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JAEPL, Vol. 2, Winter 1996-1997

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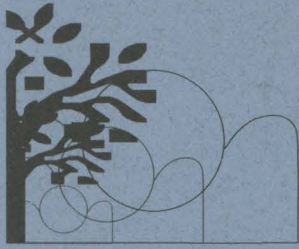
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J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

**Writing, Teaching, and Thinking
in the Borderland**

Volume 2 • Winter 1996–1997

The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

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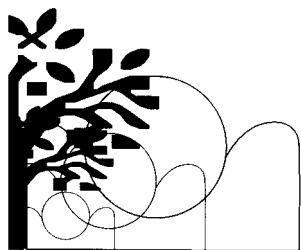
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The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL), an official assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English, is open to all those interested in extending the frontiers of teaching and learning beyond traditional disciplines and methodologies.

The purposes of AEPL, therefore, are to provide a common ground for theorists, researchers, and practitioners to explore ideas on the subject; to participate in programs and projects on it; to integrate these efforts with others in related disciplines; to keep abreast of activities along these lines of inquiry; and to promote scholarship on and publication of these activities.

The *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning, JAEPL*, meets this need. It provides a forum to encourage research, theory, and classroom practices involving expanded concepts of language. It contributes to a sense of community in which scholars and educators from pre-school through the university exchange points of view and cutting-edge approaches to teaching and learning. *JAEPL* is especially interested in helping those teachers who experiment with new strategies for learning to share their practices and confirm their validity through publication in professional journals.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to: intuition, inspiration, insight, imagery, meditation, silence, archetypes, emotion, attitudes, values, spirituality, motivation, body wisdom and felt sense, and healing. Articles may be practical, research-oriented, theoretical, bibliographic, professional, and/or exploratory/personal. Each issue has a theme. The theme of the 1997–1998 issue is Resistance and Rewards Beyond the Cognitive Domain.

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The Editor's Message

Many of us come out of formal and advanced training in writing. We are at home with the humanities: philosophy, drama, the arts, aesthetics. We connect easily to both the teaching of literature and to literary exegesis. Ideas about literacy come easily to us.

We need to be aware of work being done in the field outside our focus in writing, literature, and language. Connections need to be made between us and other members of our cultural tapestry. Every once in a while someone tells me about the name of a book, an organization, or a journal that I think our membership might be interested in. It gives me pause. I have been poking around in this area and have come up with a starter list of like-minded organizations and publishers. The Association for Humanistic Psychology, the California Institute for Integral Studies, the Esalen Institute, the Global Alliance for Transforming Education, the International Society for Traumatic Studies, the Creative Education Foundation, the Collaborative for the Advancement of Social and Emotional Learning at Yale, the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and the Naropa Institute pursue advanced ways to read, to learn, to think, to share ideas and approaches to learning in ways that lie beyond the traditional academic framework. Several periodicals and presses specialize in publishing work of this nature: *Holistic Education Review* (and Press), *The Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *The Brain/Mind Bulletin*, and Zephyr Press. Others specialize in helping people network: Great Ideas in Education, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development's Network for Research on Affective Factors in Education (and quarterly newsletter), the Resource Center for Redesigning Education, *The Newsletter for the Association for Rhetoric, Writing, and The Transcendent*, out of Washburn University.

I encourage readers to become acquainted with these organizations, interest groups, and publishers. Some of the materials that have emerged from them are sufficiently noteworthy to suggest book reviews, annotated bibliographies, and critical essays. Some of the conferences that these organizations hold are sufficiently similar to our workshops to invite some form of cross-fertilization.

An interesting side note concerning our organization: One contributor asked me, how political are we? I answered, everything we are and everything we do is political, as political as we are human. Poet William Stafford once said that anyone who *breathes* is in the rhythm business. Well, anyone who *believes* is in the political business. The very fact of life is a unending impulse to stay alive, to thrive. It is an assertion. Moreover, every act bears a stamp of interpretation, subjectivity, slant; things we reject; things we perceive in certain ways; things we would like to see done a certain way.

Nonetheless, the AEPL tries to be as inclusive as possible, inviting ideas of all shapes and sizes. But material should in some way embody alternative approaches to learning language, and teaching: Consider the following issues as the bases for contributions: How a subject uniquely stimulates language use or teaching; what its potential and problems are from a critical perspective; how it is linked to issues of knowledge, self, and culture; what its connections are to

contemporary disciplinary debates within composition studies and/or studies of language use and teaching; what its relationship is to ongoing AEPL themes that are emerging in workshops, the summer conference, and the journal.

Let me mention some staff changes: I would like to welcome Hildy Miller as Assistant Editor and to thank Mary Deming for pushing the journal from behind as it got going. I welcome Anne Mullin as Book Review Editor, and Sharon Gibson-Groshon and Bruce Ardinger as members of the Editorial Advisory Board. With this issue Martha Goff Stoner officially becomes an editorial assistant. She proofreads copy at the very last stages of production and helps compile our style sheet.

Our theme for the next volume is **Resistance and Rewards Beyond the Cognitive Domain**. By this I mean stories of personal discomfort in, student resistance to, administrative or community hesitance about or interference with the borderland. What issues develop when we teach and learn language in territories beyond the cognitive. By the same token, I also mean stories of personal discovery or renewal, student growth, administrative and community cooperation, so that advances in language education are realized in enabling and constructive ways—how we relate to our administration, colleagues, countermovements, and students. ☺

Sacred Spaces

Jean Trounstone

My grandmother used to take me to Rockdale Temple on Saturday morning. We'd sit together in a pew, and the smell of her tweed jacket would seem as sacred as the sounds coming from the organ. We'd share a *Union Prayer Book* and I'd blend my voice with hers whenever we read aloud. Sanctity stood before us, surrounded us, found its way into the Rabbi's robes, the stained glass windows, the high ceilings, and my grandmother's hands. After temple, we'd lunch at Sugar and Spice, a restaurant in Cincinnati's Bond Hill. Perched on the counter stool, my feet would never touch the ground. Never mind other people's customs, we'd order bacon, lettuce, and tomato on toasted white bread. I knew God followed us there.

When I got older, life was not so simple, and where spirituality resided was not so obvious. I was conflicted seeing friends go to *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvahs* while I found family nights on Friday more important than Sabbath rituals. I felt most at home on the stage, where something holy seemed to be happening, and where I could be propelled, it seemed, beyond the corners of my world. Besides the sheer joy of play, a sense of family and connectedness, theatre offered transformation.

In the 1960s many of us were fed up with American society and all its trappings. We rebelled against institutions and our conditioned selves. We needed transformation. We wanted more meaning in our lives. In the theatre community, innovators Jerzy Grotowski, Tyrone Guthrie, Peter Brook, and Richard Schechner were questioning American values. Aristotelian theatre, where text reigned supreme, represented a culture that separated drama from life (Friedrich, 1983). Alternative acting companies began creating new forms; theatre of the absurd took hold; happenings flourished; artists experimented with production space. We followed theatre into courtyards, plazas, and performance garages, onto side streets, near mountain tops, and along beaches. We looked to the stage for much more than entertainment. We wanted enlightenment.

As theater historian William F. Condee wrote, there was a "growing emphasis among theorists and directors to examine theatre's relationship to ritual, both for the actor and the audience" (1990, p. 57). Theatergoers, no longer safe behind their fourth wall, were confronted, cajoled, enticed, educated, and perhaps, healed. The idea here was to move us away from the predictable, to awaken the spirit, and to rouse the soul, weary or damned from American corruption. Ritual offered purification. Naked performers walked up theatre aisles carrying candles; street artists lay down their bodies protesting Vietnam. Borrowing from the East as well as the West, this theatre of great expectations hoped to address society's

Jean Trounstone, Professor of Humanities at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts, has directed plays and taught theatre at Framingham Women's Prison for ten years.

cultural needs and promised to work for what many considered one—political and spiritual change.

In my own teaching I felt constricted by my college's drama program. Like most schools that offer theatre, ours presents students with a microcosm of the traditional, adding a bit of multicultural this and diversity that, a few plays a year, and a variety of courses aimed at preparing them for the competitive world of New York. Still, as Beth Daniell (1994) astutely observed, the academy does not often tap into a "striving" in our students for "something beyond ourselves" (p. 239). Most talk of the spiritual is suspect, and we have been taught to draw lines between the sacred and the profane.

But theatre can be at once entertaining, educational, restorative, and political, and when the work soars off the page, institutions get edgy. Controversial director Grotowski may be read, and certainly we can write about him, but what of emulation? "Art is profoundly rebellious. Bad artists speak of rebelling; real artists actually rebel" (as cited in Schechner, 1988, p. 13). Art can threaten our status quo, and threat is not something that institutions embrace. While long held as a means of self expression in the university, theatre is not emphasized as a force for political and spiritual change.

This *something beyond ourselves* is what took me to theatre, but I had to turn to my college classes in a women's secure prison to understand more about the connection between the theatre's political and spiritual power. Art and humanities programs behind bars provide a safe environment and reduce recidivism (Newman, Lewis, & Beaverstock, 1993). And we have long recognized the importance of teaching language skills to a population that defines itself as dumb, unimportant, or unheard. But many women in prison, who lead lives as dramatic as Shakespeare's characters, also search for meaning. Cut off from family and friends, locked up and lonely, they speak freely about deeper connections, a Higher Power, and precious freedom. It is these women who taught me to move from one place to another, armed with a way to bridge worlds. It is these women who taught me to consider what makes a space sacred.



My assistant Cathy and I pulled and pushed the clothes rack from one side of the compound to the other. It was a cool day in early June. The sun was shining as we made our way past officers, while our rack tottered with Mexican beaded skirts and brightly colored hats and pants. Women shouted to each other and waved at us as they strolled from the dining hall back to their housing units. Some sat on the grass. Officers dotted the landscape, stationed at doorways or perched on mounds of earth. As we wound around the yard, four women volunteered to lift the rack up a set of stairs for our entrance into the old brick building that housed the gym, our rehearsal space.

It was a yearly ritual, this costume parade. Because of rental charges, the dress rehearsal always happened the day of the production itself. For seven summers, I had brought costumes into Framingham Women's Prison while officers and inmates alike said, "Is today the play?" It had become a tradition, a culmination of six months study of a text in relationship to women's history, art, and music; weeks of work adapting a script to their lives, including acting classes

and rehearsals. It was a tradition borne out of pain and distrust, where prison officials tested me every step of the way.

But today I felt like an institution. Expected. Predictable. Entrenched in the prison culture. My plays were known to be a good release for the women, entertainment for the compound. So, reminded of our history, as we lifted the rack onto the top step and eased it through the door, I was excited, a bit proud.

"Are you Jean?"

"Yes," I said tentatively, bracing myself for the next question.

"Could I speak with you for a moment?" Visions of banned costumes floated through my head.

"Hi, I'm Captain Dellard. I'm the captain in charge today."

"I've worked here for seven years," I interrupted, trying to head off criticism.

"I've worked here for thirteen," she countered, chuckling, but sweetly, as if she understood and forgave my edginess. Nonetheless, she was concerned about some reports that had come to her through some inmates. "Why don't you tell me about your play?"

"It's called *Simply Maria* and is by a terrific writer, Josefina Lopez. It tells the tale of a young Mexican American who comes here looking for a better life. In America, she meets corruption in all institutions from marriage to the courts and the church. She decides to leave home and go to college in spite of conflicts with her very traditional parents. The women here relate to it."

She nodded, even smiled. "Supposedly, one of the women in your play went back to her unit last evening and talked about what she called the play's 'filthy language.' She apparently brought some of it back with her. So two inmates went to Reverend Ryland and complained that the production is scheduled for the chapel. It isn't appropriate, they told her. Wanting to see for herself, Reverend Ryland has demanded a script. She's reading it, wants to talk to you in fifteen minutes."

I was used to the word *appropriate*. Prison, a repressive environment, does not welcome the concept of academic freedom, and most education behind bars does not happen without censorship. Thus, material that might cause trouble is forbidden. The purpose of education often seems to be to control the inmates rather than to open up their minds.

Although administrators had shown no interest in reading our plays, I had never encountered a problem with censorship. I had always walked a fine line, adapting classic texts to reveal the prisoners' truths as well as the playwright's, insisting on as much intellectual freedom as possible. Adaptation methods were grounded in Brook, Schechner and Grotowski (1976), who advised theatre artists to restore classical work to truth "through a sort of profanation," and present modern texts "rooted in the psyche of society" (as cited in Schechner, 1988, p. 190). As I wrote about performing Shakespeare behind bars (Trounstone, 1993), productions remained in bounds but they were never *safe*. There is always tension when Shylock wields his famous knife in *The Merchant of Venice*, but "there is a different kind of tension when you see one prisoner about to exact a pound of flesh from another" (p. 30). Even, I thought, staring at the captain, when the knife is cardboard.

We had taken risks before when we had performed on stage: using a large dildo in *Lysistrata* to emphasize frustration; standing with fists in air as strikers in *Waiting for Lefty*; adding a hip-hop group called The Shrews to *Rapshrew*, our updated version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. With *The Scarlet Letter*, we had explored AIDS in prison, and an actress portraying a corrections officer wore plastic gloves to escort a modern Hester to her cell. Freedom of speech was something education was supposed to foster. After all, for years educators had spoken of the potential of language to empower. But could this extend to the chapel, a designated religious space in the prison? And more important, should it?



Reverend Ryland was a Baptist fundamentalist, the head of one of three church groups that used the large chapel for religious services. It was Reverend Ryland I had called earlier in the week to get permission to perform in the chapel when the week turned out too cold for a production in the prison yard. The gym had been ruled out after roof leaks had caused the wood floor to buckle. Wainscoting showed through the ceiling now, and puddles of water collected after a hard rain. Since we had no performance space, the women in *Simply Maria*, several of whom prayed with Reverend Ryland, had suggested we perform in the large chapel.

Eileen, a nun who wore street clothes and had seen our work for the past five years, came by.

"Ask Eileen," I insisted. "Ask her. She'll tell you it's OK. It fits in the chapel." Eileen, who had arrived to take pictures of our rehearsal, reassured the captain.

"It's a satire," I stressed, "but the women connect with Maria. She is really the only force of good in the play." Everything else, including the church, I thought to myself, is satirized.

I hadn't really considered that the church would be satirized in the chapel. The fact that a drunken priest baptizes Maria was "no big deal," the actresses had declared. It shows how Maria has no chance even at the beginning of her life. Lopez has to parody institutions, they told me, because Maria has to free herself, just as they do, from the constraints of family, poverty, race, even religion.

When we had considered performing in the yard or in the gym, we knew the prison audience would laugh and cheer because they would feel free. But now, we wanted to do the play in the chapel, in a space that most of us, inside and outside prison, saw reserved for certain words, certain rituals. I flashed back to a Southeast Asian Seminar I had taken at my college the summer before, with Buddhist scholar Frank Reynolds. He had talked about religion of place as an early cultural theme, a demarcation of the land for prayer. "The marking out of some sacred spot is the primary characteristic of every sacred act" (Huizinga, 1976, p. 46). But now, the idea of what belonged in a sacred space was in question. The concept of what defined a spiritual experience was up for grabs. And was I a good judge? After all, I was the girl who had eaten bacon, lettuce, and tomato after synagogue. And now I was about to put on a play that pitted a woman against family, marriage, and the church. What was involved in this decision? Would God, as Eileen suggested, forgive our putting on the play in the chapel? Or was this experience of women working together to create something larger than ourselves exactly what belonged in a chapel?

The captain was sympathetic to my having no permanent space but wanted to hear the Reverend's concerns as well. She sent me off to the gym to set up shop. Eileen went to load her camera. Angel, an African American woman in prison for life, was disgruntled. "You should be more careful about who you get to be in your plays," she muttered as she stormed off. Apparently, the cast had decided that one of our women was a turncoat, a traitor, and by lending Reverend Ryland her script, was sanctioning our demise. As women began arriving, I piled them up with costumes and props, and sent them to the third floor chapel, urging everyone to think positively. At least this year no one had been transferred. There had been no last minute drop-outs or women sent to Maximum Security because of fights. I decided to appear hopeful.

The women held the door to the large chapel open with a bent prayer book since there was no doorstep. Steve, the sound man, and I peered into the room. The chapel, lined with white wood and filled with dark brown wooden pews, seemed an unlikely space in a prison. A high ceiling arched into a spacious peak, and windows opened half way, hiding any bars. Since the chapel, blessed with a piano, was located upstairs in a large corner, it was private and sedate. Careful not to scrape the floor, we lugged up our sound equipment. The pulpit area, our stage, jutted out into the room, carpeted, with huge wooden chairs. When we ran a sound check, our stereo boomed Latino rock and African American rap into the rafters.

Cathy stayed downstairs, helping women dress in what they call the Beauty Parlor, a tiny room with a panel of mirrors on the wall, a counter top, and a sink. After Luce completed her make-up, she came upstairs. A good-sized Latino woman, she paraded her red Mexican skirt and shawl as Carmen, Maria's mother. Luce had been in two previous plays and was typical of the inmate-actresses. She gave herself to her role and was reminded of her life through the characters she played; she was transformed and uplifted on stage. From my front row seat I watched her walk across the beige carpet and set up props, placing the laundry basket near the large wooden altar, the frying pan and tortillas across from the picture of Jesus with folded hands. I tried to see this from Reverend Ryland's point of view. I began to worry.



Religion is important to women in prison. When you have committed a crime and your family has turned away, at least God forgives. When you have suffered at the hands of abusers, a higher power provides hope. For many women at Framingham, acts of devotion are an important part of doing time; for some, a way back.

But spirituality in prison not only finds its way into chapels. It creeps into classrooms, along walkways, in dining halls and gyms. Two women sit together before the rehearsal begins. They hold hands, close their eyes and ask for help to be their best. A woman reads a story aloud in a writing class and when she gets to a painful part, she cries. Another shares that she has felt the same way. The writer, taking in the roomful of women, smiles. Sanctity here is not only the experience of reaching out, but also, of reaching oneself through others. "Writing poems is

like prayer,” a woman disclosed in one of my writing classes. It helped her reach what she called a deeper self.

This was all well and good I thought, sitting in my chapel pew, but those experiences had not involved a production. And what about Reverend Ryland? How could I explain to her, a woman who had built her life on moral prohibitions, that doing a play elevated the actresses, transformed and helped them in a way similar to prayer? What would she understand of Grotowski’s notion that by giving oneself on stage, the actor offers herself and turns theatre into a holy act so that the audience too may be transformed (1976, p. 188)? She had, as did I, a frame of reference. Hers did not allow for drunken priests in sacred spaces. Mine exalted the connection that the women made in those spaces—with the audience and with themselves. In Reverend Ryland’s frame, her God required respect for the teachings. Mine would welcome us like old friends.

Reverend Ryland walked over to us, accompanied by the captain and Eileen. She had a script under her arm, borrowed no doubt from a cast member who was probably not the *traitor* Angel had feared. I could tell by her cool hello that this was not going to be easy.

I began by describing how we were interpreting the play. “*Simply Maria* is about a woman who represents all of us, struggling to find our way. Maria really doesn’t have a chance in Mexico. She’s born out of wedlock.”

Reverend Ryland interrupted. She maintained, in no uncertain terms, that this script was not fit for the chapel. She pointed out words she didn’t like, those spoken when one side of Maria calls the other a “witch.” She mentioned sexual innuendoes, but I could tell she was fishing for specifics. Her vision of what belonged in that space was clearly opposite mine.

I sympathized with Reverend Ryland. I wished that we could have met under different circumstances, had coffee together. I liked her for having strong opinions and for being an important force for good in a place where women struggle daily to believe in themselves. But I knew that the show should go on in this space. These women needed the power they felt from performing as much as they needed the forgiveness they felt from prayer.

The captain shifted in her seat. “I’m going to override you, Reverend. There really is no other place where the play can be performed.” And that was true. There was nowhere else where two hundred women cheering and clapping could sit and watch their peers. “I’m sorry,” she continued, “but that’s my decision.” Reverend Ryland stood up, silently. She sighed, shaking her head at Eileen, and more importantly at what I imagined was our collective sin. I watched her leave through the door held open by the prayer book, knowing she would not come to the production that night. Maybe I was wrong; for a moment I felt this spiritual site would be profaned by our play. This space, designated for worship, might lend a certain power to actresses and audience, allowing us all to feel a transgression. But perhaps it was this strange sense of the forbidden that could make us even more aware of the presence of spirit. Perhaps it would shake us out of our everyday selves and into the holy.

At six o'clock, one by one, the actresses began arriving for the show. Some crossed themselves as they entered the chapel. Some sang church songs for warm-up exercises instead of practicing their usual relaxation. Everything they did took on a new meaning for me. I saw the weight of what we were doing now. By using this sacred space, we had to provide a sacred experience, or else we would do what Reverend Ryland feared, profane the space. We were not just presenting a drama, but manipulating "the world of the performance" (Schechner, 1976, p. 39). I wanted our production to prove itself worthy.

When all of the women had gathered, we moved some of the religious objects, but they wanted to leave the picture of Jesus with folded hands. Tanya, a woman with a long history of drug abuse, decided to put the flowers I had given them on the altar. Carla, an African American woman who had been in and out of prison, was to play most of the male roles; now she strutted back and forth across the stage trying on hats, jackets, and sunglasses, becoming Maria's husband Jose, a pimp, or the Statue of Liberty.

The cast retired downstairs with Cathy, while the audience piled into the chapel, a full house. Women, dressed in drab blue, hustled to get up close so that they could see their friends; officers lined the aisles. I could hear the actresses humming church songs on the floor below. After I introduced the play, the audience began cheering and clapping in anticipation. Suddenly the chapel was filled with Latino brass sounds and ten women all in black, arms in air, moved in a line across the stage, dancing a merengue. They introduced themselves and then, sporting brightly colored hats and shawls, changed costumes and characters in front of the audience.

Scene by scene the play unfolded, a play made new by the new space. I held my breath, seeing each moment anew.

Carmen stands on a stool surrounded by Mexican paper flowers, while Ricardo tries to woo her. The audience roars as he carts her off to elope, telling her no Prince Charming horse for them: they'll walk. Then she is pregnant, stood up, left at the altar. Three women in white shawls and white gloves, cross themselves, become church statues while the drunken priest performs the ceremony, marrying Ricardo and Carmen and baptizing their baby with liquor.

Ricardo escapes to America, dodging the border patrol, and our stage flashes with sirens. The line of women becomes a bus, taking Carmen and her teenage daughter to America, the promised land. The stage becomes L.A. and the audience is out of their seats, wild with laughter, as Carla pimps and struts, flashing wads of fake money. The sounds of rap, the noises of the street, more dancing, this time hip-hop, with the audience moving in their seats.

We discover Maria and Carmen embracing Ricardo on Broadway, downtown L.A., and watch Carmen look sadly around the chapel stage as if it were her new home, the ghetto. Maria fights with the voices in her head, represented by three women in white shawls, traditional Mexican señoras. Her parents forbid her to play ball like a boy, and she dreams. They tell her to learn to cook and clean, and she dreams. Finally, Maria has a literal nightmare: In the chapel at the altar with a dog chain around her neck, she is led away by husband José. We see her give birth on the altar and seven stuffed dolls as babies fly up one by one, "the amazing Mexican reproducing machine." Then the nightmare ends with a trial,

where Maria jumps upon a huge chair, condemned for living her own life. "Guilty," screams the jury. Maria wakes up to the sounds of her parents fighting, and comes downstage to the audience who stand, clap, and stamp their feet when she says that she must leave to find her own life.

Watching the inmate-actresses perform, I was, as always, transfixed. Onlookers were sympathetic to Maria's struggle in a world that did not support her. But that day I also understood that the chapel itself was responsible for a new level of meaning for both the actresses and the audience. There, where the word *whore* echoed differently than in the yard, they understood in their bodies as well as in their minds, that Maria fought with forces beyond herself. Just like Maria, the women had more at stake in the chapel. They were afraid that "something bad might happen" when they heard the word "whore" screamed by Tanya as Ricardo to his daughter, Maria. And like Maria, they wanted to free themselves of repression. The tension between place and performance had crept into *Simply Maria*. The space itself had transformed the play, made more meaning for its audience. The actresses had turned theatre into a holy act by sheer dedication and by their giving of themselves to fellow prisoners. For a shining moment the audience, too, gave up their rivalries and identities based on difference. The chapel seemed like the perfect place for what I saw as reverence.

As the cast came on stage after their final dance, I watched them bow and bow, as though they could not get enough of the applause. Audience members wandered up to look at friends in costume and to touch pieces of red and black satin, before they were shooed off by officers and led downstairs, back to their units. The performers each walked up to the pulpit and took a flower, gathered up props and costumes, and descended to the first floor.

Prisoners and officers were still talking about the play two weeks later. We had crossed boundaries, creating a place for ourselves, a sanctuary. Maria's life and the inmates' lives had been honored in the chapel. They were no longer just women who had committed crimes; theatre had spoken to the sacred in their lives.



Still, despite success, I remained troubled.

The search for the spiritual must consider upheaval. And yet, the idea that transgression might enhance sacredness would shock and frighten most of my colleagues. When considering theatre with students outside prison, I do not see us encouraging ways to allow them or ourselves to step beyond boundaries. As with our academic programs, theatre programs are by and large skill-based. They are not concerned with providing for spiritual growth, and therefore do not seek to create such spaces. At the community college, curricula suffer cuts and criticism for lack of practicality in students' lives. At the university, productions replicate the worst of what Peter Brook (1968) called "the deadly theatre" (p.9).

It is not just women in prison who need to reach outside their bars. James Moffett (1994) discussed the university's mission as similar to that of spirituality's: "getting better. . .," he wrote, urging our students towards "healing. . . , becoming finer" (p. 261). We can understand what kind of people we want to become through art, a great redeemer. However, there is risk when we enter hallowed halls. If art is not compromised but approached with methods that

open us up to ourselves and others, perhaps we can return to our truest selves, education can transform, and theatre can return to the realm of the sacred. ☺

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Spirituality and Composition: One Teacher's Thoughts

Irene Papoulis

At the 1994 Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC] I attended a half-day workshop entitled "Revisiting 'Spiritual Sites of Composition,'" a follow-up of the "Spiritual Sites of Composition" session at the 1992 CCCC. Both the workshop and the session were fascinating in their open acknowledgment of the existence of religion and spirituality at a conference as secular as the CCCC. Until attending that first session in 1992, I would not have imagined that anything to do with the word *spirit* would ever be taken seriously in the field of composition. I had read James Moffett's "Writing, Inner Speech, and Meditation" a few years before, but had thought of it as an exploration of matters that could never be acceptable in the field at large. However, listening to the papers in that 1992 session (published in the May 1994 issue of *College Composition and Communication*) and participating in the 1994 workshop, I realized that the idea of addressing spirituality as a part of composition theory was not necessarily so farfetched. I was both intrigued and disturbed by that realization. In this essay I want to tell the story about how my thinking about spirituality and composition has evolved.

On one hand, something about the atmosphere at that 1992 session made me want to run from the room. People were talking about recovery and empowerment, intuition and meditation, spirituality and an "inner source." While I was attracted to all those subjects, a part of me felt resistant to the thought of connecting them to my work as a college teacher. After all, I thought, I teach logical discourse and theoretical analysis; I expect my students to make explicit statements and use well-supported arguments. The words I was hearing, in contrast, sounded fuzzy, undefined, embarrassingly vague. Bringing such words into the classroom could cause great damage, I thought, and this thought grew out of my fear of what William A. Covino (1994) calls "the abbreviation of inquiry that constitutes American magic consciousness" (p.121). Spirituality could be misinterpreted as a kind of dangerously deceptive magic, I worried; it could encourage students to be less thoughtful, to be satisfied with easy and illogical answers.

On the other hand, I felt deeply engaged and excited to be in a room with well over a hundred conference-goers interested in spirituality. I felt a kind of faith in the value of spirituality, which I defined as an intuition about something beyond the physical world. That intuition does not necessarily have to do with what people call God, I told myself; instead, it could simply be a way of digging deeper into the experience of being a living body, and therefore was something my students could surely benefit from. Furthermore, the whole idea of spiritual-

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ity, however one might define it, somehow *felt* right to me. In spite of (or perhaps because of) my upbringing in an atheist family, I had always been interested in spiritual matters. I had tried meditating, and I even trusted, in certain moments, that there was some transcendent purpose to our lives, a purpose that I could not perceive rationally but that I might intuit. Becoming better able to articulate that vague sense of purpose, I thought, could help me as a writer, and if it could help me perhaps it could help my students as well.

Those two parts of me circled each other as I sat in the 1992 spirituality session, and my curiosity about the tension between them led me to sign up for the 1994 workshop. There, my cautious excitement grew at the thought of spirituality as an acceptable subject for composition theory, while my doubts remained. I realized that the spiritual had not been as separate from my teaching life as I might have expected. After all, I am an adherent of what is called expressivist pedagogy. I am fascinated with the process of using various kinds of freewriting to gain access to personal insights that otherwise would remain untapped. When people freewrite, they do not know in advance what they will say. Reading their own freewriting, they often exclaim, "Where did *that* come from?" Could I take a small leap and call the source of their ideas *spiritual*? Or would it in fact be a giant leap, a shift to an entirely separate plane?

The secular part of me would agree with the latter question and say that the word *spiritual* has nothing at all to do with expressivist pedagogy. The spiritual exists *outside* the mind; the insights accessed by freewriting, in contrast, though they can seem mysterious, are generated by the mind. Freewriting, the secular part of me would insist, is a psychological, not a spiritual experience. It taps into the unconscious, yes, but the unconscious, though its insights are at first obscure to the conscious mind, is grounded in the individual, not the beyond.

Yet, the part of me that is drawn to the idea of the spiritual does not want to leave it at that, the place where most people I know in composition would want to leave it. Spirituality seems, well, fun—intriguing, scary, and exciting. Furthermore, I have a vague sense that there is something I can learn from spirituality that could help my teaching.

I imagine that most leaders in the field of composition—Patricia Bizzell, for example—would frown at the thought of spirituality as a part of composition theory. It is irrelevant, I imagine Bizzell saying, to attempt to explore the mysteries of spirituality, when our goal in the classroom should be instead to teach students to negotiate among different discourses and perspectives. Inviting students to explore their own narcissistic intuitions, she might continue, promotes self-indulgence. Besides, she might assert, the idea that insights come from a spiritual place is simply not worth considering, since it is unprovable.

I choose to focus on Bizzell (1992) as an example of a leader in composition theory for a specific reason. In spite of her emphatic anti-expressivism, she alludes to the notion that our minds are governed by mysteries. In fact, in a moment of self-revelation in the concluding chapter of her collection of essays, she says something that makes a faint gesture toward the spiritual:

We postmodern skeptical academics say that values from mysterious—transcendent and universal—sources do not exist, or at least

are not available to historical beings. I can acknowledge the presence of a mysterious element in my own thinking while at the same time bracketing it off, saying I cannot explain its influence on the rest of my argument. (p. 282)

This last acknowledgment is quite surprising to me as a follower of Bizzell's work. I would not have expected her to point to a mysterious element in her own thinking, since she usually explains her ideas, and her sources, in analytic detail. Having brought it up, though, she immediately rejects the mysterious nature of her values; she even implies that to stop and pay closer attention to that origin would be counterproductive. Yet her *mystery* seems close to my *spiritual*, especially as she defines it as "transcendent" and "universal."

Those in composition theory who, like Bizzell, have a social constructionist or, as Berlin called it, a "social epistemic" perspective tend to eschew any talk of the mysterious sources of ideas. Imagining such mysteries, after all, could lead to conceiving of a world beyond language, or of a transcendent self, which is what such theorists reject. They prefer to believe that what we might intuit as an individual *self* is instead composed of language. "From the epistemic perspective," Berlin (1987) tells us,

Language forms our conceptions of our selves, our audiences, and the very reality in which we exist. Language, moreover, is a social—not a private—phenomenon, and as such embodies a multitude of historically specific conceptions that shape experience. . . . Knowledge does not exist apart from language. (p. 166)

There is no place here for the question of spirituality, except as a fantasy generated by language. Spiritual knowledge, in the sense of knowledge that transcends language and even, potentially, transcends the knower and the material world, can only be considered self-delusion to an epistemic rhetorician.

In that case, Bizzell's acknowledgment of the existence of a mysterious—even, perhaps, a nonlinguistic—source of her ideas causes her to teeter on her social-constructionist foundation. I want to give her a little push, and ask what would happen if she did not bracket off the mysterious source of her thinking. What would happen if she tried to probe the mystery?

Bizzell does not, at least thus far in her published work, seem to wish to get onto this course, but it is precisely that course that those of us who are curious about the notion of "spiritual sites of composition" would like to pursue. To do so, we have to pay more attention to a source of knowledge that is not, at least at first, available to the conscious mind. What if Bizzell put aside a psychological explanation of such knowledge, at least for a moment, and called it spiritual? Doing so would mean that she would have to acknowledge a connection between herself and something outside herself, something that she could not perceive explicitly. She could call that something *God*, or she could call it a *source*, or she could view it as an energy, or an undefined consciousness. I would say, after reading her "Foundationalism and Anti-Foundationalism in Composition Studies," that Bizzell would feel most comfortable—though I imagine this line

of thinking would make her uncomfortable in general—viewing the “something” as connected to morality, to values, to a sense of virtue. What would be the reason to attribute the source of those values to something *nonmaterial*? None, perhaps, Bizzell and most composition theorists would say, but I want to play with the idea anyway, just for a moment longer.

Something nonmaterial. What does that mean, exactly? It sounds vague; it is vague; but it is something that many in the overflow crowd at the 1992 Conference on College Composition and Communication and the overflow workshop at the 1994 conference were yearning for, attracted by, wanting to hear more about. Why? Perhaps because the nonmaterial is a condition in which discourse can give way to something that feels more grounded in our physical and subjective—and not our linguistic—lives. The yearning for such a condition is inappropriate in the nonfoundational world of composition studies that is defined today in most of our journals and books; in order to satisfy it we might have to abandon many of our current assumptions about the competing discourses that make up who we are.

Writing this, I can feel my social constructionist friends cringing. The yearning I describe is, to them, an illusion, a function of the refusal to acknowledge the perhaps painful fact that there is simply no foundational basis to my existence. My language, in its vagueness and humanism, sounds fuzzy and therefore, to them, wrong: misleading, dangerous. Nevertheless, I want to keep pushing my question, and James Moffett gives me more reason to do so. His recent book, *The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual Awakening Through Education* (1994b), is a tantalizingly radical exploration of what a commitment to spirituality could mean if we genuinely incorporated it into our educational system. An honoring of the individual's own unique quest, even a reverence for it, is what Moffett refers to when he uses the term *spirituality*. To him, group solidarity is a natural outgrowth of an atmosphere in which the personal quest of the individual is deeply respected. “Spiritualizing education,” he tells us:

. . . is intended to include everyone, however they feel about other worlds or otherworldliness. . . It energizes [our] efforts with a life force common to everything but working through each of us in a particular way characteristic of our individuality. . . . It calls us back from surfaces to essences. . . .

Spirit compares to breath, unseen but felt, experienced from moment to moment with every respiration, representing the life force that animates us and the rest of creation, uniting all things within it. . . . (pp. 19–22)

Moffett is using his own spiritual vision to inform a wide-reaching view of restructuring American schools. His willingness to apply that vision to his otherwise secular work is fascinating, especially to someone like me who is, thus far, so hesitant about any wish I might have to grant spirituality a place in my teaching. I am intrigued by Moffett's matter-of-fact tone, and also by his sense that part of the problem with American education has to do with “depersonalization”—

a lack of connection to oneself, and thus, paradoxically, to the rest of humanity. I am also drawn to the way he shrugs his shoulders at the idea of otherworldliness. Maybe my definition of spirituality as being connected with something beyond the physical realm is *too* mysterious. Maybe I would do better to think of spirituality as connecting to my own breath and to the mysterious energy of the body.

Could college composition teachers benefit from bringing such energy into our classrooms? Do we feel the lack of connection to humanity that Moffett describes? I think some of us do, and I think that lack is something that spirituality could help us with. What would a connection with the life force that is manifested in our breathing, in our individual physical bodies mean to our teaching? Perhaps it would point us away from the rigidity that can come from a too-strict insistence that discourse is all we have. This might make us more open to our students' unique experiences, in that we would focus more on encouraging them to explore and articulate barely-intuited material instead of being satisfied with more predictable ideas. If a spiritual orientation encourages students to write about their deepest insights—thereby being as honest as they can—perhaps we have a moral obligation to allow our work as teachers to become, in some way, spiritual. As I think of morality, I think again of Bizzell, who, in her discussion of values, admits that she is in fact attempting to put forth a very specific morality—albeit one of tolerance and good—to her students.

. . . I must see all my classroom work as deeply imbued with my moral values. I certainly do not go into class and announce that we will now commence indoctrination into the following table of laws. Yet everything I do in the classroom is informed by one or another element in my world view, thus potentially conflicting at every turn with other elements in the students' diverse world views and, because of my institutional position at the head of the class, potentially undercutting their values. (1992, p. 284)

In this I agree with Bizzell, and most people in composition would agree, I think, that our teaching is informed by our own historical, political, and moral perspectives. My interest in spirituality, then, and even my struggle to define it, could be seen as my way of attempting to understand and articulate my own moral values, most prominently my belief in teaching students that honesty about their deepest intuitions is crucial to their intellectual development.

The papers given at the 1992 "Spiritual Sites" session explored the moral values that are fed by spirituality. Reading those papers, I understand the potential popularity of the subject: Spiritual mystery is quite intriguing. Daniell, with her discussion of writers who learn to trust their insights whose source is mysterious; Campbell (1994), with her examination of meditation and her remark that "in the spirituality that stems from meditation, the perception of oneness does not erase difference but creates an arena where that difference is not only named and celebrated but ultimately loved" (pp. 249–250); and Swearingen, in her description of her workshops for women on creativity and spirituality, are imagining the kind of classrooms that acknowledge spiritual mysteries and attempt to

explore them. As Moffett (1994a) said,

I know, the university feels it shouldn't play doctor or priest, dirty its hands with therapy and its mind with religion. But if it has real live students on its hands, its hands are already dirty. And the time has come for intellectuals to quit confusing spirituality with superstition and sectarianism. (p. 261)

The thing that may dirty the hands of writing teachers these days is the existence of a nonlinguistic space, a space outside of discourse. As I examine my ambivalence about spirituality, it occurs to me that the belief in the omnipotence of language, a belief that is virtually unquestioned by composition specialists, may in fact not be absolute. There is something so clean about the belief that language is all we have. If students' selves are made up solely of language negotiations, our job is exclusively to help them manipulate and ultimately control the multifaceted languages that make up who they are. However, after years of hearing this perspective on language and also of using it to inform my composition classes, I feel bemused. I cannot help feeling that language alone is not enough.

The deepest reason for my own attraction to the idea of spirituality, I think, is that it offers a promise of a nonlinguistic reality. I have sensed that reality all along, both in myself and in my students, and I have tried to conceive of it as a product of the language that has conditioned and socialized me, but I continually resist doing so. This resistance helps me define what I mean by "spiritual." It combines both my initial thought that spirituality is somehow nonmaterial and Moffett's idea that spirituality comes from an awareness of the energy of breath and the body. My sense is that to the extent that my students and I embrace a spiritual, nonlinguistic reality, our writing will improve: our language will become more honest, and, paradoxically, more socially useful. Moffett explores this paradox—being outwardly more effective by turning inward—in his work, and I want to examine it too. The more deeply honest I am in writing about my inner experience, the more it can connect with the reader's deepest experience, while my more superficial stories seem narcissistic and self-serving. This seems to be true when I am writing about an academic subject—my most quirky experience of, and hunches about, an idea—as well as more traditionally personal ones.

Freewriting is a place where writing teachers can make immediate use of the nonlinguistic. When writers write privately, nonstop, and without premeditation, they uncover material that can often seem to come from a place beyond the conscious mind. The more I think about it, the more I want to call that place spiritual, especially in Moffett's sense, the sense in which one focuses on the breath, on energy. It is important to me as a writing teacher to respect that kind of spirituality in my students and to use freewriting as a way of tapping into it. Seeing the insights elicited by freewriting as having an origin outside the psychology of the author, outside the self altogether, seems potentially freeing for writers, who can leave themselves open to ideas without worrying at all about controlling the process, at least at the generative phase of writing.

However, I cannot finish an essay about spirituality, even one that explores

my ambivalence about the subject, without addressing the current political context of those who profess to want to connect religion with education. I must point to the violence and hypocrisy of the religious right, whose views are infecting school systems across the United States with deeply conservative politics. However, I do not want to conclude, simply because of my disgust with those views, that spirituality must be a reviled subject or taboo among educators. As Stephen Carter points out, our current association of religion with the political right is a switch from the climate during the civil rights movement, when prominent religious leaders tended to side with the left.

At the moment, though, and in part because of the current national climate, I would caution against bringing any discussion of spirituality into the classroom. Students taking a required composition course, certainly, do not need to hear about the potentially spiritual nature of freewriting. Instead, discussions about spirituality among trusted colleagues are what I advocate here, discussions which help us to clarify our own aims as writing teachers. By defining a technique I use often—freewriting—as a spiritual exercise, I can better focus and trust my own deep-seated belief in it as an invaluable tool in any writing.

Those who attended the CCCC session and workshop were an extremely heterogeneous group. They ranged from those, like me, with a strong but non-denominational interest in spirituality, to members of organized religious groups who want to find ways to include their actual religious orientations in their classrooms. The question of the role of religion, in addition to spirituality, in teaching is one that deserves to be addressed explicitly in the composition community. Two organizations have recently been founded to explore it, one affiliated with the CCCCs—The Association for Rhetoric, Writing, and the Transcendent—and the other affiliated with NCTE—The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning. These organizations raise interesting questions, for example: Should we allow discussions of religion and spirituality an explicit place in our classrooms? Or are these subjects private matters that have no place in the academy? Can our own religious orientations inform our teaching in useful ways? What place does spirituality have in the teaching of writing? Is the *other* of spirituality potentially empowering for student writers? Can *spiritualizing education* be a way to fight cynicism? Such questions deserve a place in the composition community, and I am no longer afraid of the answers. ☺

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Meditative Silence and Reciprocity: The Dialogic Implications for “Spiritual Sites of Composing”

George Kalamaras

The shift from a product- to process-centered pedagogy has brought with it an advantageous change, one that even cuts—in varying degrees—across ideological boundaries: a more fluid representation of the elements of the composing process and the relationship among these elements as well as among writer, reader, and text.

The meditative traditions of the East, rooted as they are in similarly fluid depictions of experience, offer notions of growth and change that are especially helpful in our current thinking about the teaching of writing and theories of composing. In fact, explicit proposals have been put forth in composition studies for including silence in the writing curriculum. In particular, James Moffett (1977, 1981, 1982) and, more recently, Charles Suhor (1992) have described the benefits of incorporating practices of silence, many of which are rooted in Eastern meditative traditions,¹ into the writing classroom.

Specifically, Charles Suhor advances an argument for using silence in English programs as a means of effecting emotional and psychological “transcendence” evoked by literature and other “aesthetic experiences” (1991, p. 23). “A fertile language environment,” he notes, “is one in which a dynamic interaction exists between talk and silence” (p. 24). According to Suhor, “silence is already part of our [English classroom] tradition,” appearing purposefully during silent reading periods, in-class writing situations, the orchestration of class discussions, and peer editing activities (p. 24). Teachers should take the next step, he argues, by including the actual practice of meditation in their pedagogies, while remaining “committed to pluralism” and “without proselytizing for a belief system” (p. 26). Silence, as Suhor describes it, has always been a goal of education: “When we are most successful, our students have a sense of well-being which is intimately linked with the inexpressible, the ineffable—that is, with silence” (1992, p. 11).

Perhaps more significantly, James Moffett’s ground-breaking article, “Writing, Inner Speech, and Meditation,” is one of the fullest articulations in Western

¹Eastern mysticism is diverse. I emphasize the yogic tradition of Hinduism, specifically, *Advaita-Vedanta* (absolute nondualism), but on occasion I refer to other, complementary traditions. Eastern mysticism is given a fuller examination in my book.

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composition studies of the benefits to language development and learning derived from practices of silence.² Moffett advocates using various meditative practices in the classroom to facilitate student access to what he calls "inner speech." Moffett describes its goal this way:

The teaching of writing must rise to a new sophistication consonant with a new stage in human evolution. A paradox is literally a "double-teaching," and that is exactly what we must do—teach two apparently contradictory things at once. Youngsters need to develop inner speech as fully as possible and at the same time learn to suspend it. They must talk through to silence and through stillness find original thought. A paradox is not a real but an apparent contradiction. To develop and undo discourse at the same time would not be working against ourselves.

. . . [I]t is a practical fact that people who can suspend discourse think and speak better when they turn it back on. (1982, p. 240)

Although I, too, am an advocate of more seriously incorporating silence in composition studies, I find Moffett's idea of "original thought" somewhat problematic, for it suggests an ontological wellspring from which some mysterious condition called *originality* is drawn. It is thus reminiscent of expressivist claims of individuality rather than of reciprocity (and by extension of the social significance of silence), a tenet of Eastern meditative practices that aligns them with poststructuralist dialogic theory—a point I hope to make clear in this paper. Likewise, Suhor's focus on the "transcendent" nature of knowledge derived from practices of silence is equally problematic, for it represents a significant misreading of the Eastern meditative tradition. On the contrary, Eastern contemplative philosophy does not suggest transcendence at all but, rather, presents a nonoppositional model that begins from reciprocity that cannot accommodate an awareness above, beyond, or outside the perceiving consciousness of the meditator.

At the same time, Moffett's and Suhor's depiction of the reciprocity between silence and language is insightful. I, too, am interested in the effects that this nonconceptual understanding has on conceptual thought. Furthermore, my own practical experience as a writer and a meditator for many years confirms Moffett's (1982) proposition "that people who can suspend discourse think and speak better when they turn it back on" (p. 240).

However, when I consider how nonconceptual understanding deepens conceptual understanding, there seems to be an issue more significant to consider than the values of silence for individual writers; namely, the impact of silence on theories of composing as well as on the writing curriculum itself. Moffett alluded to this in his essay, "Yoga for Public School Teachers" (1981); however, there remained in his discussion at that time a similar utilitarian tone

²I cite Moffett's abridged version of this essay which appeared in *College English* in 1992, after its 1991 publication in his book, *Coming on Center: English Education in Evolution*.

regarding, to put it crudely, what teachers, like students, “gain” or “get” out of silence (pp. 119–124).

One recent example of the tendency to cast meditative silence in utilitarian terms occurred at the 1992 CCCC’s meeting in Cincinnati. I was struck by the large attendance at a Saturday panel on “Spiritual Sites of Composing.” As an active meditator for many years (my practices rooted in the Hindu-Yogic tradition), I arrived at the panel fully playing Peter Elbow’s “believing game.” There’s a session on meditation, I thought; it’s about time! Each of the panelists delivered fascinating papers, describing the positive effects of meditation (or, at the least, spiritual values in general) on the emotional, psychological, and, by extension, writerly lives of people—students and community members alike. I had, indeed, expected to hear such expressivist claims for personal growth through meditation, although being interested in the social dimensions of meditation and composition I’m always a bit disappointed to hear meditation discussed in predominantly expressivist terms. However, I was not as prepared for the functionalist undertone of some of the presentations— notions to the effect that if students meditate, then the process will have such and such an impact on their writing. In such a proposition, meditation is in a sense cast as a means to an end, a vehicle in the production of goods.

Although such claims about meditation are in my experience true and may be necessary to legitimize the idea of silence in education, they simultaneously obscure the ways meditative practices result in an awareness that is allied to dialogic theory. Meditative awareness can never privilege one aspect, such as product over process, or even individual expression over the social construction of knowledge, but sees their relationship more complexly.

The respondent to this panel presentation, James Moffett, related a poignant story of one of his earliest meetings with his spiritual teacher, the yogic master Swami Sivalingam. In it, Moffett suggested a concern, similar to mine, regarding the emphasis on the pedagogical effects of meditation, reversing his earlier seemingly functionalist presentation of meditation in “Yoga for Public School Teachers.” As Moffett recalled, when he first met his teacher, the man asked him what he spent most of his time doing. Moffett replied, “Writing.”

“That’s good,” Swami Sivalingam answered, adding something to the effect that it would help deepen Moffett’s concentration for meditation.³

What I admire most about this story is that it turns the sock inside out, so to speak, reversing the perceiver’s expectations of the role of meditation in the writing classroom. Rather than arguing for better writing as the goal of meditation, Moffett’s story suggests that writing in itself may be a practice that deepens one’s spiritual life in significant ways. Perhaps more important, though, its ironic reversal boldly suggests (in the manner of a Zen koan, a paradoxical Buddhist riddle that communicates spiritual insight) the problem of framing such practices as meditation and writing as goal-oriented in the first place. When we perceive a practice only in terms of its benefits, we begin to lose hold of the importance of the practice itself—whether it be meditation or writing.

³Moffett’s written response in the “Spiritual Sites of Composing” interchange does not include this story.

The paper to which Moffett responded with this story was delivered by JoAnne Campbell (1992). And to her credit, Campbell (1994) has clearly rethought the functionalist aspects of her original position in her article published two years later as part of a "Spiritual Sites" interchange in *College Composition and Communication*. In her article, "Writing to Heal: Using Meditation in the Writing Process," she highlighted shifting the goal in writing classes from producing better prose to making writing and meditation more enjoyable activities, without emphasizing finished products. In concluding her essay, she argued:

It's perhaps a particularly capitalist perspective to think of meditation as a means to an end. In Buddhism the practice of meditation is all, and meditators are cautioned against becoming attached to outcomes or insights. Yet in a discipline which talks of process but where teachers often must still evaluate products, and in universities where students want class activities to feed directly into the papers they write, it's difficult to avoid arguing for the practical benefits of offering meditation (p. 251)

Campbell put her finger on the crux of the problem, namely, finding a way to talk about meditative consciousness within the academy without resorting to functionalist claims. Institutional pressure for *outcomes* is indeed strong. However, I would also suggest that equally strong is the pressure on professional academic discourse and rituals. How often, for instance, have many of us heard in professional circles that this article or that presentation said nothing of practical value, and how have such critiques shaped our own later articles and talks? Campbell is indeed dealing with a thorny issue. In doing so, she maintained some functionalist undertones (as she herself admits in the conclusion of her essay). Some of these continue to leave me uncomfortable. I question, for example, her suggestion in her title of the *use* of meditation *for* something. However, I do not want to overstate my point here; and it is not my intent to take Campbell to task, especially given the instructive ways she's reconsidered the broader aspects of her position (even I have found myself making functionalist claims from time to time). But I wish to examine this moment as emblematic of the complexity of introducing "spiritual sites" into the classroom. A more productive way to examine this conflict might be for us to avoid *selling* meditation but rather to deepen our understanding of it. Such practices are always culturally inscribed, and when Eastern techniques, for instance, are brought to the West, we need to learn to *read* them from inside rather than from outside that perspective, say, as through a Western model of productivity.

This reminds me of another story that illustrates the complexity of cultural interpretation, a story an old office mate told me. He had studied in upstate New York with a certain Tibetan lama who once said roughly the following:

When I tell Western audiences about the heightened powers of Tibetan yogis [meditators], how they can literally fly across canyon crevices on their way to morning prayers, they often look at me as if I was crazy. When I tell Eastern audiences about the powers of

the West, how you always have hundreds of fresh flowers when it snows, and how you drink oranges in winter out of cardboard boxes, they often look at me as if I was crazy.

I want to argue, then, that we have misread aspects of the Eastern meditation, perceiving them from a primarily binary rationalist framework. In the process we have relegated silence either to the ranks of an educational “nicety” divorced from the social, or equally troubling, to a product-centered social-capitalist America reminiscent of our dominant economic arbiter. Our perceptions in the West have become so imprinted with the productivity model of education and the drive to realize some Utopian end (a kind of educational “manifest destiny”) that we sometimes miss the subtleties of an experience like meditation, which is not a territory to be colonized but is at least at parity with educational goals, if not a goal in itself.

At the same time, I am aware that discussing meditation as a goal in itself begins to make it again sound expressivist, namely, that it is an activity that transcends social forces. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Before I discuss the dialogic rather than expressivist nature of meditation, let me first put my cards on the table. As a committed yogi, my experience (as well as the documented experiences of others) suggests that the world would probably be a better place if more people meditated regularly: people would most likely be happier and more relaxed, maintain better physical, psychological, and emotional health, be less selfish and more helpful to others, be more imaginative, independent, and critical thinkers, and—specific to our enterprise—many would most likely become more fluent, insightful, and clear writers, a point well-argued by Moffett, Suhor, and others. However, unlike Suhor, I am not so sure that introducing meditation into the writing class is not a kind of “proselytizing for a belief system,” as he put it. Although the practice of silence is cast in terms of meditation rather than religion,⁴ it still encompasses a system of spiritual beliefs, the introduction of which into the secular community makes me uneasy. Having students actively meditate, then, is not merely politically incorrect but potentially dangerous to democratic education, carrying with it some of the same baggage as the school prayer debate.

At the same time, does this mean that meditation has no role in the classroom? That it should be seen as a private and personal act alone simply because it derives from a set of spiritual and human values? Certainly, it encompasses a belief system. But what theory doesn’t? Even in the most critically aware social constructionist classroom, for instance, the pedagogy derives from a particular belief system known as social construction, and from the need to alert and introduce learners to the discourses of power. It should be obvious at this point that I think meditation and its belief system does indeed have a role, and a significant one, although perhaps not the one envisioned by Moffett, Suhor, and other advocates of silence.

⁴Meditation constitutes one aspect of Eastern and Western religion and consists of contemplative exercises that seek to interiorize consciousness so that meditators can directly experience the divine ground of being.

My emphasis differs from theirs. Rather, it focuses on the ways values that come from the practice of meditation—such as trust in intuition, ambiguity, and chaos as well as trust in the reciprocity and interpretative quality of experience—shape theories of composing, pedagogy, and curricular reform. In other words, I am less interested in but more wary of actual meditation in class. I am more interested in teachers recruiting meditative values as a guiding principle in their pedagogical theories.

In order to clarify how these meditative values can guide our pedagogies in socially aware ways, I want to reiterate that meditative silence, perhaps paradoxically, is more closely aligned with dialogic theories of composing. As the Tibetan lama's story suggested, both East and West have misunderstood one another. I would argue that central to Western misunderstanding of meditation is the idea of transcendence, so often championed by expressivists and critically scrutinized by social constructionists.

In the West, for instance, there is the common perception that meditative practice strives to transcend symbolic forms, such as language, and locate some mysterious Other outside the realm of discourse. However, this is not so; practices of silence actually attempt to deepen intimacy with symbolic form, although their route differs from that of discourse. Such a nontranscendent model more closely allies silence with dialogic rather than expressivist theories of composing, suggesting a focus on the reciprocal values of silence rather than on those of individual expression.

For meditators in both Eastern and Western mystical traditions, for instance, the process of attentiveness to symbols yields psychic fluidity and, thus, meaning. This fluidity is similar to the awareness Walt Whitman describes when he echoes Wordsworth, "There was a child went forth every day, / And the first object he [sic] looked upon . . . that object he became . . ." (p. 138). That is, meditation intensifies this process of looking. In this way, the seer and the seen merge, the perceiver and the perceived become one.

Eastern traditions, especially, have cultivated highly refined practices to interiorize consciousness and heighten this sense of looking. Through various practices such as focus on a *mantra* (a word or phrase with particular sound and/or verbal significance), a *yantra* (a geometric design with spiritual attributes), one's own breathing, or even silence itself, Hindu yogis attempt greater intimacy with that object they look upon, in other words, with the symbol. Western poetics offers an analogue to these practices. Gaston Bachelard's (1964/1969) theory of "intimate immensity," for instance, suggests "a phenomenology without phenomena" (p. 184). Specifically, Bachelard argued that through heightened attentiveness to the poetic image, the image user psychically merges with it. Similarly, the knowledge meditators attain through practices of silence is not transcendental to, or outside the realm of symbolic form. Rather, meaning lies within the interaction itself, that is, in attentiveness to, or in the deepening intimacy with, symbols. Flora Courtois, founder of the Los Angeles Zen Center explained it this way:

At the heart of Zen practice there is a kind of radically intimate attention. This absolutely firsthand quality of experience

characterizes the beginning of our lives, and if we are not drugged, the end. No “other” mediates between us and the intimate aloneness of birth. . . . Here attention is reality and reality attention. (1990, p. 17)

Understanding that the reality of complete attention that silence yields is itself a symbolic form requires a shift from a model of opposition to reciprocity. In Eastern meditative traditions there is no concept of opposition, at least as we have come to conceptualize it. Rather, unlike Western rationalism, meditative consciousness is an experience of unity in which paradoxes such as self/other, inner/outer, the seer/seen, personal/cultural, as well as other seeming contradictions, are resolved and the seer and the seen become one. As the Zen mystic D.T. Suzuki (1956) noted: “The doctrine of *śūnyatā* [the Void of meditative consciousness] is neither an immanentism nor a transcendentalism. . . . ‘Knowing and seeing’ *śūnyatā* is *śūnyatā* knowing and seeing itself; there is no outside knower or spectator; it is its own knower and seer” (pp. 261–262). Meditative awareness, then, is a realm in which consciousness of distinction or separation, and thus the possibility of transcendence and hierarchy, are nonexistent.

How, then, might the values of silence and reciprocity inform classroom practices? Given my discomfort with introducing meditation into the classroom, I cannot very well argue that all composition instructors be required to take up meditation and allow its values to seep into their pedagogies. Although the dynamics of teacher development differ in some significant ways from those of student learning, both dynamics share many features, two of which are issues of mentor or instructor power and maintaining secular educational settings. To be sure, the practice of meditation facilitates a nonoppositional world view and would be helpful for interested instructors. However, I would argue that as a profession we would do better to focus on the dialogic of meditation. In this way current advocates of silence might benefit from perceiving meditation more subtly; likewise, social constructionists might enhance their dialogic perspective by more seriously engaging the meditative idea of reciprocity.

Specifically, then, how might such awareness inform instruction? Nearly all Eastern meditative traditions strive to cultivate an awareness that the individual self equals the expansive Self. Thus, for the practitioner of silence, as with dialogics, meditation is an experience in which an individual deconstructs the self and reconstitutes it in more connective terms. A classroom grounded in such a model and its corresponding values would, first, resist romantic notions of individual expressivity and ownership of texts. Second, it would hold dialectic suspect in favor of dialogics and conversation. And this is why. Dialectics begins with the assumption that there is, indeed, a thesis and an antithesis to resolve, in other words, a binary framework that leads to the hierarchies of winners and losers; pure dialogics positions opposites, so to speak, in more complementary terms, yielding what Bakhtin refers to as an “interanimation” or “interillumination” of discourses (pp. 47–49).

This orientation, then, might manifest itself through a variety of activities. For example, methods of written and oral response to student texts and discussion, perceived through such a reciprocal model, would approach student ideas

(even so-called finished essays) always as work in progress, creating a site for critical thinking and revision of ideas. The tone of teacher comments, furthermore, would be less hierarchical; rather than asking teacherly questions of students, teachers would pose *real*, that is, writerly questions, with the teacher voice constructed as a trusted problem-posing colleague rather than as an objective authority, or for that matter, in an expressivist model, only as an encouraging coach. The development of sequential, interconnected writing assignments would be a further attribute of such a learning environment; in keeping with meditative perceptions, assignments could be designed in more fluid, connected ways, relying on both formal and informal writing in nonhierarchical, supportive ways to yield student investigation of both personal and cultural issues that lead to multivocality and the seeing of self as implicated in a variety of discourses.

Finally, central to these values and practices of silence as a whole is a complex rendering of the significance of change as a dynamic and generative activity. What the meditator discovers in deep contemplation is that the universe exists in a state of continual flux. As quantum physicists have similarly described, the universe manifests itself as a seemingly stable entity according to one's particular mode of conceptual knowing (Zukav, 1980). Thus, rather than trying to normalize writing activities and student products to reflect outdated classical and Newtonian perceptions of the universe, a classroom grounded in meditative values would be radically dialogic. It would create continual opportunities for multi-vocality and revision, anchoring its authority, for example, in the interpretation of texts.

A true model of reciprocity can never ultimately serve a functionalist orientation (except, perhaps, as a pleasant result). Nor can it cultivate individual expression at the expense of the social construction of knowledge. Perhaps more importantly, the meditative model, grounded in the assumption of reciprocity and a Bakhtinian interanimation of all things, does not ask students to go through transformations themselves without the teacher doing the same. This, obviously, complicates the practice of teaching. However, if we learn to trust the process of continual deconstruction and reconstitution of the self that both dialogics and the values of meditation suggest, we, too, can come to trust even more fully the chaos that we so much want our students to embrace. ☺

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When the Distressed Teach the Oppressed: Toward an Understanding of Communion and Commitment

Christopher Ferry

Jane Tompkins' 1990 essay, "Pedagogy of the Distressed," decries the prevalence of what she calls the "performance model" of pedagogy in college classrooms—that is, a model, perhaps unconsciously, centered entirely on the teacher's performance in front of the students. She calls instead for a more student-centered approach, based at least in part on the model Paulo Freire (1970c) describes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Tompkins' essay prompted a number of forthright responses. Most emphasized the difficulty of enacting Tompkins' recommendations for teaching because of overwhelming course loads; a lack of institutional prestige and/or support; students who just don't care; or a nostalgic and lingering fondness for performance pedagogy.

Tompkins' concept of performance-based pedagogy and the responses it occasioned indicate a healthy willingness among teachers of reading and writing to discuss pedagogy. Nevertheless, I remain troubled by attitudes toward students embedded within this exchange. Certainly Tompkins advocates using student-centered techniques; her invocation of Freire conjures up a powerful dedication to students. Freire's commitment to students, however, his *communion* with them, results not from mere technique but from his spiritual foundation in liberation theology. I will explore the implications of this idea first by considering how people have responded to Tompkins, and then by examining the links between her argument and Freire's in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and other, perhaps lesser known, writings. I want to raise the possibility that, while we may consider ourselves student-centered educators in a Freirean sense, we have, in fact, taken only tentative first steps on an arduous journey.

When the Distressed Teach the Oppressed

Tompkins argues that English teachers are preachers, "indirectly," perhaps, "but always." The problem as Tompkins sees it is that "our practice in the classroom doesn't often come very close to instantiating the values we preach" (p. 653). In other words, English teachers talk the talk, but we don't—or can't—walk the walk and so are "distressed." Tompkins traces this tendency to what she calls the "performance model" of teaching, whose goal is "not to help the students learn but [for the teacher] to perform before them in such a way that

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they would have a good opinion of [him or her]" (p. 654). Performance teaching derives from the following psychological profile:

Many, perhaps most people, who go into academic life are people who as children were good performers at home and in school. That meant that as children they/we successfully imitated the behavior of adults before we were in fact ready to do so. Having covered over our true childish selves, we have ever since been afraid of being revealed as the unruly beings we actually are. Fear of exposure, of being found out, does not have its basis in any real inadequacies either of knowledge or intelligence on our part, but rather in the performance model itself which, in separating our behavior from what we really felt, created a kind of false self. (p. 654)

Academic life, at least as Tompkins sees it, is a haven for the hopelessly insecure, the demesne of the dysfunctional, the sanctuary of the socially inept. This pathology results in fear, and fear grounds the performance model: "[f]ear of being shown up for what you are: a fraud, stupid, ignorant, a clod, a dolt, a sap, a weakling, someone who can't cut the mustard" (p. 654). The profession itself, which values scholarship rather than teaching, further instills fear of pedagogy. Fear-based practice, Tompkins believes, causes teachers to transmit—although preach might be the more appropriate word—fear to their students.

Tompkins describes university and college classrooms not as social spaces conducive to knowledge-making but as theaters within which teachers, vanquished by fear, perform set pieces in ways that will make students (and, by extension, the institution) think well of them. These teachers, Tompkins implies, do nothing out of the ordinary (practice *safe* pedagogy) and certainly offer no critique of themselves, what's happening in class, or why it's happening. Tompkins depicts higher education as a Möbius strip of mediocrity focused on teachers' fear-induced, narcissistic insecurity. Further, this creature eats its young, so to speak, in that students take up this same attitude—that is, of performing tricks to please an audience. Teachers and students become atomized objects of schooling, rather than its integrated subjects.

To counteract this situation, to invalidate the performance model and relieve the distress, Tompkins borrows from Freire's idea of education for critical consciousness and so recommends a student-centered approach based on rules of thumb such as, "Trust the students"; "Talk to the class about the class"; "Offer what you have"; "Don't be afraid to try new things" (p. 659).

College English solicited and published a number of responses to Tompkins. Few were overtly negative; instead, most followed a familiar pattern: Tompkins makes a wonderful point; I identify with her/welcome her to the conversation about teaching; BUT. This "but" is usually followed by a critique centered on her rules of thumb. Michael Carroll's response (1991) is typical. He welcomes "Pedagogy of the Distressed" but chides Tompkins for overlooking "the realities of English instruction at the college level as it is generally practiced" (p. 599) and for depicting an ideal reality that obtains only for securely established professionals (p. 600). Tompkins' students, the ones with whom she practices student-

centered pedagogy, doubtless received "the attention they needed" in high school and are thus better prepared for college than Carroll's are. Carroll argues that "Tompkins' students do not need her attention in the same way that less privileged students in the lower division in public institutions need the attention of their teachers" (pp. 599-600). On the one hand, Carroll has a good point. The student-centered course that Tompkins describes as the "most amazing" she had ever taught was, in fact, a graduate course. Certainly, teachers can make particular assumptions about the preparation of graduate students that they cannot make about undergraduates, no matter what their high school experience. But from a Freirean perspective, student preparation simply isn't an issue. As Tompkins (1991) notes in her response to Carroll, Freire worked with illiterate Brazilian peasants. These peasants were, to use Freire's terminology, "submerged in reality," buried within an oppressive structure. The peasants believed, for example, that they deserved to live in slums; that they deserved to drink tainted water; or that hail stones were the souls of unbaptized children sent plummeting to earth by God to punish the sinful. Nevertheless, Freire and his literacy teams taught them to read and write. The program's success led to Freire's imprisonment as an enemy of the state after the 1964 military coup. Claims about underprepared students seem petty when considered in this context.

Terry Caesar (1992) examined Carroll and Tompkins' exchange and used it as a context to discuss two "rarely discussed" aspects of the profession: "institutional privilege and success." According to Caesar, Tompkins can say the things she says because she works at Duke. Moreover, we must all "avoid . . . the discrete suggestion of the vulgar truth: Duke gets better students than New Orleans [Carroll's institution], and faculty at Duke can do things with them that are scarcely dreamed of at New Orleans" (p. 474). At the three institutions where I've taught during my career, average entering SAT scores have ranged from 700 to 1200, not including open admissions. My point, though, is that at all three institutions the stories teachers tell about students have been basically the same: Students just aren't as bright as they used to be; they're passive, boring, whatever. It may indeed be the case that Duke admits better students than New Orleans, but student-bashing seems to be a popular pastime no matter where one works. Never mind institutional prestige.

An Ethical Question

By drawing attention to the dangers of performance pedagogy, Tompkins demands that teachers think about students, that teachers take them seriously as learners. Further, when she invokes Freire, she invites us to consider an ethical argument. Tompkins shows how revolution and education are integral to Freire's thought. But Freire's pedagogy has other goals, spiritual ones. North American followers of Freire typically see only the political aspects of his work, while overlooking the profound influence liberation theology has had on him. Theology is a meditation on a religious faith. In the Roman Catholic tradition, theological work has typically been performed by the clergy as a scholarly undertaking. In other words, theology happens behind the library's closed doors and most usually produces written text. Liberation theology, on the other hand, is very

much a worldly pursuit in which all people perform theological work. People do theology by working together to free themselves from an unjust and alienating reality and, in the process, practice salvation. Liberation theology is not, therefore, simple reflection on the faith; it is Christian action upon the world—Christian praxis to transform unjust and alienating social structures—followed by theological reflection on that action.

More specifically, liberation theology critiques the domination and injustice extant in Latin America. The liberation critique traces this situation to an internalized alien cultural model—that is, capitalism—and its rapacious quest for private property and money. Because capitalism precludes the equitable use by God's children (all humanity), it provokes what liberation theologian Galilea (1979) calls "frustrating, alienating desires" (p. 171), and, according to liberation Gutierrez (1979), "ruptures our friendship with God and our brotherhood with other human beings" (p. 21). Free humans regard other free humans as slaves, treat them as "tools," and deny their humanity.

This situation is sinful because it prevents humans from fulfilling their potential for salvation, communion with each other and with God. How, then, does liberation theology propose to vanquish sin, to bring people back into communion? Liberation theologian Planas (1986) contends that "what is needed is an altruistic ethic that permeates not only the individual but the entire culture, and places the needs of the entire social family (including the individual's) ahead of one's own." Thus, a person will "think and act socially (the Christian concept of brotherhood)" rather than selfishly (p. 134). Gutierrez (1973) adds that "sin demands a radical liberation, which in turn implies a political liberation" (p. 176). Praxis accomplishes this liberation, transformative, and Christian action upon the world.

Education for critical consciousness, the process Freire calls *conscientização* (conscientization in English; literally, "making conscious"), grows from this context. Freire argues that humans are beings with relationships with the world, with each other, and with God. For Freire, humans are "uncompleted" beings, conscious of their "incompletion" (1970c, p. 27). Freire sees God as a transcendent "Absolute," a presence in history who calls people, "limited, unfinished, and incompleted as they are," to share in His creation (n.d., p. 13). Further, humans are bound to God, and our relationship with God provides the model for our relationships with the world and each other (*Educação como prática de liberdade*, as cited in Elias, 1976, p. 25).

According to Freire, humanity's task, its "ontological and historical vocation," is to be "more fully human," that is, to develop critical consciousness as beings who separate ourselves from and objectify reality, then act upon and transform it (1970c, p. 40). Humanity cannot fulfill its vocation in the context of oppression; however, oppression is "violence" that "interferes" with our task (p. 40). God stands *over* humans, but the relationship neither dominates nor domesticates; instead, "by its very nature," God's relationship with humanity "liberates" us. So also human relationships with other people should neither domesticate nor dominate: "I cannot be the author of your salvation. . . . I have to live as a man among men!—discussing, acting, transforming, creating" (1970b, p. 17). For Freire, finally, the liberating relationship with God *incarnates* human

relationships so that they, "by their very nature," liberate as well. To liberate is to fulfill human nature and enter into communion with other people and with God, creation's and humanity's source.

The "Easter Experience" and Critical Teaching

Freire's fervent religious rhetoric and devout Roman Catholicism, may no doubt discomfort many, more secular North Americans. Nevertheless, when he frames his ideas in religious language, Freire adds urgency to his call for social transformation and illustrates the passion that must inform one's commitment to it. Consider, for example, his thoughts on what he calls the "Easter experience."

For Freire, *conscientização*, education for critical consciousness, is the primary means of fulfilling the human vocation. *Conscientização* is Christian praxis mandated by God: "The process of conscientization leaves no one with his arms folded. It makes some unfold their arms. It leaves others with a guilt feeling, because conscientization shows us that God wants us to act" (1974, p. 29). Conscientization demands what Freire calls an "Easter," that we die to be born again. But conscientization as praxis is itself an Easter:

This Easter [conscientization], which results in the changing of consciousness, must be existentially experienced. The real Easter is not commemorative rhetoric. It is praxis; it is historical involvement. The old Easter of rhetoric is dead—with no hope of resurrection. It is only in the authenticity of historical praxis that Easter becomes the death which makes life possible. (1972, p. 35)

Freire thus binds his pedagogy of the oppressed inextricably to liberation theology. The "real Easter," according to Freire, a concrete historical fact, marks the "radical liberation" of humanity from sin and death. All liberation, be it Easter or conscientization, is praxis, and conscientization marks the emancipation of humanity from oppression and enslavement.

Critical educators must also experience an Easter, undergo what Freire calls a "conversion to the people." These educators must constantly re-examine themselves and must never regard themselves as "proprietors of revolutionary wisdom" that they give to the people. To do so would simply reify oppression:

The man who proclaims devotion to the cause of liberation yet is unable to enter into *communion* with people, whom he continues to regard as totally ignorant, is grievously self-deceived. The convert who approaches the people but feels alarm at each step they take, each doubt they express, and each suggestion they offer, and attempts to impose his 'status,' remains nostalgic towards his origins. (1970c, p. 47)

Communion with the people is possible only for educators who themselves possess Utopian—that is, hopeful and transforming—vision. As part of this Utopian vision, educators must prove their respect for and confidence in the oppressed

(1970a, p. 44). Critical teachers must be "in and with" student reality and not be submersed in their own fear-induced "performance." They must, in short, trust their students.

A New Ontology of School

Conscientization and critical, student-centered teaching are not the products of simple pedagogical techniques. To be authentic, education for critical consciousness must be a total commitment, a way of life, a conversion to the people. In Freire's view, it demands an Easter, a radical, inexorable transformation that will not admit compromise: One cannot experience half an Easter.

Tompkins maintains that "the kind of classroom one creates is the acid test of what it is one really stands for" (p. 656). The Easter experience Freire announces constitutes just such an acid test. The Easter experience demands that we who call ourselves critical teachers undertake an ontological change; we must examine not only our practice but the theory and context from which practice emerges. Of course we should be wary of the performance model that Tompkins describes; I'm not convinced, though, that her call for student-centered classes offers an authentic alternative. Indeed, the idea of student-centered teaching limns the heart of "Pedagogy of the Distressed"; when we abandon a self-centered, performance model of teaching we turn, perhaps inevitably, toward students. But embracing a student-centered model does not guarantee that we'll embrace our students, as the letters responding to Tompkins' essay attest. Freire maintains that people can denounce oppression and announce radical transformation only if they have "grappled directly" with reality and are in touch with the dominated classes. Tompkins would no doubt endorse group work, sitting in circles, and holding class discussions instead of lecturing, as ways to grapple with reality and understand the oppressed. Unless these techniques are preceded *and* accompanied by existentially experienced ontological change, they amount to little more than gimmicks, or worse, performance-art teaching.

To enact an authentically student-centered pedagogy, then, critical teachers should first understand that praxis mustn't be limited to the classroom. Liberation theology cannot be performed as an intellectual exercise behind closed doors; it must be shaped by the world and by people in the world so that it, in turn, can shape them. So also, liberatory praxis must pervade the lives of critical teachers. We cannot perform our social and political commitments in the classroom so as to be well thought of. Instead, we must integrate these commitments with our personalities and with all aspects of our lives, including teaching.

To begin, perhaps we should think through the idea that we may well be products of performance teaching, not just practitioners of it. Now that we have "come to power," as Tompkins says (p. 653), we reproduce the performance model despite our best intentions because we've seen few (or no) alternatives. We don't trust our students (even though we may believe we do) because our teachers did not trust us. We might also try to remember what being a student is like; we should study student reality not as some shard of abstraction, but as the lived, existential experiences of the women and men we teach. Further, student experience should be integral to pedagogy; we should not use pedagogy to enforce or

delimit it. Within the context of ontological change, Tompkins' "rules of thumb" become a scrim that barely obscures the reified performance model. Critical teachers must attest a new ontology of school to students, a new way of "being school," based on trust, commitment, and communion. Freire writes: "Hope is an ontological need" (1994, p. 8). Entering into communion with students means trusting them, accepting them and their limitations as they are, while at the same time working together to transform reality.

If we continue to believe, however, that our students aren't good enough, and that the better ones go to more prestigious institutions, we surrender to something more insidious than the performance model. We surrender to an authoritarian version of school that posits students as an unruly, ignorant Other to be conquered and brought to learning.

Given the institutional constraints within which we work, however, the reality of school into which we have been socialized, is commitment to and solidarity with students even possible? Speaking for myself, as one who occasionally joins in the student-bashing, I don't know. I do know, however, that these questions make me uncomfortable. They place my teaching practice and attitudes toward my students on problematic ground. And what's scary for me is the realization that if I want to be a teacher of and for change, a critical teacher, I might, in fact, have to change myself first. ☹

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Diversity and Dialogue in Reforming the Academic Community

Mary Louise Buley-Meissner

How would you define multiculturalism? I like the definition given by James Banks (1992), director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington. He believes: "Multiculturalism ultimately is a way of thinking. It's thinking about concepts from different people's vantage points. It's recognizing other perspectives, but it's more than recognition. It's caring and taking action to make our society more just and humane" (p. 22). In my view, taking action must include respectful, careful consideration of students' spiritual values, especially because such values influence their self-expectations, social interactions, and life commitments. Consider, for example, the rich, volatile mix of students in my recent basic writing classes—all second-generation to fifth-generation Americans: Puerto Rican and Cuban Catholics, Mexican Baptists and evangelical Christians, Pakistani, African, and Albanian Muslims, East European Jews and Lutherans, Korean and Cambodian Buddhists.¹ To make multiculturalism a reality, we need to affirm the importance of diversity and dialogue in creating our academic community. And I do mean creating. For in our classrooms everyday, through our interactions with students, we give the academy whatever vitality it has.

How can we promote cultural exchange that allows students to learn from each other? I would like to suggest guidelines based on my experience with basic, intermediate, and advanced composition students during the past eight years. At whatever level I teach, we write our own guidelines as we investigate cross-cultural views of the self. Figures 1 and 2 below show effective communication strategies resulting from student discussions. Consistently across different courses, my students and I have found that our world views change as we understand what it means to listen and learn.

Quaker educator Parker Palmer (1983) has observed that "[t]he shape of our knowledge becomes the shape of our living. . . . The way we interact with the world in knowing it becomes the way we interact with the world as we live in it. . . . our epistemology is transformed into our ethic. . ." (p. 21). This is what I see happening when students work toward a deeper understanding of each other's lives. Instead of defending our own views or criticizing what others think, we offer each other *cooperative consent*: I will listen to you—empathically, intent on understanding rather than judging—if you will listen to me. Furthermore, we

¹Nearly 90 percent of college freshmen indicate a religious preference (Fact File, 1992).

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offer each other *provisional acceptance* of differing, even conflicting viewpoints. That is, we try to practice what Palmer calls "the discipline of displacement" (p. 116), imagining what the world looks like from perspectives other than our own.

Common ground: Respect for individual identity and the integrity of every student; emphasis on writing as provisional, open to interpretation, partial in its grasp of truth; emphasis on writing as communication leading to mutual understanding; acceptance of truth claims as valid within context.

Common goals: Description and analysis of experience; appreciation of others' beliefs as compelling and consequential; constructive discussion of sources, forms, and implications of beliefs that shape self-expectations, social interactions, and political commitments; development of broader, deeper understanding of truth as informed by diversity and dialogue.

Figure 1. Common ground and common goals for class discussion.

How is this possible? As Figure 1 indicates, our *common ground* includes respect for the individual identity and integrity of each class member. During our first meetings, for example, we establish this through student introductions and group profiles. We approach writing itself as provisional, open to interpretation, and always incomplete in its claims. Our *common goals* include talking through our experiences so that together we may examine the beliefs that influence us. Figure 2 also presents guidelines that students have helped articulate: first, the *recognition of resemblance* means everyone is considered alike in intellectual capability and moral integrity; second, *openness to difference* means we are aware that everyone brings distinct histories, traditions, and values to class; next, *attention to context* means recognizing that all claims of truth are conditional, subject to qualification; and finally, our *focus on commitments and consequences* means that we accept the force of those claims in our lives.

How do these guidelines take form as specific classroom practices? When students address each other, they are encouraged to emphasize shared values and knowledge as bridges to understanding, an approach advocated by Rogerian rhetoricians (Teich, 1992). At the same time, students are expected to clarify, complicate, or widen the world view being developed by the group, a fundamental principle of "methodological believing" in Peter Elbow's *Embracing Contraries* (1986).

When one basic writing class discussed news coverage of international religious violence, they agreed that such violence is fueled by ignorance and fear. They also concluded that in the collective consciousness shaped by popular American media, to be religious often means to be a blind follower of a dangerous faith. In the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, for example, Pakistani American student Shabana and African American Fahad told us how they had felt "hated and suspected" because of their Muslim faith. "I get angry," said Shabana, "when I think about how people jumped to the conclusion that terrorists from the Middle East planned the bombing. And I get more angry when I think about how people equate terrorism and Islam. But I know they get their ideas from distorted

- 1) *Recognition of resemblance*: Everyone is alike in intellectual capability and moral integrity.
- 2) *Openness to difference*: Everyone brings different histories, traditions, and values to class.
- 3) *Attention to context*: All truth claims are conditional, subject to qualification.
- 4) *Focus on commitments and consequences*: The force of truth claims may be seen in all our lives.

Special considerations in addressing others: Try to discover shared values, knowledge, and other bridges to understanding. Be aware of and acknowledge your personal perspective rather than assume an unqualified authority. Take responsibility for your claims on others. What do you expect other to believe? On what basis? Why? Expect to be questioned. Consider classmates' inquiries to be signs of engagement and interest in your views. Try to clarify, complicate, or enlarge your classmates' understanding of the reality that you inhabit. Be prepared to review that reality in light of their questions.

Special considerations in responding to others: Listen with full attention. Listen to understand rather than agree or disagree. Listen to learn what it is like to see the world as others do. Ask in order to understand, imagine and participate in the realities of others' lives. Try to move from an outsider's to an insider's perspective through your questions. Describe the scenes and situations which come to mind as you listen. Ask questions to make those images more clear, complete, and vivid.

Figure 2. Guidelines for addressing and responding to classmates.

[news] coverage about who we are and what we believe." Fahad agreed, adding his own perspective: "If you're a Black Muslim like I am, people think you're a troublemaker. They don't know that Islam teaches brotherhood. Holy books [the Qur'an, the Bible, and the Torah] teach godliness, upright living, and responsibility. . . . We don't need to be afraid of each other, do we?"

As students respond to each other, they ask questions that promote entering into and understanding the realities of others. How did you become a Muslim? [Shabana was born into a devout family. Fahad converted in his late twenties.] Where do you worship? [At mosques, at home, in the mind and heart.] How has your faith changed your life? [Shabana: "It is woven into every part of my life. It means that I have to do my best at everything—being a daughter, being a student." Fahad: "I have to stay on the right path because a higher power is directing my steps."] Students report that they are intellectually and personally intrigued by their peers' life stories. Most are intensely interested in explorations of identity, difference, and cross-cultural values in American society. Perhaps this is more true of basic writers, who are often acutely aware of their status as ethnic, racial, socio-economic, or cultural minorities.

Our sense of truth often changes as we evaluate our beliefs in the context of the convictions of others. In their class evaluations, evangelical and fundamentalist students comment that my class has made their world a more complicated place, as do mainline Protestants, liberal Catholics, and my most zealous students, the atheists. Intellectually and personally it is risky to address the convic-

tions that give us a sense of individuality and belonging in the world. But we have much to learn from each other, and as educator Maria Harris (1991) emphasized, "Ignorance is never neutral" (p. 100). At the very least, it jeopardizes any possibility that our society will become more just and humane.

Perhaps I saw this most clearly during and after the 1992 Los Angeles riots. At a time when racial prejudice, economic tensions, and class antagonisms were tearing America apart, I watched my students turn to each other incredulously. As I listened to them, one of the central questions that emerged was: How are we going to rebuild belief in this country?

These were basic writing students in Milwaukee, one of America's most segregated cities, as indicated by patterns of housing, employment, and education. Only 10% of the students at my university are people of color; 65% of those students are required to enroll in basic writing; only 13% complete degrees. They are typically considered at risk. However, in the spring of 1992, they proved to be exceptionally insightful cultural commentators as they discussed the causes and consequences of the riots. Most of all, they were concerned with this question: What do we do now? And answers were influenced by students' spiritual values.

In *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (1993), Stephen Carter argued that "religion at its best will tend to strengthen, not weaken, the values most Americans hold dear" (p. 268). Academic intellectuals might disagree (Battenhouse, 1987; Culler, 1986), but many of my students would support Carter's view. Listen, for example, to African American student Kevin as he explains why Milwaukee did not disintegrate like Los Angeles:

The media predicted riots in Milwaukee. The media predicted hatred and violence. But it stayed quiet. People were anxious; people were waiting. But it stayed quiet. Why? I know one big reason was that our leaders in our churches preached peace. They said we had to live peace.

Six of the eighteen students in his basic writing class were African American; all six were Christian; four of them were youth leaders and/or members of community outreach groups. (Carter notes: "As a group, black Americans are significantly more devout than white Americans. By some measures. . . black Americans are 'the most religious people in the world'" (p. 60).

For some students spiritual as well as racial identities decisively shape their outlooks. As Chris told the class: "How do we respond to the riots? As an African American and a Christian, I believe [the] Los Angeles [riots] shows us how hard it is to build multi-ethnic neighborhoods and how crucial it is to do so. Was Los Angeles only about African Americans and Koreans? It was about all of us. We can't give up on each other."

Hearing Kevin and Chris, other students responded with proposals for making Milwaukee a "culturally diverse rather than culturally divided city" (a theme that I drew from students' initial reactions to the riots). Strikingly, many of their ideas came from involvement in the church, temple, mosque, or synagogue: edu-

cating public school students about differences in cultural heritage; supporting legislation for fair housing, employment, and health care; protesting biased media coverage and supporting alternative local and regional newspapers; encouraging high school and college students to work for their communities; lobbying the university for courses and programs promoting more comprehensive cultural studies. Clearly, their religious affiliations strengthened their commitments to social change—whether the students were Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, or Muslim. Moreover, they were able to sustain an intercultural dialogue that all of us found enlightening. As Robert Coles has observed, a fundamental human need is a “grounding not only in factuality but in moral reflection” (“Celebrate Values!” 1992, p. 21).

At times, of course, students’ views do clash. Yet, I have found extraordinary potential in such situations which theologian Gabriel Moran has called “the redeeming, reconciling, and reuniting of the world” (1992–1993, p. 482). Teaching a senior-level advanced writing workshop, I asked two European American students with opposite views on abortion if they would work together in a small group. They agreed and subsequently discovered, much to their surprise, that they shared a longtime commitment to women’s welfare. On the initial basis of tentative mutual respect, they exchanged ideas; eventually they cooperated in investigating causes of and alternatives to abortion—without compromising their individual ethic. How did that happen?

Perhaps the two students each had an unusual capacity for the kind of empathy and compassion that the Buddhist priest Thich Nhat Hahn (1976, 1987, 1991) calls “mindfulness.” Perhaps they and their classmates developed sufficient trust in each other to undertake listening as “deep practice,” as an alternative to the violence of blaming and arguing (1993, p. 68). Here is an excerpt from students’ midterm review of changes in their thinking and writing:

Bill: At the start, as a fundamentalist, I only wanted to write against abortion for my church newsletter. But I’ve been listening to Sarah and I’ve been thinking that it’s very important to know more about why women seek abortions. She has told our small group very tragic stories about abused women. So I’ve been focusing more on how important it is for the abuse to end.

Sarah: It was hard for me to work with Bill at first, and it was even harder for him to work with me. [Sarah counseled women in a low-income family clinic, which sometimes made referrals for abortions.] At first, I thought, “He’s a fundamentalist, so we’ll never agree on anything.” However, he belongs to a church that strongly supports women and families through educational, social service, and job-training programs. I’m not a Christian. I’ve been studying Buddhism, but some of Bill’s basic beliefs—social and religious—are close to mine.

Bill and Sarah’s work together suggests an important starting point for “authentic conversation” (McCormick, 1992–93) about many subjects, especially those

we find hardest to discuss. I have frequently heard students of diverse backgrounds share commitments to social justice, to the human family. Contrary to warnings from colleagues, I have not found that, as they say, "Fundamentalists will take over the class if you let them talk about religion." Instead, guided by the principles outlined in this essay, students have shown remarkable willingness to establish common ground for open and earnest dialogue.

Intercultural discussion takes many forms and addresses many subjects. Religion itself is not at issue; that is, direct comparison and contrast of one set of beliefs with another is not the intention and would best be left to a theology or philosophy course. Instead, I am interested in the variously complex spiritual affinities that influence our sense of direction and purpose in life. Psychologist Robert Sollod (1992) has described "the hollow curriculum" which results when higher education separates mind from spirit. Healing that split, I believe, is essential to healing deeply painful societal divisions. Multiculturalism can become a reality only if we listen and learn along with the students we serve. ☺

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Break Point: The Challenges of Teaching Multicultural Education Courses

Arlette Ingram Willis and Shuaib J. Meacham

In work on multiculturalism and teacher education, much has been made of the ironic growth in the heterogeneity of America's public school students and the homogeneity of America's public school teachers (Fuller, 1992). Educators have thus been alerted to the dire consequences to follow, should they continue to engage the complexity of culturally diverse student populations in their present state of "multicultural illiteracy" (Ladson-Billings, 1991). Along with this alert, lip service seems to be paid to what preservice teachers don't know, and what they should know and do in order to meet the educational needs of children of color and of linguistic difference (Gore, 1993; hooks, 1992). Like our colleagues, we believe that the most effective way to reform education begins in our colleges and universities in teacher education. A review of the related research suggests that many multicultural education courses are taught with the intent of changing the attitudes and beliefs of white preservice teachers. We suggest that all preservice teachers need to improve their understanding of the role of linguistic and cultural diversity in children's lives, to improve their understanding of its history, and change their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors so that a more just multicultural school climate is realized. It is imperative therefore that teacher education courses not merely *teach* about multicultural education, but that they *become* multicultural environments. In this article we describe accounts of our experience as two African American instructors teaching multicultural education courses and the experiences of students who have taken them.

Among a plethora of publications on multicultural education, little has been written on the constraints facing teacher educators who attempt to convey attitudinal change. Consequently, there is a tacit, yet prevalent tension between ideas about the learning that must take place and the practical limitations under which many multicultural education courses are conducted (Gore, 1993). In fact, theoretical admonitions tend to underestimate the subtle dynamics within the practical setting and altogether fail to account for the ways in which multicultural learning takes place. We believe it is important to articulate clearly and explicitly the emotional nature of these discussions. Students have expressed responses that range from self-pity to racial hatred. We've included their words for, as Nieto (1992) has pointed out, their voices must become part of our examination of the teaching process.

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We have organized our experiences and the responses of our students around three questions: 1) What conflicting influences are implicated in multicultural preservice teacher education courses? 2) What resistances develop between white preservice teachers and a curriculum that focuses on the experiences of people of color? 3) What pattern occurs as a result of this conflict and resistance? And how can it best be managed?

The Context

We began teaching multicultural education courses for preservice teachers in response to a survey indicating that more than any other area except classroom management, teacher educators wished they had a stronger background in multiculturalism (Holste & Matthews, 1992). Our response to this wish, however, differed greatly from that of national trends. As education researcher Fuller (1992) notes, nationwide, 94% of teacher educators are predominantly white and middle-class (p. 88). Further, Fuller reports that the national demographic patterns of preservice teacher educators indicate that students in teacher education courses are also more often white (92%), female (75%), and middle class (80%). The demographic patterns at our university were similar. Their college experiences are often the first and most diverse settings they encounter.

In contrast, we were in a unique position as African American teacher educators. While we understand that, generally, it is not polite to mention faculty race as a factor in education (hooks, 1992), we understand that race and positions of power influence students. For example, our EuroAmerican, Latino American, and male and female colleagues share similar problems with conflict and resistance when they conduct courses that deal with multiculturalism. Several EuroAmerican instructors disclosed that they must contend with students who feel that they have somehow "sold out" their whiteness in order to adopt a multicultural perspective. They also revealed that when their classes are composed of only EuroAmerican students, the students are open in their resentment of such a curriculum. In contrast, our colleagues noted that when at least one minority person is in the class, the openly hostile attitudes become considerably tempered.

We made a conscious effort to develop courses reflecting a critical multicultural pedagogy. First, the work of Sleeter and Grant (1988/1993) and McCarthy (1993) helped us to frame our courses along established lines of multicultural theory. Second, we went beyond issues raised in multicultural efforts that focused on the canon, the curriculum, and instructional strategies. Most often, the response to the call for increased multiculturalism has been to add a few "minority items to the curriculum." Yet, simply adding materials to the curriculum without reforming it or training teachers only perpetuates the dominant cultural paradigms. As Apple (1992) states, "[I]t is naive to think of the school curriculum as neutral knowledge. Rather, what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender, and religious groups" (p. 4). Moving beyond the canon, curriculum, and materials takes considerable effort. Barrera (1992) suggests that teachers need improved understanding of cultural knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge, and

multicultural knowledge. She describes meaning making and literacy teaching as culturally mediated and involving control issues. Further, she notes that "literacy and literature are cultural phenomena and are practiced differently across cultures" (p. 232). An ideal place to instill awareness of this cultural mediation were preservice teacher education courses.

Third, most empirical research has emphasized the curricular innovations designed to increase the receptivity of white preservice teachers to the task of teaching children of color (Ladson-Billings, 1991). Its primary goal has been to assess the attitudes of preservice teachers toward race, culture, and inequality by emphasizing cultural difference and diversity (Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; King, 1991). When the topic of race is discussed, it has usually focused on people of color. Yet this willful interpretation conceals the concept of white identity or "whiteness" from critical coverage of multiculturalism (hooks, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 1994). Consequently, white preservice teachers are not provided with the opportunity to examine their own ethnic identities and investigate the influences of such identities on teaching diverse students. McIntosh (1990) asserts that "the absence of a racial discourse on whiteness reinforces the widely accepted myth that whiteness is morally neutral, normal, and average, and also ideal" (p. 2). To suggest otherwise in public conversations in mixed racial settings raises levels of discomfort for many students. Demystifying the privileges associated with whiteness is a difficult position for many preservice teachers to assume.

Finally, Helm's (1992) theory of the acquisition of racial identity as applied to preservice education courses by Tatum (1992) helped us to understand our students' developmental progression vis à vis their own racial identity. Their findings suggest that students undergo a range of emotions from feelings of guilt and shame to feelings of anger and despair. Tatum outlines three sources of student resistance: 1) discussing race is considered taboo, especially in racially mixed settings; 2) many students, regardless of racial group membership, have been socialized to think of the United States as a just society; and 3) in particular, white students initially deny personal prejudice, recognizing the impact of racism on other peoples' lives but failing to acknowledge its impact on their own (p. 5).

Three questions are at the heart of this issue. Number One: What are the various conflicts implicit in teaching multicultural preservice teacher courses?

The multicultural education course is a genuinely peculiar phenomenon. The expanding diversity in society has introduced into the educational enterprise elements incompatible with traditional notions of teaching and learning. Multicultural education courses have emerged as an attempt to address these discrepancies. Instead of being called on to teach generic educational theory, instructional techniques, and skills, these courses are charged with turning fearful attitudes into positive sensibilities.

Within the larger framework of teacher education, this very difference leaves many students feeling confused about what they are supposed to be getting from such a course. This confusion is compounded by the insecurity involved in their future roles as classroom teachers. A student's journal entry illustrates this tension:

It seems that the main focus of the discussion about diversity issues deals with identifying that there is a problem which needs a solution. (Euri, an African American female)

In addition to the often unsettling and controversial nature of the course topics, teacher educators must contend with competing pedagogical orientations. Students have expressed resistance to incorporating multicultural notions into their educational philosophy. Some have even suggested that multicultural education is offensive, serving only to divide the country further.

Another factor which feeds the tension is that of time (Tatum, 1992). Research by Sleeter (1993), among others, has indicated that changes in attitudes are not lasting. As in any developmental process, time must be allowed for certain processes to unfold. However, this exigency is often circumvented by the add-on quality of content in many education courses. Marginalized in teacher education, the multicultural component is frequently allotted less time in which to provide effective learning. Faced with one and a half hours a week, teacher educators must strike a balance to avoid watering down the course to the extent that it becomes meaningless, or to avoid overwhelming students with highly charged material to the point of frustration.

In addition, such conflict causes resistance with which the teacher educator must contend. Generally two types of responses occur. First, students may call into question the instructor's expertise or inquire about his or her knowledge base. Neither gender nor racially specific, the questions seek validation in terms most familiar to students (academic degrees, teaching experience, expertise). Second, students may complain about the imposition of a course on multicultural education. An example illustrates this point:

I have talked with several in-service teachers who believe that multicultural education is another trend. They said they too learned innovative ideas and practices during their undergraduate studies and training. Right now, they are not investing too much of their time with multicultural education because they do not believe that it will last long. (Evelyn, white female)

One of the most pervasive conflicts appears from white students who express difficulty identifying themselves as white and having European roots. Sleeter (1994) maintains that "to open up a discussion of white racism challenges the legitimacy of white peoples' very lives" (p. 7). For most of our students this is the first time their whiteness has been challenged. Examples of the most frequent type of responses follow:

My family does not usually define itself in ethnic or racial terms. I have become increasingly aware of this as of late, and I don't know how to think about it. (Dave, white male)

I don't really have any need to identify with a cultural past. My past, and present is American. I like to think that I meet people as

individuals and treat them as such, not as belonging to any racial group. (Alice, white female)

Students of color, however, do not tend, on average, to share concerns about identifying with their ethnicity. For example, two students wrote:

I stress African American because I cannot accurately trace my descent beyond the era of American slavery. That, I regret, I have been successfully denied. (Sherman, African American male)

It is often asked what we second generation "Korean Americans" consider ourselves as Korean or American. It's a difficult question to answer because our "Korean-ness" and "American-ness" are in conflict. We can not consider ourselves as fully Korean because we were born and raised in America. At the same time, however, it is also difficult to say we are fully "American" for a number of reasons. First, the families, culture, customs, traditions and lifestyles are not typically "American." They are, in fact, very different from some of the traditional American customs people have held since the beginning of American history. Secondly, our outward appearance can confuse people into thinking that we are foreigners to the American way of life. Lastly, it is just plain difficult to define what "American" really is, especially now, in the X-generation and the politically correct wave of thought. (Lily, Asian American female)

In much of the critical writing on contemporary education (Giroux & McLaren, 1988; McCarthy, 1993) classrooms have consistently been portrayed as sites of cultural contest. The crucial social, political, and economic issues of race, resentment, and identity are played out in emotional terms. Today's college campuses have become veritable cauldrons of friction wherein perceived threats to academic traditions, economic decline, and the more publicly expressed perspectives of people of color promote intercultural hostility, insecurity, and fear. Attention to the histories and perspectives of people of color has made the school one in which there is direct examination of the harmful and traumatic aspects of American history. In turn, white students have felt victimized by the recurring accounts of physical, economic, and political oppression by white people of people of color. McCarthy (1993) calls these competing forms of victimization, the politics of "resentment." The following student comment illustrates this point:

Today, I hear constant put-downs of whites. It seems that the study of diversity includes pointing out how terrible whites have been. I do not feel I deserve the label "racist." I know racists and many of them are white but this does not provide anyone the right to generalize that all white people carry racist views. I am not saying that this class perpetuates this but I think that this is something the "white Americans" feel in general. (Julie, white female)

In the same discussion Charles expresses a similar view from a male perspective:

It is not easy being a white male, especially of my age in this country right now. You are constantly under the microscope. The thing is true I am white, I am a male, and I am 21, but other than that you know nothing about me. . . . Things are not coming to me free or any easier than they are to others because I am white. I guess I am tired of being made to feel as though I am to blame for Columbus, slavery, rape, or everything else. When the fact of the matter is I have nothing to do with any of these activities.

At the very moment of pronounced social and professional insecurity regarding their futures, white middle class preservice teachers are being asked to exile themselves from white privilege which many feel they don't own and to embrace the educational prospects of people of color.

Question Number Two: What resistances occur between white preservice teachers and a curriculum that focuses on the educational experiences of people of color?

As African Americans teaching classes on multicultural education to predominantly white middle class students, we enter a hostile world. This world is laced with fear of the unexpected. Suddenly the conventional, unspoken, and assumed frameworks of power have been overturned and students' privileged racial, cultural, and educational experiences are no longer the standard. Hesitancy may be fueled by a racially divided campus and national socio-political context in which multiculturalism is debated in terms of consequences for them as white students (Schlesinger, 1992). Buzzwords and euphemisms abound and red herrings swim silently in the classroom: "economic decline," "quota," "affirmative action," "reverse discrimination," "balkanization," "political correctness" and, "speech codes" from those able to intellectualize the ideas of race, class, gender, and power. At the core of this confusion is the issue of racial identity. Encouraged never to think about what it means to be white, these students live with ideas of themselves as culturally generic people who are merely people without culture. We encounter white students who protest, "I don't really have a culture"; "I consider myself American. My culture is the American culture." For these students a new language of identity has been provided "European American," "EuroAmerican," "Anglo," "Anglo American," "White male/female." They inquire, "What's the matter with being American?" They wish to dismiss or silence the issue of race as unimportant to "American-ness." The two following responses to the question, "What does it mean to be white?" provide instances of the cultural tug-of-war these students are trying to process:

No matter if one sees it as good or bad, I must realize that because of my appearance, I have been given the opportunity to have "no ethnicity." I am in a privileged position in this society, I am white, and if I did not look this way it would be more difficult, if not impossible, to claim the status that I have. (Jeff, white male student)

Objectively speaking, my cultural background includes those who are white, upper-middle class, Catholic women of German-Polish descent, who believe in God and America, the Land of Opportunity.

This answer is problematic for two reasons. First, I do not really have a working definition of culture that satisfies me, making it difficult to discuss. Secondly, I have a problem being placed into a group that I do not feel particularly attached to. (Ann, white female)

An additional source of opposition arises from the fact that the preservice teachers whom we have taught contend that there is no significant problem regarding race in this country. The nation has become aware of a considerable difference in how race is understood, for example, in the racially divided reactions to the acquittal of O. J. Simpson. While African Americans and other minority groups continue to perceive race as a significant social issue, many EuroAmericans maintain that racial hostility is a thing of the past. Our students, too, think that acknowledging racial difference contributes to racial discord, implying that if we simply ignore racial difference, the problems will resolve themselves on their own. This perspective is reflected in a preservice teacher's remarks:

Why do we have to keep defining things according to color? The fact is people are people. We all have similarities, we all have differences. Is it fair to "define" a race? I don't think so. . . . How far do we have to take this political correctness? Why can't we be Americans? I understand that some people want to stress their heritage, but I think it ends up separating people even more. (Tiffany, white female)

These attitudes are not representative of all preservice teachers, or of all white preservice teachers, but they demonstrate the enduring challenges for teacher education instructors.

Question Number Three: What pattern may occur as a result of this internal turmoil? And how can it best be managed?

Depending on factors such as time, class size, type of class (required or elective), and the political disposition of the course, teacher educators can expect a myriad of possible outcomes. However, in our experience, the collective stress from denial, fear, hostility, confusion, discomfort, and unwelcome shifts in perspective seem to build over time. When students are forced to read, reflect, re-think, and discuss issues which they have been taught and silently agreed never to discuss in public, they need an outlet. This silent resentment when given room to vent, may result in an individual or collective *break point*. Pent up emotions may come out in some awkward display of authentic feelings, as in the student comments that follow:

When are we going to stop this farce? Don't we know that as white people we are really only fooling ourselves? We know we see and recognize color, but we don't want to admit it. We always see color as a difference. (Stacy, white female student)

Whenever I read something, whether it is written by a minority

author or not, I always see the people as white. I just do. For some reason I don't think of the characters as different. (Karen, white female)

The following scenario offers a more specific example. During a student led small group discussion of a novel written by a Latino American, a student had a very disconcerting experience. She was allowed to share her reaction and reflection with the class:

I proposed that the cultural richness of my original "homeland" has helped me to understand my interest in literature and the arts. My classmate responded that she was surprised with my identification on this level, because she always thought of Irish people as "scrappy." From that point on, a severe nausea set in and I felt sick the whole day. . . . For example, in my discussion group today, another group member (EuroAmerican) agreed that his nationality was not an issue, and we could not figure out the reason why it means so much to other people and so little, for the most part, to EuroAmericans. I am wondering if you would encourage an intellectual debate centering around these issues so that we all might understand. (Kelli, white female)

This student's response to what she perceived as an insult created for the class an emotional break point or transition in how they responded to the issue. As a result of this student's consciousness raising, a thoughtful, emotional discussion followed, in which class members dealt with these subjects honestly and directly. We believe that an open, heartfelt dialogue is a catalyst for students to engage a deeper understanding of multiculturalism. And it is important that a substantive discussion arise from within the students themselves. The break point welcomes the unvoiced and obvious discomfort we observe in the classroom. We anticipate its occurrence, await its arrival, and look forward to life after it occurs.

The students are astounded to learn that we have been waiting for them to reach this level of understanding. Some wondered aloud, "You knew we would have a class like this one day? I can't believe that you would allow this to happen? I am really impressed that you have waited for us to reach this point." And, as bell hooks (1992) suggests, "[M]utual recognition of racism, its impact both on those who are dominated and those who dominate is only the standpoint that makes possible an encounter between races that is not based on denial and fantasy" (p. 28). We liken the experience to the scene from the *Wizard of Oz* when Dorothy finally realizes that she has had the power within herself to return to Kansas all along and doesn't need outside help. Students begin to realize that they are empowered as a group and as individuals to discuss multiculturalism and move to social action.

Having established an atmosphere of comfort, truth, and respect, students then forego silences and converse in more meaningful ways. We believe that a break point is a natural part of the multicultural education class. The dynamic

underlying the break point appears to be power. The struggle of many EuroAmerican preservice teachers appears to lie with their place in the multicultural picture: In our courses, familiar perspectives, images, values, and interests that have traditionally privileged white middle-class experiences and understandings, do not dominate the material. Nor do they dominate theory, curriculum, or instructional practices. White preservice teachers now find themselves as targets of historical, social, and literary critiquing, particularly within the intellectual work of people of color whose writings they had formerly avoided. Having, in some cases, never considered their own identities, white students seem to be thrust into a discourse about the histories of discrimination, resentment, economic and political oppression, which has, to some extent, fueled the cultural identities of those they study. The following preservice teacher responses offer a sample of the reactions following a break point:

I have been very emotional every time I have left your classroom. I think that you bring up some very important and tough issues. I am really glad that we are exploring these topics. They are really making me think about how I need to approach inequalities, parents, etc. This class has really made me evaluate my own thinking.
(Christy, white female)

I think the issues we are discussing are extremely important and of a critical nature for us as we make our way into the teaching world. However, I believe that it is only natural that there are going to be some "tough times" during the course, when people are coming to terms with their prejudices, ignorance, and their short-comings. . . . I'm glad I'm of the mindset that I know I have prejudices and ignorances, and that the only way to deal with them in a healthy way is to address them head on. (Debbie, white female)

After a break point the problem of culture, race, gender, and power are no longer remote. The class becomes the emancipatory society we have been attempting to construct. Prior to a break point there was a kind of dance, a pretense of tolerance, a cerebral exchange of opinions. Now students are free and ready to speak more openly, honestly, and realistically. Students no longer pretend that they don't have these problems. It has hit home. Some will continue denial, but others will genuinely awaken. Those who struggle admit to feeling overwhelmed. Still others begin to notice discrimination in their classes, dorm life, family gatherings, and private conversations. A few may see the need to change but stop short of advocacy when considering the social costs. They wonder: "What will my friends, family, sorority/fraternity think if I publicly advocate multiculturalism?"; "What will happen to my life?"; "What will happen to the privileges I enjoy?" Sleeter (1994) refers to this state of discomfort and choice as one facet of "white racial bonding." Although their in-class personas may have been challenged, some white students choose to liberate themselves from racism. Some may also begin to realize the importance of retelling the history of people of color. At the very least, most students begin to question and challenge the status quo.

We are not naive about the general ignorance of other ethnicities. However, we want our students to become active participants in facing that challenge and making lasting changes. The Japanese word, *kaisan*, conveys a greater sense of what we are trying to achieve than the terms "change or transformation." *Kaisan* means continuous change for the better, not just change during a course or until the first student-teaching assignment. It is the transformation of an attitude for a lifetime. ☺

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Transcending Gender: Toward a New Awareness of the Fluid Self in Writing

Jack Ramey

What does it mean to speak as a woman? How does it mean to speak as a man? Why are so many of our cultural myths involving gender obsessed with extreme and often violent division? In Plato's *Symposium* the image of Zeus slicing through androgynes to create male and female reflects the way we have constructed ourselves internally and rhetorically. In Genesis Adam and Eve are driven from paradise by an angel's fiery sword. With such rancor at the heart of our creation myths, is it any wonder that we have constructed metaphors of war and opposition to explain gender?

In the creation myth of the Dogon, a West African people, two pairs of twins, male and female, are engendered within one egg. Through the slow, sensual gestation period they are meant to combine, recombine, and hatch themselves as androgynous beings, the perfect inheritors and inhabitants of the world. Something, of course, goes awry, and one of the twins prematurely bursts forth creating the division of the sexes and, by implication, the radical ferocity and imperfection of the world. The one who bursts forth, destroying paradise and peace on earth is the male, the breaker, the violence-bringer, he who brandishes the spear between his legs. By contrast, in Judaeo-Christian myth, his female counterpart defies the sky deity and causes, through her desire for knowledge, the imperfection of the human condition. What rawhide myths we whip our minds with.

We are all born of woman. I am born of womb(man)'s blood, an inescapable fact that I do not wish to escape from, but, in a larger sense, I have been transcribed by my (male) sex as the inheritor and progenitor of what Cixous (1976) calls "the false theatre of phallogocentric representationalism" (p. 884). How has a creature born of woman escaped from the egg to lord it over his creator? Plato's phallogocentric Cave, that great progenitor of Western (read male) logocentric thought, is not the Cave of Gilbert and Gubar (1979): "a female place, a womb-shaped enclosure, a house of earth, secret and often sacred. To this shrine the initiate comes to hear the voice of darkness, the wisdom of inwardness" (p. 93). In this cave the voice of the deity speaks through the priestess, the oracle whose mouth is mother and vagina, whose lips speak truth, the Sibyl whose prophecies one ignores at peril. The Great Mother mysteries and the ancient earth religion—whose only remnant is a tepid Virgin Mother myth—have been supplanted by the Name-of-the-Father so that discourse, according to Cixous,

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becomes "equivalent to masculine masturbation," and the woman who writes is forced to "cut herself out a paper penis" (p. 883).

The Nine Muses, the sources of inspiration for poetry, theatre, art, and music are all women. My own personal strength as a writer comes from tapping into the feminine aspect of my nature. Although Jung in *Man and His Symbols* (1964) spends far too much time dwelling on what he considers the negative aspects of the anima on the male psyche (pp. 178–180), as we know, he maintained that there is a feminine side to a masculine soul, and a masculine side to a feminine soul. A man has a woman within him. The anima is the deep cave where creativity spreads her wings, a river in the dark continent where poetry swims within the soul of a man. Most men never find it; indeed, are never even aware of it. Many men, through fear, kill the anima. Boot camp is designed to extinguish any trace of the soft, the gentle, the nurturing artist within a man, turning him into the ultimate killing machine, AndroMan with an M-16. Conversely, the animus, like the Dogon twin in the egg, is the powerful aspect of the female soul that has been locked, subjugated, and silenced throughout the history of Western civilization. Women have been forced to deny the richness of their creative selves, to deny the Amazonian power that lives in their psyche; they have been forced to write weak imitations of a phallogocentric prose. Cixous (1976) urges women to break their shackles: "To write and thus to forge for [themselves] the antilogos weapon" (p. 880).

Although Jung's notion of anima and animus has provided an increased awareness of the existence of our gendered Others, there is still something troubling at the root of its binary core: Male/female, man/woman, masculine/feminine may be dualities that no longer serve—if they ever did—any useful function. Perhaps a construction of the Postmodern Self is not so easily reduced to its opposition. The real question now may be: How can we best get beyond these socially constructed boundaries of gender? Cixous (1988) recognizes this dilemma and in her essay, "Extreme [F]idelity," addresses the problematic notion of masculine and feminine as cognitive constructs: "[W]hy distinguish between them? Why keep words which are so entirely treacherous, fearful, and war-mongering? This is where all the traps are set" (p. 15).

Perhaps a more useful way of looking at the twin aspects of the gendered self would be to adopt the Eastern notion of yin and yang. These constructs are not binary opposites, portrayed as diametrical extremes of the spectrum, eternally at war with one another. They are rather complementary, interlocking halves of an inseparable whole, independent, yet interdependent. Is it surprising that Taoist breathing exercises associate inhaling (literally inspiration) with yin, the feminine aspect, and exhaling with yang, the masculine? But these do not war with one another. They both exist in men and women in equal measure. The constant process of the breathing-in of yin and the breathing-out of yang begins, continues, and ends, from our first breath to our dying one, whether we are male or female. Like its pictographic representation, the yin/yang is liquid, two drops flowing into and around each other, each equal half linking and supporting its Other. The yin/yang pictogram exists on a two-dimensional plane. However, if we transpose it into the realm of the three-dimensional and perceive it as such, a deeper understanding of its true significance emerges. Beneath the black half is

the white and beneath the white is the black: they each have their foundations in their counterparts, each half folded into the other in a continuous sphere of inclusive others. The eyes within the drops—white on black and black on white—are perfect two-dimensional representations of a three-dimensional figure.

Once we challenge the either/or construct of male and female, yin and yang, and recognize the inclusiveness of both, then we as writing instructors can better help students free themselves of the socially constructed gender dichotomy. By embracing the concept of the fluidity of gender, we may be able to help them navigate the unfamiliar waters of their Other. In "The Rhetoric of Masculinity: Origins, Institutions and the Myth of the Self-Made Man," James V. Catano (1990) maintains that one of the chief goals of rhetorical pedagogy "is to free the writer to know and to experience a self that has been dormant, unknown, unformed, or simply unavailable" (p. 428). What Catano suggests is precisely what I urge: we must wake up the sleeping Other, the dormant female source of strength that lies unconscious within the anima-cave of males and the Amazonian-yin power laid low by masculine rhetoric. Catano points out how one of our most influential rhetoricians, Peter Elbow, while giving lip service to "mitiga[ing] the level of aggression in his writing style and model," uses a staggering array of "aggressive descriptions and metaphors of writing" (p. 430). Guns, battles, knives, blood, mastering, and power—phallogocentric metaphors of violence—proliferate, perhaps unconsciously, in his description of the writing process. These metaphors are clearly anti-feminine, nonnurturing, and counterproductive. It is important, therefore, to take care with the way in which writing is described, and with the language that frames the writing assignment itself so as not to valorize the masculine pen-as-phallus-as-weapon metaphor, further perpetuating an enslaved feminine rhetoric.

I am trying in my classroom to point out to male writers who use anti-feminine metaphors the basic falsity and betrayal implicit in their rhetorical stance of which, for the most part, they are unaware. Many men do not know that there is a powerful female anima chained-up to a wall in the caves of their unconsciousness. Even in biological terms, men are made up of countless generations of women, the X chromosome an inseparable part of their biochemical makeup. If men can open up to the feminine inside them, they are more likely to tap into a powerful source of creativity. I often invite men to pick a woman they admire—usually a mother, a sister, a grandmother—and to rewrite portions of personal narratives in the voice of this Other person. Men discover a voice they did not know they had, an opening-up (in Jungian terms) to the opposite mode of perception. I am not claiming any earth-shattering revelations; rather these are small but necessary steps toward a larger goal.

The problem for women writers, as I see it, is somewhat different in nature. Many of them have already learned how to master the basic elements of masculine discourse. For centuries they have been forced to deny their own mode of perception, to write with the stylus of the penis, often assuming masculine *noms de plume* to find outlets for their work. Among basic writers this often results in convoluted passive constructions that go to great lengths to exclude or deny the *I*. In my pedagogy I try to empower women students to find their own voices, their empowered female *I* identities, the feminine-*I* that they have been

forced to suppress.

But here we find ourselves, as composition teachers, caught between the horns of an age-old dilemma. We want to empower our students by helping them to tap into the well-springs of their fluid Selves, but, at the same time, we must prepare them to take part in an already firmly-entrenched, western, and more solidly masculine academic discourse. Foucault's (1982) methodological proposal of balancing the *I*, the Self, between the creative "Inclination" and the expectations of the academic "Institution" seems to be one sane and worthy approach that could be woven into classroom discussions of the writing process. The Self must be nurtured, but it must also be balanced between apparently conflicting poles: "Not infinitely open, not closed, permanent and self-consistent, discourse emerges instead from the eventful conflict between openness and closure, between what Foucault terms 'desire' and 'constraint'" (Spellmeyer, 1989, p. 717). Clearly, we need to investigate the ways we can (re)construct positive, nonlimiting images of Self, thereby tapping into the diverse aspects of personality.

Culture and society are also labile, and, as such, are constantly in a state of evolution, as are our notions of gender and the Self. We, as educators and thinkers working in the field today, are directly responsible for the ways in which the Self is to be constructed and viewed by the next generation. We need to realize that we have the capacity to influence and alter the flow of the future. What, then, comes after an awareness of the Other, a discovery of the fluid self? What lies beyond the realization and the negotiation of intertwined selves?

In *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the Third Millennium*, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1993) holds out hope for a new consciousness that celebrates the complexity of the Self, "a *transcender*, or a T-person" (p. 208). His analogies for this more spiritually cognizant person are drawn mostly from Asian cultures:

The Confucians called them sages, the Mahayana Buddhists called a person who attained the Ninth World a Bodhisattva, while the one who attained the final stage of Buddhahood (or *butsu* in Japanese) was given no fewer than ten titles, including Teacher of Gods and Humans. (p. 208)

Recognizing the need for a more complex vision of the Self is one matter; realizing that vision is more problematic. As a cultural construct, the gendered Self reflects centuries of inbred conceptions. We are still laboring under the assumptions of a Western masculine rhetoric that is a product of Apollo's usurping the role of the *Magna Mater*, turning the Muses (feminine creativity) into his handmaidens. We have been blinded by a Linnaean world view where nature is hierarchically categorized into separate kingdoms, phylum, species, genera. We are only now beginning to grasp the implications of the vast interconnectedness of existence. Only by adopting the holistic world view of an inseparable web of being can we then reconstruct ourselves as transcendent persons. Eastern rhetoric and the more holistic Eastern world-view is the product of a different history, based on entirely different and perhaps more fluent notions of Self and gender.

Fan Shen (1989) exemplifies these differences in his article, "The Class-

room and the Wider Culture: Identity as a Key to Learning English Composition,” pointing out the difficulties he faced in creating a new *English Self* as opposed to his *Chinese Self* (p. 462), so that he could compose successfully in English. The Chinese method of composition, *Ba Gu*, is a circular form, moving around a topic and “is like the peeling of an onion: layer after layer is removed until the reader finally arrives at the central point, the core” (p. 463). This method is radically different from the hard-hitting, straight-as-an-arrow masculine logic employed in Western discourse. *I* or ultimate Self is subsumed under the collective *we* in modern Chinese rhetoric. The stylistic use of *yijing*, an imagistic painting of mental pictures which is so typically Asian that Shen was forced to replace Chinese “pictorial logic” with Western “verbal logic” (p. 465).

The examples of Shen’s early literary criticism in English, before he *mastered* Western rhetoric, particularly his work on Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, read like poetry, charged with a hauntingly evocative purity. It’s a pity that he was compelled by the constraints of Western rhetoric to clip the wings of his natural, lyrical Self to conform to an authoritarian, hierarchical mode of expression.

There is a way, I feel, that East can meet West, and, by doing so, propel itself to new levels of sophistication. West can expand its notion of acceptable discourse beyond the Aristotelian-Apollonian-Linnaean scheme to embrace the holistic discourse of a connected experience. The Western academy, with its rational, linear orientation, is certainly not dead, but, I maintain, the pillars that have held it up for centuries are crumbling. The shape of discourse will change and is changing now. In the twenty-first century, rhetoric will have finally caught up with its past. For at least four thousand years we have been trying to force square pegs into round holes, to impose a phallogocentric way of understanding reality on what is biologically a nonlinear way of knowing it. As Carolyn Handa (1990) points out: “The world we learned to write in is not the world they [students today] will be living and writing in” (p. 182).

One pedagogical arena that is shaping this new discourse is computer-mediated composition instruction. Students who are linked to each other in a network of connected terminals are brought face to face daily with the very embodiment of the web of existence. Anonymous, online discussions are, indeed, linear. Nonetheless, they tend to erase gender cues, and, in many cases, empower traditionally marginalized students: women and ethnic minorities, in particular. Hypertext, with its open-endedness, its defusing of authority, its constantly shifting center, favors—like the Chinese rhetoric *Ba Gu*—a circular, nonrational, intuitive approach to apprehending truth and meaning. This multivalent discourse does not privilege one Self or form of expression over another. It gives rise to the free expression of multiple selves and subject positions.

The world is shrinking. The future is running to meet us. As boundaries melt, or *if* they are to melt, mutual acceptance and understanding of diverse Self-expression is vital. Then humans can swim as transcendent beings in the river that flows in all directions, and become, like the original twins in the Dogon myth, whole and healthy inhabitants of the earth. ☺

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From Writers To Writer/Designers

Margaret Batschelet and Linda Woodson

In the seventies the profession paid new attention to invention in writing; Ann Berthoff in *The Making of Meaning* (1981) and other researchers investigated the visual dimension of thinking. They demonstrated how to use visual representations such as mapping, cubing, clustering, and branching to generate ideas and how to use visual games and photographs for increasing perceptual acuity. As a result, the widespread use of these aids has proven successful in creating connections during invention, particularly for students with a dominance of what Howard Gardner (1983) describes as "spatial intelligence" (p. 9), that is, intelligence that emphasizes visual relationships. In the following years, however, the role of the visual within the writing process did not expand beyond invention in the traditional writing class, and visual topics were relegated to technical and professional writing courses. This situation has endured despite the fact that all students rely to some extent on visual interpretation.

In a very real sense writing classes have denied the physical reality of writing, the fact that words on a page are actually physical entities, black marks on a white surface or black marks on a white screen. The illusion maintained by this denial is that the physical words on a page have no part in the interplay among writer, text, and reader in constructing meaning—that, like the spoken word, the written word is primarily a mental construct (Berthoff, 1996). Yet this illusion is constantly contradicted by our admonitions to students that grammatical and mechanical errors interfere with the construction of meaning. Failing to recognize words on a page as physical entities denies the reality of the surface, the actual page upon which we write; otherwise, we would have no response to the student who protests a lowered grade because of spelling errors by declaring, "But you knew what I meant!"

Visual and Verbal

Responding to this kind of denial, Rudolf Arnheim (1969, 1974), in his work on visual thinking, argues that an artificial distinction has been made between the verbal (associated with the intellect) and the visual (described by Arnheim as "perceptual concepts"). When psychologists address cognition, they often separate knowing into two types of knowledge: *perception* or sensory knowledge, and *conception* or thinking and judgment. While the division of these two separate ways of knowing facilitates our understanding of the processes being described, the separation itself remains an artificial one. Suzanne Langer (1942)

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attempted to bridge this artificial separation by describing the thinking that exists in what is considered *perception*, calling those thoughts *presentational forms*, nondiscursive visual forms capable of being articulated. Langer, basing her theory on Gestalt psychology, suggested that the processes, the perception of imagery and verbal activity, occur simultaneously. Visual forms do not present constituents successively, but simultaneously. Langer believed we abstract a form from each experience and use this form to conceive the experience as a whole:

Unless the Gestalt-psychologists are right in their belief that *Gestaltung* is of the very nature of perception, I do not know how the hiatus between perception and conception, sense-organ and mind-organ, chaotic stimulus and logical response, is ever to be closed and welded. (p. 90)

Some ideas are too subtle for speech and rely on these nondiscursive forms:

The recognition of presentational symbolism as a normal and prevalent vehicle of meaning widens our conception of rationality far beyond the traditional boundaries, yet never breaks faith with logic in the strictest sense. Wherever a symbol operates, there is a meaning; and conversely, different classes of experience—say reason, intuition, appreciation—correspond to different types of symbolic mediation. (Langer, 1942, p. 97)

These perceptual concepts are nonlinear, nondiscursive, unlimited by what the mind can retain in words from the beginning of a perception to the end of it. But they are thinking nonetheless, albeit thinking that does not lend itself readily or entirely to words.

Neglecting these forms of thought in writing instruction, however, and maintaining the artificial separation between the two forms of thinking, limits students to what fits in words alone. It means that students are taught to ignore visual information beyond the noise level, i.e., the level of mechanical error, rather than to see the visual and verbal as one congruent whole. Yet generations of writer/designers from the medieval scriptoria to Albrecht Dürer to William Blake to Mallarmé have been aware that visual and verbal are, in fact, united, that words exist as visual entities before entering the consciousness of the reader. Arnheim (1969) argues that "an abstractive grasp of structural features is the basis of perception and the beginning of all cognition" (p. 161), a grasp through "clear-cut directions, sizes, geometric shapes, colors, or textures" (p. 46).

Some contemporary writing textbooks (Elbow & Belanoff, 1995) have begun to include discussions of how often visual references appear in our descriptions of writing and thinking. Often, too, in describing their own processes of writing, writers acknowledge the influence of these visual thoughts. Psychologist James Hillman (1983), for example, in *Inter Views* describes his use of the visual to structure his writing:

I remember writing "Abandoning the Child" in 1971 for an Eranos

lecture. My image of it was a collection of very simple water colors. And I just wanted to do a little one here, one there, a little one on the “dead child,” a little one on the “tree and child”. . . like you go through a gallery, and it didn’t matter which picture came first; there was no conscious order between the phenomenological images of the theme. I didn’t want to build anything, get heavy with it. I wanted to keep it all a series of images touched lightly, water colors. (p. 158)

And again:

When I worked on Dionysus and Hysteria [*Myth of Analysis*, Part 3 (1969)], I remember saying I feel like I’m inside one of those great big sculptures, a Henry Moore, or one of those huge things of steel girders, and I’m doing all I can to weld huge chunks of steel together. It was like a great physical, exhausting, sculptural work. So those images of what I’m doing when I’m writing have nothing to do with what I’m writing, but they become necessary for my imagination to do it. It’s like it prevents and it forms. (p. 159)

Revising writing instruction to recognize this unity between the visual and verbal means seeing writers as writer/designers and helping them to develop the harmony of message between them. Given the vast potential of desktop publishing, it is no longer necessary for a writer to leave all decisions concerning visual information to others. Novice writers who are improving their facility in language need concurrent development of their intuitive sense of form and information regarding the visual dimension of text. Just as we have discarded the notion of standards of correctness as the means of developing effective writing style, writing instructors must also embrace more than sterile graphic principles to enable students to produce effective documents. During the process of visualization, the physical page become both malleable and seductive in the same way that concepts are labile in the process of forming text. And the creative impulse becomes clearly the same for both dimensions of writing (Arnheim, 1969, p. 308).

According to Arnheim (1974), any abstraction can be translated into visual form, becoming a visual concept (p. 159). The properties of the abstract thus become physical: “During the moments in which a human being is an artist, he finds shape for the bodiless structure of what he has felt” (p. 169). Visual experience is a “transaction between the viewer and the object”; meaning arises from the “interplay of activating and balancing forces” within a work (pp. 37, 53). Moreover, the visual form is not arbitrary but a “precise interpreter of the idea the work is meant to express.” Its subject matter becomes the embodiment of its theme, “exactly correlated with a formal pattern” (p. 460). Neither form nor subject is the content of art; the two are inextricably bound (p. 461).

Although Arnheim gives his attention primarily to works of visual art, it is possible to apply his principles and descriptions of structural design to page design. Thus Arnheim’s (1974) observation that any place that “coincides with” part of the structural framework “introduces an element of stability” (p. 14) can

be juxtaposed with the symmetrical structure of the "classic" page as described by Suzanne West¹ (1990). The reliance in the classic page on balance and harmony also echoes Arnheim's (1974) observations about the properties of simplicity—"parsimony" and "orderliness"—which produce a "leveling," reducing unique features and enhancing symmetry (p. 67). A classically designed page produces a sense of stability and order, reinforcing the perception of harmony. Writers who are aware of these features can use these visual principles to emphasize the message of their documents, as in the design of the traditional essay or argument where the sense of stability and order lend to the symmetry of the message. Or writers can avoid these principles if the verbal message conflicts with the visible message of permanence. Writers can invoke the "dignity and readability of classical traditional typography" (Meggs, 1992, p. 365) to confer traditional dignity and stability on a radical position, as in the case of Dugald Stermer, the designer of the 1960s magazine *Ramparts*. Stermer used page design to convey the message that the information in *Ramparts* represented authority as surely as did the information in more mainstream publications. Stermer also used page design to place the message of *Ramparts* on the same footing as the message of the establishment press it sought to displace.

A further dimension of the conjoining of visual and verbal is suggested by E.H. Gombrich's description in *Art and Illusion* (1960) of the interactive play between an agency to convey perceived concepts and the concept itself. The chosen vehicle of the artist determines not only what artists convey to the audience, but also plays a role in what artists perceive:

The artist, clearly, can render only what his [sic] tools and his medium are capable of rendering. His technique restricts his freedom of choice. The features and relationships the pencil picks out will differ from those the brush can indicate. Sitting in front of his motif, pencil in hand, the artist will, therefore, look out for those aspects which can be rendered in lines. . . . [H]e will tend to see his motif in terms of lines, while, brush in hand, he sees it in terms of masses. (p. 65)

The implication of this interactive play for writers is clear. Writers with a visual repertoire consisting only of the classically designed page will not only be limited in conveying what fits the design of that page, but those writers will also be limited by that design in what they can perceive.

The Visual As Scene

Another generative approach to understanding the role of the visual in writing is through the application of Kenneth Burke's concept of scene. Until recently, scene has been largely available to prose writers strictly in the form of verbal description. Although writers could create scene as part of the drama of

¹West defined the classic or traditional page as one that emphasizes order, symmetry, balance, and proportion.

the interaction through descriptive words, much of the actual scene in which words were presented on the page, the physical layout and appearance of the prose, has, of necessity, been the domain of the publisher. Unlike poetry, which could be shaped, or actual drama, which could be placed in a stage setting, the scene of prose was largely limited to the visuals of paragraph size and length, the placement of headings, and the size of margins. To describe what we mean by scene in this context, we must first look at Burke's (1969) definition of the term within the Pentad, where he describes scene as "setting or background" (p. 3). This setting contains the "act," and in the principle of drama "the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene" (p. 3). In exploring this, concept, Burke demonstrates how a drama is enacted in a setting that both "*realistically reflects* the course of the action and *symbolizes* it" (p. 3), as, for example, the kitchen of the Loman home in *Death of a Salesman* that serves as a last refuge against the depersonalization of the outside world and the heath in *King Lear* that serves as a physical representation of the chaos of Lear's madness.

We believe that all writing has the possibility for creating the physical scenes once left to stage setting in drama and the shaping of poems. These physical scenes can contain the act and dramatize the scene in which the writer apprehended a percept or concept. Keeping in mind that in scene Burke also included *suggestions*, we assert that those suggestions can be extended to the feeling created by the placement of prose, as well as the typography, spacing, and other elements of layout.

Clearly, too, readers participate in constructing the scene as they participate in constructing meaning. When we asked a group of graduate students to describe the scene in the first stanza of John Donne's poem "The Sunne Rising," with its shaped lines, they responded that the lovers were in the bedroom and that the undulating lines represented the movement of the curtains at the window. When we asked them to explain how they knew that the lovers were in a bedroom instead of a kitchen, they referred to the traditions of love poetry, indicating their shared sense of reference with the poet.

Because of the generative powers of Burke's Pentad, the visual dimensions we are describing may also be considered a component of act and agency, and all of these aspects provide insight into the importance of the graphic in prose. Our emphasis here, however, is on the use of the visual by writers themselves; thus we concentrate on the visual as scene. Yet, even if we accept the unity, indeed the symbiotic relationship between visual design and verbal message, difficulties remain in adapting abstract design principles to dynamic messages. How can the writer learn to use both dimensions? Are there any absolute meanings in the graphic language of the page?

The Visual as Sign

In semiotic terms the words on the page are patent signifiers; they stand for both the linguistic meaning associated with them and the meaning associated with their visible appearance. But there is a contrast between the traditional stance that ignores the surface or visual aspect of print, addressing only the deeper,

verbal meaning, and the stance of those writers, like poets, who deliberately choose to emphasize surface, designing the space as well as writing the words. Writer/designers thus deconstruct the meaning of a text and then reconstruct it as a visual artifact. Readers, in turn, have both the signifier and the signified with which to construct meaning—the visual and verbal meaning and their interrelationship. The commonly held idea that readers actually deal only with the verbal dimension, the signified, is in fact an illusion: the page refuses to become transparent. The use of design in advertising alone gives some indication of the vast potential for reader and message manipulation inherent in page design, a potential that students should be aware of both as writer/designers and as reader/consumers. But rather than describing this process as manipulation, we suggest that writer/designers create a page environment that moves readers away from a distanced, passive stance and into the form and mood of the page. Readers, then, participate in creating meaning in this environment, and a higher degree of perceptive/conceptive insights by writer/designers is conveyed.

The dimension of writing that goes beyond the semantic level has rarely been addressed in formal writing instruction because in the past writers had little control over the design of their texts. As writers attain greater control over every aspect of the page through the availability of electronic publishing technology (and to a lesser extent through the page design features of most word-processing programs), they may become even more aware of the visible surface, breaking down the commonly held assumptions about the division between surface and meaning.

The distinction here involves what Norman Bryson (1983) refers to as the “deictic trace.” He borrowed the concept of deixis from classical rhetoric and linguistics, where it described “utterances that contain information concerning the locus of utterance” (p. 87). Western painting, Bryson argued “is predicated on the disavowal of deictic reference, on the disappearance of the body as site of the image. . . . [I]n deixis the utterance is continuous, temporally, with the event it describes” (pp. 89, 95). In other words, Western painting has treated both the viewer and the act of creation as irrelevant, as if paintings existed in a separate reality without the interaction of the viewer or the evidence that paintings are, in fact, a product, a construction. In contrast, Bryson describes “the painting of the glance,” including much modern art and nonWestern art, which “addresses vision in the durational temporality of the viewing subject,” not excluding the viewing process or the evidence of production (p. 95). Rather than being a disembodied ideal, art in this sense includes both the painter’s techniques and the viewer’s physical participation in its creation. In this connection writer/designers seem to acknowledge the “deictic trace,” the surface properties of their texts, realizing that words exist as physical entities, what Bob Brown calls “black riders” (as cited in McGann, 1993), rather than strictly as disembodied mental constructs. And the acknowledgment of this physical dimension opens possibilities both for creation and chaos.

The page in this sense becomes a “rich sign,” combining icon, index, and symbol (Silverman, 1983, p. 22). The page literally pictures the information it conveys, becoming an icon, but it is also indexical in that it directs the eye through the elements of page design. It is likewise symbolic in that it creates a subjective

reaction through an arbitrary association. Thus, for example, advertisements for luxury products such as expensive perfume use greater amounts of white space, relying on the connotative equivalence of space and status and implying a symbolic relationship between their products and improvement in social rank. Similarly, academic formats like syllabi convey the intended organization and environment of the classroom, and paper formats like lab reports convey both the type of information being presented and the tradition in which that information should be seen, that is, a scientific world view. Like Roland Barthes' "kitchen of meaning" (1986, p. 157) in which the world around us provides daily the signs of life-images, gestures, behaviors—that we constantly interpret—so the page becomes a comparable kitchen of iconic, indexical, and symbolic meaning. The visual elements of this page *speak* to readers in a rich extension of the usual *I see what you mean*, as writer, like visual artist, "draws attention by choosing to expend psychic energy upon [the artists' subjects] in creative ways, for example, by exhibiting or rehearsing or celebrating their very existence, by dramatizing or developing attitudes toward them, by eking out the enjoyable or judging the reprovable in them" (Tejera, 1965, pp. 94-95).

The page also contains definite paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. The syntagm is represented by elements in contiguity on a single page, such as the various typographical treatments of words at different levels of heading and text. The paradigm is formed by the similarity of design from one document to another, from computer manual to instrument manual to textbook to essay. Design elements thus have meaning both in microcosm and macrocosm, referring inward to the other elements of the immediate context and outward toward an entire range of connotative references. And these frames of reference have effects on both writer/designers and readers, governing the way in which text is seen and processed. In another sense, the page represents a type of "aesthetic code," with various "multivalenced signs" such as white space, signs that can represent a variety of "signifieds" depending on context (Berger, 1984, p. 36). And in this connection the page becomes a part of Barthes' "mythic structure" (1972). Writer/designers fill the form with content; interpreters strip away the form of the design from the message; but readers reassemble the message/design in its entirety (p. 128). The myth, according to Barthes, "transforms history into nature" (p. 129); it is, moreover, stronger than our rational interpretations of it; even if we understand the myth, the code the visible page is conveying to us, we cannot do away with it. "Nothing is safe from myth," Barthes states; it will invade and transform everything it touches (p. 131).

A clear application of this principle is the example of *Ramparts* magazine described earlier. There the page design represented a complex interplay of competing elements, a deep structure working with the text itself to convey meaning. This page design brought to immediacy the power of the myth in which Stermer sought to participate.

In sum, visual information means one thing deliberately, another metaphorically. Writer/designers may aim for one particular effect, readability, for example, yet may enlist an entire range of meaning beyond simple readability inherent within individual signifiers. The page becomes more readable both in the traditional sense of conveying information and in the connotative sense of conveying

readability as a subjective metaphoric quality. Interpreting the page involves reading both its denotative and connotative information.

The Ethos of the Visual

Thus, we are brought to one of the most compelling reasons for incorporating instruction about the physical properties of the page in the writing class: the capacity of the visual to reinforce the ethos of the message. Philosophers of language have sometimes fostered profound and fundamental distrust of spoken and written language. But perhaps this distrust has been extended to written language in part because of the split between words as conveyors of thought and words as physical properties in a created environment.

Michel Foucault (1972) speaks of the appropriation of language by various discourse communities: "Thus the statement circulates, is used, disappears, allows or prevents the realization of a desire, serves or resists various interests, participates in challenge and struggle, and becomes a theme of appropriation or rivalry" (p. 105). But, in the same essay, he also describes the relationship of the statement to its surrounding field. "[I]t is endowed with a certain modifiable heaviness, a weight relative to the field in which it is placed, a constancy that allows of various uses, a temporal permanence that does not have the inertia of a mere trace or mark. . ." (p. 105).

If, then, writer/designers create a visual environment for the statement that conveys its perceptive/conceptive field and captures more of the sensory environment in which the concept was apprehended, it follows that the statement has a decreased chance of being misunderstood or appropriated into inappropriate contexts. To permit an optimal understanding of concepts under discussion, writers achieve ethos through careful attention to precise words, specific details, and clear examples, so too attention to the atmosphere created by the visual environment provides a similar ethos. Writer/designers' sent message and readers' created meaning develop in a context that give readers access to more of the writer/designers' intention and purpose.

The Visual In The Writing Classroom

Given these premises then—that the physical properties of the page represent another dimension of text and that this dimension is also the domain of the writer—what are the implications for the writing class? In "Grammars of Style: New Options in Composition," Winston Weathers (1976) called for a freeing of writers from the confines of what he described as "the box," the eight-and-one-half-inch-by-eleven-inch page. Weathers reminded us of the freedom achieved by writers such as Gertrude Stein through the use of alternative forms that he called "grammar B," forms such as lists, labyrinthine sentences, crots. At that time the freedom from the box that could also be attained through alternative visual forms was not available to all writers through desktop publishing and word processing programs as it is today. Our contention is that the writing class is not only an appropriate place to incorporate discussion of visual thinking, but that visual thinking has long been unnecessarily omitted to the detriment of students' development.

The work of Arnheim suggests that limiting writing students to verbal messages, without accompanying visual information, limits their ability to convey their perceptions. Further, the work of Gombrich suggests that limiting writing students to classical page design not only limits the possible perceptions they can convey, but also *limits* the possible perceptions they generate. We suggest that instruction should include attention to the elements of page design. Students should be encouraged to try out alternate formats in their writing, and they should be guided to an understanding of how the visual dimension provides the scene for the verbal message, and even how the visual dimension conveys information on its own. Above all, teachers can develop a sense of play and excitement in their students concerning the visual and its possibilities, an attitude that encourages freedom beyond the confines of the single-column page. Yet we should also remind our students that these choices are not without risk. If they choose, for example, to introduce innovation in a highly traditional format, such as a lab report, they may be seen as rejecting the tradition and culture through which the format developed. And such rejection may produce negative reactions from readers within that culture.

When we wrote the initial version of this essay, for example, we were careful to present it in a traditional format, using innovation only in the choice of type font because we feared rejection from editors confined to traditional formats of academic journals. In other words, we were interested more in ensuring that our message be heard than in challenging traditional formats through innovation.

In our reaction to innovation as teachers, we should also be prepared to receive the unexpected and nontraditional and to make an effort to understand their purpose. As teachers we must be prepared to reassess our own ideas of text, confronting such basic questions as the relationship between words and graphics and whether design can, in some instances, take the place of words altogether (as in a magnificent brochure on endangered species prepared by the state of Colorado which allows photographs of animals to take the place of extended descriptions).

In sum, we suggest that students undertake visual experimentation self consciously, that they be aware of the risks involved as well as the rewards. That such potential risks exist should not be seen as a reason to avoid using the visual altogether; rather, we should encourage our students to explore the possibilities judiciously.

When we are met with the objections that these matters are more appropriately addressed in technical and professional writing classes, we are reminded of the various controversies that arose regarding materials throughout the history of art. Is photography really art? Should painters use acrylic paint that dries faster but is less durable, or should painting restrict itself to oil? Should painters project images from photographs onto their canvases as a starting place, or should they be limited to what they can reproduce in drawing? Should the art world embrace computer design and graphics? Ultimately, however, these controversies have been resolved by the passage of time because artists in their search for ways to convey their perceptions successfully make use of all available materials; and traditional oil painting and traditional sculpture have not been lost in the process. Our stu-

dents live in a world of rich visual and verbal interaction. They have access through electronic publishing to the dynamics of the visual and the verbal in their own writing. To deny entrance of these materials into all writing classes means the loss of potential development in using and understanding these intriguing resources. Further, if we deny entrance of the visual, we run the risk of widening the gap between what is practiced in the world in which students will ultimately live and work and what is done in the writing class. If we are to develop writers capable of knowing the value and pleasure of writing, as well as capable of meeting the demands of any number of writing situations, we cannot afford that risk. ☹

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Re-Visioning Psychology in the Writing Class

Dennis Young

*Call the world, if you please, "The vale of Soul-making."
Then you will find out the use of the world.*

John Keats

Why Soul Matters

The awe I felt reading Greek mythology when I was a child is still with me today. I marvel at the characters and the insights into human behavior that these stories depict. The ancient Greeks were profound psychologists, their stories always probing psychological depths. For them psychology meant something different than it does for us; the "logic or discourse of soul" (a literal translation of the word psychology) was not an abstract system of thought but was grounded in poetic figures and mythic tales. These myths have not lost their ability to move us through their archetypal power because they express and embody soul.

Soul is rooted in the main ground of the Western educational tradition, extending from the Greeks through the Renaissance and the Romantics to depth psychology and beyond. An admittedly difficult and elusive term, soul nonetheless resounds in discussions of the purpose and goals of education. In Book VII of *The Republic* Plato wrote that soul was the heart of education, positing that all learning is a kind of recovery of that clarity of perception characteristic of childhood. Philosophers and psychologists as diverse as Emerson, Whitehead, Dewey, Jung, and Bruner have all intimated a mutual relationship between education and the cultivation of soul. For a stunning range of writers, soul is that center of organized power, of desire, of feeling, of awareness, of freedom, of choice. Considered this way, it seems somewhat redundant to speak of bringing soul back to the classroom; it already is in the classroom; it just isn't often acknowledged. Because teaching writing always involves interpersonal relationships, student motivation, personal histories, and other psychological *insistences* that shape awareness and foster learning, it seems worthwhile to reconsider—or *re-vision*—psychology in the writing class.

James Hillman's work in archetypal psychology helps us do that. I first became interested in Hillman's work while studying poetry in graduate school, discovering in his penetrating examination of the imaginative life and his rich description of archetypes a language to interpret the complexity of the psyche.

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I further found that the insights of archetypal psychology provided a method and vocabulary to interpret the subtle dynamics of learning and teaching. It was abundantly clear that a classroom psychology that does not attend to the psychic drama of student lives remains superficial.

I'm not the first to recognize that the archetypal approach helps us reclaim the psychological dimension of the writing class. The recent call for a "poetics of composition" (Gates, 1993; Owens, 1993), the attention to postmodern notions of knowledge, teaching, and subjectivities (Faigley, 1992; Gere, 1993; Welch, 1996), the renewed interest in the noncognitive domain (Brand, 1989; Brand & Graves, 1994) and the psychoanalytic insights into teaching/learning writing (Brooke, 1987; Davis, 1987; Felman, 1982; Jay, 1987; Schleifer, 1987; Tobin, 1993) all pay singular attention to the psyche in the writing class. Sessions at composition conferences—sessions that did not occur five years ago—now focus on such issues as spirituality, healing, meditation, and archetypes. Archetypal psychology provides a *poetics* of the classroom and suggests coordinates for understanding the place of discourse in shaping psyche and in understanding how archetypes underwrite rhetorical ways of making meaning.

Archetypal Psychology and the Imagination

Archetypal psychology is about the imaginative life, soul—not ego—and healing. Because archetypes relate fundamentally to cognitive and noncognitive realms of behavior and thought, they are central to a fully imagined psychology of students and their writing. As Hillman (1975) defines them, archetypes are

the deepest pattern of psychic functioning, the roots of the soul governing the perspectives we have of ourselves and the world. They are the axiomatic, self-evident images to which psychic life and our theories about it ever returns. (pp. xiii-xiv)

And they are the "frames of our consciousness" (p. 127). Consider the Greek root of the word itself: *Arche* implies a search for beginnings, and the initiating force of a beginning; *typos* means fundamental outline or structure. For archetypal psychology, "development of soul" and "the cultivation of imagination" are pivotal (1983a, p. 4); "depth" is identical with the imagination. If the "image is psyche," as Jung (1975, p. 23) believed, then being is essentially imaginal. The word *imagination*, Hillman (1983c) said, is preferable to *unconscious* because "the unconscious is an abstract noun to cover over the cultural implications that are in the imagination" (p. 32). Since we are always behaving with imagination and always within the borders of an image, *soul* is not so much an entity as an on-going event, the *deepening* of events into experiences, the union of formative forces that give shape to psychic life with that psychic life itself shaped by them.

By using the term *imaginal* as opposed to *imaginary*, Hillman hoped to undercut the real/unreal distinction and to propose instead that the imaginal not be assessed in terms of a narrow, utilitarian conception of "reality," but a broader and more multifaceted one which gives credence to the imaginal (Corbin, 1972).

Like Jung, Hillman's psychology is grounded in myth and archetype, though Hillman sought to "annul [Jung's] metaphysics so as not to lose his psychology" (1989, p. 215). In other words, while omitting Jung's metaphysics and wishing to recover soul free of philosophical idealism and religion, Hillman (1983b) revived Jung's work in archetypes. And he in fact helps us to reconceive Jung as well as Freud and the psychoanalytic tradition. Hillman refigured Jung's Kantian metaphysical theology and his collective unconscious, and he revised the archetypal self, which for Jung was equated with the God archetype, leading Jung into a version of philosophical idealism. In place of Jung's one, all-powerful God and the notion of cosmic Creator and His privileged perspective, Hillman outlined a "polytheistic psychology" that privileges the aesthetic value of the image. In this regard Hillman betrayed the influence of Nietzsche as much as that of depth psychology. Following Nietzsche, Hillman deconstructed philosophical idealism and rejected theology and its literalizations altogether.

While Hillman did not claim to have founded a school of thought, his singular desire to recover psyche through myth, image, and language made him especially relevant to teachers of writing, because writing, in one way or another, is imaginative.¹ The writing class is a constant process of gaining perspective and positioning self through the language of multiple discourses and "fictional" masks which are *not* exclusive to creative writing courses. Each time students sit down to write for us they not only have to "invent the university," as Bartholomae (1985) said, they also have to invent another version of themselves.

Hillman's (1980) radical view of soul as nontheological and grounded in the imagination, I believe, helps teachers to reclaim the word and what it implies. Archetypal psychology makes it possible to re-imagine students (and ourselves) not as whole, unchanging, literal egos striving for self-satisfaction, but as souls constituted by the shifts of thought, language, and experience. Such a perspective is important for writing teachers because language makes such awareness possible; without language we could have no introspection (p. 21). Imagining soul in part relies on the diversity, richness, and precision of the language that brings it forth.

Words are powers which have invisible power over us. They are personal presences which have whole mythologies: gender, genealogies (etymologies concerning origin and creation), histories, and voices: and they are guarding, blaspheming, creating, and annihilating effects. For words are persons. (1975, p. 7)

Meanings, ideas, and images cluster around words, which produce verbal archetypes. Writers engage that archetypal *poesis* or making in the activity of writing. We learn to write not so much by imitating texts but in part by identifying with persons and language that shape us. For example, I hear language echoes of my family members and influential teachers whenever I speak in the classroom; my written words seem inextricably bound to the language rhythms and word pat-

¹Every time we write, we not only have to imagine our audience, which, according to Walter Ong, is "always a fiction," but we also have to imagine a persona, e.g., mask.

terns of those close to me. Helping students claim their own language and thereby reclaim the meaning of their learning constitutes part of our task as teachers of writing.

Reclaiming Education

The metaphor of reclaiming found in the title of several books on teaching (i.e., *Reclaiming Pedagogy*, Donahue & Quandahl, 1989; *Reclaiming the Classroom*, Goswami & Stillman, 1987; *Reclaiming the Imagination*, Berthoff, 1984) is powerfully archetypal. It is Freud's own metaphor in his discussions of dream work and is reminiscent of Jung's metaphor of archeology. Do we also wish to *reclaim* soul (psyche) for studying how people learn—the soul that is conspicuously absent from most discussions of contemporary psychology and education? We certainly need to reclaim the idea of soul from Allan Bloom (1987), who in *The Closing of the American Mind* appropriates it to demonize the Left, uphold the eternal verities of the Great Books, and thus overlook what he sees as the accidental particularity of immediate lives.² What attracts me to Hillman's archetypal perspective is that it takes seriously our culture's most persistent psychological need—to know thyself.

When Socrates refers to the oracle of Delphi in his discussion of soul in *The Apology*, he suggests that "self" in "know thyself" is "soul" in distinction to "ego" (the Cartesian "I am," which separates knower from known). Surely the ancient injunction to know thyself has not lost its appeal for educators, especially writing teachers. Knowing oneself, as I understand the phrase, doesn't mean isolation and vigilant inwardness, but active, reflective introspection and connection with the *daemonic* through acts of purposeful communication. Janet Emig (1983) recognized the mythic dimension of writing when she called up a "hierarchy of daemons" (p. 51) in "The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing." Her choice of words recalls Greek philosophy and myth and is explicitly archetypal. Even Eros (love) was a *daemon*, and it is Eros that moves us to engage Psyche and that, according to the persistent Platonic tradition, moves us to desire knowledge. Knowing oneself is essentially mythic and archetypal.

Current debates in composition about what and how to teach, the nature of discourse communities, the place of critical theory in the classroom, and literacy and the culture wars bring me invariably back to the inner lives or the underlives of students themselves. Theoretical considerations, to be meaningful, have to be grounded in real lives. When I think of myself as a teacher, I think of particular students who worked through problems in their writing and achieved fluency as they struggled to find meaning in psychological conflicts. I think of Angela: While discussing a poem about the loss of a child, she unexpectedly broke down in tears and in a critical analysis of the poem wrote about the loss of her own infant. She made connections in the act of writing about a loss that understandably

²Bloom's subtitle is "How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students." His version of soul is based on a fantasy of a "Golden Age of Literacy," when elite "truth seekers" were undeterred by "accidental lives" (p. 380). Bloom always stays within an archetypal philosophy with its commitment to coherent unity. But soul is best imagined poetically as being beneath in the underworld, immanent—the deepening of events related to pathology and affliction.

penetrated her life and had profound implications for it, coloring her sense of herself as a student, as a writer, and as a woman. The writing did more than merely bring conflicts to the surface; it was an act of healing. And there was John (whom I discuss in more detail), a twenty-two year old recovering addict and alcoholic who wrote about his decision to go to college and about the transformation of values that took place. His examination led him back in memory to the early, life-affirming influences of his French speaking grandmother who read stories to him, instilling in him a love of learning that he had to recover to achieve some balance in his life. And Janet, who, reflecting on the writing she'd done over the semester, veered off into a discussion of her fear of God's punishment because of flights of promiscuity and drug use, and her realization of the compulsive emptiness of her tendencies; writing was a way to work through, interpret, understand.

Their stories emerged in essays they wrote about the importance in their lives of reading, writing, and education. I did not ask for personal narratives; their stories were insistent, because they had no choice but to recover a neglected side of their lives, a side that cried out for scrutiny and care. As Thomas Moore (1994) in *Care of the Soul* (a distillation of Hillman's theories) points out,

[C]are of the soul begins with observance of how the soul manifests itself and how it operates. . . . When people observe the ways in which soul is manifesting itself, they are enriched rather than impoverished. They receive back what is theirs, the very thing they have assumed to be so horrible that it should be cut out and tossed away. (pp. 5-6)

My students entered the realm of soul by reflecting; they came to better understand themselves and their world by engaging in *healing fiction*, their essays constituting what Wallace Stevens calls "cries of their occasion." Their writing was enhanced—enlivened—by their attention to soul, revealing that the individuation process is not a matter of choice but one that we are bound to out of necessity.

The stories of these students betray archetypes of defeat and pain, decay and growth. As teachers, how can we ignore such powerful expressions of psyche? Nurturing student writing means attending to the shape of experience and soul-making. Working closely with John on his paper, I recognized this. At first I did not want to go into the difficult experience he approached in his essay; I wanted instead to talk about formal matters like organization and syntax. But to get him to rethink and revise his paper to bring it to maturity, I had to draw out the details by asking John questions to help him understand the profound implications of his experience, and thus to strengthen his work. I realized that to help John write this particular piece about the place of education in his life, I wanted to make evident to him that writers use their experience and memories by descending into themselves to create powerful writing. That these images and insights are what make writing worth reading John had never seriously considered. John then referred to some pieces we read by Salinger (*The Catcher in the Rye*), Angelou (*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*) and Joyce ("Araby") that seemed

somehow to offer troubling mirrors of his own dissolution and longing. He was able to gain sympathetic insight into his own condition, he told me, by identifying with the crisis and psychological trauma of the main characters.

I encouraged him to see that the worlds he encountered in these literary pieces were not so unlike his own, that the authors drew on the conflicts and dilemmas of growing up to create engaging pieces. His past experience of writing, he told me, was largely a sterile exercise in disembodied prose in a style that left no room for awareness and growth. "In high school I would be counted off for writing like this. Can I really write about this in this way? Is it OK?" he asked me.

I asked what he meant by "this way."

He replied, "In high school my teachers looked to see if my writing was right; they didn't care that much about what I said. Now you are asking me to tell you the stuff that really matters, the gory details. Are the details true? Well, yeah, that's the way I see it."

I simply said, "Yes, you can write this way." It was as if John, who had been playing the role of the obedient student trying to please teacher (or his fantasy of teacher), for the first time saw amazing possibilities for his paper. Instead of "My grandmother was a big influence on my life," he was moved to write:

After my mother and father were through fighting and I was through crying, my grandmother always read to me in French and English. This memory of her love of books helped me decide that drugs and alcohol were dead-end excitements. I knew that I had to return to the way I felt when I read books with her in her room when I was small. My grandmother's death left me empty, but this memory helped to keep me from destroying myself.

John seemed to realize the power of memorable images and confronted his depths in the form of his mother, father, grandmother, drugs, darkness, tears, trauma and death—the stuff of soul. The influence of his grandmother, far from a mere abstraction, resonated with life-sustaining meaning. John told me well after the semester ended that the activity of writing made it possible for him to "face my demons" and "face my future without drugs. . . . I think I learned something about myself that I didn't know was there."

John's piece constituted testimony of the emotionally possessive effect of archetypes on his writing. Both of us, I believe, felt pulled down below the level of the institution-driven teacher and student. His writing and our interchanges about it made me realize that as a teacher I must attend to the psychological richness of students' stories and their ways of knowing experience. Had I attended to textbook issues of writing disembodied from the actual psychological process of struggling with painful memories, I would have lost an opportunity to appreciate what mattered to John. Had I shied away from his personal struggle, his prose would have remained flat, generalized, and unregenerative. Conflicted yet creative energies strengthened the drama of his essay and surely made it worth reading—and worth writing. I do believe this was a turning point in his writing. He seemed to gain a confidence and maturity I had not seen before. His seriousness was evident in class discussions and in his reactions to me after class when

we'd talk about the day's readings or writing. He wrote to me after the semester to say that the course was "great for students who want to improve their writing," which I admit surprised me. I thought he would have said something about his revelations and discoveries in the essay on his grandmother, and would perceive the writing as only incidental to the process. But he apparently understood that writing was primarily instrumental in disclosing himself to himself, that the very act was like a wedge that brought him through the depths into understanding.

The archetypal pattern seems clear, but needs interpreting. I think of Keats' (1993) famous line to his sister and brother: "Call the world if you please, 'The Vale of Soul-making.' Then you will discover the use of the world" (p. 839). Without claiming too much from this anecdote, I do think we both discovered the "use of the world" by making soul through writing. Refusing to ignore the depressing nature of John's experience, we entered a kind of underworld, so to speak, an aspect of existence that usually doesn't see light in academic precincts or in everyday business. That world of torment and trauma is there but denied or suppressed. On this occasion we didn't deny it but worked it through to awareness. The intimacy was unsettling in part because conventional wisdom has it that writing teachers are not supposed to engage students or consider psyche.

I hear my critics saying that such a teaching style is bound to be problematic or not our job as teachers, but surely there is space in the university for what JoAnn Campbell (1992) calls the "intimate classroom": "An intimate classroom invites students to use the facts of their lives, beliefs, and experiences to enhance their knowledge, as a means of connecting with a topic and each other, and as a legitimate foundation for further inquiry" (p. 480). Teaching as "healing intimacy rather than a new form of control" (pp. 480–481), like that modelled in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), constitutes a promising alternative to the dominant modes of teaching that position students as listeners to lectures, as readers of worded texts, and as memorizers of information. These modes ignore the needs of soul, but I cannot.

The Soul of the Writing Class

Begin with where they are is a truism for teachers. Interpreted philosophically, the statement intends to help us see students as language users who seek to find and create forms and shape awareness. Redefining who students are and where they are psychologically is also crucial to understanding student development. It means that we need to see through the empirical fictions that govern our views of perception, psyche, and world. Being aware of soul in the writing class does not mean that participants enact a confessional group therapy session. It does mean that we remain open to the experiences that matter for students, and that we allow moments of confusion, emotion, failure, and silence—for in the construction of meaning these things count, too.

Soul emerges in all kinds of discourse, rhetorical situations, and classroom interactions. "You can't open your mouth without an archetypal perspective speaking through you. Rhetoric doesn't mean just the act or system of persuasive argument; by rhetoric" Hillman (1983c) states, "I mean that all speech is rhetorical in that every archetype has its own mode of rhetoric, its own way of

persuading you" (p. 119). The rhetorical turn to archetypes occurs when we see them as structures of consciousness and embodiments of soul. The mythic element in writing is important in part because it provides a vocabulary of psyche. It's hard to express emotion and psyche, to name what is important. By naming the emotion and the experience, John called forth its significance and gained the motivation necessary to write seriously. This motivation to reclaim experience gave soul to his writing, revealing that writing is seldom a mere choice between personal and academic discourses. Richard Miller (1996), reconsidering the place of the personal in academic contexts, points out that writing is "transformative, . . . an activity whereby we *remake ourselves* (my italics)"; it is a process of "learning how to make oneself heard in a variety of contexts" (p. 282). We need to learn, Miller goes on, "to hear what . . . students are saying," to help them entertain alternative constructions of themselves and to re-vision "the components and possible trajectories of one's lived experience" (p. 285). This plea for making students' lives central in an academic setting is consonant with attending to soul in writing as one way to elicit engaged and meaningful work.

I began this essay with a reference to Greek mythology, and I would like to end with a familiar archetypal image as a visual reminder of what the writing class is. Hermes, god of borders and *hermeneutics*, is a constitutive figure for the writing class. Hermes recalls the inevitable chaos and ambiguity—as well as the organizing force—of the hermeneutical act of composing. Hermes is, Hillman points out, a "healing fiction . . . guide of souls. . . . He appears in the interpretive act; his gift is the insight" (1983b, p. 30). He is also the eloquent, mercurial trickster who twists words, who makes new and unexpected meanings, and who escorts us to the soul of words; he is, after all, the god of writing. Hermes then embodies the perfect image of the elusive nature of teaching and learning writing. He reminds us that the subject of writing resists clear and stable definition and that psyche is forever out of sure reach and, at the same time, always present. Hermes then gives us a word and an image for representing the writing class and for revealing the emotional complexity of learning/teaching writing. As a writing teacher, I privilege Hermes and use him as a guide through the psychic landscape of the classroom, a place of learning and a place of healing. ☺

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Aiding AIDS Through Writing: A Study and Bibliography

Emily Nye

Narrative writing, according to Jerome Bruner's (1984) often-quoted passage, joins the writer to "possible worlds that provide the landscape for thinking about the human condition" (p. 128). Expressivist pedagogy stresses writing toward self-discovery, while a Freirean view emphasizes not just self-awareness but a "critical consciousness" of self and society. Such consciousness empowers individuals and groups to improve their situation. Nel Noddings (1984) also focusses on awareness, change, and growth as a result of caring relationships between teachers and students. Noddings' theory of care simply states that every human encounter is a potential occasion for caring. The connections between writing and healing are evident in the work of theorists' in composition studies and education (Campbell, 1994; Moffett, 1981; Rico, 1991). But it is a scholar from another discipline, nursing, who brings together self-awareness, change, and growth as healing. Jean Watson's idea of human care in nursing asserts that patients and nurses together are partners in the healing process. Their relationship is mutually transformative; it is fostered by understanding, love, and concern. This is particularly important in nursing, because caring is necessary when curing has failed. No cure is known for AIDS, but healing is still possible.

At an AIDS clinic called the Nursing Project in Human Caring (also known as the Caring Center) in Denver, Watson's ideas were put into practice. Patients received one-on-one nursing care and engaged in traditional and nontraditional therapies, including *reiki* massage, *tai kwando*, and rafting and hiking trips.

While volunteering at the Caring Center, my proposal to run a six-week writing group was welcomed as an expressive activity that would constitute a caring occasion. Eight people attended, six men and two women, including me. The group spanned ages 20+ to about 60 years. Half the writers were homosexual and half were heterosexual. Over the next six weeks, four writers stayed with the group and a few others dropped in.

I filled two spiral notebooks with field notes and collected more than 200 pages of the participants' writings. I also conducted in-depth interviews with each writer as well as with the director of the Caring Center, its personnel, and others involved in the AIDS community. I later analyzed the data to learn more about the healing that took place when these individuals wrote.

As I collected the group members' writings and other materials, I followed a qualitative research method based in sociology called Grounded Theory which enabled me to analyze the writing and the interviews and to distinguish impor-

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tant themes in the narratives (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method allows theory to emerge from the data collected: writing samples, interview notes, and other materials like local publications and brochures. I kept track of my own reactions to the phenomena observed and experienced through a research journal. I combed the data, taking apart each observation sentence by sentence. I coded the ideas described with a name or conceptual label. In order to see connections among ideas, I studied the concepts in relation to each other (in Grounded Theory terminology this is called *constant comparison*). Once I identified these categories, I grouped them together and consolidated them. More than two dozen categories became evident. These included themes like: Family/Support, Making Sense of Life, Anger, Guilt, Humor, Survival Tips, Regrets, and Pride.

An Emerging Taxonomy

Story-telling or narratives surfaced repeatedly in the data. Four particular kinds became apparent, each with a different healing function. These functions included making sense of life, in general; teaching others about AIDS; helping others with AIDS and generating a community of support; and gaining control and empowerment by claiming one's own experience and survival.

First, people found it psychologically healthful to make sense of their lives. Writing their life stories, particularly key moments and events, helped them to become more aware of their lives and reckon with their past. They developed a sense of the whole of their lives by marking points along the time-line of their existence. Second, teaching others about AIDS posed a different healing function. Teaching requires knowing. Thus, in this narrative posture, writers accept an authorial stance which is adversarial. The writers found it healing to fight back by sharing their stories. The narratives of people with AIDS, similar to those of Holocaust survivors, may shock or frighten outsiders into confronting the reality of the epidemic. Intersubjective connections occurred, as a member told a class of community college students at a speaking engagement: "I'm the other guy. I'm the person who thought it would never happen to him." Such realizations of otherness brought to light their own mortality. As another stated, "AIDS has no boundaries and can enter your [the participants'] lives as easily as it did mine." Finally, sharing information and survival tips among members of the AIDS population strengthened support within the community. In effect, such support nurtured the caring networks. This assertion also brings this article full-circle to Bruner's idea of the centrality of story in our lives. A caveat is, however, in order. Facilitating writing groups is not for everyone. Some who do this work—like me—are skilled, but not credentialed. Others are credentialed, but not skilled. A third group is neither, and, I suppose, a final group is both. It is useful to examine one's own motivation before working with writing groups. For those readers wishing to learn more about this work an annotated bibliography follows.

Annotated Bibliography

References for this Article

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Bruner examines how narratives transform the mind, allowing us to make meaning of our experiences.

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Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Grounded theory is presented as a systematic way of gathering, coding, and analyzing field notes, interviews, written material, and so on. Rather than proving a hypothesis or testing a theory, themes and theories emerge from the data, effectively closing the gap between theory and research.

Moffett, J. (1981). *Coming on center*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

This collection of essays and talks (from the 1970s to the 1980s) looks at education in America and suggests ways for teachers—of language arts, in particular—to improve their teaching and curricula. The article, "Writing Inner Speech, and Meditation," examines connections between writing and therapy.

Neil, R. (1994). Authentic caring: The sensible answer for clients and staff dealing with HIV/AIDS. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, 18, 36–40.

Neil explains Jean Watson's theory of human care and how it is put to practice at the Denver, Colorado Nursing Project in Human Caring.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminist approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Noddings proposes a theory of care in education where the one-caring (the teacher) enables the one cared-for (the student) to act freely, to grow, and to learn.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basic qualitative research: Grounded theory, procedures, and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

For an audience of novices this book makes grounded theory methodology accessible to researchers in any field.

Watson, J. (1985). *Nursing: Human science and human care*. Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century Crofts.

This general nursing textbook applies Watson's theory to the nursing field. Interdisciplinary Readings on Writing as Healing:

Watson, J. (1990). Transpersonal caring: A transcendent view of person, health, and healing. In M. E. Parker (Ed.), *Nursing theories in practice* (pp. 277–288). New York: National League for Nursing.

According to Watson, the nurse is a co-participant in the human care process. Watson's perspective is phenomenological and subjective.

Campbell, R. (1985). Writing groups with the elderly. In M. Sundell, P. Glasser, R. Saari, & R. Vinter (Eds.), *Individual change through small groups* (pp. 546–588). New York: The Free Press.

Campbell describes the therapeutic benefits of senior citizen writing groups that she has facilitated: Participants leave a legacy for family members, record and validate their lives, learn new things about themselves, and make friends.

Gilman, S. (1995). *Picturing health and illness: Images of identity and difference*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gilman looks at the history of our culture's perception that health is beautiful and illness is ugly.

Kelley, P. (Ed.). (1990). *The uses of writing in psychotherapy*. New York: Haworth Press.

Social work professor Patricia Kelley collected eight articles that show how writing has been used with deaf children, Southeast Asian refugees, the elderly, incest survivors, and individuals with eating disorders.

Klein, A. (1989). *The healing power of humor*. New York: Putnam.

This book explains the importance of humor. It provides techniques for "getting through all that not-so-funny stuff."

Leedy, J. (1985). *Poetry as healer: Mending the troubled mind*. New York: Vanguard Press.

Leedy presents essays by psychiatrists and psychologists who have used poetry with patients in clinical settings.

Scarry, E. (1985). *The body in pain: The making and unmaking of the world*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Using literature, art, medicine, and politics to analyze the subject of pain, Scarry delves into the difficulty of expressing pain and the ability of pain to destroy the sufferer's language and even his or her world. The act of creation—producing cultural artifacts and language—is a "re-making" of the world.

Texts about Narrative and Healing:

Butler, R. (1963). The life review: An interpretation of reminiscence in the aged. *Psychiatry*, 26, 65–76.

Butler describes the importance of self-reflection and reminiscence as a normal part of life. Such life review helps people resolve conflict, make sense of their lives, and prepare for death.

Myerhoff, B. (1992). *Remembered lives: The work of ritual, storytelling, and growing older*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

This collection of anthropologist Myerhoff's essays provides insight into the elderly in America and the importance of the stories they tell. This book is especially useful for anyone planning to conduct writing workshops with seniors.

Pennebaker, J. (1990). *Opening up: The healing power of confiding in others*. New York: William Morrow and Company.

A psychology professor at Southern Methodist University, Pennebaker presents the findings of studies that measure the effects on health of disclosure through writing. Written for a lay audience, the book includes citations of studies from the fields of medicine and psychology.

Polkinghorne, D. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Polkinghorne writes about psychotherapy as narrative reconstruction. By making patients aware of the structure and role of narrative in their lives, they may reconstruct meaningful interpretations of their past.

Sandelowski, M. (1994). We are the stories we tell: Narrative knowing in nursing practice. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 21, 23–33.

Because narratives are expressions of human consciousness, the skills in narrative analysis taught in holistic nursing may benefit patients.

White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Clinical social workers with specialties in family therapy, the authors examine therapy as a process of "storying" one's life through letters, invitations, certificates, and declarations. Their therapy is based in part on Foucault's theories of power and knowledge.

Texts about AIDS

Boffin, T., & Gupta, S. (Eds.) (1990). *Ecstatic antibodies: Resisting the AIDS mythology*. London: Rivers Oram.

This multi-media book/exhibit casts light on the politics of representing AIDS. Partly sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Britain, the work depicts AIDS through social and political commentary in the form of articles and art work.

Borger, I. (Ed.). (1996). *From a burning house*. New York: Washington Square B.

This collection of creative work by members of the AIDS Project, Los Angeles Writer's Workshop resulted from a group Borger facilitated for several years.

Boudin, K. (1993). Participatory literacy education behind bars: AIDS opens the door. *Harvard Education Review*, 63, 207-232.

Boudin, an inmate as well as a literacy scholar, led a prison reading class based on Freire's idea of empowerment education. Participants developed their own curriculum on the subject of AIDS.

Crimp, D., & Bersani, L. (Eds.). (1988). *AIDS: Cultural analysis/cultural activism*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

This collection of essays considers how culture perceives and deals with AIDS.

Erni Nguyet, J. (1994). *Unstable frontiers: Technomedicine and the cultural politics of curing AIDS*. St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press.

Erni Nguyet uses Foucault's theory of discourse to analyze the power structures and cultural politics surrounding medical treatment in the AIDS crisis.

Gilman, S. (1988). *Disease and representation: Images of illness from madness to AIDS*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gilman analyzes the images of disease through history, including the plague and syphilis. His chapter, "Seeing the AIDS Patient," provides an historically grounded view of the media's representation of AIDS that has had harmful effects on patients and the public alike.

Hadas, R. (1991). *Unending dialogue: Voices from an AIDS poetry workshop*. New York: Faber & Faber.

Poet Rachel Hadas facilitated a poetry workshop through the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York. The book includes poems by AIDS patients as well as the poet's own in response to the experience.

Holleran, A. (1989). *Ground zero*. New York: Morrow.

This collection of essays presents the author's reflections on the AIDS epidemic and his experience as a gay male in New York.

Kubler-Ross, E. (1987). *AIDS: The ultimate challenge*. New York: Collier Books.

Kubler-Ross applies her philosophy of the stages of death, dying, and grief to the AIDS epidemic. She discusses the experience of AIDS among several populations and stresses the importance of creating support communities for AIDS victims and their caregivers.

Lamendola, F., & Newman, M. (1994). The paradox of HIV/AIDS as expanding consciousness. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 16, 13–21.

Interviews with nine gay men showed how self-disclosure about HIV/AIDS was a turning point in their lives, which led to a heightened consciousness and/or more positive outlook.

McMillen, L. (1994 October 19). AIDS as metaphor: The epidemic spawns a growing body of scholarship on its signification. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. A20.

McMillen reviews new scholarship on AIDS within the humanities, political science, sociology, public health, social science, and history.

Monette, P. (1988). *Borrowed time: An AIDS memoir*. New York: Avon.

Chronicling the last months of his lover's life, Monette writes powerfully and memorably as an AIDS insider.

Murphy, T., & Poirier, S. (Eds.). (1993). *Writing AIDS: Gay literature, language, and analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

The 14 essays in this collection provide an interdisciplinary examination of AIDS as depicted in literature, journalism, film, gay activism, and the gay culture. An annotated bibliography of AIDS literature from 1982–1991 is provided.

Patton, C. (1990). *Inventing AIDS*. New York: Routledge.

Patton analyzes the complex discourse of AIDS. She challenges the media's treatment of the AIDS epidemic and re-examines science's authority on the epidemic. The author also looks at the political aspects of AIDS activism and AIDS education.

Peabody, B. (1986). *The screaming room*. New York: Avon Books.

This mother's narrative describes her son's death from AIDS as well as her struggles and grief.

Reeves, C. (1996). Language, rhetoric, and AIDS: The attitudes and strategies of key AIDS medical scientists and physicians. *Written Communication*, 13, 130–157.

Taking an interesting twist in AIDS scholarship, Reeves interviews AIDS medical scientists to understand how these persons act as communicators. She analyzes the process of rhetorical negotiation in a medical crisis.

Seidel, G. (1990). Thank God I said no to AIDS: On the changing discourse of AIDS in Uganda. *Discourse and Society*, 1, 61–84.

Seidel presents an intriguing look at how the leading AIDS education agencies in Uganda adapted the rhetoric of their publicity according to the ideological and cultural context of the time.

Shilts, R. (1987). *And the band played on: Politics, people, and the AIDS crisis*. New York: Penguin Books.

Shilts' journalistic chronicle of events surrounding the AIDS epidemic provides much historical and anecdotal material.

Sontag, S. (1988). *AIDS and its metaphors*. New York: Doubleday.

Sontag examines the metaphors used in AIDS discourse: war, plague, end-of-the world rhetoric, and others. She writes about the effect of such metaphors on society's consciousness.

Treichler, P. (1988). AIDS, homophobia and biomedical discourse: An epidemic of signification. In D. Crimp & L. Bersani (Eds.), *AIDS: Cultural analysis/cultural activism* (pp. 31-70). Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Treichler follows feminist theories of language and Foucault's discourse theory to examine the social constructions of AIDS and its influence on public perception and the authority of medical science.

Verghese, A. (1994). *My own country*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Verghese, a physician, writes about his work in a small community in Tennessee and his growing compassion and respect for the AIDS population that he encountered there.

Weir, J. (1985). AIDS stories. *Harpers*, 273, 22.

Weir's haunting one-page essay provides a snapshot of men in an AIDS writing group and their stories.

Weitz, R. (1991). *Living with AIDS*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Rose Weitz interviewed 37 people in Arizona who had HIV disease, describing their lives and the phases of the disease. She addresses the social construction of the disease and how HIV affects the body, relationships, and doctors' perspectives.

Related Texts in Composition

Bishop, W. (1993). Writing is/and therapy? Raising questions about writing classrooms and writing program administration. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 13, 503-516.

The author encourages teachers to acknowledge and explore writing as a healing process in the classroom. Bishop provides thoughtful arguments for both sides of the personal writing question. Colleagues in school writing centers and counseling offices may profit from this piece.

Brand, A. (1989). *The psychology of writing: The affective experience*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Brand examines how emotions change when writers write. She surveyed five different populations of writers (from students to professionals) on a

scale of 20 emotions. She concludes that positive emotions intensify during writing, negative passive emotions weaken, and certain levels of anxiety are helpful in writing.

Brand, A. (1980). *Therapy in writing*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Brand conducted a study of 16 secondary school students to examine the possibilities of developing a writing program for personal growth. She found that students came to grips with personal problems when they wrote and also showed improved self-concept.

Brand, A. & Graves, R. (Eds.). (1994). *Presence of mind: Writing and the domain beyond the cognitive*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann.

The 21 essays featured in this collection examine alternative aspects of writing, including writing as healing, writing and meditation, writing and its relationship to emotions, and writing about archetypes and the unconscious.

Campbell, J. (1994). Writing to heal: Using meditation in the writing process. *College Composition and Communication*, 45, 246–251.

Campbell teaches students to meditate in order to help them generate images and details in their writing and, in some cases, help dissolve writer's block.

Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

A psychiatrist and teacher of literature, Coles looks at the relationship between literature and the human self and spirit. Each essay in this collection illustrates Coles' philosophy that every person has a story to tell, "and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them."

Daniell, B. (1994). Composing (as) power. *College Composition and Communication*, 44, 238–246.

Daniell suggests the need for language that allows descriptions of its spiritual and emotional aspects in addition to those that are cognitive, intellectual, social, and political.

hooks, b. (1988). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston: South End Press.

hooks traces her evolution as a black feminist scholar. Speaking out, according to hooks, is a move toward empowerment. Finding one's voice is essential in one's struggle against oppression and toward liberation.

Kirsch, G., & Sullivan, P. (Eds.). (1992). *Methods and methodology in composition research*. Carbondale: South Illinois University Press.

This collection of 14 articles presents research methodologies used in composition, including teacher-research, ethnography, and textual analysis. The essays also discuss the philosophical issues of epistemology and the politics of knowledge.

Morrow, D. (1991). Tutoring writing: Healing, or what? *College Composition and Communication*, 42, 218-229.

A former physician-turned-writing-coach, Morrow explores the metaphorical connections between writing and healing, envisioning revising as the healing process in writing.

Murphy, R. (1990). Anorexia: The cheating disorder. *College English*, 52, 898-903.

Murphy examines the pedagogical questions involved when teachers misread student work.

Nye, E. (1996). *The more I tell my story: Writing as healing at an AIDS clinic*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

This study contains an extensive literature review in her examination of several AIDS writing groups.

O'Reilley, M. (1993). *The peaceable classroom*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook.

In this compassionate and insightful collection, O'Reilley recounts her evolution as a teacher, scholar, and peace worker.

Swartzlander, S., Pace, D., & Stamler, V. L. (1993, February 17). The ethics of requiring students to write about their personal lives. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. B1.

The authors question the fairness of both disclosing and grading personal writing. They offer instructors such helpful tips as maintaining a student's confidentiality and using the school counseling center as a resource to sensitize teachers to the "implications of forced revelations."

Witherell, C., & Noddings, N. (Eds.). (1991). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

This collection focusses on the power of narrative to teach students about the world and about themselves. Included are exercise and readings.

Adams, K. (1990). *Journal to the self*. New York: Warner Books.

Adams develops a series of short journal-writing exercises from list-writing, to letters, to detailed accounts of memories or dreams. A workbook is available.

Cousins, N. (1979). *Anatomy of an illness*. New York: Bantam Books.

Cousins uses humor and a positive attitude to fight a serious degenerative disease of the connective tissue.

Dunning, S., & Stafford, W. (1992). *Getting the knack: 20 poetry writing exercises*. Urbana, IL: The National Council of Teachers of English.

This is a wonderfully accessible guide to writing poetry with children or adults.

Goldberg, N. (1986). *Writing down the bones*. Boston: Shambhala.

A decade has passed since this book was published and it is still a favorite writing exercise book: accessible, simple, humorous, "zen." Her second book, *Wild Mind*, is also noteworthy.

John-Roger, & McWilliams, P. (1991). *Focus on the positive: The workbook*. Los Angeles: Prelude Press.

This activity book addresses the problem of negative thinking, listing no fewer than 100 writing exercises.

Koch, K. (1977). *I never told anybody: Teaching poetry writing in a nursing home*. New York: Random House.

Poet Kenneth Koch describes teaching poetry writing at a nursing home in New York City. Included are exercise ideas as well as participants' writing samples. Koch's *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams*, directed at teaching poetry to children, is also recommended.

Metzger, D. (1992). *Writing for your life*. San Francisco: Harper.

Metzger shows how writing and storytelling can be spiritual acts, capable of shedding light on archetypes, fairy tales, and myths.

Ostaseski, F. (1994). Stories of lives lived and now ending. *Inquiring Mind*, 10, 14-29.

Ostaseski, Founding Director of the Zen Hospice Project, explains that hospice workers need to cultivate a "listening mind" to hear the stories that dying people tell.

Ouwehand, T. (1995). *Writing your way to wholeness: Creative exercises for personal growth*. San Jose: Resource.

This activity book is divided into four categories: Uncovery, Discovery, Recovery, and Reading, containing more than 70 writing exercises.

Progoff, I. (1975). *At a journal workshop: The basic text and guide for using the intensive journal*. New York: Dialogue House.

Psychologist Progoff pioneered a journal-writing technique that helps people explore their families, work, dreams, and spirituality.

Rico, G. (1991). *Pain and possibility: Writing your way through personal crisis*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.

This book provides writing and drawing exercises that help readers understand and work through emotional pain.

Schneider, P. (1994). *The writer as an artist: A new approach to writing alone and with others*. Los Angeles: Lowell House.

Apart from listing 50 exercises, Schneider discusses her work as a writer. A powerful documentary, *Tell Me Something I Can't Forget*, has been made about her work with women writers in a Massachusetts housing project. ☺

REVIEWS

Katz, Steven B. 1996. *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric: Toward the Temporal Dimension of Affect in Reader Response and Writing*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Lisa Langstraat

In *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric* Steven Katz explores the sensuous and temporal nature of language in ways that challenge the tenor of epistemological inquiry, the very rhythm of our scholarship and teaching. "Affect and intuition," Katz suggests, "may not be so much an extension of rational, spatially oriented logic as another, physical kind of knowing all together" (p. 61). Probing the possibilities of this affective epistemology, Katz turns our attention to the aural and musical features of language, features suppressed in recent rhetorical theory because they have been deemed the elements of lower forms of literacy in our logocentric culture.

As he develops a theory of affective response predicated on the idea of language as sound, Katz challenges several deeply held premises in composition studies. He maintains that current rhetorical theories cannot fully account for the corporeal and emotional realm of language. We can profit, he suggests, by moving from that logocentric episteme—which, in our scientific culture, stresses visual and spatial modes of knowing—to a phonocentric episteme—which may account for aural, temporal modes of experiencing and reasoning. In concert with this challenge, Katz asks heady questions: "What else is there besides analysis and interpretation? What else can we do with texts?" (p. 8). To respond to such questions Katz reconceives reading and writing as *performance*, and he develops approaches to supplement analysis and interpretation when teaching literature and writing.

Clearly, Katz's goals are ambitious, for he departs from the prevailing approaches to emotion in rhetorical theory. Rather than considering affect within psychological, cognitive, or biological frameworks that configure affect as an *à priori* episteme that language can only describe—not embody, Katz casts language itself as inherently affective in its meter, tone, and movement across time. This conception of language, Katz suggests, was neglected in Newtonian physics and New Critical practices which erased the subjective and emotional by casting language as a transparent means of reporting a knowable, coherent reality. There is, however, an emerging sophistic in our culture, an epistemology of probability, relativity, contingency, and uncertainty that challenges the purported objectivity of knower and language.

Katz locates this sophistic in two parallel movements: New Physics and Reader Response Criticism, which place subjectivity at the center of all epistemological processes. My word choice here, however, reflects the problems Katz locates in these approaches. The center implies a spatial, visual mode of

structuring knowledge. Since emotional response is often instantaneous, physical, and diffuse, Katz argues, it might be better understood as an “indeterminate movement of patterns in time” (p. 155), rather than as visual schemata localized in space. Such a phonocentric episteme could foster new ways of hearing the form of experience that logocentric interpretation, given its spatial, print-oriented literacy, does not allow.

These insights demand that we rethink our (often unspoken) bias against orality as a lower form of literacy. Turning to classical rhetoric, Katz asserts its value based on its emphasis on aesthetic, nonrationalist response to the rhythm of words. Unravelling the phonocentric insights of Sophistic and Ciceronian rhetorics, Katz chronicles the subjective and social dimensions of oral cultures and suggests that the corporeal and emotive experience of language is tied to temporality and physiology. In contemporary music theory Katz (who is, not incidentally, a classical guitarist) finds a correlative in the sophistic philosophy of language as affective performance. The work of musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl, for example, examines how tone, melody, and rhythm challenges our common conceptions of time as a fourth or spatial dimension, rather than a separate, indeterminate vibration. Katz draws from these perspectives to suggest that time “is the basis of the experience of language as sound, emotion a lump of time caught in the throat” (p. 176).

Katz insists that he is not presenting a theory of language *as* music. Instead, he considers language sensuous, temporal sound. This reconception of language accounts for linguistic dissonance, voice, and felt sense, the very bases of writing. To teach the aural, temporal nature of language, to orchestrate in educational practices the link between felt sense and language, is to teach indeterminacy. Katz maintains that tacit knowledge cannot be learned through formalistic rules. While musical talent—an ear for language—might be grounded in natural talent, Katz argues that it can be taught through imitation, practice, and performance. If this smacks of classical teaching methods, it does so rightly. For Katz insists that such unorthodox experiments in contemporary teaching as pantomime, body movement, dance, and dramatic reading draw on the classical traditions of performance. The field, however, has favored the rationalistic, taxonomic rules found in classical rhetoric (and other cognitive rhetorics).

It makes sense, then, that no rules for performance appear in Katz’s discussion of teaching indeterminacy. Instead, Katz offers general guidelines for fostering in students the ability to create and comprehend written texts in light of their physical, intuitive responses. Katz’s pedagogy is one of performance, and teaching students through imitation and playful approaches to reading aloud figure prominently. The social forums of collaborative classrooms provide the opportunity for students to hone their listening skills. And oral finesse—gesture, delivery, and drama—becomes a key feature of reader response. In this approach voice becomes not an abstract ideal, but a material feature of rhetoric as performance. Similarly, students come to understand organization not as a visual container for their ideas, but as a rhythmic event.

Jarring by its absence, however, are descriptions of students’ prose and music. Certainly Katz acknowledges the difficulty of enacting rhetoric-as-performance: He notes that students are unaccustomed to focussing

on the felt sense of language, are rarely trained in close listening skills, and are often embarrassed by performance as well as by the emotional components of language. But Katz refers only to the prose of expert writers when demonstrating his theory of language. I found myself wondering how students' writing might present a different rhythm from Hemingway's, Heidegger's, or Welty's. Would day-to-day, temporal classroom experiences recreate and embellish Katz's theories?

My wish to hear students' texts and voices is not based on a need to hear Katz interpret language events rationally. I share with Katz the suspicion of educational impulses to return classrooms to the basics, to formalistic skills-and-drills pedagogies. However, I question Katz's argument that to teach writing as speech is "nothing less than the education of the intuitive faculty, that *natural aesthetic* [my emphasis] that Isocrates and Cicero talk about" (p. 148). Could including students' voices, their collaborative performances, clarify this claim? I am thinking here of students who speak in other-than-standard dialects, and the ways many teachers have listened to these students' voices for error rather than for music, for discord rather than for harmony. I am thinking of the ways women's voices were often deemed piercing, shrill, and unnatural in what Miriam Brody calls the "muscular rhetorics" of writers such as Cicero. (Indeed, I find it odd that Katz fails to engage feminist work on reader response, for work that syncopates the personal, political, private, and public in insightful ways.)

Katz's argument that we recast language as sensuous, aural performance offers a new theory of aesthetics. Accordingly, style is not a surface feature of language, but a temporal, emotional experience. Given this reconception of style, it is also clear that our natural aesthetics are influenced by our experiences as members of a culture. I found myself wanting Katz to account for questions of culture and difference, to explain to us how he negotiates them in the real time of his classroom.

Katz's reconsideration of language within a phonocentric episteme is, however, provocative and timely. *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric* has heightened my awareness of the ways visual metaphors operate hegemonically in our discourse; as I write this, I see that my own critical vocabulary is very much visually oriented, and I am looking for ways to revise these metaphors. Moreover, the notion of language as sensuous, and its concomitant stress on temporality and emotion, square with exciting new areas of research into rhetoric and corporeality—from Richard Miller's absorbing discussion of the "nervous system" that is academic writing, to feminist reconceptions of body, power, and emotion (L. Irigaray. (1985). *Speculum of the other woman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press); and L. Worsham. (1993). *Emotion and pedagogic violence. Discourse 15*). Katz's theory also has exciting implications as our culture moves from print-literacy to a hyper-visual one, characterized by what James Berlin called "space-time compression."

Generative, innovative, and compelling, *The Epistemic Music of Rhetoric* is a powerful example of rhetorical scholarship. It resists easy closure and quick fixes, recognizing the complexity of researching, describing, and teaching the corporeal and emotional nature of language. In so doing, Katz reminds us of the indeterminacy of knowledge, of the possibilities for new ways to understand and feel what's right with language. ☺

Fox, Roy F., Ed. 1994. *Images in Language, Media, and Mind*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Linda T. Calendrillo

Roy F. Fox collects sixteen essays that emphasize the image while discussing the relationship between image and word, visual and verbal. While the collection is divided into three sections stated in the title—language, media, and mind—the thrust of attention is given to the second category. Unfortunately, of the three sections, this middle section on media presents the image in a most negative light. Though Fox declares that the book values the image and its meaning-making potency, the view of image as seductive deceiver prevails.

In his introduction Fox defines an image as “any form of mental, pictorial representation, however generic or fleeting” (p. x). Fox also states the book’s purposes: to show the importance of how the mind functions, how the culture is structured, and how social issues are presented. Finally, the introduction lists assumptions about images that the book relies on: that meaning comes from interacting both with images and with language, that images can be discussed by means of language, and that images are rhetorical in the persuasive sense.

Fox opens the *Images in Language* section with his own essay “Image Studies: An Interdisciplinary View.” This piece examines the influences on image studies that come from science, technology, psychology, philosophy, and the arts and humanities. It reviews how central images, their examination and manipulation, are related to modes of thinking and to the burgeoning field of mental imaging. With its excellent overview, “Image Studies” will be particularly helpful to those who have scant knowledge of the field.

The next four essays may be the strongest in the book because they examine image and language from a pedagogical perspective. In “People Prose” Alan Purves explores teachers’ false assumptions about the ways their students think and reason. Purves looks at how the generally image-bound student culture opposes the literary style preferred by teachers, thus placing the image in opposition to the language of the academy. Nancy Thompson writes about Sylvia Ashton-Warner’s use of imaging to encourage literacy in her native New Zealand and later in Colorado; Thompson thus gives readers access to an unfamiliar educational philosophy and approach. Carol Hovanec and David Freund describe a pedagogy linking images and language to develop critical thinking in a course that ties writing to photography. Stevie Hoffman’s piece, “Child Talk,” reveals how integral the image is to a child’s meaning making. On the whole this section of the book seems most successful of the three in matching theory with practice and in examining imaging positively and productively.

Another solid section of the book is the final one, *Images in Mind*, which includes some of the book’s more philosophical pieces. Herb Karl’s “The Image is Not the Thing” warns that context must be included when images are assessed; he reviews both theory and an empirical study to reinforce this claim. Kay Ellen Rutledge’s “Analyzing Visual Persuasion: The Art of Duck Hunting” reviews many of the same problems with media images which the book’s second section ad-

dresses, but pro-actively offers an educational approach to equip students to analyze such images.

Rutledge combines Burke's Pentad with Hugh Rank's Schema for Propaganda Analysis, a system that teaches students to examine what elements are downplayed and which are intensified and to apply the opposite strategy to a given communication. The last essay, Vito Signorile's "The Riddle of Visual Experience," is a fascinating discussion of how images move from specific to generic via a culture's acceptance of and identification with their symbolic nature. The weakness in this section is Fox's interview with S.I. Hayakawa and Alan Hayakawa, which opens but fails to focus the cluster of essays.

More than half of Fox's collection is devoted to Images in Media. These seven essays revolve around the idea that images used by mass media to persuade are suspect, and teachers must train students to decode these harmful and invariably manipulative images. Though this premise holds some value, it makes for reductive and repetitive reading. More significantly perhaps, it fosters the notion that images are bad, that advertisers use images to play on naive emotions rather than to appeal to the logical reasoning faculties that individuals would use were they interacting with language rather than viewing images. For those who study mental imaging in order to enhance learning and creativity, such a view is limiting and potentially destructive. This section's essays, though individually engaging and culturally revealing, may not be as productive as the book's other investigations.

Images in Language, Media, and Mind is valuable in that it provides essays that focus on the image and its importance to composition studies. Unfortunately, the collection also fosters two visions of the image that may prove inimical to this relationship. First, a number of essays rely on the idea that individuals are manipulated unfairly by images, that images are unworthy because they aren't "text-rich," aren't elaborated on or evaluated for their truthfulness but are instead accepted as true—with a "seeing is believing" naiveté. In addition, the view of the image as media temptress also reinforces the idea of rhetoric/persuasion as potentially evil because it appeals to emotions instead of to logic. This second view is equally dangerous because it separates emotions from thinking processes in a simplistic way and reinforces the notion that emotions are primitive while logic is superior to and separable from emotions in the meaning-making process. ☹

Nagel, Greta. 1994. *The Tao of Teaching*. New York: Donald I. Fine.

Judith Bradshaw-Brown

The title intrigues me. Hopeful that I'll find connections I haven't made, a different perspective on teaching and learning, I approach *The Tao of Teaching* with interest. The introduction lays out the origin, intent, and plan of the book and gives a general, very brief "historical and philosophical background" (p.5) of Taoism. I remain interested; Nagel's intent and plan seem promising.

Nagel suggests that the concepts of Taoism "align well with current ideas for learner-centered practices, holistic views, interdisciplinary instruction, and constructivist education" (p. 1). I'm with her. She tells me that *The Tao of Teaching* is a book of stories about real teachers because Taoist philosophy stresses the importance of modeling. Again, I'm happy; that suits my notion of good writing as well as good teaching. She elucidates her focus on three teachers who, she believes, were practicing Taoist principles in their classrooms: a multi-age K-3, a 6th grade, and a high school philosophy/psychology/ government class. I appreciate the broad range of her choices. I like reading about the Tao emphasis on the importance of a balance between intuition and reason, the yin/yang concepts that can help us tune in to our students' and our own needs and act on what we come to know.

However, I begin to feel confused about Nagel's intended audience (to whom she refers as Dear Reader) when she tells us her hopes for the book: "to influence the attitudes of teachers who yell at their students and who fill novice teachers with advice like, 'You have to be mean.'" She goes on to list the worst practice and unhealthy environments she hopes to change. She hopes that teachers will "realize that their work is social work and that students should write poetry all year long and engage in the fine arts as necessities, not frills." It's a large charge for one book. And the likelihood of "the teachers who yell at their students" (pp. 8-9) reading and being influenced by this book does not seem great. Yet, if the audience is, as she suggests, preservice teachers, I'm still thinking it might be helpful.

The rest of the book is presented as 81 short chapters, each beginning with a precept of Taoism, followed by Nagel's interpretation and connection to teaching and a narrative of one of the teachers exemplifying the precept. Nagel's sections have a tendency to be didactic. For "[s]ilence is a virtue," she tells us: "Do not admonish harshly or lecture repeatedly. Speak once and expect to be heard" (p. 17). The anecdote has the 6th grade teacher blinking the lights for attention, speaking only in a quiet voice and using few words to spark student interest in a new project.

By the fifth precept, I'm zoning out. The connections are none I couldn't have made. The practice, while exemplary and admirable, shows me nothing new. I'm not comfortable with the didacticism. If the audience is preservice teachers and not those bringing to the book knowledge of and experience with constructivist, student-centered practice, then I suggest that there are other, more helpful books. I'd propose books that give readers an idea of how one might arrive at such practice as well as the struggles entailed in getting and staying there. I'm thinking of Jill Ostrow's (1995) *A Room with a Different View: First through Third Graders Build Community and Create Curriculum* (York, ME: Stenhouse, 1995) or Randy Bomer's *Time for Meaning: Crafting Literate Lives in Middle and High School* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995). Ostrow describes the journey she and her six to nine year-old students take when they decide to build an island in their multi-age classroom. They physically transform their classroom, grow into a community, and complete interdisciplinary, self-assessed projects. Ostrow's engaging narrative shows us how she and her students move away from a traditional model to one that seems to me to exemplify Tao precepts. Bomer traces his own

growth as a teacher, offers nuts and bolts suggestions for reading/writing workshops that honor students, and invites us to reflect on such areas as our attitude toward time. Again, while Bomer never mentions the Tao, I find the precepts illustrated in his work. Teacher-educators wishing to make connections between Tao precepts and classroom practice might use *The Tao of Teaching* as a source of discussion starters in conjunction with other reading such as Ostrow or Bomer.

I like making the connection of constructivist practice to Taoism. I applaud Nagel's choice of a project and her intention. For me, however, the intention of *The Tao of Teaching* does not square with my experience of the book. Nor does it fulfill the promise of its intriguing title. ☹

Lamott, Anne. 1994. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Doubleday.

Frances Jo Grossman

Some books delight those of us who teach composition for the recognition and reaffirmation of the universals that we experience in our daily walk as instructors. Such a book is Ann Lamott's *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Lamott, a novelist from San Rafael, California, writes of the vicissitudes of living in the world from the multiple perspectives of writer, daughter-of-a-writer, mother, and friend-of-the-dying, while sustaining the writer's attention to detail in the foreground and observing larger perspectives. The book's intensely personal self-disclosure is both its strength and its hazard.

In the vein of Natalie Goldberg and Annie Dillard, Lamott writes for writers, or more specifically, for those who wish to become writers. In highly engaging conversational style, Lamott introduces her readers to her family and friends and to the motivations behind her earlier books, including the novels, *Hard Laughter* (1980), *Rosie* (1983), *Joe Jones* (1985), *All New People* (1989), and *Operating Instructions* (1993), her memoir about mothering her son.

Lamott is most convincing as one who has been in the fray and knows the territory. She announces to her students on the first day of class that good writing is about telling the truth. "A writer paradoxically seeks the truth and tells lies every step of the way. It's a lie if you make something up. But you make it up in the name of truth, and then you give your heart to expressing it clearly" (p. 52). And truth telling, Lamott style, permeates her text. She avows that "grim and horrible childhoods are okay" as subjects providing the writing is well done. Pragmatic advice such as, "Remember that you own what happened to you" (p. 6) fits all levels of writing. Lamott takes joy in rejecting the dictates of "not telling" that many writers have been subjected to; she asserts that perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor.

Her passion for writing and truth telling is a sacred alliance. She acknowledges: "Writing has. . . so many surprises. The act of writing turns out to be its own reward" (p. xxvi). She speaks of the necessity of faith and perseverance in writing and the miracle of books to comfort and quiet as they unfold "world after world after world, worlds that sing" (p. 15).

Lamott's response to people who complain that writing can't be taught is: "Who the hell are you, God's dean of admissions" (p. xxvii). Her own teaching has been in the creative writing workshop setting, and her emphasis is directed to those who want to write fiction. Part One of her text is entitled Writing, with sections identified as Plot, Character, Dialogue, Set Design, and Plot Treatment. But within this same section, which specifically discusses emerging characters, she also includes chapters titled Getting Started, Short Assignments, First Drafts, and Perfectionism. These brief chapters apply to most who write or teach composition. They speak to those real issues that writing teachers, that any writer, must somehow address: the blank paper, the need for practice, the simultaneity of work and play. Lamott notes specific techniques, such as using a one-inch picture frame as an aid to sharpen focus. And she relates the story of her book's title when, over 30 years ago in the desperate attempt of her ten-year-old brother to write a report on birds, her father gently encouraged, "Bird by bird. . . . Just take it bird by bird" (p. 19).

Lamott speaks to the writer within each of us. She knows that writing can come from a place of our deepest needs: "our need to be visible, to be heard, . . . to make sense of our lives, to wake up and grow and belong" (p. 19). Yet, she tempers this exhortation of writers to tell the truth "because something is calling you to do so" (p. 31) with reminders that we had better not forget how to laugh at ourselves. She sees the ability to be funny as part of the clarity that writers bring to the unforgivingly complex reality of our lives.

Lamott is funny, outrageous with insult and creative metaphors, such as "A critic is someone who comes onto the battlefield after the battle is over and shoots the wounded" (p. 142). However, eventually I grew weary of the excessive personal references to disaster, when waiting for feedback by the writer's group or an editor. Yet this exaggerated style, this hyperbole, the avowedly open: "So I'm neurotic. Who isn't? At least, what writer isn't?" is too intrinsically a part of the book to separate it from the writing. Lamott is the dancer and the dance—charming and provocative in her steps. Her humor is self deprecating and available for any of us willing to see ourselves in her mirror.

Lamott's *Bird by Bird* invites readers to keep on writing and/or keep on teaching others to write. Though the material is not original thematically, Lamott's humor, candor, and willingness to reveal the writer's vulnerability make the book engaging for even veteran teachers.

Lamott generously provides quotations and acknowledges sources from well-known writers on writing: Henry James, Mark Twain, E. M. Forster, John Gardner, Donald Bartholomae, Marianne Moore, and Toni Morrison. She even references Samuel Beckett's tree in *Waiting for Godot*. We also find lines from Geneen Roth: "Awareness is learning to keep yourself company" (p. 31) and Hillel: "I get up. I walk. I fall down. Meanwhile, I keep dancing" (p. 130). Her gloss on Roth's line is to learn to be more compassionate company to yourself. This state-

ment suggests the tough tenderness and honesty underlying Lamott's advice to writers.

Possibly, the richest part of reading Lamott's *Bird by Bird* lies in her reminders that ultimately writers speak hope. In a chapter called Giving, she writes that despite our fragile humanity, the very act of writing is a sign that words carry on our hope to change things, ourselves, the world, that compassion for others is the reason to write. These verities comprise the final section entitled The Last Class, in which she concludes, "Becoming a writer is about becoming conscious" (p. 225). When her students solemnly ask once again, "So why does our writing matter?" she replies: "Because of the spirit, . . . Because of the heart. Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation" (p. 237). Writers and writing teachers already know this. Lamott's book provides an inspiring reminder to stay true to what we do indeed know, and to keep our courage in speaking our heart in all domains, including the institutions where we boldly teach. Our students come to learn to write, and Lamott helps us to remember that it is possible to teach them that their words sing and that we dance together as writers. ☺

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Manuscript Submission Information

Theme	<i>Resistance and Rewards Beyond the Cognitive Domain</i>
Deadline	January 31, 1997
Typing	Double-spaced, numbered pages, including references and block quotations; at least one level of internal headings, when necessary; wide margins for feedback; author's name to appear on title page only
Title Page	Title of Article; Name; Address; Home and Office Phone; Institutional Affiliation
Abstract	2 double-spaced sentences on title page
Preferred Length	Articles, 12-15 typed pages, including references; Book Reviews, 3-4 typed pages
Citing Students' Work	Written Permission, even when citing anonymously
Documentation Style	<i>APA Manual of Style</i> . 4th ed.
Copies	Three, letter-quality
Envelopes	One SASE if you wish your manuscript returned; Unattached stamps for mailing 2 manuscripts
Editorial Report	Within 6-8 weeks
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AEPL at CCCC • Phoenix, 1997
Two Special Interest Group Sessions

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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP SESSION I

Writing to Heal

Thursday, March 13, 6:45–7:45 PM

Chair: Regina Foehr

Speaker: Paul Heilker, Virginia Technological University

A Rhetoric of Healing: Student-Composed Meditation Books

Speaker: Gabriele Rico, San Jose State University

Evolving Patterns of Meaning the Healing Word

Paul Heilker's essay, "The Rhetoric of Spirituality in Popular Meditation Books," appears in *The Spiritual Side of Writing: Releasing the Writer's Whole Potential* (eds., Regina Foehr and Susan Schiller). In *Pain and Possibility* Gabriele Rico demonstrates how writing can chronicle a path through personal crisis.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP SESSION II

Researching Topics Beyond the Cognitive

Friday, March 14, 6:00–7:00 PM

Chair: Regina Foehr

Speaker: Lee Odell, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Researching AEPL Topics

Speaker: Kurt Rachwitz, Georgia Institute of Technology

Getting AEPL Research Funded

Workshop Alternative, Participation Welcomed

Lee Odell, NCTE Research Assembly Past Chair and *Research in the Teaching of English* Advisory Board member, will serve as a featured presenter and leader. His focus will be "Researching AEPL Topics." Kurt Rachwitz, Director of Development of the College of Sciences, will speak on "Funding Your Research." Rachwitz will provide techniques and resources, including hand-outs of potential AEPL topic-friendly funding sources, and offer grant proposal writing/cultivation/solicitation strategies.

Odell and Rachwitz will answer participants' questions about their AEPL research interests, reviewing their research plans and procedures. Please bring 1) a draft proposal to be developed—even if it is brief or tentative, 2) a past proposal (successful or unsuccessful), or 3) a detailed project description for research and/or cultivation/solicitation.

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— *OTHER SPEAKERS TO BE ANNOUNCED* —

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