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Critique on Eisenberg's article Flaws and idiosyncrasies in mathematicians...

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I enjoyed reading the article and learned some interesting (and disturbing) information about well known mathematicians that is not so well known. However in its current form it is more appropriate for the popular media rather than as an academic or scholarly article.

Having said that it does raise some serious questions of ethics and values that all mathematics educators should be engaging. The increasingly popular view that mathematics teaching be socially contextualised means that this kind of historical information may be communicated in lecture rooms and classroom with little understanding or awareness of the "hidden curriculum" being enacted.

The questions are posed but left "in the air" as it were. It is largely a descriptive account. The article could be theoretically strengthened and give a more grounded set of perspectives from which to consider the problem if for example a section were to be included on how such questions may be addressed from different ethical theoretical points. The discussion section could also draw on some of the debates and literature that advocates (and is against) greater use of history to teach and learn mathematics. The ethics of teaching any history of mathematics which includes biographies of mathematicians is the specific and rather novel issue being raised. But one is left disappointed that a deeper engagement is absent. A serious mathematics curriculum issue is put on the table but not explored from the vantage of different curriculum standpoints. For instance how would ethnomathematics, critical, feminist or socio-constructivists respond to this challenge? There is also some repetition in the sections and appears as more of the same. I hope these comments will be helpful to the author in improving the article

Vithal