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J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

**Mind, Body, Spirit:
Teachers Making Connections**

Volume 4 • Winter 1998–1999

The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

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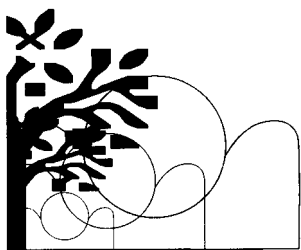
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J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

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Volume 4 • Winter 1998-1999

J A E P L

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

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

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

Topics of interest include but are not limited to: intuition, inspiration, insight, imagery, meditation, silence, archetypes, emotion, attitudes, values, spirituality, motivation, body wisdom and felt sense, and healing. Articles may be practical, research-oriented, theoretical, bibliographic, professional, and/or exploratory/personal.

Membership in AEPL is \$15. Contact Bruce Arding, Columbus State Community College, 550 E. Spring St., Columbus, OH 43215. e-mail: bardinger@compuserve.com. Membership includes that year's issue of *JAEPL*.

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Editors' Message

We live in a culture dominated by boundaries of all sorts. Personal space is precious to us, and we become uneasy when others do not honor those invisible borders, ignoring, perhaps, the ways in which those borders shift with age, class, gender, and ethnicity. We have office doors, house doors, and bedroom doors that we close and lock. Many of us demarcate a sharp separation between private life and public work, arguing, as does Michael Bèrubé that the life lived has nothing to do with the work written. And so we exist, being careful not to overstep our "boundaries," communicating in body language and in words the necessity of distance between me and thee, spirit and school, body and mind.

Much that we do in AEPL is designed to disrupt those boundaries, to resist the ways in which arbitrary separations lock us into damaging patterns of living, thinking, and feeling. We believe, as Gregory Bateson says, that severing mind from body will result in an epistemological error that will surely hurt us. Thus, in our workshops at professional sites, in our annual conference in the Colorado Rockies, and in our interactions throughout the year—many of which are carried on in cyberspace—we celebrate the necessary unity of mind, spirit, and body.

This issue of our first jointly edited *JAEPL* continues that celebration by featuring articles addressing in varied fashion our necessary unity. Laurence E. Musgrove in "Attitudes Toward Writing" focuses on ways in which teachers must attend to the importance of students' attitudes while writing. Mark McBeth in "Body Oddities" blurs the boundaries between exposition and fiction, as well as between flesh and word, as he plumbs the ways in which differences in body encode differences in being, underlining the organizing and disruptive nature of bodies. Focusing on the needs of the spirit, Hildy Miller argues from a feminist perspective for the importance of a goddess religion for the development of women in our patriarchal culture. Keith Rhodes blurs the boundaries that separate imagination and rationality that have become solidified in Western culture. Using the Jungian archetype of the trickster, he re-reads Plato and Gorgias as philosopher-rhetoricians imbued with a subtle resistance to absolute rationality that marks the trickster. Judy Halden-Sullivan in "Reflection and an Appetite for Experience" taps the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer to argue that the synthesis of experience and reflection is essential for our composition classrooms. Finally, in "The Healing Power of Words" Dave Waddell highlights the reciprocity of language, body, and spirit, illustrating how each mutually infuses the other. Each article, separately and jointly, offers unique insight on the necessary unity of mind, spirit, and body.

We also wish to acknowledge the work of our Book Review Editor, Anne Mullin, who, after a three-year tenure in office, will be turning her efforts to new projects. We welcome Susan Blau as the incoming Book Review Editor, and eagerly anticipate the upcoming array of reviews. We also wish to welcome Jane Tompkins to the Executive Committee as ex officio member, Alice G. Brand to the Advisory Board, and Tom Dean to the editorship of the *AEPL Newsletter*. Judy Arnold, outgoing *Newsletter* editor, will be pursuing other writing projects.

Breaking with tradition, we have chosen to issue an open call for the fifth issue of *JAEPL*. Rather than focusing on a specific topic or theme, we invite submissions on any topic or approach that offers insight into AEPL interests. We also begin a new tradition in that we will be using MLA (4th edition), rather than APA, citation style.

Please visit our website at <http://cctr.umkc.edu/org/jaepl> and e-mail us all your comments and suggestions. We look forward to introducing new discourse and new topics to the world of cyberspace. ☺

Dedication to Alice G. Brand

In the contingent realm of human affairs, Aristotle argues, the process by which we arrive at ethical decisions regarding our actions results from the balancing of *logos*—narrowly defined as rationality—and of *pathos*—appetite, desire, emotions. Much of the work in our field has concentrated on *logos*—on the rationality of the word separate from the necessary leveling of emotion, thereby imperiling the ethicality of our endeavors as teachers and researchers. Alice Brand—poet, teacher, scholar—has dedicated her professional life to redressing that inequity by continually seeking ways to “heat up cognition” and unite the “cognitively blind but arousing system of emotion with the subtle intellectual apparatus” (*Psychology of Writing* 1). Her efforts to bring a field’s erring attention back to emotion include *The Psychology of Writing: The Affective Experience* (1989), *Therapy in Writing* (1980), and the co-edited collection (with Richard L. Graves) *Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive* (1994), as well as innumerable articles and presentations. Her efforts to keep her own attention on emotion include her work as a published poet: *studies on ZONE* (1989) and *Court of Common Pleas* (1996)

Heated by her own *pathos*, Alice has gone beyond these traditional venues and avenues of scholarship. With Richard L. Graves and Charles Suhor, she created the Assembly for the Expanded Perspectives on Learning—a community where like-minded teachers from a variety of disciplines could meet to discuss and exchange views on matters that, like emotion, remain on the margins of scholarly interest and respectability. Then, she stepped down as co-chair of the assembly to serve as the first editor of the newly established journal: *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (JAEPL)*. Teachers needed a journal, she believed, which would provide an outlet for writing about topics and in genres devalORIZED in the field at large. And so, under her three-year editorship, *JAEPL* became that journal. Those of us who published under Alice learned how powerful the combination of *logos* and *pathos* could be. Her editorial vigilance was exacting, and her gift and sincere wish for excellence inspiring.

We wish to acknowledge and honor that passion, diligence, and exactitude by dedicating this fourth issue of *JAEPL* to Alice Glarden Brand: groundbreaker, mentor, caster of long shadows. ☺

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Attitudes Toward Writing

Laurence E. Musgrove

*I take myself back, fear.
You are not my shadow any longer.
I don't hold you in my hands.
You can't live in my eyes, my ears, my voice,
my belly, or in my heart my heart
my heart my heart.*

Joy Harjo

In *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom*, Kathleen Blake Yancey (1992) maintains that “portfolios in composition classes often exhibit . . . some metacognitive work, that is, some exploration by the writers of their own composing processes and of their own development as writers” (p. 104). As the term “metacognitive” suggests, much of this exploration or self-evaluative writing takes place after students have completed a series of writing assignments; they look back to see what they’ve accomplished and the degree to which they’ve improved as writers. Yancey also argues that portfolio reflections can “provide information about what is going on ‘within’ the writers to help them set their own agendas and thus exercise some control over their development in appropriate ways” (p. 104). What is within writers is quite different from what they’ve produced, or even the knowledge and skills they’ve developed along the way. What is within student writers are heart-felt stories, narratives of success and failure played out in the English classroom. Unfortunately, the most common of these stories are filled with fear and despair—students fearing teachers’ comments and peer response, students despairing of success or approval. Repeated again and again over time, these narratives of hurt become internalized and shape students’ attitudes toward future writing experiences. Even the most supportive teaching practices will fail in the face of such deep-seated resistances. In response, I believe we should give our writing students a vocabulary of attitude, help them use this terminology to recount and revise their writing experiences, and provide them with short narratives, parables, and poems that exemplify specific predispositional attitudes which contribute to or interfere with their chances of success in the writing class. In combination with a portfolio pedagogy that offers multiple op-

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portunities to set learning goals and evaluate their progress in achieving them, I believe attention to attitude will offer students the chance to see how what they bring to writing influences what they can ultimately achieve in writing.

Defining Attitude

In "The Affective Domain and the Writing Process: Working Definitions," Susan H. McLeod (1991) maps out a variety of terms most often used by psychologists to name affective states of being so that she can suggest ways we might extend our research into affect and the writing process. These affective states include "emotion," "feelings," "attitude," "anxiety," "belief," and "motivation." Here, I'd like to examine only the first three of these in order to distinguish "attitude" from "emotion." "Emotions" according to McLeod are intense, positive or negative conditions "where the organism is aroused for a fairly short period of time. Using this definition, grief, joy, fear, and anger are all emotions" (p. 98). Less evident affective states would be "moods" such as "the blues." The distinct physical responses to emotions and moods are "feelings": the shortness of breath related to fear and the fatigue that may accompany sadness (98). From the field of social psychology, McLeod takes "attitudes" to mean "psychological states acquired over a period of time as a result of our experiences; these attitudes influence us to act in certain ways" (p. 98). In other words, an attitude is a learned state of readiness rather than the act or response itself. Synonyms would include "tendency" and "predisposition." Finally, attitudes also have affective, behavioral, and cognitive components: attitudes may be accompanied by positive or negative emotions, and we may act and think in particular ways as a result of our attitudes (pp. 98-99). Therefore, emotions and attitudes are distinct affective states, even though an attitude may lead to an emotional response and then to a feeling or bodily response, as in a student's negative attitude toward writing resulting in anger and perspiration.

In "Social Cognition, Emotions, and the Psychology of Writing," Alice Brand (1991) claims that "social-cognitive theories of writing mask the emotional experience of writing" (p. 396). Tracing the development of the term "attitude" in the field of social psychology, Brand focuses on attitude's emotional component—"a positive or negative valence and a level of intensity" (p. 398)—and concludes with a call for a theory of writing that includes attention to the writer's emotions (p. 403). In an earlier argument, *The Psychology of Writing: The Affective Experience*, Brand (1989) develops the means to survey students' emotional responses toward writing. When defining her primary terms and assumptions, she helps us further understand the relationship between attitude and emotion when she discusses the difference between "state" and "trait" emotions. According to Brand, "state" emotions represent a person's affective experience at a specific moment, while "trait" emotions "predispose people to particular state emotions but do not have a locus in time" (p. 59). So, just as attitudes are one's habitual tendencies toward a response or action, trait emotions are one's habitual emotional display, one's regular temperament. Again, attitudes don't always produce emotions, but when an attitude does prompt an emotional response, the emotional response may be trait, state, or a combination of emotional responses.

Kinds of Attitudes

One of the difficulties that arises when discussing attitudes is determining kinds of attitudes. This is evident in McLeod's essay mentioned already above. While she readily offers names for kinds of emotions and feelings, she doesn't name specific attitudes, except to say that students have negative ones (p. 99). Cataloguing attitudes is particularly difficult, I think, because the terms "attitudes" and "emotions" and "feelings" are often used synonymously in our discussions of habitual emotional response and behavior. For example, what might the attitude be called that prompts a student to have the emotion of despair? Would the attitude be called "pessimism"? "Hopelessness"? Could it also be called "despair"? If I am prone to emotional despair when faced with writing, do I have a despairing attitude?

Interestingly enough, some help in this regard comes from Wayne C. Booth who has an abiding interest in the relationships between writers, their texts, and their readers, as evidenced in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983), *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (1988), and *The Vocation of a Teacher* (1988). In the last named volume, and in an essay titled "The Scholar in Society," Booth criticizes the ideal notion of objective inquiry and, instead, proposes the scholar who accepts his or her social and thus value-laden role while practicing the habits of honesty, courage, persistence, consideration, and humility (pp. 67-73). For example, scholars are persistent when they choose to investigate a "problem until it is either solved or proved pointless" (p. 70); scholars demonstrating humility "have tested their powers for discovering the truth and have discovered instead vaster and vaster domains of ignorance" (p. 73). In other places, he equates these habits with "virtues," "powers," "traits," "strengths," "characteristics" (p. 67) and "attitude" (p. 64). While Booth would probably see these five habits of scholarship more readily as demonstrated behaviors or virtues, they do provide us with names we can attach to attitudes. By that I mean, if we can say that someone—a firefighter for example—is predisposed to act courageously, we should also be able to claim that he or she has a courageous attitude.

A Pedagogy of Attitude

Thus, for my purposes in the writing classroom and in the context of a portfolio pedagogy, I introduce a vocabulary of attitude, provide literary examples, and assign self-evaluative writing to prompt students to account for their own attitudes toward writing. My purposes are, of course, to help students write and think well, to feel confident when faced with a variety of writing tasks and rhetorical situations in and outside school, to effectively plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing, to be capable readers of other students' writing, to develop the independent ability to evaluate the appropriateness of their own writing, and to find personally and publicly significant purposes for writing. In terms of attitudes, I want students to understand how specific predispositions influence what they can achieve and how they can improve as writers.

At the beginning of the term, I give my students a definition of attitude, making it synonymous with one's predispositions toward particular tasks,

ideas, or people. Then I take Booth's terms for the five scholarly habits, add the attitude of hope to his list, and introduce six pairs of positive and negative critical attitudes, listed in the figure below, that contribute to or interfere with learning.

honesty/dishonesty
courage/fear
persistence/procrastination
consideration/narrow-mindedness
humility/arrogance
hope/despair

Then in a series of mini-lessons, I share with my students short pieces of literature exemplifying these attitudinal pairs. While I prefer short literary examples because of their intensity and because they take less class time, longer stories, novels, essays, and plays may also be appropriate at other times to demonstrate attitudes in conflict. The table below lists some poems, parables, and short stories that correspond to specific attitudes.

honesty/dishonesty	"A Ritual To Read to Each Other," William Stafford
courage/fear	"Fear," Stephen Dobyns
persistence/procrastination	"To Be of Use," Marge Piercy
consideration/narrow-mindedness	"Those Winter Mornings," Robert Hayden
humility/arrogance	"Eclipse," Augusto Monterroso
hope/despair	"Drouth," Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry's poem is an excellent example of how opposite attitudes are cued by the same event.

Drouth

All day the crops burn in the cloudless air,
Drouth lengthening against belief. At night
The husbands and the wives lie side by side,
Awake, the ache of panic in their bones,
Their purposes betrayed by purposes

Unknown, whose mystery is the dark in which
They wait and grieve. All may be lost, and then
What will they do? When money is required
Of them, and they have none, where will they go?

Many will go in blame against the world,
Hating it for their pain, and they will go
Alone across the dry, bright, lifeless days,
And thus alone into the dark. Others
In grief and loss will see more certainly
What they have loved, and will belong to it
And to each other as in happiness
They never did—hearing, though the whole world
Go dry, the hidden raincrow of their hope.

(Berry, 1997, p. 54)

In my classes, as we talk about this poem and try to understand why some despair and why some remain hopeful when confronted with the same failure, the poem also gives us the opportunity to talk about the failures that we all face in writing, how failure and error are natural and necessary for growth, and how difficult it is for us to remain hopeful when faced with the hard work of writing.

In my writing classes, students also keep portfolios designed to help them track their attitudinal development, along with their progress as more knowledgeable and skillful writers. Portfolio ingredients include a résumé, an initial attitudinal survey, learning goals, a personal grammar and usage handbook, in-class writing, homework assignments, essays, and portfolio self-evaluations written at midterm and at the end of the semester. A sample midterm self-evaluation assignment is included below.

Part I

Copy the questions below and compose a short paragraph response to each.

1. Of all the reading, writing, and thinking goals you set for yourself, which were the most important to you?
2. To what degree have you been able to achieve them during the first half of the term?
3. Which ones do you still need to work on?
4. What new goals would you now set for yourself?
5. Of all of the writing you've accomplished, which was the most meaningful?
6. Of all of the reading you've accomplished, which was the most important to you?
7. If you had an opportunity to change this class, what would you do?
8. Of all of the ways you've progressed in this class, which one are you most proud of?

Part II

Review your responses to Part I above, and then compose a four-page essay in which you reflect upon the growth you've experienced so far this term as a result of what you've accomplished in this class. Describe the person you were at the beginning of the term, especially that person's attitudes toward writing. Then, describe the person you are now and contrast your present attitudes with your earlier attitudes. How have the activities in this class contributed to that contrast?

I am especially interested in how you might use the six pairs of attitudes we've discussed in class to think about your "attitudinal" progress in this class. These six pairs include hope/despair, courage/fear, perseverance/procrastination, humility/arrogance, honesty/dishonesty, and consideration/narrow-mindedness. It should not be necessary to discuss all six pairs, but I would like you to concentrate on at least three of them.

The first part of this assignment is designed to prompt students to reflect on their learning goals, the degree to which they've achieved those goals, and what they've accomplished during the term. The second part of the assignment asks students to focus on the person they've come to be and, more specifically, on how their attitudes about writing have changed.

Student Stories

While I've included excerpts from midterm self-evaluations below in order to demonstrate how students think and write about their attitudes, I want to admit that as of this time I have used this approach in only two of my classes, in an English education course for English majors who are prospective teachers and in a first-year writing class, both in the fall of 1997 at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville. The school draws a homogeneous population of students, most first generation college students, and most from Evansville and the immediate tri-state region, including Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky. All of the students represented here are white, female, and between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two.

Sharon, a student in the first-year writing class, describes in her self-evaluation her experiences in high school, but also her concerns about writing in college:

Imagine a young girl who is just starting college. She is eager to learn, but also afraid that she won't be able to handle her new challenge. The girl you are picturing is the person I used to be. Before school, I was hopeful, but also despairing and fearful when it came to this English class.

Writing had never really been a problem for me. I always had positive experiences with writing in high school. However, I knew my teachers were more lenient in high school than my professors would be in college. I also imagined that I would be writing ten page essays. These reasons combined made me fearful about writing in college.

Sharon has a good writing history, but still she doubted her ability because she was unsure what to expect from college writing assignments, as well as fearing what she didn't know: how her writing will be evaluated in college. Most students in the class also feared writing, a common and tragic cultural attitude toward writing, and one we, as teachers, should address directly in our classes and in our professional organizations.

Ashley, from the same writing class, reveals another attitude toward writing and learning:

Despite being in this class only a few months, I have noticed a change in my attitude toward English already. I never thought that I would feel any different toward the reading, writing, thinking, and learning skills incorporated into an English class. But the attitudes I had at the beginning of the semester are totally different than those I have now.

I was a very narrow-minded person when entering this class. I had my beliefs and would very seldom listen to anybody else's. I also had a hard time taking the criticism and the advice peers had to give me. I like the way my essay was, and I did not want to change anything.

Ashley makes a significant judgment about herself and her way of responding to others' ideas. Realizing her narrow-mindedness, and perhaps her arrogance, she has an opportunity to see the limits of her knowledge and to recognize the value of considering other perspectives. Her response also reminds us that terminology and self-evaluation won't affect attitudinal change by themselves. Because the primary text in the course emphasized critical thinking and because the class included multiple opportunities for peer response to writing, Ashley was able to connect writing to thinking and negotiation, and learn the benefits of consideration and humility.

I also asked English majors who were prospective secondary teachers to reflect about their predispositions toward writing and teaching writing. The following excerpt by Shana may be surprising:

As I began this semester, my attitude toward writing was very negative. I had not had many good experiences in writing during high school; therefore, my attitude toward writing was despairing and fearful which led to procrastination.

I did not want to have this negative attitude, but all I had experienced in high school writing classes was failure. Because the teach-

ers never told me what I could do differently to improve my writing, I was not given the opportunity to improve or view myself as a writer.

My attitude toward teaching writing was just as despairing. When I decided to major in Secondary Education, I only focused on teaching literature. I guess I thought that I could teach writing as minimally as was required, and the main focus of my classes would be on learning the great works of literature. With this attitude, I would not have been very helpful in producing writing students who were confident and good writers.

Perhaps this response isn't so surprising after all, but Shana obviously writes better than she thinks she does. In addition, the opportunity to reflect about her attitudes and the reasons for them helped her see the degree to which she was already successful and allowed her to make new goals for developing her skills further. The last paragraph of her self-evaluation demonstrates a changing sequence of attitudes from despair, fear, and procrastination to hope, courage, and persistence:

As I look through my portfolio, I see that I was not a bad writer. I just needed to develop the positive attitude that I could become a writer, and with some practice and guidance, I have become a better writer. The best example of my writing improvement is my personal essay. By learning that I needed to change my sentence structures and comma usage, I learned how to use them correctly in my writing. I now know how to use sentence variety, and I feel more confident about commas. I will probably struggle with commas for a while longer, but in the second half of the semester, I will continue my positive attitude as I courageously attempt to become a good writer.

Conclusion

As a teacher of writing, I believe I've had some initial success in helping these and other students connect their histories as writers to how those histories affect their attitudes. By giving them a vocabulary of attitude, providing them with works of literature that demonstrate or model particular attitudes, and asking them to reflect about how their writing experiences have shaped their attitudes toward writing, I hope that students are better able to re-shape themselves into successful writers. Writing this essay has also helped me think about ways I might extend my research into the relationship between attitude and writing, such as focusing on the particular attitudes of hope and fear in future surveys of students and teachers. For example, what is the relationship between an English teacher's age and his or her hopefulness toward students of writing? To what degree do teachers believe student attitudes of despair and fear can be changed?

Finally, returning to the relationship between attitude and emotion, revisions

of attitude frequently result in revisions of emotional experience related to writing. To demonstrate, I conclude with the final paragraph from another one of my first-year students' self-evaluations. In this case, Nicole reveals how a focus on attitude affected other aspects of her life and notes the emotional objective of her improved attitudes.

I have used what I learned in this class both inside and outside of school. I use my persistence techniques in my chemistry class. This is an attitude I am aware that I should have toward all of my classes. Outside of school, I have become more hopeful and courageous in attempting all of my goals in my life. These goals include making myself happy while being successful in all that I do. ☺

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Body Oddities: Hypothetical (Com)positions from the Physically Extreme

Mark McBeth

*Speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and
most invisible body effects the divinest work: it can stop fear
and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity*

Gorgias

*The act, an enigmatic and problematic production of the
speaking body, destroys from its inception the metaphysical
dichotomy between the domain of the "mental" and the domain
of the "physical," breaks down the opposition between body and
spirit, between matter and language.*

Shoshana Felman

The human body, arriving from the womb, is genetically constructed, a slick, wrinkled bundle of breath and flesh. In some cases, however, that package emerges deformed, failing pre-set expectations of the accepted biological model. Nature creates anomalous human forms, hermaphrodites or conjoined twins. Other times, the seemingly standard body goes hormonally awry to defy the standard ideal: bearded ladies, men whose weights exceed four digits. Paradoxically, these "victims of nature" have historically been hidden from sight or commodified upon the sideshow stage. When exhibited, these extreme bodies have been displayed like "freakish" theatrical props to play upon their observers' sympathy, curiosity, and sense of relief. Their (re)presentations provided a vantage point where on-lookers, as members of a prescriptive society, could position their own sense of normalness (or freakishness). In other words, their alternative subjectivities were replaced by the audience's objectifying and emotional gaze. The curtain pulls away to reveal their bodies, and, simultaneously, the audience's strange and

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shocking morbidity unveils. Yet the observers often forget that, for these constructed Others, conventional bodies are aberrations, anomalous to *their* self-naturalized states; thus, in the end, all are freaks. Freak, normally disparaging, becomes for my purposes a linguistic tool that implicates all, hence destabilizing entrenched sensibilities of a "naturalized" self. All individuals gain a self-generated subjectivity through their corporeal situation, a somatic accrual of experience that Margaret Miles (1989) calls "carnal knowing." She explains carnal knowing as being "both embodied and social," encapsulating all the particularities of both the public and private. She proposes, "Body and subjectivity have in common, it seems, a thoroughgoing vulnerability to the transformative effects of social conditioning through gendered representations" (p. 10).

For the purposes of this essay, I would extend her feminist statement to read "*engendered representations*" which, more generally, exist through a body of multiple influences and subjectivities. Feminists consider the implications of the female body (i. e., de Beauvoir, Cixous, Irigaray, Wittig); I broaden their ideas to ruminate upon the divergent body. I specifically explore atypical embodiments and their rhetorical effects: How do the bearded lady's ablutions and their aberrant effects shift the way the world perceives her and, thus, how she can control it? How will the hermaphrodite's bi-sexed body re-complicate his/her explication of events, a twice inflected worldview? How do conjoined twins negotiate their perspectives; would their strategy(-ies) be the same as our single-minded frames? How do extreme ("freakish") bodies lend certain nuances, values, or credences to the understanding of the world? And, finally, how do these physically different individuals compose their worlds? I want to reflect upon the physically cross-gendered, the hormonally altered, the biologically conjoined to consider how their diversity underscores the body's relation to a person's idiosyncratic processes, functions, and epistemes—in short, one's "freakishness."

The body, because it ceaselessly accompanies the mind, must have other altering perceptual effects. Judith Butler (1990) advises that the body should not be considered a passive medium that is defined solely by external, cultural forces. She questions, "What separates off 'the body' as indifferent to signification, and signification itself as the act of a radically disembodied consciousness or, rather, the act that radically disembodies that consciousness?" (p. 129). She implicates the body in the meaning-making even before cultural forces commence regulation. Likewise, Esther Newton (1979), in her ethnographic study of female impersonators, shows how crossing-dressing men and their bodily performances both defy and redefine legalistic and social (cultural) conventions. Her work, more than just theorizing a particular "deviancy," evinces how that extreme and marginalized community divulges general attitudes and ideals of American culture. Newton confirms, "But drag, like violence, is as American as apple pie. Like violence, it is not an accident or mistake, nor is it caused by a few people's weak character. It is an organic part of American culture—exactly the 'flip side' of many precious ideals" (pp. 112–113). Throughout her study, she demonstrates how that "flip side"—the life of drag queens—succinctly reflects and comments upon the society in which it exists. Thus, the extreme aptly exposes and expounds.

My characters' body oddities are, likewise, considered extremes, media hypes and photo ops at which to gape. But instead of relying on this scopic economy

(Dallery, 1981; Irigaray, 1981), I want to allow these extreme conditions of physicality to disclose their alternative perspectives, and to impart their compositional processes within the context of their material worlds. The challenge is to deflate the “hype” by reincorporating their bodies’ meaning-making significance, and inferring these personas’ differences as optional and productive ways of knowing. Through the act of writing, I, vicariously, occupy their physically extreme positions to ponder their diversity, and the effects those distinctions have upon their imagined thought-composing processes. I invent particular events in these characters’ lives by integrating my life experience with researched accounts and diaries of a bearded lady, a hermaphrodite, and conjoined twins, and in doing so, surmise how these figures internalize external pressures and respond performatively and compositionally to develop their ways of knowing (and being). I then compare these intimate narratives to the experiences of real writers who record how their bodies played important roles in their text- and meaning-making processes. I want the questions of this essay to become self-reflective: Do the physical constructions of allotted bodies affect my thinking processes and the way I know myself? How does my body relate to and/or affect my emerging compositional voice? Although these examples of private writing are admittedly hypothetical, I consider how these individuals with physical differences—as biologically, historically, culturally, and ontologically marked and Othered selves—demonstrate, in more revealing ways, how writers perceive themselves and how those selves compose and are composed. Their bodies, further, uncover other questions about learning to compose and teaching writing: How does the body intervene in the performance of writing and, likewise, how does writing recompose the body’s construction? How do (mis)conceptions of the body, in relation to writing, help or hinder students’ learning and teachers’ pedagogical efforts?

Bearded Woman: The Body’s Performance of Its -Ness

In the steamed bathroom mirror, she writes H-A-I-R-I-N-E-S-S; each letter condenses and drips. In the misty reflection I see the bearded woman. She is rugged and beautiful. I shall never shave. She said this years ago, and ever since sports her natural mane. I am a simultaneous change of disguise, beyond the tricks of quick change. She performs in the guise of five o’clock shadow. I gain the respectable handshake of unsuspecting masculinity. She conceals her breasts beneath baggy flannel. I hear them hesitate, “Something strangely pretty about that man with the beard?” She steps out her door, and I am he, if I choose to be. Today, she shall buy a hammer and nails, wood glue and spackle, consume the entire store and reconstruct all that it engenders. If anyone can emasculate that hardware world, I can. She can change your view and you won’t even know it. And like Samson, my powers grow thicker and longer, and like Delilah I control them. You can huff and you can puff, but she will not depilate nor debilitate. Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin.

The bearded lady's experience illustrates to us the body's power to violate society's preconceptions, while society, simultaneously, limits her actions/reactions. In a parallel situation, writers' bodies impel the external forces which, once again, motivate their actions/words. This interaction of "power and resistance" reproduces itself in recursive loops. Foucault (1978/1990), in his *History of Sexuality*, explains that "power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations " (p. 94). He sees power as a *not* solely top-down process, and recognizes how resistance is distributed unevenly, "furling across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds" (pp. 94-96). In this type of power relationship, a certain agency can then be reclaimed by the non-privileged. The bearded lady, although physically at a marginal point, can exercise the power of her whiskers with(in) and against a certain gender-marked system, and, so, her resistance and the world's pressure are equivocally confluent.

Writers also work with and against these external pressures. The resistances relate to the writer's body and its -nesses (Raceness, Classness, Sexualness, Genderness, Hairiness). These "nesses" are further accompanied by certain bodily habits and performances, such as ethnically-centered traditions, resistance against gendered expectations, or the bearded lady's refusal to shave. The external world maintains preconceived ideas about the writers' bodies, inevitably commenting upon them and the performances prescribed to their appearance. Thus, writers internalize the world's perception of them, influencing their chosen performances relating to the -ness of the body, and they react accordingly or discordingly. Who, then, takes agency—writers, society, or the "beard"? What might be called the power of inscription displays itself from and through the characteristics and (re)actions of the writerly body. If I am conditioned to believe that my voice must be underspoken (or just plain silent) because of my body's social position in society, how will my written voice emerge—as a relinquishing murmur or a relieving scream?

As an example, Carol Mavor (1995), in her collection of essays *Pleasures Taken*, records and analyzes the Victorian love affair of Arthur Munby (a Cambridge-educated gentleman) and Hannah Cullwick (a lower servant). Munby's collection of photographs of Hannah (the name she preferred to be called) displays the gentleman's voyeuristic interest in her working-class life posed against her ability at masquerading as an upper-class lady. Both Munby's and Hannah's diaries reveal that it was she who suggested that she dress as a man in public, so that her identity and their public activities together could be covert. In many instances, Hannah sustains agency in subversive ways within the societal context that she lives. Mavor (1995) comments:

Despite the volumes of diaries that they both kept, and despite the forty-odd photographs of her in the Munby Box, it is hard to get a hold of Hannah. One wonders if her invisibility within this space of excess representation is not tied to her own desire to defy visibility. She made invisibility into an art. She wore her thirteen-and-one-half-inch biceps as proudly as she wore her dirt. Her dirt, her masculine stride, her lack of womanly manners enabled her to go

through the streets of the city freely, without the usual constraints placed upon the Victorian lady.... Hannah writes in her diaries: "That's the best o'being drest rough & looking 'nobody'—you can go anywhere and not be wonder'd at." (pp. 77-78)

The photographs and diaries of Hannah recount how aware she is of societal constraints about her image, her romance, and her position in society (all bodily-related). It is this self-awareness and insight into societal mores that sustain her control and her ability to compose herself. Through photographic imagery, journal writing, and daily performance, Hannah composes a life that concedes and transgresses her culture's norms. While recognizing that she remains under public scrutiny, "looking 'nobody,'" she nevertheless devises means to undermine the external view, using it to her advantage.

Similarly, throughout bell hooks' (1989) essay "Talking Back," hooks repeatedly refers to how the reactions of the people in her world affected her and her voice. Unlike the bearded lady and Hannah, who gain social advantages by rethinking their physical situations, hooks' female voice (her talking back—her "beard" so to speak) repeatedly draws negative reactions:

In the world of the southern black community I grew up in, "back talk" and "talking back" meant speaking as an equal to an authority figure. It meant daring to disagree and sometimes it just meant having an opinion.... To make yourself heard if you were a child was to invite punishment, the back-hand lick, the slap across the face that would catch you unaware, or the feel of switches stinging your arms and legs. (p. 5)

She reiterates:

Questioning authority, raising issues that were not deemed appropriate subjects brought pain, punishments—like telling mama I wanted to die before her because I could not live without her—that was crazy talk, crazy speech, the kind that would lead you to end up in a mental institution. "Little girl," I would be told, "if you don't stop all this crazy talk and crazy acting you are going to end up right out there at Western State." (p. 7)

hooks develops physically and mentally *through* the external forces—the back-hand lick, the silencing, and the warnings of insanity. She composes herself by "talking back"; the world reacts with a slap; nevertheless, she rejoins. She recognizes authority's regulations, limitations, and threats, and realizes that her world's perception has an indelible (in her case, painful) effect upon her thinking, yet she is able to prevail over those external forces and use their negative reactions to her advantage. The world tries to relegate change, but its intentions are not always fulfilled. Judith Butler (1997), in *Excitable Speech*, explains how the insult, or other external pressure, can indirectly enable the writer:

The insult, however, assumes its specific proportion in time. To be called a name is one of the first forms of linguistic injury that one learns. But not all name-calling is injurious. Being called a name is also one of the conditions by which a subject is constituted in language.... Does the power of language to injure follow from its interpellative power? And how, if at all, does linguistic agency emerge from this scene of enabling vulnerability? (p. 2)

I join Butler in questioning how insults, oppressions, or restrictions introduce a certain type of agency to the "mouthy" hooks, the muscular Hannah, and the unshaven woman, regardless of potential linguistic injuries.

If a bearded woman passes through her day using her beard as a disguise to fool the world, will the world treat her differently than if she were without that prop? Will they give her allegedly masculine opinions more respect, not direct her attention to the vanity mirrors? Will they question her authority less because she is perceived as male? The world believes its paradigms of gender, sexuality, and social position; it has naturalized the implications of the body, thus designating who has the authority to speak and who doesn't. hooks uses the black male preacher's voice as an example of authority that was to be heard and remembered. Unlike his revered voice, her and other black women's voices were to be ignored. She proclaims, "Our speech, 'the right speech of womanhood,' was often the soliloquy, the talking into thin air, the talking to ears that do not hear you—the talk that is simply not listened to" (p. 6). Hélène Cixous (1991), from her own experience, confirms hooks' recognition of culturally-designated positions of linguistic authority:

You can desire. You can read, adore, be invaded. But writing is not granted to you. Writing is reserved for the chosen. It surely took place in a realm inaccessible to the small, to the humble, to women. In the intimacy of the sacred. Writing spoke to its prophets from a burning bush. But it must have been decided that bushes wouldn't dialogue with women. (pp. 13-14)

Cixous' satirical remark distinguishes how the female body and its words are suppressed and, through her writing, she reconstitutes a Jewish, foreign, female body which dares to compose.

The writing body reconciles. hooks (1989) finally resolves herself with the forces that try to silence her: "Certainly, when I reflect on the trials of my growing-up years, the many punishments, I can see now that in resistance I learned to be vigilant in the nourishment of my spirit, to be tough, to courageously protect that spirit from forces that would break it" (p. 7). And in "Coming to Writing," Cixous (1991) writes in a forcefully compelling voice about external powers in relation to her bodily identities:

Everything in me joined forces to forbid me to write: History, my story, my origin, my sex. Everything that constituted my social and cultural self.... You want—to Write? In what language? Property,

rights, had always policed me: I learned French in a garden from which I was on the verge of expulsion for being a Jew. I was of the race of Paradise-losers. Write French? With what right? Show us your credentials! What's the password? Cross yourself! Put out your hands, let's see those paws! What kind of nose is that? . . . Write? Taking pleasure as the gods who created the books take pleasure and give pleasure, *endlessly*; their bodies of paper and blood; their letters of flesh and tears; they put an end to the end . . . How could I have not wanted to write? . . . When my being was populated, my body traversed and fertilized [sic], how could I have closed myself up in silence? Come to me, I will come to you. When love makes love to you, how can you keep from murmuring, saying its names, giving thanks for its caresses? (pp. 12–13)

Instead of allowing the “body of knowledge” (her carnal knowing) to decompose under the forces that deride her, she re-composes her subjectivity, putting her critics under speculation and, thus, reconstituting her desire and herself in language.

How then does a disruption of “the naturalized”—whether that be the bearded woman, the biceped maid, the talking girl, or the writing “Jewoman”—affect the person who has been blessed with these respective gifts? If you can stroll through the world reweighing its prejudices, you perceive, and possibly undermine, far more easily its self-deceptions, its socially-constructed rules, and its idiocies. The bearded lady composes her day with the aid of her hairy face, not pretending, but allowing the rest of her world to pretend about what they want to perceive. hooks interrupts, talks back and writes while her family, colleagues, and critics try to hush her, silence her; they don't know that their futile attempts fuel her need to express herself. These women do not succumb to these rules and idiocies because they control them. They remain agents of their voices and passions for writing. The bearded lady, hooks, Hannah, and Cixous share parallel trickeries (hair, “mouthiness,” masquerade, passion). Their trickery is their resistance to and manipulation of what the world has accepted as “natural,” and their power is their ability to recompose it. In the end, none of them assimilate; all subvert.

Hermaphrodite's Note to His/Her Hateful Lover

I will not be with you tonight but you will feel me so close that you will weep when I am laughing in your face with my back turned to you. Why do you use all of my love to make me hate you? I know why but refuse to acknowledge the fact, but regardless, I can accept your fantasies. I can't imagine that you understand my adoring greetings within my despising farewells. With you, it is always so taxing the things you take for free. I am exiting now but I will find the right entry to escape the wrongful liberties you took. I just gave up. Down the road, you will realize why I remain so passionate about your indifference. Now get out of here.

The Hermaphrodite represents the polar views that dwell and are processed within the writer simultaneously, the internalized outside: man/woman, feminine/masculine, good/evil, strength/weakness, passion/reticence. And between those poles, between the penis and the vagina co-existing on one body, there is the interstitial space that is the fluid continuum of back-and-forthing. The hermaphroditic body lies between two societally naturalized sexes and, thus, hypothetically makes the contextual choices between those two social, gendered positions. This is exemplified by the diaries of Herculine Barbin (Foucault, 1978/1990), a 19th-century French hermaphrodite.

Until the age of twenty-one, Herculine Barbin lived as a female (working as a lady's maid, attending a women's normal school, and teaching in a girl's boarding school), after which she was medically and legally reinstated as a man. In some ways analogous to the bearded lady's situation, Barbin's situation might have been controlled by external powers, but s/he understood the advantages and disadvantages of knowing multiple perspectives. In the following journal excerpt, Barbin's multiplicity both clearly resounds and laments in her/his (com)position:

As the result of an exceptional situation, on which I do not pride myself, I, who am called a man, have been granted the intimate, deep understanding of all the facets, all the secrets, of a woman's character. I can read her heart like an open book. I could count every beat of it. In a word, I have the secret of her strength and the measure of her weakness, and so I would make a detestable husband for that reason. I also feel that all my joys would be poisoned in marriage and that I would cruelly abuse, perhaps, the immense advantage that would be mine, an advantage that would turn against me. (pp. 106–107)

Barbin reflects on how contextually paradoxical and problematic her/his position becomes. This hermaphroditic writer creates a voice that disputes and conciliates all that arrives/departs within her/his internal voice from outside influences. Barbin, as the hermaphroditic composer, constantly surveys the contextual shifts that exist in her/his life.

In Barbin's era, the spiraling realm of composing self becomes entangled in the external medicolegal forces and, likewise, in Barbin's own internal sense of morality and unfulfilled desires. Her/his self-actualization, in the end, is so pressured that s/he is driven to commit suicide. In Foucault's (1978/1990) introduction to the memoirs, he states:

Alexina [Barbin's female name] wrote her memoirs about that life once her new identity [as male] had been discovered and established. Her "true" and "definitive" identity. But it is clear she did not write them from the point of view of that sex which had at least been brought to light. It is not a man who is speaking, trying to recall his sensations and his life as they were at the time when he was not yet "himself." When Alexina composed her memoirs, she was not far from her suicide; for herself, she was still without a definite sex....

And what she evokes in her past is the happy limbo of a non-identity, which was paradoxically protected by the life of those closed, narrow, and intimate societies where one has the strange happiness, which is at the same time obligatory and forbidden, of being acquainted with only one sex. (p. xiii)

According to Foucault, under this constructed logosphere of sexless, “happy limbo,” Barbin’s desires and pleasures culminated into a fulfilling *jouissance*, which was, ultimately, destroyed by public opinion. Her detached attachment to both sexes offered Barbin multiple viewpoints in a desirously ever-shifting context, which in more conducive cultural conditions would have been enlightening and beneficial.

Cixous (1991) rejoices in the sensation of multiplicitous and unrestrained bodily writing, in which ambivalence is luxurious: “Languages pass into my tongue, understand one another, call to each other, touch and alter one another, blend their personal pronouns together in the effervescence of difference” (p. 31). She (and the once felicitous hermaphrodite) revel/rebel in a dichotomous world where opposites attract and repulse. They delight in the equal and opposite forces of the world, with their often contradictory and confounding sensibilities. They are oppositional and pluralistic—all-consuming—and confront each topic with the various influences that are attached to and through their bodies: male/female; writer/reader; penetrator/penetrated. Cixous (1991) extols:

I don’t “begin” by “writing”: I don’t write. Life becomes text starting out from my body. I am already text, history, love, violence, time, work, desire inscribe it in my body, I go where the “fundamental language” is spoken, the body language into which all the tongues of things, acts, and beings translate themselves, in my own breast, the whole of reality worked upon in my flesh, intercepted by my nerves, by my senses, by the labor of all my cells, projected, analyzed, recomposed into a book. (pp. 51–52)

Finally, for Cixous (1990), the multiplicitous information, perspectives and sensibilities culminate into a univocalized text—a “text that is made of flesh” (p. 27).

The hermaphroditic writer is a diplomat, a negotiator, a single voice like a chorus representing all, yet constantly fighting the melody with him/herself, a cacophonous harmony. When Helen Wilcox (Cixous, 1990) describes Cixous, she states, “. . . the writer is exile and other, but also the reconciler of opposites. Underlying this is always the matter of . . . the perplexing question of the ‘I’” (p. 3). The hermaphrodite and the writer can clutch only temporarily onto the “I” because the “I” sometimes becomes, sometimes is already the “we,” the “you,” and the “they,” and, thus, as the writer proceeds, his/her identity shifts. Cixous (1990) confirms this idea when she succinctly comments, “Of course I don’t know who ‘I’ am/is/are” (p. 9). Even in Cixous’ grammatical construction of the copulas, the I of the writer collapses into the identity of I/he/she/you/they simultaneously. Accompanying this collapse (or, perhaps, inflation) of identity, the hermaphroditic writer develops a special relationship with his/her myriad

readers. Writer and reader, together, develop an intersubjective condition within the text (Brandt, 1990). These are textual places where the writer and audience gain awareness of each other in realms of ideas, opinions, experiences and perceived flesh.

In this textual place, the hermaphroditic writer reinvigorates the subject with an eros of ambiguity, which resonates with the multiplicity of discourses that exist there. Muriel Dimen (1989) writes in "Power, Sexuality, and Intimacy":

Erotic experience is extraordinary, lying somewhere between dream and daily life. Sped by desire, it knows no shame and no bounds. In it, pleasure and power, hurt and love, mingle effortlessly. It is a between-thing, bordering psyche and society, culture and nature, conscious and unconscious, self and other. Its intrinsic messy ambiguity confers on it an inherent novelty, creativity, discovery; these give it its excitements, its pleasure, its fearsomeness. Sexual experience entails loss of self-other boundaries, the endless opening of doors to more unknown inner spaces, confusions about what to do next or who the other person is or what part of the body is being touched or what part of the body is doing the touching or where one person begins and the other ends. This is sometimes pleasurable, sometimes painful, always unsettling. (pp. 46-47)

Dimen's description could as easily refer to the processes of composing as it does to the erotic; both erotic activity and writing can outwardly manifest the body's desires and pleasures. To highlight this overlap, I palimpsest: Sped by desire, *writing* knows no shame and no bounds. In it, pleasure and power, hurt and love, mingle effortlessly. *Writing* is a between-thing, bordering psyche and society, culture and nature, conscious and unconscious, self and other. Its intrinsic messy ambiguity confers on it an inherent novelty, creativity, discovery; these give it its excitements, its pleasure, its fearsomeness. Dimen's final statement, "This is sometimes pleasurable, sometimes painful, always unsettling" could not be more true about the process of composing. Writers, redefining themselves in these strategic processes, undertake relationships with the Other that often make them question their sense of self. And, as we will see in this final section, the bordering loss of self with the Other becomes even more pronounced in the situation of the conjoined twins.

The Simultaneous Journals of Conjoined Twins

On March 7, 1962, twins boys were born, conjoined twins commonly know as Siamese twins. The doctor said, "They've got one body and two heads." The father, stunned at the crude remark, felt suddenly divided about the Bible story of Abraham and his child lying on the stone. The mother gasped foreseeing their special tailoring, their summer jobs, their dates at their prom; for a moment, she lost herself. For the first two days the young pair did not move. The parents waited. The doctor told them, "If they live, they will be retarded." Those boys lived and developed as fully capable

individuals relegated to a single body. Their double-headed resistance defied their doctor's prognosis. From the age of six, they kept their diary. Following are mid-life entries:

December 25, 1992

Dear Diary,
Such a happy holiday! The children loved their presents. And their mother was so sweet with them. To think we've been together for 2 years already—her patience with all of us is heroic. I don't know what I'd do if I lost her. He always said he liked her but I can feel something opposed as residual as the beat of his heart against mine—a syn-copation, a complex and distressed syncopation. I've told him time and time again that if he doesn't stop sending that negative message that he will never connect with anyone. I feel as though he is so lonely (yet how can this be?). He rejects all of our invitations to join us in our games, our dinners, our family gatherings and yet he acts as if he's not a part of this. He refuses to see the importance of family, the importance of connections. It is as though he only wants separation, only sees the negative space between us. He didn't even answer me, only smirked when I wished him a happy birthday this morning. I guess he is worried about his age or something. I was too angry with him yesterday when he pontificated about how we shouldn't tell the children that there's a Santa Claus. He spouted some cockamamie stuff about how this would distort the children's sense of self. How this would separate them from a true sense of reality like a lie. I just don't know where he comes up with this stuff; he scares me sometimes.

Dear Diary,
Jingle Bells Santa Smells . . . I hate this holiday and its overblown importance and to think we were born on this day. I imagine our mother's horror when instead of getting some facsimile of the baby Jesus we popped out like some strange Hindu deity—our multiple heads wailing. He is killing me. His entire blind bliss infuriates me. This whole situation with the wife and those kids. They act like I'm not here like the complexity that I am. Like the living breathing monkey wrench that's thrown into their lives. When she fucks him does she not get off on me two (Oops Freudian slip)? We share our genitals. I always cover my head and go somewhere as fallow and barren as possible. Once the pleasure was so great that I whimpered beneath my cover. I accidentally gave over and that was the night the first baby was conceived. I know it. He was so pleased, so joyful. I told him to keep me out of it. As if . . . When he asked me to conceive the second one, I was hysterical. Couldn't stop laughing? But then his pain was so intense, so visceral, I could taste the bilious feelings rising within him. I gave in. I told him one more and that was it. When his stupid wife said that she would love if I was the godfather, I was dumbfounded. Those children came from my seed too and she talks as if I am a surrogate. And he said nothing. His lying silence astounds me. How can we be connected at all? How can he not face all that exists between us? —all that is both evident and implicit? Does he still believe in Santa Claus?

Imagine this scene. A pair of conjoined twins sits at a desk. The twins share a torso, a chair, a pair of legs with an attached yet unusable third leg. They have separate heads (thus brains) and attached to the opposite sides of their torso are two arms (logically, one twin is left-handed, the other right-handed). They freewrite on a given topic. What results from their inquiries, their explorations? How are their thinking processes the same and/or different? What will their perspectives be and how different can they be? Let's complicate this scene. There are two pairs of conjoined twins: the one previously mentioned, and another pair. These are attached at the head; they share only a part of their brain and no part of their bodies. They can never really face each other, always peering in directions slightly aschew from those of their physical partner. Will their perspectives be completely different? How does their shared brain process the simultaneous messages, images, and immediate visceral responses that each of these twins sends it at once?

Conjoined twins, an extension of the hermaphroditic writer, represent the multiple yet separate points of views that constantly exist within the writer, points of view that constitute a contingency to the world, an experience, a time, and a location. These poly-perspectives constantly separate and conjoin, re-shaping the self and voice that emerge from the body. The writer's voice, too, evolves depending upon the locations, limits, contacts, and attachments the body makes (i.e., socially, politically, sexually). The writer's bodily experience links him or her to other developments in his or her life, and other histories of other people, and other readers in other places. Bakhtin (1981) recognizes these links through language:

The tendency to assimilate others' discourse takes on an even deeper and more basic significance in an individual's ideological becoming, in the most fundamental sense. Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth—but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as *authoritative discourse*, and as *internally persuasive discourse*. (p. 342)

This ideological becoming of self, inevitably, involves the processes, markers, and performances of the body with and against authority (as seen, also, with the bearded lady, and the hermaphrodite). Throughout Bakhtin's writing in the *Discourse in the Novel*, he refers to various points of connection and separation from external (authorial) voices. At one point, he states,

[T]here is a struggle constantly being waged to overcome the official line with its tendency to distance itself from the *zone of contact*, a struggle against various kinds and degrees of authority. In this process, discourse gets drawn *into the contact zone*, which results in semantic and emotionally expressive (intonational) changes.... All of this has been studied by psychology, but not from the point of view of its verbal formulation in possible inner

monologues of developing human beings, the monologue that lasts a whole life. [italics added] (p. 345)

This lifelong inner voice relies on the body's interaction and experience with the surrounding world—a contact that is, at once, somatic and visceral.

Adrienne Rich (1979) recognizes the impact of her body, her performative lesbian body, on the connections and experiences (Bakhtin's "dialogized monologue") she makes with the rest of the world, in this specific case, the world of women:

Even before I wholly knew I was a lesbian, it was the lesbian in me who pursued that elusive configuration. And I believe it is the lesbian in every woman who is compelled by female energy, who gravitates toward strong women, who seeks a literature that will express that energy and strength. It is the lesbian in us who drives us to feel imaginatively, render in language, grasp, the full connection between woman and woman. It is the lesbian in us who is creative, for the dutiful daughter of the fathers in us is only a hack. (pp. 200-201)

She trusts this attachment to women so thoroughly, so faithfully that she uses the lesbian body as a synecdochic description of women's attraction to womanly worlds. The lesbian, in this metaphor, is not necessarily homosexual, but she is pro-actively homosocial, homopolitical, and homoaesthetic. Sex does not exhaustively inhabit her desire, but she burns with desire for other women, inseparably attached to them. But Rich's synecdoche ends up only partially true because some of her audience detach and separate themselves from her metaphorical desire. Her audience's individual interpretations, and their lack of shared "lesbian" experience, cause this elision. Rich (1989) concedes:

I believe that I failed in preparing my remarks, to allow for the intense charge of the word *lesbian*, and for all its deliquescences of meaning, ranging from "man-hater" and "pervert" to the concepts I was trying to invoke, of the self-chosen woman, the forbidden "primary intensity" between women, and also the woman who refuses to obey, who has said "no" to the fathers. I probably oversimplified the issue, given limits of time, and therefore obscured it. This experience made me more conscious than ever before of the degree to which, even for lesbians, the word *lesbian* has many resonances. (p. 202)

Rich realized that her words, and their interpellative power, had unexpected effects on women whom she did not want to alienate; yet, nevertheless, she did, in her overarching definition of "lesbian." Some accept her term; others reject it. Her seemingly "united" audience exposes its "multi-headedness." Like the conjoined twins, Rich and her audience/her readers conjoin and separate at various locations that each affect their abilities to understand each other, thus

exemplifying Bakhtin's contact zones between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. These contact zones are the bodily experiences that each respective listener/reader shares or does not share with Rich.

To bridge this disparity with her audience, Rich's solitary performance as writer must include newly conjoined voices—perhaps even adversarial voices—that will negotiate, not compromise, her communication to those with whom she obviously feels compelled to attach. Rich (1989) confirms this desire when she states:

The lesbian/feminist lives in a complex, demanding realm of linguistic and relational distinctions. One of the tasks ahead of us is to begin trying to define those distinctions (and the overlap of female experience that is synchrononymous with them) For us, the process of naming and defining is not an intellectual game, but a grasping of our experience and a key to action. (p. 202)

She recognizes that the act of composing (i.e., naming, defining) can assist in building communities, bridging gaps and, likewise, has the potential to negotiate all perspectives. Rich (1993) writes to her male friend, with whom she shares experiences of sexual and ethnic differences: "And, in the act of writing, to feel our own 'questions' meeting the world's 'questions,' to recognize how we are [attached] in the world and the world is [attached] in us" (p. 26). The unifying attachment, however ambiguous it may be, resumes at the site of the writing body.

Writing Body/Bodily Writing—A Concluding (Com)Position

I have explored the ways extremely anomalous bodies can be compared to and inform the writing body. Even though I don't have two heads from which to think, I have a multitude of perspectives and voices that separate and conjoin with each linguistic and contextual interaction. Even though I don't have a body that shares both male and female genitals, I am marked by sex, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation which, separately and in combination, signify certain meanings in my culture. Even though my body maintains standard systems of humors and hormones regulating my appearance, I am aware how my body, nevertheless, lies under public scrutiny. The sideshow dwells within me; the bearded, bigenitalled, two-headed Other resides in every utterance I compose and, eventually, this undeniably desirable and necessary freak show emerges upon my body in gesture, performance, view, and voice.

Although the positions of these characters are imagined, their circumstances effectively illustrate the power relationships, the negotiated perspectives, and the external and internal forces that the writerly body must confront and process. I realize that by fictionalizing, and assuming certain ideas about these various characters, I risk re-objectifying their positions. In my privileged positions, I can imagine that some readers might see this as a hegemonic act of appropriation, which undermines my intent; however, if, in the end, I infringe upon their subjective spaces, it is because I hope to create an intersubjective awareness that reveals new interpellations of our common and/or parallel experiences. As woman

or man, as black, brown, yellow, red, white, as gay or straight, as native, immigrant, or exile, as physically abled or disabled, the individual moves through a system of socially constructed experiences inflected through the body and its performances. In turn, when an individual writes, all of which has transpired through that body is disclosed in its (com)position. Recognizing this link between composing and the body helps us more closely reevaluate and re-value the shared subjectivities between ourselves and others. ☺

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Goddess Spirituality and Academic Knowledge-Making

Hildy Miller

*I was reading about rationalism
the kind of thing we do up north
in early winter, where the sun
leaves work for the day at 4:15*

*Maybe the world is intelligible
to the rational mind:
and maybe we light the lamps at dusk
for nothing. . . .*

Then I heard wings overhead. . . .

Jane Kenyon

In this poem Jane Kenyon captures a moment in which she suddenly apprehends mysterious creatures in flight—ironically—just after she has assured herself that reality must be both rationally constructed and rationally discernible. The imagery of dusk, when the sun no longer illuminates the world clearly, suggests those moments when one privately questions accepted explanations or considers the information and experiences that contradict most culturally sanctioned kinds of knowledge. Like Kenyon, many of us find ourselves questioning the limitations of rationalist views of knowledge sanctioned by the academy—a perspective most feminists would characterize as masculine. We sense that some sort of counterbalance is needed. Yet, Beth Daniell (1994) points out, “As scholars and teachers in America, we have been carefully trained not only to separate religion from civic life but also to dismiss the spiritual” (p. 239). Indeed, academic knowledge-making typically delimits its domain by assigning nonrational kinds of learning to nonacademic contexts.

Thus, spiritual belief is relegated to the province of churches, temples, and mosques. It is excluded because it is seen not simply as another way of knowing,

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but instead as a way of not-knowing, and so as altogether opposed to the kind of reason that we as academics should espouse. The mysteries of dusk must remain removed from the bright light of reason. To be sure, there are obvious dangers in attempting to admit spirituality to the academy if it serves to restrict or exclude any points of view. But by operating only within a rationalist tradition, we also limit what counts as knowledge, how we can go about making meaning, and who qualify as legitimate meaning-makers. As a result, many of us are left, like Kenyon, feeling intellectually fragmented when kept within such narrow straits.

Certainly, for intellectual growth to occur, we must be free to draw on a full range of knowledge, including that of spiritual belief, no longer completely divorced from the enterprise of academic research and teaching. In particular, I want to propose that spiritual belief can be an alternative way of making meaning that can enhance as well as challenge our traditional notion of academic knowledge making. And I want to illustrate this point by showing how I integrate spiritual ways of knowing into the reading and writing that students do in my literature and composition classes from the perspective of goddess-centered spirituality.

My own connection to this tradition grew out of my longstanding interest in feminism. Early in the 1970s, I participated in consciousness-raising groups in which circles of women gathered privately to try to interpret personal experience through the social lens of gender. As I would discover later, such circles worked well not only for social issues but for spiritual ones. Out of these shared experiences, women generated a coherent and increasingly complex feminist theory that transformed masculine approaches and assumptions in many sociopolitical areas. Always, I read and watched these transformations with interest. By the late 1970s, the women's movement had begun to change spirituality too when it began to reclaim lost feminine spiritual traditions. It was during this time that a group of women gathered in Boston for a first spirituality conference (Christ, 1987). My own exposure to this development began when I read a book by Merlin Stone (1976) called *When God Was a Woman*—a watershed study, the first to document ancient and widespread matrifocal spiritual traditions. It was, in fact, also the first time I had ever felt the negative impact of the way in which our culture typically anthropomorphizes a supreme being as masculine.

And I was thunderstruck. As I read about ancient goddesses, I found myself first struggling even to imagine a god-figure with feminine qualities, then after only partly envisioning this phenomenon, feeling overwhelmed with the significance of its implications. A woman knowledgeable, powerful, respected, and honored? For the first time spirituality reflected back a face I recognized. Immediately I sent copies of the book to my mother, sister, and women friends so that they could also share the wonder of this novel concept. Whatever interests in spirituality the book had awakened were set aside, however, until I returned in the 1980s to graduate school, where I studied rhetoric and composition. There in the academy I found feminist theory transforming standard approaches to teaching and research. In my own research on cognition and writing, I gradually rejected narrow rationalist paradigms of thought processes. I came to see these mechanistic models as byproducts of masculinist epistemological assumptions on which the dominant academic notion of cognition is based. Other scholars

too were arriving at similar conclusions and offering similar critiques (Grimshaw, 1986; Lloyd, 1984; Longino, 1989). In contrast to these paradigms, nonrationalist forms of cognition posited as embodied, contextualized, personal, and figurative—were ways of knowing largely absent from the academy.

My interest in investigating this kind of cognition led me again to small groups of women who were working experientially with goddess spirituality, much as they had with sociopolitical issues in the past. This time, however, circles of women were creating rituals to celebrate the seasons, to mark rites of personal passage such as marriage, divorce, and childbirth, or simply to develop an idea, such as sharing the names and memories of those women who most profoundly influenced them. Goddess ritual is grounded experientially by use of incense, candles, singing, drumming, and dancing, thereby enacting a body-based knowing. It is rich with image, metaphor, and symbol. Goddesses represent the creative potential of all women; seasons correspond to internal states such as renewal and rebirth or rest and hibernation; the traditional four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—stand for life itself. For an academic steeped in rationalism, ritual was to me a fascinating way of making meaning that was uniquely collaborative, experiential, and metaphorical. As a kind of spirituality, it held special meaning because it centered on concerns of women using positive images of women. It was empowering to have the creation of ritual in our own hands—ritual appealingly imaginative and spontaneous.

As always with women's studies, experience and theory were intertwined. Groups working to develop goddess-based ritual were complemented by research on women's spirituality across many religions, including prepatriarchal goddess traditions. The political had encompassed the spiritual, much to the dismay of a good many feminists. Dubious American feminists, always practical and results-oriented, were initially aghast at this development. Gloria Steinem's (1984) immediate response: "After all, how can mythological goddesses from a patriarchal past help us to analyze our current realities or reach an egalitarian future?" (p. ix). Yet by the mid 1980s, thanks in part to the popularity of Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* (1982), in which her heroine's personal development hinged on reconceiving the gender of god, feminine spirituality was starting to be regarded as yet another field to theorize and another aspect of women's personal experience to validate. Theory, then, had to catch up with women's experience, for as Carol P. Christ (1987) maintains, "The Goddess symbol has emerged spontaneously in the dreams, fantasies, and thoughts of many women in the past several years" (p. 120). My own research developed in this area, as did practical applications that I found in my composition and literature classrooms. It made me question what counts as knowledge, how we make knowledge, and whom we consider legitimate meaning-makers.

Goddess Spirituality as a Complement to Rationalism

What actually counts as knowledge-making in the academy? Peter Elbow (1986) responds: "We are in the habit—in academic culture anyway—of assuming that thinking is not thinking unless it is wholly logical or critically aware of itself at every stop" (p. 57). The way of knowing suggested by goddess spiritual-

ity exemplifies the sort of cognitive alternative that many feminist scholars have proposed in their critiques of Western rationalism, the system of knowledge-making that undergirds academic research. Rationalist cognition might be said to represent our cultural preference for impersonal disembodied reason (Johnson, 1987; Lloyd, 1984). Mark Johnson explains: "The view of the objective nature of meaning and rationality has been held for centuries by philosophers in the Western tradition, and, in the last several decades, it has come to define *the* dominant research program in a number of related disciplines" (p. xi). Introduced by Aristotle as the *modus operandi* for rhetoric and philosophy and later adapted by Descartes for scientific inquiry, this paradigm for knowledge-making has come to be regarded as synonymous with reason itself. Procedurally, it is based on the belief that we can, metaphorically speaking, hold up a mirror to nature and see reality in it from a God's eye or objective view. The results of such inquiry, a piece of objective truth, must then be articulated through literal, orderly, and methodical discourse. However, such an approach to knowledge-making and its verbal expression is not the only way to reason. As Johnson, G. Lloyd, and other feminist scholars have pointed out, there are other valid ways to make meaning. In particular, there are contextual, personal, and embodied approaches often associated with women, though, of course, not found exclusively only within this group. Rather than holding up a mirror to nature from a position of detached observation, researchers in these approaches look into a mirror to see interactively both themselves and the one reality out of many that they are attempting to describe.

As a vehicle for reconceiving knowledge-making, goddess spirituality goes about making meaning by using symbol rather than theory. It is not just an alternative logos, but instead conveys knowledge through metaphor, as do other ways of knowing associated with the holy and sacred (Dooley, 1995; Wilshire, 1989). Images of goddesses, the seasons, the elements of earth, air, fire, and water, the earth and moon all function as central metaphors of this symbol system. As external symbols, they mirror internal processes and are used both externally in ritual or internally as objects of contemplation. So, for example, a woman might contemplate the image of the goddess Minerva, who stands metaphorically for the feminine expression of scholarly intelligence. Functioning as a kind of role model, the goddess might emanate such qualities as thoughtfulness, dignity, and depth and might possess an authoritative voice that speaks in measured tones. Her image presumably triggers deep understandings of these qualities, which well up from the unconscious. That is, she is understood not in the detached, rationalist fashion of assimilating facts from outside oneself, but in the more personal embodied way in which these latent qualities seem to be called up from within.

By apprehending the unconscious facet of feminine experience that she represents, individuals can then begin to incorporate these qualities into their conscious ways of being in the world. Such images provide powerful feminine precursors for knowing and speaking not only individually but collectively throughout the culture: Minerva, the academic woman of intelligence; Aphrodite with her appreciation of art, beauty, and the senses; Artemis, adventurous and athletic; and the Triple Goddess—maiden, mother, and crone— representing the

life stages of women. Clifford Geertz (cited in Christ, 1982) has said myth influences us both individually and culturally at unconscious levels (p. 72). And we especially need figures suggesting female presence and power. Christ (1987) explains: "The simplest and most basic meaning of the symbol of the Goddess is the acknowledgment of the legitimacy of female power as a beneficent and independent power" (p. 121). Goddess figures can legitimize that power by honoring not only familiar expressions of the feminine such as mothering, but more uncommon ones such as scholarly thought. C. Jan Swearingen and D. Mowery (1994) observe, "[The Goddess] legitimates woman-as-subject in a phallocracy where the only legitimate subjects have been male" (p. 221).

People who are attracted to goddess spirituality often seem to be reacting to the lack of sacred feminine figures and the limits imposed by rationalist approaches to knowledge-making. They are searching for a way to reclaim the "feminine voice," that voice that honors contextual, personal, and embodied ways of knowing. For many women, the process through which they identify with goddesses is empowering. One woman remarked: "I find inspiration in the feminine spirituality movement because the Goddess is a deity with whom I can identify. Her body and mine are one; her power and mine are one" (Murdock, 1990, p. 26). Such identification is particularly useful for many women who feel disempowered and alienated by cultural images of god-figures as male. Many have said, no matter what they know or do, somehow they feel *otherized*, with their achievements invalidated because their self-image is so different from the male images of gods that they have previously internalized. They react much as I did first contemplating a feminine god, in feeling astonishment at the resulting sense of empowerment and validation. Goddess figures function, then, not as external entities, but through the identification process, as an inner resource, a symbolic extension of self. As a result, women come to see themselves and their abilities positively. As Ntozake Shange (1975/1991) puts it: "i found God in myself & i loved her/ i loved her fiercely" (p. 252). For men, the discovery of goddess figures often activates a latent view of feminine self and knowledge, one they may yearn for, but for which they have seen few examples and seldom received any cultural reinforcement.

In embracing goddess spirituality, people embark on what M. Murdock (1990) has called an archetypal "descent to the Goddess" (p. 87). The notion of metaphorical *descent* is important here, since in many spiritual traditions, one transcends involvement in worldly or everyday concerns by *ascending*. However, in goddess spirituality, one is said to *descend* by grounding oneself in the body and emotions—thus learning to value those sites of knowledge-making by seeing divinity as located there. Such awareness begins to redress limited rationalist notions of what counts as knowledge. As Murdock (1990) says: "We are blind to the rigid, driven, dominating masculine that controls our psyche. Each time we deny our feelings, body, dreams, and intuition we serve this inner tyrant" (p. 158). Participating in ritual—that most ancient rhetorical expression of singing, dancing, chanting, and drumming—becomes a means of recovering this "body- knowledge." Recent cross-cultural studies have identified numerous links between women, speech, and knowledge. For instance, the Indian hymn text, *The Rigveda*, one of four books of Hindu philosophy dating from 1300 B.C.E., calls

the “creative, fecundating power of speech, ‘matarah,’ or ‘mothra’” (Debrida, 1982, p. 138). Greek mythology also recognizes the voice of the Muse, herself a goddess, along with a pantheon of vibrant feminine figures (p. 139). Other knowledgeable feminine precursors may be found in ancient seers, poets, and musicians. In Homeric hymns, a goddess was typically invited into the home to offer a blessing (Bolen, 1984, p. 32). Much as goddesses were once invoked into homes, part of the enterprise of the feminist classroom is to bring the voices of women into the class “in order to explore women’s relationship to language and to make students aware of the rich and varied tradition of female articulation” (Daumer & Runzo, 1987, p. 47). By their presence, these images seem to reinforce the point that women too are qualified to make meaning.

Though we are increasingly aware of the negative impact on our students of having so few secular female models for speaking and writing, we may not have recognized the lack of sacred models. If being presented with images of women as knowledge-makers does empower women, such an oversight is surely problematic. After all, as numerous studies have shown, the silent woman is still a pervasive cultural archetype (Lakoff, 1975; Olsen, 1978; Spender, 1980). Woman as statue, doll, or mannequin—from the image of the Angel of the House to that of Pat Nixon—personifies the suppression of feminine knowledge. Other figures of the vocal but evil woman—the Medusa, Medea, Gorgons, and Furies of Greek mythology—suggest our fear of speaking and knowing women (Debrida, 1982, p. 142). More recently, the image of Anita Hill still resonates powerfully in the public consciousness both for remaining silent and for eventually speaking out. Certainly, within our classrooms, the pattern of silent women has been replicated in study after study (Annas, 1987; Kramarae & Treichler, 1990). Women still speak far less than men do there, yet when they do speak, they are often unheard or misunderstood. So, too, a feminine voice in male students is presumably silenced, for in the typical academic classroom of both male and female teachers, it is only the voice that speaks from a rationalist knowledge-base that is likely to be heard.

In studies of feminist theory, cognition, and cognitive development, however, we still are ambivalent about the need for such alternatives to rationalism. On the one hand, in much of the theory on women and cognition, it is assumed that women, unlike men, automatically retain and are free to express feminine ways of knowing (Chodorow, 1978; Cixous & Clement, 1975/1986; Irigaray, 1985; Ruddick, 1980). Theorizing from a Freudian perspective, some scholars suggest that women never separate psychologically from the mother and all the qualities that that feminine figure represents. If women, then, always closely identify with the feminine, they are not repressed and can write and speak from the body without struggling to recover this ability. In contrast, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1987) in their landmark study, show many women virtually silenced by rationalist values. Women struggle to emerge from voicelessness by first grounding themselves in a subjective, body-based way of knowing. Much like a descent to the Goddess, they learn to attend to and value their own intuitions. They play a “believing game” rather than a “doubting game” by listening receptively to their own ideas rather than vigorously questioning them (Elbow, 1986). Only after this immersion in feminine self can they cultivate more

conventionally masculinist—disembodied and objective—ways of knowing. In most studies of rationalist knowledge-making in males, such alternative conceptions of knowledge never arise as an issue (Kohlberg, 1981; Perry, 1970).

My own sense is that most women and men find themselves, to some extent, assimilating the values of our rationalist and masculinist academic culture. Certainly, in my own case, I needed the experience of goddess spirituality to break out of the rationalist paradigm I had internalized. D. Stein (1991) observes: "Within the safety and protected space of the cast circle, women [and men] create their idea of what the world would be like to live in under matriarchal/Goddess women's values" (p. 2). With its rich symbolism, it functions for me not just as a way to rethink our notion of academic knowledge-making, but rather to "re-vision" it (Christ, 1987, p. 106). Of course, in drawing parallels between the kinds of knowledge-making and knowledge-makers found in goddess spirituality and secular feminist critiques of rationalism, I do not want to imply that it is the only way to re-envision academic knowledge-making. Certainly, many other spiritual traditions also provide similar correctives. However, from a feminist standpoint, this woman-centered approach has been particularly useful in balancing the masculinist epistemology of the academy with a more feminist one emphasizing connections to self and others (George, 1994). In what follows I detail some of the ways that I apply these spiritual insights in my teaching.

Spiritual Knowledge-Making in the English Classroom

In women's literature courses, I have begun including selections that focus on spirituality as an issue in women's lives. I am persuaded that these stories are an important way of bringing women's voices on this topic into the classroom. As Christ and Charlene Spretnak (1982) say: "The expression of women's spiritual quest is integrally related to the telling of women's stories. If women's stories are not told, the depth of women's souls will not be known" (p. 327). So I have begun treating spirituality as a valid part of the experience of women, and I have found not only a wealth of selections to choose from, but student interest and receptivity. Typically, I pick several examples to comprise a unit on spirituality. Some, like Marion Zimmer Bradley's novels *The Mists of Avalon* (1983) and *The Firebrand* (1987) are fictionalized accounts of prepatriarchal goddess traditions. The former, a woman's perspective on the Arthurian legend, presents Celtic goddesses and beliefs; the latter, a woman's view of the fall of Troy covers Greek goddess traditions. These books provide examples of sacred role models—goddesses as women who speak and know. However, I do not just confine the readings to goddess spirituality. Instead, I include a variety of pieces focusing on general spiritual issues for women. Among the best known novels are *The Awakening* (1899/1981) by Kate Chopin, *Surfacing* (1972) by Margaret Atwood, *The Four-Gated City* (1969) by Doris Lessing, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937/1978) by Zora Neale Hurston, and *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989) and *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker. Though not about goddess spirituality in particular, these novels all show women characters on quests that follow a pattern similar to a descent to the goddess. That is to say, characters recover a feminine voice by immersing themselves in the feminine and forming a new identity.

So, for example, I might focus on a passage in Walker's *The Color Purple* in which the central characters Celie and Shug discuss the nature of a supreme being:

Here's the thing, say Shug. The thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for. Trouble do it for most folks, I think. Sorrow, lord. Feeling like shit.

It? I ast.

Yeah, It. God ain't a he or a she, but a It. . . .

She say, My first step from the old white man was trees. Then air. Then birds. Then other people. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed. And I laughed and cried and I run all around the house. I knew just what it was. In fact, when it happen, you can't miss it. It sort of like you know what, she say, grinning and rubbing high up on my thigh. (pp. 177–178)

The casual unassuming tone of their exchange belies the profundity of the spiritual questions at stake. Can we create our own god or goddess? Does it matter what gender we assign or whether we envision any gender at all? How do we come to “know” this entity—through our minds, our emotions, our bodies? For Celie and Shug, re-envisioning what the culture has taught them is pivotal to their personal development. Only after reconceiving god as less oppositional, that is, less the old white man, and more complementary, as a presence in nature and sexual pleasure, can they incorporate spirituality in their lives. The accessible god they create—immanent in the sky, the rich color of flowers, and the sensations of their own bodies—therefore becomes empowering to them.

In coming to understand the meaning of these issues for the characters in the story, I ask the class to play with these notions in their writing journals and class discussions.¹ Have they ever connected god with gender, and does doing so matter in their own lives? Student reflections on this idea typically express a range of views. Some of them declare that they have always thought of god as genderless, and so question the purpose of anthropomorphizing in this way. Yet, ironically, we inevitably notice that even as we try to entertain the idea of a genderless god, somehow in discussion we all keep referring to *It* as *Him*. A few students find the entire idea quite threatening: “As far as considering God as genderless I can't. This causes my questioning beliefs and spirituality all together [sic].” Others say that, like Shug and Celie, they have always envisioned god as

¹All information from students was gathered from questionnaires, journals, and papers coming out of two courses in women's literature and advanced expository writing. They have given me permission to cite their work anonymously.

a mature white man. Since this is the figure most familiar to them, they are comfortable with a male representation. In contrast, many students find the notion of a female representation empowering. As one woman said: "Women, I think, need to visualize the Higher Power in whatever form they can identify with. . . ." Recently during one of these discussions, an African American woman expressed her own frustration with what she saw as the complete Europeanization of her spiritual tradition, especially the dominant image of the old white man. Celie's experience clearly gave her a voice with which to speak. The variety of responses to these questions is precisely what I am seeking to elicit. Students do not need to agree with me—or Celie and Shug. Rather, I am asking them to engage themselves in spiritually significant issues.

In Alice Ostriker's poem "Everywoman Her Own Theology" (1986/1991), a woman is also shown creating her own multiple vision of a supreme being:

My proposals, or should I say requirements,
 Include at least one image of a god,
 Virile, beard optional, one of a goddess,
 Nubile, breast size approximating mine,
 One divine baby, one lion, lamb,
 All nude as figs, all dancing wildly,
 All shining. . . . (pp. 281–282)

She enacts her own ritual to invoke this pagan vision. Like Martin Luther nailing his theses to the cathedral door, she tacks her descriptions of a deity both kind and peaceful to a bulletin board in her kitchen. By such means, she hopes, somewhat audaciously, to invoke this being and any of its associates who care to join her. Beneath the humorous tone and irreverence of the ritual, some serious spiritual issues are raised. What images of divinity might women create? In a culture in which men still officiate at most spiritual rituals, should women develop their own rites? What would these alternatives look like?

In writing and class discussion we consider these issues by reading the poem through our own spiritual experiences. Both male and female students—but especially women—find the narrator's actions, humor, and sheer temerity inspiring. The outrageousness of this role model empowers them. Typical of student comments: "That's me! I liked this poem because there aren't many other choices for women. I worship in my own way." Often students, having become disillusioned with traditional sites of spiritual observance, are moved that her home was such a special holy place. Invariably, we always talk about a sense of deep contentment many of us feel in our homes or other places of private retreat. So many poems were located domestically, that we labeled these experiences *kitchen spirituality*. In a journal entry, one student described her special sanctuary:

I was able to relate to this poem a great deal. As a child, I designated a certain area of our yard as a place to worship God. The area overlooked a field and in the distance were mountains. I found this particular spot so beautiful that I was sure that I could better get in touch with God (who created beautiful things).and that God could

better hear my prayers. So, in that respect, I was sort of doing the same thing as Ostriker does in her kitchen.

Still other students are alienated by the way the character does not align herself with a more traditional religion. Without this mooring, one woman saw the character as lost and confused: "She doesn't know what is right and how to distinguish her beliefs." As with the Walker piece, my objective is not for the class to agree with Ostriker. Instead, I hope that by hearing this feminine voice and contemplating this spiritual issue in their own lives, students become more aware of their own voices on this subject.

In composition courses, as with literature courses, I encourage writing from both rationalist and spiritual bases of knowledge. Many of my assignments call for traditional academic writing grounded in rationalist assumptions. After all, students expect to hone their abilities here, and my intent is not to reject this knowledge base but simply to admit other kinds of knowledge. Through such writing, students appear to hold a mirror up to nature by analyzing ideas from a stance of apparent detachment with their personal voices masked. Assignments that demand a kind of pseudo-objectivity are common in college writing. From a standpoint of goddess spirituality, though, this traditional approach asks writers to work from a position of estrangement

because its essence is that we do not see ourselves as part of the world. We are strangers to nature, to other human beings, to parts of ourselves. We see the world as made up of separate, isolated, nonliving parts that have no inherent value . . . (Starhawk, 1988, p. 15)

So in contrast to this kind of writing, I also try to include some assignments which, like a descent to the goddess, ask students instead to ground their knowledge in self—in their bodies, emotions, and experiences. Both male and female students seem to enjoy these assignments, though they are sometimes unsure if what strikes them as such a creative approach is really *bona fide* academic writing—writing from a stance of immanence rather than one of detachment, "the awareness of the world and everything in it [is] alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting, and infused with moving energies: a living being, a weaving dance" (Starhawk, 1988, p. 9). Students must see "in the mirror" both themselves and the part of reality they are trying to describe.

Although not the kind of overt discussion of goddess spirituality included in literature classes, the kind of knowledge-making I integrate into composition classes is actually patterned after that of ancient feminine oracles who spoke ritually through their bodies at the times of "wise blood" in which visions fluctuated and intensified with their menstrual cycles (Grahm, 1993; Wilshire, 1989). Yet, it also has its rhetorical counterpart in the Greek magical tradition. Rhetors made meaning by speaking magically, from the body, when the gods and goddesses they invoked induced a state of "divinely inspired enchantment" (de Romilly, 1975; Miller, 1994). Elbow (1981) explains:

Words were once connected in a more primary way with experience or things. . . . Logic had to be gradually developed and honed out of language. It took a ceaseless overusing of words—words rubbing and rubbing against each other till they gradually get rounded and smoothed and unhooked from things and experience. (pp. 359–360)

In this tradition, immanence rather than detachment was the preferred rhetorical stance.

Over the years I have developed writing assignments that encourage this kind of meaning-making. For example, one that I have often used asks students to recall a meaningful story from their childhood:

Stories that we read or see help us shape our identities and make sense of our world. Think back to a favorite childhood story and consider it from your view as a child, your view as an adult, and from the standpoint of issues raised by some of the theorists we have read. What did the story mean to you as a child? How does it affect you today? Combine all the perspectives to explain your story. Consider the images and symbols, and what it enabled you to imagine as a child that you might not have otherwise.²

Through this process of recalling a story that has resonated in their lives, I am hoping that students can “re-hook” words and experience, as Elbow suggests. In order to recover the memory of its initial impact, I suggest they figure out a ritual that will enable them not just to recall the story but to relive it. They must re-experience not words so much as the images evoked. If the story has truly reverberated for them, they should discover some long forgotten origins of current attitudes and beliefs.

This assignment is one that students, both male and female, generally appreciate. As one said, “I think knowing yourself well helps you to get to the feelings you use in writing.” Another commented, “It enabled me to rethink the issues more thoroughly.” The experience of a student whom I will call Michael typifies the response. He chose to reflect on what the film *Easy Rider* meant to him in high school. The film, often considered the quintessential ’60s story, follows the odyssey of two rebellious characters on a road trip. In an effort to recapture the story’s impact, he actually scoured his parents’ attic for mementos from high school. As part of his ritual, he recreated the initial viewing by pinning up his old posters, wearing his old clothes, and watching the film again alone. It was during this viewing that one character’s line, “You do your own thing in your own time,” struck him, as he said, “like a thunderbolt.” For the teenager he had been, it had awakened wild hopes for a life free of duty and

²I further develop this basic assignment by using a composition text by Marjorie Ford and Jon Ford entitled *Dreams and Inward Journeys* (1994). This anthology is unique in that it encourages ways of knowing using image, metaphor, and symbol.

achievement—a life in which he no longer had “to carry around the weight of an All-American boy persona.” From his adult perspective, however, the film seemed emblematic of his family’s values at that time: “My parents grew up and participated in the struggle for freedom and I grew up in the fallout. Nobody was sure of anything anymore, especially what freedom was.” Though the film evoked a deep sense of longing for the sort of free life his parents encouraged, he reaffirmed his own inclinations by concluding, “Utopia is nice to believe in but reality is more important.” Much as ancient feminine oracles spoke from the multiple viewpoint of ever changing blood knowledge, he had to consider how his meaning-making had changed over time, how his identity had changed, and how meaning and identity, intertwined with the past, still formed powerful undercurrents in the present. The ritual he devised for himself appeared to help him access this fluid kind of inner knowledge.

For the most part, my efforts have been successful at integrating the ways of knowing that I associate with goddess spirituality. I have made headway in re-envisioning academic knowledge-making by including issues, models, and methods that can help both my students and me to recover the feminine voice. In these ways, spiritual belief can surely enhance rather than threaten our traditional ways of making meaning. As I continue teaching as much in the tradition of the Egyptian goddess Hathor’s temple as that of Plato’s academy, I expect to keep discovering ways to bring balance to academic learning. ☺

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Plato, Gorgias, and Trickster: Seeking Rhetoric's Muse

Keith Rhodes

*We should never forget that in any psychological discussion
we are not saying something about the psyche,
but that the psyche is always speaking about itself.*

C. G. Jung

Introduction: Trickster's Place in Archetypal Rhetoric

Jung's vision of a "collective unconscious," where metaphorical "archetypes" perform their shadowy dramas on a figurative sub-stage of consciousness, has a natural application to the history of ideas. These deep forces, operating similarly in human minds across space, time, and even cultures, can account interestingly well for the persistence of certain modes of human thought—as literary critics like Northrop Frye have amply demonstrated. Eventually, I hope to argue that the Trickster archetype, one of Jung's most puzzling figures, bears a special, even integral relationship to the theory and practice of rhetoric. Indeed, as part of this argument I mean to claim that, for rhetoric, archetypal analysis is far from being just another theoretical lens. Rhetoric, as a consequence of its integral relationship with the Trickster archetype, might be seen as itself an essentially archetypal practice—one that is most centrally about playing out a specific role in our collective psychological drama. Whatever may be the wider range of possible approaches to composition theory and practice, to take a rhetorical attitude toward writing may be nothing more or less than to invoke a Trickster muse. Certainly, that may claim too much; but let us examine the evidence at length, and then come back to this notion.

First, we must turn our attention to the Trickster itself. Originally, the Trickster archetype received scant direct attention from Jung himself. This can seem

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strange, since Trickster is a prominent character in one of Jung's most central psychic constellations. That is, Trickster is to the Shadow as Hero is to the Ego. Just as Hero is the collective figure manifested in the individual Ego, Trickster is the collective figure manifested in the individual Shadow (Jacobi, 1973, pp. 109–115; Jung, 1980, p. 262). One reason Trickster can escape attention, of course, is that it collects together material that the contemporary psyche tries to put behind it. Trickster is the dark cloud made of everything bestial and unconscious that literate, Heroic humanity struggles to leave behind. Historical and social forces have generated the Self as a more humane and fully differentiated state of psychic being. The more primal material that collects into Trickster thus retreats from view as the more Self-ish Hero rises to become the most prominently manifested collective archetype. There is danger, though, in pretending that the struggle can ever truly end. If the relatively Heroic project of Jungian archetypal theorizing itself does not also contain Trickster's continuing influence within the psyche, that project will suffer the usual, dire fate of overly proud Heroes who ignore the deeper gods.

Hence, it would be quite literally a tragedy if those who are interested in the project of exploring connections between archetypal theories and rhetoric should ignore Hero's older, quieter partner. Indeed, there may be a particular value in discussing Trickster within the context of applying archetypes to rhetoric and writing. Trickster sets useful problems before the psyche and then offers arcane resources by which the psyche may resolve these riddles, helping the Heroic ego along the path toward fuller psychic integration. It may be that, just so, rhetorical theorists inform largely Heroic writing teachers, enabling teachers in turn to empower largely Heroic writers; and so we also should expect to find Trickster prominently involved in the transaction between rhetoricians and those who learn from them.

If I come not to bury Trickster, though, neither do I come, exactly, to praise such a figure. It would be a grossly mistaken use of Jungian theory to attempt to "liberate" the Shadow or the Trickster, to dream of some impossible unification of conscious and unconscious processes. Trickster has a dangerous siren call, promising to reveal to us the true life of the body, the legacy of evolutionary forces brought to bear upon a primate that was once not yet verbal. But there is no real hope of going back across the Rubicon of language to recover the roots of an "essential" embodied reality. Nor is there any real hope, postmodernism notwithstanding, of freeing the intellect from the body and its evolutionary inheritance, creating a new Empire of mind. Trickster is impossible to ignore, then, but it is also beyond hope of redemption. To play on my previous cultural references, we are "Caesarean," irremediably Heroic Selves, torn from the womb of nature by human artifice. As such, we neither can nor should fully inhabit the role Trickster offers.

Thus, to align rhetoricians with Trickster, as I will seek to do, is not immediately to call for a higher valuation of Trickster. Trickster's value lies not so much in what it is in itself as in what it does for Hero. Trickster brings to consciousness what Hero, intent on its quest, intentionally forgets: that ultimately the conscious ego is not a thing apart from the psychic vastness it seeks to control. Like a Shakespearean fool, Trickster has a maddening usefulness for those

who will listen. Trickster deflates hubris and reveals the complicity of Heroic individual action in larger unconscious and transpersonal dramas. Within the vast historical movement toward fully conscious human literacy, rhetoric has played the Fool, being maddeningly useful relative to the more straightforward Heroic quest of philosophers and other rationalists.

These days, though, rhetoricians (and others whose works have been drawn into the rhetorical canon) may remain maddening, but their usefulness has fallen into question. As Stephen North (1987) explains, teaching practitioners are largely out of touch with the work of rhetorical theorists—and sometimes defiantly so. Buried in often slavish conditions, many composition teachers who would value theoretical discussions are simply unable to take the time to participate in them. Indeed, even where rhetorical theorists' views are used, it seems often to be a matter of the brute coercion of relatively powerless graduate assistants and adjunct instructors by academically empowered theorists who control composition curriculum and other institutional processes. Further, reviewing scholarship in the field of modern rhetoric, it becomes quite clear that a rationalist sort of Heroism is at work in the over-all paradigm of its production. If there are significant numbers of rhetoricians who are practicing the Tricksterish arts of being witty, troublesome, maddening, or seemingly foolish in service of profundity, most are not being published regularly. Instead, theoretical scholarship is almost unrelentingly earnest and deferential to authorities, even when extolling the virtues of "anti-foundationalist" theories. Scholarly camps within rhetoric seem to have become monarchies without Fools—a tragedy in the making if seen with an archetypal eye.

Rhetoric seems in dire need of applying Trickster's healing attention to its own processes, then; and as the discipline has intuited, one source of possible healing lies in examining its own history. Of particular interest has been the history of rhetoric in classical times, when rhetoric shifted its nature quickly and permanently. Once simply the practice of effective utterance, rhetoric became, especially in the hands of Aristotle, the practice of *shaping* utterance—a more completely conscious practice. This development in the history of rhetoric is clearly analogous to the generation of ego out of a previously undifferentiated psyche in the creation of self-consciousness. The generation of ego in turn converts Trickster into an archetype, a personal psychic replacement for the tribal shamans who served Trickster's role in earlier stages of more rudimentary psychic integration (Jung, 1980, pp. 466–472). Thus, there may be synchronicity at work in the history of rhetoric, such that an examination of rhetoric's emergence as a conscious practice might illustrate Trickster's dialectical value to rhetoric and to writing pedagogy.

Examining the Origin Myths of Rhetoric

Rhetoric's roots typically have been rendered rather more as myth than as history; and, since these myths are commonly known, I will not "blame" any myth on any cited source. The old myth of rhetoric starts with Corax and his student Tisias—respectively the first to discover and the first to learn a reliable art of speaking effectively—honing their skills in the emergent democracy of

Syracuse, in Sicily. As the story goes, Tisias and his own student, Gorgias, made an emissary to Athens on behalf of Syracuse, and Athenians fell in love with the sweet nothings that Gorgias delivered so well. This ushered in the age of the “Sophists,” a band of gifted, silver-tongued charlatans. After Plato’s withering critique of these Sophists, Aristotle finally regularized rhetoric by establishing it on a sound, ethical, and rationalist base. This myth has had a long and stable history, and retains a great deal of currency in our culture—whatever its inaccuracies.

Lately, though, a new myth of rhetoric’s origins has been taking shape. The new myth rehabilitates the Sophists, finding in their slipperiness somewhat less of artful cynicism and somewhat more of legitimate skepticism. Still, if the Sophists were the first to find “social constructionism,” apparently it was largely an accidental accomplishment on their part and came to little in their hands. As proof of this, we find in this new myth that the Sophists were unable to prevail over the reactionary efforts of Plato, paving the way for Aristotle to implant his rationalistic paradigm into the consciousness of the centuries in between then and now. It is important to point out that Plato and Aristotle, the key figures in the old origin myth, remain the key historical figures within the new myth. In one sense, this is hardly surprising. Given that we have many hundreds of pages of works by Plato and Aristotle and only a few fragments of the works of the Sophists, traditionally Heroic scholarly work on the Sophists themselves is inherently limited. This is particularly true within the rational-ideal paradigm carried forward unreflectively in the hierarchical and traditional genre conventions still used by most scholars of the “new myth,” who apparently remain Aristotelians despite themselves.

Of course, Plato’s reputation has not always come out well in either myth. Indeed, esteem for Plato seems always to be less than absolute. Within the old myth, Plato’s flaws—for instance, his lack of thematic coherence in works such as the *Phaedrus* and the *Protagoras*—always required some rationalization. In recent times, though, esteem for Plato has become much more problematic. Indeed, the project known as the “rehabilitation of the Sophists” could, at least by volume of discussion, be cast more readily as the *dehabilitation* of Plato. At best for Plato, William Covino’s casting of him as a “wondering star-gazer” reduces Plato to simply one of several who have urged a view of “rhetoric and writing and reading as play with an expanding horizon” (1988, p. 21). At worst for Plato, Jasper Neel (1988) casts him as the scourge of civilization, a deviously successful millennial politician who redirected the course of history, to our great disadvantage, through an intentional abuse of the rhetoric of narrative. Somewhere in between is a Derridean view (according to Neel, at least) of Plato as a flawed figure valuable primarily for what a good deconstruction of his work might reveal (Neel, 1988, pp. 140–201). What recent critics of Plato share with older, gentler treatments, though, is a tendency to write extensively about Plato at the expense of writing very much about the Sophists. Even Neel, who complains persuasively that the very worst thing Plato did was to obscure the ideas of the Sophists, devotes only a brief final chapter, little more than a post-script, to the Sophists’ ideas themselves.

It seems a rather odd move, this attempt to dehabilitate Plato by featuring

his thought in both the content and title of one's work; and here I am, seeming to do the same thing. Perhaps it is time to go beneath these myths to find new ones.

A Trickster Myth of Rhetoric

Richard Leo Enos (1993) has carefully verified that Empedocles, the mystic Sicilian philosopher, has a serious claim to be the most important source (if not the founder itself) of rhetoric as a conscious discipline. Enos demonstrates the likelihood that Corax, Tisias, and Gorgias forwarded an art sprung from Empedocles' thoughtful understanding of the meaning and effect of language. As the standard myth holds, this art was affected by the need for persuasive arts in Syracusean democracy; yet it had other sources that were both deeper and more conscious. In other words, Gorgias did not merely know the practice of persuasion and artful speaking, enhanced by a few handy tricks. Instead, Gorgias is likely to have known a fully philosophical and theoretical practice of rhetoric, a practice of the sort that earlier mythologies of rhetoric traditionally reserve for elucidation by Aristotle.

Further, Empedocles' own understanding was not an accident of genius or inspiration, whatever his own claims. According to Freido Ricken's (1991) usefully compressed exposition, the Hellenic/Ionian world as a whole had participated actively in a philosophical movement which had already been through three distinct stages of growth by the time Gorgias and Socrates initiated a fourth. This highly secular and scientific philosophical tradition opposed itself to the belief in animistic gods that, if not genuinely philosophical, was certainly the first step away from a purely physical human existence into the generation of psychological life.

In the first genuinely philosophical stage of this psychological process, originating in the Asia Minor port of Miletus in the seventh century B.C.E., Thales and others sought rational explanations for mysterious matters generally attributed to gods—matters such as, on the one hand, "objective" earthquakes, and, on the other, "subjective" passions. This first stage appears to have lasted until about the start of the fifth century B.C.E. In the second stage, much more dispersed but thriving most fully in the southern Italian city of Elea, Parmenides and others eventually discovered that pure rationalism founders in irreconcilable dualisms like "changeless change." In the closely following third stage, more pragmatic philosophers, including Zeno of Elea and Empedocles, tried to reconcile the insights of rationality with empirical observations. Like the second stage, this third stage was widely dispersed. Still, following the leading influence of the second-stage philosopher Anaxagoras (originally from Asia Minor) over the Athenian ruler Pericles, the fourth, Socratic stage of this philosophical movement eventually became centered in Athens.

Before this time, Athens seems to have been a backwater of philosophic exploration; and, as Enos demonstrates, Sicily had been one of philosophy's real hot-beds. Interestingly, Democritus, another leading light in the latter part of "third stage" philosophy, came from Abdera, in Thrace. Abdera, of course, was the original home of Protagoras, the only real peer of Gorgias in the first Athenian Sophistic. Thus, contrary to likely assumptions within the earlier myths,

Gorgias and possibly even Protagoras—and hence the Sophistic movement—came from regions that most likely outstripped Socrates' Athens in the depth of their philosophical traditions.

Meanwhile, as Enos most centrally demonstrates, running through all of this history, influencing both Athens and Sicily, was the hypnagogic tradition of the Homeric rhapsodes. Plato asserts in his *Ion* that the rhapsodic tradition was one of “mere” divine inspiration, and not a genuine art (1961, pp. 216–228). Importantly, we can suspect that Gorgias would differ. The dispute between Socrates and Gorgias most likely was not one between philosophy and rhetoric but one between differing attitudes toward the place of the irrational in a study of language. Socrates, harking back to deistic and rationalistic thinking that the philosophic tradition had left behind in earlier, non-Athenian stages, appears to have seen language as a mere device, used at its best in service of either gods or abstract rationality. Gorgias, following Empedocles, most likely saw language as a fully human phenomenon always combining irrational and rational components, either component being a legitimate subject of practical inquiry. In other words, the apparent dispute between Socrates and Gorgias, reading both with and against Plato here, may have been between a naive, naturalistic philosophy and a more mature, rhetoricized philosophy.

To further elucidate this important difference, I need to add a prominent and well-known historical element that Enos rather curiously omits from his review: the interplay of shamanism with the philosophy of the time, and particularly with the philosophy of Empedocles. We should pause to recall, first, that Trickster's advent and the fall of shamanism are necessary complements in Jung's theories. Shamanic cultures still have their external Tricksters; only post-shamanic minds need the internalized archetypal entity as a regular part of their internal narratives. Further, the internalization of the Trickster archetype and the demise of shamans were an integral part of this important transitional time in the history of the West. Empedocles was still quite heavily influenced by shamanic ideas and practices (Dodds, 1951, pp. 145–147), an influence that makes sense within a Jungian framework. That is, as the psyche began to disassociate itself from the body, at first it fell to a god-like but tangible figure, the shaman, to represent the repressed body to consciousness. By the time of Empedocles, tangibility and divinity had become partially detached, with Empedocles only vaguely indicating his possible divinity and claiming mostly to have access to a Muse who could tell divine truths (Freeman, 1971, p. 51).

Gorgias and Socrates seem to be at last the bearers of differentiated psyches, individuals who claim most of their creative powers for themselves as those natural to a mortal being. This is the beginning of the sort of psyche in which the Trickster archetype could at last manifest itself as the sort of generative muse moderns would be willing to credit as a psychological phenomenon. While Socrates and Gorgias made use of this same phenomenon, there might be a highly significant difference between their visions of its nature. The famous charioteer metaphor from the *Phaedrus* exquisitely captures the Socratic attitude toward Trickster, the shadow, and the body. All three are clearly represented by the unruly black horse, the one that seeks to bring the chariot to the ground. The Heroic white horse seeks, as Heroes will, to escape the earth, to fly to the

ethereal heavens. To Plato's Socrates, the answer seems simple: whip the black horse into submission so that the chariot might soar. To give Socrates his due, of course, he does not advise getting rid of the black horse, and ultimately his metaphor must be seen as proposing a version of dialectic. Further, certainly neither Socrates nor Gorgias can be held to the standard of having a conscious understanding of the archetypal implications of their work. Still, Gorgias can be seen as providing a more practical alternative: the alternative of accepting the maddening usefulness of Trickster in helping the ego toward a fuller integration of all of its possibilities.

Gorgias is notorious for two works which, I would contend, are misinterpreted unless seen as attempts to be maddeningly useful in Tricksterish fashion. In the "Encomium of Helen," Gorgias reveals the troubling incommensurability between the concepts of fate and blame: if gods and fate rule humanity, Helen of Troy can hardly be blamed for doing as the gods required and thereby launching the Trojan War. Of course, readers of a rationalist bent could conclude that Gorgias actually meant to be understood referentially, as inferring that morality is relative and that blame was thus never possible for any human. The argument can just as easily be seen, though, as an indirect attack on the idea of fate, a demonstration that the ordinary conception of fate leads to intolerable ethical contradictions.

The other of Gorgias' notorious works, reputedly titled "On Nature," has not been preserved in its original (Freeman, 1971, pp. 127-129), but has survived in part because its thesis is so memorably outrageous. Gorgias is credited with a proof that, in descending order, either nothing exists, or, if anything does exist, it cannot be comprehended, or, if anything can be comprehended, it cannot be communicated (Freeman, 1971, pp. 128-129). Again, one who looks only at referential meanings might conclude that Gorgias meant to be profoundly relativistic. Two other quotes from the relics of Gorgias' productions give us a clue that something very different was at issue, however. First, Gorgias, not Aristotle, seems to have originated the concept that "One must destroy one's adversaries' seriousness with laughter, and their laughter with seriousness" (Freeman, 1971, p. 138). Second, Gorgias contradicts his "nothing exists" conclusion, at least partially, when he remarks that "Being is unrecognizable without seeming, and seeming is weak unless it succeeds in being" (Freeman, 1971, p. 139). The first quotation alone might continue to support a view of Gorgias as a nihilist, someone who aimed only at reversal, contradiction, and making the worse case the better. The second, however, opens up another possibility that, paradoxically, destabilizes attempts to cast Gorgias as merely a relativist.

If one reconsiders Gorgias as someone who knew what he was doing all along, then the idea of being and seeming having a dynamic relationship in the construction of reality becomes the most likely candidate for being a genuinely referential comment. After all, despite what he said elsewhere, Gorgias did continue his attempts to communicate and did prize material aspects of existence. The idea of laughing at the seriousness of one's adversaries, in this light, becomes the key to interpreting the playfulness of seeming to attack blame while actually undercutting the theology of fate, or of seeming to communicate the idea that ideas cannot be communicated. In other words, Gorgias was not being

Heroically referential, nor was he being merely contrarian; he was being maddeningly useful, following the Tricksterish way with a purity all the more astonishing for being without reference to Jung's legitimating theories.

This interpretation of Gorgias' works makes even more sense when Gorgias is seen as informed by trends in the philosophical tradition in which he clearly belongs. The idea that, rationally, "nothing exists" was not news to Empedocles, much less to any of his students. That it may have been news to most Athenians creates the context in which Gorgias' supposed proof becomes a spoof, a satirical riff on provincial Athenian attitudes toward reference and objectivity. Even before Gorgias there was an interesting proto-Trickster, Zeno of Elea, who did much the same thing within the community of Hellenic/Ionian philosophers. Zeno—a contemporary of Empedocles who worked even more closely with their common teacher, the skeptical empiricist Parmenides—specialized in creating paradoxes that revealed the lack of "seeming" value in rationalist accounts of "being." In the most famous of these, it is "demonstrated" that, in a race between Achilles and a turtle, the speedy Achilles will lose if he starts later. That is, logically, Achilles will only be able to make up half the distance, then half of the remainder, then half again, and so on forever; he will never catch the turtle because, logically, he cannot escape from eternal regression (Salmon, 1971, pp. 8–9). Given such obvious ribaldry (however serious its purposes) within Gorgias's philosophical tradition, it may be absurd in the extreme to read Gorgias referentially.

What, then, could Gorgias have been after? Perhaps one more quote from the scant record of Gorgias' words holds the final key: "Tragedy, by means of legends and emotions, creates a deception in which the deceiver is more honest than the non-deceiver, and the deceived is wiser than the non-deceived" (Freeman, 1971, p. 138). This attitude could certainly apply as well to orations that were quite intentionally something other than they seemed to be—that were, then, essentially dramatic and performative. In that light, Gorgias goes beyond being merely ironic—intending, for instance, merely to produce the belief that fate is bad by pretending to excoriate blame in the "Encomium of Helen." Instead, Gorgias may well have been intending something more radical, something like a dramatic deception that leaves those who enter into full psychic participation with it wiser at some inarticulate and irrational level of being. After all, this is what could come of musing with an archetype like Trickster, the defier of pure mind, the bringer to earth, the harbinger of primeval processes still at work beneath the appearance of rational transcendence.

Plato's Place in a Trickster Myth of Rhetoric

Despite Gorgias' claim to a more complete respect, Plato's continuing centrality in rhetorical discussions may well have more merit than the heroes of the new myth want to grant (even though their actions still grant it). That is, Plato's openly Tricksterish craft may be more important than his rather more Heroic referential content. The instability of Plato's referential meaning, of course, is old news. Still, it seems impossible to choose among, for instance, Derrida's (supposedly) earnest but deluded Plato, Covino's starry-eyed and playful Plato,

or Neel's masterful and dastardly Plato. For a failure, Plato certainly has been difficult to top; for a wonderer, Plato certainly is heavy-handed; for a schemer, Plato certainly does seem transparent. I would like to propose something informed by all of these readings that renders choice among them unnecessary: Plato had learned from all of his predecessors how to use the Trickster muse of rhetoric, a matter which renders the issue of his personal "intent" not merely problematic, but essentially unfathomable—and by design.

I find two clues in Plato's work to be extremely compelling in this regard. First, in his *Ion*, Plato demonstrates his belief that art is, at its best, a "divine" inspiration, one that necessarily comes from extra-human sources. In that work, (harking back here to Enos' tracing of the rhapsodic roots of Gorgian rhetoric), Plato persuades Ion, a rhapsode, that his artistry must come from inspiration rather than technique. After all, Ion clearly does not possess the encyclopedic knowledge that would be necessary to generate his ability on the basis of articulable technique. Certainly, we all know examples of artists for whom this is true—even if now we have other explanations of the transpersonal agencies that manifest themselves in spectacularly imaginative artistry. Even more to the point, though, is Socrates' readiness to surrender to his *daemon* for his own creative bursts of rhetorical art, nowhere more emphatically than in the *Phaedrus*, the most central and penetrating of Plato's dialogues on rhetoric. Indeed, in the *Phaedrus*, the third and final speech, the supposed pinnacle of truest rhetorical art, is cast as entirely the creation of Socrates' *daemon*. Even if it is possible to believe that Plato wanted us to see Socrates as being playful in making this claim, it is also possible to believe that Plato, Socrates' student, knew full well the value of musing as a path toward the finest persuasive art.

Still, I must agree with the pervasive judgment that Plato was flawed, even if the instability of the explanations of Plato's flaws should make us all wary. Perhaps Plato was prevented from gaining full mastery of this process of musement by his seeming view that musement came from independent gods rather than from the psyche of an ordinary, mortal language-user. On the other hand, given his prolific and wonderfully "deceptive" (in Gorgias' sense of deceiving us toward wisdom) theatrical art (for what else are Plato's dialogues but theater?), perhaps it is necessary to give Plato more credit. Whatever may have been Socrates' limitations in regard to musement, we have evidence in the artistry of Plato's dialogues themselves that Plato out-mused his teacher. Indeed, even considering the limitations in the available evidence, perhaps Plato transcended all of his teachers, including Gorgias. Perhaps by virtue of being there on the scene at exactly the most propitious, fresh moment, Plato simply nailed the art of musing with Trickster like nobody else ever has. If that were true, nobody would ever be able to say for sure what had happened in Plato's work, but it would be hard to escape its maddeningly useful effects. That certainly does seem to have been Plato's legacy.

Something even more significant may emerge in Plato's work, explaining more understandably why even Plato's most astute critics spend so much time considering his work. Empedocles and then Gorgias may be said to be true rhetorician-philosophers, but Plato could mark the point zero from which primarily Heroic philosophy and primarily Tricksterish rhetoric diverge, as they must, into

an archetypal dialectic. Plato may mark this separation because he introduces a third idea capable of interpreting rhetoric and philosophy together, hence permitting them to be distinguished from each other. Interpreting philosophy and rhetoric together is the work of *psychology*, of being neither Tricksterish nor Heroic but interpreting both together dialectically. Plato's millennial power over the entire scene of relations between rhetoric and philosophy may arise precisely because he was neither philosopher nor rhetorician, but primarily the first psychologist.

Still, I see no sign that Plato knew what he was doing sufficiently well to articulate to himself the nature of this superior, psychological vantage. His errors remain as glaring as his potency. Further, it seems fairly plain that rhetoric continued to be, at its best, Tricksterish in the Gorgian sense rather than psychological in this potentially Platonic sense. Covino (1988) may under-estimate the uniqueness of Plato, then, but the Tricksterish perspective supports his contention that Aristotle, Cicero, Montaigne, Vico, and Hume continue what I have called the Gorgian style of Tricksterish discourse, the art of intending readers to experience something other and more than the mere reproduction of referential meaning. I do not need to assert that Tricksterism was the "intent" of these and other rhetoricians, though. Rather, by entering into a discourse which was by nature and tradition closely allied to the role of Trickster, these most penetrating and relentless pursuers of rhetorical wisdom became subject, at least in part, to rhetoric's muse and its collectively unconscious agenda. If few of these rhetoricians were as fully psychological (and hence fully dialectical) as Plato, neither could any rhetorician who wrote after Plato be entirely without a psychologized perspective—even if the perspective came from a point beneath consciousness.

In recent times, of course, there has been a change in the rhetorical tradition. As Covino demonstrates, earnest nineteenth century rhetoricians seem to have succeeded in driving Trickster out of acceptable rhetorical discourse. Meanwhile, Freud and others opened up the possibility of articulated psychological technique, a technique that Jung brought to bear on the very source of musing. Modern writers on rhetoric and semiotics, like Derrida, Lacan, Burke, Langer, and Eco, are more fully aware of themselves as psychological beings. They have been able to move beyond the mere trickery of using non-referential or "irrational" language to deceive, and have begun to explore these phenomena and their meanings in both referential and performative ways. Recent works more closely tied to the community of academic writing teachers have taken advantage of this new atmosphere of psychologically informed rhetoric. Writers like Stanley Fish (1980) and Peter Elbow (1973) have gone beyond mere trickery to open up "seriously playful" methods of reading and writing. Perhaps most stunning of all from this perspective is the insight of Hélène Cixous (1976) in "The Laugh of the Medusa" that writing the embodied self could liberate unconscious resources in rhetorically powerful ways.

In sum, it may well be that in this time, precisely now, a new paradigm may be opening not only for rhetoric, but for the use of Trickster—and by logical extension, for the psyche itself. Meanwhile, rhetorical theory and writing instruction seem poised at the very edge of this new paradigm, uniquely positioned to use it and to begin to articulate it.

Trickster, Psychology, and Teaching

Most applications of archetypal thought to writing instruction tend (even without intending) to establish Hero as the muse of "empowered" writers—and by extension, the muse of teachers in their efforts to "write" an empowering classroom experience. Here, I claim instead that Trickster has been the most useful muse of rhetoricians, of writers about writing. This latter claim, however, complicates matters for writing teachers. Surely, writing teachers are also rhetoricians, "writers" and speakers about writing who intend to complicate and support the efforts of Heroic writers in much the same way that theoretical scholars intend to complicate and support the efforts of writing teachers. If the writing teacher is both Hero and the supporter of Heroes, the demand upon writing teachers to become impossibly wise, to be timeless and genuinely individuated Trickster-Heroes, may be acute. The seeming impossibility of this demand lurks within the most prominent conflicts in composition theory, those concerning how consciousness is supposed to interact with the unconscious processing of such things as syntax, ideology, reasoning, writing processes, and theory itself. As in writing processes, in teaching processes there is simply too much for Heroic consciousness to manage if everything is attempted at once.

As has been indicated above, writing teachers can take on another role, one that mediates between Trickster and Hero: the role of psychologist of the writing self. Shoshona Felman (1987) has written with great clarity and understanding about the application of Lacan's ideas to this project, and I mean to take nothing away from that effort in suggesting something else. Archetypal thinking also enters this scene usefully, offering symbols with which to mediate between the complex, invisible vastness of unconsciousness and the Heroic sense of individual freedom. Moreover, Jungian psychology dares to approach what the anonymous writer we refer to as "Longinus" long ago recognized to be the heart of rhetoric's value: its ability to generate writing that is sublime, able to remind readers viscerally of their most profound longings. Trickster's most central role, after all, is that of forcing Heroic egos into the conflicts out of which they may emerge as what Jungian analyst James Hillman calls, without apology, "souls" (1977, pp. ix–xvi). As Hillman points out, the rhetorical perspective on language breaks down all attempts to cast the human condition as systematizable, concrete, and mechanical, and so becomes a vital aspect of the even larger transpersonal movement of soul-making (pp. 142–154).

This description of rhetoric as a Tricksterish discipline directly and centrally involved in issues of both re-embodiment and "soul-making" has an immediate aptness when considering figures like Empedocles, Plato, Longinus, Erasmus, Vico, or Burke. Still, it would seem to have lost a good deal of applicability in the professional lives of academic rhetoricians. Moreover, in the current atmosphere of institutionalized education teachers may fear and resent the risks of rhetorical teaching as this analysis suggests it should be, something dangerously close to psychotherapy—and a rather aggressively upsetting kind of therapy at that.

Nevertheless, what other responsible avenue is available? Simply to ignore the Tricksterish aspects of rhetorical learning is to be at cross-purposes with the

activity itself. Even a brief review of Jung's metaphor of the psyche as a whole reveals that merely cheering on the Hero is bound to fail, for Trickster will come along, bidden or not. Even worse, resorting to postmodern rhetoric's decidedly Tricksterish resources without a fully psychological understanding may well be the very model of an unwitting psychic "therapy" of a potentially dangerous sort.

Bold words—even in hyperbole—for someone who has not yet proposed a program, I suppose. There really is not a need for a new program, though, as much as there is a need for better understanding of what existing programs offer. That writing is a form of Heroic rationality in need of constant remediation from Tricksterish irrationality lies behind nearly every recent advance in the teaching of writing, and informs all practices that render these advances genuinely advantageous. Students who have been fed a steady diet of their errors lose the Heroic spirit; students who have been given a steady diet of rational prescriptions become pathetically incapable of using irrational means to effective ends. "Process" techniques like freewriting and loop-writing, on the other hand, give the irrational room to enter the process. So we are making some progress; and yet at bottom what is needed is something rather more like the thorough devotion of teachers and students to something like Ann Berthoff's image of writing as the practice of a fully dialectical and psychological Imagination. We seem not yet to have had the collective curricular courage or rigor to meet Berthoff's call. Perhaps an understanding of the psychic patterns in which we work can encourage us.

Ultimately, though, the symbol-using mortal body, aware because of its symbols of both the apparent immortality of ideas and its own inevitable death, is not merely a system of cognition, a cultural construct, or an operator of rules. It is a fragile, embodied soul in need of understanding, and most in need just when it is asked to enter into transactions of consequence with other souls. There is much we already know about what sorts of things these souls can do to write better texts, but ultimately there is no "program" for the larger purpose. We just pull each other out of the cave, one Self at a time—as Plato knew. ☺

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Reflection and an Appetite for Experience: Theory to Classroom Practice

Judith Halden-Sullivan

Experience is openness to possibilities for seeing the world, one's place in it, and one's relation to the things that matter in that world. It is a process of questioning. It holds the potential for communion with others, and it promises to transform those who diligently engage in it. Investigating the nature of experience constitutes the heart of Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1990) text, *Truth and Method*. Gadamer (1990) explains:

Experience stands in an ineluctable opposition to knowledge and to the kind of instruction that follows from general theoretical or technical knowledge. The truth of experience always implies an orientation toward new experience The consummation of his experience, the perfection that we call "being experienced," does not consist in the fact that someone already knows everything and knows better than anyone else. Rather, the experienced person proves to be, on the contrary, someone who is radically undogmatic; who, because of the many experiences he has had and the knowledge he has drawn from them, is particularly well equipped to have new experiences and to learn from them. The dialectic of experience has its proper fulfillment not in definitive knowledge but in the openness to experience that is made possible by experience itself. (p. 355)

After years of reflecting on my own purpose as a teacher of composition, it was this study that revealed to me the heart of pedagogy. My goal in relation to my writing students is not to fix in them information, knowledge, or even a set of well-honed skills but to help them locate within themselves an attitude that moves beyond these apparent outcomes: an appetite for experience. The instigator of that appetite is reflection. Over time, reflection has the potential to transform novice writers and readers into experienced thinkers if we recognize its character and animation in our natures. Reflection is not a separate activity apart from ordinary experience—a special exercise for the last 20 minutes of class; it is a

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way of living. In the context of Gadamer's assertion, then, the validation and closure proffered by the sufficiency of discrete, graded writing courses must be subordinated to the experience of making and re-making texts. The goal of composition instruction should be not (only) to valorize the pragmatic—the assimilation of knowledge and composing behavior patterns—but to invite the “radically undogmatic”: the openness of the experienced person who maintains conflicts and yet discovers options for appropriate action.

Remaining open to possibilities for meaning and being is what the experienced thinker does best. In turn, reflection, or what phenomenologists call thinking, grounds such openness. What is reflection? I think of it as looking back to look forward. It is an activity always in process, always deliberating upon discrete acts in the past in relation to the unfolding present, impinging upon the actions of both the present and future. In this way, reflection is a constant repositioning of the thinker's place, never static, never complete. It mirrors the processes of writing and reading as composition instructors have come to understand them. Reflection is recursive, reiterative, and cumulative. In its pivotal role in considering past and present, and projecting future events, reflection has the potential to keep the channels to further experience open.

An indivisible part of reflection—looking back—is projection—a putting forward of possibilities—and Martin Heidegger's work offers insight into the projective power of reflection. The term “projection” has significance in Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of reflection or thinking. Thinking is not construed as a bundle of cognitive strands. In describing the interdependence of projection and thinking, Heidegger releases these processes from any commonplace analytic domain. Projection is the human being's continual, innate *function*; the human mode of being's function is to manifest possibilities for standing out in relation to its world. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1962) defines understanding as also innate, as the character of human beings that discloses to people their “own potentiality-for-Being” (p. 184). Concomitant with understanding—part of *its* nature—is projection. As innate human understanding is “altogether permeated with possibility” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 186), at any given instant, human beings project such possibilities. These possibilities are not always consciously thought; they are often more than the contents of the mind at any one given moment. They are what is possible but not yet known. Heidegger (1962) claims,

Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out, and in accordance with which [a person] arranges [her or his] Being. On the contrary, any [person] has, as [a person] already projected [herself or himself]; as long as [a person] is, [she or he] is projecting. As long as it is, [the human mode of being] always has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities. (p. 185)

Thinking for Heidegger, first, is a natural way of being, and, second, the dwelling place of untapped potential—a wellspring of possibilities. It is the richness of this dwelling place that students must experience. Heidegger (1962) invites us

to take seriously the invitation to “Become what you are . . .” (p. 186), referring to each of us as a “Being-possible” (p. 185).

The way to remain open to the Janus-faced nature of reflection is to question. Gadamer (1990) states in *Truth and Method* that, “As the art of asking questions, dialectic proves its value because only the person who knows how to ask questions is able to persist in his questioning, which involves being able to preserve his orientation toward openness. The art of questioning is the art of questioning even further—i.e., the art of thinking” (p. 367). To reflect well demands the ability to pose questions. “When a question arises,” Gadamer claims, “it breaks open the being of the object, as it were” (p. 362): “To ask a question means to bring into the open” (p. 363). Gadamer does not refer here to questions with simple, apparent answers but instead to questions that bring a subject into a “state of indeterminacy, so that there is an equilibrium between pro and contra” (p. 363). “Every true question,” he concludes, “requires this openness” (p. 363). Consequently, in Gadamer’s words, “We cannot have experiences without asking questions” (p. 362). Freire and Faundez (1989) offers a similar but more urgent perspective:

Human existence, because it came into being through asking questions is at the root of change in the world. There is a radical element to existence, which is the radical act of asking questions I think it is important to note that there is an undeniable relationship between being surprised and asking questions, taking risks and existence. At root human existence involves surprise, questioning and risk. And, because of all this, it involves action and change. Bureaucratization, however, means adaptation with a minimum of risk, with no surprises, without asking questions. And so we have a pedagogy of answers, which is a pedagogy of adaptation, not a pedagogy of creativity. It does not encourage people to take the risk of inventing, or reinventing. For me, to refuse to take risks is the best way there is of denying human existence itself. (p. 40)

The phenomenology of reflection, then, is distinguished by exploring possibilities, questioning, opening oneself to one’s own and to others’ potentiality, and thinking. This experience is constitutive of being human. Why, then, is it so aggravating to students? Why do they chafe at thinking? Why are experiences that demand reflection frequently characterized by students as too hard or too boring? Even if we as teachers are convinced of the need to foreground reflection, we also will need to confront the resistance of many students to this experience. In my own speculation, there appear to be two roadblocks to reflection: first, the aesthetic of sufficiency that pervades learning—a desire for closure that is consistently rewarded—and, second, the characterization of education as a commodity. Years of traditional schooling have constructed these roadblocks. By the time they arrive at college, students are experts in sufficiency: they expect closure, and they certainly know and are quick to remind teachers when they have done enough. They are rewarded for sufficiency with (hopefully passing) grades and completed degrees. Courses that are accumulated for those degrees

proffer discrete tasks completed in limited time-frames; projects end with grades; whole programs of study conclude with unit-counts of courses tallied to a critical mass, ending in a numbered average. Students have come to expect teachers' assistance in delivering expedience to sufficiency, a patterned regimen designed for closure. This attitude promotes the second obstacle: learning in such constructs is a commodity, packaged in 15-week blocks, weighed, balanced, and measured like loads of bricks. Students perceive every course as a discrete entity—a different package, with a different packer, to be handled in discrete ways. An experience-resistant “thingliness” pervades their expectation of learning. This attitude stands in opposition to the nature of thinking I have described; it is even at odds with students' *own* natures. I suspect that this predisposition accounts for why, particularly in composition classes, there is so little carry-over in students' application of skills from one course to the next. In his introduction to Heidegger's set of lectures entitled *What Is Called Thinking?*, J. Glenn Gray (1968) defines the primacy Heidegger gives to thinking, and within this preface, Gray suggests three conditions that have the potential to move students beyond their demand for sufficiency to an appetite for experience unencumbered by the expectation of a fixed commodity:

[Thinking] is a gathering and focusing of our whole selves on what lies before us and a taking to heart and mind these particular things before us in order to discover in them their essential nature and truth. Learning how to think can obviously aid us in this discovery . . . *Only the thinking that is truly involved, patient, and disciplined by long practice can come to know either the hidden or disclosed character of truth.* [italics added]. (p. xi)

Genuine involvement, patience, and disciplined practice open the path for thinking. This is a meditative, reflective stance. However, students grow impatient with processes that seem to them such annoyingly ineffable experiences, and the time required for learning seems impossibly inefficient. What, then, can make learners already predisposed to quick closure more patient? What will make them stay open to experience? The solution, if it so easily can be called that, lies both in a reacquaintance of students with themselves as *thinkers* and in prioritizing the *experience* of education over its documentation. Bringing reflection of the sort I have described to the classroom addresses the former concern. In regard to the experiential *ethos* of the latter point, Heidegger (1968) offers this supportive distinction:

Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than—learning. His [sic] conduct, therefore, often produces the impression that we properly learn nothing from him, if by “learning” we now suddenly understand merely the procurement of useful information. The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they—he has to learn to let them learn. (p. 15)

Learning to learn demands students' (and teachers') patience, investment, and self-discipline. As an example of incorporating this *ethos* into teaching, I will offer my own situation—the first-year writing classroom. In my case, the phenomenology of students' composing, reading, collaborating with peers, and assessment must come to reveal to students their *own* mode of being.

The composing process drives the everyday composition classroom. As a mode of thinking that brings ideas or entities into the open, reflection reveals the composing process as not just the engine for producing documents but as a recursive, reiterative path on which students manifest their thinking for themselves and others. In composing, students both project themselves and become themselves. Their recognition of this self-reflexive correspondence should be a process paramount to the course. For novices in particular, this path should be broad, tentative, and as marked by failed attempts as demarcated with victories. For students to think deeply about the writing tasks they encounter, they must be able to grapple with ideas at their own individual paces; openness to possibilities—of the kind Heidegger and Gadamer describe—demands patient deliberation over time. The phenomenology of reflection suggests that the budgeting of time for learning in the academy must be a more fluid and less lock-step configuration; however, on an institutional level, this attitude toward time is difficult to find. At the level of classroom pedagogy, one familiar method of self-pacing I use is students' construction of revised essay portfolios. Such portfolios constitute the heart of my writing courses. Unlike many teachers, I do not require a mid-term portfolio assessment; at that early juncture, I feel students are not yet fluent enough in their revision techniques to be graded. While I and students' classmates offer commentary for revision beginning in the first weeks of the semester, students may choose to revise earlier drafts in any number of ways as they experiment with writing strategies throughout the quarter. They are free to transform their essays at their own pace until, of course, the end of the term. However, I do periodically check their writing notebooks for revisions in-progress, encouraging weekly effort and intermediate drafts and discouraging the procrastinator's end-of-term madness.

A broader accommodation for self-paced learning I have suggested to my faculty is the creation of a rising-junior portfolio as prerequisite for exit from core curriculum writing courses. Because scheduling may prohibit them from completing first-year writing in one year, students would be given two years to prepare anthologies of their best efforts, pacing their work as they see fit within that period. In this scenario, first-year writing courses would ingrain in students not just skills but an attitude about themselves as *authors* who require time to write "books." Within that regimen of disciplined self-pacing, when the inevitable experience-blockers arise, such as "I have nothing to say," or "I see no purpose in writing this," or "Nobody would *ever* want to read this," time can be allotted to fully question the source of these deadends with writing teachers and tutors.

In addition, finding discourse modes that invite a great deal of dialogue, such as interviews and fieldwork as a kind of primary research, and locating real audiences who can respond to or even act upon students' ideas can deepen students' investment in the composing process. Asking questions and generating

possible answers—concomitant with openness—become immediate to their experience in these contexts and so nurture reflection. In my own classes, I find that mid-term and end-of-quarter class anthologies, prepared for classmates, prompt careful reflection in the composing process, particularly revision. When students feel fully engaged in the writing task for which they must project possibilities, composing is a task more happily and patiently revisited. My responsibility is to design prompts that, of course, motivate purposeful reflection, but, as the experience is to be *theirs*, I offer my composition students a degree of autonomy in generating, selecting, and modifying essay topics. For example, I allow disenchanted readers to create, with my help, their *own* reading lists, as long as they can bring their responses profitably to our topical and thematic class discussions.

Finally, to experiment with different tactics in drafting, students must generate and explore ideas in a low-risk environment. Graded evaluation that arrives too soon before the ripeness of students' ideas can extinguish the appetite for more composing experiences. Ann Berthoff (1982), in her text *Forming, Thinking, Writing: The Composing Imagination*, claims that "the composing process rather than a composition is [the student's proper] concern" (p. 13). Berthoff is not troubled if students' essays do not come to closure, asserting in an often-quoted line that more is learned "from a dozen starts than from a single finished job" (p. 4). To me, this is a reflective stance, open to possibilities; Berthoff prioritizes the *event* of learning while recognizing the possibility of closure. In composition courses, this event is manifested in conferences, students' notes, freewriting, and in rough and "finished" drafts. I review this evidence, encouraging with my commentary process and change. Such opportunities for flexibility with and receptivity to the chaos that accompanies composing invoke the experience of thinking.

In regard to remaining open to reading texts, reflection provides ways to be flexible and receptive, but it demands patient, disciplined practice. Instead of resigning themselves to the role of passive recipients, students must cast themselves as participants in a dialogue with texts, regardless of how distanced from their experiences the texts might seem. In my own classes, reading journals offer ample space for this dialogue. The roadblocks to thoughtful reading are many, not the least of which is students' lack of familiarity with the printed page and its discourse conventions. This can be overcome by posing questions that bring these textual distinctions to light: guide questions, prepared by teachers *and* students, can motivate reflection on matters of historical context. Guide questions are a staple in both my writing and literature courses. But, even when students enjoy ample opportunity to interact with readings, we have all witnessed the more destructive barrier to encountering texts: "I cannot relate to this text, so it is just not worth reading." Gadamer (1990), drawing from the work of philosopher/critic R.G. Collingwood, suggests a dialectical twist that may help to at least draw the disaffected student into conversation with a text. Gadamer states, "We can understand a text only when we have understood the question to which it is an answer" (p. 370). Articulating such a question not only illuminates the construction of any given text and the subtleties of its historicity, but such an inquiry also reveals the questions important to any group of historical readers. In

reflecting upon the many possibilities for questions to which a text is an answer, even the most reticent reader will be faced with drawing into proximity her self-disclosive line of inquiry with the text's response. The comparison should be worthy of reflection.

Like dialogue with texts, collaboration with peers should be both self-reflexive and other-directed. Kenneth Bruffee (1980) rightly asserts that, "Peer criticism is the most *real* writing students will ever do as students" (p. 115)—purposeful and accommodating an immediate audience. Many studies, such as Martin Nystrand and Deborah Brandt's (1989), have revealed how empowering peer-critiquing can be: students come to see each other as collaborators and revision as "reconceptualization"; when instructors are the sole evaluators, teachers become "judges," and the process of revising is reduced to "editing" (p. 212). Perhaps what Nystrand and Brandt indeed confirmed was that, with their peers, students experience more readily what Gadamer (1990) defines as the "dialectic of reciprocity" (pp. 359–360): an experience with "the other" that "let[s] [her or him] really say something to us" (p. 361). Gadamer states that in speaking to one another,

Here is where openness belongs. But ultimately this openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather, anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without such openness to one another there is no genuine bond. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another. When two people understand each other, this does not mean that one person "understands" the other. Similarly, "to hear and obey someone" . . . does not mean simply that we do blindly what the other desires. We call such a person slavish . . . Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so. (p. 361)

Reflection can support peer collaboration. In my own classes, I ask students to systematically explain in their own words what peers presented to them, locating the common ground and also the dissensus in students' commentary. They present their interactions to me; I, in turn, pose questions about their accounts. The foundation of this reflection demands patience: listening is hard work. What does their understanding of their peers reveal about their *own* thinking? Class journals in print or on e-mail can allow such reflective questioning, re-statement, and repositioning to flourish. The prompts we offer students for their work together should promote purposeful reflection and allow students to *really have something to say* to one another—perhaps something that "counts" alongside the writer's self-assessment and the teacher's appraisal of the writer's performance. This is a level of investment and responsibility rarely afforded peer commentary. When the inevitable disagreements arise, the *ethos* of peer collaboration should be a reflective, Gadamerian one: listen, re-state the understanding, learn about the other, define one's own place, and, most importantly, build the often tenuous but necessary bridge. This approach is at once dialogic and dialectical—a mode of inquiry in itself.

The same should be said of assessment. Ideally, assessment should take on the energy of good conversation, an interchange between two interested participants. In my own first-year writing classes, I ask that students maintain with me an assessment log that records their self-assessments of drafts, my commentary, and their responses to and questions about my responses. Through this sort of dialogue, I hope my students not only will sharpen my diagnostic abilities as an evaluator but also identify for themselves both the rigors of reflecting upon their efforts and the authority I offer them in setting the course of assessment. In addition to being dialogic, assessment should embody a dialectic, in particular, the same dialectic pedagogy promotes: an interactive, transformative *experience* with language. In this regard, assessment techniques should be qualified by this question: does this technique open students to and foster an appetite for new experiences with thinking and writing—for more participation? Traditional grading—A's through F's—in its concern for alignment with defined academic expectations, implies that such alignment is an end in itself, a sufficiency. But can assessment encourage students to move beyond the comfortable repose of sufficiencies to remain eager for more experiences, despite conflicts in expectations and outcomes? In my own teaching, I attribute value to the process of communicating with students in our shared log; building and reflecting upon the assessment log are at the heart of our work together. Assessment is a conversational mode of inquiry for us. With the rigors of this sort of assessment in mind, I recommend grade-free first-year writing courses in which students perhaps would negotiate their path toward not just a prescribed quality of writing but a quantity—a repertoire, a manuscript portfolio, an anthology of fieldwork—of essay types addressed to a variety of real audiences. As I noted earlier, production of this anthology would be their sole responsibility in first-year composition, with instructors acting as guides to options for preparing such a collection. As the voice of experience, instructors could dictate not grades but the constitution of a well-rounded portfolio which would reveal a range of students' thinking and writing skills. In the same way students work together to prepare "class magazines" for publication, so might they commit to publishing, for example, their autobiographies as thinkers. Such portfolios of essays can be the locus of active *inquiry* about the terrain of learning as it relates to assessment, providing perhaps the most open avenue to Gadamer's concept of experience: students would be free to have as many encounters with making texts as they choose, strengthening with each revision their own flexibility in relation to generating new texts. They would not be penalized for becoming "experienced" at their own pace. In addition, and more importantly, students would negotiate with their instructors to render this binary determination before exiting first-year writing: *ready or not*. Defining readiness implies a full-rounded appreciation of *thinkers*, not just their rankings.

As we define it today, first-year English roots that which defines students' college experience: the making manifest of their own thinking for themselves and others. It is a "free space," as Gadamer (1992) calls it, and, even though "Bureaucratized teaching and learning systems dominate the scene, . . . it is everyone's task to find his [or her] free space. The task of our human life in general is to find free spaces and learn to move therein" (p. 59). Reflection offers

a space for rigorous, open-ended exploration of a multiplicity of writing experiences, experiences that both foster students' voices and invite them to experiment with and participate in the discourse of the academy. Students may reach an understanding in their dialogues with their teacher, their texts, and their peers, which, according to Gadamer (1990), "is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were" (p. 379). This communion, concomitant with students' patient and self-disciplined reflection, should be at the heart of first-year composition. However, the ready appetite for experience that such transformations may perpetuate is a life-long pursuit. ■

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When a Student Ends a Wounded Silence

Dave Waddell

"I guess I'll read mine."

The words came reluctantly from the back of my college night class, spoken by a middle-aged firefighter. "Mike" had taken my developmental writing course for no other reason than its completion would put a little more money in his paycheck. His collar was decidedly blue, and, on the few occasions he spoke, his neck seemed a definite shade of red. He came to my class to do the bare minimum, but something happened on his way to the end of the term: He recounted a decades-old war story—one that for him was traumatic—and in the process largely healed his wound.

I believe Mike's experience—how he came to be moved to tell a painful story, what occurred during his exchange with audiences, and the therapeutic benefits derived—is typical of students who write about their own trauma. Over the course of several weeks, Mike went through what Judith Herman (1992) described as the three "fundamental stages of recovery" (p. 1): He felt safe, he told his terrible story, and he restored connections between himself and his community. Mike revealed his haunting memory to readers who were caring and supportive, and the transaction eased his burden.

For teachers, the handling of such emotion-laden text creates special challenges. Even teachers who view such writing as invasive of student privacy—teachers who deliberately attempt to frame assignments to avoid what Robert Connors (1987) called the "emotional 'knockout punch'" (p. 180)—may find themselves receiving trauma-inspired papers. Students will disclose painful episodes in their lives in classes taught by teachers they trust—regardless of the teacher's theoretical or pedagogical paradigm. Sooner or later most teachers will encounter the phenomenon of writing as healing, and they should carefully consider how to respond.

As for Mike, it was certainly out of the ordinary for him to volunteer to read anything he wrote. On this November night, he had just completed a pre-writing exercise designed to help students generate ideas in advance of writing an "Important Memory" paper. Students wrote five sentences, each beginning with the words "I remember" They then selected one of their topics and wrote quickly for about 10 minutes. The remembrance Mike chose to elaborate on had to do with Vietnam, and he produced a barely legible half-page beginning. He told of a certain day—the last day of 1971—when the helicopter he was piloting was shot down and an American soldier lost his life.

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On this night, Mike's desire to share his experience won out—barely—over his hesitancy and uncertainty, as he spoke up just as I was about to end the exercise. He revealed little beyond the fact that a comrade had been killed, but it was quite evident the memory pained Mike, bringing, he later would tell me, “a clamp on my throat.”

When he finished reading, Mike expressed doubt about whether he could write at length about his Vietnam memory. For my part, seeing a disinterested student suddenly interested in the possibilities of writing, I encouraged him to proceed. I saw value in the class being exposed to a first-hand tale of Vietnam—so much a part of the lives of Mike's generation, a mere historical reference to so many of his younger classmates. On another level, I sensed that such a paper could be therapeutic for Mike.

While I think today that my instincts were right, it occurs to me that they came with too little introspection on my part. After all, here was I, a teacher of approximately Mike's age who had managed with something less than Clintonesque slickness to avoid the Vietnam quagmire, encouraging my student who hadn't to write it up. Further, the war in Southeast Asia left many who fought there deeply traumatized for years and decades to come, haunted by an inner pain that never seemed to go away. Not only were the young soldiers psychologically scarred by the atrocities of war, their homecoming was a “notorious example of community rejection” (Herman, 1992, p. 71). They became disconnected from their fellow American citizens.

I didn't realize it at the time Mike was in my class, but one of the most successful treatments to cure the flashbacks of the Vietnam war was to induce veterans to discuss and relive their battlefield experiences (Pennebaker, 1990, p. 79). At the time, my teacherly instincts told me that Mike wanted very much to write this war story about an excruciating day in his early manhood. So I persisted in my strategy of heading him in that direction by reading at the next class an excerpt from Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, a correspondent's wrenching account of the constant horror of Vietnam. Mike was deeply engaged in the class discussion of Herr's reporting—to which he brought an expertise no one else present possessed—and, as I'd hoped, set out to write his own history.

Mike sought out my thoughts on his first draft—something he hadn't done with any other paper. As I read his story, entitled “Not a Good Day to Die,” it became clear why this was such an important—and distressful—memory: Mike blamed himself for the death of his crewchief, a man he remembers only as “Jones.” What made matters worse was that Jones had learned, on the same day he was to die, that his wife had given birth.

A Viet Cong ambush left their helicopter riddled with holes. Mike wrote that there was “No thinking, no talking it over, my decision, my reaction, my crew chief dead.” In the paper's most poignant passage, he describes his feelings shortly after the enemy assault:

I now had time to feel, to think, to pray. I felt many vibrations, I could feel the impending death of a machine that had given her all when I asked for it, I looked up to find red frothy fluid flowing down the inside of the bubble. Blood of a machine. The transmis-

sion fluid was leaking all over the green house blocking the sun and dripping on my hands as I thought of a new born baby that will never know her father.

In the midst of producing his memoir, Mike remarked about how beneficial the paper had been for him, and I asked him to reflect in writing on the experience. To the next class this suddenly engaged student brought a lengthy response, an excerpt from which follows:

... I worked on this paper in handwritten form for approximately 8 hours, writing thoughts and descriptions in a factual manner, thinking back and remembering what really happened. This was extremely hard, it dredged up memories I had buried but they were never very deep but I wouldn't admit that to anyone. I went back over this paper and rewrote, rearranged paragraphs and looked up words, trying to make sense out of a bunch of words....

After the second handwritten paper that turned out 13 pages long, I started typing. It took six hours to type nine pages and I was pretty happy with the outcome until I started proof reading. I let several people read it to get their input and reactions. The reactions were all positive, I like the silence most people showed after reading it, but I really wanted their thoughts. My 18 year old son read my rough draft and spent an hour understanding the slang and pointing out where the writing wasn't proper and I explained why I had written it that way, because that was like it really happened.

I was happy enough that I wanted it perfect so I retyped it again, that took another three hours. I read this second typed paper about three times and finally realized I am really tired of this story, this is old and it really wasn't my fault, it is getting boring and I know I have several hours more work to do before the final draft can be handed in.

... I really believe the reading and writing and changing and re-writing finally made the story so boring I just want to put it down, I am totally tired of even thinking about it. I know I will keep a copy of my final draft as something to look back on some day. But now the story is on paper, I don't have to keep remembering it

For twenty years, Mike tried unsuccessfully to put his battlefield trauma behind him, but it wouldn't go away. Daniel Wegner (1989) found that efforts to inhibit psychologically threatening thoughts actually exacerbate them, especially when a person is feeling depressed (p. 130). Herman (1992) asserted that atrocities "refuse to be buried Equally as powerful as the desire to deny atrocities is the conviction that denial does not work . . ." (p. 1). Perhaps Mike came to feel prisoner to his own thoughts, to sense that Vietnam was an ordeal he needed to confront, explore, and record for his own mental well-being. Yet if he first had had to speak what for him—for decades—was unspeakable, the words might never have come. The written word was the means that Mike chose to at last disclose

his pain and guilt. After two decades of wounded silence, Mike became ready to reveal, ready to write.

In my mind, writing made all the difference for Mike. Writing is dissimilar from talking in that it slows down the thinking process, forcing writers to organize their thoughts and follow them through to a logical conclusion (Pennebaker, 1990, p. 106). In painstakingly revising his paper, Mike came to the realization that “it really wasn’t my fault.” James Pennebaker (1990) reported that “repeatedly confronting an upsetting experience allows for a less emotionally laden assessment of its meaning and impact” (p. 106). Mike’s comments suggest that part of the reason his hurting went away was because he actively and repeatedly faced the trauma while drafting, reworking, and receiving feedback about the writing. He was absorbed in the paper for weeks. Gradually, his perspective changed. He became more detached and objective and eventually grew weary of thinking about the tragedy any longer.

While Mike’s original audience was me and the class, it quickly expanded to what for him was a much more important, much more valued set of readers—his family and friends. Indeed, it got to the point where he seemingly wanted everyone he came into contact with to read a story that, weeks before, he barely could talk about. With Mike’s paper, as with most other trauma-based student writing I have encountered, the most caring and useful responders were actually situated outside the classroom. There may occur empathetic and change-inducing interactions between writers and readers that are never known to the teacher whose assignment prompted the writing.

Across the classroom from Mike that fall sat a very quiet student I’ll call “Melanie.” Years before, she had endured severe physical and mental trauma while she and her two very young sons lived with an abusive man. The shame and emotional toll of those years still lingered, and she had never discussed her victimization with anyone. At long last, however, she chose to write about it. While I was the only one in our class with whom she wished to share her paper, I was not her most important reader. The audience she really sought to reach was the people she loved: her two boys, who had shared her hell, and her mother and husband, who hadn’t. As with Mike, I asked Melanie to reflect in writing on her production of the paper, and this is what she gave me:

While I was writing my story “Scared to be Happy” I had to stop a couple of times, to get myself together again. Some of the things I wrote I had blocked from my mind. The fear had never gone away though. After I typed my story, my oldest son, now eleven years old, read it. After reading it he began asking questions about different things that happened while we lived with that man. He never talked to me about these things until he read my story and found out how I felt about the whole mess. I have a hard time dealing with that part of my life. I never realized that my boys were afraid to talk to me about those awful years. This story helped me explain to my family how my life used to be, since I could never tell them....

In a later conversation, Melanie related that for years her sons wouldn’t talk

to her. The sharing of her paper, however, had made them more communicative. It was Melanie's analysis that her boys, by reading and discussing the writing, "... were able to see that, 'Hey, Mom's human. She feels these things, too.'"

Though post-traumatic dysfunctions of the sort that haunted Mike are often associated with men at war, these disorders are more common to "women in civilian life" (Herman, 1992, p. 28) such as Melanie—the victims of verbal, physical or sexual assault. As a graduate student conducting my master's thesis research, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview several articulate and courageous California State University, Chico students who had written in a junior-level writing class about such abuse.

A commonality these students shared with Mike and Melanie is that they had struggled with their haunting memories for long periods—years and even decades. As a teen-ager, "Brenda" had been the victim of incest—an especially heinous traumatization that can leave the survivor with disturbing and unresolved thoughts that last a lifetime (Silver, Boon, & Stones, 1983, pp. 96–97). Brenda had shouldered her burden for 25 years before writing "The Rape of ME"—a paper whose production she equated to "the cauterizing of a bleeding wound" (Waddell, 1994, p. 55).

Another Chico student, "Karen," who wrote of her physical abuse at the hands of a boyfriend in high school, recalled in an interview the feelings that had continued to hound her into her early 20s:

... These experiences kind of have been nagging at me, 'cause I felt like there's still an awfully lot of hatred in there for something that had happened ... what was it, seven years ago? And I felt like I couldn't get past it, and it really bothered me because ... I'm normally really a happy person ... But there was always this kind of nagging there; it was driving me crazy. And I felt like there were a lot of things that I never said to people that I wish I would have been able to ... things that just went unsaid ... because I was so beaten down ... by people's attitudes. Eventually, I stopped saying anything. There's an awful lot that I just never said. I felt like I had to get it out....(Waddell, 1994, pp. 55-56)

The verbal disclosure of traumatic events, the "getting it out" that Karen seemed compelled to accomplish, is a commonality of psychotherapeutic approaches. Pennebaker has shown that when people write about their own trauma, they are likely to improve not only their psychological health but their physical health as well. The act of putting pain on paper is difficult and affective—for some, such as Karen, a literal weeping before the word processor. Once past the initial wave of sadness, though, "talking or even writing about emotions or personal upheavals can boost autonomic nervous system activity, immune function, and physical health" (Pennebaker, 1995, p. xiii). Karen, in an interview with me on Feb. 16, 1993, recalled the emotion that accompanied her writing:

I was on my computer and my roommate came into the room and I was just bawling. I mean, I was just in tears. She just kind of looked

at me and she said, 'Are you OK?' And I said, 'Yeah, I think I'm going to be OK.'... I really wanted people to be able to feel what I was feeling and so in order to do that I had to go back, and I think that was really hard.... Because when you hide something for so long, you know, and you don't deal with it and you just try to cover it up and when you go back to actually dig through it again, it's really hard.

Writing teachers should have an understanding of what students are going through when they disclose their own pain. I suspect that teachers who students find trustworthy eventually will receive emotion-laden writing—whether they want to or not. Marilyn Valentino (1996) deliberately attempted to avoid assigning personal writing of any sort and was “shocked” (p. 277) by the deep pain her students revealed in responding to Langston Hughes’ “Harlem” and Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. Wendy Bishop (1993) pointed out that both expressivist pedagogies, which are associated with autobiographical writing, and social constructivist classrooms, which may ask students to consider such political issues as date rape, can elicit disturbing personal narratives (p. 508).

Tom Fox, a professor of English at California State University, Chico who advocates a politically active pedagogy (1990), was both surprised and concerned one semester when numerous students, including Brenda and Karen, wrote about their histories of sexual and physical abuse in his upper-division writing course (Waddell, 1994). These students had been assigned to write not a personal narrative per se but rather an essay on a meaningful topic they cared passionately about after reading and discussing the Michelle Cliff piece, “If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would Write This is Fire.” Fox could not explain why that specific assignment, that particular semester, generated such personally powerful papers (Waddell, 1994, p. 43).

Sexual assault, by its very nature, is a horrifying violation, an intentional infliction of psychological trauma. In the case of rape, the attacker’s purpose is to “terrorize, dominate and humiliate his victim, to render her utterly helpless” (Herman, 1992, p. 57). Sexual abuse is a personal defilement that, for the victim, has unfairly carried with it societal shame and stigma. Pennebaker (1990) has found sexual abuse to be among the most difficult types of trauma to confide to others (p. 30) and one whose victims has a high incidence of long-term health problems (p. 26). Understandably, Fox saw his handling of student papers about such subject matter as one of the greatest challenges of his teaching career (Waddell, 1994, p. 42).

Even though, as a writing instructor, Fox professes a strong aversion to therapeutic intentions, his “fire writers” agreed that his teacherly persona of gentleness created a nonthreatening environment in which they could safely open up (Waddell, 1994, pp. 28, 44–45).

“Tracy,” who wrote of a sexual assault that changed her life, vividly recalled many months later how Fox cradled her paper:

When I walked into his office he had gotten up and grabbed the paper and he held it with both his hands and he handed it over to me

and he said, "I wanted you to know that I cried when I read this." And I was like ... Because first of all, it's jumbled. I was not expecting that at all. And second of all, I made a male professor cry! That just doesn't happen. I was really set back by that, and he continued and he said, "I really feel like you have given me a gift by letting me read this and I just wanted to take care of it and hand it over to you." And I think that was definitely the biggest encouragement because not only was I affecting myself and women by exploring this experience, but I was also affecting a man and somebody whose opinion I very much value. Those two sentences he said to me ... I think that's why I had the several revisions was because when he said it was a gift, I wanted it to be a gift, so I wanted to make it the best I could. (Waddell, 1994, pp. 44-45).

Regardless of the composition theory a teacher may favor, no assignment—ever—should require (even subtly) students to write about the hurt in their lives. Personal-writing assignments should be open-ended enough to allow students to write about traumatic events—or to avoid them. Stories selected from anthologies or examples shared of previous student papers should not be strictly personal tragedies, lest students get the impression that self-disclosure of the same sort is the unspoken expectation.

An approach such as that advocated by Leslie Rex-Kerish (1985), urging students to pick painful topics they "definitely do not want to write about" (p. 3), is clearly wrong. Rex-Kerish even went so far as to select a "student guinea pig" to subject to some especially insensitive classroom interrogation that she hoped would yield "public soul-baring" (p. 2). And while I agree with Carole Deletiner (1992) that highly personal writing is appropriate for the college classroom—if handled with care—Deletiner's practice of aggressively prying into her students' lives crosses where I would draw the ethical line.

Swartzlander, Pace, and Stamler (1993) contend that writing assignments requiring "inappropriate self-revelation" (p. B1) are common in colleges and that instructors' highest grades often go to papers with the most emotionally charged topics. Basing grades on degree of disclosure rather than writing ability weakens academic rigor. Students should not receive "above average grades for writing 'tearjerkers' with poor form and careless errors" (Alton, 1993, p. 667). Where confession is pushed and prized, untraumatized students may feel forced to embellish or to outright fabricate stories to satisfy a teacher's craving for the dramatic.

Further, personally revealing writing could be used by predatory male faculty to identify the vulnerabilities of female students (Swartzlander et al., 1993). A sociologist at one university was denied tenure after female students claimed he "acted more like a psychotherapist than a professor, by inappropriately mining their written assignments for details about their private lives" (Wilson, 1997, p. A12). Clearly, teachers act unethically when they coercively or voyeuristically prey on their students' secrets.

While producing very personal writing may create more risks for students from predatory or insensitive faculty, the students I have taught and interviewed

universally reported positive experiences. Personal writing assignments have been a large part of the teaching of composition in America since the 1890s (Connors, 1987, p. 177). In developmental writing classes especially, telling personal stories allows students to "write what they know." Critics of a personal writing emphasis argue that having students write research papers is better preparation for succeeding in and making a contribution to society. Connors (1987), who advocates a middle ground, contends that personal writing is an "essential step" in discovering "that one has a right to speak, that one's voice and personality have validity" (p. 181).

Students, like other writers, are drawn to relating the salient events of their lives. Sometimes those events were traumatic, and the writer, after a long personal struggle, feels compelled to testify to the trauma, despite the pain and risk that accompany the production and sharing of such writing. Arthur Frank (1995) has discussed the story-telling compulsion in people who have endured bouts with life-threatening illness:

Becoming a witness assumes a responsibility for telling what happened. The witness offers testimony to a truth that is generally unrecognized or suppressed. People who tell stories of illness are witnesses, turning illness into moral responsibility. (p. 137)

In a nonthreatening environment, in a classroom that engenders a sense of safety, students likewise may choose to bear witness to the wounding, the hurting. While the primary purpose of a teacher of writing is not to engage in therapy, "student-teacher relationships have long been recognized as extending beyond a purely instructional to a psychological dimension" (Brand, 1980, p. 29). Alice G. Brand argues that teachers are uniquely situated to "engage in practices of a therapeutic nature" to the betterment of community mental health (1980, p. 43). Bishop (1993), noting the therapeutic impulse of writing, found composition students "savoring their texts and sharing them with friends and lovers" (p. 504). Silver et al. (1983) notes that "the absence of anyone in whom to confide seems to hamper the ability to find meaning" from some victimizing experiences (p. 97). The interpersonal relationship that best fosters recovery may not involve a therapist (Herman, 1992, p. 134); it could include a teacher and/or her writing assignment:

The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation. ... [The survivor] must be the author and arbiter of her own recovery. (Herman, 1992, p. 133)

I submit that therapeutic outcomes are inevitable in any student-centered classroom in which important personal writing is promoted and valued. I am honored when students use any of my assignments to write about painful episodes in their lives. I try to treat such papers with the respect and sensitivity they deserve,

though never losing sight of the objective of wanting the writing to be the very best it can be.

While a teacher's empathetic response may be sought and esteemed by students who produce emotion-laden texts, a therapeutic outcome is not dependent upon the teacher. I certainly don't try to solve personal problems, wouldn't know where to begin. Rather, I attempt to create a nonthreatening environment where students write personally meaningful papers. Sometimes the memories they produce are of traumatic events. When this occurs, I strive to be supportive and understanding, and to make careful judgments in consultation with the writer about how public the paper should become. Any healing that takes place occurs in the writing itself and in the path the writer chooses for her paper—in the therapeutic transactions involving certain chosen readers more valued to the student than any teacher could (or should) possibly be, i.e. family, friends, or acquaintances who have been similarly traumatized.

The last time I saw Mike, the Vietnam veteran, he told me that long ago there had been some mention of him receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross for his valor during the fatal mission. The whole notion of receiving a decoration while his comrade Jones had gone home in a body bag had repulsed Mike. But after writing his story, he decided to find out whether he actually earned the medal. It at last held some meaning for him.

What was most meaningful, though, was how the people he cared most about responded to his memory writing. Having his paper about extraordinary trauma received with understanding and empathy by a highly valued audience had moved Mike closer to his friends and family. The power of the written word—and how others responded to it—had helped a man scarred by war to shed his haunting memory. ☹

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REVIEWS

Olson, Gary A. and Hirsh, Elizabeth, Eds. 1995. *Women Writing Culture*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Zlotnik Schmidt, Jan, Ed. 1998. *Women/Writing/Teaching*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Katie Kane

In the somewhat overheated but essentially provocative and useful introductory analogy she deploys in her foreword to *Women Writing Culture*, Donna Haraway articulates the goals of the anthology of interviews using an elaborate metaphor of "marine invertebrates undergoing metamorphosis," as "... the written, collected, and published book of interviews becomes the finished scaffolding, the coralline reef, on which the next generations ... will settle. ..." (xii). Further, Haraway says that she hopes that "those who enter the nutrient web and replicative choreography of these interviews" will find an epistemological and practical reef comprised of "knowledge-crafting sedimentations [that] offer a host of promising sites to settle down and shape change" (xi). Insofar as this metaphor indicates that the objective of the text is to function as a resource for cultural workers and educators who are interested in exploring the relationship between literacy, culture, liberation, and writing for the sake of effecting progressive social change, the trope can, with important exceptions, be assented to. As well, the metaphor can even be extended to explain the similar aims of the other anthology under review here: Jan Zlotnick Schmidt's *Women/Writing/Teaching*. Indeed, both collections do provide a "reef" of support for projects that seek to assess, revise, and often subvert the practices and philosophies of the current late twentieth century Western educational status quo.

Among the six interviews and important frame material (foreword and afterword) of the Olson and Hirsh collection, of particular note for their engagement in the labor of creating (to use a phrase from Giroux's afterword) "a literacy that is ... responsive to history" (p. 196) are the conversations between bell hooks and her interlocutors, Olson and Hirsh, and between Donna Haraway and her interviewer, Olson. hooks is particularly good in her dialogic work at articulating an agenda of wide-ranging cultural criticism which responds to the lived experience of students. She is also particularly productive in insisting that educators take seriously their roles as literary activists: "I've found that we can't have formulaic teaching and we can't have formulaic syllabi, that you have to go into a situation willing to think about what the needs of the people in this situation are" (p. 119).

For her part, Haraway makes exceptionally clear and compelling the political and pedagogical ramifications of her concept of "cyborg writing." Claiming both a diagnostic and prescriptive function for the category of cyborg writing—

which reflects the “extraordinary role that communications systems and cybernetics play in our literacy practices” —Haraway explains how this mode of authorial production moves beyond traditional notions of the writer and the text: “I think cyborg writing is resolutely committed to foregrounding the apparatus of the production of its own authority . . . [to] foregrounding of the apparatus of the production of bodies, powers, meanings” (p. 50).

The interviews with Sandra Harding and Mary Belenky form interesting companion pieces with Haraway’s work in that all three scholars rigorously question the relationship among gender, social power, and the discourse of science. In addition, Belenky’s conference with Evelyn Ashton-Jones and Dene Kay Thomas includes extensive and direct discussion of her collaborative research and writing of *Women’s Ways of Knowing*. Of equal value is Harding’s identification, in talking with Hirsh and Olson, of the historically problematic relationship between experience and knowledge that feminist cultural workers inherit from Western epistemic systems. These various strands of public responsibility, cultural criticism, feminist politics, and pedagogical practice are productively rehearsed and underlined by Henry Giroux in his brief but motivational afterword.

Of less value in the Olson and Hirsh collection are the interviews with Jean-Francois Lyotard and Luce Irigaray. Although both pieces function as indices of the general origins of feminism and cultural critique in our only partially theorized “postmodern” epoch, the editors would have done better to include as well the voices of self-identified dyke and lesbian academics and activists for whom the terms “women, writing, and culture” have particular political and experiential impact. The overt homophobia of the concept of “the ethics of the couple” which Irigaray details in her interview with Hirsh, Olson, and Gaetan Brulotte (wherein the heterosexual pair is identified as “the most mysterious and creative couple”) is, by virtue of the absence of such voices, effectively left uncontested. This lack of lesbian expression was a very crucial, potentially deadly, oversight.

Jan Zlotnik Schmidt’s anthology *Women/Writing/Teaching* is equally exemplary and equally compromised in the supportive scaffolding it erects for its readers, scholars and educators in search of “autobiographical visions of our experience as women writers and as teachers” (xi). The collection represents 20 essays of autobiographical reflection on the lives of women as writers, readers, and teachers. Zlotnik Schmidt makes clear the logic of selection in her theoretically and bibliographically useful introduction to the anthology:

The essays . . . in this volume . . . arise out of a need to merge autobiographical reflection, contemplations of the writing life, and critical examination of our pedagogical practices in order to comprehend more fully our complex lives and struggles as feminist writing teachers in the academy. (p. 3)

In addition to the explicatory and definitional work that Zlotnik Schmidt does in the introduction, a comprehensive bibliography—Autobiography Studies and Feminist Theory and Pedagogy and Composition Studies—is provided for the edification of the reader.

The autobiographical form is a potent genre for the communication of the pleasure, power, and occasional stifling quality of writing for women. Lynn Z. Bloom's composition "Teaching College English as a Woman" is exemplary here. In the piece she explicates the violence and silencing she experienced as a woman in the academy; in the culminating section of her text Bloom details her escape from a rapist—a story she subsequently and productively narrates to a Women Writers class. One of the strengths of the anthology is the multiplicity of voices the editor has gathered together and put into conversation with one another. The voices of mothers and daughters who write and teach (Elaine and Gillian Maimon) are present, as are the articulations of working class women who came painfully and late to the project of education (Karen Ann Chafee). In addition, this anthology speaks with the inflections of women linguistically marginal to the dominant forms of writing in the U.S. academy (Judith Ortiz Cofer and Min-Zhan Lu) and with the cadences of women whose racial and ethnic heritage make the act of writing and reading a form of radical praxis (bell hooks, Diane Glancy). However, amid the considerable and admirable autobiographical diversity of *Women/Writing/Teaching* there are no autobiographical essays by self-identified lesbians which talk directly and primarily about the activities of reading, writing, and teaching under the coercive terms of a heterosexist culture.

It is surprising at this historical juncture in which the structures and institutions of Western "patriarchy" are recognized as resting in part on the ideologies of homophobia and on the backs of lesbian women and gay men that two texts which take this patriarchal history as an object of critique and as a matter requiring action fail to understand how the category of lesbian is important to consider along with the classification of "the female." Women, writing, culture, and teaching cannot be adequately thought in the late-twentieth century without conscious and concerted inclusion of lesbian voices. ☺

Childers, Pamela B., Hobson, Eric, and Mullin, Joan A. 1998. *ARTiculating: Teaching Writing in a Visual World*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Sheryl Mylan

For most of us, the everyday world is largely visual. We can hardly escape the barrage of images, whether at work where so many people use multimedia- or graphics-oriented computers, or at home, where the television is a major source of news and advertising as well as of entertainment. So the information we learn, products we desire, and stories we tell about ourselves often come to us through a visual medium. For that reason alone, we in the verbally-based academic world should examine the role of the visual in instruction. This is precisely what Pamela Childers, Eric Hobson, and Joan Mullin do in their exceptionally helpful book, *ARTiculating: Teaching Writing in a Visual World*.

Childers, Hobson, and Mullin take up the challenge issued by the NCTE Board in 1996 to recognize visual literacy and explore its relationship to learning. One of the key assumptions upon which this text is based—that the visual image precedes language—separates their work from other approaches which simply add visual approaches, such as an occasional movie or slides, to serve as an accompaniment to instruction, or sometimes as diversion. The writers of this text know that a substantial percentage of students do not respond well to verbal instruction, but that most students, even those with high verbal skills, benefit from visual/verbal methods of writing instruction.

This assumption is based upon neurobiological and cognitive research, which the writers discuss, albeit briefly, while keeping their focus on pedagogical applications. The research indicates that visual images precede language because of their efficiency as storage units in the brain, and that language ability derives not from a separate organ but from relatively minor neural rewiring of parts of the visual system. In short, the visual/verbal neural wiring means that visual experience enhances verbal skills and cognition.

This knowledge is a major premise from which exercises, course designs, and faculty development workshops described in the eight chapters flow. Each chapter is followed by a Response, in which one of the three writers of this text discusses some of the benefits of the approach and why s/he likes it, successful applications, and other contexts in which it could work. The chapter and response design is a particularly inviting format, especially since the writers recognize that writing teachers' discomfort with the visual often mirrors students' unease with the verbal. The Response sections help situate the reader as part of the conversation about this new pedagogy. As a result, the activities described in the chapters are not so much prescriptive as they are the impetus to other new ideas.

The activities in these chapters range from the simple to the complex. One such simple task, which can be used for any grade level from elementary school through the university, involves creating name tags to facilitate an understanding of audience and ethos or self-representation in writing. A technique which can be used throughout a course is to encourage students to use visuals in their journals.

Another approach practiced by college-level writing students, which can be the basis for an entire course or one project, is to use art postcards to lead students through writings on observation, storytelling, cultural context, and critical and aesthetic reception.

A more complex use of the visual was presented in a course in which students visited the Toledo Museum of Art, which resembles a Greek temple, and the adjacent Center for Visual Arts, a postmodern construction which proved disconcerting for many of the students. After the visit, students compared the buildings and how each met or frustrated their expectations for design—how one entered or exited, where rooms were located, how visitors navigated the building, and other concerns. Then they compared the Toledo Museum of Art with a traditional approach to writing, and the CVA with a contemporary approach to writing which emphasizes risk-taking and exploration. The teachers using this approach found that it gave students a visual vocabulary to see new ways to construct their writing. Out of the course came the idea of the “footprint,” an approach which gives students a tangible metaphor for the structure of their writing. They can walk around buildings on campus to learn the same lessons students visiting the museums did. Whether students are visual or verbal learners, walking around in a building and “walking” around in a text can help them understand the ways in which structure facilitates understanding.

One of the most intriguing approaches to visual/verbal learning is demonstrated in the design of a team-taught WAC course titled, “Hallowed Ground: Monuments, Memory and the American Civil War.” Studio arts students and art history students studied the Battle of Gettysburg, learned about memorial ceremonies and monument production during the late nineteenth century, and then, in groups, produced their own bronze monuments and wrote their own dedication speech, each to a single unit that fought at Gettysburg. Students took trips not only to local cemeteries to examine, sketch, and write about monuments, but also visited Gettysburg, where they spent several days seeing various points on the battle site and monuments commemorating actions of the troops. Obviously, a course like this demands a highly orchestrated effort among faculty and student participants and a substantial cost; but the benefits, one can well imagine, are profound. The verbal practices of reading and writing deepen students’ analysis of the visual, while their visual study and production enhance their reading and writing. In her Response to the chapter, Pamela Childers discusses variations on the course which can work in other contexts, such as visits to local public statues for a history class or an early American literature class, trips to a city art museum or photographic display, or even a study of political cartoons. Designing such a course, where the visual element is integral to the students’ work rather than grafted on, helps break down the dichotomy which privileges the verbal/mental over the visual/physical. But, more important, it stimulates verbal development because it makes use of the natural connection in the brain between sight and language.

Whether writing teachers are interested in elaborate course designs like the Hallowed Ground course or in simpler approaches, they will find something valuable in this text. It encourages us to articulate the meaning of the world by reading the world as a text, but, wisely, it demonstrates that this text is both verbal and visual. 

Jerome Bump

Daniel Goleman's best selling summary of research beyond the cognitive domain is useful to members of AEPL because it validates our concerns and pushes our issues into the mainstream. Goleman adopts the definition of emotional intelligence by the Yale psychologist, Peter Salovey: [1] knowing one's emotions, [2] managing emotions, [3] motivating oneself, [4] recognizing emotions in others, [5] handling relationships. Salovey has subsumed in these categories Howard Gardner's earlier theory of multiple intelligences that provided so much support for AEPL, including the interpersonal, intrapsychic, spatial, kinesthetic, and musical.

Reading Goleman's book is like hearing a medley of AEPL themes: emphasis on our humanity, the heart (in current idiom, the right side of the brain), the power of prelinguistic, nonverbal modes of understanding, inner guides, concentration, creativity, flow, nonjudgmental self-awareness, empathy, active listening, relaxation and yoga techniques, writing as healing, among others. Goleman makes connections to the usual subjects of English courses: "the emotional mind's special symbolic modes: metaphor and simile, along with poetry, song, and fable, are all cast in the language of the heart. So too are dreams and myths, in which loose associations determine the flow of narrative, abiding by the logic of the emotional mind" (p. 54). He accents the creation of a caring community, with strong emphasis on cooperation and teamwork, and devotes a whole chapter to empathy. Spirituality is not discussed directly, but "flow" is related to the "classic literature of contemplative traditions," and presented as "A New Model for Education" (pp. 92-95).

The value of this book for the K-12 members of AEPL is fairly obvious. Goleman documents rising rates of aggression and depression in the schools and cites examples of successful emotional intelligence programs such as the Social Competence Program at Troup Middle School in Connecticut, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program in the New York City public school system, the Child Development Project in Oakland, the PATHS curriculum in Seattle, and the Self Science class at the Nueva Learning Center in Hillsborough, California. Goleman concludes that "the next step is to take the lessons learned from such highly focused programs and generalize them as a preventive measure for the entire school population, taught by ordinary teachers" (p. 263).

One of the weaknesses of the book is that Goleman does not spell out what responsibilities colleges also have in this movement. The goals remain relevant to college courses: "An emerging strategy in emotional education is not to create a new class, but to blend lessons on feelings and relationships with other topics already taught. Emotional lessons can merge naturally into reading and writing," for example, and most classes can include "basic study skills such as how to put aside distractions, motivate yourself to study, and manage your impulses so you can attend to learning" (pp. 271-272). Fortunately, others have already picked up the baton and carried it on to the college campus. In 1994, Jeffrey Berman, for

example, in his pioneering *Diaries to an English Professor*, concluded that though “few literary critics, apart from feminists, reader-response critics, and composition theorists, have recognized the affective components of knowledge . . . effective teaching is . . . affective teaching . . . Classroom discussions of literature awaken intense emotions within teachers and students alike—love, hate, passion, jealousy, fear—and these emotions cannot be relegated to ‘guidance counseling’” (p. 226).

Many of the basic arguments in the book will be familiar to members of AEPL who know one of our founders: Alice G. Brand. She talked to us about the importance of the brain research of Joseph Ledoux, whom Goleman cites at length, at our workshop at the CCCC Preconference Workshop in Milwaukee in 1996. Moreover, Goleman would have had a better sense of the history of his movement if he had consulted Brand’s books. At one point Goleman states,

The emotional-literacy courses have some remote roots in the affective-education movement of the 1960’s. The thinking then was that psychological and motivational lessons were more deeply learned if they involved an immediate experience of what was being taught conceptually. The emotional-literacy movement, though, turns the term *affective education* inside out—instead of using affect to educate, it educates affect itself. (p. 262)

Had Goleman consulted Brand’s *Therapy in Writing: A Psycho-Educational Experience* (1980) he might have acknowledged more fully the debt of the emotional intelligence movement to the affective education movement.

Brand showed that teacher education experts in the 30s and 40s became “convinced that education and mental hygiene were one and the same thing” and in the 50s humanistic psychologists believed “therapy could take place not only behind closed doors but . . . in school and community settings as well” (1980, pp. 31–32). The focus even then was on emotional literacy. Brand cites Redl and Wattenberg, for example: “that the teacher can and must assume some share of responsibility for the emotional as well as the intellectual development of his students is today a truism” (quoted in Brand, 1980, p. 36). Nor was the program limited to students. Carl Rogers (1961) stressed that “in the school context, the first essential was that teachers reveal themselves in honest ways and exhibit the range of feelings that differentiate living persons from ‘automatons’” (p. 19; Brand, 1980, p. 33). Brand documents the persistence of this movement into the 1970s.

Rather than showing how this movement was turned inside out, Goleman has documented its flowering in the 90s and demonstrated that it is even more crucial as we move into the twenty-first century. His extensive documentation of studies of the difference between normal academic intelligence and emotional intelligence and the importance of the latter for mental health in general and education, social competence, business, intimate relationships, and physical health in particular, provide members of AEPL with the evidence they need to convince their more skeptical colleagues of the value and significance of our concerns. ☺

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