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J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

**Recognizing Our Wounds,
Reconciling Our Pain:
Teaching amid the Tensions**

Volume 13 • Winter 2007-2008

The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

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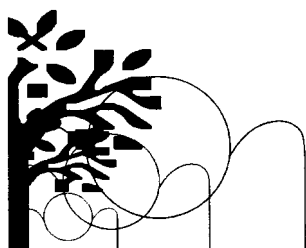
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The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL), an official assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English, is open to all those interested in extending the frontiers of teaching and learning beyond traditional disciplines and methodologies.

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: aesthetic, emotional, and moral intelligence; archetypes; body wisdom; care in education; creativity; felt sense theory; healing; holistic learning; humanistic and transpersonal psychology; imaging; intuition; kinesthetic knowledge; meditation; narration as knowledge; reflective teaching; silence; spirituality; and visualization.

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Contents

- v Editors' Message

Essays

- bell hooks* 1 **Writing for Reconciliation: A Musing**
- Devan Cook* 2 **The Value of Mutual Respect:
What We Learn from Student Complaints**
*This essay discusses the emotional labor of teaching and
the ways writing programs can support that work.*
- Elizabeth Gardner* 13 **Dangerous Pedagogy**
Patricia Calderwood
Roben Toroyan
*Using data primarily drawn from undergraduate
psychology classes, we reflect upon what humane but
"dangerous" pedagogy illustrates about our teaching and
our students' learning.*
- Karen Surman Paley* 22 **Applying "Men and Women for Others" to
Writing about Archeology**
*This essay explores one archeology professor's pedagogy
of caring during a summer field study of a former state
school and orphanage.*
- Elizabeth Oakes* 33 **Reading Othello in Kentucky**
and others
*Members of a graduate Shakespeare class at Western
Kentucky University discuss Otherness in the context of
Othello and national perceptions of Kentucky.*
- Rachel Forrester* 45 **The "Not Trying" of Writing**
*A very spiritual "not trying," or non-work, is at the heart of
composition.*
- Eudora Watson* 57 **The Other End of the Kaleidoscope:
Jennifer Mitchell**
Victoria Levitt
Configuring Circles of Teaching and Learning
*To reflect on and participate in reconsideration of
convention in academic discourse, this essay presents
three voices in three genres.*

*Helen Walker*65 **Connecting***Stephen DeGeorge*

The Things They Bring to School

Johanna Rodgers

Translating Authority

Jeremiah Conway

Emily's Cave

Reviews*Kabi Hartman*

- 72 **Writing With, Through and Beyond the Text:
An Ecology of Language**
(Rebecca Luce-Kapler, 2004)

Caleb Corkery

- 74 **African American Literacies Unleashed:
Vernacular English and the Composition Classroom**
(Arnetha F. Ball and Ted Lardner, 2005)

Joel Kline

- 77 **Race, Rhetoric, and Technology:
Searching for Higher Ground**
(Adam J. Banks, 2006)

Terri Pullen Guezzar

- 97 **Why Is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools?**
(Kathy Emery and Susan Ohanian, 2004)

Editors' Message

Whitman writes in "Reconciliation":

For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin—I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

In that act, in a gentle kiss that joins self and enemy, he reconciles and eases the pain of war's devastation.

For Whitman, reconciliation is the "Word over all, beautiful as the sky," the deed that washes the world clean of the carnage of conflict. Without the act of reconciliation—the bringing together of that which was divided, of that which was estranged—the "soil" of war, its blood feuds, its hate, its fears, and its enmities—would linger to pollute the promise of a country and its people. Reconciliation is necessary to heal, to move on, to be at peace with, and to again flourish as a people in a nation once violently divided against itself and estranged.

Teaching, too, relies on an ongoing act of reconciliation. Good teaching, Parker Palmer reminds us, comes from identity and integrity, and both have "as much to do with our shadows and our limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials" (13). To teach requires reconciling shadows and limits, wounds and fears with strengths and potentials: our own and our students'. The seven essays in this issue of JAEPL "bend down and touch lightly" fears, woes, and strengths to bring about a fruitful union of pain and healing; they do the work of reconciliation so necessary in teaching and in writing, pointing to ways in which we might similarly reconcile our own tensions.

We open with a poignant plea from bell hooks for the work of reconciliation, a necessary prelude, she says, for writing and healing. Without reconciliation, she points out, writing cannot be therapeutic, it cannot heal that which is broken. The six essays that follow her supplication offer specific moments and specific methods of reconciliation, seeking to bring again into harmony relationships and forces that tug against each other.

Devan Cook focuses on one of the most contentious and painfully fraught sites in composition studies: the first-year Writing Program and the difficult negotiation among students, administration, and adjunct faculty. Beyond reconciling the "breakdowns in communication between students and their instructor" that disrupt teaching and learning, a writing program administrator (WPA) must confront and attempt to reconcile the whirlpool of tensions swirling around "emotional labor." Cook argues that "teaching involves emotional labor as well as knowledge and creative work," and, while asking adjunct and contingent faculty to engage in this emotional labor is necessary, it is "at the same time highly problematic, given the conditions of their work." Thus, reconciliation functions for Cook in her role as a WPA on multiple complex levels: practical, interpersonal, discursive, and institutional. While addressing these tensions is difficult emotional labor for any WPA, it is essential for the well being of teachers, students, and institutions.

Moving from the emotional and intellectual tensions within writing program administration, we turn to two essays that examine from different perspectives

the constant movement of reconciliation necessary to honor the goals of a Jesuit-inspired pedagogical philosophy: *cura personalis*, or care for the whole student. In "Dangerous Pedagogy," Elizabeth B. Gardner, Patricia E. Calderwood, and Roben Torosyan jointly engage in an exploration of two techniques Gardner uses in her undergraduate psychology classes to bring together students' personal and intellectual lives: brief "What's on Your Mind" discussions and Insight Cards. While student evaluations reveal that such techniques foster a sense of community that enriches and deepens learning, the authors also conclude these methods are potentially dangers because they rely on constant reconciliation. They observe that "traditional student-teacher power relations became unmoored," and, while there was "room for the social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of teacher and student to shape the process and the content of learning," those complex dimensions posed a threat. Teacher and students had to work collaboratively and continually to harmonize these tensions.

Karen Surman Paley in "Applying 'Men and Women for Others' to Writing about Archeology" also tackles the complex pedagogical philosophy of *cura personalis*, secularized as "men and women for others," this time within the context of an archeology class unearthing the remains of a state orphanage. Through fine-grained case studies focusing on students' writing, Paley highlights the degree to which students developed through reconciliation. They enact reconciliation physically in moments when former residents of the long defunct orphanage returned to reunite and witness the class's work. Students also enact reconciliation intellectually as they struggle to determine what private information to include in their archeology reports from their interviews with former residents. And students reconcile emotionally as they experience the necessary union of intellectual inquiry with the humanity of the subject of inquiry.

If reconciliation lends depth, and danger, to pedagogy, it also invites communal membership and engagement with literature. In "Reading Othello in Kentucky," a painful and humorous essay, Elizabeth Oakes and students in her graduate seminar on Shakespeare explore these two spheres of reconciliation. Inspired by Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, an account of an unauthorized and highly illegal class Nafisi informally conducted with seven other women in Tehran, Oakes and her students explore the experience of Othering. They take their cue from Shakespeare's marginalization and manipulation of Othello, applying those lessons to their marginalization as Kentuckians. In the process they identify the tensions implicit within the literature, their response to the literature, and their own communal identity.

Rachel Forrester brings us back to the individual act of reconciliation, particularly the resolution—or balancing—of tensions in writing. In "The 'Not Trying' of Writing" Forrester struggles with "the uncertainty and perhaps even deep dread" she experiences every time she begins to write. Writing is an act of faith, she says, faith in the power of "not trying" because, after all the hard work, all the preparation, the act itself is like hearing what to say rather than deciding what to say. Writing seems to "emerge in physical, black-and-white form." Her essay attests to the paradoxical necessity of not trying, tracking and harmonizing the tensions of writing through silence, the unconscious, and bodies. She finds in that reconciliation ways to bring into the classroom the "not trying" of writing.

Finally, we conclude this exploration of reconciliation with an essay that seeks to reconcile through both its form and its content the tension between rules

and freedom intrinsic to teaching. By playing with traditional academic discourse—performing it, disrupting it, transforming it—Eudora Watson, Jennifer Mitchell, and Victoria Levitt come to grips in different ways with the chafing necessity of seemingly arbitrary rules. In “The Other End of the Kaleidoscope: Configuring Circles of Teaching and Learning,” the three authors enact reconciliation both emotionally and discursively, bringing into a tentative if only temporary harmony the difficult and troubling tension between the seemingly informal and formal rules of academe with the richness and necessary disorder of learning itself.

If reconciliation is, as Whitman says, the “word over all,” then these seven essays demonstrate through myriad perspectives that reconciliation is also a constant process, a matter of continual balance; it is more than a single act, completed when we have lightly touched the face of an enemy to discover our own divinity. Rather, these essays suggest that teaching, learning, writing, and reading may, in fact, derive their life’s blood from our ongoing efforts to recognize and heal wounds through reconciliation. We bend down and lightly touch the tensions, the shadows, the limits of our classrooms and ourselves not once but always. Here is the necessary torque that powers the lives of teachers and learners. □

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Writing for Reconciliation: A Musing

bell hooks

One of the questions most frequently asked me as a writer is whether I think writing is healing, whether I believe writing has a therapeutic dimension.¹ Clearly, writing can be a dynamic and powerful means of self-interrogation, which can be therapeutic. However, there is no recovery or healing without reconciliation. When we begin, in whatever dimension of our lives, to seek to reconcile, we enter a domain where there is conflict, tension, denial. Writing is that place of sanctuary where all can be revealed, exposed, acknowledged.

Reconciliation enables us to move toward the place where we feel damaged and broken. It allows us to take the bits and pieces of the heart and put them together again. Memory and re-membering are essential to the process of reconciliation. Often, we remember to forget. Writing the autobiographical memoir of my girlhood, *Bone Black*, allowed me to come to terms with my childhood in a deep, psychoanalytic way, one that was liberating. Once those memories were down on paper and made into a book, I no longer felt obsessed with them. I no longer felt the need to revisit them. Significantly, healing came because I was bearing witness, bringing the memories out of the dark into the light.

Anytime we “confess” in a public context, reconciliation becomes communal. It engages us in a practice of mutuality. Time and time again, I hear from readers that I am writing their childhood, their pain, and their hope. Thus the process of reconciliation becomes circular, moving from the self into greater community.

No matter the circumstance, time, or distance, reconciliation is always possible. Since much of my recent work has been on the topic of love, I have found it useful to see reconciliation as a transformative practice. All that we reconcile opens our hearts and therefore makes it possible for us to love more fully and deeply.

At our June 2006 conference on writing for reconciliation, we all wrote about a topic that we all are struggling to reconcile ourselves to: that was the issue of death. As writers, we gathered and read aloud our thoughts about facing death. Listening to one another’s insightful, sad, funny musings created among us a powerful sense of the dynamic connection between writing and reconciliation. Late into the night I could hear the mutual give and take of our words—the sounds of deep listening. They entered my dreams like a kind of music—luring, inviting me to sleep with the certainty that death will one day surely come. And that, when it does, I can call out, greeting death tenderly—with complete reconciliation. ☐

¹This musing grew out of the AEPL Summer Conference in Berea, Kentucky, June 2006, at which bell hooks was the keynote speaker.

International intellectual and scholar, bell hooks is the author of more than 25 books. Her analysis of national politics and policies focuses on race, class, and gender. Recent publications include The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love, and We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity. She is also the author of several children’s books, including Happy to be Nappy and Be BoyBuzz. Currently a Distinguished Professor in Residence at Berea College, hooks has taught literature, women’s studies, and African American studies at Yale University, Oberlin College, and City College of New York.

The Value of Mutual Respect: What We Learn from Student Complaints

Devan Cook

The student and I have to share a mutual trust and value.

—Kevin Davis

(Bishop and Davies 55)

When I served as assistant director and then acting director of my university's first-year writing program, I heard a wide variety of student complaints. Some complaints were amusing: for example, one student found it inappropriate that her teacher did not give her an A for the extra credit work she did. Unfortunately, other complaints addressed much more difficult issues. Perhaps the most troubling kind of complaint was registered by a delegation from a class rather than a single individual: two or three or four or more well-groomed, responsible-looking students who wanted to "talk to someone about our teacher."

That did not happen often, but it did happen, and two instances were sufficiently memorable that I still reflect on them and wonder what could have been done to prevent them. In the first instance, the students were distressed by problems in the classroom. They reported that assignments were not returned, grading policies were unclear, grades on Blackboard were not kept up to date, and the teacher did not respond to phone calls and e-mails. When she met with me, the teacher resisted the idea that anything was amiss; for example, she explained that she had not commented on some student papers because they were turned in late. She also told me that she had heard one student talking in a threatening manner outside her office at 9 p.m., when the building is mostly empty. Worried about her personal safety, she waited an hour before heading home. But she did not communicate her fears to campus security or the Writing Program.

The second instance was similar to the first in that it involved multiple complaints, confusion about grading and assignments, and disorganization in the schedule. Students were concerned—distressed, even—that the confusion might keep them from successfully completing the semester. Yet, invariably, these students' complaints concluded with some version of "He's a nice enough guy, but he just doesn't seem to care." Rather than feeling alarmed and defensive, as the first teacher had been, this teacher was disengaged and unresponsive. In fact, it proved difficult to arrange a meeting with him to discuss what was happening in class.

Now I am struck by the similarities in the two incidents: in both, breakdowns in communication between students and their instructor resulted in a situation where teaching and learning could not continue. After the first teacher had left my office, I called the university's student conduct officer, who commented that often classrooms with multiple problems develop an atmosphere of mutual disrespect between students and teacher which eventually poisons all

Devan Cook is associate chair of the English Department at Boise State University. Her most recent publication appeared in California English, and she is working with Patrick Bizarro and Alys Culhane on a collection of essays that discuss new directions suggested by Wendy Bishop's scholarship.

their work. His insight helped me understand what was taking place in both classrooms.

This essay represents my effort to untangle—and learn from—these admittedly complex events and to critique my performance and the Writing Program's in the hope of improving the situation for others. Here I'd like to outline some of what I've come up with: that teaching involves emotional labor as well as knowledge and creative work; that the emotional labor of teaching may have been either neglected or under-rated in these situations; and, most importantly, that asking adjunct and contingent faculty to engage in this emotional labor is both necessary and at the same time highly problematic, given the conditions of their employment. The emotional labor of teaching writing can be challenging for tenured professors; for those who are overworked and underpaid by our universities, it is almost too much to hope for. And yet it is a vital part of teaching. My university employs many adjuncts to teach composition and other English department courses; at the very least, the Writing Program might help them deal with the emotions and emotional labor that are an essential aspect of teaching. Dale Jacobs posits the argument that “by revising the discourse surrounding teaching so that emotion talk becomes acceptable, we perhaps use the expression of emotion as a starting point for critique and social change” (46), linking the ways we talk about the role of emotion in teaching to the possibility of better working conditions for our instructors. At the end of my essay, I consider ways this has become true in our case.

What is Emotional Labor?

Arlie Hochschild, author of *The Managed Heart*, created the term “emotional labor”:

This labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. . . . This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality. (7)

Emotional labor is always done for pay; emotional work is a synonym. In “Emotional Labor since *The Managed Heart*,” Ronnie Steinberg and Deborah Figart offer an updated description:

Emotional labor emphasizes the relational rather than the task-based aspect of work found primarily but not exclusively in the service economy. It is labor-intensive work; it is skilled, effort-intensive, and productive labor. It creates value, affects productivity, and generates profit. It is why frontline service workers and paraprofessionals have been referred to . . . as the “emotional proletariat.” (9)

In other words, contingent faculty—often highly skilled employees who teach service courses and make money for the university—belong to the emotional proletariat. Hochschild's original study was of flight attendants, but her work is relevant to teaching, and in fact it is generally agreed, by Hochschild and those who have followed her, that postsecondary teaching involves “substantial amounts

of emotional labor” (Bellas 97). As teachers, we must produce the proper state of mind in others so that learning can take place; we have to coordinate our thinking and feeling to manage a classroom successfully; and this work involves our deepest sense of our own integrity. Marcia Bellas writes, “Postsecondary teaching involves far more than simply imparting knowledge. Professors help students mature intellectually and emotionally; they motivate and stimulate student interest. In short, professors nurture young minds” (98). Teaching, then, can be considered to be emotional labor.

Emotional labor works through the management of feelings and is accomplished in one of two ways. The first is surface acting, which involves bodily movements, facial expressions, and well-rehearsed scripts; the flight attendant’s “Enjoy your flight,” accompanied by a smile that extends to the lips but not the eyes demonstrates surface acting (Hochschild 35). The second, deep acting, asks that the practitioner actually experience the feelings he or she projects, either through method acting or through a self-induced emotional experience (35, 38–39). Emotional labor involves following conventions related to feeling or what Hochschild called “feeling rules” (56); these conventions are an accepted part of everyday life—i.e., crying at a funeral—and also of work. They are certainly a part of teaching: we may chide a student who comes to class unprepared, even though we are not especially angry. Or we may choose not to immediately address a student who angered us during class, worrying we’ll be too harsh.

Bellas points out that not only should professors refrain from experiencing negative emotions, but they are also expected to keep their students from negative feelings as well (100). Steinberg and Figart agree: “Emotional labor also requires a worker to produce an emotional state in another person while at the same time managing one’s own emotions” (13), just as Delta flight attendants in Hochschild’s original study were responsible for helping passengers enjoy every flight. Certainly, at least from an institutional perspective, this is true for teachers: the university expects us to be enthusiastic about the subjects we teach and to share our excitement with our students. And we ourselves know we must often help our students feel sufficiently confident to undertake the work required in our classes.

The confidence that writing teachers help their students learn is not the same thing as simply feeling good about the experience of writing, as flight attendants want airline passengers to do while they are in the air. A positive outlook will encourage students to undertake difficult or challenging assignments, to know that they are ready to master increasingly complex material. In fact, a teacher skilled in emotion work may give assignments that make students distinctly uncomfortable or that jar their complacency. But students must also know that the teacher has given such an assignment because she respects their abilities. Any real challenge may feel unsettling or disturbing, but students are very clear on the difference between a challenge for which they are supported and prepared by the teacher and one that is impossible. This preparation and support are part of the atmosphere of mutual respect that our student conduct officer posits as the most essential component of classes that work.

Emotional Labor and Student Engagement

One of the most difficult things about emotional labor in teaching composition is that the teacher’s own emotional involvement is essential. Jacobs writes:

“to allow students’ emotions to enter into the classroom, we as teachers have to also allow our own emotions to become part of the mix” (42). In order for students to be engaged, teachers must be vulnerable, invested. Teaching and learning, at heart, are a relationship within which “daily emotion work is crucial to accomplishing the goals of literacy widely espoused in higher education” (Holt, Anderson, and Rouzie 151). In their 2002 article, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” Wendy Bishop and Kevin Davis explore the opposite situation to a classroom meltdown: What happens when a class works? What characterizes a successful class, and how can we replicate that? Perhaps the first step in trouble-shooting classrooms that develop a poisonous atmosphere is to unpack classrooms where the atmosphere is salubrious and share some of that good air.

Bishop and Davis posit three markers for such classrooms and such teaching: process, collaboration, and authenticity. Bishop argues that rather than loving individual students, she loves an entire class: “There’s something that happens when a class works. . . . When that happens, a class is a magical thing. . . . And I know that the difference happens only on an emotional level. If I don’t connect, if I don’t love ’em, if they don’t love me back, it’s just a class” (47). That sentiment is hardly unique; Susan Kirtley reports, “despite my attempts to remain a brain alone, my heart has betrayed me and I have fallen in love again, this time with a student—a whole class of them in fact” (57). In loving a whole class, Bishop is most interested in whether the entire class (teacher included) has learned during the course of the semester; she compares this attitude to the fact that she’s more interested in a whole student portfolio than a single paper because the processes of learning and writing are more evident within the portfolio, implying a connection between learning and loving (48). “Is process love different from product love?” she asks (48).

Kirtley makes a connection between love and the process of writing that is similar to Bishop’s: “I teach my students that the joy of writing is not only in the product, but in the process as well, in the act of crafting language” (65). So the processes of learning through writing and learning to respect each other as students and teachers are thoroughly intertwined. Bishop further explains how such emotional work can be done: “Teachers have to accept themselves flexibly—in the moment—but be ready to learn from each moment. . . . You don’t love yourself arriving, you love yourself on the way, continuing. Because of that flexibility, you’re able to help students dream because your images of them aren’t set either” (51). She points out that this flexibility requires that teachers continually reinvent themselves (52) and pay attention to what they learn from students.

Collaboration, Bishop and Davis’s second suggestion, involves working closely with students. Referring to a John Berger essay and the concept of “copying distance,” she argues that classes may fail because a teacher doesn’t get close enough: “She stays at a copying distance (doing only or mainly what was done to her and/or thinking of the students as something quite ‘other’)” (51). Rather than engage in creative collaboration with students and with the material, the teacher relies on set standard patterns of behavior in teaching. But the temptation to stay within copying rather than collaborating distance would be especially strong if an individual taught more than sixty writing students in any given semester—the maximum number advised by the CCCC “Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing”—and most of our

adjuncts, including those about whom complaints were registered, have many more students than that.

Bishop and Davis's final suggestion is to "value authenticity over authority" (54). Taking a Freirean position, Davis states, "An authoritarian gets from students only what he demands; authenticity, on the other hand, begets authenticity, and students will give what they have to give to a teacher who both gives and receives with grace" (54). Inauthenticity is one of the "emotional dissonances" Hochschild noted as a damaging consequence of doing emotional labor when the disjuncture between the role and the self is too great (cited in Wharton 163). Here the need for deep rather than surface acting becomes apparent: teachers must become—or rather, are always in the act of becoming—teacher selves that work in authentic rather than inauthentic ways.

And that act of becoming always includes the possibility of failure, for none of us is an automaton, reliably positive and energetic, competent and compassionate, prepared and engaged. Even tenure, helpful as it is, does not protect us from exhaustion, self-doubt, anger, or depression. To be always positive whether we feel that way or not would be inauthentic: humans aren't like that—nor are human emotions or emotional labor, which can and perhaps should take advantage of our imperfections. In order to be authentic and to collaborate with students, we ought perhaps to acknowledge that we may be able to learn from times when we were exhausted and doubtful, disengaged and afraid.

We may also be able to do more emotional work with and in such times. In an essay exploring what he learned in disavowing the quest for perfection in student writing—and in teaching—Keith Duffy argues for "the essential role of imperfection in the writing classroom—not as a brokenness to be fixed or a problem to be solved, but as the source of humanity and community, indeed something to be honored" (2). At times when we are less than perfect as emotional laborers and experience the teaching flaws and failures that represent our most authentic selves, we gain opportunities to share and learn. We can talk about them with others, including most importantly our students. Such times also make it possible for us to teach in more honest ways and, if such experiences are shared with other teachers, to create stronger professional communities.

Nevertheless, it is worth asking whether the emotional labor rules ought to be the same for tenure-line and contingent faculty, who perform the same sorts of labor as tenure-line faculty but within vastly different contexts. Steinberg and Figart ask, "Which types of jobs should receive compensation for the emotional labor they perform?" (23). And in "The Psychosocial Consequences of Emotional Labor," Amy Wharton notes, "The consequences of emotional labor may be highly contingent upon other characteristics of the job, the organization, and the worker" (161). An adjunct and a tenured professor may engage in the same sorts of emotional labor to the same extent but nevertheless receive different rewards or penalties for doing so; the role of the adjunct within the institution determines the outcome.

As teachers, however, we perform emotional work based upon our skills as emotional laborers and our understandings of what the culture of our institutions and our discipline will accept—regardless of our professional status. If we do not, as Bellas comments, we may "be subject to poor evaluations, informal or formal sanctions, and in extreme cases, termination from employment" (97). Certainly these consequences must have been in the minds of the teachers involved in the complaints we heard: is it any wonder that neither was eager to talk with us?

Student Complaints: Where Emotional Labor and Working Conditions Meet

I cannot help returning to the fact that neither teacher in the incidents with which this essay began was able to discuss the emotional aspects of their situations—their alarm, their disengagement—much less participate in a dialogue about the necessary emotional labor involved in teaching. And I can understand their position. I may be a tenured associate professor and an administrator now, but for the first half of my working life, I was a part-time flexible clerk in the U.S. Postal Service: a job with irregular hours, no guarantees, and extensive emotional labor related to customer service—and a paycheck my family depended upon. From a postal clerk's perspective, the only imaginable format within which to discuss emotion and work with a supervisor would be one in which I was “in trouble,” which would probably mean fewer hours or possibly even termination. The only relevant question would be, “Will I lose my job?” As a working mother, I did not want to even formulate that question.

And it is not natural to expect contingent faculty to trust administrators in such matters (any more than I would have trusted a postmaster), particularly when emotion is excluded from the normal discourse of and about teaching. As Tom Kerr explains, “we do not . . . promise to engage deeply and/or critique (or evaluate) the emotions of our students or colleagues, but the constant interpretation, production, and exchange of text amounts to no less” (25). In a similar vein, Jacobs notes that our disciplinary dialogue about teaching takes place within a framework “in which it is not possible to express one’s emotional responses to the demands of teaching” (44). Finally, Kerr asks a very relevant question, considering that both of these complaints involved student concerns with grades: “But what formal means . . . have we developed to talk about the abundance of feeling that always already accompanies the ‘text,’ (or the grade) and the complex social relations . . . in which the text is embedded?” (26). Each of the complaints outlined at the beginning of the essay included an “abundance of feelings” and also a failure to communicate; while our Writing Program had a formal procedure for addressing complaints, it could not ensure that we could talk about their emotional contents.

It is also essential to note our discipline’s perspectives on the working conditions of contingent faculty. The CCCC “Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing” states:

These teachers work without job security, often without benefits, and for wages far below what their full-time colleagues are paid per course. Increasingly, many are forced to accept an itinerant existence, racing from class to car to drive to another institution to teach. . . . [I]t is evident that their working conditions undermine the capacities of teachers to teach and of students to learn. These conditions constitute a crisis in higher education.

Similar arguments, demonstrating the awareness within English studies that contingent faculty need but do not have humane working conditions, have appeared in many places. The MLA “Report of the Commission on Writing and Literature” points out that contingent faculty “are untenured and untenurable, what one administrator calls the ‘floating bottom.’ They teach term by term, with

no benefits or job security . . .” (70). Both of these statements were drafted in the 1980s.

Twenty years have passed, but the humane working conditions which contingent faculty need have not appeared, while their numbers have increased. The 2003 AAUP statement on “Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession” asserts, “The dramatic increase in the number and proportion of contingent faculty in the last ten years has created systemic problems for higher education,” and goes on to outline the costs of such reliance on contingent faculty: problems with student learning, faculty governance, academic decision making, and academic freedom. And in the introduction to *Moving a Mountain: Transforming the Role of Contingent Faculty in Composition Studies*, Eileen Schell and Patricia Lambert Stock summarize:

those who are calling for academic reform share a number of understandings: the academy has come to rely too heavily on contingent faculty, particularly to teach the core curriculum to undergraduates; the working conditions of contingent faculty are, almost without exception, substandard; and contingent faculty often resemble tenure-accruing faculty in their talents, preparedness, and in the contributions they make to the larger educational enterprise. (28)

Interestingly, Schell and Stock's description echoes that of Steinberg and Figart in describing the emotional proletariat: contingent faculty teach service courses, are often highly skilled, and create value for the university, all the while working under difficult conditions.

Thus, more support from the Writing Program would be well-deserved. While it would not counterbalance the effects of working conditions, it is important for us as a Writing Program to perform our own emotional labor: to appreciate, value, and love the adjuncts who teach in our program. Mutual respect is a three-way rather than a two-way, student and teacher relationship: the third leg of the triangle is the Writing Program and the institution of which it is a part. Eileen Schell advocates a “rhetoric of responsibility” which includes the responsibility of the institution to faculty and students (330); we are responsible for what happens in our composition classes. If the Writing Program doesn't respect and value its instructors, if there is little trust between the Program and its participants, then the ability of each teacher to create a respectful relationship with his or her class is already seriously compromised. If contingent faculty are responsible for performing emotional labor, it's obvious that the Writing Program and the English department are responsible for supporting contingent faculty in that performance.

At my university, the Writing Program employs seventy adjuncts and twenty-nine teaching assistants, who teach almost all of the sections offered of the first-year composition sequence, English 101 and 102. The teaching assistants tend to teach more 101, while more sections of 102 are taught by adjuncts. Class caps have recently been lowered to twenty-five. Both complaints with which the essay began involved English 102 classes taught by adjunct faculty. Our adjuncts are paid either \$820 or \$843/credit hour, depending on experience; this is the lowest hourly pay rate for adjunct teaching within the state. Apart from seven instructors, who teach four sections each semester and enjoy salaries, benefits, and expectation of continued employment, we offer adjunct faculty no benefits other

than library privileges. Helen O'Grady writes, "When writing teachers have neither time nor space (many do not have access to telephones, mailboxes, or offices), their ability to teach effectively is diminished" (133); most of our contingent faculty have access to shared desks, telephones, and computers, and the department has worked hard to secure these. The English department and the Writing Program are not happy about the extent of our reliance on contingent faculty for such important courses. By and large, we have an excellent, committed, and intellectually involved adjunct faculty, and we get much better teaching than we pay for.

How do these understandings inform the students' complaints? The first teacher was defensive, arriving in my office with a valise full of textual evidence: gradebooks, assignments, calendar, etc. She was only willing to meet with me once, although she did e-mail more evidence, when more questions arose. Perhaps her unwillingness was related to her highway flyer status: like many contingent faculty, she taught at two different institutions, for a total teaching load of seven classes that semester. When would she have time to meet with an administrator whom she had no reason to trust when she did not even have time to post student grades online? O'Grady points out what should be obvious: "Effective writing instruction depends on teachers having sufficient time and energy to prepare classes, to respond usefully to students' writing, and to conduct writing conferences with students outside class during office hours" (133). All of these practices are critical to writing instruction, and all involve emotional labor; yet with no time and few resources, it seems impossible that this teacher could provide the kind of teaching O'Grady describes for her students.

The second teacher's situation was like that of the first in one way: he had no time either as he had another full-time job. He taught three or four classes for us back-to-back, and then he went to his other place of employment. Because he wanted to compensate for his absence and in order to keep up with response and conferencing, he relied heavily on technology; nevertheless, his lack of availability weighed on his relationships with students. Because I knew this instructor better than the first one, I suspected that the problems his students encountered might be related to the fact that he had been involved in a life-threatening accident early in the semester; as a result, he had been ill numerous times. The accident had caused some emotional trauma as well. But the instructor had not come to the Writing Program offices to discuss his accident or the ensuing difficulties he was experiencing. The combination of his several professional lives and the aftermath of his accident caused him to disengage from his classes and resulted in the complaints we heard.

Was I able to use my experiences as a former part-timer at the post office to begin a dialogue about emotional work and teaching with either instructor? No, I was not. Anticipating fallout from superiors should students take their complaints forward, I spent more time on their concerns than the very real issues their teachers had to deal with. Certainly I failed to understand how close the emotional connections and mutual respect must be between administration, teachers, and students for teaching and learning to succeed. I did not know then what I know now. Neither teacher was responsive to my inquiries: the first from alarm, the second from a lack of emotional energy. Both were also seriously overworked. But certainly I failed to initiate a conversation about emotion with either of them, a conversation which might have opened up to critique and then to change. We

no longer employ either of these teachers, but we are responsible for what occurred in their classes—and for them.

What Have We Learned?

Writing program administrators usually find themselves working after the fact, attempting to reconstruct whatever caused a set of problems in the attempt to solve them. The Writing Program itself, however, helps to construct the programmatic framework in which classes take place and hires and supports teachers. Thus, while administrators are almost never in class at a crucial time when they might intervene and address problems directly (a solution that would be disrespectful to teachers), they are involved and implicated and—theoretically, at least—can use their positions to address problems. Some possible, optional solutions include the following:

- Make opportunities for new teachers to learn a program's rules for emotional labor before they teach their first classes. Both of the teachers involved in the cases outlined above were new to the institution although both were experienced instructors; they had not been our teaching assistants. Bellas notes, "Most colleges and universities do not offer on-the-job training for professors" (98). Our new adjuncts receive invitations to a working luncheon, a mentoring program run by other adjuncts, and once-a-semester in-service meetings. A workshop of several days before adjuncts begin teaching would be helpful, but some of our adjuncts are hired at the last possible moment.
- Work to create a strong adjunct teaching community. Our adjuncts teach on several campuses, and most of them have other jobs, too. We have several community events throughout the academic year, yet many of our teachers do not know each other. Because their offices are spread across campus and because they are scheduled to teach at times that vary widely, adjuncts cannot meet and form a core community. The situation does not allow new teachers to learn emotional labor rules that may be transmitted in an informal manner.
- Encourage faculty and administrators to develop interpersonal strategies in general in addition to strategies for teaching writing, to practice emotional work as part of the work of teaching. Wharton explains that "as the amount of time spent interacting with people at work increases, workers' feelings of inauthenticity [one consequence of emotional labor] decrease" (166). Practitioners experience inauthenticity when the gap between an emotional role and one's felt emotions is too great. Perhaps an honest and up-front assessment of the emotional labor required for teaching would better prepare teachers to undertake the deep acting that effective emotional labor involves.
- Maintain as much autonomy and self-direction for adjuncts as possible. The literature on emotional labor points out that "the fusion of self and work role increases the risk of burnout" (Wharton 162), and teachers suffering from burnout are less likely to undertake the emotional labor necessary to keep a class positive and productive.
- Work to improve compensation and working conditions for adjunct instructors; doing so will encourage adjunct instructors to see themselves as pro-

professionals and to abide by the feeling rules of the institution and profession. Bishop notes, "When I am (self)valued, I am able to do unto others. Difficult, no doubt, for teachers who often find their institutional conditions are poor mirrors for self-belief" (53). Autonomy and self-direction are good first steps; improving compensation will help even more.

- Create opportunities for the Writing Program, the primary link between adjuncts and the institution, to assert its differences from the Delta Airlines model of mandated emotional roles and perform its own emotional labor as an administrative body. Mutual respect between parties involved in a classroom transaction does not have to be solely dialogic. Since education takes place within an institutional framework, the Writing Program can perform the same kinds of emotional labor it asks from its teachers and students. Rather than a patriarchal airline, then, the Writing Program can be a Good Witch: powerful, but using its power to improve the lives of those it affects. In the main, our writing program does a good job of positive bewitching—or at least, I think it does. But there's always room for improvement; problem cases and cases where emotional labor isn't undertaken point out systemic weaknesses.

Finally, at my university there have been some substantive improvements in the working conditions of adjunct faculty with the creation of full-time, non-tenure-track appointments. Citing a desire to improve student retention after the first year—currently at sixty percent—the president and provost have opened up full-time, benefit-bearing special lectureships. These positions are renewable annually and pay \$30,000. For that sum, special lecturers are expected to teach four classes a semester and also to perform service to the Writing Program and the English department. Thirty special lecturer positions were filled at the university in late spring/early summer 2006; many of the adjunct instructors applied for the positions, and a faculty committee that included skilled adjunct instructors who did not plan to seek special lectureships quickly came to a decision about who should receive the additional four slots the English department was allotted (we already had three such positions, created in the early 1980s). The department was told that over a period of time, all of the adjunct instructors who had been teaching a four-three load eventually would be converted to special lectureships—a statement that the adjunct faculty regarded with a combination of appreciation and wary skepticism.

It is too early to say what effect the existence of the special lectureships has had on adjunct morale and the emotional labor that is a fact of part-time teaching life. Most of those who were not selected in the first round are waiting to see if there will be a second round and a third and so on until they themselves become special lecturers. While they are happy that four instructors have been promoted, they are uneasy about the possibility that a budget crunch or change in administration will intervene before they themselves achieve their goals. Based upon anecdotal evidence—my conversations with them—few of those who are eligible for special lectureships take for granted that they will actually receive them.

Things have changed for the better in terms of the emotional labor environment for adjunct instructors within the Writing Program and the English Department. Several instructors have become more politically active and continue to participate in university committees that address adjunct issues; these commit-

tees have the ear of the university provost and promise the opportunity for substantive change. Overall, the adjunct mood with regard to work environment is cautiously hopeful.

Evaluations, including classroom visits, are currently underway, but we are optimistic there, too. In visiting classrooms and conducting evaluations, adjunct instructors thank us for observing—and respecting—their teaching. As we staff our composition sections with those who are honored as professionals within the program and support them to perform the emotional work of teaching, everyone involved—the university, the Writing Program, teachers, and students—should benefit. ☺

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Dangerous Pedagogy

Elizabeth B. Gardner, Patricia E. Calderwood,
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Our learners come to us already engaged with their daily lives. So, too, do we bring our complicated selves to our work as educators. We can insist upon checking our collections of cares and concerns at the classroom thresholds, or we can invite them in, to become valued elements of our shared learning. To invite the deeply personal, however, is to risk that we may not be prepared for what arises, that we may find ourselves in a position as vulnerable as our learners.

Dr. G takes into account that we as students have a lot on our minds and may be preoccupied with general life while we are in the classroom. She takes the time to ask us how we are doing and what we're thinking about, letting us know that she cares and is aware of our lives both inside and outside of the classroom. That means a lot.

Comments such as the one above arose after a deceptively innocuous question, “what’s on your mind,” was asked during Betsy Gardner’s undergraduate psychology classes. Whenever Betsy invited such sharing, end-of-term evaluations showed consistently that students appreciated the sense of community that was developed and felt that their learning was consequently richer and deeper. As a result, Betsy initiated an ongoing conversation with two colleagues working in different areas of this mid-sized, Jesuit university. Together, we examined how Betsy negotiated the inclusion of her own and her students’ personal lives into her coursework in order to search for insights useful to other teachers. Looking at written responses from Betsy’s students regarding her What’s On Your Mind sessions and Insight Cards, we initially undertook to showcase evidence of a positive learning environment created in her classes.

In doing so, however, we discovered a dangerous pedagogy. Traditional

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student-teacher power relations became unmoored. Learning communities, built on trust and caring, emerged. Teaching and learning engaged the intellect, but now there was more room for the social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of teacher and student to shape the process and the content of learning. Our analysis begins with Betsy's first-person narrative, illuminated by examples from her classes, and by scholarship about creating personalized contexts that support learning.

Navigating the Personal: Betsy's Reflections

As a professor of psychology in a college that values the Jesuit pedagogical principle of *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person (integrating intellect and affect), I try to design my courses to be relevant to students' lives. Over the years, I have learned that, when students believe they are valued as persons, they take more risks in their learning and they are more open to new ideas. Getting to know them provides a social foundation for the entire educational process, as a shared sense of trust enables students to learn deeply from each other and not solely from me. I use a variety of pedagogical tools to try and build caring, community, and dynamic learning in my college psychology classes. For example, through "Absorb and Relate" papers, students explain new concepts as if to another person and then explicitly relate the concepts to their daily lives. I require service learning to extend and enrich students' understanding of course and other material afforded by experience and service in the community combined with reflection. Two teaching strategies stand out:

- 1) At the beginning of each class I ask, "What's on your mind?"
- 2) At the end of each class, I collect Insight Cards, index cards or slips of paper on which students write a thought or question about something that was unclear to them or anything else they want to write. I read them, put a checkmark or comments, and return them at the beginning of the next class; sometimes, based on what I have read, I contact students outside of class.

After the events of 9/11/01, my colleague Larri Mazon and I wanted to find out how our students were doing and what they were feeling in a course we co-taught. It felt imperative to us to encourage students to talk about and process their feelings about this real-world event. So we simply began asking, "What's on your mind?" Some students mentioned that few of their professors had even acknowledged the occurrence. Perhaps the most memorable post-9/11 student disclosure, offered in a course on sensation and perception, was from a student who shared that her father was Arab and that she feared greatly for his safety. This made concrete for the other students the effects of the resulting anti-Arab bias and broadened their education beyond the explicit curriculum.

I realized that I should ask students what is on their minds in all of my courses. I also had students establish class participation guidelines at the beginning of the semester; their rules included "don't feel cornered and don't feel pressured—pass," enabling them to remain silent if they wished. These pedagogical choices resonate with the observations of Jeannie DiClementi and Mitchell Handelsman who suggest that letting students generate their own ground rules increases their sense of ownership and opens them to class discussion and with Raymond

McDernott who notes that trusting relations between students and teacher facilitate learning.

Disclosures have ranged from *"My roommate has had a friend visiting for a week and I'm annoyed and wish he would move out"* to *"My family has not heard from my 18-year old brother for a week and I am worried"* to *"I'm worried about my history exam."* I have also participated, such as when I shared that I had found an interesting article in the newspaper or that I was feeling stressed and described how I was handling it. A student commented: *"Open communication often helps not only the listener, who learns new ways to think about life, but the speaker as well, who has to sort out and process thoughts more completely."* Such venting allowed students to relieve themselves of some of their burdens, freeing them to concentrate a little better on course material and get to know each other and me, thereby beginning to build some trust. I, also, learned from others' contributions and was able to put aside my burdens.

Overall, students have been appreciative of the inclusion of the personal into our curricula. As one student put it, *"everyone listens and truly respects one another."* Another shared, *"This semester has been very stressful for me, but somehow I always felt better after class,"* while yet another said the process *"gives some insight into experiences others are having and makes talking to people I don't know easier."* An email from a recent graduate said that when she and some friends got together, they *"still reminisce about WOYM."*

Reading insight cards does take time, but students' insights are exciting to read! After some classes I can hardly wait to sit down and read through the students' comments. As the class becomes more personal, the disclosures of our different views and experiences help us all learn better who we are and to appreciate our commonalities, such as needing solace. One student who seemed securely independent and serenely mature amazed us by saying that she had ordered a pizza mailed from her faraway hometown at great expense because it would bring her comfort during a trying time. When a young woman shared that her undergraduate experience as a "minority" had been horrible, many of her European American peers expressed amazement that this Latina female had had such different experiences from their own.

Inviting the personal offers the opportunity to affirm, to create caring teacher/student relationships, and to be affirmed, as I learned from this student note, *"Thank you for telling me I am special . . . it meant a lot to me."*

Unwrapping the Pedagogy

As we considered the evidence from Betsy's courses, we noted that her classes had taken on characteristics of learning communities, where students and teachers deliberately create communal bonds of trust and interdependence, and use interpersonal relations to further their study of disciplinary content (Calderwood; Rogoff; Schroeder and Hurst; Smith; Taub). One first-year student found that *"starting class talking about what's on our mind,"* was not only *"very helpful"* but also *"comforting."* Such participation in shared sociocultural endeavors is emphasized by the "community of learners" paradigm: "both mature members of the community and less mature members are conceived as active; no role has all the responsibility for knowing or directing, and no role is by definition passive" (Rogoff 213). Intriguingly, the inclusion of the personal, as used by Betsy, made

it more pleasant for students to learn the manifest content of the course, its formal curriculum, but also changed the formal curriculum. The social relations of community, trust, and interdependence, which mark successful learning communities, served as a catalyst for a broader, but more uncertain, education for Betsy and her students. The pedagogical choices, obviously caring, humanizing, and committed to powerful learning opportunities for Betsy's students, are risky ones. They effectively draw students and teacher into what feels like a safe space, but what is, in fact, a space in which certainty and security—of knowledge, of emotion, of power relations—exist only because the caring and humanizing permeate, transform, and transcend the formal curriculum of the class. For many of us, making space for the personal can be managed without commitment to risky, transformative opportunities. But should we so limit ourselves?

Educating More Broadly

Betsy's narrative reveals a deep-seated belief that it is an inherent good to create humane relations, and such belief underlies her pedagogical decision to increase the porosity of the classroom walls and of her syllabus. This resonates with theories of active learning, feminist and Ignatian pedagogies as well as the community of learners paradigm, all of which dictate that we know our students. Feminist pedagogy emphasizes interactive and collaborative learning and personal stories and takes the view that the instructor's role is to create community in an atmosphere of safety and democracy (Adams, Bell, and Griffin; Boryczka). Active-learning theorists express similar views illustrating that invisibility and anonymity are the enemies of learning and that personal attention to students is of paramount importance (Fink; Kytte; Maiorca; Warren, Rose and Barnack). *Cura personalis*, an Ignatian pedagogy, with the teacher in a pastoral role vis-à-vis the student (McShane, ctd. in Cahill), echoes the same theme of knowing our students (Duminuco) and attending to readiness for growth along with learning styles. Reflection is a major component of Ignatian pedagogy, and insight cards invite students to reflect on what the class period has meant to them.

During our collegial discussions, it was easy to see why Betsy connected her inclusion of the personal to improved student learning in her classes. She notes earlier in this paper that asking "what's on your mind" allowed students to put aside their worries and to concentrate on their primary purpose for gathering together, thus serving as a "container" for what otherwise would be distractions from the manifest business of the course—learning the content. But rather than mere opportunities for students and professor to put side momentarily the stuff and worries of their lives, the shared confidences were opportunities to inject the stuff of their lives into the course content. This made the classroom relations more humane, allowing more interesting things to happen. We infer that these "interesting things" include a broader and deeper learning, and Betsy's students concur. For example, during the course *Homelessness: Causes and Consequences*, the students completed a series of "Experiencing Poverty" exercises in which they spent only \$10 for a week, used only walking or public transportation, did not use their cell phones, and carried their belongings in plastic bags. A student wrote:

While no one can argue that the "experiencing poverty" exercises gave us an accurate sample of what it is like to be truly homeless, I think they provided the most important

knowledge that we, as students, will gain all semester. . . . the exercises got us to ask, "is this how someone else actually sees the world?" or "do other people really think like this every day of their lives?" Without having asked these types of questions, no amount of endless study or research would have given us an accurate depiction of what living in poverty is really like. . . . If we cannot see what this problem directly means to us, then we will become useless in attempting to rectify it.

Not everything that happens during a well-designed course has to be explicitly aligned with a pre-planned content learning objective. Elizabeth Bischof, writing of a class discussion of events preceding the U.S. invasion of Iraq, raises the issue, ever-present in the minds of some, of whether to talk about current events (and other topics of interest) in the classroom "when there is so much course material to cover in the course of a short semester." She unequivocally urges us to "(e)ncourage your students to be well-informed citizens, ask, even if only in the first few minutes of class, if anyone has any issues to bring forth." Inviting student reflections and confidences as pedagogical elements foregrounds a decision to face and consciously include in course content what many educators call the evaded curriculum or third space: the real life concerns and needs expressed by our students (Boryczka; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Turner; Luttrell). Such a stance prevents us from limiting our responsibilities for our students' learning strictly within canonical confines (Fish). When we looked to our university mission, which speaks of preparing our students for leadership and service in a changing world, of fostering ethical (and religious) values and a sense of social responsibility, we found a compelling rationale for including the stuff of the third space or evaded curriculum ("Mission Statement").

We are willing, if not always comfortably so, to educate broadly rather than narrowly, and find the University mission to be in consonance with our personal beliefs about education. It matters to us that our students and we can take emotional as well as intellectual risks as we construct knowledge together, that cares and concerns have a legitimate space within our shared intellectual work, and that habits of caring and concern permeate our intellectual spaces. Making time and space for our students' cares and concerns is a powerful pedagogical decision. However, because welcoming the stream of lived lives into the explicit curriculum opens up room for surprise and uncertainty, it is tempting to resist such sharing as intrusive and interruptive of clearly delineated and traditional responsibilities.

An example from Betsy's class illustrates a missed opportunity to move deeply into the evaded curriculum. For the service learning component of a cognitive psychology class, a student had spent time in a drop-in center for women who are homeless. He remarked that he was being asked to form relationships with people he had been taught by his parents and others to avoid. This provided an opening to discuss the challenge of putting aside stereotypes and valuing friendships with people of ethnicities and backgrounds different from our own. His comment contrasted with those of another student who had not altered her "us/them" way of perceiving the program participants. She said that she felt put off and disgusted by them; she thought they weren't trying to get out of their current situation. Betsy shares, "At the time, I let the dissonance hang. But, in hindsight, I should

have stopped and asked everyone to write for one minute, then share what they had written with the person next to them.”

When there is room for the personal, student differences highlight the quicksand patches of power and responsibility ever present for teachers. We all make choices in the moment. Sometimes the choices are expedient; sometimes they stir the soup of critical inquiry. But sometimes they are about correcting student views, beliefs, attitudes, and biases to better align with our own, perhaps to make ourselves more comfortable. We have the responsibility to remember that learning is developmental and to tread this quicksand with sensitivity to the risks taken by students when they reveal their tremulous selves. We can turn our slip into the quicksand into an adventure that invites exploration rather than a hurried escape from the uncomfortable space. However we cannot always, in the moment, choose to jump into, rather than leap over, the quicksand.

Responding Authentically to Students' Concerns

Including the personal breaks through the barrier between the explicit and the evaded curriculum. A balance between explicit and evaded curricula might shift from day to day and class to class without slighting either curriculum. This flow between the explicit and the evaded curriculum requires maintaining the sensitivity toward the personal and private while allowing it to guide not only the process, but also sometimes the formal content of the course; for example, topics brought up when students share their insights and what's on their minds might easily become the basis for reading or writing assignments. For instance, during Betsy's Seminar on Aging, a woman shared that a high school friend had committed suicide, the family was not planning to have a service of any kind, and as class secretary she had the task of informing her high school classmates about the death. In response, another student shared that in a similar situation the young friends had planned their own service. Betsy recalls, "After this, I went on with the class material. During the break I recognized my choice to get on with my planned lesson as a missed opportunity, so after the break we discussed together what might constitute a satisfying memorial service." One student wrote about the ensuing discussion: *"I was very touched by Nicole's story and I am so glad she got a chance to share with us because it seems like she hasn't talked about it much. So I'm really thankful for an opportunity to step out of my own little world with my own problems and be able to connect with other people."*

In typical college classes the professor has a position of considerable power in controlling the formal curriculum, addressing the disciplinary content, choosing what to grade, and arranging student learning experiences and groupings. Our power, however, is not necessarily accompanied by a sense of responsibility to our students as human beings with cares and concerns of their own. Many of us shy away from caring relationships, mindful of maintaining sensible and decorous boundaries that protect our privacy and maintain a respectful distance between us and our students. In contrast, learning that a student was coping with the recent death of her mother, Betsy cooked and delivered a simple meal. The student, an only child, had shared that her father, who worked two jobs in order to keep her in college, had no time to cook and she was worried about him; so, whenever Betsy made an easily shared meal, she put aside and froze some for Liz to give to her dad. It made a difference to Liz and her dad.

Slipping past our self-protective boundaries need not tangle us up so deeply with our students, however. There may be revelations that confound, dismay, or frighten us. Unexpected confidences may create a need to act, perhaps in a way for which we feel unprepared. Students may share very personal information, sometimes more than they realize. However, as Jeffrey Berman says, “We need to realize that we can be caring without becoming caretakers” (B9).

Insight cards give students the opportunity for students to share privately what they would not be willing to say to their peers, and allow us to respond to them with affirmation. When a male student who appeared to be resentful and negative wrote, *“After reading Tatum’s section on biracial individuals, I found myself remembering incidents in elementary school where I resented my Filipino side compared to my Italian side. Everybody made fun of my Filipino side so much, I found myself exaggerating my Italian side,”* Larri Mazon, Betsy’s teaching partner, provided sincere, yet clearly bounded, affirmation: *“you are blessed with two sides, two cultures, both of which make you the unique and wonderful person and human being you are! I am glad you shared who you are!”*

Student notes can provide insight into why some students seem to be problems and provide an opportunity to reframe our understandings more generously. For example, an apparently resistant student in one of Betsy’s courses wrote, *“I feel like shit leaving this class every week. Maybe this isn’t the right class for me. I’m opinionated, but fair and respectful. However, since nobody agrees with me or listens to my points (believe me, I’ve kept track) I don’t feel like contributing if it will be thrown to the side.”* Faced with the dilemma of how to respond, Betsy emailed affirmation that he was a valued member of the classroom community and invited him to talk with her outside of class. Although the student did not come talk with her, he began to participate much more frequently in class discussion.

An exercise suggested by one of Betsy’s students, “two truths and a lie,” provides another example of how to deal with unexpected shared confidences: during the exercise, one woman said, truthfully, that she “was OCD” (obsessive-compulsive disorder). Unsure of what to say at the time, Betsy let it go and later invited her to talk privately. During that private conversation, the student confided that, although she had never been diagnosed, she knew that she showed the symptoms. Betsy gave her the telephone extension for Counseling Services and suggested she talk with the folks there to learn more about it, thus offering sensible, clearly bounded help that was gratefully accepted.

Drawing the Line

As Betsy noted earlier, she also shares her concerns during the what’s on your mind moments, which begs the question: How personal is too personal? Modeling our own learning and growth for the students can encourage them to take risks in their learning, but such openness requires of us both humility and courage. It also can confuse or upset our students. For instance, during a class discussion about unlearning racism, Betsy tearfully recounted that while she was in high school her parents strongly discouraged her from dating an African American friend and that she still felt badly about it some 50 years later. Few students expect that they will be asked to create a safe space for the professor’s pain. Yet there is an implicit reciprocity of caring and support when confidences are shared

within a trusting community. It is disingenuous of us to too carefully polish or dull down our own self-presentations when we invite authenticity from our students. Ought we to give up the occasional misdirections, evasions, disguises, and outright lies we pass off as personal revelations? Perhaps not. We are not required to become entirely transparent nor unguardedly revealing of our personal concerns. We need not, and should not, dissolve the personal-private membrane too thoroughly. We need not even meet our students halfway on the revelation path in order to reciprocate their trust in us.

Dare We?

As part of our examination of Betsy's data, we have come to understand that when we deliberately design our teaching and classroom cultures to be responsive to our students, when we really hear and understand who they are, what they think, and how they feel, we begin to build with them a community of learners with the power to change lives. We are convinced that when our classrooms shimmer with the promise of trust, vulnerability, and caring, our learning, all our learning, is enriched in meaningful rather than superficial ways (Calderwood). We are also convinced that inviting the personal into our classes expands our curriculum, validates students as people, and makes teaching a far more satisfying calling.

As educators, we engage more deeply, are more effective, and are more fulfilled in our teaching when we know that our students believe that we design and adapt our courses and classrooms to meet their learning needs and their interests. Perhaps most importantly, we look beyond their roles as students to see, understand, and value them as complete individuals.

We suspect, though, that what's on your mind moments and insight card reflections are dangerous pedagogy, needing a warning label pointing out their risks to the faint of heart among us. They can engender time and energy-consuming obligations that erode emotional distance between professor and student, erase dissonance between the content of a course and of everyday life for professor and student, and interrupt the direction of a well-planned syllabus. Further, we suspect such pedagogy is a trickster, promising gratifying affirmation of teaching effectiveness while demanding no change, lulling student resistance to course content, and smoothing out small dysfluencies in a well-planned syllabus.

Perhaps, though, this dangerous pedagogy is also a key that open doors, allowing us to fine-tune our teaching and our courses to improve opportunities for students to learn, perhaps to learn what we will about who we are as educators, or, for the more daring among us, to build, through trust and caring, learning communities where there once were courses. ☐

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Applying “Men and Women for Others” to Writing about Archeology

Karen Surman Paley

*In archeology we tend to see research as consultative, co-operative.
It is “our” work. . . . Grasping the collaborative sense of a project is key.*

—Pierre Morenon

C*ura personalis* is a rich and interesting phrase used by Jesuit educators. This pedagogy of caring for the whole person describes how a faculty member demonstrates concern not solely for the cognitive acquisition that transpires in a classroom but also for the development of the emotional and spiritual life of a student. While the phrase is widely used in Jesuit colleges and universities, it is not used in any of the foundational texts of the society. Neither does the phrase turn up in the *Concordancia Ignaciana*. I find the clearest statement of the pedagogy in a 1977 monograph published by the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA): “The concept of the personal concern of the teacher for the individual student has always been perceived as a mark of Jesuit education.” As Robert Newton writes, this concern is manifested by “adjusting the educational program to the uniqueness of each student” (13). While there is no body of scholarship on this pedagogy, there are parallel pedagogies grounded in the secular, and we might substitute the phrase “pedagogy of care,” looking, for example, at the philosophy of Nel Noddings who declares that “our schools are in a crisis of caring” (181).

One example of a pedagogy of caring can be found in the classroom and fieldwork of archeologist professor Pierre Morenon at Rhode Island College in Providence. From 2001–2006, Morenon’s summer field school was linked to an interdisciplinary multi-grant project on the Rhode Island State Home and School, a former orphanage and school for abandoned and neglected children. As they excavated for artifacts formerly belonging to the residents of this orphanage and state school, Morenon’s archeology students themselves became aware of what one student called the “living nature” of the grounds, and central to that discovery was the role of writing within Morenon’s pedagogy of caring.

Oral History of an Orphanage

Morenon invited me to observe Anthropology 489, Archeology Field School, in the summer of 2003. Although I did no excavating, I eagerly watched excavations, attended a field trip to the site of a colonial battle with Native Americans, and collected student texts, studying how his pedagogy reflected caring for the whole person. Coincidentally, Helen Whall, an English professor at the College of the Holy Cross,

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had just published "Caring for the Whole Faculty" in the Jesuit magazine, *Conversations*. Her essay reminded me of the very common application of the phrase *cura personalis* in Jesuit schools, "men and women for others" (14). This phrase was initially put into circulation based on the text by Pedro Arrupe, S. J., in 1971. In his statement "Justice in the World," Arrupe summarizes what qualities the graduate should possess. By works of justice, he means:

1.) a basic attitude of respect for all men which forbids us ever to use them as instruments for our own profit; 2.) a firm resolve never to profit from or allow ourselves to be suborned by, positions of power deriving from privilege. . . . To be drugged by the comforts of privilege is to become contributors to injustice as silent beneficiaries of the fruits of injustice; and 3.) an attitude not simply of refusal but of counterattack against injustice; a decision to work with others toward the dismantling of unjust social structures so that the weak, the oppressed, the marginalized of this world may be set free. (6)

Morenon's class and its relationship to the oral history project on a former state orphanage and school on the college campus evoked a secular notion of "men and women for others," despite his not having any connection with Arrupe or the Jesuits.

I had met Morenon earlier when I was a junior faculty member in composition and rhetoric at Rhode Island College, newly appointed to the college-wide Writing Board. He invited me to attend and eventually to join the Steering Committee of the Oral History Project, which was then involved in interviewing former residents and staff of the State Home and School. The summer field study class I observed consisted of six undergraduate students, and I invited anyone who volunteered to provide me with copies of her writing assignments and to meet with me. Morenon did not know who in the class was active in my study.

Two points emerged from the work: the collaborative essence of the work and the students' sensitivity to the future audience of their writing. Morenon tells me he is not an isolated scholar working alone in front of his Trinitron monitor but

a public scientist who conducts experiments with others (students) in front of a curious audience. . . . [M]ost students think of research in terms of a solitary process. . . . It is 'their' paper. In archeology we tend to see research as consultative, co-operative. It is 'our' work. . . . Grasping the collaborative sense of a project is key.

This archeology project demonstrates a way to provide "a happier writing environment" (Hyson), as one of Morenon's students describes his class. Furthermore, it offered a genuine audience for student writing outside the classroom, something compositionists frequently seek. Written assignments from Morenon's course became part of two public archives, a library consortium, and local print media. His student anthropologists worked in a framework of caring for both the subjects and the place of their research.

Course Goals

Morenon's goals for the project are quite clear. He comments:

I was interested in incorporating writing into this course more

intensively than in the past for several reasons: First, I am eager to examine the way “experience” informs writing and vice versa. What do students think about as they go through the process of excavation? Second, I am interested in maximizing the process of fieldwork. How can we extend fieldwork from day to day, from daily routine to curious exploration? So writing becomes both an opportunity for reflecting upon and extending what is an apparently tiring, dirty process.

Along with Diane Martell from the School of Social Work and Sandra Enos from the Sociology Department at Rhode Island College, Morenon is a leader of an oral history project funded by grants from the Rhode Island Council of the Humanities (RICH) and a faculty research grant from the college itself. For three summers he and his assistants have been excavating an area that once housed the State Home & School for Neglected and Dependent Children (1885-1947). Their work provides a service to the community of former residents and staff by recreating a space to return to for memories and reunions; the undergraduate archeologists contribute to that service. The Oral History Group holds reunions of former residents and staff, bringing together people who had not seen each other in years, and even siblings who had been separated in childhood. As members of the Oral History Project steering committee conducted interviews, Morenon and his students found recreational items mentioned in some of the interviews, such as marbles, jacks, a toy truck, a handle to a porcelain teapot, and a piece of vinyl record. In the first day of the summer class, Morenon told his students, “This is not your typical archeology project. Hardly [any archeologists] work with children. . . . Who speaks for the children [the former residents]?”

The past and the present came together during the excavation when former residents stopped by to watch the excavations. Rhonda Hyson, a student who was especially sensitive to what she calls “the human aspect of the site,” writes in her daily log, “I thought we were lucky to have a former resident on hand” (8). Later, referring to a reunion of former residents and staff organized by the steering committee, she journals,

After sitting and talking with Mary, Elenore, and Dorothea, I realized how super important this project really is. These people thought their lives would be forgotten. But because of their willingness to share their past, the project has taken shape into a bigger thing. . . . They are living history. I was proud to have made their acquaintance and look forward to seeing them again. (14)

Clearly the course meant more to Rhonda than simply reading lives and events widely removed from the people, places, and period of her own life. The course provided Rhonda with “histories” of these people, and the writing enabled her to realize a part of her desire to be “a woman for others.” Rhonda was able to feel the importance of the people, the remnants of whose lives she and her classmates were retrieving. She was being educated in more than the material tools of the archeological profession. The Anthropology 489 students who attended one or more meetings of the steering committee of the Oral History Project really could not ignore the connection between the artifacts they located in one of forty-six test pits and the human lives they revealed. They became participants in Morenon’s “public science.”

Real Site, Real Audience

Journal writing is writing-to-learn pedagogy as opposed to writing-to-test. Students have a private place to record data and emotional responses to readings. As Sheridan Blau writes, "The principal use of a log is to encourage students to record the questions, confusion, and difficulties they experience in reading texts" (154). In their logbooks, the archeology students could ask questions such as "when do you adjust for transit height?" (Whitmore 2), or they could interrogate the "textual" meaning of the finds. Jan DeAngelis, another student, wrote, "As we retrieve these objects we can't help but wonder about the children who last touched them. It also conjures up thoughts of your own childhood such as a favorite toy or a favorite place to play" (4).

Melissa Mowry, like Rhonda and Jan, appreciated the deeper connection between the physical work and the human history: "It is a truly rare opportunity to be excavating objects from a site and interviewing the very same people whom they belonged to or possibly belonged to" (2). One might call it an expanded perspective on learning. Melissa also allowed herself journal space to "tell it like it is" after one of many days of excavating in the rain: "We're learning this is indeed a tedious practice, very dependent on outside influence" (2). She continues to comment on "the tedious nature of archeology" even after finding a white porcelain handle perhaps from a teapot. "Everything is not fossils and 'treasures.' Hey, everything isn't even quartz." On the other hand, Alisa Augenstein reports, "I have wanted to become an archeologist since I was in the 6th grade, and this is the first step I am taking to make that a reality" (2). She discovers, "I really like getting my hands dirty; it makes me feel like I accomplished something" (6-7).

Teaching about the constraints of audience is *de rigueur* for composition classes. Text after text educates the novice writer about the importance of considering audience and purpose. However, the audience for composition classes is often nothing more than a *mise-en-scene*, frequently limited to the teacher and fellow students. Except when so designed, such as a letter to the editor, much of the work of the freshmen writing class, is not for "a real situation," but rather a "sophistic" one: "Real situations are to be distinguished from sophistic ones . . . and from fantasy in which exigence, audience, and constraints may all be imaginary objects of the mind at play" (Bitzer 11). While writing professionals try very hard to prompt students to produce prose with the reader in mind, as opposed to the self-directed prose with only the writer herself in mind as described by Linda Flower, audience beyond the classroom is most frequently imaginary. To use the terms employed by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, it is invoked as opposed to addressed. "The 'addressed' audience refers to those actual or real-life people who read a discourse, while the 'invoked' audience refers to the audience called up or imagined by the writer" (156).

Morenon used a real situation in his course. His students did not undergo "a simulation experience" (Wygota and Cain 32). The archeological site for Anthropology 489 was on the students' own campus. Rhonda, for example, was very much aware that they were dealing with a real situation. She referred to "the humanity of the site" in her second paper for the course. First, the site was an Indian settlement, then a mansion, then a school for children, then a college, and now a "project." "I mean you probably walk across places like that all the time but you don't realize it. *I felt like the site itself was alive*" (emphasis mine). Be-

cause the archeology project was tied in with an oral history of former residents of the State Home and School, there was no need for simulation. Morenon does not plant objects in the ground for his students to “discover.” As he puts it, “An archeology project is real. We did not dig up the State Home and School as some imagined exercise—like recording the anatomy of a plastic fish in a laboratory, for example.” His students knew right away that their papers, even their informal logbooks, would become part of a publicly accessible archive.

In other words, these assignments brought with them a guaranteed audience outside the classroom and the field site. I asked Morenon about what appeared to be his pedagogy of pre-professionalizing students. He responded, “They are being asked to function not as pre-professionals, but as professionals with quite a bit of oversight.” Admission to the class is selective, and student work is supervised. Once the class and the teams are determined, there would be very carefully produced excavation records. Morenon does recognize the need for training, a point he raised in a comment on one of Melissa’s papers: “The education protocol has to go hand in hand with the research protocol” (Mowry 2). He developed this point in an email to me:

Perhaps the discursive writing that was part of this field experience was less about precisely recording our findings and more about finding something else. . . . As each student wrote they may have discovered whether they were students, like young birds in a comfortable nest, or professionals who really did want to fly.

The only warning he issued was for students to consider what they wrote in their logbooks, making sure it would be something appropriate for a wider audience.

I wondered if this open-minded acceptance of and willingness to make student writing public would challenge them in such a way that they would produce their best writing or if it would inhibit or frighten them. After all, the nest is comfortable. I brought the topic up in the last class and later discussed it with three of the six students: Rhonda, Melissa, and Helen.

Rhonda

Rhonda is a married student in her early twenties who returned to school some time after completing a two-year art degree. She had a longstanding interest in archeology that began when she was in elementary school: “When I was a kid I used to actually dig in my backyard all the time. I still have stuff that I found when I was a kid, minerals and broken silver quarters . . . antique glass jewels.” Her joy in discovery is tempered by her self-concept as a writer: “I have no confidence in my writing. It’s not that I haven’t been trained well enough. It’s just that when I went back to college the second time around, everything is different. It’s not like there’s a standard any more. It’s all per teacher.”

On September 11, 2003, a month or so after the summer session ended, Rhonda spoke to me of her mixed reactions to learning that her logbook and her two papers would be made public. At first excited to “become a part of history,” she later grew concerned about what she had put in her logbook. For example, a casual conversation with a former resident of the State Home and School yielded “sensitive” information. Recording this information in her logbook might not have

given Rhonda much pause for concern had she not attended a meeting of the Oral History Steering Committee where there was much discussion of the need for a careful protocol and guidelines for obtaining permission to quote people. Rhonda became concerned about her own ethics, wondering about the fact that she had not received permission from the former resident before noting their discussion in her logbook. The person had shown her a rock where, on a particular day, she had been asked to serve as a lookout while some residents went into the woods "where they learned to have sex." After an Oral History steering committee meeting on protocol, she wondered about recording even the lookout story. "Here I am. They just thought I was hanging out talking with them. Maybe they wouldn't have told me their stories if they had known [I might write them down.]" When she did transpose some of the stories into her logbook, she reports having felt guilty, "almost like I was doing something wrong and I knew it but I wasn't sure if it was wrong." She resolved the dilemma by deleting last names and by "writing everything in pencil." A psychologist might note that Rhonda appears to have taken on some of the guilt of the former lookout. Sociologist Sandra Enos, one of the co-directors of the Oral History project, comments on a draft of this essay, "Rhonda may also have been troubled by the stance of the researcher, when any gesture, comment, or even silence can be fodder for analysis."

Melissa

The future public nature of their writing was also a concern for other students. They questioned their abilities and whether what they had to offer in their papers would have any scientific validity or could really add to the body of knowledge about the field site or the conditions at the State Home & School. When I asked Melissa what had been her initial reactions to learning that her writing would be part of an archival exhibit, she told me, "I thought it was very thorough to do that; then I wondered if MY findings would really matter to the project as a whole." Why? Melissa described herself as "learning as I go" because it was her first experience with archeology and she was not a professional: "How would I really say something that someone in the future would . . . look at as information that would really matter?" Since her evaluations were not "scientific," how could anyone learn from them? In the early stages of her logbook, she reports forgetting that it would be made public, and so she wrote "naturally." "Then I remembered, sometimes mid-sentence, and tweaked things a bit. By the end I didn't care."

And what did the tweaking entail? She would recall that her audience had not seen what she had, that she had "memories to know how [she] meant [by] her words." So she searched for stronger adjectives and words "to make them understand what happened since they weren't there." By "not caring at the end," Melissa meant that the future audience "would be looking in on [her] experience anyway, so [she] could have the right to kind of leave it the way [she] wanted to leave it." The evidence of logbook "tweaking" remains buried beneath the text.

From 18 July 03: On the last hole we found a very fancy, formal white handle (porcelain) to perhaps a teapot. For me, this first time of actually getting to dig, led to a more precise understanding of the tedious nature of archeology.

From 25 July 03: It really seemed that we were finding

something continuously. . . . While trying to incorporate ideas for the 1st paper with today's findings, I realized that archeology is so much more experimental than I realized.

Morenon comments on my reproduction of Melissa's logbook: "Totally experimental! Students have a hard time understanding that one is expected to learn during an experiment. One learns through action, through the work; just as one learns through memorization, imitation . . . and simulation." Digging and cataloging are "writing"-to-learn exercises, not heavily based on received information.

As Melissa began to transform some of her field experiences into papers, she remained reflective and worried about the phenomenon called "disturbance":

What we touch will never be the same again; maybe the tossing of worms brought on these feelings but I was thinking, what about the stuff we are disturbing when we dig? What could I potentially be chipping away at when I drive the shovel in the pit? I sense that at any dig, the thought of making the initial "incision" is quite unnerving. . . . Imagine taking this great find back to the lab, perhaps the ossuary of "James the brother of Jesus," then realizing you have no accurate record of where it was located? . . . Regardless, the dig is not about what you are finding, but what information that discovery will render later during analysis.

Morenon comments next to Melissa's last line, "This is an important point—we are collecting information, not artifacts" (3). In relation to her fears about disturbance, he notes on my draft, "This is the universal fear of all beginning archeologists. I suppose the intern thinks the same way: 'What if I slice through his heart?'"

As the paper draws to a conclusion, Melissa tells us, "Archeology is about telling a story without a story; a story that previously had no words, no record" (3). In none of these sentences do I see a writer constrained by an audience who might judge her lack of expertise, her earlier stance. She worries about archeologists damaging the earth and about claiming inaccurate locations for religious relics, but there are no concerns that any particular findings might later be judged as "not mattering." The voice is as self-assured as it might have been if her professor constituted the only audience. Morenon views her as "constrained by her own sense of limitation—error, inaccuracy, mistake; rather than the real limits—curiosity, intensity, hard work."

By her final paper about interpreting an archeological site, Melissa has found a voice and utters what Aristotelians call deliberative discourse, urging the college to protect the historic site of the State Home and School. Her earlier concerns about disturbance are focused on the specific dig:

I am quite perplexed at how the State Home and School has been treated: I see attempts to plant tulips, and sod, in front of the Murray Center [another building on the campus], but no action to preserve a piece of national history. So perhaps now, with the glitter of a prehistoric site found by archeologists, attempts will be made to fund both the preservation and the further excavation of the area.

What Melissa has to say here about funding for preservation is something for the public, the audience outside the classroom that has the ability to change. She is saying, "We have a historical site. . . . Let's not change it, but continue to fund excavation." She does not appear to be writing with the tentative voice of a student here, but rather with the voice of a concerned adult who has some professional training and an ecological conscience. It is the voice of a subscriber writing an open letter to the editor of a local newspaper. She has gone from being a passive recipient of knowledge to public educator and agent for change.

Helen

Unlike Rhonda and Melissa, Helen was a practicing professional, a registered respiratory therapist who had been in the field for 8 years. Her second paper on how to interpret an archeological site reflected her background. She told me that public access to her writing did not "bother her" and that she did not think the logbook would "be a big deal." Nor did she reflect on the public audience as she constructed her first paper on how to organize an archeology project. However, with her second paper, a piece she calls medical archeology, she worried that she might offend someone.

For this paper, Morenon requested that students do some interpretive work based on the data analysis that took place in the last class. My second visit to Morenon's indoor classroom occurred on August 8, the last class of the summer session. At the left side of the room, there was a floor to ceiling display case, about a foot deep, enclosed with sliding glass doors and containing some stone heads, plaster casts of various "peoples" around the world.

Students were given carefully labeled and sorted bags with artifacts from each of the 46 test pits. Each test pit bag had a number of smaller bags containing the findings and a small yellow card called the "excavation record card," representing each 10-centimeter layer in the pit. The rocks were quartz, quartzite, and hornblende. Some students found broken pieces of sewer pipe and "flakes," or what Morenon described as the whittlings from Native American arrowheads. As Melissa commented, "My god, we found all this stuff," and Morenon noted, "And all of this was invisible to you [before excavation]."

As the class proceeded, students became anxious, asking what Morenon was looking for in their second paper on how to interpret an archeology site. Morenon encouraged them to link their ideas with the evidence. Helen continually noted that she did not feel she had enough evidence. Morenon's responses invited speculation: "To me every excavation poses a question that can be answered, like 'I wonder what happened here.'" Morenon was asking them to create knowledge, and Helen appeared more accustomed to working with received data. Morenon suggests that Helen's response was a typical one:

Helen is thinking inductively, like the history or English student that is looking for a critical document that they will "interpret." I do emphasize that excavation is usually deductive in its structure—you ask the question first, and then seek the evidence, through the excavation, to answer that question. Students are used to reading, which they see as "evidence," and then "interpreting." Of course they are usually just describing what someone else said, reorganizing the evidence. Students need to

discover that summarizing what others have said is not interpretation. Artifacts don't talk, so Helen needed to ask a question first.

Mary Rose O'Reilley tells us in *The Peaceable Classroom*, "I think that students . . . write better essays about what they themselves notice than about what they have been told by critics and teachers to look out for" (24). Yet, when suddenly thrust into this level of intellectual responsibility, students can panic. To me, Helen seemed very anxious. At one point, Morenon referred to a "hypodermic needle" that he and his assistant, Skip, had found, and Helen asked if the class could see it. As a medical professional, she immediately recognized the object as an antiquated piece of phlebotomy equipment, not as a hypodermic needle at all.

I found her ensuing paper to be an interesting report on the sanitary conditions of the school, although initially I worried that this topic was far removed from the bags of artifacts the class sorted and analyzed; I worried, on her behalf, that she might not be following directions. Fortunately, her paper received 19 out of 20 points (the highest grade I saw), and the comment,

This essay is very good. You have done a nice job considering a range of health concerns. You might have started your paper with a question, but the overall structure makes sense without that device. The paper would be stronger with more physical evidence: artifacts, maps, floor plans; and with more oral and written evidence: comments by residents, public records. In 1890, for example there was a committee hearing on issues of abuse, inadequate food, etc. There are also records at DCYF (Department of Children, Youth, and Families).

Morenon's comments show that he takes this student's work very seriously. Encouraging further professionalization, he writes, "You might consider working on a collaborative study with someone in nursing on an expanded version of this paper." Apparently not anticipating this type of encouragement, Helen told me, "At first I thought he wanted me to rewrite my paper!"

The paper itself, as Helen explains, falls in the realm of "medical archeology"; it begins with a critical stance and ends with an unsupported positive conclusion. Her introductory paragraph ends with, "Although the State Home and School was established to cope with the community's neglected children, evidence from the school's history may support the idea that living arrangements and eventual overcrowding of the children may have contributed to high incidences of illness and even death at the school". For example, in 1887, out of 110 children at the school, 73 had whooping cough or b. pertussis (3). She tells her readers that until a vaccine was invented in the 1940's, "it was known as a killer of children" (3). The conditions allowed for facile spread of the disease: children "slept in open bays" with more beds than rooms were designed for. Keeping windows closed made the rooms warmer but created poor air circulation (3). Conditions were also favorable for the spread of tuberculosis, a disease that can lie dormant for years. In the paper she wonders if, through interviewing former residents, researchers might determine how many residents did become actively tuberculous. Shared unwashed toys might have contributed to the aggressive spreading of the common cold. She reports that in 1938, 54 children became ill from

"tainted" food and two died. The records show that 11 other children died during the school's existence, and Helen expresses interest in exploring the causes of these deaths. Her evidence and speculations are disturbing, but the paper concludes with nothing but praise for an institution that created an otherwise safe place for children and separated them from criminals: "The health status of the children of the State Home and School may never be fully known. What is known is that the school provided an *invaluable* service to the children of the state for many years" (emphasis mine 5).

In a subsequent email exchange and interview, I questioned Helen's use of the word "invaluable" at the end of a paper that convincingly argued that the sanitary conditions were not what they could have been. While she told me that she did not give much thought to a public audience when she wrote in her log-book, recording but not speculating about facts, the question of audience was very much in her mind as she wrote the second paper. This paper was "more what I thought . . . and I began to worry that someone would be offended" by a discussion of improper hygiene "because the school did a great service to the community." I now think Helen was able to balance the differing aspects of the school, but the word "invaluable" reminded me of many freshmen essays that describe very troubling incidents yet end with proclamations of never-ending friendships or true love or other immutable sentiments in which young people are still capable of believing. Morenon adds humorously, "She is also unsure of the accuracy of her 'interpretation.' She does not want to go out on a limb because she thinks that someone will discover that definitive evidence that disproves her claim. So, she takes the middle road: 'Everyone died, and they were happy in the end.'"

For Helen, the paper presented the first time she had to write something based on inferences. She was not working from anyone else's findings. As she told me, "This [paper] is mostly my thoughts about what the evidence could possibly mean." In only one other class as an undergraduate was she asked to make inferences. Thus, Morenon's assignment provided an intellectual challenge. Morenon values the intellectual abilities of his students. His pedagogy works to enhance cognitive acquisition in a way that develops the students' thinking abilities and confidence in expository and archeological skills.

Aspects of Pedagogy to be Imitated

I cite Rhonda's email response to an earlier draft of this essay to help me draw to a close: "It was enlightening to think that your work might be used by other professors to encourage a happier writing environment" (19 June 2004). By contrast, Rhonda told of a response that offended her that came from another member of the school's anthropology department. On the first day of that other class, students were asked a question and directed to freewrite a response. Rhonda said when the professor collected her writing, she said aloud, "Next time you might want to write more." Rhonda was offended by this comment. "She hadn't even read my response. How did she know I hadn't fully responded to the question?" Students are uncomfortable living with a fear of being brought up short. In a class governed by caring for the whole person, the student feels that the teacher is rooting for her and eager to see her work in the best light. In such an atmosphere, the student feels freer to explore and generate her own analysis as we see in Helen's paper on the sanitary conditions of the State Home and School.

Morenon is not a Jesuit, but he is affiliated with The American Friends, and the pedagogy of Quaker educator Mary Rose O'Reilley as expressed in *The Peaceable Classroom* provides a look at a secular version of the pedagogy of *cura personalis*. O'Reilly speaks of compassion as a form of critical inquiry, and the book's second chapter is entitled "Inner Peace Studies and the World of the Writing Teacher," where she confidently declares that she distrusts any pedagogy that does not begin in the personal (1) or conclude in the communal (62) where it is "subject to the checks and balances of others, the teacher, the tradition, the texts" (61). This approach is surely compatible with *cura personalis*, and Morenon clearly exemplifies this Jesuit philosophy. What I learn from Morenon is a spirit of generosity toward student analysis. Instead of immediately looking for the shortcomings or errors, why not see what is new that we can learn from the student, treating the person as a colleague? ○

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Reading *Othello* in Kentucky

Elizabeth Oakes with Heather Adkins, Maggie Brown,
Carrie Carman, Gary Crump, Cle'shea Crain,
Amanda Hayes, Tara Koger, Mike Sobiech,
and Chuck Williamson

In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi gives an account of a clandestine class she taught at her home in Tehran for seven young women. In several novels, among them *Lolita*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Daisy Miller*, *Washington Square*, and *Pride and Prejudice*, novels set far away from Tehran, they found issues relating to their own lives that were too incendiary to handle directly. The “theme of the class,” writes Nafisi, “was the relation between fiction and reality” (6), specifically “how these great works of the imagination could help us in our present trapped situation as women” (19). In effect, Nafisi created a space within a space, the safe walls of her apartment within Tehran. The book is the story of what transpired there, but one can also see it graphically in two photographs which she discusses in the book and which she showed at a presentation she gave recently at Western Kentucky University, where I teach: one is of the young women covered in black except for their faces; the other is of them in their t-shirts and jeans, with their hair (except for one, who retains the black scarf) falling around their faces. Bowling Green is far away from that apartment in Tehran, but what I discuss in the following essay is that what the American culture and media does to my students is what the Iranian government does to hers: erases their individuality, albeit by covering them with prejudice rather than with cloth. What resonates, I believe, about Nafisi’s book, which is a best seller in this country and which has made her a much sought after speaker, is the rebirth of the idea that one can mine literature for life lessons, something the academic world denounced at least by the time of New Criticism. However, perhaps there are certain groups—perhaps it is even all of us—who can benefit from experimenting with such an approach.

It is a truism of the last several decades of critical theory that race, gender, and class are crucial in how we read Shakespeare. What this essay does is add geographical place to the mix. This semester my graduate Shakespeare class is reading *Othello*—in Kentucky. *Othello* is one of Shakespeare’s Others, in the parlance of contemporary criticism, one from whom the dominant group differentiates itself in order to form an identity that is superior. Everyone in the class was appalled at the racism directed against *Othello* and sympathized with him as its victim (even though no one could in any way condone his murder of Desdemona). What if, however, we looked at *Othello* not as a racial Other, as someone whom Iago makes into a “them” as opposed to the Venetian “us,” but as one of us in

The spring '07 graduate Shakespeare class at Western Kentucky University was a diverse group of first and second year graduate students, native Kentuckians and transplanted ones, high school teachers and Ph.D bound graduate students. Facilitated by Elizabeth Oakes, they focused on Othello in traditional and experimental ways.

Kentucky, a kind of *mon semblable, mon frere*? Those of us who live in Kentucky, especially those of us who were born here, certainly know what it's like to be considered an Other.

What if we situate ourselves here—and read *here*? This includes me as well. Who am I when I read Shakespeare, I asked myself. I grew up on a farm in rural northern Kentucky, a real farm with cows and chickens. My parents raised tobacco and had a garden, from which my mother canned much of our food. However, when I read, say, *Othello*, am I reading from that perspective or from that of the Ph.D. from Vanderbilt who has taught and read and, by now, traveled, and who goes back to the farm only for the yearly picnic? But even though I think I am reading from the latter, I can be stereotyped as just a grown up version of the little barefoot girl who never left the farm.

I have my stories of being an Other, of having the Kentucky stereotype applied to me when I least expected it. This is just one example: I'm crossing the border from Canada, and the young man at the desk asks me why I was in Canada. When I tell him that it was to attend the Shakespeare Association Conference, he looks surprised. "What do you do with Shakespeare in Kentucky," he asks. "We read him and talk about the plays," I begin with when he interjects: "I didn't know people in Kentucky could read." He, so far as I can tell, is not kidding. At least his laugh is not the kind people have when they are kidding. We can find the same phenomenon in the current blue state/red state binary. Who can forget that map showing the election results in 2004 with the east and west coasts as blue and the rest as red, with the red states repeatedly called the "fly-over" states, with all that connoted?

So, in addition to the traditional ten-page analytical, researched paper on *Othello*, I asked my classes to write a two-page paper on "Reading *Othello* in Kentucky," to read *Othello* in this red state, as hillbillies (although we don't live in the hills at all), to do everything you're not supposed to do in a "regular" paper. The focus was to be on their experience as it related to Othello's. It's common today in Shakespeare criticism to say I, but the I is always the scholarly, academic I, the I sitting in the leather chair in an office full of books—the objective, learned I, the Ph.D., the expert. In contrast, this I would be the one who interacts with the play, who connects emotionally. I had no idea how this would work but took some assurance from the fact that Shakespeare himself was a hick from a town much like the one in which I teach. He was called an "upstart crow" for writing his plays, much as we might be called one for reading them.

Critical Nexus

"Reading *Othello* in Kentucky" relates to several critical methodologies, especially reader-response criticism with its concept of reading communities. It is tweaked somewhat by the stipulation that the students write from a sense of identity with Othello as an Other, that we explore the play from an aspect of ourselves that we have tried to deny or outgrow instead of from the "academic self." The goal was not to interpret the play so much as to effect a resonance of the play and the self. In addition, as the class was writing these essays, we were also following the debate on a Shakespeare listserve about presentism, the new kid on the critical theory block in Shakespeare studies. Believing that new historicism has become calcified and rigidly orthodox, Hugh Grady and Terence

Hawkes, the leading proponents of presentism, argue that we should explore the plays not only as cultural artifacts but also as living documents. After all, what are the plays other than what we can make of them with our twenty-first century sensibility? The present, they argue, is

a factor actively to be sought out, grasped and perhaps, as a result, understood. If an intrusive, shaping awareness of ourselves, alive and active in our own world, defines us, then it deserves our closest attention. . . . A Shakespeare criticism which takes that on board will aim scrupulously to seek out salient aspects of the present as a crucial trigger for its investigations. [One essay in the volume, for instance, explores the allusions to *Henry V* that abounded after 9/11.] Reversing, to some degree, the stratagems of new historicism, it will deliberately begin with the material present and allow that to set its interrogative agenda. It will not only yearn to speak with the dead. It will aim, in the end, to talk to the living. (3-4)

Linda Charnes puts it more succinctly on a Shakespeare listserve. Presentism, she says, “is not a methodology but rather a sensibility, one that always poses the following questions: why should anyone care about this now” (“Presentism”). The pre-eminent goal now, she argues, is to make the “texts we teach and write about relevant to the lives of our students and readers” (“Reading” par. 1).

There is also a kind of relationship to cultural materialism, which began in Britain several decades ago with the goal of instigating societal change through a study of the plays. In fact, presentism, Charnes says, “seems a more urgently re-launched version of cultural materialism, perhaps even more important now in a globalized, post-911 world than it was twenty years ago” (“Reading” para 1). Perhaps the two elements go together, as it was Gandhi, I believe, who first said that we must become the change we want to be in the world. The strategy of the excerpts below is to read locally, while, with Nafisi as inspiration, thinking globally, and to read personally, which is, as the saying goes, inevitably political.

Encountering the Stereotype

I never fail to be surprised at how omnipresent the negative stereotype of Kentucky is and how many lives it has impacted. Several students in the class had encountered it as children when visiting relatives in other states, who were surprised they wore shoes or something like that, an experience that resulted at the most in hurt feelings, perhaps, or a kind of surprise that one was being seen with the overlay of a group rather than as an individual. All were aware of the media image. As Heather Adkins relates, “The south does have a wonderful reputation of genial hospitality and manners that would impress Emily Post herself. Unfortunately, however, that perfect postcard image is most often overshadowed by media images that suggest that we all live in trailer parks and have missing teeth, abhorrent grammar, and beer bottles permanently attached to the hand.” What

this can lead to is a kind of divided self in which we identify somewhat with the oppressor, a kind of Stockholm Syndrome. As Heather continues, “When my town was ravaged by tornadoes last spring, I found myself shamefully relieved that the damage was concentrated in an upscale neighborhood, therefore saving us from the predictable news coverage of storm-destroyed mobile homes.”

Others had encountered prejudice that would have been unthinkable for an African-American, a woman (one not from Kentucky, that is), or, actually, a member of any group except us. This is Amanda Hayes’s story:

The first time I encountered my particular “otherness” was in graduate school. I had traveled to six other countries and lived in Germany for a summer without knowing that I was anything other than an “American.” I thought that being from the United States was my “Otherness” until I began a doctoral program in Near Eastern Studies. I soon learned I was a novelty: I was a Kentuckian.

During an academic advising meeting, the Head of Graduate Studies explained that “coming from where you come from” would make adjusting to both academia and general life in a city difficult. At the time, I lacked the confidence to ask him to clarify his statement. Every meeting thereafter included some derogatory statement about Kentucky. On one occasion, he counseled me in an almost fatherly manner about how he worried that after learning so much I would “not be able to return to the farm.” Whether he meant that statement literally or figuratively, I have no doubt that he was genuinely concerned. I do know, however, that he was aware that I was flying to Paris every month during the first semester of the program, and that I was leaving for Brussels after that particular meeting. My advisor who had once given me an assignment that I researched at the Louvre was convinced that his school was permanently broadening the horizons of a small-town girl from Kentucky. Rather than assessing my situation objectively, he credited himself with helping me overcome my “Otherness.”

One of my professors repeatedly made references to me in class as a Christian. He used me in examples of how not to translate Near Eastern texts, and he made jokes about my encountering blasphemies. I never once discussed my religious background (or lack thereof) with anyone in the department. He assumed I was an evangelical, conservative Christian based solely on my “Otherness.” I did very poorly in his classes, but I had no alternative other than to take them. On my last exam, I memorized his translation of every passage that we covered during the semester. This was no small feat. He gave me a perfect score which saved my grade because he was in shock that I was capable of translating anything.

Although I ultimately left the program, the atmosphere of cultural hubris I encountered gave me an enduring consciousness of my “Otherness.”

Reading *Othello* as a Kentuckian

Ironically, since the play is in his name, we first meet Othello as the Moor; his name is not used until the third scene. Racial epithets abound throughout the play. Forced to defend himself before the Senate against Desdemona's father's charge that he has bewitched his daughter—the only reason Brabantio thinks she would “run” to a Moor's “sooty bosom” (1.3.71)—Othello does so admirably and is sent to Cyprus to defend it from the Turkish threat. All looks well; however, Iago, who has been passed over for a promotion, vows to make Othello believe Desdemona an adulteress. There's the matter of a handkerchief, precious to Othello, which Iago tricks Othello into believing Desdemona has given as a love token to the handsome Cassio. Convinced finally by the villainous Iago that Desdemona could not, as her father previously says, love “such a thing as” Othello (1.3.72), Othello reviles both her and himself: “My name, that was as fresh/As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black/As mine own face” (3.3.402-04). Because Othello's last reaction to Otherness is to embrace the worst projection of it, the tragic murder of Desdemona ensues.

Othello is radically different from young graduate students living in America in the twenty-first century, more so than Nafisi's students and mine. However, Othering (with that capital O) has the same dynamics, no matter how different the victims. Although we see ourselves from the subject position and thus consider ourselves individuals and therefore different from each other, the process of objectifying means that those who make “us” into a “them” see us as objects, as all alike, i.e., different from—and inevitably inferior to—them.

When we brought our experiences of being an Other to bear on *Othello*, we found that some of the most offensive jokes about Kentuckians correlated with Iago's depiction of Othello. After detailing some of the “howlers” involved in applying for citizenship in Kentucky circulating on the internet (you can guess what they are, I'm sure: you must drive a pick-up, have bad teeth, be almost illiterate, be married to your cousin or your dog, be named Billy Bob, Billy Ray, etc.), Mike Sobiech writes,

Othello is like me. I know that we are very different. He's black, and I'm white. He's a general, and I'm a civilian. He's dead, and I'm alive. He's fiction, and I'm real. He's a Moor, and I'm a Kentuckian. We are different people, but we also share things in common. We are both physically stereotyped: Othello has “thick-lips” (1.1.68), and I have yellow/yellow-brown/brown/black teeth. We are both considered capable of bestiality: a farm animal might be my sexual partner, and Othello is “an old black ram [. . .] tugging” Desdemona, a “white ewe” (1.1.90-91). The paternity of our children is suspect; mine might be the result of incest, while Othello's marriage to Desdemona will result in the devil making Brabantio a grandfather (1.1.93). We are both dangerous: I am thought to have guns all over my house, while Othello is capable of murder.

The real tragedy of the play is not that other people thought less of Othello: stupid people are going to think stupid things. The real tragedy is that he cared what they thought. The real tragedy is that he let them—not just Iago, but his culture—

manipulate him. The real tragedy is that he didn't team up with the other Other in the play and in his life, Desdemona. At the end, he kills the one with whom he shares the most. But that's what they want. The only way they can stay in power is by dividing us from each other.

Carrie Carman had much the same to say:

In many societies and circumstances where you read *Othello*, I think Othello isn't really one of the people with whom you would side. But when you are reading *Othello*, who is an "Other," and you yourself have been considered an "Other," you begin to understand why things tend to happen as they do. It is no justification for Othello's behavior in the end, but it would be hard to be told every day what a beast you are and how savagely you behave. You in some ways would have to start believing it.

Such personal identification with a character surely affects the way we interpret a play when we begin to do so in a scholarly way. In fact, that is evident from looking back at the history of Shakespearean criticism. After all, it was only when women began to flood into the Ph.D. programs and the tenured positions in the 1970s that the female characters in the play began to be written about and that the comedies, which center around the women much more so than the tragedies and the histories, became more legitimate subjects of inquiry.

An Outsider Inside

An interesting twist on this assignment was that several students wrote of feeling like an Other in Kentucky, which goes to prove, I suppose, that no group is exempt from excluding others. Maggie Brown, for instance, gives this account of moving from the West Coast to Kentucky when she was ten years old:

My handkerchief was a pair of jellies. (Jellies are weird-looking summer shoes made of a kind of gelatinous plastic that have since, apparently, come back in style.) My mother did give them to me as Othello's mother gave him the handkerchief, but they weren't imbued with magical powers: Mom bought them at Nordstrom's.

My new classmates at Happy Valley Elementary in Glasgow, Kentucky, had never heard of jellies or of Nordstrom's. When I first arrived, class had already been in session for two weeks (they started before September, a concept my West Coast parents couldn't wrap their heads around). In other words, I was wholly unprepared, and no one told me I'd be playing kickball on my first day. As it turns out, a cafeteria-cum-kickball-field is the closest thing I've ever seen to a Cyprus battlefield. When it was my turn to kick, and the red, round ammo headed my way, I assumed my war would soon be over just like Othello's—but instead I had Turks to fight off for years. I kicked back at the ball with gusto, only for my once-prized jellies to fly off my

Oregonian foot and hit the opposing wall with a thud. I lost my shoe as Desdemona lost the handkerchief: by mistake. And just like Iago, the fifth graders at Happy Valley weren't eager to return the trinket once it was in their possession.

I can say to Othello: "I know what you mean, buddy. Being an Other sucks."

An Other Everywhere

In Kentucky there is a division between rural and town, between eastern Kentucky and the rest of the state. Several students found themselves not really belonging anywhere, as Gary Crump relates:

Growing up in a rural area, I eventually noticed that I didn't fit the mold of the typical young Kentuckian. Unlike Othello, my skin color did not mark me as an outsider. Rather my speech, my clothing, and even my hair signified to those "normal" boys and girls that I didn't belong with them. My mother took me to an Apostolic church, and I could never go to dances, wear shorts, go to the movies, or do many other things that the normal American kid would do. However, when it came to being a Kentuckian in my home town, I stood out even more: I always combed my hair neatly, as my Mother insisted that any good Christian boy would do, and I always tried to be good and polite. For all of this, I recall being hit, kicked, choked, taunted, and lied about. Other kids assumed I must be a weirdo, a "queer," or a psychotic religious fanatic because my aspirations were higher than their dreams of losing their virginity at the first opportunity, getting married prematurely, and working for the rest of their lives in a local factory. If that's the lifestyle they desired, that's fine. I never understood, though, why they felt my thoughts and dreams must match their own. Othello's contemporaries saw him for the color of his skin; my peers saw me in the same manner, never looking beyond what they wanted to see and believe.

Othello and I share something although we're very different individuals. We know what it means to feel alone, to be taken advantage of, and to suddenly realize how trivial things are that our peers hold against us. I hope, however, to remain stronger than the "valiant" (1.3.50) Othello, who is called this in relation to his military prowess. Although I fear embarrassment, I never want to harm anyone in the process of rising above that which haunts me every day.

The Others' Other

The image much of the United States has of Kentucky is, sadly, the same as Kentuckians have of those who live in the eastern portion of the state, in the upper reaches of Appalachia. Eastern Kentucky is a drop-dead beautiful place which is, yes, poorer than the national average. However, it is populated by people

with strong family ties and a deep connection to the land. The music and crafts of the region are world famous, and deservedly so. However, I dare say it is not known for its higher education, and those who leave the area for the sunlight, to use Plato's cave analogy, don't fit in when they go back. As Tara Koger explains,

My hometown in eastern Kentucky has felt very much like an island since I moved away. My family there speaks a dead language found only in that area and in old books written by Kentucky authors. They grow enormous gardens and spend all summer weeding, picking, tying, spraying and babying them, then all fall canning, drying and freezing their goods. We grew up with well water and wood heating. I learned to sing by howling to my Boyz II Men cassette with my portable tape player in one of the barn hay lofts. At eighteen, I left eastern Kentucky.

I can only imagine that what Othello went through to get to the position we see him in at the beginning of the play must be similar to what I went through when I arrived at college. When I spoke, my "i's" were long. My first college roommate, who was from Chicago, and my boyfriend, from a city in the south, called my attention to this one night, giggling while mimicking how I said "night" and "right." The letter "i" became a priority on my to-do list, and I worked to learn a short, strong pronunciation of it. However, the list never ended.

The Other's Lover as Disguise

Her experience would change the way she read *Othello*, as she related it to one of the debates about Othello and Desdemona: does he love her for herself, or mainly, even partly, because she, standing by his side, visually solidifies his place in the white Venetian culture (such a debate contains the bias that, of course, the ethnic Other will want to assimilate). In one of the classic essays on the play, Ania Loomba contends that Desdemona is "the guarantee of her husband's upward mobility" and "the gate to white humanity" for Othello (176). Below is Tara's analysis of this syndrome as it applies to her:

On my initial reading of *Othello*, I drew the appropriate and expected conclusions about Othello's otherness: he was flawed, yet sympathetic. It also seemed natural to assume that the characters closest to him functioned as tools that further isolated him or that he was using to try and conceal his Otherness. This, of course, places Desdemona as his connection to the white world, his ticket in. This I never questioned, until I read *Othello* in relation to Kentucky and similarly read myself as the Other.

Like Othello, I have a significant other who does not join me in my Otherness but is rather my key to hiding it. When I am stereotyped as ignorant, uncultured, close-minded, and totally incapable of intellectual development, I have a well-spoken, city-originated, non-Kentuckian, stylish partner to keep

me from being totally pushed back into the crowd of Others. The criticism of *Othello*'s Desdemona, or his ticket out of Otherness, assumes that he has no true investment in the relationship, or that any genuine emotions come second to his primary influence in selection: white inclusion. If this is the case and I am a similar Other, I must assume that the same criticism would label my relationship equally shallow and based on aspirations of social advancement or mobility. Obviously this is not true, or I would not write about it.

So what about Desdemona? We can clearly see in the text that she is his transport into the white Venetian world he has served so long. But is that an evil? Any two partners must recognize and share in each other's world; it is inevitable. My Desdemona has served to obscure some of my Otherness. Through him I have met people that might not otherwise have given me a chance, and I've been versed in subjects and topics that I might not have been so fluent in without him. Similarly, he has been given access to my world. He has visited my family's farm in eastern Kentucky. He has fed the cows and gone shooting with my father, and he's had the great honor of eating blackberry dumplings, homemade jam, chocolate gravy, vegetables from the garden, and deer meat galore.

Sometimes it's just simpler to let our Desdemonas do the work for us. In their world, they have more power than the most articulate Other, and the Other cannot be blamed for sometimes taking the easiest way out.

Othello as Mirror

When we first begin to read Shakespeare, someone once said, it's like looking through a window into another world; then we realize that it's not a window but a mirror. In *Othello* two students saw themselves. Cle'shea Crain writes:

One of the first conclusions I came to after finishing the play was not very scholarly at all. It was simply "I am *Othello*." *Othello* is a black man and a recently converted Muslim from the Barbary Coast. I am a black female from the Bible Belt of the south. For both of us, it just does not get any worse when one is talking about stereotypes.

I am like *Othello* because he is a racial Other. He is an outsider while on the inside of Venetian society. Most times I feel the same way. I am an "honorary white" because I am an English major—a field seemingly belonging solely to white people. Like *Othello*, I have to be careful what I say, or people will dismiss me as ignorant based on my race. Thus, I stumble over my words a lot so that I can be sure to say the right thing and not sound "black," even though I am. On the other hand, when I am at home, I have to remember to stop stumbling for the right words and just say whatever comes to mind, disregarding grammar and politics. I have to remember to say

“Where you at” instead of “Where are you.” I have to infiltrate black society, too.

Othello and I are trying to fit in, but we have to change ourselves—and lose ourselves—to do it.

Chuck Williamson also reflected on the similarity between himself and Othello in “Lectura *Othello* en Kentucky”:

—*Gringo. Leave me 'lone . . .*

But they do not. They circle around him in the dancing dust settling outside this dilapidated Quick Stop. Three white teenagers in cheap sneakers sashay back and forth around this confused and terrorized man, whose grasp of English comprehends the loathing in words like *spic* and *beaner* and *imm-eeee-gration*. He tries to plead with them. *Leave me 'lone*, he says over and over, but the circle closes in.

I watch them and say nothing. I pump my gas. *Only \$12.07*, I say to myself, ignoring the spectacle in front of me. *Must be my lucky day*. I get in my car and drive away. I ignore the charade I have lived all my life. I forget that my father was white, that my mother was Latina, and that I am the pretender who will never learn to pantomime the part of either very well.

Sometimes, I think of Othello.

Attaining the rank and prestige of a white man, he thus sheds his otherness and attempts to redefine the boundaries of his ethnic and cultural identity. Though he is publicly seen as noble and honorable, he is privately viewed as “an erring barbarian” decked out in fancy pantaloons (1.3.358), or one of the many “[b]ondslaves and pagans” (1.2.101) Jacobean audiences would have loathed and feared.

I want to go back to that time. I want to tear them away from that man. I want to say, *Take me instead*. I want to accept parts of myself that I have trouble accepting, and I want others to accept them too. I want to look at myself in the mirror and see more than lies.

In the follow up assignment which involved a reflection on the first paper, Chuck continues:

When my professor requested that I reflect on my analysis of *Othello*, I grew heavy with ambivalence. *Too confessional*, I thought. *The damn thing's too confessional. It's egotistical, shameless, the sort of thing I dare not reflect on*. I tried to force the words, but nothing came out. I had to make a pilgrimage outside the small, academic world I had created. I had to revisit the gas station.

Twilight hit before I arrived at my destination, and the bruise colored skies burned overhead. I ambled into this small, closed-in space as a stranger, picking through the signs that said CLOSED ON SUNDAYS and NO SMOKING. Electricity buzzed within the confines of a gargantuan ice-box, its hulking

frame adjacent to the locked doors. Cold and desolate, the place resembled how I imagined Cyprus looked in the wake of Othello's *hamartia*—a wasteland of dead silence.

Time passed slowly as I waited for something to happen in this gas station. Nothing happened. Instead, my thoughts returned to the emptiness of Cyprus—and the way a theater looks so lonesome when no one stands behind the red curtain. I think to myself, *Who was Othello?* and *Who am I?*

He was. I am. He is. I was. We are. *We are.*

Shakespeare as Therapy

Although I could rarely find a way to incorporate it into my Shakespeare classes, I have often said that, if we can't learn something about ourselves by reading Shakespeare, then there is something wrong somewhere. Incidentally, such was the case in his day. Simon Forman, who attended three plays at the Globe, wrote notes to himself to beware making the same mistakes as some of the characters. Much more recently, there is at least one non-scholarly book on the topic: *Will Power: Using Shakespeare's Insights to Transform Your Life* by George Weinberg and Dianne Rowe. In a chapter on *Othello* titled "Looking for the Poisonous People in Your Life," they advise someone to, for instance, "resist any urge you might have to disparage yourself to the jealous person" when dealing with someone like Iago (143). Googling "Shakespeare as therapy" yielded multiple hits, with some of the first ones having to do with acting. Andrew Sullivan, a columnist for the *Times*, learned from playing Benedict in *Much Ado about Nothing* that "working your way through a character's evolution can . . . become a little digression through your own needs and wants." My graduate Shakespeare class found that to be true in this set of essays in which they were willing to speak so openly about a topic that was painful and shameful to them.

Conclusion

I began this essay with an allusion to a book written in Tehran and then focused on a play written over four hundred years ago in another country. There is no trans-historical experience, the criticism of the last several decades has taught us, and perhaps that is true. However, I return to Azar Nafisi's talk in Bowling Green and contend that whatever brought her here is a counterweight even if we cannot give it a name. She spoke of imaginative empathy, genuine empathy, which creates a space that is universal, a space where we are not judged by nationality, race, gender, class, or any of those markers. "When," she says, "you have been degraded to the point where you doubt your own humanity, then you return, in order to survive, to the highest achievements of humanity, which are those works of literature which give each individual a voice" ("The Republic"). In their essays the class relates Othello's experience to theirs and finds that the two converge and resonate: they speak across the centuries. We all, real or fictional or whatever combination of these self-identity involves, are citizens of "The Republic of the Imagination," as Nafisi titled her lecture here on 23 April 2007 (incidentally, both Shakespeare's and Nabokov's birthdays). My class and I started with the title "Reading *Othello* in Kentucky," but we were also "Reading Kentucky in *Othello*." ☐

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The “Not Trying” of Writing

Rachel Forrester

In a previous life, I was a career newspaper writer. Over the course of my twenties, I worked my way up from a tiny rural weekly with a circulation of about 3,000 to a major metropolitan daily with a circulation of nearly thirty times that. Newspapering was fun work, but exhausting, and eventually my life's path brought me back around to academia, where I am now happily ensconced in yet another language-centered occupation. Lately, I have been catching myself reflecting on how my days in the trenches as a journalist in many ways paved the way to where I am now. I remember, for instance, a day when I sat in a newsroom writing and looked up from my computer with a feeling of nearly inexpressible wonder coming over me. I looked around at my comrades and thought about how miraculous it was that we produced what we did. Almost daily, we created something out of nothing—a story, an entire newspaper's worth of stories, when the day before no such thing existed. We were handed (or thought of) a germ of a story in the form of a few words that floated out over our meeting table, and somehow, a few days later, something new and readable emerged. I was struck in that moment in the newsroom by the otherworldly-ness of what we actually did every day, which usually seemed so mundane.

Why was that suddenly so miraculous to me? I had daily evidence of the hard work that led from point “A” (the germ) to point “B” (the story and newspaper). It took tracking down phone numbers and playing phone tag, coordinating with photographers, driving through smoggy traffic (sometimes with bad directions), attending meetings and reading minutes, conducting interviews, massaging egos, sorting through my own bad handwriting, revising, and tightening (and sometimes agonizing over) what had to be cut to make a story fit. That wasn't “nothing.” It took work to make those stories appear out of the thin air. Where was the miracle in that?

Looking back, the miracle was that anything got written in spite of the uncertainty and perhaps even deep dread I experienced *every time, without fail*, no matter how many stories I had produced. How would I “pull it off” this time? I wondered. Every story was an act of faith; every day, I had to battle the feeling that, even after I had immersed myself in my subject long enough to really know and care about it, it could somehow slip away from me at any moment. This was because every time I sat down to actually write the story, it did not really seem like me, or my conscious effort, that finally made the leap from the mess of preparation to the actual words spinning out onto the page; *I* didn't make sense of it all. It was something else, or at least something I did not have full control of. It seemed like the me that went out and did all the footwork was just the assistant, and it just handed all of that footwork to some other hidden me, or some other hidden somebody to make the magic happen. It was never like *I* was *deciding*

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what to say. It was as if *I* was *hearing* what to say, as though it had already been written, and it was just time for it to actually emerge in physical, black-and-white form.

I am many miles from my newspapering days, but I cannot shake my fascination with this otherworldly transformation that occurs in writing, between the moments before writing hits the page and the moment it actually does—that going from nothing to something, the way we seem to know in an instant that which we did not know we knew the moment before.

Silence and Not Trying

There are a multitude of ways of naming and describing this phenomenon. It has been described, especially in recent composition scholarship, in terms of the unconscious, the body, intuition, insight, creativity, emotions, imagery, visualization, spirituality, epistemology, psychology, all of which have been crucial to a thorough understanding of what is actually happening in that moment. In many ways, for instance, the recent flurry of scholarship regarding silence attempts to get at this very thing. In her 2004 *Unspoken*, Cheryl Glenn argues for a new look at silence as a rhetorical tool as important and worthy of critical attention as words. “Few documented accounts explicitly demonstrate the usefulness and sensibility of silence, particularly in our talkative Western culture, where speech is synonymous with civilization itself,” she says (xii). And yet, “people use silence and silencing every day to fulfill their rhetorical purpose, whether it is to maintain their position of power, resist the domination of others, or submit to subordination” (153).

What’s perhaps most interesting about silence as a rhetorical tool—the reason Glenn must make an argument about it at all—is that, as effective a tool as it is (and she builds a potent case for it), it represents a certain seeming *absence* of human effort. An absence of sound and motion, an absence of all the usual *appearances* of productivity. It’s easy to miss the effectiveness of silence because it doesn’t call attention to itself in the same way words do, doesn’t seem to offer, at first glance, any immediate trails of meaning. The same is true of listening, a kind of silence: Krista Ratcliffe in *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness* notes how “we have been slow to imagine how listening might inform our discipline” (19). She considers various possible reasons for disciplinary bias against listening as worthy of critical study, even though it constitutes, in essence, a third of the traditional rhetorical triangle. But when we step back and look at the total picture of the rhetorical act including the spaces where words are not, we see how enormous a role those spaces play. It’s hard to hear, Glenn says, but silence “resonates loudly along the corridors of purposeful language use” (xi). She continues, “We live inside the act of discourse, to be sure, but we cannot assume that a *verbal* matrix is the only one in which the articulations and conduct of the mind take place—regardless of the measure of inward or outward persuasion” (153).

Just as the seeming absence of human effort of silence turns out to be an important part of the rhetorical act, the seeming absence of human effort which I will call “not trying” (and by which I essentially mean the setting aside of cognitive analysis) is often a key element of our best writing experiences. After all our groundwork is laid, writing seems to emerge from the kind of nothingness that

silence represents but where something is actually happening. We tend to resist the thought that good writing might come from anything other than our conscious efforts; our culture values, above all, the work ethic, dictate that things get achieved because we are busy, because we try, not because we are occasionally visited by any mysterious force within or outside of ourselves that knows what we mean to say before we say it. After all, what do we have left to teach our students if drafts comes from somewhere besides their brainstorm lists, clustering, invention notes, and revision efforts? Are we going back to that old notion that writing is "magical," unteachable and unlearnable, that only the gifted elite have the necessary tools?

By no means. Janet Emig made her large leap forward for teachers of writing when she argued in 1981 against "magical thinking" in the teaching of writing (21), as regards to how writing gets done and who gets the credit for it. So began process writing as we now know it: good writing doesn't "magically" appear, but goes through a rigorous, often recursive invention process with parts that all writers share in common, if we can get them to the surface for observation. This is important; in doing so, we are attempting to ease our students' writing anxiety by offering the hope that anyone can do it if he or she just engage in the process. In 1992, William Covino subverted to a degree Emig's work by reclaiming the term "magic" for rhetoricians, saying that "magic" is nothing if not the exercise of rhetoric in all its glory in its (here he borrows from Daniel Lawrence O'Keefe's *Stolen Lightning*) "'audacious individual use of existing powerful symbols'" (349).

I agree with both. Though he begins his piece by pushing against hers, Covino's thinking isn't necessarily incompatible with Emig's; in actuality, the two represent the balance all writers must strike in their process: writing is not either/or; it's *both* the hard work of the process *and* the culminating leap of faith/invocation of magic that typically characterize our best writing experiences. The hard work of the process of writing—the phone calls, the interviews (in short, whatever research is necessary, whether it's research into the subject matter or into the mind of the writer)—is necessary for the moment when "not trying" occurs, when the piece finally lifts off the ground and takes flight.

The notion of "not trying" when writing comes is of course not original with me by any means. Most advanced writers, and many developing writers, have a story of a moment when a whole piece seemed to emerge from the subconscious in an instant of its own accord. My hope with this essay is simply to remind us to resist the narcissism of the very American belief that it is always and ever our motion, our sound, our busy-ness, that gets us (and our students) where we need to go in writing. Even the most staunchly "unspiritual" writers will usually admit to the occasional feeling that they seem to be in the hands of something beyond their cognitive control (something I will later venture to call spiritual) when they write. At the end of the essay, I will offer some practical classroom strategies for teachers and students who are looking for ways to help this phenomenon occur more often, so deliciously liberating when it does.

I began with Cheryl Glenn's silence-as-rhetoric as an analogy for "not trying"-as-writing. I like the analogy partly because silence can then shift gears to provide both a source for, not just an analogy to, the not trying of writing: the specific words we need when we're composing seem to come out of the silence when we can actually achieve it—the silence or stillness of our minds, or of the

room around us. Peter Elbow describes this in his piece “Silence: A Collage,” where he uses the examples of the silence of the “spaces” between gathered text fragments in a collage. In his essay, Elbow gathers together a number of freewritings from colleagues during a workshop on silence. Each muses in different ways about his or her personal experience with silence; one, for instance, about the different *kinds* of silence, one about what a silent breakfast with colleagues was like, and so on. Reading Elbow’s gathered excerpts, one feels a bit like an observer at a quiet gallery of art, free to follow the pleasures of his or her own line of thinking as the excerpts float past, rather than being required to follow the more logical progress of a formal essay to “get” what is said by the end.

What Elbow is saying is that it is the actual *lack of* formal, cognitive explanations of how these fragments relate to and converse with each other—the “silence” between each of the excerpts—which makes the experience of reading it so powerful:

The principle of negativity; absence. What makes writing good is not what the writer puts in but what she or he leaves out. Silence is often what’s most powerful in music; space in art and architecture. We hear the pulsing energy in certain rests in music. . . . We see the force in the spaces in certain line drawings. . . . Silence and felt sense. The source and foundation of verbal meaning often lies in the silence of what is felt nonverbally and bodily. When writing goes well, it is often because we periodically pause and say, “Is this what I mean to be saying?” It’s amazing that we can answer that question: that we can tell whether a given set of words corresponds to an intention. The source of the answer is the feelings and the body—consulted in silence. (12-13)

It is the things left unsaid which seem to have the most impact. There is an intimacy of meaning that comes with silence, when an idea travels by doing nothing, by “not trying.” The lack of necessity to say something says the important thing: the connectedness of a speaker or writer and his or her audience, which is the message that underlies all messages. Silence works both as a source for the artist or writer and as a technique because where the ideas come from for her, she trusts they may also come for the audience. There is a not-trying in the verbal and visual void of silence—a mind that stops to float for a moment, relaxed vocal cords, a hand that draws back to rest—that is essential to the creator’s overall success.

Many Terms, One Concept

The recent scholarship of silence makes a helpful inroad into the idea of the “not trying” of writing, but many lines of composition scholarship have contained its traces, describing the same thing—a kind of nothingness where *something* is happening—but from many different vantage points. When we talk about the unconscious as it relates to the writing process, for instance, we are using Freudian terms to grapple with the experience I described above, that of someone “else” (in this case, the unconscious) making writing occur. One of my favorite essays along this line is Barrett Mandel’s 1980 piece, “The Writer Writing Is Not at

Home," which begins with verbal descriptions by the painter Jasper Johns on his creative process during an interview with Michael Crichton:

The author asks Johns why he has just made a change in the handle of a spoon in a lithograph on which he is working. Johns answers, "Because I did." The author asks, "But what did you *see*?" Johns: "I saw that it should be changed." Author: "Well, if you changed it, what was wrong with it before?" Johns: "Nothing. I tend to think one thing is as good as another." Author: "Then why change it?" Johns, after a sigh and a pause: "Well, I may change it again." author: "Why?" Johns: "Well, I won't know until I do it." (370)

Then, Mandel explains:

It is time for writing teachers to begin to take seriously those who create. Johns is not pulling anyone's leg. He is being honest, even at the expense of sounding foolish. Like so many professional artists, he simply and truly does not know why or how he paints the way he does. He does not know where the ideas come from. He is nevertheless clear: that he is responsible for the lithograph; he accepts the fact that it is his.

Johns sees that a work of art happens and that an artist creates it—out of no prior knowledge, thought, plan or expectations. Not that there aren't prior thoughts and plans, but that the work of art does not arise from them; they do not cause the work of art to materialize. Johns is willing to avoid all tenets, dictates, philosophies, and pedagogies concerning the making of this lithograph. He distrusts explanations, reasons, and rationalizations, while accepting the insight which moves his hand across the canvas. It may be argued that Johns at some earlier point had to follow tenets and pedagogies. Perhaps. But my point would be that he became what we would call creative or imaginative by transcending all such rules and by learning to trust the free choice of his hand over the entrapment of his mind by rules of procedure. (370)

Mandel uses this beginning to set the stage for his argument that writing—the moment the words actually come out, which I found so mysterious in the news-room that day—comes from a place other than consciousness. He says that "one writes before one is conscious of what one has to say" (373), as though writing "comes from behind the screen of consciousness, behind which no person can ever hope to see" (374). This changes everything in the writing classroom, Mandel says: "We must push students past their own ego-restrictions so that they will be open to the experience of having the words flow from wherever their source is—as in speech. Wherever that place is, it is non-conscious, non-logical, unsegmented, non-problematic and perfectly dependable. We must, I am saying, drive the student out of the House of Self-consciousness" (375).

The thing Mandel calls the "non-conscious" others might call "the body." This might seem at first a little jarring to consider, as both come from distinct

lines of scholarship, but, in some ways, both are actually saying the same thing: that writing comes from somewhere other than the cognitive effort or “trying” which seems to characterize other kinds of academic or intellectual work. In other words, when we speak about the unconscious, we are saying it’s a “not trying” of the conscious. When we speak about the body, we are saying it’s a “not trying” of the mind. Both are reaching for and theorizing about the same invisible, mysterious thing, but from different avenues. Though Mandel refers mostly to the unconscious, he makes the crossover himself, invoking a subtle body-oriented theory when he says the artist Johns accepts “the insight which moves his hand across the canvas” (370), as though it is his hand, or an insight in charge of his hand (notably, not his mind), doing the work. As with the unconscious, when we talk about “the body” in relation to writing, we are usually saying that our bodies “know” in ways that our brains don’t, though our brains are part of the bodily package. The answers and explanations we seek when we’re writing, the specific ways of putting things, seem to come from our bodies themselves, in much the same way an artist works with his hands. “Sometimes the body knows before the mind knows. Ask a potter about the wisdom of the hands, about the feel of the clay, its moisture and texture, about the form emerging from raw clay,” say Alice Brand and Richard Graves (75) in their introduction to the segment on the body in their essay collection *Presence of Mind*. Sondra Perl describes this as the “felt sense” (78), a sense about ideas and words which is experienced in the body:

Working with this sense is intrinsically creative, and nothing about it stays still. Delving into it does not simply yield a discovery of something already formed yet hidden from view, the way an archaeologist unearths an artifact on a dig. The very “delving in” helps shape what emerges and may shape and reshape the very manner in which we “delve.” This way of working is alive and lives, as we do, in our bodies. . . . Our felt sense of something is always quite specific. The sense you have at this moment is unquestionably *this* sense and no other. But to write what you sense may take some doing. . . . Only certain words will say what you sense; and these may only come by a careful process of slowing down and listening, of paying attention to those hunches, leanings, and subtle pulls. (78)

In both cases, whether the source is named the “unconscious” or the “body,” the point is that both are ways of describing what I think of as the “not trying” that occurs when writing happens. It is not even as though the cognitive powers are put in neutral; it is almost as though they must be actively resisted and curtailed off for the “magic” to happen. Note the flow of conversation between Crichton and Johns in Mandel’s introduction: Crichton’s mind probes curiously with the thinking and speaking pattern of the interviewer intent on solving the equation of “why” with cognitive details. Johns is obviously not only practiced in the skill to resist his own “why” while he paints, but to resist the onslaught of the cognition of another into the intimate details of that process. It is as though Johns knows that the more cognition is applied, the farther away the interviewer will actually get from the knowledge he seeks. It is a knowledge which must, in some ways, come to the seeker; it cannot be hunted down like prey. The seeker’s job—whether artist or interviewer—is to wait and to listen, a position which can

seem agonizingly passive to our culture, especially academic culture.

As with Mandel's example, so it is with the "body" as well. To recap: "these [artistic insights] may only come by a careful process of *slowing down and listening*, of paying attention to those hunches, leanings, and subtle pulls," says Perl (78, my emphasis). The thing we need to happen when we're writing, she says, doesn't happen with aggressive probing, motion, work, or anything like it; quite the opposite. It comes from a slowing down—deceleration, retreat from intellectual speed—and listening. That is to say, that, if there is a motion at all, it is one of intake, not output, of feeding oneself with stimuli, not producing it—something perhaps opposite of what we typically envision when we imagine writing from outside the process. We want so much to give students ways of actively stalking the ideas that make their writing compelling. But the stalking is not, in the end, what actually makes it happen; it just loosens up the soil.

The Common Denominator

In other words, all of these ways of trying to get at the "magic" that happens at the moment of composition—discussions of silence, the unconscious, the body—have one thing in common: there is a "not trying" at the center of them all which we still cannot quite get at with our minds. There is a kind of putting the self on pause, of release, a cessation of movement or sound, a time when the mind is, in a way, out to lunch rather than in control. Control is subjugated to something else. Whatever that something else may be, the most miraculous part of it is the "work" gets done while we're "away," whether it's by the subconscious or the body, or whatever terms we have of identifying and describing that mysterious force. When writing happens, it feels like the "trying" stops, and the hardest "work" we have in the middle of the experience is keeping faith that the words will come and keeping our minds quiet so we can hear the words as they do. Whatever is still "working" or "trying," if there is anything doing those things in that moment, is still beyond our reach, or at least seemingly beyond the reach of our cognition. We are not filling in sums or formulas by counting doggedly. We are dabbling in words and sounds, letting them speak to us. We are, indeed, in some ways, passively listening for something that appeals to us, pleasures us, in much the same way a child mills about a room and doesn't have to *try* to get interested when his or her teacher starts singing a delightful song. There seems to be about grown-up writing, when it does actually happen, an element of the deep, unmanufacturable wisdom and the love for the easy, unexplainable fun of sounds that characterizes the play of children, not the trying and "work" of grownups. In that moment when the words actually come, though we may be sweating with anxiety, "effort" and "trying" seem somehow to fall out of the picture. As I found in the newsroom that day, it doesn't feel like "us" because it doesn't feel like work.

The Hard Work of "Not Trying"

Notably, within discussions of this mysterious source—saying it comes from the unconscious, the body, silence or any other thing—there is an automatic implication and presence in the room, if you will, of their opposites. We wouldn't have a discussion of the unconscious, the body, or silence if we weren't inclined

to depend on the conscious, the cognition, and noise and motion for the assurance of productivity. We have the common urge among us to work, to move ahead, to believe that it is work and movement and busy-ness which will produce the results we're looking for.

Perhaps a literal definition of work will help here. In physics, mechanical work is described in terms of a relationship between a pressure or force and the distance it moves something in space ($W=FD$, or Work equals Force times Distance). When I push a chair across the floor, the amount of work it takes to get it to its new spot is the product of me ("F") and the distance the chair is moved ("D"). We define work in terms of the pressure or energy it takes to move an object, or make something happen, that wouldn't move or happen on its own.

When the "magic" of writing happens, we know a distance has been travelled. There are words on the page where before there were not. And we think of writing as work. But if it is work, then who or what is the "F" force? Is it us, some other part of ourselves, or someone or something else? I contend that all around the process of writing is work, trying, and its evidence, but that at the center of it, like a seed in all its infinitely mysterious intersections of chemistry, biology, physics, and, for some, spirituality, there is non-work. There is an absence of *trying*; there is just a *being*, a rest, a pause, a void, albeit a full, pregnant rest or void. It just does not feel the same way it feels to push a chair across the floor. When writing happens, it feels as though we ourselves are being pushed across the floor, and we are throwing up our feet and hands (if only for a split second) in glee. No matter how it is described or defined, it feels transcendently like "not trying," like sitting back and letting someone else finally take the wheel.

This might make us uncomfortable. The thought of it tends to produce, at least in myself, a range of responses: exhilaration and relief, but also terror. Exhilaration and relief that I am quite possibly, finally not in charge of every last detail; and terror that, if I am not in charge, how can I be sure that it is what Mandel calls "perfectly dependable" (375)? It seems even a little un-American: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." We are brought up to believe that hard work and nothing else brings success—a simple look at the typical annual working hours of Americans (more than 1800 hours, one of the highest on the global scale, comparatively) as compared to workers in other cultures (in Norway, as low as 1300) reminds us of that (Bovée and Thill 70). We are not taught to be still and believe that the answers already lie inside ourselves—or somewhere—waiting. Culturally, perhaps especially in academia (though there is increasing openness to it), "not trying" or stillness is equated more with laziness and not knowing than productivity and knowing. If this were not the case, we would not have the downward pressure from upper administrative positions (who get their pressure from boards, legislators, voters and parents—in short, ourselves) to boost full-time equivalent productivity, volunteer on committees, publish for tenure. Notice that all three are things we can physically see the results of; a professor talking to a class, a committee meeting, or an article or book fresh off the press. All are things which certainly have their value in a vibrant and richly interconnected university community. All show tangibly that work has happened or is happening. But is this truly productivity, or is it merely the illusion of productivity? Time for stillness, reflection, not-doing—those are ways of allocating human resources of which we cannot cognitively measure the benefits, and so they are not allocated much at all. Notice even a recent change in terminology: no longer

is a semester away from campus called a "sabbatical" (of Hebrew origin, meaning a time at regularly scheduled intervals allocated "to rest," *Oxford English Dictionary*); it is called an "off-campus scholarly assignment" or an alternative. Our terminology shift gives away our discomfort with "not trying": rest, not-doing, not-trying, seems fuzzy and unacceptable; scholarship (in which learning or some other measurable or tangible product is being produced) is acceptable. If we are to allocate a regular time for non-work in our days, weeks, months, years, we must scramble for it ourselves; it will not come from our culture.

No one is saying, though, of course, that the *trying* part of the writing process is not important; it is simply not the whole picture. According to one creativity paradigm, "saturation" with one's subject is the first step in a process that leads to creative insight (Holman 67). All of that planning, research, meeting-going, and interviewing I did as a reporter was important preparation for the moments when the words did finally begin to spin out. But, when the "magic" did begin to happen, it was never (at least on my good days) just a regurgitation of those facts; the end results always seemed to be more the sum of the parts I had put in, and I never had the sense that I had done anything myself to make that happen. As Mandel says, "Not that there aren't prior thoughts and plans, but that the work of art does not arise from them; they do not cause the work of art to materialize" (370). Things just seemed to come to me at the moments they needed to, in ways that kept me guessing every time I wrote at how I would, as stated earlier, "pull things off" this time. Though we're told hard work is the key to success, inside every success story seems to be, ironically, the kernel of a moment like this, when "not doing" (the Buddhist way of putting it) seems to become key; a miracle just occurs.

In this way, writing seems like a distinctly spiritual endeavor or one that requires daily faith in something unknowable. I contend that the hardest work of writing is the discipline of that faith, in believing that, if you get things ready, the rest will come. Gradually a good writer grows a faith in the knowledge that it will come, even if he or she doesn't know what it will look like in the end. In an essay that deals with modes of spirituality in the technical writing class, Marianthe Karanikas describes a time when Nobel Prize-winning geneticist Barbara McClintock was trying to solve a genetic problem; after three days of investigation and analysis, she wasn't finding what she wanted, so she left to "meditate under the eucalyptus trees." Suddenly, after half an hour, McClintock jumped up and "knew everything was going to be just fine" (159), even though she didn't yet have the formal solution to her problem. The sense of sudden well-being in writing always seems likewise to emerge from moments of stillness, of giving in, in a sense, to the unknowability of even what the writer is doing at that very moment.

"Not Trying" in the Classroom

Thankfully, there is an increasing level of comfort in secular educational contexts with incorporating spiritual (as distinct from religious) notions into pedagogy, but there is also the understandable skepticism and resistance. After all, if we're not here to get our students to "try," then what are we doing? What *is* our job, and will we have one at the end of the day if we tell our students that what they need to learn and produce will happen, in the end, without them trying and

working? I believe the answer to this lies in the understanding that our students, like our children, are absorbing more from our modeling than from our overt strategizing, speaking, or assignment designing in the classroom. They learn our way of life, our ways of handling conflict, our ways of prioritizing, our “tone” of life—our optimism and pessimism, in short, “how things feel in the class” (Tompkins 657)—before they learn the digitizable information we plan so carefully to transfer to them. Appropriately, just as writing happens in some ways when we’re “not trying,” so does teaching. It’s important, of course, to use the contact hours we have with students in ways that maximize the benefits that togetherness offers. But it’s the *feel* of our class which students remember, not what we say or tell them to do or not do.

“Nowhere is such a cultural phenomenon more evident than in our classrooms, where we honor the material over the spiritual, the rational over the intuitive, the social over the self. Critical thinking is given supremacy with little thought to the *raison d’être* for that thinking,” says Kristie S. Fleckenstein, “Thus, the heart of teaching, the spiritual center, is lost and, as Yeats predicts, ‘things fall apart’” (25). When we stop seeing physical and cognitive busy-ness in our own lives as the sole indicators of productivity and meaning, it will inevitably trickle into the lives of our classrooms and our students, saving the “heart” of learning.

Mandel seems to agree with this: “It does not work to teach coherence, unity, and emphasis, since these follow insight. They do not precede it. What works is to stimulate insights by creating contexts in which they are likely to occur” (375). In other words, “teaching coherence, unity and emphasis” can all become tempting forms of classroom “busy-ness” when we don’t know how to express, or perhaps don’t feel safe expressing, what actually happens when we write. Writing is a very intimate process, and we make ourselves vulnerable when we tell the truth, which is that we don’t really know where writing comes from, though we’ve spent our careers studying it. Ultimately, under this model, we become primarily teachers of patience rather than teachers of writing. If we believe fully in what artists and writers seem to say across the board about their processes, then we must believe that students have the writing already, in some ways, within themselves, in which case we teach students how to prepare and then how to wait and listen.

Here are a few extremely simple practical classroom strategies I have used toward this end:

1. How do you feel? What do you want? I have long since forgotten which friend or counselor to credit with these two simple questions. Try beginning a class, or try beginning all your classes, with a freewrite for five or 10 minutes, answering these two simple questions. They are notoriously harder than they look; few of us are accustomed to being asked them. If you or they get stuck (and I of course always try to write with my students), try choosing your answer to the first question from one of the four main categories: happy, sad, mad, scared. These are the “primary colors,” if you will, of the emotional spectrum (attributable, once again, to an unknown friend or counselor). The point of this exercise is, of course, honing the skill of internal listening, of self-awareness, the kind it takes to be ready when the “not trying” finally comes.

2. The Power of the Pause. The strategic pause is something I learned while writing for newspapers. An editor once told me to sit and listen for more when an interviewee seems to come to a stop when answering an important question. The

temptation is to plunge in and ask the next question, to keep the sound moving. But allowing the pause to stand does mysterious things: almost invariably, the interviewee will suddenly go deeper, revising the previous answer with the details you were hoping for in the first place. I teach my business writing students this strategy for oral presentations: when you ask your audience a question, stop and wait for an answer. This is hard, because silence can be intimidating. What if no one says anything? Live with the silence a moment, I tell them; feel the answers around the room rising to the surface, which they inevitably do. The classroom can be a safe place to help students get comfortable with silence, to learn to ride its mysterious energy, a skill useful when writing.

3. Listen. I am continuously having to remind myself that my most important job as a teacher is not to "teach" or to lecture. My most important job is to listen, to receive what students already have to give, and to provide my services as an experienced listener and reader. In her essay "Listening Like a Cow," Mary Rose O'Reilley describes a situation where a student bolted from a class in tears, so moved by another student's presentation. When the student presenting asked, "How can we go on?", O'Reilley responded, "Pay attention. Just be there. Don't be thinking about a solution, or how you should fix it. Just listen hard and try to be present" (27). When we model this kind of listening to students, we teach them the kind of listening so rare in our culture: the kind that remembers that you already have the answers to your life's quandaries inside you, and reminds you to trust yourself—often the missing ingredient when we can't get writing to take flight.

"Not Trying" as a Form of Grace

"It's the closest thing to grace there is," a self-proclaimed "un-spiritual" academic friend of mine said when I told him I was investigating spirituality as it relates to the creative process. The feeling of grace—the unexpected gift, free of charge, from another world—in a tired, spiritually uncertain post-9/11 world is something which, while frightening in many ways, is reassuring in others. As Richard Graves says,

The popular understanding of grace is sometimes limited to the theological realm and, for that reason, some may question whether or not it is appropriate for school settings. I believe to the contrary, that grace has profound implications for pedagogy. The way I am using the word is more akin to its physical and social connotations, as when we say "she dances with grace" or "he acted with grace." Used in this manner, the term connotes harmony of movement, coordination, poise under pressure. But a hint of the transcendent also pervades this meaning of the word. For the dancer spends hours in practice, but when the moment of performance comes, some magic takes over, some invisible force beyond the muscles themselves. (15)

Grace is experienced when the total is more than the sum of its parts, and not by "trying." This seems to be what happens when we write. What's most exciting about the attention that non-cognitive—or "not trying"—processes are being given in academia is that we are perhaps bringing our occupation closer to its true source

of knowledge. Perhaps the source is indeed a simple, still place inside of each of us, making “study . . . about the sacredness of life” (Briggs, Schunter, Melvin 28). If we insist on space for “not trying” both in our personal lives and in our classrooms, and if we keep faith based on overwhelming evidence that something key lies inside of it, perhaps we will find that what we needed to know was there all along. ☉

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The Other End of the Kaleidoscope: Configuring Circles of Teaching and Learning

Eudora Watson, Jennifer Mitchell, and Victoria Levitt

Have you ever made a kaleidoscope, or taken one apart? You can hold the tube with its mirrors in one hand and the baubles that provide the color and movement in the other. Put the baubles back into the kaleidoscope. Close up the base. Look. Turn the kaleidoscope. Look again.

Circling the Rules

In the turns of my memory, I see my second grade self heading back to school one day after lunch. It had been rainy, but, while I was eating lunch at home, the rain let up. As usual, I'd left my preparations for going back to school too long, and, in my rush to be on my way, I did not remember to pull my school-mandated rain gear (innocently called "rubbers") back over my shoes. Instead I dodged puddles for the three blocks back to school. I rounded the corner of the school building on a run to line up with the others at the back door. Heads turned towards my shoes. "You're in trouble!" The news was elbowed down the line and more heads turned. "But my shoes didn't get wet, look!" I held up a sole for inspection. "It doesn't matter. You're in trouble."

As the line made its way into the building, I held out some hope that I could slip by unnoticed. But my peers' assessment of the reaction to this infraction of the rubbers-on-rainy-days rule was accurate. As I re-entered the building, I was pulled from line and sent to the principal. He sent a note home with me: it cited my "refusal to follow school rules" and included a warning of subsequent consequence. This missive was met with laughter from my parents and siblings and became a family joke. In my large family I was the quiet bookworm—a child less likely to knowingly break a rule was difficult to imagine.

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I have a kaleidoscope of memories from my decade of teaching in the public schools. Homerooms, assemblies, classes, exams, parent meetings, staff relationships lunchroom, detention, study halls, students, janitors, parents, secretaries, principals. The context and the content: the structure of a school and the people in the school. Somehow, between them, something is wrong. How can I discover what is wrong as a step in making things right? Turn, look. What is going on?

On the way to becoming a teacher, I worked as a substitute. An early view of the schools came from my experiences as a substitute teacher and student teacher. One day in an elementary school, I was walking from child to child, leaning over to help them along. The smallest ripples of each child's excitement over an encounter with a new adult traveled with me. I looked up to the other side of the room; one of the boys was standing. The school rules I had been instructed to enforce were posted on the front wall in all classrooms; there was a rule against standing without permission. This was an early grade, second or third, so even standing he didn't make much of a mark in the world. I thought of myself as a second grader turning that corner of the school building to line up with my classmates and coming up against the rules. My family's laughing response to that encounter was the first contribution, perhaps, to the skeptical lens through which I view the goings-on in schools. I squatted down next to the child so we were just about eye-to-eye.

"Did you know you're breaking a rule?"

"I am?"

"Yup. Do you know which one?"

"No."

"Can you read the rules on the wall to figure it out?"

"Some of the words, but not all."

"Let's read the first one together."

So we read the rules until we came to the one about standing. "That's the one," he said, and sat down. "Are you going to write my name on the board?"

Later, as a student teacher, I was on rotation for after-school detention. Two high school boys sat in the back of the room, scowling. The older boy whispered things I could not quite catch; the effect on the younger boy, though, was easily read. He was in bad company and uncomfortable, but also pleased. I asked them to be quiet. I moved them a few seats apart. The muttering and dark looks continued. I called the younger boy up. "Here's your new seat. No, right here, in front of me." He dumped his books and sat, shoulders slouched, arms crossed, eyes down. He was hunkered in for a miserable hour. In the back of the room, the older boy settled into his homework.

I noticed a novel in the younger boy's small stack. "What's the book you're reading?" He looked up at me, then down to the pile. He told me the title. "How is it so far?" His scowl relaxed; we began to talk. We talked about books; he told me why he was on detention. He started doing his homework. The hour passed, and we said, "Good bye. It was nice to meet you."

In both these instances, the students and I were participants in a system that sets children away from the group in order to punish them. The system of name-on-the board, checks-after-the-name is like a secret handshake in reverse. There is a shared meaning behind the ritual, but, where a secret handshake binds relationships, names on the board rupture them. The children whose names go on the board are not being drawn into a community in which they might derive comfort

and modify their behavior to keep status as members; rather, they are being isolated from the community.

In the detention room, also, students are isolated. They are placed away from their friends, with an adult whose role is not to talk to them except to enforce the punishment. Neither of the detention boys was eager to fill the role of “bad” student. The older boy readily gave up his attempts, and the younger boy dropped all pretense. He taught me that a simple invitation to community, through a conversation based on shared interest, could help a child step back into a trusting, respectful relationship with a teacher.

Several years later I learned another lesson about community, this time with writing instruction playing a role. I owe a debt of gratitude to a class of four boys who would only stop taunting, spit-wad shooting, complaining, and falling out of their chairs for one activity: writing and reading back to the group what they wrote. Occasionally I read from a published work, but most of what we all did was to write and read our writing to each other. Alas, the ceiling was still dotted with spit wads, but all other misbehavior stopped, the atmosphere became collegial, and my students’ writing greatly improved. It took me another few years, and a supportive week with a poetry performance group during a summer, but I finally transferred what my students had been teaching me over the years into my 8th grade language arts classroom.

People improve their writing by writing, and I finally figured out how to get my students to write—by listening to what they wrote. One way I reminded myself to be a listener in my classroom was through a “write first” policy. Each question I asked the group was answered first on paper. (If I forgot and called on someone before I had given the class time to write first, the student who reminded me got a participation point.) We all wrote and then a few read out their answers. They had to read it just as they wrote it, but they could note changes they would like to make when they were finished reading it out, a method that taught them more about editing than any other thing I’ve done in the classroom.

Each week we shifted the environment in the room by sitting on our desks and reading our words to each other. We tried out typical writing workshop responses: for my 8th graders, “I heard” paired with “I wonder” worked very nicely. What my students really needed, like most writers, was someone who showed interest in their work—someone who listened to them. I called these “read alouds.” I believe they were particularly effective because I kept track of who took a turn. Prolific and glib writers shared the stage with those less ready with an answer or less practiced at speaking. My students wrote more, they wrote better, we shared laughter, and misbehaviors plummeted. When my colleagues spoke of this problem student or that during staff meetings, they would often look my way and say, “But he’s not a problem in your class, is he?” And no, I had to admit, he wasn’t.

My students came to my classroom with many curious rules about writing in place. How did a rule like “You can’t start a sentence with a conjunction” come into being? It clearly isn’t so based on a look at the work of published writers. Another school “rule” that suffers when compared to published work is the ban on the word “I” in essays. “It’s hard to say your opinion when you can’t write ‘I,’” my students tell me, and I can well agree. Why are we holding young, inexperienced writers to a standard more confining than the one mature writers are held to? This is not to say that we shouldn’t hold young writers to the standards of good writing that hold for anyone else. It is to say that when we hold them to

contrived standards that apply to no one else, we isolate them by ensuring that they will not be conversant in the writerly practice that takes place outside the grade school.

The faults in school have typically been thought to reside in the people: the students and, more recently, the teachers. Solutions have been applied there. Tougher standards for students and teachers are the current try at reform. Reshape the baubles and funnel them back into the same kaleidoscope. But it is the structure of the kaleidoscope that rules the view, not the baubles. What is wrong is not the people, but the structure that constrains them.

Circles of Responsibility

As a child taking horseback riding lessons, I followed a strict set of rules that kept me safe and earned a stream of praise. From the center of the circle, my instructors called out their corrections to our form (“Eyes up! Heels down!”) and directed our movements around the circle. I relished the praise, and I was embarrassed by mistakes and misunderstandings.

As an adult, I ride through open fields with an arthritic and ornery horse and an aging back of my own. Our course is an uncertain negotiation through uneven grass and on paths cut by deer leaping away from us into the woods. I still find that it helps to keep my eyes up and heels down, but only in order to keep my balance when my horse shifts his. I do not focus on rules and praise, but on staying loose, responsive, and in charge more often than not. Sometimes success means knowing when to dismount and walk alongside my horse, offering another kind of leadership before trying again.

I love my job as a writing teacher at a small state college. I try hard to help students develop their compositional skill and to motivate them to pursue difficult answers, to communicate complex ideas. Many students seem initially convinced that they just don’t like academic writing or are not good at it. I believe instead that they are limited by their training in stringent rules for writing. I try to loosen those rules for them to make room for new priorities.

In writing centers, I first saw the effects of students’ training in prescriptive rules. Students’ written work seemed complete to them: it had a thesis, examples, and a restatement of the thesis. These, they had learned, were the unquestionable features of a good essay. They were dismayed when their college teachers criticized this sort of writing for its fractured argument and unclear connections. Students failed even when they thought they were following the rules perfectly. Teachers wanted a clear thesis, support, and a summary, but they also wanted writing that displayed critical thinking. Teachers and students could not translate their views of “good writing” for each other. In this conventional training, the features of a clear essay are presented as simple steps: first, pick a thesis; narrow the thesis to fit the form, making it easy for all to understand (notice that no exploration or development has occurred); arrange three examples that support the the-

sis, leaving out any questions or contradictory evidence; restate the thesis in different words, but without real change. Students report this same simplified process to compositionist Amy Lee when she asks them to list the “rules for good writing that they have learned in school” (210). Several rules are stated across the years:

Always have a thesis statement in your introduction. Do not use the first-person pronoun, “I.” . . . Do not directly address the reader. Repeat your thesis statement in every paragraph. . . . The conclusion should restate the introduction but in different words. Be sure to have transition sentences between paragraphs. Have 5 paragraphs (introduction, 3 bodies, conclusion). (210-11)

Working to these rules, students will force meaning into the prescribed form, even if the meaning is distorted beyond recognition (Brodkey 137). Yet students can be punished for violating the rules and rewarded for following them even if they produce an essay that is fractured, unclear, or insignificant. The rules describe a finished essay, but they constrain the process for achieving it. The steps require students to put aside uncertainty and questions, complexity and contradiction, the features that could stimulate the thinking that college teachers often value.

As a classroom instructor, I regularly discuss differences between writing instruction in high school and college. I reward students for developing a significant thesis as they write and revise, not before. I ask them to use writing for inquiry and revision to translate complex ideas for readers. I encourage students to assess drafts from a reader’s perspective and to test them on peer readers. I choose never to blame students for using the model they have learned or to impose a new set of prescriptions. I try to gently point them out of the rut they have worn by following old rules, inviting conversation about their training and listening generously. I am patient with their reluctance to change. After all, I am implicitly critiquing their educational experience.

In resisting and loosening the rigid rules of school writing, I draw support from compositionists who argue that those rules reduce student motivation, foreclose inquiry, and encourage shallow arguments (e.g., Bartholomae; Brodkey). These compositionists caution that literacy is not neutral or mechanical, but interpretive and socially situated. Furthermore, others see the sources of prescriptive rules in ideologies of literacy, economic factors, and disciplinary exclusivity (e.g., Fox; Rose; Russell; Trimbur). They assert that it is not necessarily a great equalizer. I agree with these readings: for me, the persistence of this system of “rules for good writing” is not an isolated error, but political and fueled by many sources.

These three arenas—helping my students, adhering to intellectual expertise, and acting on political analysis—are areas of responsibility for me, but I draw thick circles around each, separating it from the others. I fear that critiquing the politics of literacy will discourage students and throw their focus off of their development. I fear jeopardizing the gentle reconsideration of deeply ingrained rules. I fear closing down their inquiries by imposing another set of rules, rules about how we “must” see literacy. On the other hand, I am also concerned about the silence on important social questions about literacy. I want these circles to

overlap, but they seem stuck, jammed like pieces in a broken kaleidoscope. I want the parts to turn, yielding a new and more integrated picture for me and for my students. What is politically responsible, in this situation? What is helping? What is intellectually sound? I want to look, turn, look again. But my kaleidoscope is jammed, and the pieces stay where they are. I am increasingly uneasy with this separation.

Min-Zhan Lu's work in "An Essay on the Work of Composition" set the pieces of my quandary in motion. Lu urges composition teachers to prepare students to be responsible users of English in a global capitalist economy (16). She does not wrangle over whether we must protect students from controversial theories of literacy and social control. In fact, she argues against the irrational fears of critical pedagogy which she finds persistent in composition (19, 43). Responsible users of English would understand the complexity and specificity of all designers' "actual discursive resources" and how they might affect their design choices. Error, then, would be considered contextually (27).

Lu identifies five kinds of "actual discursive resources": the designer's relationship to standard English; the sort of language use she or he wants to identify with; the sort of language use s/he is emotionally tied to through family; the designer's sense of self, future, and success; and his/her sense of how different Englishes interact, especially in terms of power differences (30). Lu assumes that each designer's resources are uniquely heterogeneous and exist in an "often complex and sometimes dissonant" relationship to each other (37-38). Students' study of tensions around "academic discourse" is not a threat to acquisition: rather, it can "help the writer locate personal and social reasons to critically engage with the very english one feels one needs to acquire" (38). (Lu uses "english(es)" to indicate plurality.)

Despite my fears, I trusted Lu's framework and asked students in two recent composition courses to describe some of their discursive resources, emphasizing tension, contradiction, and power differences among them. They applied that sketch in an analysis of a piece of their school writing (see 38-42). They saw how their choices in school writing reflected larger contexts and tensions, the use or censorship of other kinds of English. Suddenly school writing was not an absolute form, with sacrosanct rules that mechanically reproduced homogeneous performance. Students saw themselves as designers making choices even as they tried to comply with the rules of school writing. They also acknowledged the reasons for their effort, the variations in their compliance, and the costs and difficulties of it. And, in seeing themselves as complex and dissonant, students could expect to find these qualities in others and to critique claims to purity. I told my students in my assignment, "I believe that critical engagement with your own language history and with your own writing will make a positive difference for you as a writer." Many of them later agreed, noting a new sense of their special discursive resources and their particular difficulty with standardized language and form. They thought that this awareness would make writing easier. Lu points out that it has more radical potential to sensitize U.S. users of English to the legitimacy of diverse designs (44).

My application of Lu's rich perspective shifted the separate circles of responsibility I had drawn around politics, disciplinary knowledge, and teaching. Instead of imposing any professional reading on my students, I invited self-study, and I learned from students about language and power. This was an effective yet

non-threatening way to engage political dimensions of language. I was also able to affirm and extend students' self-knowledge as writers, while challenging them to use writing to gain new insight. Applying Lu's model reconfigured a number of my problematic assumptions. I could acknowledge and support students' wishes to be successful in conventional written English, while asking them to situate that desire in linguistic and social contexts (Lu 38). Those contexts would be meaningful to students because they would arise from self-study. Furthermore, I could never be the expert on their discursive history; I would not try to lead them to conclusions about its social significance. Students would engage to the extent they felt comfortable. A few students did limit their inquiry and reaffirmed the primacy of standard edited English. Their choice did not surprise me because I recognize the fear of destabilizing that primacy. The next step would be to see whether Lu's model of critical self-study could provide a bridge into a more complex discussion of literacies in these classes, one which also serves the development of compositional skill.

Lu's work puts my circles of responsibility in motion, merging them to yield surprising new truths about students' capacity to critique the language to which they aspire, while becoming more aware of their personal language history. Students benefited by developing a critical lens on language that will serve both their competence and responsibility, against the myth that rules ensure predictable production of English.

Circles of Understanding

The next step: take your own kaleidoscope—pry it apart.
Put the mirrors aside. Turn your attention to the baubles,
the color, the movement. Set the pieces of your
understanding in motion. Take your new seat within the
growing circle. Look again.

Circles in Response

So much depends on the listening voice
to play on the tensions, negotiate boundaries
open the borders of discourse and art.
So much depends on the juxtaposition
of disparate voices in resonant keys—
the poet invites us to unlock convention
to overlap circles, to take our own paths.
So much depends on the opening minds
and the new-built kaleidoscopes
in each outstretched hand. 

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Connecting: Pain

Section Editor's Message

This issue's "Connecting" narratives, it pains me to say, are less inspiring than usual. Instead the stories chronicle more pain than anything else. Truth be told, we are never really sensitive enough consistently enough. We do things, teach things, that cause students pain, great pain, make them disconsolate, cause them to sob both in the privacy of their rooms and, worse surely, in the public spaces of our classrooms. Then, too, if we do get off the hook and something works out not so badly, we are not even sure what caused our reprieve so that we can repeat it.

Should we be chastised for these transgressions if not burned at the stake? I can't say no to this; maybe we should be. But what I think I can say in our defense is that teaching is so incredibly hard and so stultifyingly complex that, no matter our best intentions, we will make mistakes. I can say too that the best learning process is hard for our students apart from our choices and that, as Jerry Conway's piece "Emily's Cave" attests to, it is often fraught with pain.

The truth is out. Try as hard as we may, teachers don't know everything. Some days we don't even know anything about what our students need from us. But Stephen DeGeorge insists that "you have to try." Jerry Conway suggests that this pain is "an old story re-enacted," and Johannah Rodgers shows us that, even if we can't answer the hard questions, there is something we can learn.

Let us hope, shall we, that truth is the best teacher, that each of us reading this issue of "Connecting" is a fantastic learner, and that trying counts for a lot.

The Things They Bring to School

Stephen L. DeGeorge

I called my mother Mommy. It was one of the things I was trying to work through the year she died. I was in seventh grade, but everything was put on hold while she struggled with cancer. Then she was gone. I can still picture the scene at my aunt and uncle's house when my father arrived from the hospital and said just that. "She's gone, kids. She's gone." I was thirteen, my brother was fifteen, and my sister was eleven.

So my mother became frozen in time at age 39, and everything became surreal. One of the little nagging reminders of that strangeness was that, through our teens and on into our adult lives, we would awkwardly refer to her as Mommy. It was a small symbol of all the other things that would never be worked through with her.

That night my father, my uncle, and the priest from my mother's church got good and drunk around our kitchen table. Sadly, this was a harbinger of things to

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come for about the next decade.

My mother died on June 26. The summer went by as summers do, and after Labor Day we returned to school—classes and sports and choir, jobs, dances, and such. I was there, trying to compete for my place, but home was slowly turning into a full-blown nightmare of neglect and pain. I slipped in school. I quit sports. By my junior year I was getting there only about four out of every five days.

In my years of teaching and administration, I have seen incredible pain in some of my students. Recently, I began reflecting on their stories and was shocked at what I knew of their lives. They had passed under my general influence, and I don't know if I helped them at all. I grieve for them though. I know something of the pain that they brought to school, and I grieve for them. . . .

I remember Dena—in fifth grade in a small private school when I met her, a pretty girl who looked a couple of years older than most of the other girls in her class. She also happened to be tougher than most of the boys. She intimidated everybody. She was often angry and had no compunction about slugging or kicking her peers. The lower school principal knew something about her background and took a counseling approach with her. But things were not improving, so he sent her to me. I assigned her some discipline, gave her the standard speech on self control, and sent her back to class.

At my first opportunity I met with her principal and asked about her. “Well,” he said, “she and her older sister came from a real bad situation. Apparently they were abused. The family they’re in now adopted them a few years ago, but there’s been a divorce, so they are with that dad and a new mom.” That got my attention. “Now a new baby is on the way, and this seems to really bother Dena. Every time somebody mentions it, she goes ballistic. I think she’s had a lot of counseling and really knows the drill. She seems able to talk about her issues, but she just can’t seem to deal with them.”

As I mull over the convoluted story, I mourn for Dena’s losses. Her life had been disrupted time and time again with reminders that she was not the central figure in anyone’s life. Her most common reaction was anger, and she certainly knew how to spread her misery around. . . .

Jared came to my office to be scolded for one in a series of misdemeanors. I knew something of his situation. Or thought I did. He had a loving mother and a new stepfather. His step-dad was a good man who had never had children. Now he had three and one on the way. He was trying to bring order to this family and establish himself as a loving but firm father figure. Jared was thirteen or so, and the results were predictable.

I tried to show some understanding, although divorce was not something I had directly experienced. It seemed, though, that half the kids I knew were from broken homes, so I thought I knew their concerns. I asked Jared, “Do you see much of your biological father?”

“My father? My parents aren’t divorced, Dr. DeGeorge. My father died. I thought you knew that.” Jared’s face had reddened to match mine; how did I not know this? He continued, “I don’t know how he died. No one will tell me how my father died. He was in his car. They found him in his car by the side of the road. He was dead when they found him. That’s all I know. He didn’t crash the car. He just died there.”

I was stunned. I don’t remember anything else either of us said. I went immediately from that meeting to the office of our elementary principal. She had

been at the school for several years and would probably know something. “It was a suicide,” she said. “It was pretty obvious he took his own life. I thought you knew this. I think it’s fairly common knowledge.”

“But the children?” I asked. “They don’t know? Even the two older ones?”

“I guess not. I guess their mother couldn’t bear to tell them.”

By the time I left her office, two things were abundantly clear to me: the first was that Jared was living in a state of grief fueled by confusion; the second, the really awful thing, was that I also knew the “common knowledge” that he did not. This was the crux of the boy’s pain. How could it be common knowledge at the school and still be unknown to the one who was being crushed by it?

How does a child or adolescent begin to explain to teachers that he is overwhelmed by grief? Can he even imagine that his teachers could or would understand the things that eat away at his motivation to work math problems or create a good science project? I lived in a rural community, attended a regional high school. Did they know? They didn’t seem to, but I believe they knew. I suspect that on some level they cared, but I believe they were without a strategy to help me. The one simple message that I received regularly in school was “You are not living up to your potential” or, the more harmful version, “You have ability; why are you wasting it?”

When a child carries deep trauma and grief to school, she is certainly not living up to her potential. She is “wasting” to be sure, just not as intentionally as we may think.

These stories may remind you of students you have known. They come and go through your classrooms and your lives. Grieve for them, yes. But I am suggesting that you do something more. Look into your own story in order to find understanding of your students’ pain. Then develop a strategy and reach out to them on a deeper level. Show them that you care enough to act on their behalf. They need someone to understand that grief colors everything they do. They don’t need someone to excuse them from the responsibilities of living and learning. They need someone to understand them, to be truthful with them, and to reach for them as they are pulled by the terrible tides of their hurt. You may not save them. You have to try. ☐

Translating Authority

Johannah Rodgers

Edi was not particularly tall or large, but there was something about her physically that was a bit foreboding. Everything about her—her clothes, her expression, her body—seemed incredibly well defended and nonnegotiable. Here was someone who had to be dealt with, I thought to myself when she entered the classroom. The way she seated herself in the back, not hiding but very separate from the

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others, made me feel she wanted to be left alone—that no one could touch her. Not even, or especially not, me, the teacher. As the semester progressed, if not actively criticizing the students she was grouped with, she ignored them, so much so that a few students actually asked me to put them in other groups for future work.

A few weeks into the semester, we did a translation exercise which involved splitting up into small groups and translating a Pablo Neruda poem. About one third of my students are native Spanish speakers, which means that, when the class is divided into groups of four or five, each will have at least one Spanish speaker. I then ask each group to translate a poem collaboratively. Students in each group who do not speak Spanish must rely on the Spanish speaker or speakers to explain the literal meaning of each word. Then, as a group, they all decide on what specific English word to use in the translation. I do not speak or read Spanish so am unable to offer any guidance for translating specific words. In that particular poem, there were two or three unusual, possibly literary or old-fashioned words which most of the Spanish speaking students had never seen before. Edi knew all of them. As a result, she became a whole-class resource. She never smiled or laughed but, instead, perhaps overtaxed as the center of attention, handed out the explanations of these unique words as though it were a burden she had to put up with.

After that class, however, I noticed that she was a bit more responsive to other students' comments and much more integrated into the class as a whole. She also became more actively engaged by class discussions and small group work.

I am not sure what caused this change. Some of it was probably occurring slowly over the course of the semester, but I also strongly sensed that some of the changes could be attributed to her experience of the translation exercise. But what about that experience resulted in this change? Was it that she was able to act more like a teacher and that made her willing or better able to listen to other students? Did working in Spanish give her a sense of confidence and authority she didn't have before? Was it the act of translation itself which resulted in an awareness of more than one way to look at things and that her classmates could offer interesting suggestions? It was, in all likelihood, a combination of these and many other factors that I was not even aware of that caused this change. However, in terms of my own teaching, I can more exactly pinpoint the effects of this: I learned once again how important it is to establish spaces where students can exercise their authority in innovative ways in the writing classroom. ☺

Emily's Cave

Jeremiah Conway

Like everything else, teaching can become routine, not necessarily dull or unpleasant, but remarkably unremarkable. Perhaps this is why certain moments are prized when the fog of the usual lifts and there is a reawakening to the fierce

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potential of classrooms. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky writes about how the presence of good memories, even one, preserved from childhood, can protect and sustain a life. The same, I suspect, is true of teaching. But instances of good teaching don't come labeled for easy identification. On the contrary, these moments often arrive unexpectedly, appearing as messy disasters.

The following is one teaching memory.

I was shaking a leg across campus to avoid being late for class. We were reading Plato's *Republic*, and the focus that afternoon was on the famous myth of the cave at the beginning of Book Seven. In the myth, Socrates presents an extended image of "how education—or the lack of it—affects our nature" (168). He asks a bright, young man, Glaucon, to picture an underground cave where people sit, shackled at their necks and legs, such that they are confined to the same spot and can see only what is directly in front of them. It is a haunting tale, suggesting that in our ordinary lives, we start from the position of slaves whose vision is consumed with shadows cast upon the wall of the culture we inhabit—shadows that are mistaken for reality and whose display is manipulated by figures behind our backs.

The students were just beginning to work through familiar connections: how the prisoners in the myth resemble characters in the *Republic*, who are locked into stock Athenian notions of justice; how the release of their "shackles" coincides with the stunned realization of their ignorance, jimmied by Socrates' questions. The class was preceding uneventfully—the usual back and forth questioning: why have the prisoners shackled by chains, rather than ropes? What is the odd wall at the prisoners' backs? Who are the concealed "puppeteers" walking upon it? The latter question drew a heated response from Emily. Emily didn't understand why it was important to pin down who was walking across that wall. "Socrates left the figures nameless—so, why not take our clue from him and leave it at that?" I offered my perspective, but Emily wasn't buying any of it; she seemed exasperated and quoted a footnote by the text's translator G. M. A. Grube:

A Platonic myth or parable, like a Homeric simile, is often elaborated in considerable detail. These contribute to the vividness of the picture but often have no other function, and it is a mistake to look for any symbolic meaning in them. (168)

Sensing an impasse, I turned to other students who had their hands raised.

I noticed that Emily's eyebrows were knitting, and a closed look of disagreement, even anger, was taking over her face—one I hadn't seen before. I turned toward the unmistakable pain in the young woman. "Emily, is there anything wrong?" She remained silent, but her face knotted further. She began to cry. The crying intensified. It became a low, wrenching sob. I was at a complete loss. Eventually, I felt I had to say something. "I hope I (or we) haven't done anything to offend you, Emily. No one intended to hurt." It was a weak statement, but it was all I could think of.

She was still crying; words came out, but they were broken: "Sometimes I come out of this class, and I'm so frustrated. I try, and try, and still don't get anywhere." She grew quieter, ending in a whisper: "Maybe it's appropriate, given what we're reading."

The comments sat there in the midst of the class. After initial fears that her crying was an outburst of bitter disappointment with me as teacher, I found my-

self clinging to her final comment. I turned to the young woman, “I think what you’ve said is important. A story like this forces us to wrack our brains about what it means, and it’s not immediately clear what is significant and what is not. But the fact that we aren’t sure, that we feel so ignorant grappling with it, is a difficulty that, I suspect, is intentionally handed over to us by Plato. It is built into the very way he writes.”

Like Emily’s tears, something was breaking out of me. I was defending a way of teaching: “Yes, it’s frustrating not to be told what the images of Socrates mean and to be asked to decipher them in the context of our lives. But you know, Emily, I am no longer able to teach this work by trying to pour information into your heads about Plato’s philosophy. It won’t help. This is a work of great imagination that addresses itself to our imagination; it arises not simply out of intellect, but out of the fabric of feeling and body. If we are to understand such a work, we must enter it, and read it not just as a tale from way back when, but as a story about us—as Socrates says himself.” At this point, I sensed I was professing a bit too earnestly, so I shut up. I wasn’t sure whether I was in the midst of a catastrophe.

The next day I met with Emily and cut straight to the point: “Could you help me understand what happened yesterday?”

She took a deep breath and began: “You know, Professor, I came here from Wellesley College. I met a lot of very intelligent, ambitious students there, who were focused on results. We complained about the workload, but the game was to get through the stuff and move on. We did it extremely well. But after awhile, a hard shell of efficiency was built up that nothing much could pierce.

“The events of 9/11 shook me. I wasn’t myself for some time. I grew disturbed by the distance between what we were studying and ourselves. We weren’t really being touched by much, if anything, in classes. The material didn’t really matter to us as people. Anyway, I left. I stayed away from school for a year and came to this university. No offense, but I didn’t expect much. This is a state school. My only reason for coming was that I no longer wanted my parents to pay big bucks for what really didn’t seem to matter.”

Emily continued: “You know, most of the things we’ve read this semester—Homer and Sappho, Thucydides and Aristophanes, Plato and the tragedies—I had read already. Very little was new. I had read the entire *Republic* in two of my courses in freshman year. I entered your course, convinced that I was very knowledgeable about these texts, and, in a way, I am. I’ve read commentators and listened to professors talk about them. But this course is frustrating because you ask us to puzzle out the meaning of many small details that none of my previous instructors had ever spoken about—like the questions about who are the guys walking on the wall behind the prisoners in the cave. You asked, and I wanted to shout out: I DON’T KNOW, AND I DON’T CARE BECAUSE IT’S NOT IMPORTANT.” Her words came out in a loud surprisingly blunt voice, and she stopped, as if catching herself.

“I came here thinking I was going to shine. I was going to show what I knew. And what happens? You ask questions about the material that doesn’t draw upon the information I had studied. Sometimes I feel thoughtless, stupid. I find myself questioning what I have learned. But it’s more than this. While I was dismissing your questions, I suddenly caught myself. I saw what I was doing, and I was ashamed.”

I asked Emily what she meant by “catching herself” and why the shame. The young woman paused and looked directly at me: “I caught my assumptions. I realized what I was doing: by dismissing your questions, I wanted to hold the material at arm’s length, to say that seeing ourselves in the story is not the point. I wanted questions that would show off answers I already knew. I wanted to appear bright. The tears came as I saw what I was doing. And I’ll tell you something else: for a long time in this course, my classmates didn’t impress me. They weren’t as quick or articulate as my peers at Wellesley. And what has happened? Over the course of the semester I started to pay attention to the connections they were drawing between themselves and the readings. I began to recognize that they have been doing what I was unable to do at that school, which was why I left. I felt ashamed of myself.”

I wasn’t sure what to say. I was going to say that she was being too hard on herself. I saved myself from this paternalistic flattery by the realization that this was one of those precious moments when I didn’t have to say anything. I was being taught by my student. It was a lesson witnessed before, but one I find riveting each time it is delivered: students are often eloquent instructors about how certain philosophical works transform lives. They remind us of what drove us into learning and loving these texts in the first place.

When I finally did have something to say, I was seeking to thank her. “Emily, I think you said something very truthful yesterday in class when you said that your crying was somehow appropriate, given the text. It’s a very disturbing thing to recognize, as Socrates claims we must, that we all start our education as prisoners at the bottom of the cave. He makes clear that it’s terribly painful to reorient ourselves, to turn our eyes from the shadows toward the light. You found yourself a prisoner in that cave. You recognized the pull of forces that were blocking you from even caring to interpret the work in other ways. You were in the midst of that painful turning yesterday. My only disagreement is with the shame you felt in crying. Your shame came from the awareness that your motivations were shallow and unworthy of you. But to recognize this with tears is part of the pain Socrates describes in turning from the shadows to the light. It is the price of admission to what he describes as education: the re-orienting of the soul.”

Emily smiled faintly. I sensed we both knew that a very old story had been re-enacted. ☺

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REVIEWS

Luce-Kapler, Rebecca. *Writing With, Through, and Beyond the Text: An Ecology of Language*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004.

Kabi Hartman, Franklin and Marshall College

To “write otherwise” is the desire reverberating at the core of Rebecca Luce-Kapler’s *Writing With, Through, and Beyond the Text*, and indeed Luce-Kapler “writes otherwise” as she explores writing’s capacity to “connect us to our lived experiences and reveal the depths of those experiences” (xiii). Towards the end of re-visioning the writing process—and, by extension, ourselves—Luce-Kapler draws upon the idea that “writing is an ecology” (xii-xiii). Here Luce-Kapler suggests that we investigate writers and their writings in relation to a myriad of systems: “ideas, purposes, interpersonal interactions, cultural norms and textual forms” (xiii). Luce-Kapler has adopted this idea in her own writing and teaching practice with exciting and sometimes challenging results for those of us also eager to write—and teach—otherwise.

Luce-Kapler suggests that to “write otherwise” is to be alert to “the locations and situations in which we write, especially ones that link us to the non-human world” (xiii). Modeling a deep responsiveness to her environment, particularly to nature, Luce-Kapler inscribes her self-reflexive awareness into her text. Thus readers learn that she writes her preface from a new house on a December morning with a frozen lake clearly in view (whereas I am writing at the local Borders café on my creaky laptop nicknamed “Old Pokey,” looking out at a parking lot on an unseasonably warm April day). Luce-Kapler further requires that writers pay attention to the rhythms of the natural world unfolding around them as they write. She hears birds, whereas I am dimly aware of the drone of the magnificent steel refrigerator at the back of the café and the creaks and rustles of patrons reading their books and newspapers. And yes, disturbing thoughts play at the edge of my mind—by the time I revise this, I won’t be sitting at Borders anymore, and, even more alarming, *this won’t be a book review at all!*—for I have (as Luce-Kapler does) a long history of education and am accustomed to writing in a more traditional mode. What do we gain from knowing that Luce-Kapler gazes at a frozen lake as she writes? How will our thinking and writing change if we break old molds? These are some of the challenging questions that Luce-Kapler considers, although she does not investigate them explicitly.

Now that I am aware of the drone—or is it a whirl?—of the refrigerator and the jumping jazz on the café’s sound system, I am in the right frame of mind to consider Luce-Kapler’s second chapter, “A Coherence of Being,” which explores “rhythm and its relationship to writing” (29). Luce-Kapler’s assertion that, through our attention to rhythm, we feel “the embodied character of writing” (29) invites us to think about writing otherwise. Here Luce-Kapler discusses her poem “The Milky Way” in which she attempts to capture the rhythm of her mother’s narratives, bodily presence, and comfort (32-33). Referring to Dennis Lee’s 1998 “Body Music,” Luce-Kapler recalls how writing the poem involved her “in the very heart-beat of remembering experiences and the cadence of existence where rhythm becomes an interpretation, a way of ‘reading’ the world” (34). Any writer who

has written to the urgent beat in his or her mind will understand how this is true, yet Luce-Kapler's formulation renders us more conscious of rhythm's hermeneutic function in writing.

Luce-Kapler further maintains that the very act of digesting another writer's words and responding to them in words of our own is rhythmic. She advocates assimilating this rhythm into our writing, so that one of the exercises she might have asked me to undertake in preparation for writing this book review would be to respond in my own words to some of her poems and passages, thus creating a rhythm of reading and response which would ideally work its music into my piece. This idea—again a simple one for writers—has led Luce-Kapler to a reinterpretation of what we mean by scholarship. In a series of projects she embarked on, she responded to the aesthetic practices of artists Emily Carr and Kate Chopin, attempting to enter the rhythms of these women's artistic lives through their diaries and more formal writings and paintings. Luce-Kapler's subsequent poems about Carr and Chopin, in which she works their rhythms into her own responsive art, are dynamic, effective works of literary criticism, which push the proverbial envelope about what we define as academic writing.

Thus Luce-Kapler acknowledges that we introduce new rhythms into our writing when we consciously invite them in, as she did when she brought excerpts from Jeanette Winterson's essay, "The Semiotics of Sex," to a writing workshop she was conducting with teenage girls and asked them to write about "the forbidden" (37). Luce-Kapler points out that engaging with new rhythmic structures, as well as with some of the provoking questions posed by Winterson's text, opened up new possibilities for the girls in both their writing and their lives. As most writing teachers know, bringing new texts and rhythms into a classroom and asking students to respond to or imitate them almost always produces exciting writing, but Luce-Kapler advances the discussion by maintaining that new rhythms not only produce new writing but also generate a new sense of self on the part of the writer as she sees the world anew (29-30). Thus "our subjectivity cannot be shaped only through individual reflection, but rather, is a process of coming-to-be in relation to others"—in this case in relation to the rhythms as well as the stories of others (44). Luce-Kapler accordingly champions the writing workshop as a place where people's lives change through their writing.

Luce-Kapler also endorses writing as a place to re-shape subjectivity in her chapter, "The Subjunctive Cottage," where she explores creating "a subjunctive space" in writing (81). Here she investigates a number of ways in which writing is a "site of possibility" (103) or an *as if* space in which we might imagine different futures for ourselves (88, 102). This chapter collates the ideas of numerous writers and scholars, including Carol Shields (who coined the phrase "subjunctive cottage"), Toni Morrison, Ted Hughes, Julia Kristeva, Wolfgang Iser, Mikhail Bakhtin, Rita Felski, and Luce Irigaray, demonstrating how they address the notion that different forms of writing create different possibilities. To take only one example, Luce-Kapler cites Bakhtin's argument that "different genres define a field of possibilities" (91). However, despite her stimulating forays into literary theory, Luce-Kapler invariably returns to the idea of writing as personal growth. We are thus assured that "[w]riting is a site of possibility where we can learn things about ourselves, where we imagine different choices, and where we reconfigure our experience" (103). In a touchstone story that appears several times throughout the book, we are told about Carmen, an older woman in one of

Luce-Kapler's writing groups, whose writing ultimately led her to leave a marriage that was unfulfilling and abusive. Thus "writing otherwise" leads to living otherwise.

Additionally, it is clear that writing otherwise must lead to reading otherwise, and Luce-Kapler tacitly demands that her readers adopt this practice. There is a lack of linear narrative or argument to *Writing With, Through, and Beyond the Text* that might frustrate some readers. Rather Luce-Kapler's text demonstrates her writing praxis, being itself an "ecology" in which a myriad of systems comes into relationship. Thus autobiography bumps up against poetry, which jostles with literary theory, which in turn is put into relationship with the essay form, which then is peppered with a subtle kind of feminism, and so on. If anything, Luce-Kapler's writing is circular, as she returns to various themes, developing them in new contexts.

I, not quite comfortable with the indeterminate nature of the "otherwise" in "writing otherwise," wish to define "otherwise" here as referring to genre. Therefore, if I had to boil down the argument of such a rich and varied book as this one, I would say that it is about how opening a text to generic indeterminacy ultimately transforms both writing and subjectivity. Although this is not a new idea—writers have always yearned to change meaning by experimenting with form—Luce-Kapler has, indeed, altered the form of critical writing in ways which are significant. While I am still not sure what you, the reader, gain from knowing where I am sitting as I write, I am admittedly inspired by Luce-Kapler's book to change my own writing practice. Since I am intrigued by the possibilities for critical writing when autobiographical disclosure permeates its well-defended boundaries, I wish that Luce-Kapler had addressed this, and other theoretical questions, more directly. For now, however, I must content myself with Luce-Kapler's hope in a future perfect tense *à la* Irigaray, where writing *beyond* shapes a different future. Since I imagine that, by next week, I will have used some of Luce-Kapler's writing exercises and ideas in my own writing and classroom, I see that *Writing With, Through, and Beyond the Text* has succeeded in its task ☐.

Ball, Arnetha F., and Ted Lardner. *African American Literacies Unleashed: Vernacular English and the Composition Classroom*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2005.

Caleb Corkery, Millersville University of Pennsylvania

The social mark left on those who grow up speaking African American vernacular English (AAVE) is seemingly indelible. The achievement gap between Black and White students persistently highlights the supposed liability of speaking AAVE, identifying it as a condition needing mitigation. At the historically Black university where I recently taught English, my colleagues initiated students into the world of academic language by grading papers with an error chart, deducting points for each linguistic deviation from Standard Edited American English. The department stood behind the pragmatic argument that helping students avoid racial discrimination means eradicating any racialized features in

their language use. Hammering home mainstream grammar and diction was the department's primary mission.

The stigma AAVE speakers face appears monumental when viewed through the lens of our country's obdurate racist legacy. But from the perspective of linguists, the issue is rather underwhelming. The separate language practices that developed in African American communities are viable and logical: to view them as wrong is itself wrong. That doesn't erase the "F" on a paper, though. Teachers must be practical and acknowledge the reign of the standard dialect. Yet do they also need to uphold a belief in the *supremacy* of the standard dialect?

Decades of research make plain that AAVE-speaking students feel demeaned by their teachers, directing scholars to concentrate on moving teachers toward tolerance of their students' linguistic backgrounds. This shift was formalized back in 1974 when the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) passed the "student's right to their own language" resolution to impress upon teachers that the problems students face with language learning is not in the student's language. The Black Caucus of CCCC urged teachers to regard their students' language as a resource. A steady stream of research emerged exploring issues related to race and writing, supporting the thrust of the 1974 resolution. But after thirty years, students' home literacies continue to be valued only in the theoretical realm. Negative teacher attitudes continue to plague AAVE-speaking students, leading exasperated scholars Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner to claim that "the teaching corps of composition professionals has yet to live up to the challenge to reconstruct pedagogy to make the most of the literacy potentials of all students" (189).

African American Literacies Unleashed is an impatient clarion call finally to put to rest the forces that drag down our AAVE-speaking students. The book justifies this exigency by showing the confluence of research from various disciplines that support how long overdue this solution is. Ball and Lardner suggest how to reconstruct the teacher's role to allow "African American voices to be heard, legitimized, and leveraged within the writing classroom" (185). They direct this point toward teachers, of course, but realize the network of people involved in supporting that transformation. They tell writing program administrators to build consensus with teachers about program goals, given the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student body. They tell teacher educators to pass on "instructional resources, materials, and methodologies that are representative of a wide variety of different ethnic and cultural experiences" (185). To researchers, they ask to bring the theorizing of race into practices in the classroom. These authors are not just proposing a teacher retraining program, but an entire reform movement.

Ball and Lardner explain their reform by first presenting their personal experiences, which are parts of their ultimate point. They were both shown by teachers how to "use their minds to engage the world, only in different ways—in ways that were different than the school's agenda" (4). However, Ball and Lardner's target is not programmatic changes. They are after the individual, since the journey to unleashing African American literacies begins with "seeing with new eyes" (16). They challenge teachers to examine their attitudes toward AAVE to become "aware of their own culturally influenced dispositions toward literacy" (32).

Ball and Lardner's goal is to reach the unconscious racist attitudes of well-meaning teachers. They pursue a new "set of terms" (outside of stated curricula)

that gives teachers a way to express their prejudicial responses to AAVE-speaking students. They want to rebuild teachers after first stripping, or exposing, the underlying racism.

The transformation process offered in the book hinges on certain kinds of knowledge that writing teachers need in order to improve their efficacy with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Efficacy, as the authors use the term, refers not only to teacher preparation but also to their confidence in knowing how to move all of their students toward success. As this comprehensive goal suggests, the needed knowledge comes from renegotiating both personal and professional identities. Ball and Lardner borrow from education, composition, and sociolinguistic scholars and from community-based organizations to theorize and illustrate the process.

The barriers to change, as the authors claim, are teacher attitudes that degrade AAVE-speaking students and a lack of alternative models for teachers to follow. Enhancing a teacher's sense of efficacy comes from examining the interaction between professional knowledge and personal experience. Ball and Lardner suggest teacher narratives to plumb these connections: "Teachers who confront the racialized power relations of their work in the writing classroom frequently need help in figuring out a satisfactory story for themselves. Through such stories, teachers interpret their efforts on behalf of all students and the communities they serve" (61). Narratives help teachers connect their internalized role and the role demanded of them in the classroom. The best examples of this reconstruction process, the authors show us, come from community-based organizations.

For instance, a dance program established for at-risk female students (mostly African American) has gained recognition for helping these students excel. The high efficacy of the program is clear from the students' improved sense of discipline, self-esteem, and commitment. Likewise, the group's leader, a European American, has been transformed as a teacher by his engagement with his students: "His ongoing interactions with African Americans have provided him with many linguistic resources that he uses authentically and effectively to relate to the program participants and build bridges that link their cultural experiences, his own cultural experiences and mainstream American cultural practices and expectations" (64). Understanding the students' cultural background allows the troop leader to recognize opportunities to engage and motivate the students.

The same process can apply to composition instructors, aided by teacher narratives. By constructing a teacher-life story, which the authors model, one can examine the character of one's interactions with students: the attitude, atmosphere, and affect of the classroom. Since most writing teachers are white and not "socialized" to African American culture and language, race is a crucial element in reflecting on classroom relationships with students of color. Once the racialized dynamics are brought out, the authors recommend that teachers recognize the uses of AAVE-based discourse modes and patterns in their students' academic writing. Additionally, teachers should go beyond "knowledge about" AAVE and appreciate the language abilities possessed by their students. Then, once the teacher's authority is based on familiarity with the students' abilities, the expectations for success are authentic and truly motivate the students.

Ball and Lardner offer strategies for achieving their theoretical objectives; however, their suggestions describe ideas that can direct classroom practices rather than ways to implement them. The approaches they suggest include, among oth-

ers, confronting racial prejudices that may predetermine relationships with student, allowing emotional expression in the classroom (unlike the restraint familiar within mainstream discourses), holding high expectations of all students, creating opportunities for students to play various empowering roles, integrating performance into the classroom, incorporating oral discourse patterns into the classroom, and developing teacher knowledge of AAVE discourse patterns.

Among composition scholars, these suggestions are hardly new, though never before compiled so comprehensively. For decades, educators committed to multiculturalism have been moving toward their students. Among many others, Patricia Bizzell, Bonnie Lisle, and Sandra Mano have been using readings and rhetorics that represent their students' cultural background. Wendy Hesford and Anthony Fox accept students' home literacies into the classroom. Geneva Smitherman blends community and academic literacies. Marcia Farr and Brian Street have studied the value of literacy practices outside of the academy. Mary Soliday and Scott Blake use narratives to connect personal literacies to school. Composition studies already embraces Ball and Lardner's thesis.

But this is part of their point. If scholars understand the need to bridge community literacies into school settings, why do negative attitudes toward AAVE-speaking students persist? Ball and Lardner suggest that the problem is a matter of commitment. Their answer is to incorporate what we know into who we are as teachers. The book tilts at centuries of assumed supremacy cultivated by white privilege, which becomes embedded in the practice of teaching writing. Ball and Lardner ask teachers to go beyond their professional roles, personally undoing what a history of racism has done to them. Quixotic as their ambition may be, they provide a pathway for writing teachers to change their racist patterns when relating to students with different linguistic backgrounds. Pointing out the dramatic lengths necessary to correct inculcated discrimination, the authors challenge all teachers to re-imagine the way culture shapes the roles we embody. ☞

Banks, Adam J. *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006.

Joel Kline, Lebanon Valley College

In *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground*, Adam Banks takes on topics like access to computers for education and the oppressive character of technology in the Black community. It is a complicated issue. Sometimes Banks is skillful at identifying and analyzing root causes of technology oppression. Other times his definition of technology is a bit too nebulous. However, his study frames the complexity and breadth of technology's role in the Black community and stimulates thinking about how education and rhetorical acumen can make a difference.

Banks does fine work in separating the concept of access from the real engagement of technology. He explores the Digital Divide in Chapter Two and establishes an argument to redefine the concept of access more inclusively (38). His conceptualization of access illustrates the true engagement with technology necessary for equality to emerge. Banks documents how the accepted concept of access is a poor measure of true learning in an educational setting. This idea of

access was sold as a productive solution to schools during the 1990s, when it actually was simply a start. Genuine technology success stories have only occurred in education when teachers turn students into producers and authors. However, it is not just predominantly Black schools where this is failing to happen or only now emerging. I challenge you to show me a school anywhere that improved learning solely by the fact that it was wired. Banks has a well-grounded argument that can be employed across disciplines and certainly is not limited to any race or socio-economical category. Banks blames computer companies for trying to sell products to school districts that did not solve problems. This indictment of capitalistic America turns the argument away from where it needs to go: to the communities—the teachers, school boards, and parents—who play the most influential roles in the realization of Banks's sage prescription for creating transformative access (45). Employing polemical terms like "swindled" (44), Banks blames corporations for a problem that is inherently local and community-based. It releases the community from its obligation to shoulder the load of fostering transformative access at home and in education.

In Chapter Two, Banks uses the failures of mere access to develop a comprehensive taxonomy for the concept of access that builds on the work of James Porter's *Rhetorical Ethics and Internetworked Writing*. The taxonomy includes material, functional, experiential, and critical accesses (44). This taxonomy serves as a framework to examine larger issues and identify shortcomings in providing a voice and equality to the Black community. I found the taxonomy in this section to be a valuable tool in framing the subject. It provides a perfect structure for both the scholar and the lay person in African American rhetoric to categorize institutions and artifacts.

In Chapter Three, Banks shifts to discuss the development of a Black digital *ethos*. Banks develops this *ethos* by noting how Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used the technology of television during the civil rights era. Despite the success of Malcolm X and Dr. King, Banks feels that many technologies continue to be exclusionary, and so a new *ethos* must be established to achieve equality. This section provides a concise but rich perspective on technology use during the Civil Rights Movement, especially for readers who have not viewed Malcolm X or Dr. King through the lens of technology. Banks astutely notes that both leaders were adept at using technology, specifically television news coverage. I am unsure, however, that I would take what these civil rights icons said about specific broadcast technologies forty years ago and map them to current computer technology arguments. However, Banks does a credible job of explaining a new *ethos* for the Black community using the rhetorical acumen of Malcolm X and Dr. King as the backdrop. He states,

The combination of mastery of individual technological tools and a more general theoretical awareness come together in what I argue needs to become a Black digital ethos—a set of attitudes, knowledges, expectations, and commitments that we develop and teach and bring to our engagement with things technological. (47)

In this section, he also explains how the oral tradition of African Americans is hard to represent through technology. Banks is honest about the difficulties that the African American oral tradition poses for transition to technology. It is here

that I think he could add the promises of new technology. Podcasts, video sites, and cell phone audio are simple technologies that might be able to respond to Bank's call to preserve the oral tradition yet participate in technology.

In the process of searching for higher ground, Banks returns to the idea of Black rhetorical engagement with technology and the importance of being a producer. His final chapter provides effective advice: he expands upon his earlier components of functional, critical, and experiential access to technology and provides insight as to how we as educators can begin the process. Banks's theme about educating producers is significant. Young people carve out their discourse communities with text messaging, MySpace, and Facebook. Senior citizens have jumped on the net in droves, primarily as a way to maintain contact via email with friends and family. No one but a group itself can truly foster the production of producers. By inviting the growth of producers, we, as educators, can play a role in the issue. Rap became a popular and expressive form of music because Rap artists learned how to become producers and provide their audience with content that was desirable. This is what needs to happen in order for Blacks (or any group) to be technology producers.

In addition, throughout the text, Banks pointedly cites research that identifies the insidious side of technology and its oppression of Blacks. He notes Andrew Feenberg's claim, in phrasing reminiscent of Dr. King's own, that "neither time nor technology are [sic] positive or negative in and of themselves, but they reflect the ideological commitments of society" (63). This construct is central to the book and might explain why Banks ventures to places that may not seem to be particularly technologically rooted. He explores the work of Richard and Cynthia Selfe and supplants it with that of Beth Kolko and her studies on computer interfaces built for Whites. Banks also uses the technologically-centered writing of Abdul Alkalimat to frame the subject of technology and expand the use of the word. Sometimes that word *technology* is a bit too expansive, however.

If this book has a shortcoming, it is the author's nebulous definition of technology. Chapter Five is emblematic of Banks's failure to tightly define technology for scholarly purposes. Banks supports the case for the oppression that Blacks encounter in the U.S. legal system by grounding it in technology. As serious as this argument and its impacts are to African Americans, it is not a technology issue. Therein lies the problem with a number of Banks's arguments: what does he really mean by "technology"? Technology is often ill-defined and used to encompass different areas in different chapters. This slippery treatment of technology weakens the organization of the book. In several places, Banks discusses technology access and really gets to the heart of how Blacks have been shut out of cyberspace. In other places, he uses technology as a flimsy method to pull in institutional areas that might be oppressive, but certainly are not oppressive due to a generally accepted definition of technology. If these areas that do not seem to be related to technology truly are the result of technology oppression, then Banks needs to present data or research to support that argument. When he expands technology to conveniently mean *anything*, he debases his central argument. If technology is television, media, the legal system, education, business, police and weapons, political access and voting, as Banks states in different parts of the book, then technology becomes a word for life itself. This lack of definition makes the book's intention seem more like a re-reading of history rather than a forward-looking search for higher ground.

As I closed Banks's study, I felt I needed to be shown more explicitly where technology serves as an oppressor, and I needed more practicable advice on how to counter that oppression. I do concur with Banks's core notion that all students will benefit from becoming producers. But, while Banks has made a case for technology's role in oppression, the argument needs to continue with more research and dialogue. Otherwise, people will think we have achieved equality because schools are wired, desktops sell for \$299, and Blacks are the fastest growing group on the Internet. And dangerously—as Banks argues when the Digital Divide issue disappears after the achievement of mere functional access (41)—America will feel like we have accomplished something when we have only barely begun. ☐

Emery, Kathy, and Susan Ohanian. *Why Is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.

Terri Pullen Guezzar, Independent Scholar

*Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts
We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of
fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact.
You must discard the Word fancy altogether This is the new discovery.
This is fact. This is taste.
—Charles Dickens, Hard Times*

When I first read these lines over twenty years ago, I enjoyed the satirical depictions of Gradgrind and M'Choakumchild. They were obvious exaggerations—and comfortably far away in terms of culture and time. Right? Who would have thought that the Industrial Revolution's impact on education that Charles Dickens satirized over 150 years ago would apply so readily today? I doubted my recollection of this work so much that I pawed piles of old paperbacks to find my own yellowed copy, full of notes.

Janet Emery and Susan Ohanian show us that the reality behind a Dickens novel is very much alive and well—a world where school children are dehumanized as “little vessels ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim,” all for the greater good and the “national prosperity” (48). The one big difference between then and now is that many of our teachers, administrators, and school boards are not so sure about this “new discovery.”

The main premise of this work is clear: Corporate America, the U.S. government, and all major media outlets have systematically formed an alliance over the past two decades to the detriment of our public schools. Supporters of the standards-based reform agenda in secondary education, referred to herein as “Standardistas,” extol the virtues of rigorous academic standards, business-driven outcomes, and the demand for highly-skilled workers in the global economy.

All of this comes at a very high price to students' social development, teachers' influence over the classroom, and the local school board's governance and

control over the educational process. Emery and Ohanian detail the top-down shift toward a test-driven, standards-based agenda where business has influenced the federal government which, in turn, has influenced state governments and educational standards. What's missing? Educators, students, and parents driving the decisions.

In order to illustrate this alliance, Chapters One through Four examine the political agenda and sophistry surrounding the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) as well as that of standards-based school reform advocacy groups. In particular, Emery and Ohanian expose the economic power and political impact of the Business Round Table (BRT), a group of CEOs formed in 1972 to promote corporate interests in educational policy. To the BRT, a highly skilled workforce is our one, true competitive advantage in the new global economy. They also have advanced the notion that our public schools have "failed" in developing this highly trained workforce. Teachers, administrators, and locally-elected school boards are the primary targets in this blame game.

To a lesser degree, the authors also point out the pervasive influence of Marc Tucker, founder and president of National Center for Education and the Economy, and one of the founders of the standards-based reform movement. In his famous "Dear Hillary letter," Tucker outlines educational reform initiatives, many of which have become law through various legislation such as Goals 2000, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, and No Child Left Behind.

Herein is the essential irony of this debate: while the BRT heralds the absolute necessity of this skilled workforce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics asserts that by 2010 only 22% of the jobs available will require a bachelor's degree, and only nine percent will require an associate's. Nonetheless, NCLB mandates that all schools will be 100% compliant with the new achievement standards, all aligned with college-prep, by 2014. Thus the U.S. will have 100% of the workforce ready to go to college to compete for 22-31% of all available jobs. That is, those who are able to graduate high school.

This reform movement cascades in its impact as the national BRT influences state-level BRTs. Lobbying at both the national and state levels, these round tables have focused primarily on states, influencing the standards-based agenda and supporting state-mandated testing. But this control goes even farther. Emery and Ohanian discuss in Chapter Five instances where opposition in local school boards was weeded out through the very election process that was intended to keep it an arena under local control. The national and state-level legislation mandates standards and promotes a core college-prep curriculum for all students, to the detriment of the arts, vocational training, and even physical education. Students who cannot pass the state-mandated exams—many of whom never intend to go to college anyway—are denied a high school diploma, resulting in a high drop-out rate. What is more, the authors indicate that schools performing up to these new standards get more money and the autonomy to deliver a more flexible curriculum of their choice. Meanwhile, under-performing schools experience economic sanctions and "drill and kill" pressure to teach toward the exam. Schools that don't perform well on the tests have their art, music, and physical education classes cut.

The authors drill down into the pervasive influence of this "Standardista" agenda on local governance, demonstrating how the corporate agenda has infiltrated the mission statements of school systems great and small. Emery and

Ohanian examine how all areas of influence have been co-opted—national teacher unions, educational researchers, even teachers themselves—all in an effort to bring school governance into line with the perceived needs of the “new economy.” The authors also identify a covert agenda: the more it can be argued that public education has failed, the more palatable privatizing school management can become.

One of the most influential roadmaps of the BRT is the California Business Roundtable’s *Re-Structuring California Education: A Design for Public Education in the Twenty-First Century* (1989), and this document continues to shape education reform policy (Chapter Eight). According to this plan, state government is responsible for setting goals that the schools must meet. In order to economize, schools would teach the same core content in K-10, after which students could test *into* college prep, vocation/technical education, or fine or performing arts. According to this plan, everyone has “options”: high schools can opt to teach K-10 only, and parents can then opt for alternative schools. Not surprisingly, the latter is heavily supported by corporate entities.

The authors describe how over the next nine years, the CBR effectively infused the BRT core values into legislation, solidifying a state-sanctioned performance index, subsequent economic sanctions and rewards, and “interventions” for low-performing schools that could eventually result in a state management takeover or school closure. Chapter Nine reveals how such legislation led to the San Francisco Unified School District’s reconstitution policy, “a punishment-and-reward system based on test scores” which, in fact, countered previous efforts at desegregation. Resulting from a 1978 segregation lawsuit brought by the NAACP, the district agreed that nineteen of its schools were inadvertently racially segregated. Thus, the state implemented “targeted programs” for these schools, ultimately resulting in the dismissal and replacement of any educator who could not or would not adhere to the high standards doctrine.

But what about the opposition? In Chapter Seven, Emery and Ohanian do list some parties untainted by the BRT agenda: WestEd, Industrial Areas Foundation, and independent grassroots groups such as Mass Refusal, FairTest, and the Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE). But these non-profit organizations are unable to compete financially and politically with the wealthier, pro-standards special interest groups backed by industry and federal and state government. In states such as Massachusetts, school districts that chose to grant high school diplomas to students who met all local standards, but who failed the state-mandated exam, backed down when the state threatened to revoke funding.

Just as it was easy to tell myself that *Hard Times* represented a life remote from my own, it is tempting to think the new “bottom line” in education doesn’t extend to higher education. But, as public university systems undergo funding cuts on a regular basis, it isn’t that difficult to imagine that federal and state governments could “opt-out” of more and more funding, rationalizing that, thanks to the newfound effectiveness of our public schools with their college-prep curriculum, fewer seats are needed these days. In a “cost-effective” world, we all may find ourselves reckoning with the true cost in immeasurable terms. ☐

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Manuscript Submission Information

Deadline	January 31, 2008
Typing	Double-spaced, numbered pages, including works cited 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; E-mail Address; Home and Office Phone; Institutional Affiliation
Abstract	1–2 double-spaced sentences on title page
Preferred Length	Articles, 5000 words, including works cited
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Reclaiming the Wisdom Tradition for Education

14th Annual Summer Conference
of The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning
(AEPL)

May 28-June 1, 2008

Mount Madonna Conference Center,
overlooking Monterey Bay, CA

Goals:

- To explore the nature of wisdom,
- To promote dialogue and synergy among spiritually, philosophically, and humanistically oriented groups already focusing on wisdom in education,
- To explore teachings and teaching methods that evoke the awareness and practice of wisdom.

Presenters:

Matthew Fox, founder, Wisdom University, Oakland CA; author of upcoming *Awe-Based Wisdom Education*; *One River, Many Wells: Wisdom, Springing from Global Faiths*; *Creativity: Where the Human and Divine Meet*; and many other works.

Jack Miller, Professor of Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Author of *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion: Creating Conditions for Timeless Learning* and *The Holistic Curriculum*.

Michael Nagler, Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature and founder of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program, UC, Berkeley. Founding member of Blue Mountain Center of Meditation and author of *The Search for a Nonviolent Future* (2002 American Book Award winner).

Riane Eisler, Founder of Center for Partnership Studies and author of *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*; *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Power of the Body—New Paths to Power and Love*; *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education for the 21st Century*; and *The REAL Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*.

Robert Inchausti, Professor of English, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; author of *Spitwad Sutras: Classroom Teaching as Sublime Vocation*, *The Ignorant Perfection of Ordinary People*, and *Thomas Merton: American Visionary*.

Joseph Kilikevici, founder and director, Shem Center for Interfaith Spirituality, Oak Park, IL; practitioner of Creation Spirituality and Universal Dances of Peace.

Gabriele Rico, Professor of English and Creative Arts, San Jose State University; author of the best-selling *Writing the Natural Way: Using Right-Brain Techniques to Release Your Expressive Power*; *Pain and Possibility*; *Re-creations: Inspiration from the Source*, and other works. Advisory Board Member of AEPL since its inception in 1993. www.gabrielericocom.

Site: Mount Madonna Conference Center, site of the AEPL conference in 2000, a hilltop monastic setting with an ethic of love, master yoga teachers, and wonderful views of Monterey Bay.

Consult www.aepl.org for updated information and proposal and registration forms.

Co-organizers: Bruce Novak, Northern Illinois University (brucenovak@mac.com) and Stan Scott, Professor Emeritus, University of Maine-Presque Isle (stan.scott@maine.edu)

Ball State University
Graduate Programs in
Composition and Literature



The Program

Ball State University offers graduate programs in composition and literature leading to the M.A. and the Ph.D. Although students concentrate in either area, they are encouraged to explore the connections between the composing process, the history of rhetoric, literary theory, pedagogy, and various literary traditions. Students are actively mentored in the development of publication, teaching, and other professional skills.

The Stipends

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The University

A state-supported institution with a current enrollment of about 20,000 students, Ball State University first achieved eminence in teacher education. The Department of English features nationally recognized faculty, well-equipped computer and learning laboratories, and additional graduate concentrations in applied linguistics and TESOL.

Information

For information, write or call the Director of Graduate Programs
Department of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306
Phone: (765) 285-8415 • Fax: (765) 285-3765

Ball State University practices equal opportunity in education and employment and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The *Journal of Developmental Education*, the official Journal of the National Association of Developmental Education, invites the submission of original manuscripts for publication consideration. Manuscripts are accepted year round and considered on an ongoing basis.

The Journal's content focuses on basic skills education, developmental education activities, learning assistance, and counseling as they relate to at-risk students at the postsecondary level. Editorial emphasis is placed on manuscripts that relate theory to practice (i.e., teaching, learning, and student development) and studies that include evaluative results reflecting the impact on students. The Journal also publishes manuscripts that expand current knowledge or have a clearly demonstrated impact on the field.

Author's Guidelines are available at www.ncde.appstate.edu

For additional information contact: Managing Editor, Journal of Developmental Education, National Center for Developmental Education, ASU Box 32098, Boone, NC 28608.