Legal Life-Writing. Marginalised Subjects and Sources. Journal of Law and Society Special Issues

Description: Legal biography and autobiography is skewed to the elite—a group overwhelmingly represented by white, male judges and barristers. It also tends to utilize a limited range of sources and has failed to engage with the life-writing movement, which goes beyond biography and embraces the lives of objects and institutions as well as the lives of individuals, families and groups. As a paradigm corrective, Legal Life-Writing provides the first sustained treatment of the implications of life-writing on legal biography, autobiography and the visual history of law in society through a focus on neglected sources, and on those usually marginalized or ignored in legal biography and legal history, such as women and minorities. The collection also aims to ignite debate about the nature of the relationship between socio-legal studies, legal history and life-writing. Through consideration of several unheralded women of legal history, the Jewish-born Judah P. Benjamin, the Occidental–Oriental divide in Sir Ivor Jennings constitutional legacy, and judicial pictures as legal life-writing data and a research method, chapters vividly illustrate how moving beyond conventional accounts of legal lives can greatly enhance scholarship. The collection considers the problematic position of, and the problems of doing, legal biography, suggesting how the repertoire of legal biography and, therefore, socio-legal scholarship, might be expanded and enriched by recent exemplars, including the life-writing movement. Drawing on a wide range of disciplinary approaches, Legal Life-Writing offers important new ideas for the fields of legal biography, legal history, law and society, law and the humanities, history and life-writing, and crucially, to all of them simultaneously.

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