

ScholarWorks@GSU

Writing and Wellness, Emotion and Women: Highlighting the Contemporary Uses of Expressive Writing in the Service of Students

Authors	Greene, Cantice G
Citation	Greene, Cantice G. "Writing and Wellness, Emotion and Women: Highlighting the Contemporary Uses of Expressive Writing in the Service of Students." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2010. https://doi.org/10.57709/1664214
DOI	https://doi.org/10.57709/1664214
Download date	2026-06-06 20:06:04
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14694/5193

WRITING AND WELLNESS, EMOTION AND WOMEN: HIGHLIGHTING THE
CONTEMPORARY USES OF EXPRESSIVE WRITING IN THE SERVICE OF STUDENTS

by

CANTICE GREENE

Under the Direction of Lynée Lewis Gaillet

ABSTRACT

In an effort to connect women's spiritual development to the general call for professors to reconnect significantly with their students, this dissertation argues that expressive writing should remain a staple of the composition curriculum. It suggests that the uses of expressive writing should be expanded and explored by students and professors of composition and that each should become familiar with the link between writing and emotional wellness. In cancer centers, schools of medicine, and pregnancy care centers, writing is being used as a tool of therapy. More than just a technique for helping people cope with the stresses of loss, pain, and abuse, teaching personal writing techniques enables writers to transfer their skill in writing narratives to other forms of writing, including the more traditional academic essay. By presenting interdisciplinary blending of composition and performance studies, the discussion introduces contemporary tools of writing that engage digital environments and digital storytelling techniques already familiar to students. An important highlight of the research, that allowing students to treat personal themes

in the writing classroom boosts students' overall academic performance, is a discussion relevant to professors outside of the English department. Spurred by the public health calls for intervention in the HIV and HPV spread on minority, tribal, and HBCU campuses, the essay also considers the appropriateness of offering the Life-Support Class (a mainstay of Pregnancy Care Centers) in campus clinics. The subject of emotion is treated in the essay in relation to women's relationships on campus and the evasion and stigmatization of emotion among professors in the academic setting. Further, the essay highlights research which suggests that a fear of feminist retaliation interferes with campus psychologists' recommendations for the best outcomes for sexual health. This dissertation follows the trend of feminist research methodology by explicitly exposing the author's hopes and goals, which connect women's spiritual formation to expressive writing.

INDEX WORDS: Expressive writing, Expressivism, Personal writing, Women, Healing, Narrative, Personal essay, Composition, Wellness, Women's Studies, Feminist, Pedagogy, Crisis pregnancy, Pregnancy care center, Feminism

WRITING AND WELLNESS, EMOTION AND WOMEN: HIGHLIGHTING THE
CONTEMPORARY USES OF EXPRESSIVE WRITING IN THE SERVICE OF STUDENTS

by

CANTICE G. PAYTON

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of

Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2010

Copyright by
Cantice Greene
2010

WRITING AND WELLNESS, EMOTION AND WOMEN: HIGHLIGHTING THE
CONTEMPORARY USES OF EXPRESSIVE WRITING IN THE SERVICE OF STUDENTS

by

CANTICE GREENE

Committee Chair: Lynée Lewis Gaillet

Committee: Nancy Chase

Mary Lamb

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

December 2010

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to women who are vitally a part of others' lives, especially mothers, wives, heads of households, ministers, instructors, teachers, daughters, activists, CEO's and friends. I also dedicate this work to my husband, Minister Darrell Greene, who endured me as I worked hard to finish and to my babies: Simeon, who came halfway through the journey, Timothy, whose birth coincided with the start of it, and their big brother Joshua, who was two years old when mommy went back to school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to acknowledge the great teachers and mentors in my life, Gwendolyn Joy Payton (mama—for establishing education as a priority in my life), Dr. Lyneé Gaillet, Dr. Patricia Dunkel, Dr. George Pullman, Dr. John Murphy, Dr. Latona Disher, Rev. Dean Cynthia Meyer, Ms. Dij Jones, Professor Ray Grant, Dr. Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper, and Rev. Dr. Bryan E. Crute. I thank Fran Wiggins, Lori Parker and the workers at Cobb Pregnancy Services for allowing me to be a part of their Life Support Class. I also have to give a shout out to my girls, Andrea, Cornelia, Kia, Margaret, Olu, Sole, Tarez, and Wanda, whose friendship made this work possible. I thank my Small Group, Sarah, Lavonne, Lashon, Belinda, Skip, Marietta, Vivieon, Tarchar, Ruth, and Jennifer whose prayers made a difference. I thank my brother Sebastian for his unwavering confidence in my ability to complete this study and my dad, Robert Payton, who paid my tuition at a critical time. Lastly, I thank my brother, Clearthur, my sister Gina, and my family in Phoenix, Arizona and elsewhere who provided me support and encouragement to continue my studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
1 EXPRESSIVE WRITING: THE BATTLE TO BELONG	9
1.1 Students as a Focus of the Movement	10
1.2 Expressivism’s New Faces	19
1.3 Emotion Emerges as a Subject	30
2 THE BRIDGE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE: DISCOVERING THERAPEUTIC WRITING METHODOLOGIES	36
2.1 Treating Emotion in the Classroom	58
3 FEMINISM, COMPOSITION, AND STEPS TOWARD INTERVENTION IN YOUNG WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT	67
3.1 Spiritual Realities	69
3.2 Women’s Academic Realities in Composition: A Literature Review of Types of Writing and Research	70
3.3 Collaboration: Women and Shared Voice in Writing	74
3.4 Women’s Relational Realities on Campus	81
3.5 In Search of Relational Empowerment	83
3.6 From Literature to Intervention	84
3.7 From Intervention to Prevention	88
3.8 Survey of Composition Types and Responses to Composition	94
3.9 Limitations of the Survey	97

4	EMOTIONAL REPRESSION AS THE SELF-SELECTED RESEARCH SUBJECT	99
4.1	Women Writing of Sex and Emotion	101
5	COMPOSITION AND WOMEN'S STUDIES: CONVERGENCE IN EXPRESSIVE PEDAGOGY	116
5.1	Student Performance	116
5.2	Student Health, Trauma, and Effective Writing-based Therapies	121
5.3	Written Disclosure in Print and Online Media	130
5.4	Dealing with Emotion	131
5.5	Medicine, Narrative, and Empathy	133
5.6	Mentoring and Composition: Expressive Roots	135
	APPENDIX	144
	WORKS CITED	146

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the connection between writing and wellness was instinctively known. Ancient biblical scripture reports, “They overcame him [the Devil] by the blood of the lamb and the *word of their testimony*” (Rev. 12:11, italics mine). But years of deconstruction, professionalization of the word, and the science of knowing have so muddied our memories that many writing teachers now doubt what was once intuitive—that there is a connection between writing and wellness. In the last forty years, composition teachers have been some of the loudest critics of writing that is characterized as therapeutic, writing that is personal and expressive. In a field whose founding has invigorated the teaching and study of writing, their ardent criticism of expressive writing not only prevents innovative projects from being launched in academic curricula, it splinters the unity of composition and English departments into faculty who are enthusiastic about the therapeutic benefits of narrative or personal writing, those who only cynically acknowledge the genre and those who, due to ignorance, challenge its appropriateness in the curriculum at all. To bypass this blockage, scholars of writing are conducting community projects outside of the academy, which demonstrate that writing is not only a performative function, but that it is an imaginative and transformative tool which corresponds to the holistic wellness of the author herself.

At a recent CCCC conference, Ann Jurecic presented her research in wellness and writing by highlighting the program in Narrative and Medicine at Columbian Presbyterian Hospital. In “Writing out of the Classroom” Jurecic discussed the ways that communication has been enhanced between patients and doctors and the ways that doctors reported improved performance after participating in narrative projects. Jurecic’s presentation cited the director of the program, Rita Charon, as aptly noting “narrative medicine is a means for bringing humanistic practices

into often rigid ones.” Another composition scholar, Mary Ellen Bertolini, is also passionate about her projects within the writing to heal movement in composition. Her writing and healing themed course, developed in response to the deaths of four students of color at her university, resulted in a booklet presented to the families of the girls on the anniversary of their deaths. Bertolini’s course explores writing as a catalyst for healing after loss or grief, using psychologist James Pennebaker’s *Opening Up* as a central text among others. Lisa Brush and Lorraine Higgins partnered to conduct an experiment in narrative to highlight the connection between writing and wellness from a critical pedagogical approach. The product of their work, women’s personal experience narratives, would speak to policy makers and impact new Welfare or TANF legislation. One of the program participant’s comments has stuck with me for these now years since I first encountered the project. The participant, Jule’s, retrospective said,

“What if...Older women/teachers/mentors in my life had counseled me earlier about relationships? I might have felt more secure and savvy when dealing with my boyfriends. What if all young women were counseled in this way?”

To her question, I add, What if all young women were instructed to counsel themselves through writing? What if, through their composition courses, they were exposed to research indicating the therapeutic benefits of personal writing, and subsequently trained to engage the form during their most transformative period, the college years? Higgins and Brush’s project determined to train a selected group of former and current recipients of welfare to write stories that avoided the typical hero and villain theme often associated with life writing. The article “Personal Experience Narrative and Public Debate” describes their techniques which included initiating revisions in more advanced writers.

Each of these projects by Jurecic, Bertolini, and Higgins and Brush speak to an affective need: understanding between doctors and patients, emotional recovery after death, and emotional, social, and economic recovery in the event of unplanned motherhood. In each project, composition researchers reached outside of their occupational location, a university, to meet a need. Their actions invite other composition teachers to question whether current apparatus exist whereby the university can play a more central role in meeting the affective needs of its community. The answer, intuitive to some and surprising to others, is that the university's historic purpose remains to claim the imagination of its community in boundless ways. That historic mandate provides many instructors the framework for progressing with their projects that aim to meet the affective or "felt" needs of their students and extended communities. In composition, dealing with emotion and ethics is part of our rhetorical origin, and many are reclaiming that history through an interdisciplinary approach of theory on emotion fused with an ethical pedagogy.

University teaching in the United States was never meant to be an enterprise that focused on the intellectual growth of the student in a way that neglected the student's moral and emotional faculties. Beginning with Harvard, the first colleges in the US were explicitly religious and overtly concerned with the student's moral formation and its practical implication in society. B. Edward McClellan's *Moral Education in America* revealed that "The Puritan founders of Harvard College (1636) believed that educated rulers and clergymen would [...] set the moral tone of the society" (6). Professors in the early university of the United States understood teaching and interaction with the student to be their primary activities. Ernest Boyer's often cited *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990), a book-length work calling for the transformation of the American University, notes that the first professors in America, those of the colonial period,

“took a view of collegiate life that focused on the student—on building character and preparing new generations for civic and religious leadership” (3). Through a review of primary literature Boyer traced this prevailing view from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century when agricultural and technical colleges emerged out of a changing society. He notes that The Morrill Act of 1862, which was later called the Land Grant College Act, introduced the concept of education as a “democratic function to serve the common good...” (5). Through this reconsideration of education, he notes that the function of service was added to the professor’s once primary role of teaching. Boyer then illustrates that by the late nineteenth century the American system of higher education, inspired by German innovation, devoted itself to research. That third pillar of professorial duty, university research, gained privilege late into the twentieth century and is still the one most influential to the paradigms and missions of universities today. Unfortunately, the duty of university research is sometimes misapplied as a reason to neglect students in classroom teaching or to neglect their affective needs.

Scholarship Reconsidered presents an important historical summary of the origins and transitions of US universities, and the Boyer Commission notably recommends that universities balance attention to research with other professorial obligations, including that of making significant relationships between students and society. These recommendations were based on previous study of undergraduate education, namely the 1987 and 1989 National Study of Faculty, initiated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The details of the faculty responses were recorded in forty-five pages of charts that followed the Commission’s summary of proposed changes. One of the notable statistics within those pages of data is that, of all respondents, 70% indicated that their interests lie primarily in teaching, while 30% named research as their primary interest. Category responses, divided between professors at research,

doctorate-granting, comprehensive, liberal arts, and two-year colleges reveal more telling statistics. Thirty-three percent of professors at research and 55% at doctorate-granting institutions indicated that they were interested primarily in teaching, but those at comprehensive (77%), liberal arts (83%) and two-year colleges (93%) were overwhelmingly interested primarily in teaching. This statistic came at a time when, as Boyer described, the trend was for all colleges to adopt identities that mirrored research university priorities.

The emphasis on research related institutional prestige often tends to displace the more personal role of the professor as teacher and mentor and threatens to drive some faculty from their positions within the university unless tenure and promotion parameters recognize the work that professors do that directly impacts students. Reform in the parameters of tenure and promotion continues to surface in the works reviewing writing program administration (Dew and Horning 2007, Enos and Borrowman 2008) and by the administrators themselves who recognize that the work of teaching writing often carries with it time elapsing duties that are may not be captured in tenure and promotion guidelines. Eugene Rice noted in “Beyond Scholarship Reconsidered” (2007) that especially within research or tier one institutions, the value of publication so outweighs other considerations of promotion and tenure that it interferes with the professor’s ability to focus on teaching excellence. Each of these issues is significant in the convergence of wellness, writing, emotion and the college student. The histories of US education provided by Boyer and McClellan establish the moral roots of the university, and Boyer’s pillars of the professoriate direct us to value teaching, service, research and collaboration equally in the university community. The university’s historical purpose to tend to the students’ imagination matches the primary desire of many college teachers to mentor students, developing them through interaction. The community projects by composition scholars culminate the theme by

pushing the boundaries of research and scholarship in projects which attend to both affective needs and intellectual development. These realities weigh heavily on the direction of this work.

At the time when policymakers were exposing the weaknesses of an imbalanced university approach that privileged research, rhetoric was making its comeback in the university curriculum as a part of the English department, and a subset of composition faculty was developing an approach to teaching that would place the student at the center of the educational enterprise. Scholars in the emerging field of rhetoric and composition were responding to the crisis of bureaucratic rigidity and/or stagnation in the university by returning to the humanistic origins of the field. Fueled by 1960s cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner, some in composition developed teaching philosophies that valued approaches that focused on the inner processes of a writer's mind. In English departments, this approach began to develop into what is known today as expressive pedagogy.

Expressive pedagogy is uniquely designed to position the student as an integral participant in the intellectual enterprise. In contrast to the structuralist literary theories that declared the death of the writer, expressivism places the writer in the center of the composing process as a basis from which to build her perspective of ideas which originate outside of her. This approach answers the call for professors to re-engage with students. In an era when the English Department struggles to find unifying theories, assumptions, and approaches, expressivism, if properly understood, can become one of those unifiers. As others have argued (Bump 2000, Johnson 2000) expressivism should be welcomed within a humanities department that finds its roots in a whole-person approach to education. But whether or not more professors within the English department embrace the role that expressivism has to play in strengthening a student's academic footing, as Allen argues (2000), those who recognize its value (especially

professors in Women's Studies and Psychology) are pleased with the results that come by placing this approach in their toolboxes.

Like Jurecic, Bertolini, Higgins and Brush, and others I recognize that theories and approaches in composition prepare us to conceptualize projects that are silently forbidden. Despite the slow acknowledgement of the place of emotion, writer-centered composing, and the university's responsibility to enter politically incorrect discussions, many continue to connect significantly to the communities that matter the most to them (to us) or to those who glare at us in need. From that perspective, this work will accomplish four goals: connect personal writing from the writing to heal movement to the expressivist tradition, show why expressivism persists despite consistent attack from within the ranks of composition faculty, tie the significance of expressivism to the goals of women's studies disciplines and the university as an institution, and highlight several projects which allow students to engage emotion and personal writing in university and community settings.

Chapter one defends personal writing by reaccessing the critical work by Sherrie Gradin in *Romancing Rhetorics* (1995). Following the lead of Gradin and drawing on the work of Lynn Bloom (1998), Thomas Newkirk (1997) and others, I position personal or expressive writing squarely within the goals of composition, while noting its sufficiency and effectiveness in other fields. Like others who encourage personal writing, I refer to its therapeutic benefits, which have been exposed through the work of writing therapy research psychologist James Pennebaker (1992, 2002, 2007); drawing ties from his work, I refer to contemporary moves by composition instructors to develop an "informed practice" of the personal or expressive writing that has been termed "writing as healing." This discussion comprises all of chapter two. In chapter three, I give a brief overview of feminist composition studies, its goals, strategies and the similarities

which allow women's studies and composition studies to collaborate seamlessly. I begin here to narrow the discussion to a focus on women. Women and wellness become my primary issue in my effort to bring together my academic research goals in composition and my personal attachment to women's spiritual and emotional development. Chapter four, which began as a comparison of the shared goals of women's studies and composition departments, develops into an inquiry into the assault on emotion as it takes form in women's contemporary literature, asking whether the attack on emotion is a masked attack on what is considered feminine. My assumption is that the attack on emotion is the new oppression of women that has emerged since the women's and sexual revolutions of the 60s, 70s and beyond. I finally suggest, in chapter five, that graduate students training to teach women's studies could benefit from more direct treatment of emotion, rhetoric and expressive writing practices. Specifically, I build on suggestions by Michelle Payne, Laura Micciche and others regarding treating emotion and pathos to highlight the tools for responding to emotion¹ writing. Within this chapter I highlight the work that I have done in small community groups of women and in an all women's classroom at a women's college. I report on my own assignments and a short survey, which I developed to analyze the type of responses that faculty offer to students who engage the personal essay or use "emotioned" writing. Finally, in an effort to connect this scholarship with my larger community concerns, I will suggest ways for a "Life Support" class to be implemented on campus as a tool to foster women's wellness during the current STD and STI epidemics that rage on college campuses throughout the United States.

¹ "Emotioned" is a term coined by Laura Micciche to represent the "active role that writers in the field [of composition] take in crafting pedagogical practices and theories" (3). Taken from Micciche's *Doing Emotion*.

EXPRESSIVE WRITING: THE BATTLE TO BELONG

Despite our best intentions, professors and university policymakers will always need reminders that the work of the university should impact students and communities holistically. A real or perceived sense of elitist exclusivity among university students and professors is one of the factors that inspired the development of expressive writing pedagogy. The pedagogy emerged in the 1960's as a movement to empower the student, encourage imaginative writing, and reclaim the personal voice and/or subject in writing in the academy. The affective education movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the 1950s research of Abraham Maslow in psychology, and composition's self-described "writers" (Elbow 1974, Murray 1968, Macrorie 1974, Coles 1974) converged around an objective to enlarge the view of academic writing as something that would be more than the sum of stylistic, grammatical and syntactical parts.

Arguably, in many ways, early expressive approaches were a response to the diminutive status of rhetoric in the academy. Expressive writing pedagogy paralleled the reemergence of rhetoric as the root and art behind the teaching of composition in English departments in the expanding US university system. Maureen Goggin (2000) and Ross Winterowd (1995) remind us in their histories of the subject, that rhetoric, which had once been a principle course at Harvard and other pioneering colleges and taught with attention to the five pillars of invention, style, organization, memory, and delivery, had over time been reduced to a composition course focusing on only the practical concerns of grammatical correctness, organizational sequence and some vague sense of style borrowed from the favored author of the day. The more authorial concerns of writing tended not to be prioritized in the customary composition course, at least not directly. As pioneers of expressive pedagogy, composition teachers Ken Macrorie (*Uptaught* 1970) and Donald Murray (*Writer* 1968) reacted to the product of what came to be known as

current-traditional composition instruction. Macrorie made popular the term “Engfish” to characterize writing that was inflated in vocabulary and syntax, void of personal subjection, and generally void of the tenets that make writing more than the sum of linguistic, stylistic, and grammatical formulas. The desire of early expressivists to teach writing from a writer’s perspective and to improve the status of the student within the academy characterized early explanations of the approach. The prevailing thought, explained by Macrorie in *Uptaught* can also be summarized this way, some students and professors believed that a certain level of educational progress meant necessarily rejecting the mundane and personal for a treatment of things considered ethereal. The result is a student disconnect from self and disjointed writing. By envisioning the writing in composition courses as real writing that would be encountered by real readers in magazines, journals, and books, etc. instructors hoped to re-infuse writing and the student with imagination, a theme that resurfaced during the period, in college writing in Ann Berthoff’s *Reclaiming the Imagination* (1984) and Sherrie Gradin’s “The Imagination for the Classroom” in *Romancing Rhetorics* (1995), and administration in the work edited by Martin Kaplan, *The Monday Morning Imagination* (1976), written by and for top university administrators.

Students as the Focus of the Movement

Early expressivists identified with the movement for different reasons. As recorded in Maureen Goggin’s *Authoring a Discipline*, particularly during the period when he served as editor of *CCC*, Ken Macrorie’s controversial decision to publish student writing was motivated by his desire to empower the student. Peter Elbow, one of the central theorists and practitioners of expressivism, revealed reflectively years later in *Everyone Can Write* (2000) that his purpose

in life (and subsequently his work) has been to change the academy to be more inclusive, “to attend to more of the human creature.” Alternately, James Britton and colleagues, in *The Development of Writing Ability 11-18 (1975)* became connected with the movement when their work revealed that in their writing, students were not using all of the writing methods available to them. These researchers observed that students focused on writing ninety percent of the time in a participant or a spectator role (in poetry for example), but rarely if at all used the expressive mode which enabled them to act as participants and spectators simultaneously in their writing. For these various reasons, this hodgepodge of early thinkers formed an approach to teaching writing that connected back to the author at a time when the desires, purpose, and style of the author was losing its consideration within the rhetorical lens.

In one popular bibliographic essay illuminating the pedagogy, Christopher Burnham aptly classified expressivism’s roughly thirty year existence from the late 1960s to the late 1990s into a period of Antitextbooks, Expressivist Commentaries, Britton’s Expressive Function, Ideological Critiques and Theoretical Defenses, and Synthesis (22-33). In “Expressive Pedagogy: Practice/Theory, Theory Practice” (2000), what stands out among the years of expressivist practice, besides the mention of Britton et al.’s noteworthy research-based theory of the mode, are the corresponding critiques of the approach, which become a sort of mantra of critics of the pedagogy.

As this movement, which in later years stood squarely against the one to “kill the writer,” began catching momentum, it began to be criticized in academic literature for being less than scholarly (Berlin 1982, Faigley 1992). In Burnham’s classification of expressive pedagogy, a principal criticism was the lack of theory generated by expressivist pedagogues. However, as Burnham noted, the research of James Britton et al. could not be ignored. These researchers

described expressivism as a mode which was advanced and flexible in its relation to writing in other modes. Britton et al. wrote about the expressive (a term he attributes to the work of Edward Sapir (1961) mode of composition based on their review of the writing of 11-18 year old students at the University of London Institute. They noted that the expressive mode is one in which the writer can assume the position of both spectator and participant, which perhaps foreshadowed articulations of the expressive feature serving both a subjective and objective, or private and public function. Borrowing from British psychologist D.W. Harding, Britton and other researchers describe the roles of spectator and participant in writing; they correspond respectively to that of the transactional and poetic functions where the spectator is detached, “generating hypothesis without the intention of putting them to the test” and the poet is able to give principle attention to forms (80). At length, Britton and cooperating researchers describe expressive writing as:

- (a) The kind of writing that might be called ‘thinking aloud on paper.’ Intended for the writer’s own use, it might be interpreted by a reader who had shared much of the earlier thinking, but it could not be understood by one who was not ‘in context.’
- (b) The kind of diary entry that attempts to record and explore the writer’s feelings, mood, opinions, preoccupations of the moment.
- (c) Personal letter written to friends or relations for the purpose of maintaining contact with them (as a substitute, so to speak, for being with them). Where the writer deals with his own affairs and preoccupations, the letter may read very like the diary entry, and a close relationship with the reader is claimed or assumed by regarding him as a ‘second self.’ At other times the writer may more actively invoke a close relationship with his

reader, firstly by importing references to shared experiences in highly implicit terms and, secondly, by implying strongly held shared opinions and values in the way he refers to people and events in general.

(d) Writing addressed to a limited public audience assumed to share much of the writer's context and many of his values and opinions and interests (e.g. topical newspaper commentary in a conversational manner, some editorials, 'interest' articles in specialist journals, gossip columns).

(e) Writing, intended to be read by a public audience, in which the writer chooses to approach his reader as though he were a personal friend, hence revealing much about himself by implication in the course of dealing with his topic (e.g. some autobiography) (89-90).

While descriptions b and c conform to the authorial centrality, which is criticized by many, if for nothing else, for being outdated and idealistic, descriptions d and e capture functions that are conceded to be the primary aims of both rhetoric and composition and that of forms such as the personal essay, or the essay itself. The first, description a, effectively describes invention, a stage in the process that has been settled to be essential in the writing process. These descriptions describe the unique role that expressivism affords the writer of connecting the personal to the public, or what Sherrie Gradin referred to as social expressivism, a major theme and subject of chapters in *Romancing Rhetorics* (1995).

The pseudo-theories of Britton et al. and those which later surfaced in Elbow's *Everyone Can Write* (2000) would not be enough to quiet the criticism of expressivism's lack of theoretical founding. But much of this criticism about expressivism's lack of theory was warranted. In

Everyone Can Write, Elbow noted about his early works *Writing Without Teachers* (1973) and *Writing With Power* (1981), “When I wrote previous books I certainly was an academic, but those books didn’t feel academic or theoretical—to me or to readers. I was not writing *as an academic but rather as a writer and a teacher*” (xv emphasis Elbow’s). Composition instructors wanted to offer a course that taught writing as practice rather than writing as theory (Coles *Plural I*, Murray *Writer*). As undoubtedly the most notable expressivist who remains, Elbow later explained in *Everyone Can Write*, that he was not interested in responding to his critics at the time that he was writing “anti-textbooks” and he had not been particularly engaged in the scholarly debate because he was not reading the journals or participating in the conferences of what came to be his field, namely composition.

As mentioned earlier, a significant response to critiques would come through Sherrie Gradin’s *Romancing Rhetorics* (1995) wherein she chastises compositionist misreadings of expressivism (namely those by Flower, Bizzell, Gage, and Hairston) and provides an illuminating discussion on the inherent social nature of expressivism. In “Toward a Social-Expressivism” she writes “To critics who disregard expressivist rhetorics because of a debased understanding of romantic inspiration, I suggest that a context for expressivism, which includes a fuller knowledge of its tradition, will offer an alternative reading” (96). She proceeds thereafter to analyze the works of romanticists Wadsworth and Coleridge to highlight their beliefs that “personal,” “authentic,” and “emotive” writing is “necessary to the growth of self and mind, not that it is necessary for every written document.” She both acknowledges and explains that some expressivist writers exacerbated criticism by defining writing as an art (or mystery or genius) which can not be taught. She further noted that the romantics (the group of writers most closely aligned with expressivism) “privileged emotions, imagination, synthesis, less linear forms of

discourse and logic and the importance of a ‘non-academic’ setting in which to learn...” (92). But more importantly she supported the claim that expressivist classrooms are as intellectually demanding as any, She noted about expressivism,

Exercising emotive and analytical processes, driving towards synthesis, writing for discovery, and demanding reflexivity—all components of an expressivist-based classroom—are all intellectually demanding [...] A fuller intellect fostered in our students can result in the ability to think and reflect deeply, and to create ideas and solutions. It is this ability that expressivists want for students... (93)

Referencing Ann Berthoff, she added that “without an imaginative mind capable of ‘forming,’ composition becomes a mere act of drill rather than an act of making meaning” (93). In defending early expressivists, she further notes that Murray, Elbow, Coles, and Berthoff do not imply that the self being discovered through expressivism is a “self-contained self and not socially constructed.”

In academic journals perhaps the most memorable discussion around the theme of the expressive approach and its place in the academy came as a “Comment and Response” between Bartholomae and Elbow in *College, Composition and Communication (CCC)*. Peter Elbow and David Bartholomae began what they called a conversation about academic writing at the meetings of The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in 1989 and 1991. The conversation continued over time and was subsequently published in the February 1995 edition of *CCC*, which included talks along with subsequent responses. This conversation about academic writing between two frontrunners in the field sums up the major attitudes held since the 1990s about two different approaches to teaching composition in the academy, one that focuses on the student as a creator or initiator of ideas and another that envisions the student as

an apprentice to his/her more widely read and experienced instructor. Though these professors are pitted against each other and they have very different approaches to teaching college writing, both approaches are grounded in years of teaching experience and perspectives of what students need to learn to be prepared to communicate in writing to a larger real world audience.

The print version of Bartholomae's talk "Writing with Teachers" is a title that stands in direct opposition to Elbow's early book-length work *Writing Without Teachers* (1973). In fact, Bartholomae writes that there is no writing that is writing without teachers. Bartholomae begins the article by giving both broad and narrow definitions of academic writing, which include writing that is done in the academy and writing that is done by academics, but writing that need not be perceived as mechanical and dull. Bartholomae goes on to express an opinion that marks him squarely within the critical studies tradition of composition instructors. This camp questioned the necessity of saving a place for the author as creator or central agent at a time when the author, or individual, was under attack from many other departments in universities.

Though many other practitioners of expressive writing are direct and unapologetic in their views of the writing they advocate as self-creating (see Coles, *Composing as Self-Creating Process*; Murray, *Crafting a Life: in Essay, Story, and Poem*), Elbow doesn't make this the central ideal of his support for writer-centered writing instruction. He instead challenges English department practices that privilege reading over writing and devote a much higher percentage of time to the former. Elbow writes that when writing is given the same amount of time and attention as reading, he'll respond by adjusting his courses that presently place writing at the center. He goes on to say that it is in the best interest of the writers to have "readers actually interested in what was on their mind" and "what they intended to say" (218). He also

acknowledges that writers have interest in ownership and have legitimate reasons to be frustrated when others misread what they have written.

Perhaps their biggest disagreement is exposed as they respond to Elbow's "believing game." The practice, popularized by Elbow, encourages a student in the first draft stage to assume that her viewpoint is important and to imagine that her audience is made of friends and other supporters of the work. Bartholomae, in contrast, instructs students in invention to always be aware that they are not the first to write on the subject and considers most helpful the act of assigning difficult texts and offering ways for students to interact with these texts.

The mimetic approach is subtly addressed when Bartholomae concedes that he is in favor of teaching students to write "in parallel" with a text they have read in his class and correspondingly to decide what to quote and how to interact with that quote. Perhaps this is where a student begins to take on a persona that identifies more closely with the teacher than his or herself. For Elbow, in teaching students to write for themselves or play the believing game, he is not shutting out other voices. Rather, he suggests that students privilege their thoughts and questions first in early drafting stages in the writing process, where, for him, it is most important that students be clear and confident about what they mean to say. Later in the writing process, students can begin incorporating other voices and viewpoints. The incorporation of voices comes in the latter stages of writing in the "doubting game" when students should anticipate opposition, other viewpoints, and criticism of their work. Students' ability to carry out these stages of writing, their ability to privilege an internal voice, block out other voices, and later to incorporate criticism, demand that writers teachers recognize that strategies of performance should also be addressed in the classroom. Newkirk's *The Performance of Self in Student Writing* (1997) and Andrea Lunsford's recent research involving Stanford students display that

some students only become “unblocked” in their writing once they take on a performative persona that allows them to either be themselves or become the identity which allows them to write in ways they consider to be appropriate as college English students.

In his 1997 work, Newkirk reframes expressivism as a “Performance of the Self,” without envisioning the self as an authentic, static, unchanging essence. By doing so, he doesn’t weaken the strength of the approach, but critically articulates what he believes students are doing when they write about themselves. Yet in his discussion, he doesn’t deny that the genre has romantic roots. To paraphrase, he says, students, in writing about themselves, their hopes, their successes, and their experiences, are relying on a genre (romanticism) with which they are familiar. Romanticism, he believes, is an American, self-deterministic value that (whether admitted or not) most English teachers and most readers, desire to encounter occasionally in writing, especially as a respite from the critical, sarcastic, skeptical, post-modern deconstruction of every ideology.

While Newkirk stands in support of personal writing, in the subsection “Composition Wars and the Place of Personal Writing,” he dispels some of the characteristics of expressive writing put forth by some of its framers. Specifically, he addresses the discovery metaphor used by Donald Murray to describe the pedagogy. Newkirk uses the following list to outline the obvious problems with the discovery metaphor:

- How can this self exist prior to language
- Isn’t the very concept of self a cultural product
- In what way is this self distinct if our only way of knowing it is through language with conventional meanings?
- As Murray notes elsewhere, doesn’t “genre” serve as a lens that limits what we see

-How can we know that this self is “exposed” honestly, that we’re not lying or playing a role? Is honesty anything more than the feeling of being honest?

-If part of this self is the relatively inaccessible “unconscious” how can we claim to fully present ourselves? (57).

So like Gradin, Newkirk challenges those who criticize the appropriateness of writer centered approaches to composition to critically reread the framers of the approach and then reevaluate their own critiques. The defenses of expressivism offered by Newkirk, Gradin, and Elbow must have convinced enough instructors that the approach had a place in English departments because the approach persistently reappears in the composition toolboxes and today enjoys a reemergence in a concern for pedagogies grounded in an ethical framework.

Expressivism’s New Faces

Contemporary attraction to expressivist pedagogy comes from those within and outside of composition and from both academic and community contexts. I categorize contemporary pedagogies into three sub-categories: expressivism and the personal essay, community pedagogy, and writing as healing. Since the writing and healing movement has exploded in the last decade, I spend most of chapter two discussing its important contributions to expressive pedagogy and research methodology. Community writing programs are also burgeoning currently. A selection of these programs will be addressed broadly in chapter three on feminism and composition pedagogies. The remaining category, the personal essay, most agree, is a low-stakes approach to accessing expressive writing pedagogy that has support from many disciplines.

Writers in Women’s Studies have connected to expressivism by asserting the importance of the personal element to witnessing, or signifying. In expressive writing, the desire for

witnessing seems to influence personal writing and gives rise to other forms of performance such as spoken word and written testimonies such as the Clothesline Project among others. The Clothesline Project is an event wherein shirts are strung together in prominent places on college campuses to bear witness to victims and survivors of violence against women. Rachel Carey Harper conceived of the project while serving the Cape Cod Women's Agenda in 1990. The project was in part a reaction to the Vietnam Wall and the AIDS Quilt and like the latter it not fixed, but takes form as it is erected by survivors on campuses in different locations. According to Laura Julier, who writes about the Project as a healing text, the Clothesline Project "calls attention to a point of deep and epidemic woundedness in our cultural fabric that has been accompanied by a collective silence" (357). The Clothesline project has also been called a "Coping Narrative." It is a project of both healing and voicing since many of the women who participate by writing slogans on t-shirts and pinning them to a public clothesline have never spoken about their abuse. The profundity of the project is that it acts as a bridge that connects private wounds to public exposure, since individual expressions of pain and anger are experienced by a campus community. The community may then act out of its awareness of such issues as domestic abuse and other violence against women. To Julier, these displays connect the personal to the public in an act that ensures or sustains public awareness and public memory.

Peter Goggin and Maureen D. Goggin in "Presence in Absence: Discourses and the Teaching (In, On, and About) Trauma" (published in Shane Borrowman's *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*) note that "witnessing makes presence an absence. There is pain in witnessing, and also a facing of loss. It is an act of living through testimony or giving testimony. The testimony is the act by which the narrator reclaims her position as a witness" (128). The

authors later clarify types of witnessing to suggest that what we typically do as composition instructors falls within the description of a “second degree witness.” Goggin and Goggin explain,

First degree witnesses are those who write trauma, describing scenes, etc. Second degree witnesses, those who witness the testimonies of first-degree witnesses, include those who write histories, literary, rhetorical, and cultural critical analyses on trauma as well as psychological tracts and treatment plans for victims of traumas. Those who “write about trauma” are second degree witnesses. These second degree witnesses can serve as catalysts or agents of the process of reception, agents whose reflective witnessing and whose testimonial stances aid our own reception and assist us both in the effort toward comprehension and in the unending struggle with foreignness of signs, in processing not only the literal meaning of the testimonies but also some perspectives on their philosophy and history. (134)

Heather Hewett in “In Search of an “I”: Embodied Voice and the Personal Essay” makes two strong points that support the sustained presence of expressivism for its attention to the centrality of the voicing of the writer and the narrative techniques which are generally taught in an expressive context. In an article in *Women’s Studies* (2004) Hewett claimed that her accumulated education hadn’t prepared her to write a personal essay. This discovery was made as Hewett was writing her dissertation; it speaks to the disservice that would be committed in the academy by abandoning this genre. She writes,

The very foundation of the feminist movement in the North American academy has been in the work of reclaiming and amplifying the words of women, an acknowledgment of the political (some would say, revolutionary) power of having your say within and

against a patriarchal culture. Giving voice to oneself is an act of self-creation, a claim to authorship and authority that enables the writer to define herself through the power of language. Claiming a voice is an internal act that results from tapping into the authority derived from one's lived experience. It does not depend upon external sources of power, whether institutional, cultural, or discursive; to the contrary, it often challenges them. The power of this process lies in its democratization; and the hope is that each new voice will enable someone else to achieve citizenship in the body politic. (725)

What continually resurfaces is the double significance or impact of the personal essay in that while it allows unapologetically for the presence of the author, it also recognizes the subjectivities of the author, and places the author in a position of relationship to other subjects and thinkers of the address. Commenting on another dimension of the personal essay, namely style, Harriet Malinowitz in an essay in *Writing as Business, Pleasure, and the Personal Essay* (2003) noted, "The personal essay is also a form to which language and style-or what some would even dare to call "art" or "literariness"-are as crucially important as are logic and subject matter" (317). Malinowitz, points to Phillip Lopate's 1994 landmark collection as having the most "nuanced" and "persuasive" definition of the personal essay. She specifically recounts Lopate's designation of the personal essay as that which "graciously informs without humiliating or playing the pedantic schoolmaster" (319). I agree that Lopate's hefty edition is the authority on the personal essay. He describes the form as a "kind of informal essay, with an intimate style, some autobiographical content or interest, and an urbane conversational manner" (viii).

Composition professor Marian MacCurdy has devoted significant scholarship to defining, teaching, and even locating the personal essay. For years she has taught the genre at Ithaca

College in New York where her work with the personal essay often deals with trauma. Trauma is another bridge that connects discussions of expressivism and writing and healing, the subject and title of MacCurdy's collection co-edited with Charles Anderson. In *The Mind's Eye* (2007) MacCurdy notes that in so much as students come into our classes with "everyday traumas" of the effects of divorce, parent alcoholism, suicide, mental illness, and accidents, "A writing class offers methodologies to deal with these problems: Focusing on text, relying on peer workshops, and sharing rewrites allows participants to offer their stories in a venue in which the essay becomes the focus, not the life" (156). Here she echoes the classroom practices of expressivism which Burnham also discussed, noting that in the classroom, the approach also employs freewriting, journal keeping (a staple of MacCurdy's elective course in the personal essay, *Writing about Trauma*), reflective writing, and "small group dialogic collaborative response" to foster a writer's "aesthetic, cognitive, and moral development" (23). The pedagogy insists upon a sense of writer presence, even in research-based writing.

Another practical writing genre which fits within a survey of expressive pedagogy is autobiography. Lynn Bloom has written extensively on writing instructors' apprehension to teach autobiography as an extension of an apprehension that is rooted in misconceptions about the romantic roots of expressivism as discussed by Gradin. According to Bloom's 1998 research, when used within an expressive writing pedagogy, the act of writing the autobiography alters the story and expresses understandings that were latent before the act of writing occurred. In this narrative form, "the form itself alters the experience..." (67) Her comments here connect to MacCurdy's insight about the definition of the word "amateur" and its usefulness for us as we consider what writers in this genre are trying to do. MacCurdy notes in "From Trauma to Writing," "The original meaning of 'amateur' is instructive" (194). Lovers of art engage in the

process—writing, painting, sculpting, singing—whatever can give form to chaos, structure to the unfathomable. Bloom further explains that in autobiography “certain facts are altered either because they are forgotten or because they don’t fit into the author’s narrative design. The act of committing experience to narrative form introduces sequencing and does it with a significance that was probably only latent in the original experience” (67) Bloom wrote in “American Autobiography and the Politics of Genre,” that American autobiography “...is inseparably intertwined with political concerns” (64). In this chapter of *Composition Studies as Creative Art*, Bloom noted that, before 1970, autobiography was defined as “the true story of a person’s whole life...” (64). By 1980, she reveals, the definition of autobiography had changed to encompass variations of the genre including partial and full length self-portraits, diaries, collections of letters, oral histories, personal essays, childhoods, spiritual autobiographies, confessions, and hybrid forms—dual portraits; family or group histories; personal travel narratives; and blends of fiction, myth, and personal narrative. A central point of definition is that the autobiography’s author, the story’s narrator, and “the character who is being talked about” all have the same name. The expansion of the autobiography or autobiographical works corresponds (perhaps not coincidentally) with the popularity of a critical stance in the academy. The genres are usually starkly oppositional, however it is entirely possible that the squelching of authorial stands in the academy culminates in a burst of authorial productivity sort of like a damned reservoir bursts with power when it is set free from confines. Bloom also notes that from 1950-1970 only nine books on autobiography as a genre were published in English. After 1972 there has been a 2500% increase in critical books on autobiography, nearly 250 in English. From 1970-1990 critical interest in women’s autobiography increased elevenfold, and during the same period critical attention to minorities and “peoples of underclass origins increased by 40% (68).

Bloom further asserts that the teaching of autobiographical writing, like other texts, “is amenable to a variety of prevailing literary theories and pedagogical philosophies ranging from expressivism, to feminism, to social-constructivism, to Friere’s liberatory pedagogy” (71). Yet Bloom believes that too many composition teachers enforce a double standard; they expect students to read and discuss autobiographical writing that is highly sophisticated and complex in both thought and style, but teachers too often have minimal expectations of the students’ capability to produce meaningful autobiographical writing on their own. I suggest that this low expectation is a fulfillment of teachers’ lack of commitment to teach forms rooted in expressivism or its predecessor romanticism. Yet at the same time, new acceptable forms of authorial writing surface, such as the genre creative nonfiction. Creative nonfiction is just another offshoot of the personal essay which has been marketed as somehow less vulnerable and/or dangerous than the personal essay. Classes have surfaced in major writing programs addressing the genre. For example, the spring 2007 issue of *Composition Studies* published Beth Taylor’s article describing Brown University’s “New Nonfiction Writing Program.” Early in the article Taylor reports, “Early signs show that our students are hungry for the skills we teach—writing that links academic analysis and research with nonfiction storytelling” (78).

In *Teaching Composition Studies* Bloom continues to define the problems associated with autobiography as it is taught or not taught in the English department, “It is also difficult for most freshmen to write personal essays as complicated and thoughtful as those of the autobiographers whose essays they are reading because they are often discouraged from attempting it” (72). To summarize Bloom’s passionate diatribe, personal writing requires the same tough-minded analytic capability that academic discourse involves. Students can as readily learn how to read and think critically and learn to understand a variety of discourse communities from reading and

analyzing autobiographies as they can from reading any other kind of literary text. To conceive of autobiographical writing in a reductive way is to ignore the intellectual excitement and critical potential of the genre. Autobiography is interesting only if one is able to draw deeper connections between one's personal experience and the subject under study. To do this requires a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the topic being studied. In Bloom's discussion of autobiography, the connectedness of the private and public once again appears alongside the theme of expressivism as an inherent response to stimuli outside of oneself: social expressivism. Bloom's passing mention of the tools with which to read and respond to autobiography connect to a central concern of recent works to address emotion, an article by Michelle Payne ("Historicizing" 2000) that appeared in *Writing and Healing*, an edited collection by Micciche and Jacobs (*A Way to Move* 2003), and Micciche's book *Doing Emotion* (2007).

In "A Strange Unaccountable Something: Historicizing Sexual Abuse Essays," Michelle Payne discusses her belief that arguments to restrict personal writing in college writing courses emphasize the implicit hierarchy of high and low culture, the academy and the popular, and reason and emotion. The binaries of high and low culture, etc. are assumed along with those of academic vs. personal, university vs. outside world, therapy vs. analytic performance, talk television vs. intellectual discussion. I agree that not responding to emotional, traumatic, and personal experience texts reinforces the hierarchy of power between the professor and student, but more seriously, it also reinforces a culture of silencing against the survivor of trauma. In *The Mind's Eye*, Marian MacCurdy outlines a pedagogy for allowing writers to process traumatic experiences and teachers to partner with their students in the process. As the first step, MacCurdy notes that:

“teachers must discuss with their students the possibility that difficult material may be the subject of a student’s work... This is not to mandate or privilege the writing of such material; students must freely choose their topics, and that means they must not feel pressured either to write about *or to avoid painful subjects*” (60-61 emphasis mine).

Throughout her discussion, Payne refers to the term “outlaw emotions,” coined by Alison Jaggar, to mean emotional responses constructed by dominant ideologies as “conventionally unacceptable” and characteristic of subordinate groups. Not stopping at identifying the problem, Payne addresses the reluctance of instructors to deal with the intimacies of the personal essay. For Payne, historicizing the text is one way to comment; she locates the student essays within a historical, cultural, and political context and leads students to discover that the differences in their texts are connected to their contexts rather than to “essential and unarguable individuality” (121). In addition to historicizing, Payne suggests that we can also comment on the discursive traditions that students pull from in writing their experiences and on the ways that they frame their identities in the essays. As Payne, Newkirk, and others have suggested, our students are already postmodern subjects, already fragmented by the traumatic violence they have experienced, so an analysis of students’ choices to represent themselves in writing as relying on a presumed static individual presence, which was a concern of the past, seems all the more irrelevant. By exposing the contextual situation of writing, comparing it from text to text and helping students’ to ground their rhetorical decisions in familiar writing traditions we reject the idea put forth by Kathleen Pfeiffer in a *College English* Response that personal writing is a “destruction of community and communication” (671). Along with Goggin and Goggin, hooks (*Teaching*), and Laura Julier (“The Clothesline Project”), Payne also suggests that in reading a narrative a student can become a witness of another kind, watching, for example, another student

find a language for her outlaw emotions that enables her both to reflect critically on them and to act critically in a social way.

Analyzing the improbable resistance to personal writing in the teaching of writing exposes a theme of control, or rather a fear of the loss of control in the classroom and perhaps even loss of control over one's own composure when dealing with difficult subjects broached in writing. In "Writing is/and Therapy," Wendy Bishop acknowledged that in her training in creative writing the idea that writers need to control their texts pervaded some writing workshops. Payne believes that personal writing texts express emotions that challenge the power distance inherent in the student-teacher relationship. In other words, teachers must maintain their distance to retain their power and as they approach closeness with their students they also lose their traditional sense of authority. The political struggle in composition studies over who gets to express which emotions in what contexts (if at all) suggests that emotions as well as discourses that form them are about power, discipline and knowledge. However, when interpreted as socially constructed, as suggested by Payne, emotions become always already social, political, and subject to critique, rather than feelings to avoid. Payne quotes anthropologist Catherine Lutz who says "critical reflection on emotion is not a self-indulgent substitute for political analysis and political action. It is itself a kind of political theory and political practice, indispensable for an adequate social theory and social transformation" (152). Sherrie Gradin also noted in her introduction to *Romancing Rhetorics* that her treatment of expressivism, or what she terms "social expressivism" is guided by her feminism and its attention to "voice, emotive processes, and lived experience" (xiii).

Instead of seeing students who do not extract the emotion from their lived experience or who do not "bracket" them as incapable of critical reflection because of their traumatic

experiences, I agree with Payne that we can respect their move to bring those experiences into a community and disciplinary context and find ways to encourage the critical reflection already evidenced in their texts. Writing, because it is recursive is already a tool suited to this task—as students write, they choose how to represent themselves, which experiences to share and how to frame those experiences. As teachers of writing, instead of avoiding their personal texts we can lead them to discover ways that they have taken control of difficult events by representing them in discourse. A more traditional example of bringing student writing to voice is found in the practice of Peter Elbow, who publishes the personal essays of his students and invites the class to write responses to them. His tactic again evokes the expressive practices of reader response or “witnessing” that has become a theme of writing to heal and writing about trauma. Maureen Goggin and Peter Goggin’s chapter in *Writing about Trauma* explains the differentiation between “writing trauma” a first person experience, and “writing about trauma,” a second or third person removed experience. They then differentiate “metadiscoursing on writing about trauma” as what teachers can do to introduce students to the academic inquiry and discursive practices that permit and discourage them from writing about trauma.

Finally, Payne believes that personal and specifically, as in her work, sexual abuse essays, blur the lines between emotion and reason, private and public, and expressivist and social constructionist perspectives. Speaking from a cultural studies and/ or post-structuralist pedagogy, Payne believes that historically situating one’s experience is part of the process of learning that one’s identity is socially and politically constituted, and thus that language mediates one’s experience of reality. She believes that students who reveal personal emotional traumas seem arguably predisposed to developing a critical social theory. Their outlaw emotions are necessary for developing this critical perspective, which is often apparent in the ways the outlaw

emotions motivate their writing and their assignments. Rather than focusing on the ways such essays reinforce perceived romantic, or capitalist, or humanist subjectivities and evince failures of expressivist pedagogies, we might better respond by considering the ways students choose to represent these experiences and their identities.

Emotion Emerges as a Subject

The treatment of emotion has become a sub-theme in the defenses of the personal essay specifically and in broader defenses of expressivism as a pedagogical approach from which to teach writing. In Dale Jacobs and Laura Micciche's edited collection, *A Way to Move*, the contributors focus on emotion in composition studies as a departmental location on the campus and as an act of students and professors in the classroom. The same theories that informed Payne's theorizing of a response to personal essays and the connection between feminism and composition studies (from Lutz 1989, Jaggar 1990, and Worsham 1998) resurface in their rationale for the work. In the introduction, the authors explain, "One of the most useful ideas for us has been that emotion is not only individually experienced, but is also socially experienced and constructed. If we [...] view emotion as connected to our rational and ethical lives, we open a space for reimagining our approaches to teaching, research, and administration" (4). That *if* is a big one. But the bigger question is, Why not? Why wouldn't we view emotion as connected to our rational and ethical lives? Especially since we have increasingly been trained in rhetoric with special attention given to Aristotle's appeals, why would we sever attention to pathos from our explanations as we engage students in the classroom?

In *A Way to Move*, William Wright offers his opinion of how we removed pathos from our treatment of rhetoric. In “Downsizing and the Limitations of Pathos in the Academic Workplace” Wright, discusses the problem of pathos in the composition studies workplace,

It does not easily belong in the business meeting, the busy classroom, or the official work of the academy. And when it turns up in these places, it makes us uncomfortable, impatient, and, finally, thoughtful. The fact that pathos is an act of transgression and the fact that it is out of place in the academic workplace should give us some hint of its power and uses. It exposes the foundations and divisions of our actions. (133)

In the same edited collection, Ellen Quandahl asserts that “Aristotle is an indispensable predecessor for the acknowledging and working with rather than against emotion in rhetorical education” (11). Quandahl does not dismiss the discussion of rational and irrational spheres set up by Aristotle, she instead points out that “while he does indeed suggest that the human ‘soul’ consists of rational and irrational parts, he is not altogether certain that they are separate...” (12). Quandahl goes on to enumerate four propositions of the ways Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* links ethics and emotions. The discussion left me more convinced that arguments against the expressivist approach in composition must be reread as a probing for the *how* behind this approach as opposed to the *why*. The question of *how* to engage the approach and the emotion that it disallows to hide is inarguably valid.

Gretchen Moon, writing in the collection by Jacobs and Micciche, highlights the uses of a discussion of pathos in composition textbooks. In so doing, Moon revealed the unsurprising evidence that a discussion of pathos is limited or missing in many contemporary composition textbooks. The 25 textbooks under review included prominent titles such as Lunsford,

Ruszkiewicz, and Walter's *Everything's An Argument* 2nd ed., Ramage and Bean's *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*, 2nd ed., *The Writer's Way* 4th ed., Faigley and Selzer's *Good Reasons*, Ede's *Work in Progress* 5th ed., Axelrod and Cooper's *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* 6th ed. among 19 others. In "The Pathos of Pathos," Moon summarizes the textbooks' treatment of emotion in composition this way, "They seldom sustain an attempt to understand the emotions—to know "what they are, their nature, their causes, and the way in which they are excited"—for more than two or three paragraphs. They do not explicitly engage any theory of emotions, or of the relationship between emotions and other intellectual processes, or between emotions and ethics, or the implications of emotions in history, language, culture..."(40). Aside from informing us of one of the roots of the problem of not engaging emotions in the classroom (having no blueprint for doing so in textbooks, or having contradictory advice about doing so in textbooks), Moon paints a picture of what an adequate discussion of emotion in textbooks might look like. Of her picture, I most like the vision of treating emotions as that which "would not restrict emotional appeals to the introductory or concluding paragraphs of an essay," "not figure the writer as so distinct from her readers," and "not figure readers as the victims, or at least stooges, of [the writer's] feats of emotional manipulation" (40).

In sum, *A Way to Move* further exposes the problems associated with our inefficient discussion of pathos in our classrooms and our unacceptable enactment (or lack of enactment) of emotion in our departments or on the college campus at large. The book-length work by Micciche, *Doing Emotion*, and T.R. Johnson's, *A Rhetoric of Pleasure*, pick up where these critiques leave off. They offer suggestions to eradicate our allergy to emotion in the classroom. Since Johnson partially grounds his work by explaining expressive writing's seemingly failed attempts to engage the student's emotions, or to help students experience authorial pleasure, I

deal with his presumption next. I will address Micciche's work later within the context of the connectedness of feminism and composition.

In Johnson's discussion of rhetoric and pleasure, rather than attempt to disqualify expressivist moves to engage the student holistically, he builds his own classroom approach upon the foundation of the expressive tradition, marking resonance with the motives behind the approach. In advancing his own pedagogy of pleasure, he acknowledges that composition's fallow ground needs to be worked, aerated, even rained upon if we are ever to dispel the myth of composition class as the punitive lair of the aging, unlovely grammarian-editor or dissatisfied social-political architect. Notably, in his discussion of renegade rhetoricians, he names Elbow (along with Gorgias, Fincino, De Quincey and Cixous) as a scholar who "equate[s] authorial pleasure with radicalized process-metaphors for both texts and selves and with rigorous immersion in particular communities, even personal contexts..." (16). His acknowledgement of the groundwork laid in the process and expressivist movements of the 1970s enables him to proceed fruitfully with his discussion in a way that reduces the rejecters of expressivism as shortsighted to put it politely. Perhaps what is most notable is that he links contemporary expressivist practice to ancient rhetoric, a connection that may offer rhetorically-sensitive skeptics of expressivism the disciplinary grounding that they seek.

In the *Writing and Healing* collection, which preceded his book on rhetoric and pleasure, Johnson's chapter "Writing and Healing and the Rhetorical Tradition" made two important contributions to expressivism and composition. First, he connected logotherapy to ancient rhetoric by evoking the memory of Antiphon, a healer who used chants and songs to provoke a release in his patients. Other writers who engage expressivist approaches and aims make the same connection between the pedagogy and ancient rhetoric. In the third chapter of *The Mind's*

Eye, MacCurdy retells a story from Richard Hoffman about events surrounding his publishing of a sexual abuse memoir. In the story, Hoffman mentions that “before the term catharsis was “commandeered by psychology, it was a literary term that stood for what Greek dramatists tried to effect in their audiences, not in themselves” (Hoffman qtd. in MacCurdy 143).

Antiphon was a natural subject for Johnson, who emphasizes the ways sound and rhythm can be used in the classroom to draw student’s attention to stylistic devices and the tangible bodily pleasure most feel while playing with language as in creating poetry or prose by attending to style. In Johnson’s second contribution, he joins Newkirk and Gradin who address the critical misunderstanding that the practice of expressive writing is individualistic in nature. By referring again to the act of ancient logotherapy, Johnson explains that it is through the healing power of language that the self is perceived as transformative, socially engaged and open to revision. He goes on to name Jerome Bruner and Carl Rogers, whose work influenced the development of expressive writing, as contemporary logotherapists.

Johnson’s discussion becomes even more credible in the way he teeters on the edge of discourse to discuss pleasure and pain in perhaps the most palpable yet appropriate of contexts, namely masochism. Not just to be edgy does Johnson correlate what happens in composition to masochism, but to analogize students’ painful relationship with writing, something of which we as instructors are also painfully aware. This association of writing with pain by present and former students restricts them to such a degree that once they are able to dismantle it, writing feels so light and enjoyable that the most appropriate word to describe the new relationship between writer and prose is pleasure. It is a dismantling that we as instructors should carry at least part of the burden to bring to pass, since we, when we allowed and even called for the death of authorial pleasure, helped to build the perversion that there is such a thing as writing that takes

no pleasure in the author. In this statement I am reminded of Quandahl's synthesizing remarks on the connection of emotion and rhetoric,

People's good reasons have the force of 'goodness' because goodness combines thought and feeling. It is yet scarcely imaginable how this insight ought to alter writing pedagogies, for it establishes that the effect of language on hearers and readers is very centrally bound up with their faith, including its connotations of a moral sense, in how things are (20).

The religious roots of the American education system set the stage for this persistent inner impulse to engage a student intellectually (emotionally), and perhaps spiritually. But ironically, most teachers temper an impulse to educate students beyond stringently focusing on a departmental cohort's objectives, which rarely mention the words imagination, forming, emotive, intellectual, or wellness and perhaps shouldn't have to. bell hooks' unapologetic commitment to engage students spiritually is an anomaly in the everyday goings on of higher education, yet it is guided by her desire to represent to her students a whole, transformative person, willing to engage as a member of her class and to be affected by the community it becomes. While teachers of young children are often celebrated for following this impulse, those in higher education receive mixed reactions to this holistic approach to teaching. It is composition teachers, particularly those who are responsive to the expressive tradition and its objectives, who have embraced the historical charge of education and the present kairos that beckons us to teach writing which conjoins the affective and academic dimensions of transformation inherent in the expressive writing approach.

**THE BRIDGE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:
DISCOVERING THERAPEUTIC WRITING METHODOLOGIES**

Writing and Healing in Composition and Elsewhere

*So you thought you had to keep this up
All the work that you do so we think that you're good
And you can't believe it's not enough
All the walls you built up are just glass on the outside*

*So let them fall down
There's freedom waiting in the sound
When you let your walls fall to the ground
We're here now*

*This is where the healing begins
This is where the healing starts
When you come to where you're broken within
The light meets the dark
The light meets the dark*

—Tenth Avenue North, “Healing Begins”

In *Toward a Civil Discourse* (2006), Sharon Crowley advised instructors who were guided by liberal rhetorical theory to incorporate approaches to teaching that would engage a discussion of values and/or motivational appeals and thus revive pathos to its place as a triune pillar of the rhetorical triangle. Unfortunately, Crowley’s call to action was influenced by what she classified as a critical threat to democracy caused by a rise in the political and journalistic power of “fundamentalist Christians,” who don’t use rhetoric appropriately when they argue (ix-x). Though Crowley and I disagree on whether Christian fundamentalism is a threat to democracy, I agree with her call to revive pathos and engage in a discussion of values and motivational appeals. Crowley’s recommendation is shared by other scholars who recognize the

need to engage narrative, emotion, and personal writing due to the promise of scholarly benefits within their respective fields, the warm reception of student- and patient-centered approaches, and the beneficial effects of disclosure on the writers themselves. Writing and healing enthusiasts in the fields of psychology, English, and medicine are among those who welcome uses of writing that allow for emotional and reflective patterns that make up the transformative stories and testimonial artifacts that holistically affect the author and the reader-witnesses.

When I discovered the writing and healing strand in expressive writing pedagogy, it had been ignited by three main occurrences. First, writing teachers grasped the approach as a way to address their students' voluntary disclosure of traumatic events in their lives through personal essays; second, writing teachers became aware of research that confirms both physically and emotionally healthy outcomes and improved academic performance in those who disclose traumatic events through writing; and third, employing writing as healing was a way for writing teachers to respond affectively to the unforgettable, traumatic events of September Eleventh. Though this movement is a relatively recent one within composition, in contemporary research, it began in the field of psychology in the eighties with the research of James Pennebaker. His subsequent research has established his reputation as the premier scholar of psychology in the writing and healing movement. In *The Writing Cure*, an edited collection of studies documenting the physical and emotional outcomes of writing-based therapies (Lepore and Smyth 2002), he describes his first experiment using disclosure writing with college students as an apparatus to aid in healing. At the time, he used parameters that were given to him in a university setting—a room was reserved for him for a week. He used the first day to brief students on the nature of the experiment and the remaining four days to conduct it—students would write for 20 minutes each day about an emotionally disturbing event. Throughout the

years since this first experiment, Pennebaker has varied the method: however, based on results, the four-day twenty-minute method is the one he suggests to new researchers. Pennebaker and associated researchers have maintained this method in more than twenty years of subsequent experiments (Pennebaker & Beall 1986; Pennebaker, Hughes & O'Heeron 1987; Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser & Glaser, 1988; "Confession Inhibition and Disease" 1989; Pennebaker, Colder & Sharp, 1990. Francis & Pennebaker 1992, "Putting Stress into Words" 1993; Pennebaker & Francis 1994; Krantz & Pennebaker 1994; *Opening Up* 1997; Graybeal, Sexton & Pennebaker 2002).

In *Opening Up*, Pennebaker acknowledges his personal attachment to his now groundbreaking research in therapeutic writing. He admits that he grew up in a family that did not openly discuss or express emotion, but experienced frequent sickness. While that realization seems simplistic, it was a persistent thought that affected his pursuit of research in writing.

Similarly, my research in the expressive composition tradition was ignited by my personal attachment to helping women live their best spiritual and emotional lives. My current research project emerged through a long and varied string of events tied to that goal. I didn't come to graduate school straight out of college. My teaching career directed me to graduate study in composition, and other life experiences brought me to the subject of writing therapy. With a degree in Spanish, and nearing the end of my graduate program of Applied Linguistics, I began teaching English as a Second Language at Emory University. I was hired to teach theology students for whom English was a second language. The students were not novice language speakers and my task was not to teach them English. They were graduate students of theology and public health and my job was to teach them to write "academically" in English and to improve their spoken communication skills. In other words, though they might have felt

comfortable speaking and writing English in casual settings, I needed to expose them to the specific genre of English language use in graduate school that would help them complete their written coursework and assimilate into the academic dialog at Emory University.

About halfway through my six-year career teaching second language students academic writing at Emory, I realized that I didn't know how to teach writing. I felt very confident teaching spoken communication. My classes and I enjoyed moving to the rhythm of the language, practicing speeches, having conversation partners and mastering the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in order to interpret and produce unfamiliar speech sounds. My training in speech communication had proven itself sufficient to land me in a classroom comfortably teaching students to communicate in speech. Unfortunately, the same was not true of my exposure to second language writing. In fact, during my training in Applied Linguistics and TESL, I don't remember any classes which explicitly approached writing holistically. The subject of writing was usually imbedded within textbooks on second language acquisition and within subtitles such as fossilization (a language error that had become so common that it was extremely difficult to change), language transfer (carrying language patterns from your first language into your second), and error vs. mistake. But my students weren't coming to me with questions about errors, they wanted to know how to write. They wanted to know how to overcome writers block and they wanted to write the way Peter Elbow had instructed! It was an international student who introduced me to Peter Elbow! I had never heard of him, since he hadn't been a subject of discussion in my training to teach English as a Second Language.

It was in ignorance, but with determination that I came to the English department to learn about writing. By that time I had taught ESL at Emory University for four years, I was married, and I had just had our second child. I wasn't coming to school for intellectual thrill. I wanted to

learn to teach what I had been hired to teach, but I also wanted to learn skills that were relevant to my own experience as a writer. I had never had a problem writing academically or creatively. I considered academic writing a necessary skill, but I enjoyed writing creatively. Most of my life had revolved around writing; it was what I did in my spare time, or whenever I wasn't at work. Since I was a teacher, during the summers and Christmas break I usually wrote long pieces, like full-length screenplays. When I started I was writing just for fun, or to get the story on paper. I had dabbled in college, writing a script for a campus worship service. I had even won a modest award in creative writing from the College Language Association for submitting a 30 minute screenplay. Just before graduating, I won a Readers Digest grant for writing about women. After college, I turned that Readers' Digest screenplay into a short movie with the help of friends and a videographer from school. When my church developed a drama ministry, I became the writing team leader and individually, or with a team we created full length plays for church as well as vignettes to be used during service.

Because of my background, I wanted my study of writing to be more than academic. Yes, I wanted to help my students, but I also wanted to be able to apply my work beyond the classroom. When I came back to grad school to study composition, I had founded a women-centered nonprofit whose mission was to strengthen commitments to abstinence, pursuit of purpose, desire for marriage and joy in parenthood for women age 17-30. Even while directing the nonprofit I found myself writing a play to convey our mission to our audiences. Just like most volunteers, or people who start nonprofits, my passion for its mission was developed from my personal encounter with each of themes of the mission: abstinence, life's purpose, marriage, and parenthood.

Having attended a historically black all women's institution, some women's issues were discussed explicitly and others were not. My introduction to the subject of abortion was not academic, nor political. During my freshman year, I lived in the annex of a dorm with seven other women. Because we were the only eight people in the small basement, we were close. Early in the semester, one of my annex-mates became pregnant and decided to leave school to have the baby. Then another of my girlfriend's became pregnant. For her, the decision wasn't as simple. She had been pregnant before and decided not to have the baby. She was appropriately disturbed by her pregnancy and she was agonizing over her decision. She was open about her pregnancy, so most of us had entered the conversation as encouraging soundboards for whatever decision she was leaning toward or as invested friends when she solicited feedback. I was torn about approaching the discussion. I had just become sexually active and for the first time, unplanned pregnancy was relevant to my life. Before then, I had been pretty clear about how things were supposed to happen, partly because of my upbringing in the Christian church. Abortion was wrong. But fornication was wrong too, and since I had already crossed that line, the line of abortion was also becoming blurry. So because, I was unconfident about my beliefs, I kept silent.

No one would get the chance to evaluate the effects of my dormmate's decision because a few days after telling us about her pregnancy she began to miscarry and an ambulance took her away from our dorm. She returned and continued her successful matriculation of undergraduate school, but I never forgot my own silence. I realized then how my lifestyle choices affect other women, especially when it came to being able to confidently articulate a moral stance between right and wrong. That nagging realization slowly subsides as I interact with women to help them strengthen their convictions related to Christianity and help them see how their religious

convictions meaningfully impact their lives and the lives of others. It is this work that brought me to a pregnancy care center and Life Support Class. At the pregnancy care center, workers were using written disclosure and analysis to help women through their experience of a crisis pregnancy and I wanted to know if their strategies were based on an articulated methodology. I started directing my composition projects toward research that would uncover any existing methodology of therapeutic writing in composition studies.

Interestingly, I discovered that the value of writing in general and personal writing specifically was enjoying appreciation in disciplines outside of composition such as women's studies and psychology while in the English department its value is a point of contention. In my survey of therapeutic writing, or writing used in psychological therapy I've found that some psychiatrists see writing therapy as an answer to a crisis in talk therapy. Luciano L'Abate, whose research also appears in *The Writing Cure*, is one psychotherapist who believes that talk-based therapies have run their course. L'Abate claims that face-to-face methods of therapy are threatened with extinction due to lack of accountability from outside forces that range from managed care companies to pleas within the field for measurable results driven by research (223). L'Abate is an insider who makes his position clear, "Giving up on talk and face-to-face contact is tantamount to a paradigm shift in the mental health professions and in the delivery of their services" (220). L'Abate's research centers on the effectiveness of programmed writing intervention in the form of workbooks and computer assisted distance writing. His research demonstrates the interdisciplinarity of writing pedagogy, including the use of new media to deliver and direct expressive compositions.

A case for the research and methodology of therapeutic writing draws its impetus from discussions of composition research made by Thomas Newkirk in "The Narrative Roots of Case

Study,” Richard Beach in his explanation of “Experimental and Descriptive Research Methods,” and Gesa Kirsch’s chapter “Methodological Pluralism” in the text *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research* by Kirsch and Patricia Sullivan. The Kirsch and Sullivan text, which describes philosophical assumptions that lead to distinct research designs, also reviews practitioners’ experience in composition research methodologies up to the beginning of the 1990s. Experimental and pluralistic research designs that include narration employ the personal narrative just as does writing about trauma in the post September Eleventh writing classroom.

To elaborate case study methodology, first, Newkirk discusses the lens of the case study writer/researcher noting that it is a moral framework that informs his hypotheses. He continues by referring to the power of the narrative as a medium through which change is expressed and/or achieved: “The case study researcher usually tells transformative narratives, ones in which the individual experiences some sort of conflict and undergoes a qualitative change in the resolution of that conflict” (134). Next, Beach defines empirical research designs and then categorizes them into parametric and nonparametric empirical research. The latter refers to research that examines “groups of writers as they are, without attempting to generalize to larger populations” (219). Even while meriting the duplicative nature of empirical research as a benefit of the method, Beach cautions that, “writers need to continually examine the attitudes and perceptions that guide their research” (239). Finally, Gesa Kirsch emphatically expresses the idea that composition research calls for methodological pluralism. Methodological pluralism calls for researchers to involve their subject/participants in more, if not every, stage(s) of research. Kirsch admitted that at the time of her writing not many models of pluralism in composition research existed. But she was perhaps prophetic or at least insightful as she described the climate in rhetoric and composition that could benefit from reaching across disciplines and

across methods to employ the approaches that would properly answer questions that could drive breakthrough knowledge in the field. Most importantly, Kirsch noted,

The diverse disciplinary backgrounds of researchers, the range and complexity of writing processes and written texts, and the new and changing questions developed by each new generation of researchers encourage, even demand the use of multiple methods in composition studies. (265-66)

Kirsch is right that our disciplinary backgrounds (social agendas and philosophies) drive our research questions. As I began to examine the therapeutic nature of the Life Support Class I was helping to teach, I wondered about the effect of a similar workbook and class on college women in the campus setting; it seemed to me that a form of writing therapy would be appropriate for college women who had experienced a crisis pregnancy because women in the age range of 17-21 represent the largest population of women to access pregnancy care center services. Recently, these centers have begun offering Life Support classes that address relationships, career and finances, education, and family with single women who turn to them for help (Tushnet, 2003). In addition to providing a framework from which to determine whether Life Support workbooks constituted therapeutic writing, the review of literature in writing therapy sparked a related question. Just as Luciano L'abate was examining how media impacted writing therapy, I wondered if the "disclosure-based website" standupgirl.com, which offer blogging space for their visitors to write about the traumatic experience of an unplanned pregnancy, would be considered a therapeutic tool.

To answer these questions, I had first to become qualified to evaluate these forums from the position of a qualified researcher in therapeutic writing. My challenges began here, as

assessing methodologies in therapeutic writing was seemingly beyond the scope of what we do in mainstream composition. I had no completely articulated framework from which to pull. This dilemma began my search into the place and exigency of personal and therapeutic writing on the college campus. What I found were partial methodologies located in the fringes and embedded within other discussions, in chapters of books that dealt with what students choose to write about if given the opportunity in composition classes on campus. Most of the authors who teased the subject are named in this chapter, but the number of authors represented does not correspond with the number of instructors who are called upon by the nature of much of student writing to adequately respond to and direct writing that is composed perhaps even unconsciously for the therapeutic purposes inherent in the genre. My search for therapeutic methodologies led me to the important discovery of expressive writing pedagogy in an historic and academic context. But why were therapeutic writing methodologies seemingly hidden in rhetoric and composition literature? What was so threatening or inappropriate about the method that it had been unable to enjoy a consistent presence within composition pedagogy? What I found consistently articulated in the historical and bibliographic record and what has come to be the thread that connects the subthemes of this present work is a resistance to the place of pathos, the personal, and emotion in the context of writing in the university.

As I searched within the constructs of rhetoric and composition for a research history of therapeutic writing, I discovered that the field did not provide a research methodology or practical approaches to employing this method in the classroom. I found the first tool for developing a methodology within works by psychologists and psychotherapists. Within their discipline was lore and research from which to develop a related approach to assigning and examining therapeutic writing in composition.

Practitioners in the field of psychology are delighted that therapeutic writing has gained a secure standing as a category of research and application. Partly due to the profusion of work published by James Pennebaker from the 1980s to the present, expressive writing has become a popular method of therapy for the treatment of physical and emotional disease. Conversely, writing professors are still cautious about the marriage between writing and therapy for at least a couple of reasons. First, composition as a field has recently gained limited prestige within departments of English due to the introduction of rhetoric and composition as a tract of graduate study within the last twenty years. Despite this advance in position, instructors trained in literature often consider composition the least desirable subject to teach, and/or the least scholarly of subcategories within English departments that include creative writing, literary studies, and composition. The subordinate position of composition to literature in the English department is evidenced by departmental acts of often assigning composition as mainly part-time or non-tenure track positions to be filled by those without any specific training in composition and by graduate students. These practices and the subordinate record of composition in the English department has been well documented by Susan Miller in *Textual Carnivals* (1991), Theresa Enos in *Gypsy Academics and Mother Teachers* (1996), Eileen Schell in *Gender Roles and Faculty Lives in Rhetoric and Composition* (1998) and later by Schell and Stock's *Moving a Mountain* (2000). Critics of personal writing in expressivist pedagogy may fear that it threatens to diminish the recent prestige that has been gained by the regrouping of rhetorical approaches and methods of analysis in composition. The second reason that many compositionists have yet to embrace the study and practice of therapeutic writing is related to training and liability. In the second chapter of *The Mind's Eye*, "Silence, Voice and Pedagogy," MacCurdy notes, "The benefits of self-disclosure do not negate the problems associated with it. For all the right reasons

writing teachers worry about the ethical, moral and legal issues inherent in this kind of pedagogy.” Since writing professors aren’t trained in counseling, perhaps they are unqualified to theorize methods of therapeutic writing. Whether compositionists are unqualified to apply those methods is not quite that clear.

Since there are varying degrees of therapeutic writing, the qualifications for engaging it also vary. The basic construct, tested by Pennebaker to conduct clinical trials, simply asks students to write for four consecutive days and continuously for twenty minutes. This simple construct can be given by anyone accompanied by a warning that after writing about emotional events, it is normal to feel sad for a little while, but if the sadness is extended or becomes unbearable, the writer should seek a counseling professional. For Pennebaker and other therapists, if the student experiences persistent emotional dishevelment, he or another therapist can administer counseling on the spot. Composition teachers would do what they are already instructed to do, direct the student to the counseling center and/or report to an official a student’s intention to harm him- or herself or others.

On the other end of the spectrum is what MacCurdy asks students to do in her classes on writing about trauma. These qualifications extend beyond Pennebaker’s instructions. In her ground rules for encountering student texts about trauma MacCurdy notes,

1. It is my job to teach writing and grade student texts. The elements of characterization, setting, narrative, and thematic construction, voice, verb tense, and grammar, are all critical to successful writing. The personal essay has a long historical tradition with its own aesthetic, which can help teachers focus on a text when we most need to.
2. The pedagogy of the personal essay requires writing in all drafts. This is where most of the learning occurs.

3. I allow students to tell the stories that need to be told, but I do not mandate that they write about specific experiences.
4. I model workshop protocols with students.
5. I meet with every student in private conferences several times per semester. (7)

MacCurdy's set of instructions sounds like what composition teachers are trained to do. In the discussion of our suitability to proceed with personal writing in composition, I agree with her statement that "Teachers are not therapists. While the work at times can look similar—we listen to students, we actively participate in the process of the construction of a therapeutic narrative, we can care about them as people—our job is to focus on the text, not the life to help writers produce effective work"(6). *If we actively participate in the process of the construction of a therapeutic narrative...then yes, there are risks. Allowing students to write about painful traumatic events is risky, but as in other risky behaviors the damage can be mitigated by following a few simple rules. The benefits of writing therapy will be life altering for some, refreshing for most and unenjoyable for a few. Because of the effects of personal writing, many believe students should always be given the choice to engage it or not based on a complete explanation of the benefits and drawbacks. While I agree that explaining the benefits and drawbacks of personal writing is ideal, I don't agree with our field's propensity to stigmatize personal writing as dangerous in ways that other writing (argumentative, creative, dissertation writing) is not.*

Wendy Bishop, a respected teacher and researcher in rhetoric and composition and distinguished professor of English at Florida State University until her death in 2003, argued that writing programs should add training in psychoanalysis to their graduation requirements. In "Writing Is/And Therapy?" she wondered aloud, "Perhaps it is time to enlarge WPA training by

providing new teachers and administrators with an introduction to psychoanalytic theory and the basics of counseling to support them in their necessary work” (154). Bishop went on to explain the proactive steps she took to deal with the destructive and traumatic themes in students’ autobiographical writing.

I have contacted and talked at length with student health services counselors on my campus...regularized my department files beyond simply asking GTAs to provide me with writing samples from students who are undergoing stress...I plan to draw from these files to create anonymous “cases” of classroom/student problems to share with new teachers of writing. Next, I am exploring the legal implications of this active way of looking at student and teacher classroom relationships. (154-155)

Bishop also poignantly questions the notion that expressive writing pedagogy may be to blame for these cases of trauma appearing in students’ texts. Noting that expressivism is often contrasted with social-constructivist pedagogy, she explains their mutual tendency to spark traumatic recall, “...social constructivist classrooms may ask students to consider political, social, or ethical topics (date rape, discrimination, gender bias in the workplace) which may in turn elicit curative and/or disturbing narratives, discussions, or memories for students...” (150).

While WPA and writing professors internally question whether to explore therapeutic writing in composition classes, psychologists are exploring writing pedagogy in the laboratory. Lepore and Smyth’s *The Writing Cure* compiles theory and research conducted by psychologists and counselors on expressive writing and health outcomes. One of the goals of the collection is to share how clinicians have begun to translate basic research findings into practical applications.

As composition researchers ponder IRB responses to expressivism in research methods, clinicians continue publishing information that “will be helpful to those who are interested in adding expressive writing to their arsenal of therapeutic techniques” (Lepore & Smyth 7).

For psychologists Wright and Chung (2001) “Writing therapy is defined as expressivist and reflective writing whether self-generated or suggested by a therapist/researcher. Richard Riordan (1996) prefers the term scriptotherapy to mean “...the deliberate use of writing designed to enhance therapeutic outcomes” (263). Bishop presented what she calls “clarification” from friends knowledgeable about counseling:

Therapy...is a change-process that takes place with another person (in our culture, a person who has undergone rigorous training, controlled and prescribed for the specific fields within the profession). Processes can be therapeutic; they can make you feel healthy and facilitate change, but the processes themselves are not “therapy.” Thus, “therapeutic process” seems to be the more appropriate term for what happens in writing or in a writing class. (Reid and Lord Personal Communication qtd. in Bishop 144)

Riordan, noting in 1996 that “little exists to guide counselors [/researchers] in using scriptotherapy,” created guidelines consisting of 12 suggestions that borrowed heavily from his own experience and from literature on writing therapy up to that point. In his appendix, he condensed his suggestions into four main guidelines:

1. Time and Place

Encourage writing at the same time of day. Assign a set length of time for writing: 15-60 minutes. Determine the most productive frequency: 1-7 times per week. Encourage the client to find a private uninterrupted location.

2. Content Decisions

Assign a counseling specific topic or theme to writing or encourage the client to write freely about whatever comes to mind. Suspend all rules of grammar but request legibility.

3. Feedback

Plan for a consistent method of feedback on writing. Give written feedback that is clear and unambiguous.

4. Other Logistics

Introduce scriptotherapy at the beginning of counseling. Prepare clients to handle sensitive issues that can arise. Use tape recording when writing is not possible.

Be selective about which clients can benefit from writing. Watch for overreliance on unhelpful writing. Try having the client mail writings between sessions.

Encourage poetry where appropriate. (269)

The majority of Riordan's suggestions sound like what writing teachers already do. His guidelines alone make a strong case for writing researchers and practitioners to be trained to understand the link between writing and therapy. When Pennebaker recalled the constraints that governed his first writing study he noted:

The department's introductory psychology classes had an extra credit option that allowed for up to 5 hours of participation time...Because of these practical considerations, we decided to have students come to the lab 5 days in a row—the first day to complete questionnaires and the remaining 4 days to do the writing. (Lepore & Smith 282)

In a retrospective account he added, "The study worked. Because of that, we have always had people write for 3-5 days in a row for 15-20 minutes per day about traumatic or other negative experiences. Why give up a good thing?" (282). In this same retrospective he transitions from speaking about the past to speaking about the future of his work and gives a personal account of his leaning toward research in writing therapy. Then he relayed his own experiences with personal writing and growing up in a non-reflective family with lots of health problems. He says,

“...it just makes sense that having people explore their deepest thoughts and feelings would spur health changes” (282). Those health changes were not just reports of “feeling better” after having undergone writing therapy. Lepore and Smyth’s collection report cases of blood pressure decreases (Crow et al.) and fewer medical visits for cancer related morbidities in women with breast cancer among other research findings (Stanton and Danoff-Burg).

Since research has conclusively shown the benefits of writing therapy, the field of psychology has begun to experiment with different media for providing that therapy. Jeannie Wright (2002) reviewed counseling services that had begun to offer writing therapy online and their reasons for doing so. According to Wright, practitioners highlight the potential benefit of embracing a medium that would enable counselors to reach more clients. Wright also reported that practitioners note the benefit of online counseling for the control that it gives to the client/visitor to choose the time and occasion for seeking counseling. Other reasons to explore online counseling ranged from cost effectiveness to the ability to reach audiences who would not normally seek counseling for preventive therapy. This finding again leads me to think of the site Standupgirl.com where more than thirty-five thousand registered users blog traditionally and through video or digital storytelling. The members are mostly teenage girls around age 17 who are facing unexpected pregnancies; they access the site when they want for as long as they want to get information about fetal development, and to get advice from the site administrators, but mostly to read testimonials of other girls who are facing an unexpected pregnancy. They read stories from those who delivered their babies and those who ended their pregnancies in abortion. They report that these stories help them to find community and support in a most challenging time and they go on to post their own stories. The site is undoubtedly a triumph in the marriage

between counseling and distance writing or computer assisted therapeutic writing, if not a trophy of the merit of public discourse in general.

Around the same time that Luciano, L'Abate was experimenting with creating workbooks for writing therapy, Lynn Bloom wrote, "Writing Textbooks in/for Times of Trauma." Her essay, included in Shane Borrowman's collection of essays sparked by the attacks of September 11th, touches on the ethical and intellectual responsibility of the academy during traumatic times. Bloom suggested criteria for selecting material when developing a textbook to treat traumatic events and cautioned textbook writers against traps that would thwart the process of healing. One such caution is for writers to "avoid polarizing language and attitudes" (132).

The theme of the university's ethical responsibility to students also appeared in Marian MacCurdy's impassioned apologia for the teaching of the personal essay to deal with trauma. While MacCurdy's discussion acts as an interdisciplinary bridge between composition and psychology, it also connects therapeutic writing to research in neuroscience and trauma theory. While assenting that compositionists and therapists have different goals—to produce strong writers and mental health respectively—she notes that writing and therapy can inform each other. MacCurdy discussed processes that she employed at Ithaca College while teaching an upper-level course in the personal essay. Her practices were informed by trauma theory and research in neuroscience. The narratives that come from the students in the class are layered, developed experiences that include facts, thick description and personal responses to events that were considered by the authors to be life altering. MacCurdy hints at the fact that the skills that it takes to produce the argumentative or academic essay are the ones that her students employ to produce such rich texts grounded in experience. Her explanation pulls from her study of memory and brain function, but in general explains that at first try, without assistance, discourse

about traumatic events is disconnected, distant, unemotive, and limited in description.

MacCurdy, having studied trauma theory, takes her students through exercises that encourage them to recall images that once penned can unblock emotions and sequencing that enable the students to build a comprehensive essay.

In this chapter, I am not suggesting that compositionists should “take back” writing therapy from psychiatrists who employ it. I am suggesting that compositionists who are committed to expository writing should explore the research that has made writing a serious competitor to talk therapy in psychological treatment. I am further asserting that research designs that employ writing therapy be reviewed by graduate composition students and that designs and methodological instruction for compositionists not ignore this category of investigation. Writing therapy researchers note that many studies of writing therapy have included college students as participants (Pennebaker 2002, Wright and Chung 2001). Researchers also note that the benefits of expressive writing have been demonstrated among relatively healthy and psychologically sophisticated persons (Lepore and Smyth).

Research designs in therapeutic writing are experimental, usually including control groups, an apparatus or variable of expository writing and pre- and post- statistical examination. Rhetorical and textual analyses such as those completed by Wright (2001) and Wittala (2004) may also be topics for investigating the nuanced approaches to writing therapy. While neither compositionists in the expressive method, nor psychotherapists have attempted to name ‘exposition’ as a research methodology, certain assumptions do underlie the designs of research in writing therapy.

Theories about the self, disclosure, and even coping underlie the work of writing therapists. Gloria Bird in her 1992 dissertation, *Programmed Writing as a Method for Increasing Self-Esteem, Self-Disclosure and Coping Skills*, noted the observation of Kenneth Gergen that “during fifties and sixties nearly two thousand investigations of the self concept were published...” (qtd. in Bird, 31). One of the central themes of Bird’s research is that “self-esteem, self-disclosure, and coping skills are mutually interactive and exert a positive influence on personal functioning” (40).

Bird concluded that “the systematic use of writing is a research area of promise that could have considerable practical implication” (i).

According to Barry Schlenker (1985) a person’s general identity may be compromised in certain social circumstances where a “situation identity” is manifested.” Andrea Lunsford’s recent research at Stanford allowed writers to conceptualize and dramatize themselves in order to overcome feelings of inadequacy at being new Stanford students. Lunsford’s hunch that encouraging students to experiment with disclosing their feelings of inadequacy would improve their writing and/or writing process proved to be right. Lunsford showed a case study, a video, of one student speaking the thoughts that inhibited her inventive writing. It wasn’t until this student was able to assume the persona of her successful self that she began flowing on paper. Another video showed a student reading a spoken word piece, first in an unintoned, unrythmic way, then with a persona infused that brought the piece to life. The situation identity that Schlenker described is one that can be further explored in online ethnography of discourse communities if compositionists would cross disciplines to do the literature review in psychology that this type of study requires.

The thread that appears throughout these works is the power of the narrative to transform those who write them and read them. Newkirk reminds us:

The case-study researcher usually tells transformative narratives, ones in which the individual experiences some sort of conflict and undergoes a qualitative change in the resolution of that conflict. (134)

In their composition study, research by Lorraine Higgins and Lisa Brush employed an interdisciplinary approach linking rhetoric and policy studies. Their project trained low income mothers to write multidimensional narratives that populated a policy recommendation booklet that informed officials who would make decisions about the future of welfare to single mothers. They report their process of working with the women to revise their rough drafts. One of their challenges was to move the women beyond hero and villain characterizations of themselves and others. They noted that, “Subordinated narrators need not present themselves as heroic to achieve credibility; what matters is that readers understand the moral purpose and logics that drive narrators’ responses to conflict” (720).

Marian MacCurdy, in the conclusion of the benefit of the personal essay wrote:

As writers move from their narratives to the personal essay itself, they become both owners of their moments and witnesses for others. The particular becomes contextualized for both writers and readers. Personal essays begin with the individual but end with the universal, a process which itself creates connections that can heal. (197)

The healing process evoked by the phrase ‘the writing cure’ and by MacCurdy’s words will take place when composition researchers, psychologists, and others cross methodologies in order to

see what others have found to impact writing performance and academic successes related to writing. As Gesa Kirsch foretold in 1992, methodological pluralism is the future of rhetoric and composition. Those who stand to benefit are the composition researchers who want their questions answered, psychiatrists who need their methodologies established, students who need to be unblocked, and universities who need to reconnect to the community.

With overwhelming evidence that therapeutic writing can benefit students, university profiles, and researchers, the only thing left undone is to suggest a method of employing it on campus. I don't suggest that one methodology would be appropriate for all contexts. I suggest offering multiple approaches to graduate students and instructors of composition along with a rationale for matching methodologies with pedagogical contexts. While Marian MacCurdy's courses in personal writing will suit the needs of some, other approaches are also appropriate. For example, Michelle Payne themed a course, *Writing about Female Experience* and structured it as an investigation of a subject through:

a sustained class project that through a sequence of assignments, asked students to write about that seemingly nebulous topic, 'female experience.' The students chose specific subjects that they wanted to explore, like marriage, sexuality, independence/dependence, and then I organized readings and assignments around those interests. (116)

Her course would fit both in women's studies and composition. A course similar to the format of Higgins and Brush's could cross registration in political science and English as it uses personal experience narrative to address public audiences and affect public policy. While not all professors will take advantage of the opportunity to connect significantly with students by inviting them to explore a subject through personal essay, all instructors in composition and those being trained in the area should be presented the research and practice of this direction. In

composition courses themselves, the personal essay should be a staple just as the argumentative essay now is. In fact, in departments where the personal essay is not a part of the foundation of an introduction to composition, I would suggest that instructors are either untrained in composition or afraid to engage the personal essay due to the backlash against it published in composition journals. The personal essay has been integral to writing wherever it has been encountered, as an essay which “allows unapologetically for the presence and subjectivities of the author, and places the author in a position of relationship to other subjects and thinkers of the address.” It is also a form to which “language and style are as crucially important as are logic and subject matter” (para. Lopate viii and Malinowitz 319). It belongs in the composition course.

Treating Emotion in the Classroom

Jerome Bump created a course that focused on developing “writing skills to communicate our emotions as well as our thoughts to others and ourselves.” In short, his course focused on emotional literacy. He asked students to record their emotions as they read the course’s novels, then to code their responses. One student noted; “...even if it [anger] is not dissolved, at least I am more aware of its presence and its impact on my life” (320). As a result of his teaching, Bump was asked to make presentations on literature as therapy in his campus counseling center and in its outreach programs. Unfortunately, one of his courses, in the Division of Rhetoric and Composition titled “Nineteenth-Century Autobiographical Writing” later attracted a critique from a school administrator. The school administrator pulled his course from the registration catalog, citing concern that “such ‘experiments in the classroom’ might prove injurious to students” (325).

Thomas Newkirk discussed “The problem of Emotion” by relating back to Bourdieu’s term bracketing (1984). Bracketing, or distancing oneself from various ordinary urgencies was distinctly noticeable in a high social class of people. Newkirk’s first example of bracketing was “looking at a tractor not as something necessary to plow a field, but as a series of planes, ovals, and colors” (87). His second example described English teachers’ infatuation with Virginia Woolf’s “Death of a Moth.” Composition instructors are often members of the socio-economic group that has embraced bracketing as a natural response. The danger of bracketing is that we become so accustomed to seeing or experiencing pain abstractly, or technically, that we recoil when we are met with pain or raw emotion in general. It is this insensibility that causes us to react negatively to emotion in writing and in the classroom.

To combat a prejudice against our student’s display of emotion in writing, Newkirk suggests that we:

Collapse the distance between reader and event

Collapse the distance between ethical and aesthetic

Be willing to elaborate as a reader

Be willing to endorse conventional norms of emotional response (88)

Guy Allen in “Language, Power, and Consciousness: A Writing Experiment at the University of Toronto” describes a simple study he designed to investigate reasons why students showed improved academic performance after taking his “Prose Boot Camp” course. For more than 15 years, he had tracked grades and comments received by students on their written work in other courses in the university before, during and after the course. His investigation appeared in Anderson and MacCurdy’s *Writing and Healing*, and records his method, which began as he

interviewed students before their first exposure to his personal essay system. He recorded their answers to the following questions:

What do you think about yourself as a writer?

What have teachers told you about your writing?

Why are you taking a course in writing? (256)

Then, he surveyed students at the end of his course after he had given grades using anonymous forms and a student assistant. He asked for written answers to the questions:

What do you think about yourself as a writer?

What have others told you about your writing and any changes in it since you have been in this course?

What if anything did you get out of this course? (256)

In a section describing how students saw writing before the course, Allen noted that more than 95% of students entering the course had a negative view of their abilities as writers and a negative view of the experience of writing in a school setting. According to Allen, this statistic varied almost none in 15 years. He found :

- More than 70% of incoming students report that they take the writing course to reduce the number of “mistakes” they make in their writing.
- Almost 84% report their dread of writing in an academic setting.
- More than 70 percent of entering students believe they must adopt an artificial voice to write in an academic setting.
- More than 65% believe they must keep themselves out of their writing.
- Students feel writing will be important to them academically, professionally, and personally. (258)

After distributing the three survey questions, Allen proceeded with his Prose Boot Camp regimen, which included 1) one original piece of writing each week for 10 weeks and continuous revisions of their work, 2) weekly lectures and workshops on prose basics, and 3) three one-on-one sessions with the course instructor wherein he works as an editor, recommending edits and revisions. In his section titled, How Students See Writing After the Course, Allen noted that students reported improved grade results:

72% report improved grade results in written work in other university courses

31% report an average one letter-grade

69% report a fractional letter-grade rise

21% report that other instructors commented explicitly on the improvement in their writing. (260)

Some students also:

report improvement in courses which require no writing. They attribute the change to increased personal confidence and sharpened awareness about language. Most students report relief from tension and trauma associated with writing. They attribute the change to intensive experience with writing, increased confidence and better knowledge about the writing process, especially editing. (260)

Other students, 74%, report:

feeling more positive about themselves as a result of writing personal history. Many report positive life effects that reach beyond the academy. Increased confidence, self-awareness, and assertiveness are the commonest. Some report breakthroughs with issues they feel have interfered with their ability to realize their potential. (260)

Some students also reported that:

their engagement with personal essays has shown them how to bring aspects of their own lives into academic work. Almost a quarter of students published or read in public readings. Students who publish or read for the public report that public exposure and acceptance have provided validation and confidence-building recognition. (261)

Not surprisingly:

More than 90% of students who took part in the course that offered personal and expository essay felt that the work with personal essays accounted for their positive experience in the course. Students identify the personal essay work as the part of the course that helped them improve results in their other academic writing. (261)

Finally, a few students:

less than 3%, have found the course and the personal essay instruction unhelpful and frustrating. All of these students have been ones who came to the course looking for an anything-goes creative writing course. They found prose boot camp “uncreative and formulaic.” Some wanted to write poetry or science fiction. (262)

Allen suggests that writing frequently and the ability to incorporate first language or dialect into the text played a role in student’s writing improvement. Within his discussion Allen also pointed out that direct attention to the expository essay (something he did before incorporating his Prose Boot Camp) did not improve student’s performance on the expository essay. Allen’s concluding remarks reverberate the theme of the previous composition researchers named thus far. He writes, “The writing problem in our universities is really a humanism problem. We teach humanism and dodge its practice” (287). Then, echoing the stance

of Wendy Bishop in “Writing Is/And Therapy,” Allen notes, “We make artificial distinctions between academic and creative writing, and we press these distinctions on our students” (287). In contrast Allen noted that the personal essay process he outlined in the chapter “allows a parallel discourse, one that traverses the artificial chasm between the creative and the academic, between the subject and the object, between the self and the society” (287)

Taken together, the early 1960s movements that included expressivist approaches to composition and today’s writing and healing movement are a general call to bringing humanism or humanity back into the enterprise of learning and or being within the academy. Affective education, a connection between psychology and education emerged in the 1960s and provoked a transformation that assigned the emotional factor in education a role as important as traditional academics (Brand *Therapy* 1980 qtd. in Bump). Carl Rogers strongly voiced the need for teachers’ emotional literacy: in the school context, the first essential was that teachers reveal themselves in honest ways and exhibit a range of feelings that differentiate living persons from ‘automatons’” (*On Becoming a Person* qtd. in Bump). It was Jerome Bump who referenced Langbaum (1963) and Holloway (1953) as having shown that “...the equivalent in the humanities of the empirical approach is the laboratory of ‘personal experience’” (324). In other words a student “tries out the worldview of the writer of an autobiography, then analyzes its effects on his or her experience of life and decides whether or not to incorporate any elements of that world view in his or her own philosophy of life” (Bump 324). Many authors within the expressive tradition expressed dismay at a system and discipline in which students could be instructed to keep themselves (their initial, naïve thoughts and opinions) out of writing. They believed that for writing to work, and specifically, for writing to work within the university, instructors and departments needed to reconnect to the personal.

Reconnecting to the personal did not mean that the community, or public, or audience had to be neglected. Sherrie Gradin dismantled this misreading of expressivism in her discussion of social expressivism. She also noted that expressivist classrooms encourage group and collaborative work. And “In its embracing emotion and the particular individual, for instance, expressivism’s goal is to accept humankind as it really is—diverse” (*Romancing Rhetorics* 124). The argument continues that if students aren’t invited to engage in Elbow’s “believing game” wherein they trust and voice their own perceptions, biases, and prejudices born out of environment and experience, then they won’t even attempt to play the “doubting game,” participating with others in voicing dissident opinions and having their own assertions challenged.

As I close this discussion on the connection between writing and healing and emotion in the composition classroom, I hope that these last examples of expanded pedagogy will further demonstrate our room for growth within the field. Bell hooks’ engaged pedagogy, aligns with the expressive tradition and is spelled out in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994). The goal of hook’s pedagogy is to “teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of [her] students...” (13). The philosophy of revealing oneself articulated by Carl Rogers resurfaces in her engaged pedagogy, wherein emotional literacy is a driving force. This pedagogy sharply contrasted what she and so many others saw as the disconnected state of teaching and particularly instructors in the university. Hooks describes the state of teaching that she walked into as one in with “little emphasis on spiritual well-being,” one which reinforced public-private separation, and one in which “the self was presumably emptied out leaving in place only an objective mind” (16). To remedy public-private disconnection, hooks calls for teachers to “take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions to show how experiences can illuminate our

understanding of academic material” (21). She also urges that “teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being...” (17), and she called for students and professors to regard one another as whole human beings striving for not just book knowledge, but knowledge on how to live in the world. Her suggestions are typical of the all encompassing view of literacy found in a survey of those who articulate notions of black women’s literacies, particularly those which are noted by Jacqueline Royster in *Traces of a Stream* (2000) and by Joanne Kilgour Dowdy in *Readers of the Quilt: Essays on Being Black, Female, and Literate* (2005).

Guy Allen agrees with hooks’ diagnosis of the state of the academy around the second millennium. Like hooks, he also offered a remedy to the problem:

The ‘writing problem’ in our universities is really a humanism problem. We teach humanism and dodge its practice. We ask our students to study and understand meaning at the same time that we offer little opportunity for them to make original meaning. Only the person who has attempted to make original meaning can understand how difficult that is...We offer scant occasion for them to include this kind of knowledge in their education except by accident...The ‘writing problem’ roots in our student’ alienated discourse.

Language is a tool of the human mind, whatever the mind’s enterprise. Students who live consciously in language inform themselves and their fellow students and the society in which they seek a role” (287-288).

Some might think that writing and healing is one of those soft-edged concepts that hardly fits within the rigid walls of the academy. But those closest to writing, the composition instructors trained in the pedagogies, must realize that the skills it takes to produce argumentative and analytical writing are the same ones we employ to produce writing that is

engagingly personal and often therapeutic. However engrained the idea that therapeutic writing does not belong in the college classroom, the evidence suggests that college students are precisely the ones who are positioned to be affected most significantly by a movement whose goal is to give students the tools to articulate their experiences within a larger framework of related literacies and informed practice. This movement can only take root and grow if those on the frontlines of writing pedagogy are trained to engage the principles which articulate the contexts for expressive writing, the methodologies which drive its research and the approaches which produce it. My goal is to highlight the salient contexts in which we find ourselves, engaging gender in our approaches, assigning and appraising value in arguments and attending to the motivational appeals inherent in the rhetorical framework by which we are directed to present composition. This contemporary context suggests that therapeutic writing should be engaged by informed practitioners to meet the goals of the humanities divisions of the academy to address the needs of the students who come to us in this current era of trauma and to meet our desire to restore significance of our roles as servants to those who enter our classrooms in search of transformative knowledge upon which to build their future ambitions.

FEMINISM, COMPOSITION, AND STEPS TOWARD INTERVENTION IN YOUNG WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

In some of the groups I belong to, feminism is a dirty word. At a Georgia Right to Life meeting, when someone wants to know what I'm doing in grad school or my area of study, I can't just say feminism and composition without an explanation. When a church member sees me carrying around Gesa Kirsch et al's sourcebook, *Feminism and Composition*, I find myself repeating the words of my advisor, "Whenever you focus on women, it's called feminism."

I understand my friends' suspicion of the feminist label. Before entering college in 1994, I hadn't really thought twice about feminism. I had probably never said the word. But studying at an all women's college quickly enlightened me to feminism and its many hyphenated relationships. At Spelman College, I was not a women's study major, but the nature of the school placed me in the middle of "the movement." Spelman was woman-centered by circumstance. At its founding in 1881, a school of its kind, for freed African American women and girls, did not exist in Atlanta. Like many schools founded in the post-Civil War era, Spelman, then Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, was established by missionaries and was closely aligned with the church in service to the surrounding community, but a century later, in 1994, Spelman's ties to a church or a specific Christian mission were loose at best.

Historically the goals of feminism, and its related ideology womanism have not aligned with the social and spiritual goals of the many traditional Christians churches. In fact, the words feminism and fundamentalism may be mutually exclusive. In *Feminism is Not the Story of My Life*, Elizabeth Fox Genovese's assessment of the general public's mistrust of feminism remains the most poignant,

Why do these women and men mistrust feminism? The short answer is that they do not see feminism as a story about their lives. For some, it is a story about rich women's lives, or white women's lives, or career women's lives. For the Catholics among them, it stands as a defense of abortion, which they cannot accept. For many of the women, as well as the men, it stands for an attack on men that threatens them directly or threatens their husbands, boyfriends, or sons. For most, it is simply irrelevant to the pressing problems of managing life from day to day. (10)

While it is in many ways connected to the contemporary social-political feminist movement, the feminism that serves as the scholarly foundation of this work has been rooted in study of woman's attitudes toward and experience of writing.

Professors of women's studies and feminist professors of composition have been concerned about the specific realities of women's academic and social lives since the public developments of those respective fields in academic departments and academic literature around the 1970s. Studies in the interest of feminism and composition are compiled in collections edited by Janet Emig and Louise Weatherbee Phelps (*Women's Experience in American Composition and Rhetoric* 1995), Susan Jarratt and Lynn Worsham (*Feminism and Composition Studies* 1998), and Gesa Kirsch et al (*Feminism and Composition* 2003). The two disciplines had similar concerns, to address the seeming silencing of women that was linked to the absence of a development of a separate identity and to redirect power and authority that was connected to entities outside of the woman.

Spiritual Realities

John and Stasi Eldredge co-authors of the book *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul*, seek to help women understand their origin through attention to scriptures in Genesis and other biblical scriptures related to women. The authors paint a striking reality for women early in the text in the chapter "A Special Hatred." Before turning their attention strictly to the spiritual foundation of "the special hatred," the authors write,

The story of the treatment of women down through the ages is not a noble history. It has noble moments in it, to be sure, but taken as a whole, women have endured what seems to be a special hatred ever since we left Eden. (80)

The authors follow with cultural proverbs that bear out their assertion:

It was common practice for a Jewish man to add to his morning prayers, "Thank you, God, for not making me a Gentile a woman or a slave" (81)

A Chinese proverb says that 'a woman should be like water; she should take no form and have no voice' (81)

An Indian proverb says, 'educating a woman is like watering your neighbor's garden...'
(81).

With a historical record so staunchly against the development of women, the academic landscape for women's studies was ripe for planting. Research studies which pioneered the field in composition include Florence Howe's "Identity and Expression" (1971), Joan Bolker's "Teaching Griselda to Write" (1979), and Lynn Worsham's "Writing Against Writing" (1979).

These studies and those which followed them began providing a framework from which to design and interpret writing studies for and about women.

Women's Academic Realities in Composition: A Literature Review of Types of Writing and Research

In a 1971 article, "Identity and Expression: A Writing Course for Women," Florence Howe reported the discovery that many of her women students held a negative view of their own writing abilities. Women had developed these attitudes as they were told mostly by male professors that their writing was illogical, or that they had "no ideas," but Howe also recognized that these attitudes were likely exacerbated by the fact that all of the texts used in higher education were written by men. Taking matters into her own hands, Howe designed a course that exposed her students to women writers ranging from that of traditional literature to underground feminist periodicals. Students then generally wrote a paper every two weeks. Some of their writings were reaction papers in which students were able to respond to their exposure to women as writers. Other papers were more traditionally academic in the way that they analyzed or compared two things that were alike or different.

Like Howe, Joan Bolker recognized that her students' disconnectedness from their writing was rooted in the students' development of a style or a voice in academic writing with which they felt comfortable. Bolker, another composition instructor writing around this time, observed that many of her most academically accomplished students were dissatisfied with their writing. Bolker recorded her students' reactions to their own writing as something to which they maintained no connection. Her students described "a lack of personality in their papers", and a "sense of non-ownership, and of disappointment at not being able to make herself heard." In "Teaching Griselda to Write," Bolker chronicles this syndrome and her response. Bolker

borrowed the name Griselda from Chaucer's Patient Griselda who she described as an interesting character who turns out to be "thoroughly dull." Her own "Griseldas," as Bolker named them, were the kind of good students that classmates disdained. They turned in papers on time (or even early) that were well proofread and "properly bibliographed," but they were papers that stifled the writer's voice. In Bolker's assessment, Griselda's problem ranged from "ignoring her doubts" and stopping short of following the lead of a good idea. Griseldas instead follow a safer route that turns out a neatly packaged product. In guiding her Griseldas in the development of their own writing style, Bolker suggested that the students write fiction, poetry, journal entries, and occasional essays. She also emphasized that developing a style took time.

Two additional essays that articulate women's writing and rhetoric are Sally Miller Gearhart's "The Womanization of Rhetoric" and Lynn Worsham's "Writing Against Writing: The Predicament of *Écriture féminine* in Composition Studies." Gearhart, writing in 1979, passionately argues against arguing. Specifically she calls the type of writing typical in academic journals at the time, which tears down another colleague in the name of winning, violence. She seemed not to be concerned with the inevitable indictment that her essay had done precisely what she called for others not to do, chastise the literature of others, pointing out its flaws; nevertheless, Gearhart is not alone in her assessment that arguing in disciplinary literature left a bad taste in the mouth; she is joined by Christine Mason Sutherland ("Feminist Historiography" 2002) and Andrea Lunsford ("Rhetoric, Feminism..." 1999) among others who attempt to avoid this type of public discourse.

Finally Lynn Worsham analyzes the compatibility of composition with *écriture féminine* in "Writing against Writing." In the majority of her essay, Worsham describes *écriture féminine* mainly from quotes by the French feminists who are writing about it at the time Cixious, Irigaray

and Kristeva. The main characterization that emerges as *écriture féminine* is that which is resistant to theory on the grounds that theory is static and acts as a sort of trap, disabling its subject from the fluid reconceptualization of meaning that is inherently present in *écriture féminine*. Metaphors of laughter emerge as French feminists write about women's writing in a way as to remind themselves not to take themselves too seriously and thus risk attempting to control by naming the phenomenon that takes place as women write. Another metaphor that is invoked by *écriture féminine* according to Worsham is the theme "writing the body." This metaphor emerges as a reminder that for women writing is not disconnected from the being, or physical person and all of the historical physical bondages experienced by women under men's willing ignorance and, or lust for power and control in the world.

These studies and the essays that emerge at the intersection of feminism and composition are important to current practice in composition teaching for several reasons. First they provide a history at which to point current composition students who aspire to do their own research in gender and writing. Secondly they provide an account of the emergence of differences in writing and the important reactions to the notion that women and men construct knowledge and develop intellectually from completely different standpoints. Finally, for critically minded students, these accounts expose the points of resistance and struggle experienced by both composition students and researchers who encountered a problem and dared to question it, thus creating a pattern from which to see the current challenges in composition studies from the perspective of both student and teacher.

Feminist ideology is itself multi-faceted. Sometimes merely having women as subjects of research makes one's work feminist. Other times, it is a critical and questioning demeanor in the classroom, or flexibility in knowledge making or composition that earns a practitioner a

feminist title (Kirsch and Sullivan 1992). Other definitions of feminist work from Janice Lauer's 1995 article examining the feminization of the field include characterizations such as work that is student-centered, brings out the best in others, and displays joy. Feminist work may also be characterized as that which strives to be ethical and that which is collaborative. The collaborative descriptor has roots that go back as far as Mary Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986), which concluded that when compared to men's knowledge making behaviors, women preferred working collaboratively. The ethical characterization comes from a movement to nurture wherein Nel Noddings' *Educating Moral People* (2002) was a primary work consulted. *Educating Moral People* asked educators to approach moral/character-centered education from an ethics of care which included open-ended dialogue and emphasized building relationships in order to build trust. She based much of her theory on analyzing what mothers do in caring for children. According to Noddings, where moral education was concerned, it was useless if not delivered out of genuine concern for the student and developed within a rich relational context.

Each of these readings informs the present work. I am reminded by Noddings research to be ethical in my approach to studying women. *Women's Ways of Knowing* alerts me that there is reason to separate genders when attempting to offer knowledge building education because men and women develop knowledge differently. The Howe and Hiatt studies remind me that women need to see examples of writing by women as they form a writing performance identity. Mary Hiatt's "The Feminine Style" specifically addresses emotion in writing.

"The Feminine Style" revealed three surprising realities about the nature of men's and women's writing. Described in her article "The Feminine Style," Hiatt reported that according to her research, women's writing was not illogical (as it had been labeled) but it was full of words

that relayed emotion, while men's writing tended to be void of these words. While these study outcomes don't seem groundbreaking, the significance is their connection to the body of pioneering literature in which inquiry into gender differences related to academic study were beginning to emerge, especially that which has come to be called knowledge construction.

Hiatt's study preceded Belenky et al.'s; nevertheless, the latter has come to be cited repeatedly as a groundbreaking text of the linked psychological and intellectual differences between men and women. Mary Field Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (1986) offered a view of women's intellectual development in which the establishment of voice and self were central. For these reasons, in the service of women, an expressive pedagogy may be particularly effective.

Collaboration: Women and Shared Voice in Writing

The theory that women value collaboration in constructing knowledge is explored in the scholarship of Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede in "Rhetoric in A New Key: Women and Collaboration" (1990), and Sheryl Fontaine and Sheryl Hunter's *Collaborative Writing in Composition Studies* (2006). Reporting on the two types of collaboration that emerged from their study of seven major professions and their experiences with collaborative writing, the writing teams discovered what they called hierarchical and dialogic collaboration types. Hierarchical collaboration is a type that may be initiated by an authority outside of the collaborative team. This style of collaboration was described as product driven and seen as efficient and productive, though not satisfying to the participants. The multivocal nature of a writing team is seen as a challenge to be overcome in this type of collaborative writing.

On the other hand a different type of collaboration emerged that was distinct from the hierarchical form. This type of collaboration, which the researchers called dialogic, seemed to value the process of collaboration as least as much as the product. In this form, the pair roles were fluid; each partner's role could change and each team member might hold more than one role at a time. According to Lunsford and Ede, the multivocal nature of the writing was celebrated by the writers who engaged it. It was what the writers hoped to preserve in the finished product.

The multivocal style of writing was most often described by women writing teams. The women interviewed by Ede and Lunsford often had no set vocabulary for identifying what they were doing. This collaborative writing type was identified by Lunsford and Ede as "other" and subsequently they began to describe the dialogic collaborative style as a feminine style. These thought processes and characteristics of writing were first described in articles in *Rhetoric Review* ("Rhetoric in a New Key," etc.). Subsequently their complete study was published as *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* (1990).

While Lunsford and Ede were not the first to collaborate in composition studies, their *Singular Texts/Plural Authors* is recognized as a major contribution to inquiry into collaborative writing in the field. Mentioned earlier, "*Women's Ways of Knowing*" (1986) not only classified stages of women's intellectual development, but also the researchers' method of writing itself has been recognized as an exemplar of the products of women's collaboration. In *Collaborative Writing in Composition Studies*, Sheryl Fontaine and Susan Hunter point out the researchers' (Belenky et al.'s) acknowledgement of the "sustained conversation" that the women were able to have while meeting together for days at a time. In the same work, Hunter and Fontaine name Lunsford and Ede's *Singular Texts/Plural Authors* as the "source from which all other stories of

dialogic collaboration flow.” Undoubtedly, it is the popularity of *Singular Texts/Plural Authors* that lead to its often being discussed and critiqued by those who have written subsequent analyses or studies into collaborative writing practices.

Two varying critiques come from Lorraine York and James Harley and James Pennebaker and Claire Fox. Part of York’s work in *Rethinking Women’s Collaboration*, is a direct critique based on the grounds that she understands Lunsford and Ede’s work to display an essentialist tone that places collaboration between women as almost inherently superior to collaboration by men or mixed-gendered pairs. York’s work questions whether the products of women’s collaboration are superior to collaboration by others. York’s study surveys collaboration in poetry and playwriting contexts; she asserts that in the genre of performance writing, collaboration is no new phenomenon. In addition to her problem with assertions about women’s collaboration as superior, York also questions whether women in academia can afford to collaborate in a climate where collaboration is still considered inferior to the single-authored text, an assertion that is well documented (Lunsford and Ede 1990; Fontaine and Hunter 2006).

An indirect critique of the value of collaborative writing comes from Hartley, Pennebaker and Fox in “Using New Technology to Assess the Academic Writing Styles of Male and Female Pairs and Individuals.” Rather than objecting to the value of collaborative writing on theoretical grounds, the research team presents results that show no significant difference observed in papers published by individuals and pairs in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*. In addition to these results, the researchers reported no significant differences in papers written by men versus women, though they maintain that differences might have been observable on the unpublished, submitted first drafts of the essays—a noteworthy consideration. The only significant difference that emerged was the achievement of a higher Flesch score on articles written by women pairs

which indicated that longer words and longer sentences existed in the work by the women pairs. The Flesch assessment is often tied to the complexity of the paper in question. Overall the researchers concluded that their results contradicted assertions that collaboration produced a higher quality of work, an assertion that has been reported by composition instructors of distance learning (Hawisher and Selfe 2003) among others.

The two named critiques don't necessarily speak to what is perceived to be the spirit behind the idea that women value collaboration. In fact, in writing women seem to speak a different language, which is filled with words that express emotion, and this may be the point that Lunsford and Ede mean to highlight. Rather than focusing on the product of collaboration, what has come to be known as dialogic collaboration focuses on the gratifying process of the endeavor. Resting on the view of knowledge creation as one way of joining a conversation, Lunsford and Ede (and Heath and Royster 2000, and Gere among others) focus on the idea that all knowledge is socially constructed whether additional knowledge makers or authors are named or withheld. The strength of their theory is supported at least in part by work in composition and women's studies that point to women valuing connectedness as they work to construct meaning.

The implications of the outcomes of collaboration support expressivist techniques of workshopping in small groups and maintaining high levels of interaction with the professor through conferences and classroom interaction. The outcomes also suggest that a focus on mentoring in both undergraduate and graduate students may specifically benefit women.

In feminist recovery, a division of research in composition or rhetorical historiography, another direction has been to retrieve letters and diary entries and other private correspondence in order to theorize the public implications of such correspondence. Two examples are Michelle Payne's treatment of diary entries in "A Strange Unaccountable Something" to reexamine the

evidence in the case of a woman's charge of her husband's infidelity and possible incest and Lisa Gring-Pemble's analysis of the work of Antoinette Brown Blackwell's letters to Lisa Stone as the beginning of Blackwell's abolitionist public action and the start of the Women's Rights Movement.

Later, Kirsch and Ritchie in "Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research" discuss borrowing from feminist ideology in which researchers locate themselves within their research. According to Kirsch and Ritchie, beyond just treating race and gender, feminist researchers make known their assumptions, stereotypes, and preconceived notions that relate to the research and research participants. They claim that feminist researchers also attempt to make known their potential motives or specific identities that may affect the decisions they make related to their research. Jacqueline Jones Royster's "A View From an Afra-Feminist Bridge" in *Traces of a Stream* (2000) and Shirley Brice Heath's *Ways With Words* (1983) are two excellent examples of writers theorizing their location as inquirers in the making of important research in rhetoric and composition that cross the lines of public (research questions, subjects, goals of research, previous studies) and private (researcher motives, assumptions, shortcomings, identities, feelings about research participants).

Gesa Kirsch's *Women Writing the Academy* (1995) is a testament to the ways public, private, community, academic, and body intersect when writing is the subject. Kirsch uses feminist research methods to theorize her own location to the women writers and subject of writing in the academy. Through interviews the women writers expose the constant overlapping of public and private as they describe their experiences. Many discuss their desire to write for the public or the larger community (as opposed to the private/concentrated academic community), a move which usually would not pay off in terms of their careers. Many also

described their home circumstances of having children and/or husbands, which either improved or deterred their writing efficiency.

Still another research strategy in feminism and composition is to explore the continuum between public and private writing. One line of inquiry has been to focus on genre while teaching and work with students to analyze the ways writing is developed for different audiences. One recent article in *Composition Studies* described the work of Heather Camp and Amy Goodburn in an advanced composition course entitled “Writing Ourselves/Communities into Public Conversations.” Like other studies which aim to expose students to the ways writing is developed for different audiences, analysis of the ways communities are described by others is a major part of the lesson.

Courses which intentionally or inadvertently see disclosure writing produced should find a way to contextualize that writing within the current lines of scholarship which examine how writing about private experiences, once publicly shared, impacts communities. One of my most memorable encounters with the treatment and transformation of seemingly private discourse to affect public change is that of Lorraine Higgins and Lisa D. Brush’s work subtitled “Writing the Wrongs of Welfare.” The researchers worked with a group of women who received public aid to families (welfare), helping them to transform their own narratives of the circumstances and choices that led them to apply for the aid into narratives that “transcended publics.” Higgins and Brush presented typical hero and victim narratives in order to dialogue with the women to uncover the ways that such narratives presented narrow perspectives. The researchers then worked with the women to transform their narratives into rhetorically-savvy works that considered the welfare policymakers who would affect their future stories. Upon reading Brush and Higgins’ study, I was encouraged not to reject my initial idea to examine the expressive

nature of a Life Support curriculum that I help to teach and to consider the appropriateness of a similar class on the college campus.

The subject of “crisis pregnancy” is loaded because of the public connotations that have been created by “crisis pregnancy workers,” and “reproductive freedom advocates.” Many women who experience a real or perceived unplanned pregnancy, which would constitute a crisis in their lives, have no idea that what they are experiencing has a label that invokes anger, frustration, and empathy from both sides of the choice and life platforms. However, since unplanned pregnancy is experienced widely on college campuses and concentrated on female college campuses, it seems only natural to me that a similar class would be an important service to the young women who attend. Like Higgins and Brush, my hope is that the narratives of the women experiencing these pregnancies or perceived pregnancies would “cross publics” to inform the decisions made on both sides of the Choice/Life battlegrounds. Like feminist scholars, my goal is not just to inform national or state policy makers to expand their perspectives, but to inform communities that are closer to the women experiencing the crisis, such as parents, boyfriends, friends and husbands, church congregations and youth groups, high school and college nurses and teachers, and crisis pregnancy and abortion workers. In this way I see the work as transcending public and private discourses, from the academic community of writing researchers and public health scholars, to women’s health practitioners and small community health organizations, including the family. So while the environment around such an idea is charged, to leave the idea undeveloped would be to leave women on college campuses abandoned.

Women's Relational Realities on Campus

Women suffer any number of dangers on college campuses, but one self-inflicted injury is that of having casual sex or sex with an uncommitted partner. The physical damage of casual sex in college is highly documented in the calls for intervention by the CDC and other public health organizations (James 2006; Dept of Health and Human Services 2006). The emotional damage of casual sex has been documented by counselors and journalists (Shalit 1999; Shalit 2006, Grossman 2006, Stepp 2007, Genovese 1996, 2000). The effects range from sadness to depression, attempted suicide, and increased use or abuse of alcohol and other controlled substances. These behaviors affect women disproportionately. According to Grossman's research, "sexually active teenage girls were more than three times more likely to be depressed, and nearly three times as likely to have had a suicide attempt than girls who were not sexually active" (4). The biological factor in girls feeling deeply connected to a sexual partner is the hormone oxytocin; the hormone is released during sexual activity and is known to increase bonding and trust. It is the same hormone that is released during breastfeeding to let down milk and released in the uterus to induce labor. Grossman's *Unprotected* addresses the lack of a collective professional voice to warn young college women that sex with uncommitted partners will produce a sense of loss. She noted,

When I asked Heather and Olivia to refrain, for the time being, from having relations, I would have liked to hand them a brochure, or recommend a support group. And it would have been great if there was a policy statement from a major medical or women's organization acknowledging the legitimacy of my efforts and encouraging campus officials to give their prompt attention to these critical health issues. (9)

Grossman posits that the policy statements and brochures don't exist because research on oxytocin has not been popularized the way other women-centered research often is. She finds no other logical reason for this omission than the liberal bias of psychology as a field. Still speaking about the lack of information to couple with her recommendation for the girls to "refrain for the time being" Grossman related,

I didn't find what I was looking for. Instead, throughout all the material directed at teens and young adults, the mantra of "sexual rights" and "safer sex" was repeated ad nauseam. There were descriptions of every type of possible behavior, too graphic for my taste, and much attention to topics of which I'd like to remain ignorant. (9)

Those topics included phone sex, bestiality, sadomasochism, drinking urine, ménage a trois, swing club etiquette, and cat o' nine tails. But Grossman is not writing to be a prude. She is writing with the hopes that her exposé of the politically-slanted climate of campus healthcare will cause an outcry and subsequently preserve the health of students on campus. The book's subtitle announces, "A Campus Psychiatrist Reveals How Political Correctness in Her Profession Endangers Every Student." Like other books which address sexual health on campus, Grossman addresses the physical consequences of casual sex. For example, Grossman notes that "43 percent of college coeds going in for their yearly exam get the shock of having an abnormal pap smear that reveals the presence of HPV" (16). While Grossman's book doesn't single out women exclusively, she exposes the ways subjects important to women, which should receive serious concern (gynecological realities of childrearing past 35, emotional consequences of abortion, ignoring the biological clock to pursue academic degrees) are minimized due to psychologist' fear of being stigmatized as sexist. Just as John and Stasi Eldredge noted, even on campus, women are under assault because of their unique biological vulnerabilities.

In Search of Relational Empowerment

In a report released by the Public Health Center of Liverpool, media makers were scrutinized for producing media that ignored sexual health recommendations of incorporating safer sex images and texts (Biotech Week 2004). The same warning could be given to popular literature producers in the USA for the triviality with which they treat sex. In the June issue of *Men's Health*, Ian Kerner's "She's Yours, Now What?" gives casual tips to men for managing the new woman in their lives including "keeping a toothbrush at your house," but mentions nothing about making wise sexual decisions. In "The Truth about Sex," anthropologist Jenell Williams Paris wrote about this phenomenon in the media, noting that sex is often a lot harder than it is portrayed to be on screen (2001).

Besides the media, what factors might contribute to the sexual decisions that women make? Eve Tushnet, a worker at the Capitol Hill Pregnancy Center believes that the absence of a father in the home influences a woman's sexual responsibility. In "Inside a Crisis Pregnancy Center" Tushnet writes

"I've counseled one or two teenagers who live with their fathers, and a handful of teens and adult women who speak with their fathers now and then. But for most of our clients, fathers are just not there. Growing up fatherless affects how women view their own relationships and their pregnancies. Because so few of our clients have known men who consistently met their family responsibilities, they rarely demand responsibility from the men they date. (30)

A study by Gary Harper et al. (2004) revealed that African-American adolescent females typically expected their male partners to be sexually intimate with other females even if their female partners reserved sex only for them. The men in the study revealed the

same responses. Perhaps Penn Humanities professor Michael Eric Dyson was supporting sexual empowerment for women when he recorded his belief that “a woman who is not in a committed relationship should be able to date other men...” in the June 2006 issue of *Essence*, but in the same article he later claimed that most men would feel uncomfortable if she did (committed relationship was left undefined in the article). These responses would seem to support Tushnet’s assessment of the women she counsels: “The women we counsel don't speak the language of empowered young women taking control of their sexuality. Instead, they sound profoundly disempowered; they speak as if their sexuality were not in their control at all” (30). Tushnet believes that this fatalism is another attitude influenced by their fatherlessness and her assumption is supported in Jonetta Barras’s *Whatever Happened to Daddy’s Little Girl?* (2002) and David Blankenhorn’s *Fatherless America* (1996).

From Literature to Intervention

Social scientists or counselors in mental and behavioral health use intervention to cut off destructive behavior. In the counseling handbook, *Caring for People God’s Way*, Christian counselors offer a way to understand intervention. They write “Constructive client change—improving how to think, feel, and act in a goal directed way—is the primary mission of all counseling” (79). While the stages of counseling are designed toward this end, intervention, as I am calling it here, might be mostly related to the “active change” of the “seven-step process” that is offered in the handbook. The description of active change reads,

Interventions that facilitate client change in thinking, decision making, and goal-directed behavior reach their peak during this phase of active change. This mandatory and, for most, only time in counseling requires skillful treatment planning and goal setting.

Treatment planning involves pinpointing an end goal—the purpose of the counseling—and then developing a course of action for achieving said goal. A good treatment plan will be research based and present many small objectives on the course to an end goal.

Implementation is the effort to carry out the treatment plan. Here the counselor may assign specific tasks for the completion of small objectives in pursuit of the final treatment goal. (84)

A memorable depiction of community intervention is described by Tsistsi Dangarembga in *Nervous Conditions* when women huddle around Tambu's mother during a period of lethargy after her son's death. The book, published in 1988, presents the stories of five women (and their men). As told by the narrator, Tambu, it is a story about "...my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion" (1). Tambu is able to analyze her role within the women's stories because she has progressed through the events and come out "voicing," a term associated with feminist studies to mean explicitly defying silence. Tambu reveals her seat in a place of privilege as she wraps the novel's end with narration, "It was a long and painful process for me, the process of expansion. It was a process whose events stretched over many years and would fill another volume, but the story I have told here...this story is how it all began (204)."

While the surrounding women in Tambu's mother's life may not have diagnosed her problem they certainly realized that if they hadn't intervened, her health and spirit would have continued to deteriorate. It is this realization that drives workers at Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) nationally. Many CPC workers once experienced what they believe was a crisis in their

own lives and consider their work an act of reaching out to those who are now where they once have been.

Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) or Pregnancy Care Centers (PCC –the more contemporary name) typically provide women with free services such as pregnancy tests, confidential counseling, medical referrals, abortion and adoption information, information about medical insurance or government assistance, and information about temporary shelter.ⁱ They are typically non-profit organizations supported by donations from private (usually traditionally religious) citizens. A recent phenomenon, today CPCs are also being supported by a percentage of the revenue from “Choose Life” license plates. They are located in most cities, with multiple organizations located in large cities. For example, a yellowpages.com search for “Pregnancy Care Center” in Marietta, Georgia yielded 14 Pregnancy Care Centers in Marietta and the surrounding Northwest counties within a 40-mile radius. The free pregnancy test is one of the most sought services of a CPC. Almost 100% of women who use the services of CPCs are single. For most single women becoming pregnant, even the possibility of being pregnant, constitutes a crisis. When a pregnancy test is positive, the CPCs offer assistance in the form of housing referrals, baby supplies, clothing, and information to private and public resources for pregnant women including health care coverage. For what they call “abortion-minded women,” CPC workers may recommend an ultrasound on the spot if the center has the equipment and a nurse present to perform it. This procedure is guided by reports that 75% of women who see an ultrasound will choose to carry a baby to term, rather than abort it.ⁱⁱ CPCs do not distribute referrals to abortion clinics. Many have pro-life origins stemming from an evangelical view of the sanctity of human life at all stages of development. When a woman decides to carry her baby to term, CPC workers often serve as a supportive community, giving the woman a baby shower

and often being present at the birth of the child.ⁱⁱⁱ When a pregnancy test is negative the attending workers give information on birth control procedures, STD statistics and relational prevention measures. One such measure is the Life Support class; the survey of the Life Support class that follows comes from a class in Marietta Georgia that I helped to teach as a guest lecturer.

The Life-Support Class is a seven-week course that offers single women assistance with life goals such as education, careers, relationships, and families. Each session except the last was based on a notebook of approximately 50 pages, which was divided into six sections based on the theme of each class. The first session is titled “Looking at the Past/Inspiring a Dream for the Future”. In this class, women are encouraged to create a timeline of the decisions they have made that have produced memorable positive and negative events in their lives. In class two, participants “Dream about Healthy Relationships and a Healthy Lifestyle.” In the second section of the class notebook, participants are encouraged to take notes under the titles “What Some Guys Want” and “What All Girls Need”. As in the previous example, written sections in the handbook accompany the material that community speakers come in to present on the three major themes of the class: dream, desire, and discipline. Speakers often tell parts or the whole of their own stories of overcoming obstacles. Role playing and media are also used to demonstrate the themes of the classes. All participants are given the materials necessary (poster board, markers, ribbon, scissors, magazines, and a hole-puncher) to create a life map: a visual representation of a person’s life that spans from the past to the future. Throughout the seven-week course the women are encouraged to write notes based on presentations by PCC workers or invited speakers. The last session is typically celebratory. Women are invited to dress-up as they are treated to an elegant evening and served with refreshments and words of affirmation by

center workers. Those who complete at least six of the seven sessions are handed certificates of completion at a point during the evening.

On paper, the evening doesn't sound extravagant, but to women who have struggled with poor self-esteem, depression, increased use of alcohol or other substances, and poverty (some of the women are already single parents), the night is an emotional event where the effects of their positive choices are finally celebrated. Many women on campus struggle with the same issues as the women in the class. The only difference is that students in college are often better at portraying an image of wellness. In response to women's personal struggles related to increased sexual activity, STDs and STIs on campus, the Life Support Class seems a fitting intervention, which could be conducted in the campus clinic or another safe private setting outside of the classroom. In the classroom, classes which engage expressive pedagogies such as Payne's Writing about Female Experience would help us move from intervention to prevention and from counselor to engaged teacher.

From Intervention to Prevention

When I initially participated in the Life Support Class I had no idea how to measure it to determine whether therapeutic writing had occurred. Now, after having reviewed a series of therapeutic methodologies I'm almost certain the class doesn't intentionally execute a consistent form of therapeutic writing. While the two-hour once-a-week schedule doesn't match the four consecutive day protocol suggested by Pennebaker, it is probably closer to the class formats of MacCurdy, Payne, and other composition instructors who employ expressive writing techniques in a traditional two-and-a-half hour a week course. However, one of the main factors that limits the course is that student texts are not treated recursively or as the main product(s) of the course. The class session is similar to a seminar, but students don't consistently produce new writing or

other discourse. The most textually demanding assignment is the Lifemap, which is introduced the first week of class and sometimes not completed until weeks later. While students are directed to read material that has not been covered in class, no assignment other than the Lifemap requires more than a short answer response. Although, the class doesn't present a strong model of therapeutic writing, the Life Support Class provides a strong framework which can be used to build an impactful writing workshop for dealing with "female experience."

As I noted earlier, my support for women's specific, sexual and relational health therapy on the college campus is driven by a concern for women's spiritual development. Communal wisdom and research (Shalit 1999; Grossman 2006) both reveal that when circumstances such as fatal relationships occur, the effects in a woman's life are long lasting. Above all, her self-confidence is often weakened, leaving a path of mediocrity in all areas of her conduct, including her academic progress and interpersonal relationships, even with other women. Implementing a class like Life Support on campus would likely not engage composition teachers who don't share my specific burdens for women's emotional and spiritual health. However, the courses I've highlighted by MacCurdy and Payne fit into our existing classroom structure and could act as intervention for students who've experienced trauma.

To transition from intervention to prevention we have only to employ the best methods available in the field for directing our students toward reflective inquiry and development. The personal essay is simply one of the best ways to do that. The methods and methodologies of writing and healing, case study, ethnography, and narrative composition research lend a context from which to support writing as an effective therapeutic construct.

When Marian MacCurdy or Jeffrey Berman treats loss, Payne treats sexual abuse essays, or Micciche treats eating disorders, they do so out of their desire to offer writing contexts that

have meaning for the students; they cannot assure a parent or anyone that the student won't return to harmful self-inflicted behavior. Similarly, when approaching expressive writing a student should not be led to believe that writing a personal essay about abuse will prevent future abuse from happening. Eliminating destructive behavior requires more than one writing assignment or class and there are no assurances in therapy. However, offering opportunities to write personal essays treating emotional subjects often establishes a habit of disclosure writing that can be employed at the student's convenience in difficult situations in the future. More than just to help a person gain a sense of control over a painful occurrence, when disclosure writing goes public, as in a workshop or as a published narrative, it enables a class or community to act as witnesses. The experience of witnessing can be transformational. In writing about the power of The Clothesline Project, Laura Julier notes, "The rhetoric of the Clothesline Project assumes and asserts that healing comes in part from the voicing of what had been silent or silenced or marginalized in significant ways. [It] is both text and event, a witness to healing and a means of healing, a private act and a work of social activism" (360).

At the same time, a classroom which respects personal writing and treats it academically, with a foundation in research, also provides the benefit of a teacher and other students who appreciate the chance to act as witnesses of the writer's trauma and to offer empathy and affirmation. Composition writers who are cautious of expressivism often claim that classrooms can become speak-easies, or like Oprah shows, or counseling sessions when the pedagogy is engaged. Jeffrey Berman's *Empathic Teaching* (2004) is one of the most outspoken treatises for us to embrace the challenge to see English classes and other classes within the Humanities department as the laboratory of the person or the personal. If we embrace his perspective we would save ourselves the stress and futility of trying to conduct our classrooms by imitating the

protocols of the science fields. We should not fear the emotional component embedded in our work. We should instead equip ourselves to anticipate and embrace it, just as a science professor becomes familiar with the equipment in her laboratory. Often it is our disciplinary inferiority complex that leads us to reject the treatment of emotion and the ways it blurs our boundaries of classroom authority. If we want to make a significant impact in the students we teach, to serve them well, we must embrace a fully responsible, yet fully personal pedagogy.

In our first-year required composition classes, students should have the choice to produce deeply personal themes. These writing assignments would need to be approached with the same set of guidelines as the ones given for other taught genre's of writing, such as the argumentative essay or the literary analysis. Attention must be paid to form and revision must be a central tool for completing the assignment. Also, as suggested by Bloom, students should be given personal writing readings that make the assignment seem more accessible to first-year students. More strenuous treatment of personal writing should be offered in higher level writing classes which reveal their themes in the registration catalog to alleviate disappointment or surprise, a class like Payne's Writing about Women's Experience. Classes that might be expected to treat emotional themes in personal history might include the words Autobiography, Writing about Loss, or Trauma and Narrative in the title.

Just as counselors should be informed about the nuances of writing when conducting writing therapy, English teachers who treat emotional writing should know the phases of writing associated with writing about emotional and traumatic events. They should know that a student might start out with an extremely simple style as she begins retelling the event on paper. The professor should be prepared to trigger memories to add detail to the descriptive writing, and a professor should know when a student is vulnerable and needs to take a break from writing about

trauma and engage in a lighter subject. Alice Brand (*The Psychology of Writing* 1989), Marian MacCurdy (*The Mind's Eye* 2007), and James Pennebaker (*Opening Up* 1997) include accounts of these stages in many of their theoretical and experimental publications.

As shown in the remarks of Wendy Bishop, Michelle Payne, MacCurdy and others, instructors typically don't have to induce personal writing. Our national realities of terrorism and/or war, failed marriages and fatherlessness, immigration-based, race-based, and sexual orientation-based tension, school shootings, drug and alcohol abuse, and pornography addiction have given students more than enough experiences to fill the pages of a 5-page essay. As instructors, we now instinctively report disturbing writing, writing which relays that the student wants to hurt himself or someone else, to a department head or other school official. Personal writing should be seen, then, as no more dangerous than asking students to read and respond to texts with socialist, collectivist, feminist, Marxist, secular-humanist or other ideological agendas. Not knowing whether our students are left-leaning environmentalists, or religiously-motivated capitalists, somehow we don't feel the need to warn them about the feelings of anger that may arise when they are reading texts that challenge their ideological conditioning. When students are given readings on the volatile subject of race and gender, they may or may not be given multicultural training to go with it. Only if we begin to feel sensitive to other potentially disturbing subjects in the writing classroom, should the personal essay be targeted as one which requires specialized training. Unofficially, Wendy Bishop suggested that composition instructors receive training in psychoanalysis; but, while in the classroom situation, no additional formal training is suggested. When conducting disclosure studies in an experimental setting, Pennebaker suggests that students be told that they may become sad or depressed after writing about these events, but that the sadness usually subsides about an hour after writing. If the

feelings don't go away, they should visit the campus counseling services (Hints, pennebaker.socialpsychology.org).

Survey of Composition Types and Responses to Composition

With the aforementioned research on women's writing in mind, and my desire to add to the scholarship on women's wellness, I developed a short survey to determine the types of writing assignments utilized by professors and how those who teach composition respond to their student's writing in general and personal writing specifically. The survey was partially prompted by Michelle Payne's article "A Strange Unaccountable Something" In which she argues that personal writing offers composition and rhetoric scholars the opportunity to develop theories of emotion in composition studies. Payne shares a belief with other composition scholars who surface in Dale and Jacobs *A Way to Move* (2003) and in Sally Chandler's "Fear, Teaching Composition, and Students' Discursive Choices" (2007) that pathos has been neglected since composition has turned to rhetoric to inform its practice. To address this void, Payne offers teachers three main ways of addressing student emotions in their writing; she suggests that instructors choose to either historicize the text, comment on the ways students choose to represent their selves and their stories, or analyze the text and the emotion within it just as would be done in impersonal writing. Payne suggests that in reading a narrative a student can become a witness of another kind, watching for example another student find a language for her outlaw emotions that enables her both to reflect critically on them and to act critically in a social way. According to Payne, another way to respond to personal writing texts is to see them as expressing emotions that challenge the power distances of the student-teacher relationship. The political struggle in composition studies over who gets to express which emotions in what contexts (if at all) suggests that emotions as well as discourses that form them are about power, discipline and knowledge. When interpreted as socially constructed, emotions become always already social, political, and subject to critique.

In the survey, personal writing was undefined, a weakness that I discovered only after distributing the survey. Among the multiple choice selections for writing types were response writing, blogging, newswriting, commentary, narrative, researched writing, journal writing and analysis. Professors were asked to rank the choices from 1-7, with 1 signaling the writing type most frequently used and seven as the writing type least frequently used. The next section, Responses to Writing, was designed to codify the types of oral and written responses instructors gave to students. Survey selections ranged from Grammatical/Mechanical (identifying grammatical or mechanical errors or decisions), empathetic (showing feeling and/or connection to content of response), Content Corrective (restating principles of content), Content Affirming (underlining, checking, or commenting on good comprehension of content), to Composition Corrective (identifying ways to strengthen organization, sequence or elaboration of ideas). The third section of the four on the survey was designed to identify classroom teaching practices. Survey respondents were able to choose from six common types of classroom work or teaching strategies: Small group/3-4 students working together, Individual work, Whole group/lecturing, Partner work, Workshopping (public/whole class responses to often blind copies of writing submissions such as poetry), and Conferences (one-on-one sessions between instructor and student to discuss progress on an assignment). The final section of the survey specifically targeted personal writing. Respondents were instructed to identify their most frequent responses to personal writing by ranking each of the given responses using ordinal numbers 1, 2, etc. until each choice was identified either by a number or “n/a” for “never used.” The choices given for possible responses to personal writing were:

- Historicizing-giving historical context to the personal response,

- Professionalizing-steering student back to content of assignment and away from personal issues,
- Noting “Performance”-acknowledging the ways a student chooses to represent herself and her story in the writing,
- Analyzing-analyzing the personal text just as you would any other text,
- Counseling-referring the student to counseling services or attempting to advise her yourself,
- Affirming-thanking, congratulating, or restating what was discovered or revealed,

and “Other,” followed by space for up to ten lines of an explanation (see survey in Appendix A).

Survey Results

Perhaps the greatest outcome of the survey is what it did not produce. No respondents were outstandingly opposed to the scholarly inquiry about personal writing. These results are good news since our journals continue to print negative responses to personal writing activities of composition faculty. Those responses often seem to balk at the discussion of personal writing in an academic setting.

In a department of 16 full time and three part time instructors of English, four responded to the survey; the answers of one of the respondents were lost due to technical problems. Only the responses related to personal writing are central to this discussion. The three respondents differed in the most frequently used response to personal writing, each selecting “Professionalizing,” “Affirming,” and “Noting Performance” respectively. The respondent who selected “Affirming” as the most frequent response, selected “Counseling” as the next frequent

response. The respondent who selected “Noting Performance” as the most frequent response selected “Affirming” the second most frequent response. The third respondent (who selected “Professionalizing”) didn’t complete the rest of the ranking in that section. Though the sample was small, affirming was indicated as the most common or second most common way of responding to a student’s personal writing.

Subsequently the instructor who most frequently “Noted Performance” as a response to personal writing selected “Counseling” as the least utilized response. Whereas, the instructor who selected “Affirming” as her number one method of responding to personal writing selected “Noting Performance” as her least utilized response.

Limitations of the Survey

The goal of the survey was to determine instructors’ responses to personal writing in the classroom. Yet with an expanded definition of terms, perhaps with references included, it could have also been used to give a quick survey of current practices of responding to student writing. Since the survey didn’t ask professors to indicate their familiarity with the concepts presented, data collected will not reveal a relationship between knowledge and practice, only practice.

At least one professor had a problem submitting answers, so the design of the survey needed improvement. The poor response (only 25% of the department) may be explained by the timing of distribution (at the final department meeting of the year before grades were due and before graduation) and by confusion in the design. The survey was given as an attachment in an email and was designed to display dropdown menus to capture numbers for ranking responses. At least one respondent also disregarded the drop down box and inserted answers differently. While the survey is limited in its scope and design, it represents a start at determining practices

frequently and infrequently used by faculty in the English Department at one liberal arts institution. It reveals that at least a portion of the faculty may be ready to discuss ways of responding to personal writing and would benefit from receiving a summary of fields of research and practice related to the subject.

EMOTIONAL REPRESSION AS THE SELF-SELECTED RESEARCH SUBJECT

Lately I've been noticing that our war against sexual repression always seems to require another sort of repression, of feeling and caring. This repression, more often than not, is required of the woman.

Wendy Shalit "Against Repression (Emotional, That Is)" 79

Any discussion about women in general and women in college specifically must at least acknowledge feminism as a movement, discipline, and ideological mainstay of our present global society. The convergence of emotion, composition and female college students as a topic of study is affected equally by the trends and attitudes in composition studies, feminist studies, the feminist movement and its contemporary platform. Gail Hawisher, in her forward to *Feminism and Composition* married the two subjects this way, "...my own life in the profession closely parallels the women's movement" (xvi). For better or worse, the feminist movement plays an indirect role in shaping attitudes toward responding to emotion in the written academic work of college students.

One would have to be blind to have missed the explosion in contemporary literature on the subject of young women, sex, and the fallout in the early to mid- 2000s. Three of these books are of particular importance to this discussion: Laura Sessions Stepp's *Unhooked* (2008), written to address the trend of young women pursuing sex and delaying love; Wendy Shalit's *A Return to Modesty* (1999), a philosophical and practical take on "the hook up," the effects it had on her college friends, and her suggestions for finding true love; and Miriam Grossman's *Unprotected* (2006) written anonymously to expose the ways political biases on campus endanger college students' emotional and physical health. Many other authors contributed research and/or personal experience to the "hook up" phenomenon, such as Jennifer Morse in *Smart Sex* (2005), Lynn Perils in *College Girls* (2006), and Jillian Strauss in *Unhooked*

Generation (2007). The convergence of women's emotional and sexual activity as a response to feminism's sexual revolution is a personal interest of mine since I came of age in a very public dispensation of the repackaging of women's sexual freedom. Although this agenda was raging before I reached college in the mid 1990s, I didn't become aware of it until then. At home (even the day before I left for college) the rules about sex were still that sex was off-limits before marriage. And at least in my culture (Christian, black, lower class), modesty in public was preferred over outright sexual allure. At college, however, early in my freshman year, I realized that those home rules didn't apply. According to my new social and educational women leaders, women should not be encumbered by chastity. Not only was chastity outdated, it was oppressive and sexist. Administrators of new student orientation and student health enlightened me through the free and frequent distribution of condoms, and the college president frequently reminded us that we were not in college to find a man; in fact, we did not need a man.

Frequently researching the subjects of sex, abstinence, marriage, and relationships is required for my volunteer activities. I often compare the messages delivered explicitly or more subtly in churches, schools, and pregnancy care centers and mainstream safe sex organizations like Planned Parenthood and Sistersong. Churches and PCCs often treat sex from a "reformed Christian" context. By reformed Christian context, I mean messages, articles, and books that talk about the goodness of sex as an act between a married husband and wife, emphasizing its placement within the confines of marriage as God's act of protection. Examples are Jenell Williams Paris' "The Truth About Sex" (2001), Jim Hancock and Kara Eckmann Powell's *Good Sex* series by Youth Specialties (2001) *T.D. Jakes' Woman Thou Art Loosed* (1993), Miles Munroe's *Single, Married, Separated, and Life after Divorce* (1991), Dannah Gresh's *And the Bride Wore White* (2000), *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* (1997) and *Boy Meets Girl* (2000) by Joshua

Harris, and Dawn Eden's *The Thrill of the Chaste* (2006). While I generally keep this work separate from what I do as an English professor, there are times when the two interests converge in the classroom. Particularly, in my position as an instructor of English at a women's college, the most recent waves of feminism always become subjects of discussion and treatment in composition, whether or not I plan for it. Of particular interest to me is the movement's staunch support of abortion or its paranoid reaction to a pro-life stance, sexual anti-traditionalism, and vulgarization of marriage or more specifically, the sexual rights of marriage when exercised by husbands.

Women Writing of Sex and Emotion

I became aware of the movement to address the fall out of the casual and safe-sex revolution during a visit to one of my volunteer sites when I picked up Wendy Shalit's *A Return to Modesty*. The book articulated some of the philosophical inconsistencies of feminist thought on the subject of male-female relationships and women's emotional expression. It was published when Shalit was only 23 years old, much of the manuscript having been written when Shalit was a college student. As a student of philosophy, Shalit found philosophical inconsistencies in the Women's movement such as its dedication to the advancement of women, yet lack of criticism of pornography. In the book, Shalit questioned the reported comments and literature of feminist intellectuals such as Camille Paglia and Katie Roiphe and women's periodicals, such as *Elle*, and *Mademoiselle*. According to Shalit, editors of these periodicals often advised women against emotional disclosure with their partners regarding disappointment in relationships. I use the book both to inspire undergraduate student writers who aspire to publish and for its exposure of the seemingly punitive treatment of emotive women.

Ironically, though Shalit writes from her perspective as an orthodox Jewish woman, her values for relationship more closely tie to those of the majority of students that I teach, African-American, religious (Christian), lower-middle class, women) than do cultural norms espoused by vocal leaders of NOW and their professional colleagues. Shalit's second book is another one that offers girls, who are out of step with modern feminist theory on male-female relationships, a resource for articulating their fledgling ideas about love, sex, and emotions more clearly. Shalit's *Girls Gone Mild: Young Women Reclaim Self-Respect and Find It's Not Bad to Be Good* is less of a critique of modern feminist thought and more of a support for girls who find that they do not fit within contemporary classifications of themselves as hook-up queens. Together with Shalit's passing critique of the excesses of sexual liberation is a case study of "mild girls" or girls who refused to identify with an oversexualized caricature of themselves and their peers. The book also offers advice and quizzes (staples of print and online magazines) that target the college female population already familiar with the genre. I've used the chapter "Against Repression (Emotional Repression, That Is)" in composition class as a subtheme of political rhetoric.

Shalit's chapter "Against Repression" argues that the war on sexual repression is at once a war on emotions. In order to be sexually expressive, girls must at the same time repress their emotions (which are extensively entangled in the sex act). Shalit, a student of philosophy, popular culture, and Jewish orthodoxy, makes the case that while it is a goal of feminists and, therefore, contemporary, post-feminist society to de-emotionalize women, the same people gush over male displays of emotion. But this point is tertiary. More striking is the evidence Shalit uses to assure us that in the campaign to free women of sexual inhibition, advocates burden women to become artificially emotionally disconnected. Shalit chronicles advice found in *Cosmopolitan* and other women's magazines, popular reality shows like "The Bachelor," and

popular literature including *Swell: A Girl's Guide to the Good Life* (1999) written by a style editor for the *Wall Street Journal*. She also includes excerpts from interviews with women who (unknowingly?) advocate this repression and those who dismiss the popular advice.

After reading Shalit's chapter, I considered the implications of the war against sexual repression and the movement for emotional repression. I also considered that there may be a parallel to this relationship in the present predicament of a widespread uneasiness with emotion in composition, a predicament that places me and other instructors who see expressivism as critical to teaching composition in college at odds with mainstream thinkers on the subject of emotion. In the post-feminist era, could composition's resistance to expressive writing and emotion be a rejection of perceived femininity (in the same way that parts of the sexual revolution, which attempted to help women, only stabbed them in the back)? Many would quickly dismiss this thought because feminist theorists at-large and scholars in composition spend a considerable amount of space in disciplinary journals arguing against an essentialist view of the feminine. Yet in my argument, I assume that emotional repression is automatically an act that affects women, since women are just as likely as men to express emotion. Given that context, I would agree with Shalit that although feminist theory spent many words and much money attempting to prove that "there is no universal experience or reaction that all girls have," a consistent majority of girls report having feelings related to an incident. Although Shalit's research is related to girls' and women's feeling related to sex, I think I can safely assert that the same would be true related to expressing feelings in general.

To make the point that rejection of emotion in composition is connected to the rejection of things that are seemingly feminine, let us consider *Swell*, one of the books that Shalit argues is less demanding of men than it is of women. In the book, the authors advocate a "naked

Saturday” among other things (naked Saturday seems ho-hum in comparison to some of the other advice that Shalit uncovers). Naked Saturday and other advice from this book seem to be considerate if not worshipful of traditional male sensibilities, while advocating that women embrace new roles, and even a whole new ideology. Shalit writes,

“But when you take a closer look at this “swell” new girl who is naked on Saturdays, pretends to be chased [role playing with her “hook-up”] and dates married men “platonically,” the secret to her “good life” turns out to be the same as always: Bottle up those emotions. Our swell new girl may be adventurous, but she is never so adventurous that she could actually do something like, say, express her true feelings” (84).

Later in the chapter when Shalit analyzed the indistinguishable similarities between “positive sexuality” and “casual sexuality” I wonder again what parallels could be made if I considered our composition classrooms. Could the word sexuality be replaced with composition? Could “positive composition” be congruent with “casual composition”? On the surface, the answer is no. But then that depends on who you ask. Dating back to the chorus of lament over Macrorie’s term “English” instructors have lamented writing that was filled with the academic language of the schools. We would then naturally conclude that the same English professors would celebrate the use of writing that is opposite of English. But what exactly is the opposite? To get the answer I contrast the term academic with its antonyms, *home, familial, ethnic, intimate, friendly, personal*. Then I am reminded that David Bartholomae is one academic who did not recoil at the term *academic* writing. Bartholomae begins his discussion with Elbow in the February 1995 *CCC* by giving both broad and narrow definitions of academic writing as writing that is done in the academy, writing that is done by academics, and writing that need not be perceived as mechanical and dull. Bartholomae questions the necessity of saving a place for the author as

creator or central agent, and there is an army of instructors who follow his line of reasoning today. Harriet Hewett reminded us that

The very foundation of the feminist movement in the North American academy has been in the work of reclaiming and amplifying the words of women, an acknowledgment of the political (some would say, revolutionary) power of having your say within and against a patriarchal culture. Giving voice to oneself is an act of self-creation, a claim to authorship and authority that enables the writer to define herself through the power of language. Claiming a voice is an internal act that results from tapping into the authority derived from one's lived experience. (725)

As I continue to consider Shalit's arguments, I will explain how the relational repression of emotion in contemporary male-female relationships is a loose analogy of what we do in the English classroom with composition.

When Shalit continues her analysis to point out that women seemed to be the ones who later regretted their sexual liberation, she points to the Clothesline Project as evidence. Notice that it wasn't guys who strung together their T-shirts in protest. But since we may be quick to assume that men are the targets of the protest, I'd like to consider Shalit's analysis. Women were expressing "the pain of feeling that *society* had abandoned them by failing to inform them of the emotional consequences of sex" (89 italics mine). For our discussion of feminism and composition, the news is good, the emotional consequences of personal writing tend to be positive holistically in the long run, even if students feel sadness or depressed immediately after the act of writing. Timeframe notwithstanding, writing is emotional. James Pennebaker and Alice Brand painstakingly analyze the physiology of the writing process, but even without studying their analyses we can agree to some degree that writing has a tendency to be emotional

whether it is composition in the expressive tradition or writing linked to critical pedagogy.

Although I target women students in this discussion, the emotional consequences of writing are the same for both genders. Since these positive outcomes are documented, then why (I belabor the point) are we still uneasy with personal writing, which tends to be entangled with emotion, in the classroom? One of Shalit's interviews offers an insightful answer. In a section that asserts that in an era when public emotional venting is the norm on television, private (even written) emotion is "more taboo than ever" (96). Shalit asks Orna, a teacher, and the mother of a son who suffered brain damage as a result of an accident, "What are people afraid of when they tell others not to cry" (97). Orna replied, "They are afraid that they will have to take care of you. But," Orna continued, "They didn't have to take care of me. They just had to let me cry" (97). The problem of emotion in the composition classroom is not only a fear that we will have to take care of students if we let them discover the messiness of writing on topics which engage their emotions, it is also the fear of what will become of our composed personas when they do. Will we have to empathize? Are many of us even able to? Are we stuck in a cycle of trying to administer ethical education without caring enough about our students to develop a relationship, or truly mentor? The personal essay is not unique in regard to evoking emotion. All writing is emotional and transformative education is too, just as hooks' engaged pedagogy, or Noddings' ethics of care suggests. Orna's response underscores the need to "voice," an act which has been a crux of the discipline of women's studies, and also a central concern in expressivism. As hooks noted in

Teaching to Transgress:

"When I was an undergraduate, Women's Studies was just finding a place in the academy. Those classrooms were the one space where teachers were willing to acknowledge a connection between ideas learned in university settings and those learned

in life practices. And despite those times when students abused that freedom in the classroom by *only* wanting to dwell on personal experience, feminist classrooms were on the whole, one location where I witnessed professors striving to create participatory spaces for the sharing of knowledge. (15 emphasis mine).

In order to return to the topic of emotion relating to a reading of Shalit's "Against Repression," I discuss the messiness of personal writing and the fear it invokes in the next chapter by addressing Brian Schwartz's "Near and Narrative" and Sally Chandler's "Fear, Teaching Composition" (2007) .

Toward the end of Shalit's thirty page chapter, she makes another observation about sex which parallels my analysis of composition. This time her observation is not unique, it supports a point that many have made, "...once sex is disengaged from morality and emotion; when we pursue the physical for its own sake, we require a steady diet of the formerly forbidden to keep us excited" (101). Composition has subsisted on a steady diet of new inventions to take the place of the personal essay, the most recent of which is creative nonfiction. I support the inclusion of creative non-fiction as a genre of composition, but I also recognize it as another mutation of the personal essay. Shalit's assertion is certainly nothing new, but triggers my remembrance of T.R. Johnson's *A Rhetoric of Pleasure* wherein Johnson chronicles the harsh and antagonistic attitudes of students to their English instructors. Johnson ties students attitudes to the instructors assent to teaching composition by rules, as in the line of theory connected to rationalism, Enlightenment and Bartholomae's academic discourse, and as opposed to the line connected to Gorgias, the Sophists, 18th century romantics and later expressivists.

Shalit inserts a bit of her own history in the last pages of the chapter. She recalls, "If I hadn't been open about my admiration for my husband, we probably would never have met. (I

actually asked his rabbi to set me up with him after hearing him speak at a Passover seder)” 103. She adds, “It’s troubling to think of what might have happened had I given in to all the voices telling women to stifle their feelings and emotional ‘intensity’” (103). Shalit then noted that she probably felt comfortable expressing her feelings while dating her future husband (according to observant Jewish custom) because they didn’t even touch each other until they were married. The insecurity and vulnerability that comes along with sex wasn’t a factor. Her dating relationship before marriage was similar to my own; my husband and I observed strict rules against bodily contact—no kissing, touching (except to hold hands), or sexual situations. For us it was to “flee fornication” as the bible instructs, but it also allowed us to bond emotionally . . . intellectually. I could say that Shalit and I defied contemporary wisdom that tells women to stifle their emotions, and our results have been happy marriages (so far) that also defy contemporary reality; but, of course, engaging emotions in relationships or in our classrooms wont result in simplistic happy outcomes. Engaging emotion in the classroom will make us a more robust field and will help many professor to rid themselves of an artificial objective or logical persona that doesn’t bode well in a discipline so intimately tied to the humanistic value of personal holistic wellness.

In my all women’s classroom, the subjects sex and emotion enter our course in surprising narratives. I once administered a class survey to selected students who had chosen to write spoken word poetry about relationships, abuse, abortion, and sex. The student I highlight below had chosen to write about abortion. The first survey question asked,

How would you describe your attitude and/or behavior about writing before you wrote the piece?

The student wrote,

Before writing this piece, I did not take risks with writing topics and always played it safe. I did not want to cross a line so I did not take any chances.

The follow up question asked,

How would you describe your attitude and/or behavior about writing after you wrote the piece? If no change, leave blank.

The same student wrote,

I believe that this piece made me realize that I had a desire to write about topics such as abortion. I have always loved writing, but writing about something that was emotional reflected in my grade because you saw how involved I was in the piece.

The student's "involvement" in the piece translated into thorough development of a multi-layered spoken word poem that was rhetorically savvy, acknowledging feelings of those making decision about an unplanned pregnancy and the feeling of those who consider abortion to be wrong.

I had not assigned students a specific topic, nor did I advise them to write about something deeply emotional. I'm sure that my willingness to discuss abortion and my choice of readings helped the student feel safe addressing the subject. As with any instructor my personal ideology and teaching philosophy influenced the tenor of my classroom; I didn't evade the subject of abortion even though I learned while studying rhetoric and composition that the topic is often off limits in composition classrooms. I recall being told that students are often instructed to write about any subject except abortion because their arguments often deteriorate when writing about such an emotional topic or perhaps because the stases is often not reached in the two sides that argue in favor of or against abortion. I have read students' deteriorated abortion arguments, which helped me realize why some professors ban the topic, but it is responses like

the one above given by Delyrria at Spelman College that affirm my decision to leave the topic on the table. It is my job to give Delyrria and others the tools to approach the topic, whether it is instruction on forming motivational arguments, exercises in revealing the details of a traumatic event, or approaches to writing autobiography such as those offered by Lynn Bloom.

In my classroom at a women's historically black college (HBCU) in the school year when Barack Obama became the first black President, I assigned chapters from his book *Dreams from my Father* and readings that treated themes specific to women such as marriage, abortion, and emotional repression. Students chose overwhelmingly to write extended research essays on emotional repression even though I had themed the class "political rhetoric" since we were in a presidential election year. We spent time defining rhetoric and then considering it in the context of the public spaces of our lives. Some of the writing assignment included a political autobiography (a variation of the technology autobiography borrowed from the 1999 *Teaching Writing with Computers*), analyzing a speech taken from William Safire's text, *Lend Me Your Ears*, and my own original self-governance policy assignment, which is reprinted below.

Self-governance Policy

A governance policy is a set of instructions to guide the operations of an entity (corporation, organization, etc.). In matters of dispute, the governance policy is often consulted to settle the dispute or to derive principles by which the matter should be handled. In this assignment, you will create your own self-governance policy by referencing readings from the semester, especially those not addressed in your political autobiography (Shalit, Fox-Genovese, Obama, Brooks, Stanley, Anonymous, M.D. *(Unprotected)*).

Think of your life as a larger entity. By what guidelines will your life/entity be run? Justify your policy with support from the readings. You may also include other relevant references in addition to support from the readings. Recall that Brooks discussed charity, Shalit—emotional repression, Obama—his career and the assumptions he and others had about it, Fox-Genovese discussed family and the impact of feminism upon it, Stanley—the habits and desires of millionaire women, and Anonymous, M.D. the impact of abortion specifically, and the ways political correctness (or not wanting to offend) leaves students unprotected in general.

In your essay, cover at least four categories and any other you wish to address. The finished product will be an essay divided into sections based on the themes in the readings you choose. Your essay will show engagement of the principles you learned in the readings and a discussion of why you have been impacted to incorporate these specific policies into your life.

The Self-governance Policy was third in the sequence of four writing assignments and a blog. It was followed by the research assignment. The Policy turned out to be an awkward assignment as evidenced by the clarifying questions students asked and the finished written products. Students didn't know whether to refer to themselves or to refer to a company that they would start in the future. The writing had tense shift problems and sometimes seemed fantastical, filled with statements in the future tense. I tried to address this issue with this message on a peer review form,

Organization

Do you recognize a pattern in the text? One pattern for this type of essay might consist of the following

1. Topic Sentence
2. Reaction to/Explanation of the Chapter
3. Personal Experience
4. Statement of Policy

These four elements might be arranged in any order, or they might seem more integrated into the essay, as opposed to standing alone as separate phrases or sentences.

As you review the essay write 1, 2, 3, or 4 to identify these elements in the paper. If these items don't appear in each section of the paper, suggest a way for the author to include them.

While many remained challenged by the assignment, as evidenced by claims about the future that were disconnected from their present lives, others grounded their claims in their experiences. Students also could have chosen not to treat subjects that might have seemed deeply personal, especially abortion and emotional repression. But many did include emotional repression as one of the four topics to explore. An excerpt from one self-governance policy which includes a statement on emotional repression is included below.

Karen's Analysis and Discovery

The women in my family including myself have different experiences, suffered from them, and learned from one another in some type of way. At a young age, I saw physical, emotional, and verbal abuse done to my mother and that helped me become more aware of what to look for in a man. My mother had numerous conversations with me about her lifestyle and how it was a continuous cycle that started with my grandmother. My grandmother, aunts, and mother had children at ages 17 and 18. Thus, my mother was hard on me because she wanted [sic] the cycle to end with me. I've noticed that the

women in my family have been emotionally oppressed in their relationships. They were battered emotionally and sometimes physically so it made it impossible for them to tell their true feelings and concerns instead of [sic] pretend as if everything was okay. My mother did not want me in the same predicaments as her, her sisters, and mother. She always had the sex talks with me and explained how a man is supposed to treat me based on her relationships. Wendy Shalit, who wrote Girls Gone Mild, also stated the same thing. Shalit quoted someone else who said that if you cannot trust a person to respect you and refrain from hurting you, either physically or emotionally, why would you want to reward them by giving them something as [sic] special as the chance to have sex with you? (Shalit 94). As many times as my mother told me this, I did the opposite and lost my virginity to a boy who abused me emotionally. Since that occurrence, I tried to put myself on the same level as a man, mentally and sexually, and protect my emotions and feelings to prevent myself from getting hurt again. Currently, I am learning the hard way that suppressing my feelings only damages me.

I have experienced way more than the loss [sic] of my virginity, but I plan to use my experiences to reach out to younger girls in my community such as my sister. Shalit states, "Women are afraid to broach their real concerns with their lover." I want them to know that it is okay to tell their feelings and true emotions and oppressing them only damages them in the long run.

The self governance policy that I have developed is one I plan to use for the rest of my life. My morals, experiences, and logic will help me find myself and I will continue to govern myself using these policies to one day shape my children using the same ideals.

While addressing very personal experiences, Karen was able in the excerpt and in the whole essay to integrate experience, analysis, and knowledge making or theory/policy building into her writing. Her essay demonstrates the fullness of the personal essay as Lopate and Malinowitz describe it, “informal, intimate, conversational.”

When I include chapters from Shalit’s *Girls Gone Mild* in my composition course, the purpose is not to draw attention to the academy’s aversion to treating emotion in the classroom; I use it to address Shalit’s documenting of emotional repression of women in contemporary women’s magazines and some feminist literature. Nevertheless, Shalit’s discussion makes salient for me a more widespread contemporary intellectual trend to put emotion aside or bracket it, preferring to deal with it as a part of a tidy lesson plan as an abstraction rather than when it is revealed messily in the real lives of our students in their papers and in our classrooms.

A messy relationship with emotion is also seen in the historical emergence of feminist studies in composition and specifically feminism and emotion as revealed in peer reviewed literature. It should be noted that according to Patricia Sullivan in “Feminism and Methodology in Composition Studies,” feminism has made two moves in composition research studies that Sullivan classifies as “reactive” and “proactive.” One strand “focuses on existing studies, canon, discourses, theories, assumptions, and practices and re-examines them in light of feminist theory to uncover male bias and androcentrism” (40). A second strand “recuperates and constitutes distinctively female modes of thinking and expression by taking gender, and in particular women’s experiences, perceptions and meanings as the starting point of inquiry or as the key datum for analysis” (40). Feminist research methodology in composition studies shares three characteristics of feminist research from social sciences, it “generates problematics from the

perspective of women's experiences", "it is designed for women," and it sees the inquirer as "in the same plane as the subject matter" (participant) (Sullivan 51).

As an instructor of composition I must consider the ways the field of English and the university at large, punishes or rewards me when I engage emotion in the classroom. As one who sees the benefit of engaged pedagogy, I must also ask myself difficult questions related to my personality and performance in the classroom. When I recently reflected on my personality and performance in the classroom I noticed that I am emotionally repressed when I feel it not professionally expedient to respond to my students' writings about deeply personal issues. I am not professionally conflicted when I respond comfortingly to a student following her spoken word piece about the death of a father. So why do I feel the need to quell the feeling I have to comfort a student who writes about prostituting herself? I suspect that the roots of my inner conflict are in the same places Shalit found the fodder against which to pit her treatise for modesty's comeback in the age of war against sexual repression. It is these same theories that compelled Elizabeth Fox-Genovese to break rank with her former colleagues, who she believed had become elitists and lost touch with the majority of women in *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life* (1996). The claim that emotion is repressed in the composition classroom and university because it is considered feminine could be dismissed as conservative. Likewise my claim that the current pervasive feminist cultural ideology influences my hesitance to console a woman expressing sexual behavior that is known to be emotionally and physically damaging could be rejected. Despite the risk of rejection, since women's spiritual development is my primary concern, I raise these claims with the hope that their related arguments will be seriously considered in an effort to engage all perspectives. For the sake of the women in our composition classrooms I hope they will not be ignored.

COMPOSITION AND WOMEN'S STUDIES: CONVERGENCE IN EXPRESSIVE PEDAGOGY

Since the CCCC identified personal writing as a tool of composition to achieve the goals of the curriculum, trainers of graduate students in English and directors of composition should encourage new instructors to become familiar with research in expressive writing. The classroom pedagogy and research opportunities that become available when we employ expressive pedagogies engage students, improve their academic performance, and positively impact their long-term health; moreover, they contribute to the growing body of research that corroborates the positive impact of personal writing to a person's overall mental health. Expressive writing practices can be employed to serve students effectively and pave new paths in our research and theories in six distinct ways; researchers and instructors can (1) use expressive teaching methodologies to increase students' academic performance, (2) inform student health procedures on campus related to traumatic experiences by helping to implement effective writing-based therapies (3) inform the development of psychotherapeutic procedures in written disclosure in print and online media, (4) inform new directions in medicine and literature, (5) reclaim mentoring in higher education based on the expressive roots of composition, and (6) enrich and/or revive our disciplinary history by developing approaches for dealing with pathos in our instructional, research, and theory-based literature.

Student Performance

The definition of student performance is multifaceted, but it can be stifled if we only envision "polished prose" as the product of our work. Our syllabi and departmental objectives remind us that performance continues to be measured by product; however, other visions of

performance currently drive our expanding vision of composition. Among others who currently theorize writing as performance, Lunsford (1995), Lauer (2009), and Love (2007) describe writing as a type of performance paralleling the acting or being that takes place behind the screen of drama or reality television, or as what students do when they write—the way they choose to “represent” themselves in writing. As instructors of writing who include expressivism in our disciplinary toolboxes, we should also be encouraged by the research of Guy Allen (2000), and Jeannie Wright and Cheung Chung (2001) which suggests that students who are instructed to write personal essays *perform* better academically than they would without those opportunities to write “expressively,” or “authorially”—that is with awareness of their personal interest in or connection to the writing. Graybeal et al. (2002) also noted that without offering opportunities to write personal essays, we set our curricula against the percentage of students who perform best when they employ styles associated with personal writing. Two directions of performance, the broad idea of how students are succeeding or not in the academic community and the idea of how students choose to represent themselves when they write both link vitally with personal writing.

For several years at the University of Toronto, Guy Allen conducted teacher-research revealing that structured personal writing assignments yielded an increase in students’ academic performance. His “writing experiment,” as he termed it, required students to produce one original piece of writing each week for ten weeks, revise their original work weekly, attend lectures and workshops on prose basics, and attend three one-on-one conferences with the instructor wherein the instructor acted as an editor (recommending edits and revisions of the original work). After conducting his experiment in several terms, Allen decided to observe and record student feedback measurements of student achievement. He collected self-evaluations of attitudes about

writing before and after his course, and he recorded students' academic performance based on grades in classes where written work was required. Based on their self-assessments, after attending Allen's class, students received better grades on written work such as essays and lab reports in other classes (260). Thirty-one percent of students reported an average improvement of one letter grade in evaluated written work. Seventy-four percent of students reported "feeling more positive" about themselves after writing about personal history (260).

The second direction of performance theory related to composition suggests that we regard writing as performance, just as we regard acting or oratory as performance. Seeing writing this way and offering this perspective to our students could address the challenge of feeling anxiety about grading and/or giving teacher feedback on personal or "emotive" writing. If we can envision ourselves as directors (of writing) in the same way that those who coach actors view themselves, we might feel more justified as we push students to give us more complexity of style and as we generally experiment with genre, including personal writing. Envisioning writing, particularly personal writing, as performance also addresses the uneasiness of responding to personal and traumatic accounts in essays. Of course there is still a tightrope walk for us to perform as we approach the personal text. By beginning our courses aware of the resources available to us as we treat personal writing, resources which include textbook and chapter length discussions of writing about trauma (Bloom 1998, Borrowman 2005), witnessing as treated by Goggin and Goggin and Wendy Hesford ("Presence" 2005 and "Ye Are Witnesses" 1998), bell hooks' engaged pedagogy (Teaching 1994), performance theory, and writing and healing terminology, we equip ourselves to offer our students strategies for finding at least one way to perform writing in ways that are meaningful to them.

Lastly, performance theory in composition links to our contemporary classrooms that engage technology. By engaging technology as we treat composition and performance theory, we can introduce students to digital design environments, such as the U-MOO (an object oriented multi-user domain), which allow them to go beyond one dimensional conceptions of themselves, and their stories. Students can compose in a “thirdspace” as described by Lauer (2009). But Claire Lauer cautions us that just introducing students to virtual environments without modifying or enlarging our philosophies of composition will prove futile. In fact, Lauer says, “for any of this to happen our classrooms must also be Thirdspaces—radically open places in which students are encouraged to be messy and inefficient, and to engage with knowledge in new ways through alternative avenues not traditionally taken in composition classrooms” (71). Expressivist ideas emerge in Lauer’s text as she cites the work of Gregory Ulmer (2003) in *Internet Intervention: From Literacy to Electracy* as he offered alternatives to the traditional personal essay in exploring the self. Lauer notes that Ulmer expresses the belief that the general writing classroom was a site for “self-knowledge for living the examined life” (Ulmer 5 qtd in Lauer 55).

Following Ulmer’s lead, in composition, as we engage students in their digital-literacy we simultaneously present our classrooms as “widesites in which they reflect on their relationship to and experiences with four institutions: career, family, entertainment, and community” (Ulmer 18 qtd. in Lauer 55). Once we are informed about the health implications of personal writing, we add a third dimension to our work; we are not just equipping students with tools of composition and engaging their digital proclivities, we are also impacting them affectively. In “Constructing,” Lauer describes ways that students can create signs for themselves as they compose in virtual environments. To summarize her example, students can name processes in their lives and name themselves, who they were when they traversed their journeys;

they can even rename themselves when they emerge from different phases of their lives. This naming evokes the process from disorganization to reorganization described by T.R. Johnson in “Writing as Healing and the Rhetorical Tradition.” Johnson reminds readers that the notion of writing and healing goes as far back as Greek antiquity when rhetorician Antiphon used chants to address problems in the mind and body. At the “Writing and Wellness” conference of 2007, the keynote speaker, psychologist James Pennebaker, describes a similar process that we go through when we write; he recorded that process in *Opening Up* (1994). What Johnson and Pennebaker describe as the inner workings of writing or the effect of words on the mind is addressed by Jacqueline Royster in “Going Against the Grain”:

Many of these women became...carriers of culture, and also ‘healers,’ women called upon to minister to the mind, the heart, the soul, sometimes to the body as well. They were responsible for taking care of illness, seeing it, naming it, identifying its remedies, especially when the illness was one of the heart, the spirit, or the head, that is, of the ways of thinking. (113)

Royster, Johnson, and Pennebaker remind us that words can be used to heal. Together with Lauer’s description of using technology to compose personas or transitional identities, we get a solid image of how we can engage students’ personal journeys while offering them contemporary digital tools for designing their multi-dimensional selves.

Meredith Love, in “Composing through the Performative Screen” (2007), challenges us to see ourselves in new ways—to take on a “writer-as-character” identity and to present this performative screen to our students. She writes, “Performance studies challenges Composition

Studies to refocus its attention away from fixing the discipline to stretching it, opening the definition of ‘composing’ and requiring us to be open to periods of indecision and flux” (14).

Making connections from performance studies to composition studies, we offer students a richer discipline from which to select their writing stances, and we give attention to the personal essay and narrative writing within the rich engaged pedagogy that expressivism allows. As we treat writing in the classroom through the lens of performance study, we also face the opportunity to embrace the contemporary contexts of digital and entertainment culture; by capitalizing on the prevalence of reality TV and composing in digital environments, we can connect what we do in English to the experiences which are already familiar to our students. Best of all, when we reengage personal writing, seeing it in new ways as through the lens of performance study, we also return to the priority of building students’ character, a pervasive priority in the role of the professor in the earliest manifestations of the university in America (*Scholarship* 1990). For when we offer students opportunities to reflect on their lives, we encourage them to be their best selves, to be continually transformed by the renewing of their minds.

Student Health, Trauma, and Effective Writing-based Therapies

Change is a tangible reality during college. While students are in college, older family members die, siblings go into the military, students seek out sexual and romantic relationships—the effects of which are deeply felt and long-lasting, and their religious beliefs and political ideologies are tested, lost and found. Though students come to campus aware that they will experience new things, many of them have not come equipped with tools to traverse the turbulence of these new experiences. In an effort to cope with the pressure of change, students

often seek the services of the campus health clinic, which is increasingly playing a vital role in the lives of students. As the role of the clinic expands, so too does the number of methods that student health professionals employ. Writing therapy is one of the tools that can help students make sense of the changes affecting them and the well-informed composition instructor has a role to play in the development of therapeutic writing instruction in a campus clinic setting.

The link between expressive writing and health and wellness is becoming substantiated through research as evidenced by books on the subject by physicians, psychologists, and psychiatrists (Lepore and Smyth 2002, Pennebaker 1994, Charon 2000, L'Abate 2001, and Clinton et al 2005). Anderson and MacCurdy's edited anthology, *Writing and Healing*, demonstrates that English instructors have begun to explore the link as well. Since criticism of expressive writing (Berlin 1982, Faigley 1992, Bertholomae 1995) from the 1980s and '90s colored expressive writing pedagogy as un-theoretical, writing instructors felt the need in the 1990s (Gradin 1995, Elbow 1995, Bishop 1997, Newkirk 1997) to justify a return to those practices. The justification of expressive writing practices continues today as does the criticism, though both have lessened. However, in the service of our students and ourselves, our pedagogy and theorizing must now move past justification for the use of narrative, reflective writing, and other expressive approaches to collaboration with counseling practitioners and researchers to continue highlighting the health benefits of writing about personally meaningful experiences.

Counseling researchers have eagerly adopted expressive writing to improve their patients' well being. Wright and Cheung (2001) related writing and therapy this way, "Writing therapy is defined as expressivist and reflective writing whether self-generated or suggested by a therapist/researcher" (278). Rather than allow counseling researchers to wade into the waters of narrative, I propose that we help them develop their protocols by offering our knowledge of the

history and historical uses of narrative along with the processes and approaches that make narrative a pleasurable, effective, and familiar means of communicating. Since many counselors are convinced of the medicinal, communicative, and social benefits of writing therapy, let us help them define the parameters of their writing assignments and point out the nuances of the personal essay. We can also move students beyond disclosure to authorial pleasure (the subject of T.R. Johnson's *A Rhetoric of Pleasure*) by introducing style as a category to those who see writing as a craft or those who desire to publish their personal stories. Our methods for doing so should start by building on our field's experiences of treating trauma and writing, *Writing and Healing* (2000), Marian MacCurdy's *The Mind's Eye* (2007), Mary Ellen Bertolini's "Writing to Heal: Workshopping Lives" (CCCC 2008) and Ann Jurecic's observations of the need for composition to enter the conversation around narrative and medicine (CCCC 2008). As we present these methods to the counselors in our campus clinics and in locations where we treat writing outside of the classroom, we expand our social contribution beyond journals of composition and build on Boyer's charge to work across disciplines.

We have an additional perspective from which to present the developing pedagogy of writing therapy, but our role expands even beyond informing the work of counselors. Our awareness of the processes of cognition performed during reflective writing can enable us to partner with student health professionals by way of prevention. When we assign writing, we should know that we are playing a role in helping students to make sense of their lives in relation to the major institutions with which they engage, including the family, the government, the community, and business. Our assignments then act as training for students to relate and cope with major changes in their lives and we increase our opportunities for treating emotion and working empathetically. Before engaging these practices, we should also become at least

marginally familiar with the evidence of blockages related to trauma, etc. which prevent people from fluidly engaging a topic in writing. In addition to the publications mentioned above, strategies for overcoming writing problems related to trauma are offered by Newkirk 1997 (on resisting “bracketing”), Borrowman 2005 (understanding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), and MacCurdy 2007 (treating memory).

The Life Support Class that I helped teach had a Lifeline assignment at the start of the course. For the lifeline, women in the class were given the following instructions:

An Honest Look

As you map out your lifeline, you will be seeking to identify events, behaviors, beliefs and attitudes that have brought you to where you are today.

Chart positive events above the center line and negative events below it. Begin on the left of the time line with memories from early childhood, plotting significant events on the time line using a dot on the line and a one word reminder. Continue on to adulthood.

Use this lifeline to gain insight into the life choices you have made (positive and negative). Look at your lifeline to get the “big picture” of your life. Identify positive choices you have made that led to good outcomes. Identify negative choices you have made that led to destructive outcomes. Do you notice any patterns in your choices? As you learn about God’s wisdom and His way of doing things (healthy relationships, etc.) you will be set free from wrong and unhealthy beliefs

that fuel wrong feelings and actions. God's truth will help you gain wisdom to make right choices.

This lifeline activity appears strikingly similar to a brainstorming or clustering session that may be offered as an invention technique at the beginning of a writing assignment, only the environment of the classroom, the demography of the student, and the goals of the curriculum are different. Additionally, while the language in the last two sentences may cause academic professionals to grapple with the idea of separation of church and state, it is the language of absolutes that many students come to college embracing. Particularly on the campus of the women's HBCU where I work, the place I envision as the site of a campus Life Support class, this language is familiar. While some have come to college hoping to escape religious absolutes, many of my students at the HBCU believe they are in college because of religious absolutes; because of the "goodness of Jesus," to be specific. Language invoking God was commonly used by women in the Life Support Class just as it is used by women in my classroom.

When Miriam Grossman articulates the opportunities that campus counselors have to engage students on the basis of their religious beliefs in *Unprotected*, She notes that "the vast majority of college freshman believe in God" (51). Their religious belief presents an opportunity that counselors have been either afraid of or slow to embrace, perhaps because of their own skepticism. In "Memo to the APA: Believing in God is Good for You," Grossman wrote,

"The irrational avoidance of religion in therapeutic work is not only unethical, it's old. It has no place in this century, where single-photon emission computed tomography

identifies “neuronal spirituality circuits” and produces color photos of a brain connecting with God.” (49)

Grossman notes that for the religious students who visit the campus clinic, a prescription for prayer and church service is applicable. She writes, “Along with a prescription for medication, counselors should more often consider a referral to a priest or rabbi with expertise in working with young adults” (50). But Grossman doesn’t depend on instinct to propose such treatment. Later in the same chapter, she notes research that uncovers the benefits of engaging religious belief and practices in counseling. They include the following:

Religious commitment encourages healthy behaviors, such as avoidance of smoking, alcohol, drug use, and sex outside of marriage. By lowering disease risk, it increases well-being. Prayer and other rituals are associated with positive emotions like empowerment, contentment, self-esteem, and love. (40)

People who use “religious coping”—prayer, confession, seeking strength and comfort from God—adjust better to stressful life events such as kidney transplant, cancer, the Oklahoma City bombing, the death of a close friend, and the loss of a child through sudden infant death. (41)

Students who are highly involved in religion report better mental health: non-church going students are seven times more likely to feel overwhelmed, nearly three times more likely to rate themselves “below average” in emotional health and twice as likely to report depression or psychological distress. (34)

In short, religious language would not be an obstacle to the implementation of a Life Support class as a viable option on the campus, particularly as a researched intervention study conducted in the counseling center.

When we offer such a course we should be moderately convinced that the therapeutic apparatus—the writing, or, in the case of the Life Support class, the workbook is effective. As instructors in the expressive tradition we should be able to offer our expertise in the development of the writing construct and/or workbook. An understanding of personal writing and its therapeutic benefits create in us the confidence to do so.

Perhaps T.R. Johnson's *A Rhetoric of Pleasure* does the most succinct job of describing the ways expressivists Bruner and Rogers were misunderstood and how that misunderstanding has stifled our discipline in the areas of personal writing on the campus:

Unfortunately, many in composition assume that Bruner and Rogers and their expressivist descendants argue that teachers are largely irrelevant. And, as this vulgar version of “reengage rhetoric” has obscured subtler, more powerful versions, many have accused it...of an anti-intellectual, anti-professional bias. By the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, in fact, part of what seemed to measure a rhetorician’s degree of professionalism was his or her distance from the Romantic-therapeutic tradition, and, to the degree that writing teachers could scapegoat Romanticism and valorize its opposite (David Bartholomae’s “academic discourse”), they could curry favor with—even win acceptance among their literary colleagues (85-86).

The best mentor-teachers can discourage us from accepting such dogma and point us in a direction to discover or rediscover our discipline in new ways. I was halfway through my coursework when I began hoping that my research could be centered in the concept of the types of composition that were being offered in the Life Support class. Rather than encourage me to lay to rest the idea of representing expressivism by its contemporary offspring in therapeutic writing, etc. my advising professor encouraged me to discover the ways that my personal interests might intersect with the goals of composition. Thus I continued my examination of the Life Support workbook.

The first session of the Life Support Class included a Lifemaps/Dreams in Pictures assignment as its major composition. The objective of the assignment was “To complete an art project that identifies your dreams, goals, ideas, interest, etc. regarding your ideal man, family, and career (including education)” (6). As I focused on the notebook for class I also thought about the composition pedagogy that I was learning at the time. Then, I was unfamiliar with composition and technology as an area of concentration (I was brand new to rhetcomp with a background in linguistics and ESL) but now I realize the similarity of both assignments to tasks we already assign in composition, just with different themes. While the Life Support projects were made from paper (often as collages of magazine cutouts and word art using markers and other decorative materials), on campus we assign work in composition that allows students achieve the same ends using sound and image, such as when we present digital storytelling techniques or “thirdspace” manipulation such as that offered by Lauer (2009).

Although my comparison of therapeutic writing techniques and the workbook ultimately found that the workbook was not a strong tool for engaging in writing therapy, by taking the journey to discover therapeutic methodology I’ve found overwhelming reasons to use expressive

composition assignments that offer students a way to perform as creators and an opportunity to analyze their experiences with the benefit of increasing their overall academic performance.

I waded into this project driven by my desire to help young women students on the same campus that served as a site for much of the self-discovery that still defines how I engage the institutions that comprise the world. During my undergraduate years, composition courses only played a role in challenging (or critiquing) the institutions that were dear to me (Christianity and marriage), and no comp instructor held any larger meaning in my life beyond explaining a text. My instructors exercised agendas that tore down my pillars of self-knowledge or certainty, and offered new pillars that never quite satisfied my sense of knowing. Today I am happy to know that my undergraduate composition instructors' personal indifference was more a reflection of the instructors' pedagogy, rather than a characteristic of composition as a discipline. Fortunately, during my later years as an undergraduate, I was encouraged by pregnancy care workers and church workers to rediscover the virtues of Christianity and marriage, which subsequently helped me to make healthy relational decisions that continue to enrich my life. I had to leave my college campus to find this encouragement, but it doesn't have to be that way, nor should it be when we work in a field that pays special attention to border crossings and the negligible lines between public and private. My current interest is to prevent a future indictment against our field that students have come to expect their instructors not to take an interest in their personal development.

The Pregnancy Care Center (PCC) where the Life Support class was taught should have a place on campus, especially on an all women's campus, but not just in the counseling center. The instructors and volunteers from the center dealt with family, career, relationships and money—

things that most young people are obsessed with, by giving literature, case studies, assignments, and examples from their lives in a way that seemed to me to be what I would have expected to be a part of a Women's Studies program. I know these subjects are the priorities of the students that we serve, no matter how diligently we steer them toward the theoretical and abstract, or how aggressively they are pursuing education for a higher standard of living. As an undergraduate student I didn't know what to expect from the Women's Resource and Research Center on my campus, but today I know that in addition to theory on women's progress in employment, education, reproductive technologies, and social hierarchy it should offer the practical education that the Pregnancy Care Center offers to single women. I don't expect the pregnancy care center to actually be housed in the Women's Resource and Research Center, but it would not be inconsistent in name for it to be housed there. I realize that those who have the same objectives as volunteers at the PCC are dispersed in religious studies, the counseling center, composition, women's studies, economics, and other disciplines on the campus, but students could benefit from a centralized directory or a theoretical conception of resources that stand for the same mission of offering women assistance with life goals related to education, careers, relationships, and families. Many instructors of composition who engage expressive pedagogy would feel comfortable being located on that list.

Written Disclosure in Print and Online Media

In 1996 psychologist Richard Riordan noted "little exists to guide counselors in using scriptotherapy" (263). Later in 2001, recognizing what he called a "crisis" in his profession, psychologist Luciano L'Abate turned his research direction to projects on the effectiveness of

programmed writing intervention in the form of workbooks and computer assisted, distance writing (“Distance Writing” 2001). L’Abate claims that face-to-face methods of therapy are “threatened with extinction due to lack of accountability from outside forces that range from managed care companies to pleas within the field for measurable results driven by research” (223). When graduate students in training to teach composition receive training in the theory and practice of expressivism and “writing and healing” they are positioned to respond to the call to provide research methodologies in writing therapy that corroborate support for a link between writing and wellness, as established by the research of Lepore and Smyth (2002), Pennebaker (2002), and others. Composition students with interests in the direction of writing and healing can collaborate with psychologists and psychotherapists to create and/or inform the creation of the philosophies and practices that comprise writing therapy. This direction only differs slightly from the call to collaborate with campus health promoters because the latter is confined to the campus or to college students. Yet composition teachers can be innovative by engaging current online technologies in research projects in collaboration with psychotherapists and/or counselors to determine the kinds of writing that are happening online in blogging and other disclosure writing-centered communities.

Dealing with Emotion

It was Dale Jacobs and Laura Micciche who brought to our attention the neglect of pathos in composition’s return to rhetorical pedagogy. They dealt with the lack of the treatment of emotion in broader terms in composition in their edited work *A Way to Move*. However, I suspect that many composition instructors still don’t recognize that a treatment of emotion is missing.

Nevertheless, Gretchen Moon's survey of the treatment of emotion in composition textbooks made the omission clear. Of the twenty-five textbooks/rhetorics (which were published after 1998) sampled in her study, "five books made no reference to emotions, feelings, or pathos," and "several attend explicitly to emotional appeals or pathos...by defining the term and providing an example or two within a single paragraph, or more briefly..., or as fallacies" (35). My investigation of expressive writing landed me in the subject of emotion, but many instructors of composition aren't digging around in the archives of expressive writing technique and theory. The lack of treatment of pathos and the uneasiness with expressive writing pedagogy are fears stemming from the same source; however, open dialog about treating emotion in writing is likely to allay the fears of those who avoid expressive techniques for its messy, uncharted by-products, namely students' emotion and teachers' response to that emotion. In "Fear of Narrative," Brian Schwartz asserts, "the volatility of narrative or of unguarded reflection seems fearsome next to the containment of logic" (427). A response to emotion writing seems especially difficult if the writing is stylistically weak, but the emotion abundant. For the composition instructor who is new to personal writing in an academic setting, it would seem that the two characteristics go hand in hand. Avoidance of topics deemed personal would follow, but rather than label a student by his emotional vulnerability or her stylistic weakness, or tarnish a method or pedagogy because of its reliance on forms of personal writing, instructors exposed to expressivism can take their cues from Sally Chandler and Marian MacCurdy who dig deeper into the connection between personal writing and style. Marian MacCurdy has spent years at Ithaca College developing a pedagogy of the personal essay. In her instruction to students who write about traumatic memories, the purpose is to produce vivid, multi-layered personal writing and to engage the memories, images, and experiences that lead to a student's desire to retell such an account. In

chapter two of *The Mind's Eye*, MacCurdy deals directly with the teacher's role in designing revision techniques which enable writers to find their subjects. Because her focus in the book is on writing about trauma, her techniques are an important contribution to the developing literature on treating the presence of emotion in, around, or through student writing.

Sally Chandler speaks to the directions that lie open to us when we seriously engage the concept of teaching writing and emotion. She notes that at first glance emotions seem to affect the composing process by causing students to make inappropriate stylistic choices. Rather than dismiss personal writing, however, she suggests that more inquiry is needed to evaluate what happens when emotions surround writing. She says, "we will need more nuanced study of emotional contexts for composing, fuller characterizations of emotional discourses, and detailed explorations of how emotional discourses shape written products and processes" (67).

Opportunities to treat emotion and writing will become salient as programs in composition continue to expose graduate students to expressive pedagogy, such as in the treatment given to the subject by Christopher Burnham in Tate, Rupiper and Schick's *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*.

Medicine, Narrative, and Empathy

One of composition's biggest models of making interdisciplinary connections is the program in Narrative and Literature at Columbia University. The director of the program, Dr. Rita Charon, has conducted research in composition and medicine. Scholars in composition have already begun to examine the model. In "Writing in the Clinic," Ann Jurecic noted that for the past several years graduate programs of medicine in the United States and Canada have

begun to encourage physicians to use writing as a reflective practice to help foster the relationship between physician and patient. Having conducted international research on the phenomenon, Jurecic noted that in the UK medical students are expected to keep portfolios that include their personal responses to patients' charts, etc. She also noted that the US is more apt to blend writing and medicine in a way that seeks to maximize the therapeutic benefits of writing in ill patients. Jurecic's paper introduced me to the work of Dr. Charon, a general internist with a primary care practice at Presbyterian Hospital. She also holds a PhD in English. She pursued the PhD when she realized "how central is telling and listening to stories to the work of doctors and patients" ("Narrative Medicine" Par 1). The implications of the connections between narrative and literature pointed out by Jurecic and Charon are that the work and research of composition teachers is strongly needed to develop the practices that would be exercised by the students in the program of Narrative and Literature and in similar programs linking wellness to writing.

After Jurecic's presentation outlined Charon's serious treatment of writing, and specifically narrative writing in the medical program at Columbia, she paused to mention that in Charon's publications, any grounding of her work in rhetoric, composition, or writing studies is absent. Charon instead bases her practices on literary interpretation. Jurecic posits that the gaping omission of composition theory is in part due to Charon's training in literary interpretation. For the instructor with a foundation in the methodology of case study, narrative, and therapeutic writing, Charon's omission presents us the opportunity to offer theories from composition that support Charon's practice.

Another body of researchers working to produce scholarship in the connection of writing to health is headed by John Evans who maintains a database of wellness and writing practitioners and methodologies. The newly emerged *Wellness and Writing Connections* newsletter houses

scholarship, commentary, practical guides, calls for papers, and all other general information for the annual conference of Wellness and Writing. I attended the inaugural conference in Atlanta in December 2007, which featured James Pennebaker. Other noted researchers present at the 2007 conference included Luciano L'Abate, professor Emeritus of psychology at Georgia State University whose specific direction has been counseling and writing, and Jeffrey Berman whose work includes the book *Empathic Teaching* and other publications based on his years of teaching theme-based composition using literature about sympathy, suicide and loss. Buffering Berman's book-length work and connecting empathy with medicine is the research of Joanna Shapiro that concludes that narrative writing can increase a doctor's empathy ("Point-of-view" 2006). Julie Davey, the keynote speaker of the 2009 Writing and Wellness conference is the author of a book borne out of her experience as a fulltime writing instructor and a cancer survivor. Her book, *Writing for Wellness: A Prescription for Healing*, is currently being used at the Arizona Cancer Center, at Missouri Cancer Associates, and at Mission Hospital in California.

Mentoring and Composition: Expressive Roots

It will take many of us exclaiming loudly the value of including the personal in our assignments and papers, but wouldn't it be great if one day in the future students had had so many mentor-teachers that they looked forward to the lessons they always learned in English classes?

--Timothy Blue *Mentor-Teaching in the English Classroom*

One of the key works that informs this study, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, called for a return to mentorship to reestablish the significance of college teaching. Ernest Boyer enlarged

his discussion and propositions for the future of the professoriate when he began in the chapter “A New Generation of Scholars” to discuss graduate education as the means by which to shape the professor that he envisions. He spoke directly about the dissertation process, voicing the possibility of changing the focus to the “process of research, rather than the exclusivity of the topic” (68). He proposed that graduate study connect more seriously to service through practicum experiences in order to challenge burgeoning scholars to reconnect the academy to society. To conclude his comprehensive re-envisioning of graduate study, he called for graduate schools to give priority to teaching by creating teaching assistant programs that enable prospective TAs to participate in pedagogical seminars as prerequisites. Finally, and perhaps most radically, Boyer suggested that veteran faculty serve as mentors to teaching assistants, arguing that “a close and continuing relationship between a graduate teaching assistant and a gifted teacher can be an enriching experience for both” (72). Perhaps many of us understand the need to sustain the field by inspiring our students to consider English composition as an area of graduate study and/or teaching; however, mentorship spans beyond encouraging our students to take our places in the field.

Twenty years after the publication of *Scholarship Reconsidered*, composition teachers recognize that we are positioned to play a significant role in establishing the mentoring relationships that Boyer described. Current literature has focused on the ability of Composition to play this role, including *Stories of Mentoring* (Eble and Gaillet 2008) *Mentor-Teaching in the English Classroom* (Blue 2009), and *Preparing College Teachers of Writing* (Pytlik and Liggett 2002). Even while many of us automatically embrace the idea of mentoring for its propensity to be mutually beneficial, we should be aware that mentoring relationships have challenges. In the introduction to *Stories of Mentoring* Gaillet contrasts the duties of mentoring young and

inexperienced mentees with mentoring, for example, graduated students, she warns, “[P]rofessional mentoring relationships are much more complicated and often hold high-stake repercussions for individuals, local programs, and the discipline at large” (11).

Mentoring in composition studies aligns with the goals of expressivism because both engage the affective dimensions wherein personal development is a central goal of the relationship. That is not to say that all mentoring in composition or any environment is at all times peaceful and enjoyable. In their chapter “Panopticism? Or Just Paying Attention?” Cinda Coggins Mosher and Mary Trachsel highlight a few of the less than enjoyable moments of mentoring, including a conflict in styles of feedback received from mentor to mentee. They write, “While she was thankful for the reassurance and glowing praise, Cinda felt at the time that a more critical approach might have served her better and that some of [her mentor’s] easy-going advice was best suited to a more seasoned audience” (277). Mosher and Trachsel also describe the uneasiness felt by senior faculty members teaching rhetoric at Iowa when a junior faculty member asked to be paired with a different senior faculty member as mentor, upon receiving what was implied as a poor annual review. These high stakes, high stress situations make mentoring a matter to be seriously considered rather than blithely approached.

Mentorship is pointing out the strengths in students as people and as learners and exposing them to the tools that are available to them as they pursue their dreams and careers. I remember a professor who did this well as I studied Applied Linguistics in pursuit of an MA. The professor, Dr. Dunkel, encouraged me to submit an abstract for a presentation at a local conference. But she didn’t only encourage *me* to do it, she directed her encouragement to the whole class. Many of us did submit and subsequently found ourselves preparing to deliver presentations at the local TESOL Conference, a major conference in our field, while we were in

various phases of completing our MA studies. When it came time to present we had a good idea of what to do because we had watched Dr. Dunkel model the techniques in class; she often presented information to us using PowerPoint and slides before we engaged in discussion. Having studied under Dr. Dunkel, we were prepared to enter our discipline's professional discussion. At a state, regional, or national conference our audience would be different, but our technique wouldn't have to change. When I later saw Dr. Dunkel in the halls at the conference, she introduced me to one of the textbook publishers she was working with. She then talked to me about considering textbook publishing as another avenue of work in our field. Dunkel had authored textbooks for language learners and research-based textbooks for aspiring language teachers for many years. Beyond communication centered on the profession of teaching English as a Second Language, Dr. Dunkel was comfortable enough to respond thoughtfully to my personal questions about work/life balance. She was a mother and, at the time, all I had was a desire to become a mother and the common sense to know that juggling motherhood and a college teaching career would require forethought.

Mentorship is a practice that is often embraced by feminist professors. Perhaps it is their support of the ideology of egalitarianism, which collapses the power distance between professor and student, that results in those professors exposing students to many of the practical duties of their jobs and their personal stories of becoming teachers, researchers, and/or activists. Perhaps it is egalitarianism that allows graduate students of feminism to quickly see their professors as peers. Ironically, however, since egalitarian ideologies do not embrace hierarchical relationships, at times mentorship between feminists can be complicated. In "Educating Jane," Jenn Jishman and Andrea Lunsford discuss the complexity of a feminist mentoring relationship and their trouble finding ways to articulate a conception of their relationship that will be accepted as

something other than a traditional idea of mentor and mentee. Though they do not label their relationship or themselves feminist in this article, the contextual and theoretical assumptions of feminism are richly demonstrated in their chapter. Upon prewriting for the subject of mentoring they acknowledged their uneasiness with the term due to its connotation of control (20). For that reason, they tried on the term *colleague* to describe their relationship, but found that it also had a drawback. They recognized that many would dismiss the term and see the two (one a graduate student, the other a well known teacher with published research and textbooks in composition) as mentee and mentor despite their agreed upon terminology. Irrespective of their success in interjecting the term *colleague* in place of mentor, their discussion raises important questions about mentoring and the ideology of gender.

I have my own short story of the complicity of feminism and mentoring. My interest in women's studies drew me to a course titled "New Directions in Feminism" during my procession toward the doctoral degree in Composition and Rhetoric. Most of my classmates, students of Women's Studies, called the professor by her first name. They might have felt liberated by the experience, but I found myself in one class session after another wondering whether or not the woman who taught the class had obtained a PhD. I wanted to know because I wanted to address her appropriately, since I prefer to call professors by their titles as a sign of respect. Added to my propensity to call my professors, Professor ... or Dr. so-n-so, I (subconsciously) address female professors by their titles as a "so called" feminist act. For me this feminist act seems to have roots in black communities where women and people of color were traditionally regarded familiarly and without titles. With all of these traditions and ideologies intermingled, I found myself partially debilitated and only partially freed by the culture of the class. Although I

embrace some tenets of feminism, I feel the same way about egalitarianism as I did when I wrote my final paper for the class:

One of the new supremacisms that has emerged is that of egalitarianism. This worldview is able to unite hegemonic feminists, queer advocates, spiritists, womanists, cultural revolutionaries, left-wing and moderate political agents with rich, poor, and middle peoples across Asian, White/European, Hispanic, Indian and Black/African racial categories. Yet egalitarianism shuts out people who subscribe to the tenets of their religious systems that establish and revere systems of subordination and authority. Egalitarianism is against belief systems that valorize anything above equality, and insists that no one person, group, or system (unless it is egalitarian) is right. Ironically, egalitarian clerics seem not to understand that by evaluating people or systems on the basis of their adherence to egalitarian principles, they have created a new moral and therefore the possibility for a new oppression. (6)

Mentorship is a planned relationship about half of the time. Programs of junior faculty development and new faculty partnerships with tenured faculty are an example of planned mentorship, but, about half of the time, mentorship is less of a planned relationship and more of a by-product of situated availability. A pivotal point of mentorship was reached for me when I realized that the availability of a professor in higher education, especially at a research university, is a commodity.

My second experience with mentoring as a graduate student began with a directed study in a program of Rhetoric and Composition. I didn't know it then, but now I realize that a professor's willingness to oversee a directed study and the actions between student and professor

that follow that agreement constitute a form of mentorship. Directed study works well as a mentorship opportunity because of the frequent personal interaction that is embedded within the relationship. A student develops her course under the guidance of the professor. Negotiations continue from the development of a curriculum, through to the completion of assignments and the evaluative feedback given.

At the beginning of my directed study, I didn't recognize the value of the relationship as a mentorship because I saw it as a worker performing her duties. It wasn't until years later as a PhD candidate in the same program that I became familiar with the demanding workload of college English teachers. I then began to notice the difference between the required and voluntary activities of professors in English Studies. After looking through email later, I also realized how much time I had wrestled away from my advising professor when she directed my independent study course. In fact, as I think back, I hadn't even known that I could study independently. It was the directing professor who casually suggested it during a conversation about what I really wanted to learn (which was not being offered). Confessing to the professor what I really wanted to learn, rhetoric of courtship, norms of healthy relationships as recorded in literature, the effects of writing on the discovery and/or formation of identity, and observed norms in writing which supported a cherished scripture from Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb *and by the word of their testimony* and they loved their lives not unto death" (italics mine), required a vulnerability that I was not used to revealing in an academic setting with a professor. For although the relationship between student and professor lends itself to mentoring, mentoring doesn't necessarily happen naturally. The time that we spend physically with our students in class, in one-on-one conferences, and through written feedback on their work is probably more time than novices and budding professionals usually

spend with senior practitioners in their fields, and while the hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee exists, it does not inhibit the communication and the embedded acts of service in mentoring.

As I end this discussion on the new directions in composition that can emerge as the field engages expressivism—directions that connect to narration and medicine, composition and psychotherapy, distance learning, HIV and crisis pregnancy intervention, and reintroducing a study of pathos, I remember the term “differential” that was thoroughly treated in the Women’s Studies course on New Directions in Feminism. According to Chela Sandoval “differential” or “differential consciousness” allows one to “move between and among oppositional ideologies as conceived in this new topographical space, where another and the fifth mode of oppositional consciousness and activity is found” (57). I interpreted that to mean that by engaging the “differential” social engineers or college professors would be able to shift between strategies and collaborate with proponents of various ideologies. Just as I engage some, but not all of feminism’s doctrines in order to accomplish the specific service programs that I develop for female college students, professors in all areas of English with different teaching philosophies and teaching pedagogies can find that encountering expressivism will uncover new directions of research and practice which benefit our students both affectively and academically. By employing the *differential* it is also possible for more people to share the same space. The field of Women’s Studies, by embracing hybridization, settled into a position to take the lead in dismantling the theoretical apartheid that today exists on university campuses across the United States where rigid scientific parameters devalue the personal dimensions of research and practice. As composition teachers we benefit from envisioning our engagement with

expressivism and any other movement designed to serve students and free us to be messily human as another step toward re-unifying the uni-versity and subsequently the people within it.

**APPENDIX:
SURVEY OF FEMINIST AND COMPOSITION PEDAGOGIES**

Feminist and Composition Pedagogies

As part of a study on the impact of approaches to composition on first-year college women I have designed this survey. If you would like more information about the content of this study, please contact me at cgreene8@spelman.edu or 678-907-2995.

CO-INVESTIGATOR

Cantice Greene
Ph.D Candidate
Georgia State University
canticeg@hotmail.com
678-907-2995

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Lynée L. Gaillet, Ph.D
Associate Professor of English
Georgia State University
General Classroom Building (GCB) 918
engllg@langate.gsu.edu

Writing Types

Rank the following writing types in order of usage.

“1”=most frequently used; Do not use the same number twice; “n/a”=never used

- Response paper
- Commentary
- Newswriting
- Narrative
- Researched writing (heavy dependence on attribution to published or field research)
- Blogging
- Journal Writing
- Analysis (rhetorical or other categorizing of style and or content of prompt)

Responses to Writing

Rank the following response types in order of usage.

“1”=most frequently used; Do not use the same number twice; “n/a”=never used

- Grammatical/mechanical (identifying grammatical or mechanical errors or decisions)
- Empathetic (showing feeling and/or connection to content of response)
- Content Corrective (restating principles of content)
- Content Affirming (underlining, checking, or commenting on good comprehension of content)
- Composition Corrective (identifying ways to strengthen organization, sequence or elaboration of ideas)

Classroom/Teaching Practice

Rank the following classroom practices in order of usage.

“1”=most frequently used; Do not use the same number twice; “n/a”=never used

Small group/3-4 students working together

Individual work

Whole group/lecturing

Partner work

Workshopping (public/whole class responses to often blind copies of writing submissions such as poetry)

Conferences (one-on-one sessions between instructor and student to discuss progress on an assignment)

Responses to Personal Writing

Rank the following responses in order of usage.

“1”=most frequently used; Do not use the same number twice; “n/a”=never used

Historicizing-giving historical context to the personal response

Professionalizing-steering student back to content of assignment and away from personal issues

Noting “Performance”-partly based on performance theory, acknowledge the ways a student chooses to represent herself and her story in the writing

Analyzing-analyzing the personal text just as you would any other text

Counseling-referring the student to counseling services or attempting to advise her yourself

Affirming-thanking, congratulating, or restating what was discovered or revealed

Other, please explain below

Works Cited

- Alton, Cheryl, Pfeiffer, Kathleen, & Deletiner, Carole. (1993). Two comments on "Crossing Lines"--Comment/reply. *College English*, 55(6), 666. Retrieved July 17, 2010, from Research Library.
- Anderson, Charles M. and Marian M. MacCurdy. *Writing and Healing: Toward an Informed Practice*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000.
- Bartholomae, David. *Writing With Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow* CCC46(1) Feb, 1995
- Bartholomae, David and Peter Elbow. "Interchanges Response" CCC 46(1) Feb, 1995
- Berman, Jeffrey. *Empathic Teaching: Education for Life*. Massachusetts, U of Mass Press (2004).
- Bird, Gloria. *Programmed Writing as a Method for Increasing Self-Esteem, Self-Disclosure and Coping Skills*. Georgia State University, 1992.
- Bishop, Wendy. *Teaching Lives: Essays and Stories*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1997.
- Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg, ed. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.
- Blue, Timothy R. *Mentor-Teaching in the English Classroom* (2009). English Dissertations. Paper 48. http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/english_diss/48
- Bloom, Lynn. *Composition Studies as Creative Art*. Utah State University Press, 1998.
- Borrowman, Shane eds. *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*. SUNY Press, 2005.
- Boyer, Ernest L. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.

- Britton, James, Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, and Harold Rosen. *The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18)*. MacMillan & Co. LTD, 1975.
- Burnham, Christopher "Expressive Pedagogy." In *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, eds. Tate, Gary, Rupiper Amy and Schick, Kurt. 2001, (19-35).
- Butler, Paul. "Style in the Diaspora of Composition Studies." *Rhetoric Review* 26.1 (2007): 5-24. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 13 June 2010.
- Center for Public Health, Liverpool. "Ignoring "Promiscuous 10%" at Heart of Sexual Health Crisis in England." *Biotech Week* (Atlanta) 2004, Nov: 154.
- Chandler, Sally. "Fear, Teaching Composition, and Students' Discursive Choices: Re-thinking Connections Between Emotions and College Student Writing." *Composition Studies* 35.2 (2007): 53-70. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 13 June 2010.
- Charon, R. "Reading, Writing, and Doctoring: Literature and Medicine." *American Journal of Medical Science*, 319, 285 – 291, 2000.
- Charon, R. "The Patient-Physician Relationship: Narrative Medicine: a Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust." *JAMA*, 286, 1897 – 1902, (2001).
- Chappell, Kevin. "The Case for Marriage." *Ebony* Apr. 2006: 38.
- Clinton, Tim, Hart, Archibald, and George Ohlschlager, Eds. *Caring for People God's Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005.
- Crowley, Sharon. *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.
- Dangarembga, Tsitsi. *Nervous Conditions*. London: Women's Press, 1988.

- Dasgupta, S. & Charon, R. "Personal illness narratives: using reflective writing to teach empathy." *Academic Medicine*, 79, 351 – 356, (2004).
- Department of Health and Human Services. "Request for Applications for the HIV Prevention Program for Young Women Attending Minority Institutions--Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities" *Federal Grant Opportunities 2006-05-05*
- Dyson, Michael E. "Michael Eric Dyson Breaks It Down." *Essence* June 2006: 125.
- Eble, Michelle F. and Gaillet, Lynée Lewis. *Stories of Mentoring: Theory and Praxis*. West Lafayette, IN, Parlor Press, 2008.
- Elbow, Peter. "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals" *CCC* 46(1) Feb, 1995
- Elbow, Peter. *Everyone Can Write: Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*. (2000)
- Eldredge, John and Stasi Eldredge. *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005.
- Glade, Aaron C., Roy A. Bean and Rohini Vira. "A Prime Time for Marital/Relational Intervention: A Review of the Transition to Parenthood Literature with Treatment Recommendations." *American Journal of Family Therapy* 33.4 (2005): 319-336.
- Glasgot, Brenda. Book Review of *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism in Composition Studies*. <http://www.compositionstudies.tcu.edu/bookreviews/online/34-2/Glassgot%20Web.html>. Accessed 5 September 2009.
- Goggin, Maurene Daly. *Authoring a Discipline: Scholarly Journals and the Post-World War II Emergence of Rhetoric and Composition*. Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000.

Gradin, Sherrie. *Romancing Rhetorics*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 1995.

Graybeal, A., Sexton, J.D., & Pennebaker, J.W. "The role of story-making in disclosure writing: The psychometrics of narrative." *Psychology and Health*, 17, 571-581, 2002.

Greene, Cantice. "Coalition without Consensus: A Look at Women's Studies New Directions." Unpublished, 2006.

Grossman, Miriam. *Unprotected*. New York: Sentinel, 2006.

Harper, Gary et. al. "The Role of Close Friends in African-American Adolescents' Dating and Sexual Behavior." *Journal of Sex Research* 41.4 (2004): 351-362.

Hewett, Heather. "In Search of an "I": Embodied Voice and the Personal Essay." *Women Studies* (2004): 719-741.

Higgins, Lorraine, D. and Lisa D. Brush. "Personal Experience Narrative and Public Debate: Writing the Wrongs of Welfare." *CCC* 57.4 (2006): 694-729.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994

James, Adelbert. "College Freshmen at High Risk for Chlamydia Infection." *Health & Medicine Week* June 2006: 1342.

Johnson, T.R. *A Rhetoric of Pleasure*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 2003.

Johnson, T.R. "Writing as Healing and the Rhetorical Tradition: Sorting Out Plato, Postmodernism, Writing Pedagogy, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." In *Writing and Healing: Toward an Informed Practice*. Eds. Charles M. Anderson and Marian MacCurdy. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000.

Jurecic, Ann. "Writing in the Clinic." CCCC Presentation, 2008

- Kerner, Ian. "She's Yours. Now What?" *Men's Health* June 2006: 62-63.
- Kirsch, Gesa, Faye Maor, Lance Massey, Lee Nickoson-Massey, and Mary P. Sheridan-Rabideau. *Feminism and Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2003.
- Kirsch, Gesa and Patricia Sullivan. *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.
- L'Abate Luciano. *Distance Writing and Computer-Assisted Interventions in Psychiatry and Mental Health*. Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing, 2001.
- Lauer, Claire. "Constructing the Self in/as Thirdspace: New Potentials for Identity Exploration in the Composition Classroom." *Composition Studies* 37.2 (2009): 53-74. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 13 June 2010.
- "Life Support Class: Offering Single Women Assistance with Life Goals such as Education, Careers, Relationships, and Families." Cobb Pregnancy Services. 2006.
- Lepore, Stephen J. and Joshua M. Smyth. *The Writing Cure: How Expressive Writing Promotes Health and Emotional Well-being*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2002.
- Lopate, Phillip. *The Art of the Personal Essay*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Love, Meredith. "Composing Through the Performative Screen: Translating Performance Studies into Writing Pedagogy." *Composition Studies* 35.2 (2007): 11-30. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 22 June 2010.
- Lunsford, Andrea. Spelman English and ADW Department Lecture. Cosby Auditorium, Atlanta, GA. 23 Oct. 2006.
- MacCurdy, Marian. The Mind's Eye. U of Mass Press, 2007.

Macrorie, Ken. *Telling Writing*. Hayden Books, 1980.

Malinowitz, Harriet. "Business, Pleasure, and the Personal Essay." *College English* (2003).

McClellan, B. Edward. *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999.

Moon, Gretchen. "The Pathos of *Pathos*" In *A Way to Move*, eds. D. Jacobs and L. Micciche. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 2003 (33-42).

Newkirk, Thomas. *The Performance of Self in Student Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 1997.

Noddings, Nel. *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2002.

O'Hara, Diane. *Courtship and Constraint*. New York: Manchester UP, 2000.

Paris, Jenell Williams. "The Truth about Sex." *Christianity Today* November 2001: 62.

Pennebaker, James. "Writing Social Processes, and Psychotherapy: From Past to Future." Ed. Stephen J. Lepore and Joshua M. Smyth. *The Writing Cure: How Expressive Writing Promotes Health and Emotional Well-being*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2002. 279-292.

Quandahl, Ellen. "A Feeling for Aristotle: Emotion in the Sphere of Ethics" In *A Way to Move*, eds. D. Jacobs and L. Micciche. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 2003, (11-22).

Rice, R. Eugene. "Beyond Scholarship Reconsidered: Toward an Enlarged Vision of the Scholarly work of Faculty Members." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* July (2007): 7-17.

- Riordan, Richard J "Scriptotherapy: Therapeutic Writing as a Counseling Adjunct." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 74.3 (1996): 263-269.
- Rowley, Cynthia, and Ilene Rosenzweig. *Swell A Girl's Guide to the Good Life*. New York: Warner Books, 1999.
- Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Opressed*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press (2000).
- Schwartz, J. Brian. "Fear of Narrative: Revisiting the Bartholomae-Elbow Debate through the Figure of the Writing Teacher in Contemporary American Fiction." *Rhetoric Review* 26.4 (2007): 425-439. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 13 June 2010.
- Shalit, Wendy. "Against Repression (Emotional, That Is)." *Girls Gone Mild: Young Women Reclaim Self-Respect and Find It's Not Bad to Be Good*. New York: Random House, 2007.
- Shapiro, Johanna, et al. "Point-of-view writing: A method for increasing medical students' empathy, identification and expression of emotion, and insight." *Education for Health: Change in Learning & Practice* (Taylor & Francis Ltd) 19.1 (2006): 96-105. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 13 June 2010
- Standupgirl.com accessed 5 September 2009
- Tenth Avenue North. "Healing Begins." *The Light Meets the Dark*, 11 May 2010
< <http://www.tenthavenuenorth.com/music>>.
- Tushnet, Eve. "Inside a crisis pregnancy center." *The Weekly Standard*. 2003, February 8(21): 29-31.
- Witala, Wendy L. and Donald F. Dansereau. "Using popular quotations to enhance Therapeutic Writing." *Journal of College Counseling*, Fall2004, Vol. 7 Issue 2, p187-191, 5p.

Wright, Jeannie. Online counselling: learning from writing therapy. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, Aug 2002, Vol. 30 Issue 3, p285-298, 14p.

Wright, Jeannie and Man Cheung Chung. "Mastery or Mystery? Therapeutic writing: A Review of the Literature." *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* 29.3 (2001): 277-291.

Wright, William A. "No Hard Feelings: Downsizing and the Limitations of Pathos in the Academic Workplace" In *A Way to Move*, eds. D. Jacobs and L. Micciche. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 2003, (124-134).

Notes

ⁱ Retrieved from Christian Medical and Dental Association-Crisis Pregnancy Centers

< <http://www.cmdahome.org/index.cgi?CONTEXT=art&cat=201&art=1740&BISKIT=>>

on August 10, 2006.

ⁱⁱ Conversation with Georgia Right To Life Regional Director.

ⁱⁱⁱ As told to me by the director of the Women's Pregnancy Center of Marietta, Georgia in May 2006.