teachers trained in the method.[26] Granddaughter Yumi Kendall said in a 2016 interview that John Kendall had a saying which was that "the method is only as good as its teacher," meaning that the skill and dedication of the teacher trumped the method.[27] In an interview late in his life, Kendall said that the Suzuki Method, over fifty years, had naturally worked out problems, and he believed that mostly positive results remained.[28]

Both negative and positive aspects surround the issue of the Suzuki method's emphasis on rote-learning. On one hand, a common criticism is that the Suzuki Method produces "automatons" that only learn by rote, lack individuality, and cannot read music well if at all. On the other hand, the Suzuki Method cultivates ear training abilities which is a valuable skill for learning. Indeed, the method capitalizes on ear training and rote learning for children who have yet to develop enough cognitively to read music. The Suzuki Method inherently favors learning by rote. In William Starr's book, *The Suzuki Violinist*, he observed that Japanese students of the

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[26] John Kuzmich, "John Kendall: Visionary Pioneer of the American Suzuki Movement," American Suzuki Journal 20, no.1 (Fall 1991): 22.

[27] Fink, 21.

[28] Gabriel Bolkosky, "Remembering John Kendall," 2009, YouTube video, 10:19, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fl4vTM_2BBs.

Suzuki Method oftentimes would stop learning violin at around age 12. Further, group performances were done by memory from the Suzuki book curriculum rather than orchestral works that required students to read notes. Therefore, the method favored learning by rote. In recent years, however, revised versions of the Suzuki Method books incorporate short exercises to bolster note reading skills. To further address the issue of note reading, the Suzuki Association has endorsed or published books that promote note reading, such as *I Can Read Music,* and duet books of the Suzuki repertoire.

Kendall believed that the Suzuki Method was experimental and evolving. Kendall compared the process of change in western and eastern music education, stating that "the western way, unlike the [Asian] way, is to apply scientific methods," and that the Suzuki Method, by contrast, is "constantly evolving… it has sometimes been difficult for teachers to understand the experimental nature of his changes."[29]

Part 4: Suzuki Workshops

While at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Kendall's position allowed him the freedom to devote one-third of his time promoting the Suzuki Method through workshops, presentations, and clinics. The archive has records of Kendall presenting at many locations, with a high concentration of workshops held in the midwestern United States. Abroad, Kendall presented in Australia, Sweden, Japan, Bermuda, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, England, and other countries. Remarkably, Kendall was able to create a career that allowed him the flexibility to travel, teach, and present workshops. In addition, Kendall used these many trips to recruit graduate students to the Suzuki teacher training program at SIUE.

[29] Kuzmich, 22.

Due to the community aspects of the Suzuki Method, many opportunities existed for Suzuki students and teachers to congregate. As a result, Kendall was often invited to present for these gatherings. Some workshops were clinics. Other times, Kendall traveled to teach at a Suzuki Institute, which was a summer music camp for students and teachers. For example, Kendall has appointment letters from Margery V. Aber outlining his pay and work expectations for the Suzuki Institute at Stevens Point, Wisconsin, in August of 1972. Kendall was to receive $500 as a teaching fee and $150 for travel expenses. His responsibilities were to teach individual and group classes, present lectures, and present recitals.[30]

A review exists of one of the Kendall clinics which was a violinists' retreat in Flagstaff, Arizona in 1996. Arranged by Louise Scott and Karin Hallberg of Northern Arizona University, Kendall conducted teaching and teaching demonstrations. Lorraine Fink, a violin teacher from the Colburn School, then part of USC, wrote a review of the workshop. Fink wrote that over forty college students and teachers attended the workshop. Some teachers traveled from great distances from far-off cities to see Kendall teach. She also wrote that Kendall's approach gave many insights that were useful for the novice and seasoned teacher. "Often, Kendall's 'one-liner' suggestions are both helpful and amusing," Fink stated.[31]

Kendall also presented workshops at colleges and conferences. He was involved with ASTA (American String Teachers Association); IMEA (Illinois Music Educators Association); and SAA (Suzuki Association of the Americas). Early in his career, Kendall was more involved with the non-Suzuki organizations, but later he tended towards SAA events. Kendall has

[30] Margery Aber, "Letter to John Kendall," 1972, box 5, folder 55, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, https://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/musiclistening/special_collections/title/kendall/kendall.shtml.

[31] Fink, 21.

documents that pertain to correspondence regarding presentations, from United States colleges, universities, and conservatories. Doris Preucil stated that in 1965 she attended one of these workshops.

> I was one of the first five outside of Japan, I think. But in 1965, Kendall had a workshop at Godfrey, Illinois. He did this in conjunction with Paul Rolland from the University of Illinois…. Anyway, I went to that workshop with a few other teachers, as well as a lot of people who were interested in Suzuki. I took students and it was just an amazing thing to see how the students could all play together. I mean, that was something that had never happened before Suzuki: take a bunch of students, put them on a stage and hear how they could make beautiful music together without ever rehearsing.[32]

Later in his career, Kendall summarized some of his main workshop teaching points into a 1991 video entitled, "Violin teaching: points and exercises" and also known as "An Unexpurgated Selection of Pedagogical Points from Corelli to 2001."[33] Recorded by his student David Liu, Kendall presented material commonly covered at his workshops. Kendall stated that because he would teach between 25-30 workshops a year, he found that he repeated much of the same information. So, the video was a way for him to document his teaching points for others to learn. While the video is not widespread, students of pedagogy have used this video as a resource. Kim Bishop, a Kendall student who currently teaches in Tasmania, used the video for

[32] Oviatt, 51.

[33] *John Kendall Part 1, Violin Teaching Points and Exercises by John Kendall: 1991* (YouTube, 2018), https://youtu.be/e5IIbLde2IU.

teacher training in 2007.[34] At this time, Kendall's video is also used as a resource in Eugene Purdue's pedagogy class at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Part 5: Suzuki Program at SIUE

Kendall taught for more than 50 years at the university level but is best known for his time teaching at SIUE. He believed that long-term Suzuki teacher training was better than short-term teacher training like workshops or summer programs.[35] In 1975, Delyte Morris, then president of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, invited John Kendall to begin a Suzuki violin teacher training program. At that point, SIUE was a new campus and gave Kendall flexibility to create his own program.

John Kendall came to Edwardsville and developed what would be the first Suzuki violin teacher training program in the United States. In a television interview in 1979 for a St. Louis station, KSDK, Kendall stated that he began with three or four students but had grown the program to 200 students.[36] Kendall noted that the intent of the program was not to produce professional musicians, though many graduates did go on to careers in music.

Because Kendall offered workshops throughout the world, he was able to recruit a large roster of students. Many were international students interested in Suzuki education. Kendall had students from Iceland, Asia, Europe, and Israel. Kendall's program at its peak employed 14

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[34] Yasuki Nakamura, "Suzuki Violin Professional Development Mini Festival and Bonus Session," Suzuki Violin PD Mini Festival and bonus session - Free Online Doc, 2007, http://wodocs.com/docum/173-suzuki-violinpdminifestivalandbonussession.html.

[35] Kuzmich, 22.

[36] *SIUE Suzuki Program on Midday AM Show (Late 1970's)*, (YouTube, 2015), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4T4jnDku8E0&t=54s.

graduate assistants.[37] A core aspect of their graduate experience was in-service training. In the teacher training program, students had the opportunity to teach 10-12 children a year. For instance, Winifred Crock was a student at SIUE who studied under Kendall. Crock stated that she started teaching group classes with supervision by Kendall. “I was 17 years old the first time I taught a group lesson,” she said. Kendall would teach the first half of the class, and Crock would teach the second half as Kendall observed. Following the class, Kendall and Crock would discuss her teaching. Crock thought that it was an incredible opportunity to grow as a young teacher during college. Crock also said that John Kendall would quiz her on teaching rationale. She said, “John Kendall asked again and again, ‘Winifred, what is your rationale for doing that?!’ Four sequenced pedagogical points were the immediate expected answer.”[38]

Today, Vera McCoy-Sulentic leads the SIUE Suzuki Program. McCoy-Sulentic said she became aware of the Suzuki Method while living in Eugene, Oregon where she was a member of the Eugene Symphony. A colleague suggested she watch the Suzuki classes and told her she would be a “great Suzuki teacher.”[39] McCoy-Sulentic then participated in a weeklong summer institute held by John Kendall from SIUE, after which she moved to Edwardsville from Oregon and completed a Master's degree in music education in 1988. McCoy-Sulentic graduated in 1988 and eventually became director of the program in 1997. McCoy-Sulentic believes that the community aspect of the Suzuki Method is what separates it from other curricula. She points to

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[37] Buckstead, 19.

[38] Dye, Mary Jane, “Q&A Interview with Winifred Crock, The 2014 ASTA Elizabeth A.H. Green School Educator Award Winner,” American String Teacher 64, no. 4 (November 2014): 48–50, https://doi.org/10.1177/000313131406400410.

[39] Williams, Kan, “Music Professor to Teach at Suzuki World Convention.” This Month In CAS RSS, January 13, 2013. http://thismonthincas.com/2013/01/13/music-professor-to-teach-at-suzuki-world-convention/#more-5725.

the strong relationships among parents, teachers, and her program at SIUE as evidence of a supportive and learning environment. She stated that "it is a very different mode of teaching you can't find in other systems."[40] McCoy-Sulentic considers Kendall to be the "ultimate teacher" who was not bothered by obstacles in his students' learning process. In my interview with her, she emphasized that Kendall created a "no-fail" environment for students. She also mentioned Kendall's warmness, humor and generosity. McCoy-Sulentic now manages a teaching staff and assistant directors that help to facilitate the program.

The program at SIUE was the first Suzuki teacher college program of its kind and led the way for other college-based Suzuki programs to exist. Many of these programs are led by former students of Kendall. Suzuki college programs can now be found at the Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Maryland-College Park, Northern Arizona University, the University of New Mexico, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and others.

Part 6: Pedagogical Principles

Kendall's teaching is based on a broad range of principles. These ideas range from interpersonal, to tangible and intangible concepts. While Kendall did not write a book about his teaching methods, he did record videos in the "String House" to document some of his teachings and also wrote articles for the American Suzuki Journal (the String House was an old house on campus that Kendall used to conduct activities). Much of his teaching is preserved by the teaching practice of his former students.

[40] Brannan, Dan, "TWINKLING FOR 50 YEARS: SIUE Suzuki, McCoy-Sulentic Shine on Young." RiverBender.com, April 28, 2016. https://www.riverbender.com/articles/details/twinkling-for-50-years-siue-suzuki-mccoysulentic-shine-on-young-12751.cfm.

Kendall had a pedagogical "dialect" and "Kendallisms" that reflect his unusual ability to observe, recognize patterns, synthesize them into principles and create a means to teach the principles to students of varying backgrounds and technical levels. These sayings seemed to spill naturally from his mouth. McCoy-Sulentic called these phrases "mottos" and "the closest thing Kendall had to a book on teaching."[41] David Perry referred to them as "slogans." Some are quite well known among the students who studied with Kendall. While Kendall did not codify these coinages, McCoy-Sulentic dutifully recorded them on paper, and others have been preserved through interviews:

1. "Teach the large muscles first."
2. "Reduce it to open strings."[42]
3. "Stay close to both strings."[43]
4. "Teach by principles, not by rules."
5. "Create a no-fail environment" or "Create a can't fail environment."
6. "Pull, don't push."[44]
7. "Weight, speed, contact point."[45]
8. "We use pieces to build our technique."
9. "Stop, think, play."[46]
10. "Old finger to the new position."[47]
11. "Hand leads up, elbow leads down."[48]

[41] Vera McCoy-Sulentic, interview by author, Edwardsville, June 23, 2019.
[42] Solve string issues first.
[43] With regards to string crossings.
[44] Pertains to the bow.
[45] Elements of tone production.
[46] A good practice session includes periods of silence.
[47] Description of the "French" style of shifting.
[48] This also refers to string crossings.

12. “Keep the elbow moving.”[49]

13. “Ask, don’t tell.”

14. “Be your own Ševčík.”[50]

15. “When in doubt, PRACTICE!”

16. “Never say never, and never say always.”

17. “Trill with the bow.”[51]

18. “Open-ended staccato.”[52]

19. "Playing the violin happens with the back."

20. "Finger, bow, go!"[53]

21. “Altitude is power.”[54]

22. “Attentional rotational practice systems.”[55]

The source of these slogans varied; all were from Kendall’s students and most were written down by McCoy-Sulentic.[56] Of the slogans, numbers 1-3 are commonly used verbatim by David Perry in his teaching. Number 22 was sourced from an interview of Margaret Shimizu and based on principles taught by Shinichi Suzuki, according to Kendall.[57]

Several slogans encapsulate Kendall’s teaching philosophy. “Ask, don’t tell” is instruction to teachers (or Kendall himself) to use questions to teach rather than giving orders and directives. “Teach by principles, not by rules” is another reminder to teachers to not be rigid

[49] Elbow movement pertains to keeping the bow arm fluid and relaxed. Kendall said that “motion is the antidote to residual tension.”
[50] Design your own technical exercises.
[51] A good accent in the right hand can help initiate the trill motion in the left hand.
[52] Refers to the release of bow weight and speed following an accent.
[53] The left hand precedes the right hand.
[54] If the bow falls on the string from higher up, it can allow more arm weight to drop.
[55] Refers to learning to sense diminishing returns while practicing.
[56] Vera McCoy-Sulentic, Ibid.
[57] Bolkosky, Ibid.

in their instruction, and relates to "never say never and never say always." Also, "teach large muscles first" reminds teachers (and students) to train mechanics of large muscles and limbs before working on detailed physical articulations. Vera McCoy-Sulentic considers number 5, "create a no-fail environment" to be Kendall's most meaningful slogan. She also relates this slogan to Kendall's ability to promote self-efficacy. "Kendall let you know that you could do something… you always left the lesson feeling that you were better." Last, Kendall's slogan to "be your own Ševčík" references the technical exercises of Otakar Ševčík that emphasize the development of left-hand technique. This statement represents Kendall's desire to direct students towards independent learning and problem-solving. In sum, his slogans create memorable and exciting learning opportunities where discovery can occur through mental and practice activities.

Kendall also promoted the use of recordings for teaching and learning the violin. The archive gives us insight into Kendall's practice working with technology. In 1974, Kendall wrote about using tape recordings. In a *Listen and Play* newsletter, Kendall wrote six approaches to the use of tape recordings for practice. Kendall proposed recording lessons, listening to samples of pieces with practice suggestions, accompaniments, playbacks for the students, "self-help" intonation drones, and long-range documentation of progress. Kendall's ideal was for each child to have a recorder. He wrote, "It would be a great thing to have as a goal a tape recorder for each child in our program."[58]

[58] John Kendall, "Parent's Newsletter," Listen and Play News Exchange, December 1974, box 10, folder 11, John Kendall Papers, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Part 7: Letters Regarding Students

Kendall wrote letters to those in his network about his students. One example is a letter to Joachim Chassman of Los Angeles Conservatory in 1963, requesting lessons and financial assistance for his Japanese student Hiroko Yamada. In the letter, Kendall advocated for Hiroko and mentioned as an aside that he had been provided free housing for Hiroko.[59] In another instance, Kendall wrote a letter to the violinist Camilla Wicks, then a professor of violin at the University of Michigan, regarding his student David Perry. Kendall wrote:

> This letter is to express my appreciation for the uncommon generosity and kindness towards David Perry during his audition at Michigan. Sending him a tape of your playing was certainly a most gracious and thoughtful thing to do, and I know he appreciates it very much as I do. As a teacher for the past 10 years, I naturally have a real concern for his future, and I was so glad for the possibility of his study with you in Michigan which would be a real opportunity. Confidentially I have a sense of disappointment that it did not work out for him to come to Michigan, but we are aware, I'm sure, the tremendous magnetism of a school such as Juilliard…"[60]

Kendall closed his letter with "Thanks again for your kindness to David, and the very best wishes for this coming year. I'm hoping that the option for later study with you may still be open to him if things should work out to make it possible." Kendall also wrote a letter to Dorothy

[59] John Kendall, "Letter to Joachim Chassman," May 20th, 1963, box 1, folder 17, John Kendall Papers, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

[60] John Kendall, "Letter to Camilla Wicks," July 12, 1985, box 1, folder 20, John Kendall Papers, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

DeLay, providing information on David Perry. Kendall described Perry as a serious, hardworking student.[61]

Part 8: Conclusion

Reflection on Kendall's life and career reveals universal and positive personal qualities. Kendall imbued homespun wisdom as a result of his upbringing. Among them, being forward-thinking, hardworking, resourceful, and persistent stand out as pillars in his value system. What remained consistent in his life was him being true to himself, knowing who he was, and owning it.

John Kendall was a very creative thinker who brought back ideas from across the world. Oftentimes, people do not seek out encounters with other continents to transform popular and elite worldviews on education. Kendall, however, had the gumption to be the first to bring Suzuki's methodology to the West. While many Americans at the time held animosity towards Japanese people due to World War II, Kendall had an openness and a willingness to learn from them. "He was a real visionary," according to William Starr, a longtime Suzuki instructor and former violin professor at the University of Colorado. Starr stated, "When he saw that videotape, he was curious enough to get up and do something about it."[62] Additionally, Kendall was open to other lines of thinking. Kendall accepted the ideas of other cultures and was willing to cross-pollinate them and adapt them to broad audiences.

[61] John Kendall, "Letter to Dorothy DeLay," September 6th, 1985, box 1, folder 20, John Kendall Papers, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

[62] Schudel, Ibid.

What is more, he was able to communicate his findings and beliefs in a persuasive and influential manner. Over many years, Kendall devoted himself to propagating the methods and ideas of Talent Education. He was consistent in pointing out benefits and potential flaws and took advantage of opportunities to share knowledge with all those who were interested.

Most importantly, Kendall taught and cared for people, and particularly for his students. The fundamental message of Kendall over his career would be that he welcomed students as people and taught them as a generous role model. Finally, his ideology can be further understood in a speech that Kendall gave in Japan, where he stated, "Some things are the same the world over: Good music, good friends, sincerity, diligence, and loving beautiful things."[63] All in all, Kendall leaves a legacy in modern education, not only as a discoverer and pioneer of an influential method but also as a bridge between cultures and an example of a passionate educator. Music educators who follow his example will surely benefit their students, the progression of music education, and the music community at large.

[63] Bolkosky, Ibid.

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