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True Stories: Narrative Ecologies in Revolutionary Fiction and College Composition

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Stephanie Wade

We, the dissertation committee for the above candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy

degree, hereby recommend acceptance of this dissertation.

Patricia Belanoff- Dissertation Advisor
Emeritus Professor, English Department

Susan Scheckel- Chairperson of Defense
Assistant Professor, English Department

Heidi Hutner
Associate Professor, English Department

Derek Owens
Associate Professor, English Department

This dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School

Lawrence Martin
Dean of the Graduate School

True Stories: Narrative Ecologies in Revolutionary Fiction and College Composition

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This project argues that college writing classes are important sites of interdisciplinary work, where students can pose and pursue questions that exceed traditional disciplinary boundaries. I use the concept of narrative ecologies to respond to Fredric Jameson's critique of Jean Francois Lyotard's narrative theory and account for the layered, connected, unevenly distributed nature of master and local narratives as they alternately intersect, collide, diverge and align. The concept of narrative ecology rooted in Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser's explication of discursive ecology, combines narrative theory and cultural ecology to better understand narratives as living systems, that, like our physical homes and earthy environments, shape our experiences and also respond to our actions.

In the first two chapters, an ecological approach allows me to read the narrative and scientific work of Aphra Behn and Charles Brockden Brown, writers who worked during revolutionary periods and who used narrative and scientific discourse to engage in culture work. I use their work as evidence that contemporary disciplinary divisions are historically specific and as evidence of non-Cartesian representations of identity. In assessing the critical responses to these writers, I argue that their vexed positions in the canon are related to critical orientations that emphasize the figure of the hero or heroine and reinscribe the values of individualism. Revisiting these writers offers a historical perspective on post-humanist, ecological understanding of experience. Next, an ecological approach allows me to disrupt traditional histories of composition studies and remap this period, plotting connections among the work of Lyotard, Gayatri Spivak, and Peter Elbow, to reveal an alternative history, one that supports liberatory pedagogies. The final chapters evaluates ecocomposition and public, mixed-media writing as strategies for incorporating narrative and scientific discourse into the first-year writing curriculum.

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Acknowledgements

"The question is how you rearrange the stars above your head, to open up unexpected paths on the ground beneath your feet."- Brian Holmes

I have been supported in this project by many people in many ways.

I would not have continued my education where it not for Professor Barbara Gleason, who introduced me to the field of composition studies and suggested I pursue my PhD. My family's patience and understanding made my academic life possible. Thank you to my daughter, Maeve Ali Wade, my husband, Chuck Wade, and my parents, Nina and Jay Hirschman.

My dissertation committee allowed me to shape a project that crosses the disciplinary boundaries between English and Composition and they encouraged experimentation while reigning in my excesses. In addition, they patiently read my early drafts and asked good, hard questions that helped me make meaning from my research. Thus, I am very grateful to Professor Heidi Hutner, Professor Susan Scheckel, Professor Pat Belanoff and Professor Derek Owens. I am also grateful to Professor Patricia Dunn, who taught me about composition research methods.

Many students contributed to this project. I am especially grateful to the students of Stony Brook Southampton, whose commitment to using education to make the world a better place reminded me why research and teaching matter. I dedicate my dissertation to the students of Stony Brook Southampton.

Introduction: Narrative Ecologies; or, Story as Home

> "We are still struggling to find a positive narrative, one fitting for the
> newly redefined Earthlings." Bruno Latour

> "..we have lost sight of the simple fact that the only difference between a
> history, a theory, a poem, an essay, is the one we ourselves have imposed.
> We have cut the wholeness of knowledge into little bits, scattered them
> into the four winds and now begin to reorganize them into categories
> invented to enable empire by bringing order to chaos and civilization to
> the savage." Melea Powell

In 2007, Bruno Latour addressed the British Sociological Association at their

yearly conference. His talk, "A Plea for Earthly Sciences," asks why the mounting

scientific evidence of environmental destruction has failed to motivate people to make the

changes that are necessary to preserve the planet Earth and its inhabitants. In answering

this question, Latour argues that the analytical tools used in the modernist period are no

longer functional today, singling out empiricism for special critique on the grounds that it

restricts knowledge by valuing the "power of the brain" over embodied epistemologies.

Thus, in arguing for earthly sciences, Latour argues for knowledge that is grounded and

contextual and for the value of narrative as a mode of discourse. But, as Latour points

out, disciplinary divisions and hierarchies of discourse continue to have material effects

on institutions, understanding, and experience. In this way, Latour's argument

compliments the work of composition scholar Melea Powell, who offers a holistic

hermeneutics that pushes beyond boundaries between disciplines and genres and at the

same time reminds us of the true effects of these boundaries.

My dissertation positions first-year college writing as a transdisciplinary, public

space where students can pose questions that exceed traditional academic boundaries. It

also positions composition studies as a transdisciplinary, public space where teachers and

researchers (and teacher-researchers) can pose questions that exceed traditional academic

boundaries. Ultimately, my goal is to open up the choices available to writing students

and teacher. I begin with historical research because first-year college writing is an

institution with historical connections that range from ancient rhetoric to creative writing

workshops, contemporary English departments, education research, and emerging work

in new media. Reviewing these connections allows us to reconsider contemporary

practices as historically-specific so we can reshape first-year college writing to meet

contemporary needs.[1] On the other hand, using contemporary theory to review

contemporary needs as historically-specific allows us to consider the goals of first-year

college writing in the dynamic context of the twenty-first century. Theoretically, I

propose the concept of narrative ecology as a holistic hermeneutic for exploring

connections between composition and literature and between narrative and scientific

discourse.[2] Finally, I employ quantitative and qualitative research to assess the efficacy of

the applications of my historical and theoretical research.[3]

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[1] The changing relationship between composition and literature is illustrated by two collections published twenty-three years apart. In the introduction to *Composition and Literature: Bridging the Gap*, Winfred Horner, the editor asks "Can we…use the talents and methods of English studies to address the literacy crisis" (iii). The primary barrier she describes is that English studies conceives of its work as something independent from the real world, whereas teaching writing to first-year college students requires engagement with the world. The contributors to this volume, published in 1983, come from both composition and literature backgrounds. A newer collection edited by Linda S. Bergmann and Edith M. Baker, *Composition and/or Literature: The End(s) of Education*, published in 2006, more strongly emphasizes the work of compositionists, which suggests the growth and independence of composition studies over the intervening twenty-three years.

[2] The relationship between science and composition studies is complicated in terms of the role of scientific methods of composition research and in terms of the place of

Ecology, the relatively young science of the relationships between organisms and

their environments, is related etymologically and thematically with the Greek word

Oikos- for household, which comes to English through the German *Ökologie*. Narrative

from the Latin *narrre* and the middle French *narratif* is a relatively older term for that

which represents a series of events. By putting narrative and ecology together, I aim to

define narratives as living systems of representation. I contrast narrative discourse with

scientific discourse to get at the impact of genre upon epistemology and hermeneutics.

The concept of narrative ecologies builds upon Jean Francois Lyotard's distinction

between the grand master narratives we inherit from history, politics, science, and

religion and the narratives generated from local sources, such as personal narratives,

family stories, and the counter-narratives of marginalized groups, because it accounts for

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scientific discourse in the first-year writing curriculum. Because twentieth-century
undergraduate writing classes developed under the auspices of English Departments, the
content of the classes and the means of understanding how to best develop and teach such
classes is rooted in the humanities. As the function of higher education expanded, the role
of first-year composition changed from the preparation of public leaders to the training of
the managerial class (Halloran, Berlin). In addition, the increasing diversity of the
student body and the critique of the traditional canon of English literature called into
question the place of literature in first-year composition. The modern field of
composition studies emerged in the 1960s in response. As composition scholars took
their arguments beyond English Departments, they found the need to make arguments
based on quantitative evidence. On the other hand, a long-standing and a well-founded
suspicion of the actual objectivity of scientific research complicates the relationship
between quantitative and qualitative research methods (Bizzell 1982). Defenders of
quantitative research see this critique as a vestige of composition's relationship with the
humanities (Charney 1996). An emerging solution, which I adopt in this research project,
is the use of "hybrid" (Fleckenstein et al. 2008), "multimodal" (Lauer and Asher 1988)
and "contextualist" (Johanek 2000) research methods.

[3] Kristie S. Fleckenstein, Clay Spinuzzi, Rebecca J. Rickly, and Carole Clark Pappers'
article in the December 2008 *CCC* uses the metaphor of ecology to outline a paradigm
for research in composition studies that includes qualitative and quantitative methods.
Building on Cindy Johanek's contextualist paradigm, Fleckenstein et al. offer a
framework that not only attends to context, but also understands context in ecological
terms- as "dynamic" and "stable" but not static (408, 411).

Fredric Jameson's critique: that Lyotard prematurely celebrates the death of the master

narratives, narratives that, Jameson reminds us, continue to exist, in somewhat fractured

and subconscious forms. I revise Lyotard's analysis via the concept of narrative

ecologies in order to better capture the layered, connected, unevenly distributed nature of

master and local narratives as they alternately intersect, collide, diverge from, and align

with the narratives we live and tell and retell. The concept of narrative ecology posits all

narratives as living systems, systems that, like our physical homes and earthy

environments, shape our experiences and also respond to our actions.[4] This concept

allows us to read texts across disciplines, genres, and time periods so we may better

understand the material we have inherited, material that, like compost, creates the ground

out of which we imagine and move towards the future.

In addition to the influence of Lyotard's narrative theory, my understanding of

narrative ecology is informed by Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser's concept of

discursive ecology, which they explain "examines the relationships of various acts and

forms of discourse" (116). Dobrin and Weisser acknowledge their debt to James Porter,

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[4] On the importance of narrative from a psychological perspective, see Jerome Bruner's
Actual Minds, Possible Worlds (1985), which posits narrative as a type of intelligence.
Important treatments of narrative in literary studies include *The Sense of an Ending*
(1965), Frank Kermode's treatment of representation of time in literary narrative; Gerard
Gennette's "Frontiers of Narrative" (1982), a historical analysis of narrative as
"particular mode" of discourse, notable for its capacity to represent multiple perspectives;
and James Phelan's "Narrative as Rhetoric: Reading the Spells of Porter's Magic"
(1996), which identifies narrative as both "story" and "action" (800). Hayden White's
The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (1987)
established narrative analysis as a frame for historiography. Sandra Harding identifies the
importance of narrative epistemology in relationship to stand point theory in her
interview with Elizabeth Hirsch and Gary Olsen (1995). For a careful critique of
narrative, which uses the term "bivalency" to distinguish between "fictive" from"
nonfictive" narrative functions, see Martin Kreiswirth's "Merely Telling Stories?
Narrative and Knowledge in the Human Sciences" (2000).

who explicitly compares discourse communities with ecosystems (155). What Dobrin and Weisser add to the Porter's comparison is particular attention to zones of tolerance, the edges of ecosystems that determine the limit at which a species might migrate and survive. In extending this concept to communication, they consider the viability of the literacies and vernacular languages students bring to the classroom. Thus, in contrast to Porter, Dobrin and Weisser focus on alternative discourse in addition to academic conventions. One feature that remains consistent in Dobrin and Weisser and Porter's use of the term discourse is the sense of distance between discourse---the writing, dialogue, diagrams, and others signs—and that which is being represented. It is this distance I seek to capture in using the terms discourse: narrative discourse for representations of meaning that have more credibility in the humanities and scientific discourse for representations of meaning that have more credibility in the sciences.

Jean Franscois Lyotard's study of epistemology also argues for the value of alternative discourse. He details the erosion of the master narratives of the unity of knowledge and the emancipatory value of education upon which scientific discourse and metaphysics have historically relied for coherence and legitimacy. These master narratives have been replaced by the values of performativity, defined by Lyotard as that which increases capital, have replaced these narratives. Lyotard's book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* calls upon readers to fight the the values of performativity and concomitant pressures for efficiency, unity, and simplicity. He explains that calls for reality are actually calls for "order, a desire for unity, for identity, for security or popularity" (72). These demands trouble Lyotard, and me, as they occur in a capitalist economy that increasingly authorizes knowledge according to rules of

efficiency and productivity. The primary rule is "there is no reality unless testified by consensus" (77). The pressures of consensus impoverish our ability to represent and to apprehend contestatory, multiple and sometimes contradictory realities. These pressures constrain our ability to imagine what exists beyond the dominant culture and thus naturalizes the dominant culture as the only reality. For education, this means the older humanist goals of emancipation, which is premised on the master narrative of liberation, is replaced by performitivity which evaluates education according to its ability to train youth to perform jobs efficiently. Unlike the master narrative of emancipation, which asked questions about truth and justice, performitivity asks about utility and marketability.

Calls for standards, testing, consensus and standardization in education, such as the decision the acting director made to focus on researched argument and textual analysis, genres she deemed easier to assess, serve as examples of the pressures that Lyotards outlines. Robert Connors's research on textbooks, writing assignments, and offers a historical context from which to understand contemporary trends. His review of the contested place of personal writing in college composition from ancient times through the twentieth-century, based on teacher's writing assignments and popular textbooks, reveals that personal narrative had had a more central role in college writing in the 1880s-1920s (1987). This allows me to see my individual experience as part of a historical trend in the field of composition studies.

While Lyotard offers his hope that the master narratives and the performitivity model will be replaced by local narratives in happy competition with each other, his description of the decline of master narratives is not completely accurate; these narrative

still exert power as they continue to exist as cultural myths. Fredric Jameson, who wrote the introduction to Lyotard's text, helps use see the limits of Lyotard's model, which acutely and successfully exposes the pressures towards conformity, but prematurely extinguishes the power of master-narratives. According to Jameson, these narratives have not disappeared; they have gone underground and function in what he calls "the political unconscious" (1981). According to Jameson these master-narratives now operate in the realm of culture and at the edges of our psyches rather than as overt belief systems. Another of Lyotard's critics, Arran Garre, emphasizes the extent to which master narratives persist. In "Narratives and the Ethics and Politics of Environmentalism: The Transformative Power of Stories" an argument about the efficacy of narrative as a means of resolving our environmental crisis, he writes of the challenge of deconstructing the grand narratives we have inherited. Describing this challenge, he writes, "…. the Promethean grand narratives of modernity are embedded in institutions and organizations, in cities, buildings, instruments of productions, and even the *habitus* (to use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology) of individuals.

The challenge, then, is to remake institutions and organizations, cities, and buildings, theories and classroom practices, and maybe even identity so that they reflect ecological concepts, so that they represent our understanding of the multiple, diverse, connected, changing, living systems that comprise the physical and cultural worlds we inhabit. In my dissertation, I use the concept of narrative ecology to review three traditional stories—one about the history of the novel, one about the canon of American literature, and one about contemporary composition studies My primary goal, here, is to move ever so slightly towards the lofty goals I describe above, with particular emphasis

on first rethinking the discipline of college composition in connection with the history of

narrative and scientific discourse and second rethinking first-year college writing in

connection with ecology and public discourse. In this way, I aim to employ Derek

Owens's concept of reconstructive design by incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives

and valuing the contributions of specialists, such as composition scholars, and generalists,

such as my students.

My dissertation project began as an argument for the importance of narrative

writing in first-year composition.[5] The place of narrative writing seemed in jeopardy in

the writing program where I taught because the acting director of our writing program

responded to a state-mandated assessment project by eliminating the third genre from our

program-wide portfolio requirements. This genre, officially called the informal essay,

was historically an opportunity for teachers to assign personal narratives in WRT 102, the

only writing class required of all incoming students at Stony Brook University. After the

change, individual teachers were still free to assign informal essays, such as personal and

narrative writing, but the students' work in these genres were not to be considered in the

final portfolio reading, which would determine if the students would pass the class or if

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[5] Arguments on the importance of narrative in first-year college writing include: Robillard, Amy E. "It's Time for Class: Toward a More Complex Pedagogy of Narrative." *College English* 66.1 (September 2003): 74-92; Spigelman, Candace. "Teaching Expressive Writing as a Narrative Fiction." *JAC* 16.1 (1996): 119-40; Fleckenstein, Kristie S. "Images, Words, and Narrative Epistemology." *College English* 58.8 (December 1996): 914-33. Critics of narrative often conflate it with poorly theorized concepts of the personal and thus argue for critical and or rhetorical approaches. See Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu (1988) *College English;* "The problematic of experience: Redefining critical work in ethnography and pedagogy" and David Bartholomae and Peter Elbow (1995) "Writing with Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow/"

they would need to repeat it.[6] Only the researched argument and textual analysis would

be evaluated because, according to the acting director, these would be the most

appropriate genres to assess. I objected to curricular changes based on the director's

interpretation of the assessment mandate. I was concerned that this would tilt our

teaching away from narrative and towards expository, analytical, and argumentative

writing and that this would rob our students of an important means of communication, a

means that not only may serve as a bridge to other genres but also offers students the

opportunity to engage in cultural work, to comment on the world and engage in discourse

via vernacular rather than academic forms and languages. For me, this particular

assessment project had a happy ending—I spoke with the director about my concerns and

explained the functions of narrative as critical culture work; she invited me to present my

research on narrative and culture work to the faculty; I continued to include narrative

writing in my curriculum; my students continued to pass their portfolios at average rates;

and I kept my job.[7] Unfortunately, the larger context of education in general and higher

education in particular, where the business model has more and more force, with negative

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[6] Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie's 1995 *CCC* article "Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research" presents composition research methods that move beyond the personal/public dichotomy. Candace Spigelman's 2004 book *Personally Speaking: Experience as Evidence in Academic Discourse* offers pedagogies that transcend this dichotomy.

[7] My understanding of the phrase culture work is informed by two sources. One is the research on the early American novel as an important vehicle of cultural critique by Jane Tompkins and Cathy Davidson's. The other is the Syracuse Culture Workers, a publisher of books, posters, buttons, stickers, and other material that embodies three core beliefs: that all are capable of engaging in culture work, that such work is "legitimate" work, and that the basis of such work exceeds economic principles. The range of material published by SCW indicates the understanding that culture work takes many forms and encompasses visual and print texts.

consequences for labor and curriculum, is less happy.[8]

    In the first half of my dissertation, I look back at two writers who used narrative

and scientific discourse to engage in what Jean Francois Lyotard would consider multiple

language games: Aphra Behn, the seventeenth-century novelist whose translation of

Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's *A Discovery of New Worlds* was the most popular

scientific text in British colonial America, and Charles Brockden Brown, the eighteenth-

century American novelist who translated Volney's *View of the Soil and Climate of the*

United States. Both writers worked before the rigid disciplinary boundaries that divide

humanities and sciences today had ossified; thus, they engaged in scientific translations

and novelistic discourse; both had complicated relationships to the dominant cultures of

their times; and both created works where nature imagery represents the primary paradox

of empiricism: its reliance upon experience and observation and its revelation that

experience and observation are deceptive. In this way, Behn and Brown challenged the

dominant culture of their respective eras.

    Using Bakhtin's theory of the novel in Europe and Cathy Davidson's analysis of

the novel in colonial and early republican America, I observe that the form of the novel,

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[8] On the business model and higher education, see Shelia Slaughter and Larry Leslie
*Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University (*1998);
Christopher Newfield, "Jurassic U: The State of University-Industry Relations; and
Jeffrey Williams, The Post-Welfare State University (2006). For examples of the impact
on writing, see the most recent draft of writing expectations of The Common Core
Standards Initiative, which emphasizes expository and argumentative writing, as Edgar
Schuster explains in his February 1, 2010 essay "The Core Standards for Writing:
Another Failure of Imagination." On literacy rates and incarceration, see Dunn and
Lindblom's 2003 article "The Roles of Rhetoric in Constructions and Reconstructions of
Disability." They site research from the Center on Crime, Communities and Culture that
posits 20%-40% of adults in prison range from "completely" to "functionally" illiterate
(168).

relying as it does on the mode of narrative, has historically provided opportunities for people from the margins of the dominant society to engage in culture work. As Cathy Davidson writes "Novels allowed for a means of entry into a larger literary and intellectual world and a means of access to social and political events from which novel readers (particularly women) would have been otherwise largely excluded" (10). My analysis reveals counter narratives to positivist, empiricist traditions; demonstrates that contemporary disciplinary divisions are historically specific; and illustrates non-Cartesian representations of identity. M.M. Bakhtin describes the novel as a heteroglossic form that creates meaning by representing voices in dialogue with each other. This dialogical model opens texts up to a multiplicity of readings. From formal and contextual perspectives, meaning is constructed by the interaction of voices in the texts and contexts. The frame of narrative ecologies allows me to build upon Bakhtin's work to better understand the intersections among the "local" narratives within novels and "master" narratives circulating as Behn and Brown wrote, to use Lyotard's terms. Master and local narratives persist as the material-the compost, if you will- out of which new meaning grows. In particular, Brown and Behn's move from narrative to scientific discourse indicates the cultural shift, precipitated by the scientific revolution, to honor scientific discourse. Both writers gained cultural authority in their time via novel writing, yet both worked on scientific translations at the end of their careers, suggesting their awareness of the market value of scientific discourse, their concern with scientific debates, and, perhaps, their understanding of the growing power of scientific discourse.

In Chapter Three, I use my historical analysis of scientific and narrative discourse to critique two dominant histories of composition studies—James Berlin's and Richard

Fulkerson's—and illustrate that, despite their differences, both serve the status quo and support pedagogies that maintain a narrow focus on standard English and academic conventions. I remap this period, connecting the work of Jean Francois Lyotard, Gayatri Spivak, and Peter Elbow, to reveal an alternative history that reunites the constitutive and instrumental aspects of language and promotes interdisciplinary inquiry. I propose ecological concepts of literacy and public discourse as two concrete means of resisting pressures for consensus.

In Chapter Four, I present research on ecological approaches to first-year college writing. After a historical review of the influence of ecological thought in composition studies, I tease the major pedagogical features resulting from this influence, analyze these features in terms of the Council of Writing program Administrators Outcomes for First-Year College Writing, and present a case study of a first-year writing curriculum organized by principles of ecocomposition. I conclude that ecological approaches to composition research, which enabled me to see my success and my failures, offer teachers a means of assessing design principles and classroom practices.

The final chapter focuses on multimodal writing, alternative discourse, and public genres. After reviewing the work of S. Michael Halloran, Christian Weisser, Nancy Welch, Bruce Herzog, Mark Davis and Robert Shadle, I describe new media and alternative print projects as means of engaging students in public discourse. I argue that experiments with genre can make writing come alive for students and thus are important to ecocomposition pedagogies. After I describe my efforts to weave public discourse through introductory and intermediate first-year writing classes, I use excerpts of my students' reflections on their work to demonstrate the possibilities and pitfalls of public

discourse in first-year college writing and to argue for more attention to pedagogy in this area.

In my conclusion, I return to a local situation to consider an important counter-point to my emphasis on the power of narrative. I consider the effects of power-from-above, in this case the institutional power of a college president to effectively close a college campus, alongside student and community protests. I conclude that this debate, regardless of its conclusion, situates higher education as a community concern and important topic of public discourse.

Chapter #1 A Discovery of New Worlds: Aphra Behn, Histories of the British Novel and the Emergence of Scientific Discourse.

Rhetoric and composition studies needs to contribute to the development of a sophisticated scientific literacy to further challenge modernists' claims to progress, objectivity, truth, and universality in science.
        Michael J. Zerb

To bring into being other worlds beyond those of purely abstract information; to engender Universes of reference and existential Territories where singularity and finitude are taken into consideration by the multivalent logic of mental ecologies and by the group Eros principle of social ecology; to dare to confront the vertiginous Cosmos so as to make it inhabitable; these are the tangled paths of the tri-ecological vision.
        Felix Guattari

At the start of the twenty-first century, teachers, scholars, and administrators wrestle to define the world of college composition. The various names for first-year writing classes indicate the assorted ways the class is defined. For example, English 101, the title of the famous Langston Hughes poem, signifies the long-standing, recently eroding relationships between first-year writing and English departments. Writing 101, or the Writing Workshop, as the class is called at Stony Brook University where I teach, signals some distance from English departments and also connections to creative writing and the writing process movement of the 1960s and 1970s. New names for this class, such as the Writing Studio, indicate the growth of post-processes pedagogies that recognize the great variety of students' learning styles, the range of writing experience they bring to college, and the divergent writing situations they will face in school and in their personal, professional, and public lives. The emerging Writing Studies approach situates first-year writing as an introduction to the field of composition and rhetoric.

Central to the changing definitions of first-year college writing are several trends: the increasing specialization of academic disciplines—including the professionalization

of composition studies; the rise of the business model in higher education and the pressures of late-stage capitalism; and the marginalization of the humanities in the college curriculum. While these pressures are uneven—distributed differently in various places—what is at stake is not only disciplinary. What is at stake is epistemological, ethical, social and political. The definition of first-year writing—the questions explored, the genres employed, and the language authorized—all have consequences for our students' performance in our classes and beyond.[i] The types of knowledge, genres, and language authorized in first-year writing also have consequences for the types of knowledge, genres, and language our students value. If we believe that discourse shapes perception and that perception precipitates actions, then as Guattari reminds us, the stakes are high; the language and genres we use, the language and genres our students use, shape their ability to imagine alternative futures. As Kathleen Yancey said at the 2004 Conference on College Composition and Communication, "What we ask our students to do is who we ask them to be."

In this chapter, I take a long historical perspective on genre and disciplinarity as part of my larger argument for locally-determined definitions of college composition, definitions that listen to larger discussions in the field, that listen to narrative and scientific discourses, and that acknowledge the possibility of multiple worlds, as Guattari describes. I do this by looking back three hundred and twenty-two years to the 1680s, the period when modern science, modern economics, and modern ideas of individualism were born, at the work of a writer who argued for the possibility of other worlds. The objectivity and authority accorded to science in most places today conceals the fierce battles early scientists waged in order to to publicly convey their work. Reviewing these

battles is important today for a number of reasons. Even as the authority of scientific

knowledge has been called into question on a number of fronts—from within science

itself in the form of Werner Heisenberg's post-Newtonian scientific practice, from

Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper's post-positivist philosophies of science, and from

feminist and post-colonial standpoint theories such as Sandra Harding's—appeals to

science maintain increasing power as warrants in a number of fields, and scientific

research garners much of the funding in higher education[9]. While science has lost much

of its liberatory potential due to its material connections to capital, as Lyotard details in

The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowldege this need not be the case (45).

Critics of scientific authority such as Arran Gare and Walter Fisher argue scientific

means of legitimating knowledge are not only intellectualy skewed, but, more

importantly, they restrict who can participate in public discourse and ultimately policy.[10]

The very language of science and the process by which scientific knowledge is made

excludes those unversed in scientific methods and discourse.[11] The very questions

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[9] In her 1997 essay, "Women's Standpoints on Nature: What Makes them Possible,"
Harding writes, "scientific language necessarily enables and limits what a culture can
know about natures regularities and their underlying casual tendencies (196). Here she
emphasizes that science can 'enable" and "limit" (196).

[10] Garre notes the value of post-positivist science as a warrant for systems approaches to
epistemology and hermeneutics. "Narratives and the Ethics of Environmentalism: The
Transformative Powers of Stories."

[11] In the world of composition studies, Charles Bazerman and Michael J. Zerbe call for
critical attention to scientific discourse. *Shaping Written Knowledge,* Bazerman's 1988
study, reveals the historical process whereby the genre of the scientific lab report was
constructed to appear to be an objective form for conveying scientific research as
unbiased and factual. With historical research, Bazerman deconstructs the hierarchy of
knowledge that posits scientfic discourse as a natural and neutral means of representing
reality and demonstrates instead that scientific discourse mediates reality. Michael
Zerbe's work builds on Bazerman's landmark study to remind composition teachers of
the threat we face when we ignore the discourse of science. Admitting the partiality of
scientific perspectives means nothing, according to Zerbe, if we fail to teach our students

explored by researched are determined by those that garner funding and answers gain

letitmacy not because they are true but because they they generate income. As Lyotard

writes, "Scientists, technicans and instruments are purchased not to find truth but to

augment power" (45). For these reasons, science as discourse has an important place in

the world of composition studies; scientific literacy is a necessary precondition for

critique and for engagement in the public discourse that is necessary to create democratic

policies. A historical perspective on scientific discourse reveals that the dominant genre

of the lab report is not a natural or necessarily objective form, which reminds us that we

need to reconsider not only what counts as scientific knowledge but also how that

knowledge is represented and dissemenated.

Al Coppola offers a very useful analysis of the fraught relationship between

science and politics during the early modern period in his 2008 essay "Retraining the

Virtuoso's Gaze: Behn's *Emperor of the Moon,* The Royal Society, and the Spectacle of

Science and Politics." Viewing the work of naturalists from the lens of Tory politics, he

understands the cataloguing work of the London Royal Society as an embodiment of

Cartesian philosophy and royalist, conservative politics. The very representations of

nature—the visual drawing of crocodiles, the mathmatic enumeration of the number of

their bones—were inflected by an ideology that valued hierarchical authority and control.

He writes: "In the volatile years of the Exclusion Crisis, it seems that the pursuit of not

to read and critique scientific discourse. Zerbe explains how the language of scientific
discourse obfuscates meaning and makes even established writers and academics in the
humanities feel incompetent as readers and critics of this material. In this his work, like
Walter Fisher's, is motivated by the premise that scientific discourse silences public
debate. He urges first-year writing teachers to assign scientfic studies as readings for
students to critically analyze and for students to talk back to via their own primary
research. His pedagogy offers a means of teaching students to interrogate the objectivity
of scientific report.

just propagandistic pseudoscience, but also the mainstream natural philosophy espoused by the Royal Society, was itself a political act that was perceived to help the Tory cause—if only in the hope that it would act to cool the political climate and change the topic of conversation in the city" (488). Coppola situates on Aphra Behn's 1687 play "The Emperor of the Moon" in this context, reading her work along with New Science, to reveal a more complex picture of her politics. Behn, typically associated with Tory politics, demonstrates her remove from royalist ideology in her 1687 play, according to Coppola, via her satirical representation of Baliardo's interest in science, an interest that "blinds him to what's really going on in the world around him," according to Copppola (492).

One year after writing "The Emperor of the Moon," Aphra Behn, the seventeenth-century writer famous as the first woman to earn her lving via her pen, translated Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's argument for the existence of life on other planets, *A Discovery of New Worlds*, from French to English.[12] The title of Aphra Behn's 1688 translation aptly describes the impact of Behn's work on literary and literacy studies; Behn's engagement in narrative and scientific discourse embodies the sticky relationship between these modes of knowing- between humanistic and scientific inquiry. Below, I trace Behn's interest in the natural world and natural philosophy as a canvas for political ideology to her first novel, *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*. In a number of her works, Behn uses nature imagery and scientific discourse to encourage her readers, mostly female, to imagine new worlds, worlds beyond the social and religious

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[12] Gerald Dennis Meyer's 1955 study *The Scientific Lady in England 1650-1760* reports that Fontenelle's work was the paradigmatic scientific text of his era and the figure of the Marchioness became the model for women with interest in the sciences in the early modern period.

conventions of the seventeenth-century. In this way, she uses narrative and scientific discourse as liberatory discourses. Reading the meta-narrative of the reception of her work reveals the power of conservative pressures and disciplinary divisions to keep contestatory positions at bay as well as the power of the veil of aesthetics as a rationale for discrediting serious cultural critique. I hope this will remind writing teachers to resist conservative pressures that would limit the writing of first-year writing, to engage in interdisciplinary work in their classes and to assign alternative discourse with an understanding that such work is not a fad or a trend but rather that it is part of a long historical tradition. In addition, Behn's translation of Fontenelle reminds us that the lab report, the dominant genre of science today, is not necessarily the best or only means of engaging in scientific discourse.[13] She reminds us that we may need to re-imagine modern genres of scientific discourse to account for new epistemologies.

While the conventions of the twenty-first century are wildly different from those of Behn's era, analysis of her work via the frame narrative ecology reveals previously ignored worlds of sixteenth-century literature and culture. When we understand dominant and counter narratives as living, unstable systems, we can resist the dominant mode of scientific discourse in twenty-first century, a positivist mode that pushes for certainty in the humanities and the sciences- and thus we can better apprehend Behn's novels and her scientific translation, which represent perspectives from the margins of early modern British culture. In one way, Behn's work enacts the very concept of narrative ecologies. Translating Fontenelle, who cites Descartes as an authority a number of times in the original French (98 113, 163) initially seems an odd choice for Behn, whose poems,

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[13] See Charles Bazerman *Shaping Written Knowledge*, 2000.

novels and plays convey earthy, embodied epistemologies. But, in total, Behn's preface and small ammendations to Fontentelle's original text suggest her efforts to harness the power of the emerging discourse of science in a way that maintained connections to embodiment. Behn frames Fontenelle's argument for Cartesian science in a way that disjoins it from objectivity and embeds counter-narratives. Thus, her translation of Fontenelle embodies the dynamic, nesting narture of narrative ecologies and serves as a counter-narrative to positivist accounts of scientific inquiry. In addition, her enagement in public discourse complicates our understanding of the public sphere as neither an inherently democratic space posed by Habermas nor an inherently repressive space, as posed by his critics, but, rather as a space that is always in flux, always in a state of negotiation. While her early work expresses optimism about the potential for women to challenge conventions by engaging in public discourse, creating at least subaltern counter-publics, such as the sphere in which the character Sivlia acts—a marginal space, to be sure, but one that poses an alternative to conformity—Behn's vision becomes tragic in her later novels, such as *The History of the Nun; or the Fair Vow-Breaker*—which concludes with the deaths of all of the main characters. In the end, Behn's move to scientific discourse might represent her canny understanding of its rising power to legitimate authority in contrast to narrative discourse, especially the novel.

Set up as a dialogue between a man of science and a lady of the world, Behn's translation of Fontenelle embodies the tension surrounding epistemology, authority, and empiricism in the late seventeenth-century, addressing in particular the question of whether human senses provide true knowledge of the world and serving as a pivotal

document of the construction of scientific discourse. In the late 1600s, as the

technologies of microscopes and telescopes revealed the limits of human senses, these

technologies also revealed the limits of traditional authorities: Christianity no longer

uniformly explained the natural world and aristocratic ideology no longer satisfactorily

explained the social world. In her work, Behn argues for her readers, especially female

readers, to use literacy to question empiricist ideology and to forge lives beyond

restrictive social conventions.

In a range of texts, employing multiple genres--from her early, bawdy plays and

her first epistolary novel *Love-Letters* to her later work on postcolonial themes in

Oroonoko and her translation of Fontenelle, Behn grapples with issues of structure and

agency that persist in contemporary theoretical debates. While the field of Behn studies

has successfully argued for the importance of her work, it is just beginning to explore the

connections between the various genres in which she worked.[14] Looking at her

engagement with scientific discourse along with her narrative work brings the depth of

her critique of conventions to the fore. As Behn represents the contradictions of dualistic

thought in her novels, she offers a commentary on the contradictions of empiricist

epistemology, revealing both the liberatory potentials that surface when dominant

realities are disturbed and the conservative pressures deeply rooted in social conventions

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[14] Heidi Hutner's call for attention to the formal features of Behn's texts as well as the contexts in which Behn worked initiated this trend (1993). Recent work includes Will Pritchard's "Masks and Faces: Female Legibility and the Restoration Era" (2000); Vernon Guy Dickson "Truth, Wonder and Exemplarity in Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (2007); Al Coppola "Retraining the Virtuoso's Gaze: Behn's *Emperor of the Moon*, The Royal Society, and the Spectacles of Science and Politics" (2008); Tony Bowers, "Behn's Monmouth: Sedition, Seduction and Tory Ideology in the 1680s" (2009). These studies still exclude *Love-Letters,* Behn's first novel, perhaps because of its length or because its availability had been limited until 1987.

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that support the dominant reality. In making Fontenelle's work available to a wider audience, particularly those without knowledge of French, Behn popularized Fontenelle's position that there exist worlds beyond conventional, earthy perception and thus offered evidence that unconventional lives are available and viable. In both her scientific work and narrative writing, she posits human existence as part of a web of life that includes the nature world, spiritual forces, and the connections among humans.

In the late seventeenth-century, amidst many pockets of dissent in England, Aphra Behn occupied a uniquely contradictory position as a political conservative and social progressive. Like her narrators, Behn crossed social boundaries and lurked at the edges of the dominant culture of her era. Her work, well received in her day, fell out of favor in the middle of the eigteenth-century and then slowly gained attention through the twentieth-century. Ross Ballaster attributes the erosion of Behn's popularity to the erotic nature of her work. Judith Kegan Gardiner notes several converging factors that mitigated against Behn's popularity: Whiggish accounts of the novel, masculinist aesthetics, feminist ideals of properly emancipatory literature, and the erotic themes in Behn's work. Revolutionary politics offer another way of understanding Behn's reception and later neglect. Aphra Behn's popularity peaked during a period of relative political stability in England, from the time of Charles II's restoration to the throne to the Glorious Revolution that enthroned William III and Mary. A century later, coinciding with Behn's decline, poltical revolutions peppered the Atlantic world. These revolutions polarized the political and intellectual culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as liberals and conservatives warred over definitions of authority, freedom, and value. Behn's work, representing the deep contradictions embedded in the empiricist arguments for freedom

as well as the deep entrenchment of social conventions that supported traditional authority, provided scant comfort to either side. The modernist Virginia Woolf is famously responsible for reclaiming Behn's place in English literature, yet she inaugurated a tradition that attends to Behn's historical rather than aesthetic value.

Looking at the reception of her work in the contexts of revolutionary politics, new science, and positivist ideologies reveals the material effects of ideology on the formation of the canon. Theorists of the novel, such as Mikhail Bahktin and Cathy Davidson, imagine the growth of this form in connection to its ability to provide voices to those on the margins of the dominant culture. Davidson attends to the impact of printing technology, which allowed for the distribution of novels and expanded readership, creating an audience for alternatives to traditional literature. Bahktin emphasizes that the novel allows for the representation of multiple voices and vernacular languages. Both argue the novel was accessible to writers and readers who had not had formal, classical education for the novel did not have the rigid genre expectations of the epic and other verse forms. The early novel also offered a place for writers to critique the dominant discourse, to explore counter-discourses, and to represent multiple, competing versions of reality. We see this in the early novels of Aphra Behn and in her translation of Fontenelle. As Behn's translation of Fontenelle argued for the existence of life on other planets and asked readers to believe what they could not yet perceive, her novels ask her readers to imagine and believe in lives beyond the limits of conventional perceptions. Aphra Behn took a unique path as a woman writer in the 1600s, by representing her complex vision via the emerging form of the novel and by commenting on contemporary scientific and theological debates. Her work offers a historical precedent for current writing teachers

interested in resisting unproductive conventions and ion encouraging their students to forge unconventional paths.

Twentieth-century accounts of the novel, relying on positivist paradigms of genre development, further marginalize Behn's contribution. For example, in *The Origins of the English Novel*, McKeon ignores Aphra Behn's popularity, which persisted into the eighteenth century; he neglects her contribution to epistolary fiction and the novel; and he overlooks her engagement in scientific discourse. He offers the most sustained attention to *Oroonoko*, which he situates among travel narratives, initially referring to it as one of "Aphra Behn's imaginary 'true histories,'" yet, he never reveals a clear position on the truth of this work (111). His murky position here suggests his ambivalence about this work, one he deems representative of the risks of naïve empiricism as the basis for claims to historicity. But his decision to call *Oroonoko* a travel narrative situates it as a precursor to the novel and excludes it from the sustained attention to the way this work fits into the history of the novel. Since its publication in 1687, Oroonoko has been printed as a novel and in collections of Aphra Behn's novels. A 1966 collection of Behn's work called *The Novels of Mrs. Aphra Behn* includes *Oroonoko,* so McKeon's discussion of this work as a travel narrative represents McKeon's attitude towards the work, rather than the works actual generic status. Because McKeon fails to give *Oroonoko* the sustained attention he offers to the works he deems novels, he reads this work as an example of naïve empiricism and ignores Behn's critique of empiricism. But the characters in this novel experience the deep contradictions of empiricism epistemology: they find that their senses fail to offer true knowledge and they find that the authorities of family, religion and government fail to offer true knowledge. McKeon offers similar cursory attention to

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five of Behn's other works, and he completely ignores her first novel, a epistolary work that contains her most severe critique of the sort of naïve empiricism with which McKeon charges her. He also ignores her later novel, *The History of the Nun*; *or, the Fair Vow-breaker*, which deepens her critique of empiricism and her engagement with concepts of structure and agency.

Looking at Behn's work in the context of New Science reveals her attention to the deep contradictions of empiricism ideology and her representation of the material marks of ideology. Recent studies complicate our understanding of nature and science in colonial and republican America. Drawing on a rich array of print and material sources from diverse sectors of the multicultural communities that peopled the land, they offer local accounts that challenge earlier, grand narratives about the relationships among science, nature, and literature. *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World*, Susan Scott Parrish's 2006 work, is one such book. Parrish demonstrates the range of participants who contributed to the formation of knowledge about nature, a transatlantic network of knowledge workers that included the Royal Society in London as well as ex-slaves in Suriname, male and female British colonists, Indians and Africans. Specifically, she argues that descriptions of nature in the field of natural history held a special place during the early colonial period. As people from various cultures contributed to this discourse, it serves as a unique field in which to observe the interactions between dominant and marginal discourses. The material she gathered and her analysis of it disrupt prior accounts that had simply aligned natural history with positivist, Cartesian science. Parrish offers an important corrective, representing the various connections and dialogues among the many communities that

comprised colonial America and the mysteries that persisted as these communities

negotiated each other's epistemologies (313). Parrish's work allows us to situate Aphra

Behn's critique of empiricism amidst noisy, complex transatlantic narrative ecologies-

systems of epistemological dialogue and contestation, dialogues in which Charles

Brockden Brown also participated, as I discuss in the following chapter.[15]

      The frame of narrative ecology accounts for recovered writers, such as Aphra

Behn and accounts for interdisciplinary approaches, such as Parrish's. This allows us to

read Behn and Brown's narrative and scientific work together and to see why major

theorists of the novel disagree about its origins. In his definition of narrative as rhetoric,

the narrative theorist James Phelan argues for an antifoundationalist position that

responds to pragmatic critics. Of this position, he writes, it is "antifoundationalist because

it insists on the incompatibility of the multiple facts, the impossibility of finding one true

account of them" but also insists "that although facts are always mediated, always seen

within the confines of a given perspective, the perspective does not create the facts"

(806). Thus, he agrees that "there are no facts outside some framework for describing

them" but he departs from the pragmatist position "that truth is constituted by our

discourse about it" (806). In this way, Phelan's discussion of narrative as rhetoric aligns

with the concept of narrative ecologies and offers a useful lens for approaching the

histories of the novel because it allows us to see that the traditional accounts of the novel

come from individual perspectives in historical contexts but do not in fact represent the

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[15] Other studies include James Delbourgo's *A Most Amazing Scene of Wonder: Electricity and Enlightenment in Early America; Philadelphia's Enlightenment, 1740-1800: Kingdom of Christ, Empire of Reason* by Nina Reid-Maroney; *Empire's Nature: Mark Catesby's New World Vision*, Amy Meyers and Margaret Beck Pritchard (eds).

truth; Phelan helps us to recognize that traditional accounts continue to frame contemporary readings.

Theorists do not agree on why the English novel became popular in the modern period because they locate this popularity in various times, places, and texts. Ian Watt's early and important twentieth-century study of the novel, *The Rise of the Novel* (1956), locates this rise in the 1750s, among the middle classes of England, in the work of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding. According to Watt, the rise of the middle class, with their desire for easier reading material to fill their increased leisure time, led to the popularity of the novel, a genre he associates with "formal realism." Unlike Watt, who stresses the relationship between the novel and realism, M.M. Bakhtin's collection of essays, *The Dialogic Imagination,* published in 1975, traces the novel back to ancient Greece, throughout Europe, among readers of various classes. He plots the rise of features from folk culture –"heteroglossia" and "dialogue" that allow for the representation of multiple realities and multiple readings—and the decline of epic modes, which fell into disfavor as they became innreasingly ossified. This, according to Bakhtin, cumulated in the rise of the novel in the early modern period. Michael McKeon follows Bakhtin in his attention to the contradictions embodied in the novel. His 1987 study, *The Origins of the English Novel: 1600-1740* traces this popularity back to the start of the seventeenth-century; it debunks the myth of the rise of the middle class, and replaces it with a dialectical assessment of the conflicts between aristocratic and bourgeois ideologies, and it adds Cervantes, Bunyan, and Swift to Watt's list of originators of the modern novel. McKeon argues that the novel rose as it addressed questions of truth and questions of virtue that were endemic to the modern period itself, and, in addressing these

questions during a time of great change and conflict, the novel embodied a number of contradictions, not the simple realism Watt offered.

Critics following Watt and McKeon move away from attempts to offer sweeping accounts of the novel. Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* situates the rise of the novel among competing discourses about gender, domesticity, and class in the eighteenth- century. Thus, she complicates both McKeon and Watt's positions by applying a Foucauldian model of analysis to this genre. With McKeon, she proposes that the novel embodies and enacts the contradictions of the modern period, but she emphasizes the way such contradictions created a place for a uniquely female subjectivity: a concept of the self that became the model for modern male and female individuality. While provocative, especially in her reading of female agency, Armstrong's account ignores the work of Aphra Behn, which emphasizes connection rather than individualism. Armstrong's provocative argument that the novel ushered in the birth of subjectivity overstates the effects of the novel and overstates the rise of individualism because she fails to recognize the diversity of early novels, she ignores the uneven distribution of even the most popular novels, and she does not account for multiple readings of the early novels. In these ways, her analysis is static, not responsive to the live, dynamic, ecological nature of knowledge.

Ros Ballaster, another revisionary feminist critic whose work I review below, focuses on women's fiction, the theme of seduction, and Freudian concepts of desire in Aphra Behn's work. Other theorists focus on the novel in relationship to popular fiction, travel narratives, and newspapers. My point here is that times, places, texts, and authors create competing contexts that frame questions about the history of the novel and these

frames influence the way the questions are answered. Traditional and revisionary

frameworks have yet to fully account for Aphra Behn's contribution to the novel: some

use woefully inadequate masculinist standards of value; others concentrate on the erotic

implications of Behn work. They all fail to note her engagement with scientific discourse

and thus they ignore her radical critique of empiricism, a critique that offers a sort of

agency to marginalized voices and at the same time tempers Bakhtanain enthusiasm in

the possibilities of narrative epistemology.[16] Al Coppola's 2008 article offers a sign of

change. He reads Behn's last play *Emperor of the Moon* alongside her translation of

Fontenelle which builds on Susan Owens's and Robert Markley's work to reveal a more

nuanced understanding of Behn's politics as critical of both Tory and Whiggish

ideologies.

Ian Watt and Michael McKeon's studies share an obvious omission; their frames

obscure the contribution of women writers to the development of the novel. Watt

mentions Behn as one of a number of precursors to the novel whose "foreign, archaic or

literary connotations…excluded any suggestion of real and contemporary life" (19).

Watt not only overlooks the realistic aspects of Behn's novels, he also, more importantly,

creates a tautology: defining the novel by its connection to realism he then discounts

works that lack realism. Finally, and most troublingly, Watt represents realism in the

novel and empiricism in the seventeenth-century in terms that are over-simplified. Here

too Watt's argument it tautological. Arguing that the novel satisfied the middle class need

for easy entertainment, Watt represents the novel and its philosophical context in

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[16] Behn's heroines, such as Isabella, who ends up beheaded, and Silvia, who becomes a social outcast, demonstrate that the power of carnivalesque discourse is unevenly distributed for these characters represent the consequences some women faced when they transgressed conventions.

simplified terms, as easy entertainment. Tracing modern realism to Descartes and Locke,

Watt states it "begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual

through his senses" (12). He glosses over the crucial problem of empiricist discourse: that

human senses provide insufficient information about the world and that the traditional

authority of church also provides insufficient information. He claims that arguments

about this doctrine are ancillary to his purposes because it is not the doctrine of realism

that is important to the novel, but rather its "temper," "methods," and "the kinds of

problems it has raised" (12). Unfortunately for Watt's argument, the kinds of problems

philosophical realism raises, such as the question of whether experience or authority

provide true knowledge, are the very arguments he discounts as ancillary to his purpose.

Thus, Watt fails to register the way the novel represents and enacts the contradictions of

the early modern period.

In contrast to Watt, Michael McKeon sets his study of the novel in a context

richly representative of the complexity of seventeenth-century debates about knowledge

and authority: what he calls the discourses of truth and discourses of virtue. He locates

these discourses in religious texts, scientific writing, the press, and literature. In the realm

of truth, he observes a dialectical movement from romantic idealism, which located truth

in authority, to naive empiricism, which defined truth via experience, to extreme

skepticism, which critiques both the capacity of authority and sensual knowledge to offer

truth. In the realm of virtue, McKeon observes another dialectical movement, this time

from aristocratic ideology, which posited social value in innate social class, to

progressive ideology, which represented social value in individual behavior, to

conservative ideology, which embodied a desire to return to more structured notions of

social value. Locating the rise of the novel among these dialectical discourses allows McKeon to define the genre by "its powerful adaptability in mediating questions of truth and virtue from opposed points of view" (21). The value of this approach, he argues, is that it overcomes the flaw of Ian Watt's study. That is, McKeon claims his approach allows us to understand Samuel Richardson's as well as Henry Fielding's contributions to the novel because dialectical reasoning recognizes the presence of Richardson's discourses of virtue and naïve empiricism and Fielding's discourses of skepticism and aristocratic ideology. I agree that McKeon offers a compellingly complex model for analyzing the origins of the English novel. Unfortunately, he fails to fulfill the promise of this model because he neglects the contributions of women writers in general and Aphra Behn in particular.

In the introduction to *Popular Fiction by Women 1660-1730: An Anthology*, Paula R. Backscheider and John J. Richetti argue for attention to women writers of the early modern period on several grounds including historical accuracy, for these writers were as widely read as their male contemporaries and their emergence offers a glimpse into the development of mass print fiction, as well as aesthetics, for these writers denaturalize the aesthetics of the canonized writers. While recognizing that McKeon's work has much value, Backscheider and Richetti argue that his dismissal of women writers "falls far short of evoking the special power and relevance (and pathos) of women's narratives" (xiv). McKeon's admitted goal of creating a model of the novel that works for both Richardson and Fielding reproduces the teleological perspective that grants Richardson and Fielding status as innovators and naturalizes their work as the standard by which other writers are assessed because this perspective views Richardson and Fielding as the

standards by which others are evaluated. In this way, his reasoning is circular. Ecological approaches to literature allow us to escape the teleological fallacy because they require us to dwell in the thick of the messy material of the past.

Dale Spender's 1986 work, *Mothers of the Novel* sketches out a counter-tradition to the canon of male writers upon whom traditional accounts of the novel have been based. Her work offered an important corrective to the gender bias of the canon, but her cursory attention to the formal aspects of the work she champions reduces the efficacy of her argument. Alison Conway contributes to the creation of a counter-tradition by crediting Behn with the creation of the genre of the courtesan narrative, which contributed to the creation of female libertine aesthetic.[17] Ros Ballaster challenges McKeon, as well as traditional formalist and historicist accounts of the novel, by drawing attention to the way these accounts are framed by masculinist bias. She counters this by using the work of Aphra Behn, Delariviere Manley, and Eliza Haywood, as well as the insights of psychoanalysis, to create a frame that allows us to see the contributions of women writers. While Backscheider and Richetti claim that Ballaster's use of the term "amatory" to describe the work of these women writers diminishes her analysis, Ballaster actually explores amatory themes as well as representations of the feminine as symbolic. According to Ballaster, amatory themes offered Behn an opportunity to symbolically engage in political discourse and to use her pen to denaturalize social constructions of gender.[18] Ballaster's approach is useful, especially for approaching Behn's work, because

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[17] Conway also posits Behn's influence on writers such as Lætitia Pilkington and Teresia Constantia Phillips.
[18] Retelling the history of the novel to include Behn's work also reveals of tradition of women who explored political and sexual themes, including Delariviere Manley's 1705 *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians: Being a Looking-glass for*

she comes close to revealing the radical potential of Behn's critique of empiricism. While

not going so far as Nancy Armstrong, who sees the eighteenth-century novel, along with

the discourse found in conduct books, enacting the creation of the modern individual,

Ballaster argues that seventeenth-century female novelists, including Aphra Behn, used

the feminine symbolically to comment on gender construction and to encourage their

readers to use the power of their pens to redefine their identities.

To fully reveal Behn's critique of conventions—those of gender and the

emerging ideology of individualism—we need to look at Behn's work in relationship to

the female traditions that Ballaster reviews as well as the discourses of New Science and

empiricist epistemology.[19] This approach, an ecological approach that situates Behn's

work in multiple, dynamic contexts, over overcomes artificial disciplinary divisions and

allows us to better apprehend Behn's critique of empiricism in her 1685 novel, *Love-*

Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister and her translation of Fontenelle. In this way,

I follow the work of scholars such as William Spengemann, who situates Behn in a

transatlantic context in his review of her novel *Oroonoko* and Robert Chibka who reveals

_____ _____ *in the Kingdom of Albigion,* Jane barker's 1713 *Love's Intrigues*,
and Eliza Hayward's 1722 *The British Recluse of the Secret History of Cleomira,*
Supposed Dead. The marginalization of these writers illustrates the way fear of novelty
has affected the formation of the canon of the novel. While literary experiments in sex
and gender were popular in the first half of the eighteenth-century, they became
increasingly rare after the revolutions of the mid-1700s. Perhaps the violent Atlantic
revolutions in France and the American colonies made representation of female desire
beyond the structure of family, church, and state appear increasingly dangerous.

[19] Barbara M. Benedict analyzes Behn's *Oroonoko* from this perspective and concludes
that Behn appropriated the discourse of New Science to gain authority for her narrator in
this work, a work which, according to Benedict, "moralizes curiosity" and creates the
space for female writers to explore the liberatory and tragic consequences of curiosity
through the nineteenth-century (197). Thus, Benedict offers a broad perspective on these
themes. In my work, I focus more closely on two of Behn's less popular novels and argue
that Behn's vision became increasingly tragic.

the post-colonial themes and representation of truth-effects in this novel. I focus on her earlier novel *Love-letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* because the date of its publication offers a useful perspective for question histories of the novel, because Behn's use of nature imagery represents her enduring interest in the sticky relationship between nature and conventions, and because it serves as a point of contrast for her later narrative work *The History of the Nun: Or, the Fair Vow-Breaker* where her vision grows increasingly cynical.

After years as a successfully writing for stage but before translating Fontenelle, Aphra Behn wrote her first novel, *Love- Letters bewteen a Nobleman and his Sister* (1685) . In a 1999 essay, Rachel K. Carnell suggests that Behn turned to novel writing because it allowed her to explore contradictions that she could not represent on the stage. Behn's first novel bears out Carnell's suggestion. In this work, Behn uses nature imagery and shifting points of view to illustrate the powers and limitations of social conventions. Characters in the text, as well as readers of the text, find that these conventions are constructed, not natural, as they may initally appear. Recognition of the social construction of conventions creates an opportunity for the characters to move beyond these constructions.[ii] But this movement is not unfettered, especially for Silvia, the main female character in this story, who loses the protection of social codes when she breaks convention. In one of Behn's later novels, *The History of the Nun; or, the Fair Vow-Breaker*, social conventions that perpetuate dualistic thought have deadly conseqeunces for all the characters. Thus in Behn's work, we see a deepening critique of the problems of empirical epistemology. In her earliest novel, the female character suffers most severely, but she survives, lurking at the edges of the conventional society that she

rejected and that rejected her; in Behn's later work, male and female characters suffer as social conventions ultimately kill all three of the main characters. Recognition of gender construction allows Behn's characters to craft new roles for themselves, but material embodiment and the deep entrenchment of social conventions prevent them from successfully transcending these roles. The dim hope Behn finally offers in these novels is that writers, especialy female writers, might imagine alternative lives for themselves in the future.

Behn's continued enagement with issues of agency and empiricism in her translation of Fontellele signals her hope that scientific discourse offers the means to other worlds and to liberatory futures. Her move to scientific discourse additionally suggests her understanding of the growing power of this genre. As a female writer from the margins of her culture, she may have earned cultural capital via her success writing plays, poetry, and novels, which afford her entry to the genre of science to engage in public discourse. The function of nature imagery in her novels presages her interest in scientific discourse, as I illustrate below, and suggests her early understanding of the power of material realities, the effects of social constuction, and the limits of empiricism.

The plot of *Love Letter* follows the formula of the traditional seducation plot. Philander uses his marriage to Silvia's sister as a means of seducing the young Silvia and convincing her to leave her family and become his mistress. He then engages in a series of romances, leaving Silvia under the protection of his servant, Briljard. At the end of the novel, Philander finds himself accepted back into society, but Silvia is an outcast. In this way, Behn illustrates that transgressing sexual conventions has harsher implications for women than men. While *Love-Letters* begins as an epistolary novel, the changes in its

narrative structure represent the possibilities of dialogic discourse and also the power of conventions. In the second part, the epistolary form is complicated by the arrival of a narrator. This ambigious character claims first-hand knowledge of the events, yet lurks at the edges of the plot. In this early section, the narrator's comments are limited to editorials about the scenes of letter reading and writing. In the third and final sections, the narrator eventually assumes control, summarizing letters and narrating the conclusion of the story. The characters' voices and visions are reduced to the narrator's voice and vision, and the narrator's perspective assumes the shape of social conventions in the conclusion. The polyvocal discourse is reduced to univocal discourse (Bahktain). Nature imagery changes in ways that parallel the transformation of the narrative structure. In the first section, images of the natural world represent the possibility of successfully transcending social conventions; in the end, images of culture circumscribe nature. Thus, through plot, narration and imagery, Behn represents the failure of attempts to circumvent social norms even as she illustrates the construction of these norms, as I detail after a brief summary.

Related as brother and sister-in-law, Philander and Silvia flout law, religion, and social convention when they begin a romance first through letters and later through elopement. While they initially appear as in-laws, they are also related by their physical desire for each other. Thus, Behn represents two relationships which, according to social conventions, should be mutually exclusive—the fraternal and the sexual—as existing together. In this way, Behn deconstructs the either/or binary of brother/lover, one of a number of dualisms she explodes in this text; in doing so, she raises the problem of appearances. The appearance of familial relationships should preclude an erotic

relationship, but this appearance is deceptive in Behn's text. Philander and Silvia's

familial relationship includes an erotic relationship. Rather than representing Silvia and

Philander as trangsressive, she naturalizes their relationship by using nature imagery. In

representing the familial and the erotic together, and in her use of nature imagery in this

representation, Behn thus denaturalizes the social construction of familial relationships as

nonerotic.

In her first letter to Philander, Silvia combines nature imagery with familial

imagery to argue against their relationship moving from sibling to lovers:

> You grew up a Brother with me; the title was fixed in my heart, when I
>
> was too young to understand your subtle distinctions, and there it thriv'd
>
> and spread; and 'tis now too late to transplant it, or alter its Native
>
> Property: Who can graft a flower on a contrary stalk? The Rose will bear
>
> no Tulips, nor the Hyacinth the Poppy; no more will the Brother the name
>
> of Lover. (13)

She thus insists that their familial relationship is natural; the title "Brother" established

their relationship as fraternal. Thus, Silvia uses words and nature to argue that they are

prohibited from changing from siblings into lovers. But, in a postscript, Silvia then uses

nature imagery and words to represent the insistance of their feelings. She tells Philander

that she has returned to the place of their last meeting "where our prints (that invited me)

still remain in the prest greens" (14). Thus, Silvia oberves that her romantic relationship

with Philander made a lasting impression in the natural world, and this impression invites

her to return to the space they shared. In this space, Silvia rereads Philander's letter, and

kisses the letter, and is so moved by his description of his marriage to her sister, she

wishes herself dead. Behn, a writer always aware of the power of words, imbues both the letters and the setting "in the prest greens" with the power to create space and hold time. Thus, nature imagery serves two contradictory functions: it constrains the characters by naturalizing by social conventions and it offers the characters the means of breaking these conventions by registering their transgressions of the conventions which creates a new path, one that opens the way to normalizing the transgressions. In this, Behn represents the paradox of empiricism in the seventeenth-century: the expansion of experience via telescopes and microscopes destablized the traditional authority of church and state, but it also destablized the authority of unmediated experience and introduced the power of technology to improve human apprehension of reality.

When Silvia agrees to leave her home and her family for Philander, he responds with his desire to mark the natural world with a record of decision. He writes, "Oh, let me record it on every bark, on every Oak and Beech, that all the world may wonder at my fortune, and bless the generous maid; let it grow up to Ages that shall come, they may know the story of our loves" (71). Thus, Philander wants to mark nature with their human affairs so that the story of their relationship will persist for future generations. This harkens back to Silvia's description of the "prest greens" that held the image of their tie psent there. In an earlier passage, Philander noted Silvia's power to change nature: "Your Beauty shou'd like itself produce wonderous effects: it shou'd force all obligations, all laws, all tyes of Nature's self" (11). Nature becomes a text open to the transcription of their aesthetics, their feelings, and their relationship. Philander comments on the need for a new path himself as he writes: "let us (born for mightier joys) scorn the dull *beaten road*, but let us love like the first race of men, nearest allied to God" (12). In rejecting

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social conventions, Philander argues for a fresh path, which is both new and also a return to a path that is closer to God.

Seventeenth-century efforts to reconcile Christianity with the emerging discourses of the natural sciences also emphasize nature as a text. Famously, Galelio wrote: "philosophy is written in this grand book the universe" (The Assayer 1623). Sir François Bacon based his argument for exploring the natural world in the effort to know God's design. Later, Thomas Paine went further, offering the natural world as a more trustworthy guide than formal religions and their texts. Behn not only evokes the tradition of seeking signs of God in the natural world; her characters press on the boundaries of this discourse in their efforts to contribute to the text of the natural world and thus exercise their agency. In a sense, Philander's argument that he and Silvia reject the beaten path and thus find a state closer to God precipitates Romantic discourse that posits a prelapsarian freedom from corrupted religious and social convention in nature.

In the second section, the functions of nature imagery grow increasingly complex. The love triangle between Mertilla, Silvia and Philander becomes a hexagon including Briljard, Octavio, and Castilla. The letters in this section include more perspectives: Silvia and Philander are joined by Octavio and the narrator. The characters themselves practice deception by disguise and art, thereby troubling the concept of stable identity and complicating the romance of the first part. The first twenty-six pages of this section are barren of nature imagery, and when such imagery appears, it is used to represent stasis and trouble rather than change and possibilities, as it had in the first section. The narrator, describing Silvia's reaction to Octavio's feelings for her writes, "It being natural to Women to desire conquests" and Silvia defines herself "by nature soft" (142). These

normative, prescriptive depictions of nature contrast with Part One where nature imagery represents the unconventional. In addition, the particular images that Behn uses evoke statis and decay rather than life. For example, Silvia responds to Octavio's feelings by saying, "Your thick foggy air breeds *Loves* too dull and heavy for noble flights, nor can I stoop to them" (142). Shortly thereafter, Silvia upbraids Philander for his inconstancy when she writes: "Has thy industrious passion gather'd all sweets, and left the rifled flower to hang its wither'd head, and die in shades neglected, for who will prize it now, now when all its perfume has fled" (144). The stasis and lack of desire come together when Silvia describes her feelings for Briljard : "there was in Nature something which compelled her to a sort of coldness and disgust to his person" (157).

Octovio's words further the negative use of nature imagery as he combines it with colonial imagery to describe his feelings for Silvia:

> Love is my right, my business, and my Province; the Empire of the young,
> the vigorous, and the bold, and I will claim my share: the Air, the Groves,
> the Shades are mine to sigh in, as well as your Philanders, the Eccho's
> answer me as willingly when I complain or Name the cruel Silvia,
> Fountains receive my tears, and the kind Springs reflection agreeably
> flatters me to hope. (160)

This passage embodies Octavio's certainity, his "right" to his feelings and the rightness of them. Octavio uses nature to find a "reflection" of his hope. These lines signal an important problematic: the alignment between women and nature as territory for male

pleasure and conquest.[20] This alignment is furthered by the meaning of Silvia as one who inhabits the forest. By writing a tragic end for her heroine and aligning her with nature via naming, Behn suggests that women and nature suffer under patriarchical systems. In this way, her work critiques Cartesian science that posits disembodied, masculine reason at the top of a hierarchical value system.

Nature, in Part Tree, initially serves as a medium of change and desire. Octavio's uncle, feeling passion for the first time, meditates to himself, "A strange change he found, a wonderous Disorder in Nature, thus aligning passion, change, and nature" (288). He confesses his feelings to Octavio in the setting of garden, which suggests that this setting is unique in that it allows him to speak of that which had been foreign to him. Philander describes his relationship with Calista, his new lover, as follows:"every Night I had the fair Charmer in bed with me…or else in the Arbors, or on the flowery banks in the Garden: Till I am confident there was not a walk, a Grove, an Arbour, or Bed or Sweets, that was not conscious of our stollen Delights." (307) Here, then, nature regains the elasticity it had in the first part, and it is the place where passion is confessed and enacted. But, in the final pages, gardens become the site for discussion of politics rather than love; then the gardens are replaced by parks and, finally, gardens are located within cities. Thus as the novel ends, nature is ultimately represented as circumscribed by the city, by culture, by human constructions.

The end of Silvia's plot ultimately locates power in the human construction of law by granting power to the governer who mandates Silva's removal. And the last lines emphasis the power of empiricist epistemology that supports social conventions. Unlike

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[20] This ideology is explored by Carolyn Merchant in *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*.

Silvia, who is rejected by the governer, the representative of law and culture, Philander is granted return to society, "in as much Splendour as ever, being very well understood by all good Men" (439). Here then we find Behn concludes this work with a deeply cynical vision. The only character to find a happy ending in this text is Philander, and he is the most manipulative, duplicitous character in the book. That all good men understand him so well suggests the entrenchment of this duplicity and impossibility of dislodging a common sense understanding of empiricism. We also see how male characters may transgress conventions with impunity, for Philander broke the same social and religious traditions that Silvia had, but is allowed to return to his place in the political order of the court; government has no sure place for Silvia, who "was forced to remove for new prey" by the "Governour" (439). The difference between Silvia and Philander's ends suggests a difference in the way Behn represents male and female subjectivity. While Philander appears as an individual in control of his subjectivity, this appearance relies on the common understanding of others. Silvia, who stands for women and nature, represents a subject position that is embodied, entrenched in social and natural worlds and bound by convention.

Having explored the genres of poetry, drama, and the novel, Aphra Behn turned to scientific discourse. Rachel K. Carnell attributes Behn's move from writing for the stage to writing novels to her increasing concern with the contradictions of her era. Similiarly, Behn's move from narrarive to scientific discourse suggests her increasing awareness of the limites of realism and empiricism. Scientific work, predicated on the emerging technologies of telescope and microscopes, increasing displaced unitary definitions of the real and empiricist conceptions of realism. Thus, Behn's move to science may be read as

a move beyond the conventions of novelistic discourse, a move beyond the convcentions of seventeenth-century realism, and a move beyond the confining social conventions of her time. Choosing Fontenelle's work, *Entretiens sur las Pluralite des mondes*, which was published in 1686 in French, she worked with a text that allowed her to extend scientific discourse to a new audience and to argue for the existence of new worlds, worlds less fettered by deadly conventions.[iii] Behn's translation of Fontelle was the second English edition and it became the most popular scientific text in British colonial America, according to S.Scott Parish, ushering in a fleet of copies: scientific texts set-up as dialogues between a man and a woman (Meyer 26). Behn titled the work that she translated, *A Discovery of New Worlds*- a slight variation on Fontenelle's orginal French title *Entretiens sur las Pluralite des mondes* which more literally would be translated as *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds.* This change offers an early clue to the allegorical implications of Behn's translation: the argument that "other worlds" beyond those circumscribed by conventions—conventions of religion, science, social class—are possible.

One convention she follows is to begin by asking forgiveness for her mistakes, referring to the inadequacy of her education—and the education of all women—in philosophy and the sciences (77, 72). [21]Herein is a partial reason for Behn's translation: to make this scientific work, one written to be especially accessible to women, available

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[21] Seventeenth-century writing on women's education include Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* and Daniel Defoe's *An Essay Upon Projects*. On the relationship 17th-century print culture and women's education: Alison Adburgham *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women's magazines from the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria;* Josephine Kamm's *Hope Deferred* ; and Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Feminine in the Early Periodical*.

to an audience of English women, women who might not have been able to read the French.[iv] Before proceeding with her translation, Behn offers her "character" of Fontenelle's work in a way that initially aligns with conventions. First, she defends him against critics who read his support for Copernicus as incompatible with the Bible and Christianity. She draws examples from the Bible that serve as evidence that it should be read allegorically and not literally in order to excuse Fontenelle from charges of blasphemy. After quoting particularly metaphorical passages from the Bible on "the Sun, which is as a Bridegroom," Behn explains, "That these words are allegorical is most plain" and concludes that the Bible "makes for the Opinion of Copernicus and Ptolemy" (82). In this way, she reconciles Christian cosmology with emerging evidence of a heliocentric universe. Behn harnessed this dramatic change in cosmology to argue for changing social conventions to empower women.

After defending Fontenelle, she criticizes him. She complains that "He ascribes all to Nature, and says not a word of God" and that his argument for life on other planets is too open to literal interpretations. She also objects to the figure he uses for a woman, Lady Marquise, on the grounds that Fontenelle makes her say "a great many very silly things" (77, 78). In her preface, she defends women's intellect, she defends Christianity, and she tempers Fontenelle's argument for the existence of life on other planets, asking readers to understand the symbolic rather than literal implications of Fontenelle's argument. In this way, she asks readers to view both the Bible and science as allegorical.

Behn makes several emendations to Fontenelle's preface, in particular where he explains: "the True and the False are here mixed but they are always very easie to be distinguished; yet, I do not undertake to justify a Composure so fantastical. This is the

most important Point of this Work, and 'tis this only that I cannot give a Reason for" (90). Behn adds "but publick Censure will inform me, what I ought to think of this design" (90). This small addition signals Behn's work on this translation as part of her life-long project of pushing against conventions (publick Censure) in her writing and of demonstrating that literacy offers women the means to do so. She concludes her preface by acknowledging her desire to have "correct[ed] a Fault of the French copy." In her final line, she admits that her translation does match her own understanding of the topic: "I resolved to either give you the subject the French book into English, or to give you the subject quite changed and made my own; but having neither health or leisure for the last I offer you the fist such as it is" (86). Her final word on the topic of cosmology is that the current work as embodied in Fontenelle's text fails to represent Behn's own superior understanding of the issue.

Looking at Behn's use of nature imagery in her first novels and her translation of Fontenelle, we see a cyclical movement from optimism in the early sections of *Love Letters*, where Behn aligns nature with possibilities beyond social conventions, to constraint in the conclusion of this novel, where Behn represents nature as circumscribed by human constructions, and later a return to optimism in her translation of Fontenelle, where Behn represents knowledge of nature as allegorically significant. This complicates the characterization of scientific discourse as conservative and narrative discourse as liberal. Of course, the dialogic form and methodology of Fontenelle's original and of Behn's translation would not appear to be scientific today. This reminds those of us who teach writing to remain cognizant that genres are mutable and that writers find

opportunities for liberatory work and contestatory positions via a range of disciplines and genres.

The long neglect of Behn's work, which continues today in regard to her engagement with scientific discourse, demonstrates the power of conventions to keep contestatory positions at the margins. In the case of Behn, disciplinary conventions that separated her scientific from narrative work diffused the power of her critique. Because her critique—a critique of appearances, empiricism, conventions, and the status quo—was informed by her work in a variety of genres—poetry, drama, novel, and scientific translation—it exemplifies transdisciplinary, multigenre work and demonstrates that such work is not a recent trend, but rather, it only seems recent because of the powerful effects of disciplinary and genre conventions today. To better understand the past and to imagine the future, we must continue to work with literature from the margins of culture-and to question the political functions of the term marginal literature. We must also question the conventional categories and disciplinary boundaries that would inhibit us from forging new material and figurative paths.. To facilitate the development of student writers and liberatory pedagogy today, we need to continue to research work at the margins and to consider new constellations of old work so we can better imagine and offer alternative forms in college composition today. As first-year writing relinquishes its ties with English departments, it must continue to honor the importance of imagination in narrative and scientific discourse and to remember that both have liberatory potential.

Chapter Two Alternative Paths: Charles Brockden Brown and the Possibilities of Place.

"…environmentalism of any sort cannot hope to achieve even modest reforms unless *some* take extreme positions advocating genuinely alternative paths…"
Lawrence Buell *Writing for an Endangered World*

In obvious ways, the twenty-first century offers a landscape of well-worn and emerging paths- literal and figurative. In an increasingly urban world traversed with machine-made streets and highways and roads, we forget that a path originally was a "way or track formed by the continued treading of pedestrians or animals, rather than one deliberately planned and made; a narrow unmade and (usually) unenclosed way that people on foot can use," as the *OED* reports. We tend to think of paths as established by design, as the *OED continues*: "In later use also: a way specifically made for people on foot, as in a park or alongside a road." We forget that paths were once literally changes in the landscape due to use by people and animals that indicated not only relationships between human and animals, who worked together, but also represented physical mobility and the ability to forge alternative routes. The very making of a path represents material attempts to move in alternative directions, to gain agency.

In the abstract, figurative sense, we live in a world where the choices available seem endless. Multiple career paths, education paths, social, political, and cultural paths. Television, computers, the internet—especially Web 2.0—and even our telephones offer an array of choices. So, it appears we have more options, more paths, than ever before. Industrialization clearly has created the need for industrial strength paths in the material world. And, in many ways, industrialization creates the appearance of proliferating choices- alternative "life-style" paths. But, for some time, scholars, such as Fredric

Jameson, have been trying to crack this mirage, to illustrate that the appearance of choices masks the ways late-stage capitalism circumscribes our lives and encroaches upon our choices. While critics of postmodernism argue for objectivity, logic, and universality, others such as Nancy Welch chide postmodern theory for the apathy spread by its relativism. Questions of human agency persist throughout these debates.

In this chapter, I address the issues of agency in the twenty-first century by looking back over two hundred years, continuing in the direction I set out upon in chapter one: to chart a path between narrative and scientific discourse. While I travel this terrain well aware that I traverse the distance of historical periods, gender, nation, academic disciplines, I hope to demonstrate both the power of and the porousness of these conventional categories, which takes me back to today. The power of conventional approaches to literature, approaches that take genre, period, or great authors as their organizing principles, functions even today, after postmodernism, to reinscribe conventional relationships among readers, writers and texts. Remembering that these categories are always teleological, I aim to get behind them to the less stable and more dynamic, live ground of ecological relationships, where narrative and scientfic discourse are braided together on a continuum of sorts. I use a historical perspective on genre and discourse so as to better understand the options available to first-year college writers today.

This chapter situates Charles Brockden Brown's novel *Wieland* and his translation of C.F.Volney's *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America* amidst transatlantic nature writing in order to see the connections between scientific and narrative epistemologies in early eighteenth-century America. Reading *Wieland,* Charles

Brockden Brown's 1798 novel along with his translation of C. F. Volney's *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America* and Aphra Behn's 1688 translation of Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's *A Discovery of New Worlds* (the most popular scientific text in British colonial America) illustrates a transatlantic tradition of interdisciplinarity. Unlike John Locke and his Scottish Common Sense counterparts, whose Enlightenment philosophy aligns with traditional readings of the novel that emphasize realism, Brown grappled with the paradoxes of empiricism- especially the vexed relationships among place, voice, and truth—and he offers a counter-narrative to hero-centric fiction. I trace Brown's use of nature imagery—especially the figure of paths—and characterization—especially the figure of the anti-hero—to represent concerns about epistemology, identity, and nation. I conclude that transcending disciplinary boundaries and traditional genres allows us to reconfigure the intellectual history of America, so we may see communities that conflict with conventional accounts and so we may imagine alternative futures- futures beyond those that serve the entrenched systems of late-state capitalism. In particular, I argue that Brown offers a place-based epistemology that counters the figure of the lone hero or heroine pitted against nature- a figure that serves individualism and capitalist economies. Thus, I continue to use the concept of narrative ecology to read narrative and scientific discourse together.

While in Chapter One, I proposed a counter-narrative to dominant stories about the rise of the novel in England, in this chapter, I offer a counter-narrative to traditional accounts of nature in nineteenth-century fiction. In the second half of my dissertation, I question dominant narratives about the birth of composition studies and describe research

methods and pedagogies that encourage college students to collaboratively question conventions and imagine alternative futures. Reading master narratives about literature and composition studies together, I aim to demonstrate that theoretically-informed historical research is relevant to the work of composition scholars.

One hundred years after Aphra Behn's death, the Philadelphia writer Charles Brockden Brown followed a similar career path. Known as the first American writer to earn his living by writing, Brown first published poems and essays, then novels, and later translated and annotated a scientific text on geography. His last project, unfinished at his death was his own geographical study of the United Stated. Like Behn, he also participated in multiple cultures- some dominant, some marginal—so he, like her, developed what W.E.B. Dubois would later call double consciousness- the ability to see the dominant reality and alternate realities. In addition, Brown used the emerging print technologies, the multiple media of his time, to distribute his work. Like Behn, Brown had no formal training in science, but Behn and Brown both lived in eras when science was more accessible to the general public, before the methodology and the language created a wedge between scientific work and public discourse. Their translations, which made scientific discourse available to a wider audience, contributed to greater accessibility. Their comments on the texts that they translated indicate the authority they claimed in the realm of science. In Brown's work, as in Behn's, the concept of narrative ecologies allows us to see the dynamic relationship between dominant and local narratives during a period of intense change. Like Behn, Brown's translation embodies narrative ecology for his emendation to Volney's text demonstrates the living nature of

discourse and the active relationships between dominant and local narratives in the realm of science.

Born into a Quaker family just five years before the American Revolution, Charles Brockden Brown was seven when he witnessed revolutionary soldiers force their way into their home and arrest his father- a pacifist- as a loyalist. Thus, from an early age, he was privy to multiple narratives about his family and about the birth of the country, which lead him to question empiricism, the notion that reality is transparently available to the senses. The Quaker pacifism of his family, who were politically Patriots, resulted in his father's arrest as a Loyalist. His father's religious pacifism created the appearance of political Loyalism. His father's imprisonment serves as a material example of the power of truth effects, Foucault's terms for the concrete consequences of words and ideas. In the context of revolutionary America, the dominant narrative pitted Rebels versus Loyalists and erased the subtly of the Quaker's pacifist position. Brown, privy to these multiple narratives, saw beyond the dichotomy and yet his childhood, punctuated by a year and a half of his father's wrongful imprisonment, demonstrated the true effects of this dichotomy- the material effects of this failure of imagination. Via nature imagery in his novels and his later work in geography, Brown explores the concept of truth-effects in ways that anticipate postmodern and post-colonial theorists. Connecting subjectivity with place, he argues for the importance of experience-based epistemology that prefigures contemporary notions of ecocriticism. In his novel, nature imagery calls attention to the role place has in knowledge. His geographical study continues this. Thus, looking at his engagement in narrative discourse and scientific discourse demonstrates that, historically, writers used both to engage in cultural critique.

Histories of the novel in America differ from histories of the English novel for many reasons, such as geography, politics, language and demographics. But, chronology offers a useful lens for understanding the field of American literature. In *Canons and Contexts*, Paul Lauter explains that American literature took shape as a field of study in the 1920s. Thus, early twentieth-century critics of the American novel had to argue for the legitimacy of their subject before exploring the field. In fact, studies of the American novel offered more excuses for the perceived lack of a national literature prior to the nineteenth-century than genuine engagement with early literature. Even as late as 1971, Henri Peters dismisses most of the novels published between 1789 and 1820 in *The Early American Novel* Writers of the American Renaissance, who fit the dominant narratives of American exceptionalism and progress, such as James Fennimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain were canonized as representative of American literature, while other writers, with different concerns and aesthetics, were assessed in relationship to the aesthetics and concerns of the American Renaissance writers and in relationship to the dominant narratives.[22] Such a teleological perspective not only excluded many writers, but it also generated narrow readings of the canonized authors. [23]Starting in the 1960s, with the rise of post-structuralist theory and

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[22] See, for example, Howard Mummford Jones *Jeffersonian and the American Novel for* an example of such critical work. Leslie Fiedler *cites Moby Dick, Huckleberry Finn, The Last of the Mohicans, The Scarlet Letter,* and *The Red Badge of Courage* as classic American novels in *Love and Death in the American Novel* and explicitly states that neither Cooper nor Brown "proved capable of achieving high art" (28). Lulu Rumsey Wiley's *The Sources and Influences of the Novels of Charles Brockden Brown (*1950) celebrates Brown and apologizes for his faults.

[23] Philip F. Gura's 1988 essay in *The William and Mary Quarterly* notes the tendency

cultural studies along with the increasing diversity of college students, the traditional

canon of American literature lost some of its hold and new constellations of established

authors created opportunities for new readings of their work, a topic to which I return in

the next chapter. Yet, the traditional canon still maintains its hold in the popular

imagination.[24] Even efforts to expand the canon, such as William Spengeman's, fail to

account for multi-lingual discourse (such as Brown's translation project). This failure is

exacerbated by disciplinary divisions that separate literature from science. As Cathy

Davidson writes "Novels allowed for a means of entry into a larger literary and

intellectual world and a means of access to social and political events from which novel

readers (particularly women) would have been otherwise largely excluded" (10). Popular

understanding of this history of the American novel continues to perpetrate exclusion.

Ecological approaches to literature help us see past these divisions.

  The place of nature in American literature is well-covered terrain. The literature of

early colonists is comprised of many accounts of expectations and encounters with the

land from Cotton Mather's observations to John Winthrop's "City on a Hill," we see the

continuation of European and biblical ideas about the land and we see writers grappling

to use language and paradigms from the old world to describe their perceptions of the

new world. The nature of the land was essential to the Puritan imagination and their

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among early twentieth century critics to take a teleological perspective on early American
writers. This essay " The Study of Colonial American Literature, 1966-1987: A Vade
Mecum," offers a concise yet exhaustive review of approaches to early American
literature.

[24] For example, the 2007 PBS website *The American Novel* which advertises that users
can "Navigate through 200 years of the American Novel" begins in 1826 (really 181
years ago) with *The Last of the Mohicans*

project of creating a New Jerusalem in the New World.[25] The trials the Puritans faced

were viewed in two ways: as punishment to Puritans who failed to live up to God's order

and as the natural condition of life after the fall. Thus the contradictions in Puritan views

of the land were essential to their conception of their mission- to make the New World

into a New Jerusalem (Segal, 42, Tichi 2). This mission required adversity because the

Puritans lived in a fallen world. In their own words, the Puritan express their conception

of the natural world as both sacred and profane.[26] The land is the devil's territory and it is

a place given by God for the manifestation of the New Canaan; the land is instructor and

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[25] Ambivalence marks Puritan attitudes towards the land in the New World. Cotton Mather typifies Puritan views of the natural world in that he observes the land as an embodiment of God and also as the devil's grounds. See *The Christian Philosopher* (1721). In his sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity", Winthrop makes a distinction between "the law of nature and the law of grace" (215). The law of nature reigned in the garden of Eden while Adam and Eve were still innocent. The law of grace came after Christ sacrificed himself for the salvation of humanity. Thus the law of nature does not provide for life in a fallen world, according to Winthrop. In contrast to Cotton Mather's observations of God in the natural world, Winthrop separates God from nature. In his famous quote, "we shalt be as a City upon a hill" (14) Winthrop articulates the Puritan mission as an explicit command to develop the land- to urbanize. William Bradford stresses the differences between the landscape of New England and Old. The landscape of the New World is hideous because of what it contains, wild men and beasts, and what it lacks, familiar symbols of home and comfort. Robert Cushman, who visited New England in the early 1600's, also decried the negligible impact of Puritan culture on New England soil. In a pamphlet published in 1621, he wrote "The country is yet raw; the land untilled; the cities not builded; the cattle not settled" (Segal 55). The task of marking the land with their culture was part of the Puritan mission and the Puritans would not have been able to carry out their mission had they found Eden upon their arrival (Tichi 2, Segal 42).

[26] Conrad Eugene Ostwalt tells the story of American views of nature as a fall from an original paradise when the land was considered sacred. Starting in the 1800's, he sees a secularization of space in the American imagination. David Chidester and Edward Lenenthal depart from Ostwalt. In the introduction to their collection of essays, *American Sacred Space*, they define sacred space in contrast to secular space and they argue that Americans continue to view particular spaces as sacred

the land is there for the Puritans to reform and to tame.[27]

In literature of the revolutionary period, we find celebration of the farmer's life in the work of Thomas Jefferson and Hector St. Jean De Crevecoeur and critics who theorize about the role of the farmer in the imagination of the early republic. Studies of the Transcendentalists and American Renaissance writers are defined by attention to nature. Theorists of American literature and American studies have and continue to assess the role of the environment in the imagination of writers. The trajectory of this criticism, like the trajectory of theories of the novel, has moved from grand narratives, such as Perry Miller's famous "Errand into the Wilderness," to more local studies, such as Martin Bruckner's study of geographical literacy.

Most have overlooked the role of nature in Charles Brockden Brown's work. Like Thoreau and the Transcendentalists, Brown emphasized the importance of place in his work. But, his position is far less optimistic and far more attuned to possibilities of deception in nature. The concept of ecophobia, proposed by ecocritic Simon Estok and developed in relationship to the gothic mode by Tom J. Hillard, offers a productive lens for reading Brown's representation of nature. (2009, 2010). Brown's anti-pastoral position in his novel *Wieland* complicates our understanding of Transcendentalism. In this novel, nature is both respite from suffering and the very source of suffering, which

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[27] Ceclia Tichi accounts for some of these discrepancies by pointing to the schism between the Puritan expectations of what they would find in New England, expectations shaped by the Bible and the landscape of Europe, and their actual experience of the New World. Tichi exhaustively describes the biblical sources for Puritan commitment to reform the land of New England. She admits that some Puritan writers became disillusioned with the prospect of living a civilized life in New England and notes the reflections of this despair in Puritan writing. Perry Miller's famous "Errand into the Wilderness" reads Puritan attitudes towards nature from a Biblical perspective, as part of the Puritan project to form a new Jerusalem.

can be read as a warning of the challenges the early country faced in understanding the

place it inhabited. His later scientific translation and his own geographical work

demonstrate his optimism that such understanding is possible, but in switching genres

from novel-writing to translating geography, to his own geographical study, he suggests

the limits of the novel as a means understanding of the American experiment in

democracy. Scientific discourse for Brown, as for Behn, serves liberatory purposes. In his

1789 novel, *Wieland, or the Transformation: An American Tale*, Brown sets up

dialectical relationships among words, place, and truth. Situating Brown within

American discourse on the land as well as transatlantic discourse allows me to read his

use of nature imagery differently, as a sign of a counter-tradition. Brown offers a more

nuanced representation of human relationships with the land- especially the need for

Americans to study and to understand the land they recently fought for. Representing a

female character who resists deception and male characters who are deceived, Brown

inverts the Biblical story of Genesis. Thus, his work resists the dominant explanatory

frameworks of Frederick Turner, and Annette Kolodny. [28]

Traditional accounts of Brown's work situate him as a precursor to the "true"

expression of American culture canonized as the writers of the American Renaissance.[29]

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[28] Frederick Turner's famous talk "The Significance of the Frontier in American History"
(1893) proposed the importance of area of western United States as unexplored territory
on the American Consciousness. Brown is very interested in understanding the land, but
he pays much more attention to the geography of the east. *Errand into the Wilderness*, In
The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontier (1984), Annette
Kolodny reviews literary examples gender the land female and pose it as territory for
male domination. In contrast, Brown represents the land as an important source of
knowledge rather than on object of domination.

[29] See, for example, Howard Mummford Jones *Jeffersonian and the American Novel for*
an example of such critical work. Leslie Fiedler cites *Moby Dick, Huckleberry Finn, The*

As Larry F. Kutchen writes, in his review of Brown scholarship: "As with the

Revolution itself, scholars have tended to retrospectively conventionalize Brown's

disturbingly revolutionary writing." His reception among the elite culture makers of his

day complicates efforts to situate him in revisionist accounts.[30] Recently, critics have

applied the insights of contemporary theory, especially new historicism and cultural

studies, to their understanding of Brown's work and his place in American literature.

These critics have accomplished much in the way of demonstrating the complexity and

achievement of Brown as a writer and revealing his impact on early republican and

transatlantic cultures.

Peter Kafer's 2004 book, *Charles Brockden Brown and the Birth of the American

Gothic*, situates Brown's fiction in the context of his family life and revolutionary

history. Brown's "experience of revolution was physical, brutal, and morally

disorienting," according to Kafer, who concludes that the unrest in Brown's fictions

register his deeply felt experience of revolution. Kafer, like many, also traces the

relationships between Brown and William Godwin. He reads *Wieland* as an inversion of

Lockean epistemology, citing Clara: "The will is the tool of the understanding, which

must fashion its conclusions on the notices of sense. If senses be depraved, it is

impossible to calculate the evils that may flow from consequent deductions of the

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Last of the Mohicans, The Scarlet Letter, and *The Red Badge of Courage* as classic
American novels in *Love and Death in the American Novel* and explicitly states that
neither Cooper nor Brown "proved capable of achieving high art" (28). Lulu Rumsey
Wiley's 1950 work, *The Sources and Influences of the Novels of Charles Brockden
Brown* looks at Brown's work in a transatlantic context, developing his connections with
writers such as Defoe, Richardson, Smollett, Sterne, Fielding, Radcliff, Walpole,
Godwin, Wollstonecraft as well as American writers such as William Hill Brown,
Susannah Haswell Rowson, and Hannah Foster. Ultimately, though, even as she defends
Brown, she does so by claiming he helped American literature reach its later apogee.
[30] Cathy Davidson *Revolution and the Word*.

understanding" As Kafer concludes, Brown here rejects the tabla rasa notion that a new, pure, clear, true political order can be built. Kafer's reading is ultimately political. While, like many Brown critics, he notes Brown's move from fiction to nonfiction, Kafer focuses his analysis on Brown's fictions and neglects the connections between these genres.

The 2004 collection edited by Philip Barnard, Mark L. Kamrath, and Stephen Shapiro, *Revising Charles Brockden Brown*, includes recent efforts to use contemporary theory to reread Brown. These essays reveal more complex readings for Brown's work. For example, Verhoeven brings together the work of Adorno and Horkheimer and Mary Jacob, who argue that there were multiple Enlightenments, not one, monolith, totalitizing system and argues that we approach Brown with an understanding of "ideological hybridity" (10). He describes the 1790s as a time of "culture wars" when "revolutionary and antirevolutionary sentiments were played out in a burgeoning print culture" (12). Situating Brown in the context of French intellectual history, Verhoeven claims Brown reacted against Rousseau and connects Brown with Volney, who lectured in New York when Brown lived there. While he sees Brown's use of scientific discourse "to bring the unfamiliar within the realm of human reason and thereby to confirm the basic tenets of the Newtonian Enlightenment," he neglects Brown's own scientific work (29). He reads Brown's use of science as a means to an end, but I see his scientific work as an end in itself.

Ed White's contribution to this collection posits Brown as an early theorist of the subaltern. Yet, while White sets forth in a productive direction, his analysis is limited in two ways. First, he claims, "Landscape, 'primitive communication,' and herding

converge in startling insights about structure, culture, and agency respectively," but he

fails to push on and articulate these insights. Second, White concludes that Brown's

figure of the subaltern as embodied in the character of Carwin aligns with Spivak; White

sees both Brown and Spivak as concluding with a call for Derridean inspired reflection.

But this fails to attend to the strong call to action with which Spivak concludes her

pivotal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak, " where she underscores the limits of intellectual

work and implicitly argues for the value of work beyond intellectual. White also fails to

acknowledge the deadly consequences of reflection in *Wieland,* where the characters

Wieland and Carwin both reject physical work for intellectual pursuits. Wieland's story

ends with violence and murder, acts the text align with the arrival and actions of Carwin,

as I discuss more fully below. In addition, White's reading ignores Brown's proposal of

farming, of coming to know the land through work, as the means to happiness. So while

White is correct in seeing a postcolonial theme in Brown's work, he reads this theme in

isolation from Brown's other work and fails to see Brown's critique of reflection.[31]

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[31] Two other studies successfully use contemporary theory and historical analysis to
reposition Brown in American literature. Anthony Galluzzo situates Brown's *Wieland* in
juxtaposition with Burke and Kant's aesthetics of the sublime, reading Carwin as
representative of Brown's critique of the existing social and political order. While
providing a useful transatlantic context for viewing this novel as well as a sophisticated
reading of the sublime as an aesthetic that seeks to capture the unrepresentable, Galluzzo
ignores Brown's engagement with scientific discourse. Eric Wolfe uses Lacanian
analysis to read *Wieland* as a meditation on the dangers of belief in democracy as a
politics that requires/represents a unified voice. Wolfe's analysis draws important
connections between psychoanalytic theories of voice, politics in the early 1800s,
Cicero's rhetoric, and *Wieland*, but he ignores Brown's sustained attention to place. Thus,
his conclusion about Brown's radical concept of "dislocated identity" misses the
importance of location to Brown's understanding of identity (452). Thus, both Galluzzo
and Wolfe capture the complexity and importance of Brown's work, but they are
constrained by their lack of attention to Brown's engagement with scientific discourse.

Closest to my analysis, is Martin Bruckner's 2006 study, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity*, which moves beyond print, literary texts to consider material culture's contributions to the dialogue about place, nature, and identity in the colonial and early republican periods. He argues that the rise of geography textbooks in the 1800s is a more important factor that the rise of the novel. Bruckner includes a chapter on Charles Brockden Brown in his book, but he assesses Brown's work in order to understand Brown's shift from novel writing to nonfiction, especially geography. Thus, he reads Brown's novels in anticipation of Brown's geographical work. This serves Bruckner's purpose- to illustrate the rise of material culture and minimize the rise of the novel in America, but such a teleological perspective limits Bruckner's reading of Brown's novels.

While my work builds upon the criticism above, my theoretical frame— transatlantic, transdisciplinary, and ecological—allows me to read Brown's early novels along with his later scientific translation in the context of Revolutionary American. This clarifies his concern with empiricism across genres and disciplines and allows me to demonstrate his use of scientific narrative and literary narrative to question the "natural worlds" posited in the dominant stories of the American dream of upward mobility. Like Behn, Brown offers an ecological understanding of self. Like Behn, his works allows us to consider writing as a transdisciplinary activity that offers agency to writers when they question master narratives and seek to forge alternative paths.

Wieland; or, The Transformation: An American Tale (1798) is based upon a true event that happened in upstate New York in 1796 (Chafer 120). An epistolary novel, *Wieland* is told solely from the point of view of Clara, younger sister to the title

character. The Wieland family history is riddled with tragedy and mystery, from the senior Wieland's religious severity and his unaccountable, violent death to the son's murder streak. Yet, the brother and sister seem for a time buffered from tragedy, raised by a beneficent aunt, who allows them to educate themselves according to their own inclinations. As adults, they live in neighboring homes on the land they inherited from their father, where Wieland, who need only attend to the theoretical aspects of farming, devotes himself to his studies and the company of his family and friends: his wife, Catherine; her brother and his best friend, Pleyel; Clara; and later his children. While generally somber, this group shares pleasure in art, music, rhetoric, performances, and nature in an idyllic setting. They turn the senior Wieland's temple into a summer-house, where they meet to discuss their shared interests. Changing this structure from a place of religious worship to one of secular, intellectual and aesthetic pleasure suggests their efforts, and temporary success, in replacing their father's severe religious enthusiasm with temperate, secular and rational pleasure. In the end, however, the land embodies their father's supernatural enthusiasm.

Clara, Wieland and Pleyel's early pleasures are interrupted by the appearance of Carwin, an acquaintance of Pleyel's, new to town, having arrived from Europe. Carwin's presence sets off a chain of events that culminates with Wieland murdering his wife and children. This raises the local question, why does Wieland reach such a tragic end, and the global questions, what causes murder, mayhem, and madness? Throughout the novel, characters refer to paths, which represent concrete and abstract liminal routes, routes that may lead to destruction or to happiness. Clear understanding of physical and psychological terrain are prerequisites for achieving the latter and for avoiding the

violence and destruction that riddles the story. In this way, this novel presages Brown's later work in geography, where Brown researched and sought to clarify the terrain of the United States. In novelistic and scientific discourse, Brown explores the power of what postcolonial theorists call truth-effects, the real, material impact of words upon human behavior and the world, and he urges his readers to pay attention to their environment.

Brown introduces the imagery of paths and the concept of truth-effects in the opening lines of this novel:

> From Virtue's blissful paths away
>
> The double-tongued are sure to stray:
>
> Good is a forth-right journey still,
>
> And mazy paths but lead to ill. (1)

Brown thus begins his novel by distinguishing between two types of paths: "Virtue's blissful paths" and "mazy paths" (1). He advocates following "Virtue's" paths and avoiding the "mazy" ones and so maintains that there are multiple paths. Some leading to bliss and some to ill. The double-tongued, those whose words become deceptive truth-effects, are attracted to the mazy paths, whereas the virtuous follow "blissful" paths via "forth-right journey." While mazy has several meanings: "labyrinthine," "dim" or "half-lit," all these meanings denote lack of clarity and suggest convolution. Brown thus begins his novel by arguing for clarity and straightforwardness. Brown's argument for clear paths becomes more interesting when we consider that paths are trails that have been formed by use, unintentionally, without forethought or planning Clear paths, then, need not be planned beforehand. In fact, as later events in his novel demonstrate, planning and calculation actually inhibits ones ability to avoid mazy paths,

which complicates the advice in the opening lines. Lastly, as path has a literal and a figurative meaning, this word neatly embodies Brown's interest in understanding place as a physical and psychological means to understanding the choices and destinies available to individuals and to the early republic, a theme he returns to six years later, in 1804, in his translation of C.F. Volney's *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States*.

Carwin enters the novels late, a mysterious figure, who captivates Clara, the narrator, because of the contrast between his rustic appearance and his melodious voice. Secretly and privately enjoying the grounds of the Wielands' property, Carwin is surprised by the approach of Wieland. In an effort to conceal himself, Carwin tricks Wieland by calling out in the voice of Wieland's wife, Catherine: "Stop, go no further. There is danger in your path" (37). Wieland had been on his way from his home in Mettingen to fetch a letter from the summer-house, previously the temple, and the site of his father's death. Thus, Carwin, the many-tongued character, uses ventriloquism to trick Wieland, to protect his private enjoyment of Wieland's land. The setting of this scene is important as well: Wieland the senior's presence lingers in the summer-house, symbolizing the father's lingering effect on his son.

From the beginning, then, we learn that paths may be manipulated. The danger that Carwin conjures is not real in either form or content. But this danger becomes real in Wieland's mind and ultimately has deadly consequences. The effect of Carwin's words aligns with current postcolonial analysis of truth-effects. While untrue in two ways--in form, because it is Carwin and not Catherine speaking, and in content, because Carwin creates the danger--they have a material effect on Wieland and serve Carwin's immediate purpose: Wieland does believe that Catherine is speaking and that there is danger in his

path. He stops; Carwin remains undetected. Colonial cultures act in a similar fashion. Presented as helpful, as advanced, as aesthetically superior, colonial cultures perpetrate false forms, forms untrue to native cultures, forms whose intent is to secure the colonizer's access to the land of the native people. The content of colonial culture is also false within the epistemology of the native world, yet it can, and has had, deadly consequences upon native people and their cultures.[32]

Understanding the postcolonial theme by considering the concept of truth- effects troubles a neat alignment of Carwin with the subaltern, for in postcolonial work, the subaltern is the one haunted by the truth-effects of the stories of the colonizer's culture. Thus, Brown, in the figure of Carwin, who is a marginal figure in the text, offers a powerful representation of the powers and dangers of counter discourse. The lack of resolution about the causes of destruction--Did Carwin tell Wieland to kill his family members? Was this Wieland's own illusion? Did Carwin's earlier performances make Wieland susceptible to acting on imagined supernatural commands?--suggests uncertainty about the origins and scope of counter discourse. Such a position seems likely coming from Brown, who witnessed the internal and external conflicts and contradictions of the Revolutionary War and early republican period. In this world, as Peter Kafer, Cathy Davidson, Baylis Bailen, and others have demonstrated, words wielded revolutionary power, which had liberatory as well as destructive effects.

The next illusory path in the novel is one that Clara encounters herself in a dream. The setting of this dream is outdoors, in Clara's "demesne," a partially enclosed structure, which represents a liminal place, much like the summer-house where Carwin had

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[32] Franz Fanon, "On National Culture;" *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o.

deceived Wieland. Unlike the prior scene, which works as an anti-pastoral moment[v], this scene evokes biblical imagery. Harkening back to Eden, such a setting recalls Eve, alone, tempted by the snake, whose words initiate the fall. Clara dreams she is walking to her brother Wieland's house." A pit, methought, had been dug in the path I had taken, of which I was not aware" (71). A voice shouting "hold" and an anonymous pair of arms prevent her from falling into the pit. So, while the path in Wieland's encounter was cast as dangerous by Carwin, Clara manufactures this path in her dream. Neither danger has a physical reality, but both have real effects on the characters in the texts. In an effort to leave, Clara encounters an actual path: "the path, leading to the summit, was short, but rugged and intricate. Even starlight was excluded by the umbrage, and not the faintest gleam was afforded to guide my steps " (73). She thus faces here a mazy path of the kind described in the opening lines; it is dimly lit and convoluted. Clara's misgiving about following this path suggest her predilection for the lit, the clear, the virtuous path. Unlike her brother, who more readily believes the voices and thus follows murky paths, Clara resists.

Carwin's reason for deceiving Wieland, his desire to privately enjoy Wieland's land, offer a unique perspective on early republican relationships with the land. This motive reappears later: Carwin uses ventriloquism to trick Clara to once again maintain his ability to secretly enjoy the Wieland property. Carwin's desire for pleasure from the land and his adolescent recoiling from the labors of farming (a destiny to which, Clara later suggests, he ultimately returns to and finds peace in) are one important source of the destruction that riddles the text. While in many ways Carwin and Wieland are foils to each other, they are parallel in an important way: both avoid the labor of farming,

choosing instead more theoretical pleasures, establishing a relationship with nature based on pleasure rather than pragmatics. The tragedy with which their relationship ends thus asks us to read this novel as an anti-pastoral work. Unlike the pastoral mode, where, according to Paul Alpers, herdsmen take respite from their labor together, creating knowledge dialogically, Carwin and Wieland are drawn from physical work to intellectual pursuits. Rather than engaging in dialogue as a break from labor, Carwin and Wieland labor in intellectual pursuits, which leads not to dialogic knowledge, but rather removal from understanding the land as a source of substance. This path thus leads to destruction.

Another type of dangerous illusion in *Wieland* is belief in a single path. Pleyel, the victim of Carwin who had feigned a romantic dialogue between himself and Clara, suspects Clara of a liaison with the new-comer. Speaking of the relationship he suspects between Clara and Carwin, Pleyel confronts Clara and says, "There is but one path. I know you will disappear together" (118). Pleyel, the symbol of reason, clarity, virtue, and right thinking, is here duped in two ways: he not only heeds Carwin's false voices, as the other characters had, but he also notes the existence of only one path, in contrast to the author's opening couplets, which insist on multiplicity. Thus, while the mazy paths lead to ill, so too does insistence on only one virtuous path.

Continuing his plea to Clara, Pleyel states, "If some light could be reflected on the actual situation of this man, a direct path would present itself," reflecting his belief in an orderly world (145). The lack of order, of clarity, is exacerbated, when, in the same breath, Pleyel explains why he would not approach Carwin to hear his rationale: "It was better to know nothing, than to be deceived by an artful tale" (145). But this is precisely

the situation in which Pleyel is in, for what he knows about Clara and Carwin is basically an artful tale manufactured by Carwin and staged as a performance. The multiple layers of deception in this scene ensconce the entire story, suggesting the futility of finding clear paths.

In fact, the virtuous path is not obvious or regular in the novel. After hearing her uncle's report and reading the account of her brother's confession, Clara deceives her uncle and uses his chaise to visit Mettingen. From her servant's house to her own, she reports, "I took an irregular path. Which led me to my own house" (219). This "irregular" path not only gets her to her physical destination, but it also sets the stage for the denouement of the story. The irregular path, which led Clara home may serve as an example that the clear path, the path to virtue, may not be the path regularly chosen. Irregular need not be mazy.

The last character to mention a path is Carwin, when he admits that he had used his ventriloquism to deceive. Of this deception, he states, "I had thus reverted into the path of error" (239). Coming from Carwin, the a many-voiced character, these words are imbricated with doubt. In this way, then, Brown's final statement on one's ability to follow virtue's path is ominous. The chances of finding this path in the world Brown conjures in the novel are uncertain and improbable. The culmination of events in the novel reinforces this. Wieland, after hearing voices that tell him to murder his wife and children, finally understands the depths of his own wrongdoing and kills himself. Clara's home burns down and she moves to Europe. While Pleyel and Clara are ultimately wed, their marriage produces no children and they move to Europe. The characters continue only in the form of Clara's tale. The power of words then is the ultimate power.

The happiest character, from Clara's point of view, may very well be Carwin, of whom she writes: "He is now probably engaged in the harmless pursuits of agriculture, and may come to think, without insupportable remorse, on the evils to which his fatal talents have given birth" (273). In the end, Clara pictures Carwin working the land, which, as we learn in *The Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist,* had been his intended work. Ultimately, working the land, following the path of his family, offers Carwin respite from torment, a torment that had been caused by his sense of the unsuitability of life as a farmer.

The imagery of paths in this novel becomes clearer when we consider Brown's later turn to geography. Ed White sees Brown's interest in geography as part of a constellation of interests woven throughout *Wieland* and the prequel *Carwin*, but he reads *Wieland* as a call to reflection whereas I read it as meditation on the dangers of unmitigated reflection, dangers which can be tempered by community, which is in keeping with Quaker theology, and by engagement with the land. The destructive characters in the novel--Wieland senior, Wieland junior, and Carwin--all reject physical work for spiritual and intellectual pursuits. Brown's own career path reflects his efforts to avoid the destruction that may ensue from solitary reflection. He belonged to a number of intellectual clubs throughout his life and he engaged with the land via his geographical work.[vi]

Reading the nature imagery in *Wieland* and reading the story of Brown's oeuvre, the predominant message is a place-based epistemology that takes knowledge of the land as a precondition for other all other knowledge. [vii]Unlike Pleyel and Clara, Brown does not leave America for Europe, although his participation in the transatlantic intellectual

community indicates his desire for connection with Europe. Brown's resolution to the chaos of post-Revolutionary America lies in exploration of the land itself- first in his translation and corrections of Volney and later in his own geographical study. Writing nearly two hundred years before Lawrence Buell and almost fifty years before the Transcendentalists Emerson and Thoreau, the paradigmatic figures in American nature writing, Brown exemplifies Buell's definition of ecocriticism- taking the land as a his primary subject, not merely a setting.

In translating the geographical study of Volney, the French writer who spent three years in America and published his observations as *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States*, Brown furthered his commitment to understanding the material landscape of America as a means of understanding the American experiment in democracy. In the preface to his study, C.F. Volney expresses disappointment that some suspected him of spying, regrets that he had to limit the scope of his project to his observation of the land, rather than the customs, and concludes this work "more grave, abstruse and scientific" than his earlier study *Travels in Egypt.* Brown, in his translator's note, disagrees with Volney. The limits of Volney's study, to Brown, are a boon, as Volney would have embarrassed himself by making public his prejudiced reflections upon the customs and people of the U.S. Thus Brown claims that Volney's perspective on the American people is wrong and that Volney's opinion of his own perspective is wrong. Brown also compares Volney's current work with his prior work, specifically noting that *Travels in Egypt* failed the test of objectivity as it served more as an argument for France to invade Egypt than as a description of those lands. Thus, we see, a suggestion that Brown is suspicious of Volney's intentions. Further cause to understand Brown as suspicious of

Volney is Brown's stance on the Louisiana Purchase; he advocated quick annexation of those lands and criticized Jeffersonian hospitality to France and their interest in that land. Volney's published work could easily serve as evidence that he was spying, writing to inform the French military so they might use their understanding of geography to plan invasions. Volney could also haven been writing to describe which land would be most attractive for French occupation and annexation.

Yet, Brown states that he admires Volney for having produced "a work so accurate and scientific, almost wholey from the funds of his own observation" (xxiv). This statement suggests that Brown believes observation to be a reliable means of discerning the truth, which is unusual coming from Brown, whose earlier work *Wieland* revolved around the problem of whether the characters could trust their senses and in many ways served as a critique of empiricism. But Brown ultimately tempers his praise. He explicitly states the reason Volney's study "is the best and the most complete" is that it is the only such study. As translator, Brown claims he has two roles: 1) to simplify the language and 2) to point out Volney's errors based on his own observations and those of experts in the field of natural history such as Dr. Barton and Bernard Romans. These points further undermine Brown's praise of Volney for, taken with Brown's critique of Volney's earlier work on Egypt as inaccurate due to Volney's motives, they draw attention to the partiality of Volney's perspective, as an individual and a Frenchman, and of Volney's methodology, of working without the help of local authorities in the field.

[33]Brown evinces his own partiality here, for Volney actually cites a number of sources in his text, but Brown ignores Volney's attention to local sources.

One way in which Brown corrects Volney is by noting places where Volney's perspective is limited by his nationality. For example, Volney describes the "universal forest" covering American land as "dreary," "sterile," and "wearisome" (6). Brown says that Americans would not see the forest in this way, but, instead, would see resources and potential there. Volney also describes rural farms hewn into the forests as a sign of the lack of progress of American civilization. Brown states this description is erroneous in a lengthy footnote:

> Those who are not enable, by their own observation and experience, to qualify this general representation, will be led into great errors. In traversing New England, Jersey, and the eastern parts of Pennsylvania and Virginia, the scene is widely different from that above described. The picture [that Volney paints] is fully realized in those quarters only which are newly settled, and where attempts have just been commenced for reclaiming wilderness" (10).

Here, Brown corrects Volney and criticizes his work as likely to lead readers into error.

Later, Volney states that Americans see themselves as living in the "backcountry" and look to Europe for sophistication (18). Brown corrects this and, countering the humeral theory of character, claims thoughts do not come from geography. Many of

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[33] Andrew J. Lewis's 2005 study of natural history "A Democracy of Fact, An Empire of Reason: Swallow Submersion and Natural History in the Early American Republic," addresses the tendency of American naturalists "to err on the side of caution" as part of a trend that rejected theory in favor of data and facts gleaned from experience (10). In this way, American naturalists situated themselves as superior to their European counterparts, who relied on reports from the field. Brown's work fits Lewis's analysis.

Volney's comments on the land serve as negative comments on the character of the American people and in many places he makes comparisons between his findings in Egypt and his findings in America. He compares America to Africa, and Brown objects, as though he suspects Volney of attempting to discredit America by analogy with countries deemed inferior in the European cosmology (142). For example, Volney writes that the wind in Philadelphia and Cairo "oppresses the brain and produces torpor and head-ache' (137). Brown corrects Volney, stating, "It is somewhat surprising that notion, so crude and so generally exploded, should be countenanced by our author" (138). In this argument, Brown sees Volney seeking to situate America among those lands the Europeans consider themselves superior to.

In another note, Brown explicitly states that knowledge of place is essential for making healthy decisions. Confirming Volney's observation that Americans settle along the "sickley" coast, rather than "the mountainous and wholesome regions," Brown writes: "The true state of this case is, that men are every where reckless of the choice of an abode, and their continuance in it, as well as other things, they do not regulate their conduct by any such considerations" (231). While Brown corrects Volney's specific focus on Americans as making poor choices by claiming this is an attribute of "men" "everywhere," Brown emphasizes that Volney's observation that people make poor choices about the health of their dwellings places is correct. In this way, he continues the argument that he makes in *Wieland*: that understanding place is a necessary, but not sufficient, requirement for making sound choices.

Later, Brown scathingly critiques Volney for attributing the origins of Yellow Fever, a disease with which Brown had intimate knowledge, to the climate: "The rage for

explaining everything, and the dogmatic spirit that imagines the causes of everything within our reach, is as prevalent now as in the darkest ages of the world" (249). Demonstrating the speciousness of Volney's reasoning, Brown then basically labels Volney's work "unenlightened" for his efforts to explain with certainty that which he has not enough knowledge to understand. This too is in keeping with the critique of reflection in *Wieland.* Brown continues to wrestle with Volney on later pages, where Volney argues for the origin of yellow fever in the climate of America: "Volney, and all violent controversialists, have minds not large enough to see the real complexity and obscurity of this question, or to admit or defend with disinterested motives" (252).

Brown's ultimate comment on Volney's work is his own geographical project. Bruckner reports that this work is lost, but we know that Brown determined he needed to replace Volnoy's work with his own study. He wanted to move from the realm of reflection to the realm of action. But his oeuvre does not repudiate his prior work. Instead, reading the story of Brown's intellectual trajectory shows us that narrative and scientific discourse are both important to knowledge making. Carwin's father, the farmer without any sense of the value of the humanities, is the character who, scared by his son's appeals to his own superstitious beliefs, puts Carwin on the path that leads to the destruction rampant in the Wieland family. Brown's work reminds us that lives are connected to each other in ways perceptible and imperceptible. While *Wieland* concludes by emphasizing the destructive power of words, his writing career suggests otherwise. Brown is not completely discouraged by the paradox of empiricism and the dangers of truth-effects; like Behn, he persisted, making science available to a wider audience with his translation and adding his observations to the project of defining the land and identity

of the emerging nation. Traversing a path between disciplines and genres allows for a richer reading of Brown, a reading that reveals an alternative understanding of subjectivity, that defines the self in relationship to place and to others, and an alternative understanding of place as an object worthy of study- rather than a transcendent or opaque object.

Aphra Behn and Charles Brockden Brown addressed similar issues in their narrative and scientific work. Both suggest two entwined paths to agency: the critique of dominant narratives and the creation of counter-narratives, narratives emerging from engagement with local circumstances. Reframing these writers in a transatlantic perspective and reframing their work to include scientific and narrative discourse reveals a counter-tradition to the dominant narratives about the novel during the long 18th-century. Rather than a domestic genre that created the interiority of modern individualism, as Nancy Armstrong argues; or middle-class activity, as Ian Watt argues; or a dialectical genre that mediates cultural paradoxes, as Michael McKeon argues; or a political genre that rationalizes new power relationships, as Leonard Tennenhouse and Jay Fliegelman argue; or a mythic genre that naturalizes man's domination of the land and native people, as Annette Kolodny argues, we find ecological perspectives that situate human agency in social and material worlds, true and imaginary worlds, and yet-to-be-imagined worlds. While Behn and Brown both used scientific discourse as a means of imagining new worlds, today the dominant mode of scientific discourse is conservative, as I review in the next chapter.

Chapter Three "To Change Our Dreams Even as We Dream Them": Imagining College Composition

We balance on the unstable ground where realities materialize and dematerialize in response to our own literate moves. The gift that we derive from our balancing act is that we have the means to change our dreams even as we dream them."

<div align="right">-Kristie Fleckenstein</div>

In this chapter, I continue to use an ecological approach to understand narrative and literacy, but here I focus more squarely on the field of composition studies. By using an ecological approach, I am able to consider some of the material—the compost, if you will—out of which we may re-imagine the field today. Such re-imagining is necessary because the dominant maps of the field, maps that rely upon narrow versions of scientific discourse, limit our work- the work of writing teachers, scholars, and students. While Aphra Behn and Charles Brockden Brown worked with scientific discourse to imagine liberatory futures and while the questions that science poses and seeks to answer may be put to a variety of ends, today, the dominant mode of scientific discourse is conservative in that it serves the narrow interests of capital rather than human or ecological ends.[34] As the concept of narrative ecology allowed me to discern counter-narratives that more fully accounted for the transdisciplinary work of Aphra Behn and Charles Brockden Brown, in

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[34] Pierre Bourdieu's early work exemplifies contemporary science, in this case social science, for liberatory purposes, in that he used the tools of social science to attempt to resolve problems caused by capitalism and colonialism on Algeria and in rural France. On the rise of science in the service of capital, see J. D. Bekelman, Y. Li, and C. P. Gross, "Scope and Impact of Financial Conflicts of Interest in Biomedical Research: A Systematic Review; and Confronting the Privatization and Commercialization of Academic Research: An Analysis of Social Implications at the Local, National, and Global Levels."

this chapter this concept allows me to offer a counter-narrative to the dominant story of composition studies in the twentieth-century.

From the late nineteen-seventies through the start of the twenty-first century, a dominant map emerged in the field of composition studies. While it did facilitate communication and did help the field achieve disciplinary status, it also created unnecessary divisions between the constitutive and instrumental aspects of language, it failed to represent common ground among various approaches to writing instruction, and it ultimately created unproductive pressures towards consensus, pressures that move contestatory positions outside the field.[35] In particular, James Berlin's histories of composition studies in America and Richard Fulkerson's taxonomies of the field, while different in significant ways, both used the label "expressive" for a cluster of composition pedagogies they deemed inherently different from and inferior to other approaches to writing instruction. Today, many compositionists are working in areas beyond Berlin and Fulkerson's categories, but pressures for consensus—from within the field in the form of the lingering effects of the dominant maps and from administrators outside the field and beyond the university—mitigate the efficacy of this work.[36] The maps we use—with

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[35] *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, now in its fourth edition, offers a good example of this map. The first part of the book," The Contexts of Teaching," opens with a section called "Perspectives." The first essay is Richard Fulkerson's "Four Philosophies of Composition," which is followed by James Berlin's "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." These two essays create a terministic screen, to borrow Burke's term, through which readers (future or current writing teachers) understand the field and their own experience as teacher. Because both Fulkerson and Berlin mischaracterize expressive pedagogies, this screen (potentially) distorts readers' understanding of the field. I return to this point later in this chapter.

[36] Examples include: continuing attention to vernacular languages (Smitherson, Villanueva, Klinoch) and hybrid genres (Bishop, Bizzell, Powell), revisionist histories (Sherrie Gradin, Geoffrey Sirc), re-imagining of composition's place in institutions (Third-space pedagogies), community literacy projects (Ellen Cushman, Linda Flowers,

misleading categories of expressive, rhetorical, critical, and cognitive—serve the forces

for consensus and make it difficult to talk about work beyond these categories. For

composition studies to fulfill its liberatory potential, we must question the dominant maps

of the discipline. We must develop policies that honor diversity, we must use assessment

measures that are congruent with the complex nature of writing, and we must engage in

classroom practices that encourage students to engage in public discourse as a means of

imagining and enacting better futures.

Three histories of composition studies remind us that alternative futures are

possible, especially those that push beyond pressure to exclusively teach academic

discourse in first-year writing classes. In *Romancing Rhetorics: Social Expressivist*

Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing (1995), Sherrie Gradin traces the roots of

expressivism to romantic literature, where she finds a philosophy that joins expressivism

and social-construction. Thus, she outlines a pedagogy that, accounting for the

constitutive and the instrumental aspects of language, transcends the confines of

traditional academic discourse. More recently Geoffrey Sirc's 2002 book *English*

Composition as a Happening revisits experimental artists of the early modernist era,

whom he sees as precursors to experimental composition pedagogies of the nineteen-

sixties. Recognizing the critical and creative functions of writing, Sirc calls for action

writing and electric discourse. Most relevant to my project, Byron Hawk's *A Counter-*

History of Composition: Toward Methodologies of Complexity redefines vitalism from

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Eli Goldblatt, Tom Deans), ecocomposition (Sidney Dobrin, Derek Owens, Christian
Weisser), new media pedagogies (Cynthia Selfe, Gail Hauswisher, Cheryl Ball), and even
calls to abolish the first-year writing requirement (Sharon Crowley).

the stance of complexity theory to point towards post-process, ecological composition pedagogies.

In this chapter, I work in the space Gradin, Sirc and Hawk's revisionist histories have created by looking back to the period just before Fulkerson and Berlin demonized expressive pedagogies, sundering creative writing and literature from critical and rhetorical writing. I look back in order to connect the work of Peter Elbow with the post-structuralist theory of Jean Francois Lyotard and the postcolonial theory of Gaytri Spivak.[37] This new constellation allows composition and writing teachers to overcome artificial barriers that have created gaps between theory and practice in the field. In these gaps, I argue, other forces such as institutional pressures, political government initiatives, and long-standing cultural biases have turned potentially liberatory pedagogies, such as theories of discourse communities, into a narrow emphasis on academic writing. Lyotard and Spivak help us understand these forces; they offer a firm theoretical rationale for the value of dissent; and they demonstrate the efficacy and necessity of teaching students to engage in multiple discourses, to learn the rules of multiple language games, as a means of exercising agency. Reading Elbow in connection with Spivak and Lyotard allows us to traverse territory where the constitutive and instrumental aspects of language overlap.

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[37] While much good work has been done on the connections between composition studies and post-structuralism (such as James Berlin's "Poststructuralism, Cultural Studies, and the Composition Classroom." *Rhetoric Review* 11 (Fall 1992): 16-33) and between composition and post-colonialism (such as the 2004 collection Crossing Borderlands: Composition and Postcolonial Studies, edited by Andrea Lunsford and Lahoucine Ouzgane. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004) Elbow's work has been excluded from these discussions. Including him offers composition studies the means to resolve epistemological concerns that that stem from artificial separation of expressive, rhetorical, cognitive, and social-epistemic composition philosophies, creating a holistic, but not totalizing, view of the field.

Jean Francois Lyotard's 1979 book, *The Postmodern Condition; A Report on Knowledge*, explicitly raises questions that engage many compositionists: How is knowledge represented? How is it evaluated? What is the role of consensus in the legitimation of knowledge? What counts as authority? What is the relationship between narrative and scientific knowledge? Looking at these questions in many times and places, from the cave of Plato's allegory to the public sphere theorized by Habermas, Lyotard argues that the postmodern era is defined by a break with older means of legitimation: traditional narrative epistemology has in many ways lost legitimacy in the face of scientific epistemology, but, concurrently, the integrity of the grand narratives that had supported scientific epistemology in the past has also worn away. In the political and economic context of the 1970s, Lyotard finds the emergence of power, capital, and terror as potential co-creators of legitimacy that work together to create seemingly seamless versions of reality-- versions that exclude liminal, contestatory perspectives. Within the power/capital/terror matrix, Lyotard also sees three areas of resistance in the postmodern era: the social nature of language games circumscribe even power, capital, and terror; sublime aesthetics evoke apprehension of realities that elude logic; and scientific observations reveal the ultimate inability of any system to represent or predict the essentially unstable nature of reality. Lyotard argues that humanists and artists can enlarge these opportunities for resisting tyranny by valuing dissent rather than consensus. While Lyotard's argument is limited by his naïve representation of traditional cultures, his narrative theory and his methodology offer composition studies a firm rationale for the use of dissent as a productive force, which helps the field grapple with gaps between our theories and practices. Furthermore, his insistence upon the value of non-rational

knowing creates room for liminal perspectives and alternative discourse in the university. Lastly, his methodology of language games, embodying the ability to play multiple games at once, offers a model for college writing pedagogy.

One of the main premises underlying Lyotard's argument is that all calls for reality are actually calls for "order, a desire for unity, for identity, for security or popularity" (72). These demands trouble Lyotard, and me, as they occur in a capitalist economy that increasingly authorizes knowledge according to rules of efficiency and productivity. The primary rule is "there is no reality unless testified by consensus" (77). The pressures for consensus impoverish our ability to apprehend and represent contestatory, multiple, sometimes contradictory realities. They constrain our ability to imagine what exists beyond the dominant culture and thus naturalize the dominant culture as the only reality. My analysis of Behn and Brown reveals how the pressure for consensus moves contestatory positions to the margins. For education in general and composition studies in particular this means that the values of performitivity, which are predicated upon utility and marketability increasingly replace the humanistic values of truth and justice. The values of performitivity have two important consequences: Education is evaluated according to its ability to train youth to perform jobs efficiently and knowledge is evaluated via the money it generates.

The methodology of "language games" that Lyotard employs serves two main functions. First, they prove that Lyotard can play by the rules of the logic-driven games and performitivity. But the postmodern language games he posits as a necessary defense against terror require facility in a much greater repertoire of rules. So, second, even in the

dense, concise, scholarly text of *The Postmodern Condition* (seventy-seven pages of text

contain two-hundred and thirty-one footnotes), we can find moments where Lyotard

evokes rules more sublime in their anarchy than the smaller beauty of logic. For

example, he uses literary sources, such as a parable Borges recounts and Robert Museil's

Man Without Qualities, to support theoretical points about epistemology, weaving

sublime aesthetics through this formal philosophical exploration, and, in doing so,

demonstrating that all discourse is permeable. In this way, his method allows him to

model and advocate for sublime aesthetics and ethics, offering an example of how to

negotiate a world where various rules are often at play, which, as he explains, is

necessary, because the boundaries between discourse communities are permeable; the

rules are never static or isolated; and institutions never fully determine or impose rules

(17).

His methodology also connects this work to his other work. An admirer of "On

the Sublime", an aesthetic treatise of uncertain origins from the early Roman era,

Lyotard explores the concept of "the sublime" in many of his works, works that use

traditional philosophical methods (as *The Postmodern Condition* appears to) and more

overtly playful forms, such as fiction and dialogues. Lyotard, via reference to Longinus

(author of "On the Sublime"), defines the aesthetics of the sublime in contrast to the

beautiful. While beauty evokes pleasure via beings and representations that comfort in

their unity of form, the sublime evokes awe via beings and representation that disrupt by

invoking the unrepresentable. For example, the formal English gardens of the

seventeenth-century embody beauty while the American landscape paintings of the

nineteenth-century embody the sublime. In brief, one can read Lyotard's career as an

effort to resurrect the aesthetics and ethics of the sublime, and *The Postmodern Condition* is one piece of this larger project.

As postcolonial critics such as Gaytri Spivak and composition theorists such as Melea Powell point out, Lyotard offers a model for marginal figures to both engage the dominant discourse, demonstrate facility in it, and assert liminal aesthetics, a feat useful for college writers, especially those from non-mainstream backgrounds. Regrettably, the concept of discourse communities has, more or less, come to function in composition studies as a set of practices that naturalize narrow definitions of academic discourse and that have further marginalized alternative discourse and, especially, vernacular languages. Using different language games in one text allows Lyotard to represent slippage among language games, a concept he works out theoretically in order to demonstrate the social nature of language and the various functions of narrative, which lays the necessary groundwork for his argument about resisting terror and totality. Initially, he distinguishes three types of language: "performative" or denotative language, which enacts its reality; "prescriptive" language, which requests possible realities, and *"language games,"* which engage in social negotiations (10). Drawing upon the work of Wittgenstein on the social nature of language, Lyotard claims that language games are the primary frame from which to understand the other languages.[38] Thus the three part division of language becomes one large language game comprised of performative/denotative moves and prescriptive moves. Next, Lyotard complicates the definition of performative in the

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[38] Unlike Wittgenstein, who concludes his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* with the cynical words "What we cannot speak of, we must pass over in silence," Lyotard encourages his readers to engage in culture work in his concluding line "Let us war a war on totality."

context of his review of the history of social thought in Europe, which he initially splits into two categories. One school of social thought views society as a whole, strives for harmony among the parts, and seeks "the optimization of the global relationship between input and output" (11). This view values "positivistic" and "technical" knowledge conveyed via performative language. Such knowledge is evaluated according to performance in market terms: efficiency, translatability, and productivity, which edge out the values of truth and justice.[39] The other "critical" or "marxist" view presents society as split and believes the means to understanding and legitimizing knowledge is dialectical, open, and achieved via prescriptive language. Yet, Lyotard quickly explains that the Marxist tradition has been basically subsumed by totalitizing forces, and only exists elsewhere as "the status of a 'utopia' or 'hope'" (13). He concludes that distinguishing between "positivistic," "technical" knowledge and "critical, reflective, or hermeneutic" creates a false dichotomy, for the former has become the frame for the latter, marginalizing it. But, because positivist values are subsumed by language games, which are social entities, Lyotards concludes all participants have some agency:

> A *self* does not amount to much, but no self is an island: each exists in
> a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever
> before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always
> located at 'nodal points' of specific communication circuits, however tiny
> these may be. Or, better: one is always located at a post through which
> various kinds of messages pass. No one, not even the least privileged

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[39] Much like the business model popular in the U.S. before the recent recession demonstrated that ever increasing performitivity is a dangerous myth.

among us, is ever entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and

position him [or her] at the post of sender, addressee, or referent. (15)

In sum, Lyotard argues that efforts to control "reality" based on logical models are

always susceptible to the sublime: that which exceeds logic, that which reminds us that

reality always exceeds our ideas and representations of it. This is one way that minority

and marginal groups can respond, can exercise power, and can resist efforts at control and

terror. In contrast to Habermas, Lyotard advocates dissent, which he explains is achieved

when we set aside our desire for grand narratives and turn instead to local narratives.

Lyotard disagrees with Habermas's position on rational deliberation in the public sphere

as the means to truth on two grounds: first, rational deliberation fails to account for the

sublime, and second, consensus silences marginal perspectives.

Lyotard's work has been influential in many fields, including composition studies.

In the 1996 winter issue of *JAC* Elizabeth Flynn summarizes Gary's Olsen's 1995

interview with Lyotard:

Writing for Lyotard is a form of resistance, a way of advancing

something that is not clear or discovery as a means of giving testimony

which is not yet included in the circulation of commodities, not yet

known. To write is to resist 'the already done, the already written,

the already thought.' (397)

Flynn's reading of Lyotard emphasizes what he has in common with advocates of a

process approach to writing, and, in particular, the freewriting activities such as those

proposed by Peter Elbow, Pat Belanoff and others. Lyotard posits writing as discovery, as

a means of resisting structural power, as a means of achieving a post-structural

consciousness. In the realm of composition studies, such strategies have, wrongly, been categorized as merely personal and expressive. What these labels miss is the inextricable web of self, other and context that form the basis of such composition pedagogies, as I review below.

Flynn concludes that her experience resonates with much of Lyotard's analysis:

As a faculty member at a technological and highly bureaucratized and computerized university, I certainly feel increasingly powerless in the face of a growing emphasis on performitivity and a decreasing emphasis on truth and justice….what we need to alter this reality is more information, more discussion, more knowledge. What we need is a new politics that would respect the unknown, the unwritten.

While her description of academic life sounds accurate, her conclusion falls short of specific strategies for change. This is because Flynn is limited by her reliance on Lyotard's analysis, which fails to move from words to the world.

Still, Lyotard allows us to see the rise of performitivity values in the metanarrative of contemporary assessments debates as represented in special sessions at the Conference in College Composition and Communication from 2007-2008. These sessions, which illustrate the tensions between scientific and narrative discourse that Lyotard so precisely and presciently articulated, indicate some of limits the federal government has sought to impose on the composition studies as well as the field's

resistance, and remind us that we must continue to heed Lyotard's call for resistance via

counter narratives.[40]

While the recent change in leadership in Washington holds some promise for

education, the trend over the past decade has been towards more conformity, more

assessment, and more evaluation according to the "performitivity" model—in sum, more

incursions of the business model. Panels at the 2006 and 2007 Conference on College

Composition and Communication directly addressed this issue, calling for members to

define assessment themselves. For example, Jackie Jones Royster entreated the audience

to attend to assessment, reasoning that if compositionists fail to articulate what their work

does, then outside forces will set the agenda. Andrea Lunsford said that decades of

research from across the country demonstrates that writing is too complex to measure

simply- to do so would be to waste time and to fail. Randy Bomer warned that the

Spellings' Commission's concern with "value" and their "ideology of scientific

management" could pose problems for the work of writing teachers. Pedro Rees

explained the business model of "value added" assessment which asks: to what extent

does the institution add value to the student, or, in other words how much more money

are students worth after college, a question that limits the values of education to those

that align with the performitivity model that Lyotard outlines. Dennis Baron discussed

the proposed Higher Education Act to rank colleges and warned that the federal

education commissioners, alarmed by diversity in education, want to regulate it. Overall,

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[40] Composition studies has, for some time, worked to develop assessment measures that respect the unknown and the unwritten. For example Pat Belanoff and Peter Elbow. "State University of New York, Stony Brook: Portfolio-Based Evaluation Program." *New Methods in College Writing Programs*. Eds. Paul Connolly and Teresa Vilardi. New York: MLA of America, 1997. 95-105. Ed White. "The Scoring of Writing Portfolios: Phase 2. *CCC* June (2005).

these speakers attested to the complexity of the work of teaching writing and outlined outside forces that seek to circumscribe this work.

The direction of the discussion on assessment changed in 2008, when Vickie Schray, Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, spoke, outlining the importance of accountability and transparency. She explained that the consumers—her term for students—need to know what they are purchasing and that the government, which extends loans to students and supports education financially, also needs to know where its money is going. Such information, Schray explained, requires uniformity. Here, Schray clearly described the function of the university education in general and writing instruction in particular within the framework of the business model. This framework also organizes several reports Schray contributed to.[41] One report, "Assuring Quality in Higher Education: Recommendations for Improving Accreditation," asks "how we can get the most out of our national investment to ensure that our higher education systems meets our nations needs for an educated and competitive workforce in the twenty-first century" (Shray 1). Here, the emphasis on economics is clearly indicated in the language. Shray defines the "investment" made in education and "workforce" this investment generates. Another argues, "In order to have a coherent framework for a unified education system, academic standards and workplace skill standards need to be

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[41] For example, "A National Dialogue: the Secretary of Education Commission's Report of the Future of Higher Education" (http://www.wiche.edu/agendabook/Nov_06/presentations/schray.pdf) and "Assuring Quality in Higher Education: Recommendations for Improving Accreditation" (http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/schray2.pdf) "Integrating Academic Standards and Workplace Skill Standards for a Unified Education" Stan Koki (http://www.prel.org/products/Products/Integrating-academic.pdf)

combined" (Koki 1). The process for creating this framework would reduce the academic goals to only those that facilitate the development of workplace skills.

Lyotard's analysis allows us to see that Schray's work is part of structural changes in the way knowledge is legitimized. We see the absence of meta-narratives rooted in truth or freedom as the means of legitimizing education. In their place, in Schray's work, the values of capital and economic performance legitimize education. Lyotard also teaches us we have agency in the face of such pressures. His answer is that we resist consensus, which creates the false impression of unity and conceals power. He writes "we must arrive as an idea and practice of justice that is not linked to that of consensus" (66). He offers a three-part solution: 1) recognition of the "heteromorphous nature of language games," which requires recognition that the uniformity Shray describes is impossible; 2) acknowledgement that the "rules" of language games are always "locally determined," which requires resistance to the unified curriculum proposed above; and 3) "free access to the memory and data banks," which make public information that support multiple language games and local rule making (). Portfolio assessment measure, such as those initiated by Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, allow students and writing teachers to engage in multiple language games while also engaging in assessment. The newly launched "National Conversation on Writing" website where composition scholars use media- old and new- to public ally define their work and to describe varied local conditions, is another effort to exert agency and resist calls for uniformity. Online initiatives such as the Colorado State University's Writing Studio, which offers electronic tools or writing and collaboration and The Parlor Press, which offers free online texts, are useful means of providing access to information and memory.

These are good efforts that follow the spirit of Lyotard's work. To fulfill our commitment to liberatory education, we must connect the classroom to action in the world, a move that Lyotard does not make in *The Postmodern Condition*.

Gaytri Spivak, like Lyotard, claims that all--even the most marginalized, liminal subjects--have some form of agency, but that western notions of subjectivity obscure this. Her solution to the problem of the business model, in contrast to Lyotard's and Flynn's, entails more than knowledge-making; it requires action. Commenting specifically on the marginal role of composition studies in her essay "Reading the World: Literary Studies in the Eighties," Spivak writes:

> …it is the composition teacher whose position—with some significant exceptions—is less privileged and more precarious. The culprit is not far to see. It is the received dogma of the freedom of the aesthetic and literature's refusal to soil itself by rendering service to the state-when that refusal is the greatest service it can render to a polity that must disguise the extraction of surplus value as cultural dynamism. (129)

She thus speaks directly to the incursions of the business model into literary and literacy studies, incursions that serve to conceal themselves via the split between composition and literature and the dressing of aesthetics offered by the later. Richard Ohmann and Sharon Crowley both offer book-length studies of the politically charged relationships between composition, literature, and the business model of education. While Ohmann criticizes

composition and literature for failing to fulfill their commitment to liberal, humanistic values, Crowley finds fault in the influence humanistic values have had on composition studies. To Ohmann, a large part of the problem is that first-year college writing serves a gate-keeping function. His solution is for faculty to take up an explicitly political orientation. To Crowley, a large part of the problem is that first-year college writing attempts to fulfill political commitments and gate-keeping functions. Crowley's solution is to abolish first-year writing as a requirement in order to make room for a vertical writing curriculum rooted in composition studies. While Ohmann and Crowley offer markedly different definitions of the problem and markedly different solutions, they, like Spivak, attest to the marginalization of composition and they make capitalism's effects on the composition and literature curriculum more visible.

Spivak explains that literature pedagogy could choose an alternative by encouraging "risky" reading. She writes:

> Everyone reads life and the world like a book. Even the so-called 'illiterate.' But especially the 'leaders' of our society, the most 'responsible' nondreamers: the politicians, the business men, the ones who make plans. Without the reading of the world as a book, there is no prediction, no planning, no taxes, no laws, no welfare, no war. Yet these leaders read the world in terms of rationality and averages, as if it were a textbook. The world actually writes itself with the many- leveled, unfixable intricacy and openness of a work of literature. If, through our study of

literature, we can ourselves learn and teach others to read the world

in the 'proper' risky way, and to act upon that lesson, perhaps we

literary people would not be forever such helpless victims. (127)

Spivak claims for literacy study the power to resist calls for consensus, such as those

voiced by Schray. Reading literature in risky ways invites encounters with the unknown

and resistance to artificial, limited, systemic, orderly, restrictive thought. Remembering

the older definitions of literature, which more broadly understand it as letters rather than

belles lettres, invites us to see student writers and published writers as culture workers,

literature and composition teachers as culture workers. This view allows us to admit the

constitutive and instrumental functions of language across the curriculum The artificial

boundaries between expressive and rhetorical/social and political/creative and critical

composition theories continue to foreshorten our ability to engage in such risky,

liberatory reading and thus serves the status quo. [42]

The context for Spivak's comments above was a question posed by a student in

Saudi Arabia about the value of literature. Spivak reports that she continued "half to

myself, and with a sense of failure":

Mere literary studies cannot accomplish this. One must fill

the vision of literary form with its connections to what is being read:

history, political economy—the world. And, it is not merely a question of

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[42] While composition studies might not be able to convince the status quo to relinquish models that serve it, those of use who work in literacy education can define our work and our students' work in ways that challenge the status quo.

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disciplinary formation. It is a question also of questioning the

separation between the world of action and the world of the disciplines.

There is a great deal in the way. (128)

To understand her self-proclaimed failure, we need to look at the solution she exercises in

her teaching and then the argument she makes elsewhere about the work of female

intellectuals. Like Lyotard, whose language games allow for multiplicity, Spivak

proposes two goals for her teaching: to prepare students for the current future they face

and to prepare them to work towards better futures. She answers that it is possible to

achieve both goals: "We should work to implement the changes even as we prepare our

students to fit into the jobs market as it currently exists" (136). In the graduate class she

describes, her students learn to use the conventions of academic discourse first; then they

experiment with other strategies.[43]

Spivak's position on pedagogy and its applications to composition studies is

further clarified in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" This essay is a critique of

western notions of the subject, notions she claims continue to haunt even poststructuralists

such as Foucault and Deleuze. While she acknowledges that French post-structuralist

theory has offered two useful insight—the material effects of "power/interest/desire" and

the rationale for exploring "the discourse of society's Other"—she concludes that it has

failed to fulfill the promise of either. Her conclusion emphasizes the limits inherent in

western intellectual work. She writes: "The subaltern cannot speak….The female

intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a

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[43] While this sequence may be appropriate for graduate students well-versed in academic conventions, Peter Elbow suggests the opposite order in first-year writing classes. See "Vernacular Englishes in the Writing Classroom: Probing the Culture of Literacy" in *Alt Dis: Alternative Discourses and the Academy* (2002). I agree.

flourish" (104). The subaltern cannot speak, according to Spivak, because the subaltern is a western construct. Conditions for the rise of voices that have historically been marginalized by western politics, aesthetics, and ideology require the eradication of the west as the invisible, normative subject.   In addition, the female intellectual has tasks as an intellectual and also tasks that are nonintellectual. Spivak suggest that the nonintellectual are less circumscribed than the intellectual. Spivak's self-proclaimed "failure" then might be that her work has been contained within the realm of the intellectual and this essay can be read as an argument for activism in addition to intectualism. Thus Spivak, like Lyotard, offers a theoretical rationale for compositionists who posit the writing class as a public, activist space.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, American college teachers encountered new worlds in their classrooms, across campus, and beyond. The growing diversity of the student body, the student protest movement, and changes in race and gender relationships altered the work of English teachers. Furthermore, students themselves protested the canonical classes of English departments that prevailed at that time. Some teachers, such as Peter Elbow, Mike Rose, and Paul Lauter, also engaged in literacy work beyond traditional classrooms, which transformed their ideas about literacy, teaching, and the functions of education. As teachers, students, and policy makers (such as the professional organizations MLA and CCCC) addressed emerging ideas about literacy, the curriculum of English departments became less stable, which made room for new content, new pedagogies, and new definitions of the work of English Departments. Within universities, research in linguistics, psychology, and history provided academic support for changing

the form and content of English classes. For these reasons, composition and literature

classes in offered opportunities for students and teachers to address the world beyond the

classroom and work beyond intellectual work.

Writing Without Teachers, Peter Elbow's 1973 text, emerged from this time,

when the boundaries between classrooms and the world, between public and private, and

between personal and political were challenged. In the preface to the first edition, Peter

Elbow opens by saying, "Many people are now trying to become less helpless, both

personally and politically: trying to claim more control over their own lives" (v). Thus,

Elbow explicitly states that he is speaking to the personal and the political needs and

desires of his audience. He offers his approach to writing as one means of providing

writers with such control. Most surprising to those who have come to Elbow through the

label expressive will be Elbow's understanding of identity and authority. He not only

recognizes the forces of social construction and the power of agency that Lyotard details,

but also offers a canny, albeit tempered, understanding of interpellation. Elbow, like

Lyotard, recognizes the "the self" as fluid, open to the force, the impact, the incursions of

the world. Elbow writes: "I think we all fear, to a greater or lesser extent, being taken

over, infected, or controlled by a bad or wrong idea" (185). He continues to say that this

fear, while valid, is misplaced because "infection" is part of the fabric of existence:

> What is finally becoming clear, I think, through increased
>
> understanding of human emotional and cognitive functioning, is that
>
> you can *never* produce enough security clearance, no matter how new
>
> or powerful your broom: you can *never* keep out all wrong ideas, all
>
> disgusting or threatening ideas, all ideas tainted by previous tenants—

all infection….Since you can't keep the ideas out, you have to let them

in. (186)

This passage illuminates Elbow's pedagogy, which seeks to undo the self-censorship and limitations that interpellation perpetrates. In this way the practice he outlines offers a concrete means of achieving the theoretical possibilities of agency that Lyotard posits and the practice of action that Spivak advocates. Elbow's insistence on the function of writing groups to destabilize authority and his understanding of the social nature of knowledge make this clearer. Finally, his emphasis on the practice of freewriting to generate new knowledge and to overcome writer's block are means of overcoming what Lyotard describes as the censorious effects of power/terror/ capital matrix.

Further support for this reading of Elbow comes from understanding his experience with the military draft and his experience with draft resistors: both embodied the complex, subtle relationships among identity, culture, and power. Elbow reports that the three letters he wrote on his own behalf in an effort to obtain conscientious objector status were all rejected by his draft board. Ultimately, he aged out of the draft, but he pursued this topic in a published piece on law and conscientious objection and through his work with draft resistors, helping them write their own letters. The latter allows us to imagine a concrete example of Elbow's pedagogy as a means of resisting consensus.[44]

Reading Elbow next to Lyotard and Spivak with an understanding of the material context of his pedagogy demonstrates the power of imagination, which Spivak defines as

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[44] Imagine being a young man in the 1960s, raised to be a "man" and a "patriot." Next, imagine being called to serve in a war that you believe is wrong. In thinking through your resistance to the war, you confront ideals of masculinity and patriotism, which complicate your ability to describe why you are a conscious objector.

"the ability to think what is not there," as a political force, a sublime force, that provides

opportunities to move beyond the limits of dominant languages and structures (xi). This

helps us see how his pedagogy seeks to undo the self-censorship and limitations that

interpellation perpetrates. His insistence on the importance of writing groups, his

understanding of the social nature of knowledge, and his emphasis on the practice of

freewriting to generate new knowledge and to overcome writer's block create a concrete

means of achieving the theoretical possibilities of agency that Lyotard and Spivak posit.

In many ways, the practice of freewriting that Elbow advocates offers an opportunity for

writers to experience the sublime, to move beyond preconceptions and to interrogate the

interpellations within their consciousness. Elbow, Spivak, and Lyotard all demonstrate

deep respect for difference and none hold consensus as an ideal. Of course they differ in

their emphasis, for Lyotard articulates a theory and Elbow articulates a practice, but

Elbow's practice is premised upon a theory much like Lyotard's and Lyotard's theory, in

many ways, invites the practices Elbow articulates. Spivak advocates theory along with

practice. This new constellation also clearly reveals the limits of the dominant maps of

composition studies that emerged at the end of the twentieth-century.

Contemporary maps of compositions studies may be traced to Richard

Fulkerson's continuing efforts to organize the field. Fulkerson notes that his widely

anthologized "Four Philosophies of Composition," first published in *College

Composition and Communication* in 1979, is rooted in two moments: Charles

Silberman's critique of the dangers of mindlessness in education and Fulkerson's reading

of M.H. Abram's *The Mirror and the Lamp*.[45] Explicitly identifying these roots, Fulkerson reveals a laudable effort to make connections among the fields of education, literature, and composition. Unfortunately, in this essay and in the decade-punctuating polemics that follow it in 1989 and 2005, Fulkerson proceeds to reaffirm unproductive barriers not only between composition, education, and literature, but also to create barriers within the field of composition studies, demarking an increasingly limited space for the work of writing teachers, oversimplifying the work of many composition scholars and ignoring the important work of others. In this process, he enacts the power/terror/capital matrix that Lyotard warns of, making invisible marginal/emerging/contestatory discourses within composition studies.

In his 1979 essay, Richard Fulkerson does not explicitly argue for one particular philosophy, but rather argues that teachers must avoid "modal confusion," which occurs when teachers conduct class and/or craft assignments from one philosophical stance and then evaluate students' work from the perspective of another. In an effort to help teachers align their practices and philosophies, he translates Abrams's four theories of literature into four philosophies of composition: expressive, mimetic, rhetorical, and formalist. But, arguing for even this type of consistency has two main drawbacks: 1) if we believe that students come to us with different learning styles, as Howard Gardner's work demonstrates, then we would not want to use the same approach for all of our students; 2) if we understand writing to be a set of recursive processes, we might employ different approaches at different stages and for different situations. Fulkerson's essay also contains as a subtext a critique of "expressive" philosophies; every example of modal confusion

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[45] Republished in *Composition in Four Keys* (1996) and *A Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* (four editions from 1981-2000).

that Fulkerson presents arises from teachers who initiate activities from an expressive stance and then take rhetorical stances in their evaluation of student work.

Interestingly, Fulkerson specifically considers the place of Peter Elbow in his categories, noting that categorizing *Writing Without Teachers* presented challenges to his taxonomy. Rather than take this as an opportunity to rethink his categories, Fulkerson uncritically accepts Elbow's self-professed position as a rhetorician. In this, Fulkerson fails to acknowledge that Elbow's definition of rhetoric would be more expansive that his own; it would include affective as well as logical persuasion and would contain a more complex understanding of audience. This might have been an opportunity for Fulkerson to consider the common ground between approaches he deemed expressive and rhetorical, but, instead, he sticks to his categories and his categories conceal the expressive and rhetorical aspects of Elbow's work.

Fulkerson clearly values consensus and order. From 1979 -2005 his argument becomes more strident, narrow, and polemical. In a 1990 essay, reflecting on the field of composition studies through the 1980s, Fulkerson expresses optimism about the growing consensus of the goals of writing teachers, goals he describes as "rhetorical" in their emphasis on good writing for a particular audience and particular purpose. Then in 2005, he bemoans the devolution of composition into what he claims is a mess of axiological and pedagogical values. He argues for a return to the popular rhetorical approaches of the 1980s in contrast to the expressivist and cultural studies/critical approaches he claims have come to dominate the field. In the end, Fulkerson advocates one game in college

writing classes and fails to acknowledge the forces that construct the very concept of good in the context of the college writing. [46]

Another problem with Fulkerson's 2005 essay is his methodology. To demonstrate his argument that composition studies is a more fractured field than it was in the 1980s, he compares two textbooks for college writing teachers: one from 1980 and one from 2001. He claims that the differences between these books provide "a suggestive picture of large-scale changes in the discipline" (655). But, he fails to offer any information about the distribution of these texts, so we do not know whether they are actually representative or influential. He uses these texts as the basis for negative claims about classroom practices. In the case of critical pedagogies, he reviews one additional book: an ethnography of a composition class that employed critical pedagogy. For expressive pedagogy, he relies solely on the bibliographic essay from the 2001 text. He does mention the existence of "complex expressive views," but he does not summarize any of this work, as he later does for rhetorical approaches. While he then admits that he has little concrete evidence for making claims about the prevalence of these methods, he asserts, "We have lots of indirect evidence of both" (669). In contrast, his review of rhetorical approaches actually contains an array of evidence: the WPA Statement of Outcomes for First-Year College Writing, journals outside the field such as *Informal Logic* and *Argumentation and Advocacy*, references to scholarship and examples of textbooks. His overt position is of observer. He writes: "There is no ultimate ground, no empirical, dialectical, or Platonic basis for proving one approach is proper" (680). But, a

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[46] Anne Francois Wysocki offers a cogent assessment of the construction of aesthetics in her contribution to *Writing New Media*. Paul Lauter does the same in terms of canonical literature in *Canons and Contexts*. Terry Eagleton famously addresses this from a Marxist perspective in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*.

close look at the evidence he assembles demonstrates the subtext of his essay: a clear critique of expressive and critical approaches.

James Berlin starts in a place similar to Fulkerson's original call for teachers to avoid modal confusion. In his book *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges 1900-1985* Berlin states, "I am concerned, however, that writing teachers become more aware of the full significance of their pedagogical strategies….The dismay students display about writing is, I am convinced, at least occasionally the result of teachers unconsciously offering contradictory advice about composing…." (557). His 1988 essay "Rhetoric and Ideology" moves to critique. First he discounts cognitive rhetoric on the grounds of its failure to attend to ideology, a failure, he argues, because it restricts the real to that which is empirically verified via scientific methods, methods that naturalize the values of the status quo. [47]Berlin follows his critique of cognitive rhetoric with a critique of expressive rhetoric, which he connects with Rousseau, nineteenth-century romanticism, and "the elitist rhetoric of liberal culture" (16). Expressivists, according to Berlin, recast this in terms of an art that is accessible to all. While he recognizes the political engagement of proponents of this pedagogy, he claims their political engagement is doomed to failure because he wrongly maintains that they locate agency in individuals and fail to understand social-construction. In this category, he places Peter Elbow as one of the "moderates" (17). Berlin explicitly criticizes Elbow's reliance on psychological ideals of individual identity. But this criticism is misplaced.

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[47] While Berlin's assessment of this branch of rhetoric is beyond the scope if this paper, it is interesting to note that Linda Flowers, whose work Berlin excoriates as the epitome of the problems of cognitive rhetoric, is currently a champion of community literacy projects, one of the most socially-engaged subfields of composition studies.

Elbow clearly acknowledges tenets of social construction in his theory and practice.

Berlin concludes his critique by presenting social-epistemic rhetoric as the solution- the

only pedagogy, according to him, that is informed by an accurate understanding of

ideology. In this, he again misses the ways that Elbow's pedagogy offers the means for

writers to question ideology individually via freewriting and collectively in writing

groups.

Reading Berlin's description of social–epistemic rhetoric, it is easy to see how it

could lead to support for alternative discourse and diversity, unlike Fulkerson's narrow,

uncritical focus on "good writing." In Berlin's description, social-epistemic rhetoric is:

> in the interest of the greater participation of all, for the greater
>
> good of all. And this of course implies awareness of the ways in
>
> which rhetorics can privilege some at the expense of others,
>
> according the chosen few an unequal share of power, perquisites,
>
> and material benefits. (21)

Fulkerson's advocacy of rhetorical approaches ignores Berlin's analysis of the

relationship between rhetoric and ideology. What Berlin and Fulkerson share is that both

aim to play one game: for Fulkerson this is rhetoric and for Berlin it is the "liberated

consciousness of the students" (23). While Berlin and Fulkerson's approaches have been

used to argue for attention to discourse communities, Fulkerson's rhetorical approach,

which aligns with the status quo, has had more traction than Berlin's social-

epistemic/critical approach. So, the liberatory potential of composition studies has been

dimmed by the false polarization of so-called expressivist and social-epistemic

pedagogies and the hold of Fulkerson's taxonomy. What this means in practice is that the

outcomes of the most revered writing programs, for example those having received the CCCC Certificate of Excellence, require students to cultivate proficiency in standard English—the functional criteria of good writing in the university, which excludes the literacy students bring to school.

The literacies students bring to school include diverse, vernacular languages. Emphasizing only the conventions of standard English marginalizes these languages, languages that have been documented as inherently valuable by over fifty years of research in linguistics. This research documents that language diversity belongs in the first-year writing curriculum for a three main reasons: standard English, while offering important instrumental value, is no more inherently valuable than other dialects; home languages offer a bridge between the literacies students bring to class and academic discourses, which enables students to develop facility in the latter; and home languages allow for the representation of perspectives that do not always translate into standard English. [48]

The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the largest professional organization in the field of composition studies, officially endorses diversity—in terms of language and genre—in a number of public position statements,

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[48] See Geneva Smitherman's 1977 study *Talk and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*, Suresh Canagarah; *Alt Dis: Alternative Discourse and the Academy*, Ed, Patricia Bizzell, Helen Fox, and Christopher Schroeder; Taylor, Hanni, *Standard English, Black English, and Bidialectalism: A Controversy*. New York: Peter Lang, 1989; Kinloch, V. Revisiting the Promise of Students' Right to Their Own Language: Pedagogical strategies*." College Composition and Communication* 57.1: 83-113; Shirley Brice Heath *Ways with Word*s 1983; and the bibliography following SRTOL http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CCCC/NewSRTOL.pdf; *Language Diversity in the Classroom: From Intention to Practice* Smitherman and Villanueva; and The Linguist Society of America's Statement on Language Rights http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/saoghal/mion-chanain/LSA_statement.txt.

including "Students' Right to their Own Language" (SRTOL) (April 1974, reaffirmed November 2003, annotated bibliography added August 2006), "CCCC National Language Policy" (March 1988, updated 1992), and "CCCC Statement on the Multiple Uses of Writing" (November 2007). But, these public position statements do not tell the whole story; they do not represent the actual practice of those who work in the field. A survey of the six first-year writing programs that have received the CCCC's Certificate of Excellence since 2004, the year the award was established, demonstrates that alternative genres have an official place in first-year writing programs, but language diversity figures in the outcomes of only one of these programs.[49] By including diversity among the criteria they use to determine who will receive their certificates of excellence and then awarding these certificates to programs that exclude language diversity from their outcomes, CCCC not only perpetuates confusion, but also creates the deceptive appearance of support for diversity.

The other major professional organization in the field of composition, the Council of Writing Program Administrators has recently demonstrated a small improvement on the count of language diversity in their recent white paper on assessment, a departure from its Outcomes for First-Year Writing. Published in 1999, the WPA Outcomes for First-Year Writing Classes call for instruction in "conventions"; using the terms "conventions" and "surface features" to skirt issues of language diversity in a way that effectively promotes conformity to standard edited English. As the document states:

By the end of first year composition, students should:

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[49] Interestingly, Rowan recently changed the language of their outcomes to emphasize standard English.

Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical
situation

Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality

Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and
spelling

This outcomes statement insists only on conventions and, in the realm of formal
education, these are the conventions of academic discourse. It bears repeating that
alternatives to "conventions of format and structure" and "surface features" (code for
standard English) are important for three reasons: 1) vernacular literacies offer a bridge to
academic literacies, so making room for language diversity in college composition
facilitates the very outcomes cited above; 2) vernacular literacies allow for the
representation of contestatory positions; and 3) standard English has instrumental value,
but it is no more inherently valuable than other dialects.

WPA's more recent white paper on assessment, published in 2008, offers a more
nuanced position. It states explicitly:

Writing assessment should recognize diversity in language.
The methods and language that teachers and administrators use to make
decisions and engage students in writing, reading, responding, and
revising activities should incorporate meaningfully the multiple values
and ways of expressing knowledge by students present in the classroom
and local communities. Assessments and the decisions made from them
should account for students' rights to their own languages.

(http://wpacouncil.org/whitepaper)

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In this statement, the WPA affirms the value of language diversity, which represents progress. But, research on language diversity was available in 1999, when the outcomes statement was published and this research is still ignored in the outcomes most writing programs.

To fulfill our dreams of education that is liberatory and pragmatic, composition studies needs to align policy and practice with research on language diversity. For example, compositionists can advocate for the WPA to revise the Outcomes Statement for First-Year College Writing so that it explicitly includes the value of language diversity and explicitly includes facility in standard English. This sort of additive multilingualism recognizes decades of research on the value of dialects; supports the achievement of students from diverse backgrounds; prepares all students for communicating in an increasingly global, always changing world; and preserves the contestatory positions that are needed to turn dreams of better futures into realities.

In the final two chapters of this project, I outline two intertwined steps—one a broad disciplinary move with pedagogical consquences, the other a pedagogical practice with implications for public understanding of composition studies—that will enable composition studies to account for the dynamic nature of knowledge. The first step is to take an ecological approach to literacy and to engage in ecological research methods. In the next chapter, I review ecocomposition and assess my attempts to use ecocomposition in the classroom. I conclude, based on my students' work, that this approach teaches students to view context and audience as living, dynamic concepts and to view their writing abilities as live and dynamic systems of relationships. Using the concept of "zones of tolerance" that Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser have imported to

composition studies from ecology, I argue that ecological research methods and ecological concepts of literacy allow us to create both/and pedagogies that attend to the languages students bring to class and enable students to develop facility in the conventions of academic writing. Following Janet Murray, who spoke of the power of new media to represent both narrative and scientific discourse at the 2008 Watson Conference on Composition and Rhetoric, I argue that alternative discourses provide the means for writers to recapture the liberatory potential of narrative and scientific discourse. Alternative discourses extend rhetorical theory by supplementing logocentric rhetoric with eco-poetic aesthetics, such as Longinus's articulation of the sublime that, presaging postmodern aesthetics, considers how to represent the unrepresentable, or, in other words, that which moves writers and readers to post-humanist/pre-modernist epistemologies. This both/and approach allows college writers to consider a fuller range of the means of persuasion and rhetorical choices available to them as college writers, professional writers, and public rhetoricians.

The second step, which builds on the first, is to introduce first-year college students to public writing and to make public the work of composition studies. Following the social turn in composition studies, many have explicitly called for public writing as part of the college writing curriculum. Michael Halloran's 1983 article, "Rhetoric in the American College Curriculum: The Decline of Public Discourse," takes a historical perspective and argues that composition remember the ancient public and civic components of rhetoric. Writing in 2000, Herzog puts Halloran's argument into practice and observes that while his students' public writing was rough, it did enliven their

research. Nancy Welch's work more fully addresses public discourse in college writing as a response to the increasing privatization of late-stage capitalism. Christian Weisser reviews theories of the public sphere from Habermas to Nancy Fraser to articulate an informed pedagogy of public writing in college composition that acknowledges subaltern counterpublics and encourages praxis. Jane Danielwicz's 2008 *CCC* essay connects personal writing with public discourse to explicitly transcend the false dichotomies between public and personal. This research offers a firm ground for incorporating public writing into the first-year writing curriculum. Building on this ground, I propose that teachers of first-year college students encourage students to take their work beyond the class as means of 1) communicating to the public the work of composition studies; 2) as a means of writing for audiences beyond the university, audiences where vernacular languages and alternative genres are often more persuasive than academic discourse and where attention to careful proofreading is also important; and 3) as a means of dreaming of futures that transcend the boundaries of home, school, and academic disciplines.

Chapter Four: Ecology and College Composition: Research Methods, Theories, and Pedagogies

"Inversnaid"

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

     -Gerard Manley Hopkins

How can we read in the newspapers that "we" as humans might be responsible for 30 or 40% of species extinction, without this effecting a change in our "identity" and our "relationships"? How can we remain unmoved by the idea that we are now as dangerous to our life support system as the impact of a major meteorite?
-Bruno Latour, 2007

Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem, a paean to the weeds and wilderness and a celebration of generative disorder, evokes an earthy landscape, simmering with untamed life. This, a stark contrast to the burgeoning industrialism and formal gardens of the late 1800s when Hopkins wrote, is an even sharper counterpoint to the industrial parks, roll-out suburban lawns, and agri-business of the twenty-first century. Most contemporary

approaches to landscape design and agriculture pose an ideal scene and or target profit, cultivate a range of plants to create this ideal or meet this target, and intervene with toxic chemicals, traps, and fences to restrict and kill pests: animals, weeds, and insects that would interfere with the ideal ends. In the modern university, academic disciplines are similarly organized via taxonomies that cultivate particular epistemologies and exclude others. In place of fences, we have specialized jargon and research methods to keep intruders out. In the realm of college writing, we have an arsenal of weapons—placement tests, quizzes, rubrics, handbooks—to help us battle the traditional pests of student errors and vernacular dialects. One thing that the increasing specialization of disciplines and the standardization of language have in common with conventional landscaping and commercial agriculture is that all move towards monocultures, a dangerous move, one that has, as Bruno Latour reminds us, resulted in the loss of biodiversity in the physical environment. Another commonality is atomistic thought: a dangerous and ill-conceived focus on small, independent units rather than systems, a focus that exacerbates competition and stymies collaboration.

The wholistic science of ecology teaches us the value of diversity and attention to context as means of adaptation, and, essentially, as means of maintaining life. Gregory Bateson describes diversity as necessary for the survival of healthy ecosystem. He writes: "There shall be diversity in the civilization, not only to accommodate the genetic and experiential diversity of persons, but also to provide the flexibility and 'preadaption' necessary for unpredictable change" (503). The principles of permaculture, based on ecology, offer an alternative design model, one that transcends the Cartesian mistake of valuing mind above body and humans above nature. Rather than positing an ideal

landscape, permaculture works with the diverse materials, life forms, needs and resources of local ecosystems. As the Regenerative Design Institute explains:

> Observing the general rule of nature - that cooperative species and associations of self-supporting species make healthy communities, permaculture practitioners value cooperation and recognition of each person's unique contributions rather than standardization and competition.

Permaculture reminds us that pre-industrial principles of sustainable living embrace diversity in living ecosystems. In many ways, academic research offers a range of arguments for intellectual diversity in general and language diversity in particular. As far back as the 1950s, linguists have been detailing the existence of various World Englishes, in contrast to the illusory ideal of a standard English.[viii] But, this research has not yet completely changed public perceptions of diversity. Educated discourse remains narrowly defined as academic forms in standard English. The gatekeepers of the university are like homeowners who despise the dandelions on their lawns, unaware that these plants offer a host of nutritional and aesthetic benefits, unaware that by poisoning the dandelions, they are also poisoning the earth.

In this chapter, I explore ecological approaches to composition research and to first-year college writing as a means of responding to our growing understanding of the dynamic nature of knowledge in the twenty-first century and fulfilling our commitment to diversity. Kristie S. Fleckenstein, Clay Spinuzzi, Rebecca J. Rickly, and Carole Clark Pappers' article in the December 2008 *CCC* uses the metaphor of ecology to outline a paradigm for research in composition studies. Building on Cindy Johanek's contextualist

paradigm, Fleckenstein et al. offer a framework that not only attends to context, but also understands context in ecological terms- as "dynamic" and "stable" but not static (408, 411). They ask researchers to begin with questions that address local needs and to use hybrid methodologies that arise from their particular questions. They also ask researchers to recognize their subjectivity and the provisionality of knowledge, but, they argue, that this need not obviate the efficacy of research. In the end, then, they claim that an ecological model of composition research attends to local needs as part of an ever-changing greater whole, which resists closure.

I adopt their ecological model by addressing the local concerns of the writing program in which I teach, specifically the WRT 102 curriculum, and by using hybrid methodologies: qualitative research to describe Stony Brook Southampton, the history of ecocomposition, and my students' reflections on their coursework and quantitative research to assess whether the features of ecocomposition align with the WPA Outcomes statement and to demonstrate a correlation between ecocomposition as a design principle and student performance in terms of attendance, completion rates, and pass rates. After I describe the local contexts of my research—the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stony Brook and the new Stony Brook Southampton campus where I am developing the undergraduate writing program, I survey the origins of ecocomposition and analyze current trends in ecocomposition scholarship in order to discern characteristics of ecocomposition pedagogy. To get a sense of ecocomposition in practice, I review several syllabi. One was created by a teacher at St. John's University, whose writing program is directed by Derek Owens, a pioneer in the field of ecocomposition; as a point of comparison, I also analyze a syllabus this teacher used before she moved to St. John's.

The other syllabi I found by searching online for "syllabus" and "ecocomposition."[ix] One is a shared syllabi explicitly titled "Ecocomposition" that three teaching assistants at the University of Texas, Arlington use; the other two were posted online by William Kupinse, who teaches at the University of the Puget Sound. After analyzing these syllabi in terms of characteristics of ecocomposition, I assess these characteristics in terms of the WPA Statement of Outcomes for First-Year College Writing and determine which features of ecocomposition most clearly align with the WPA Statement. Then, I describe my process of using principles of ecocomposition to redesign my WRT 102 curriculum, and use quantitative and qualitative data to assess the success of this approach. I conclude with suggestions for reaping deeper benefits from ecocomposition as a design principle and reflections on the efficacy of this sort of research for writing teachers.

Stony Brook Southampton opened August 2007, on the grounds of the former Southampton College campus of Long Island University. The college defines itself through four unique features: interdisciplinarity, sustainability, integrated academic and extracurricular programming, and coursework with practical applications. The undergraduate program offers degrees in a number of interdisciplinary programs that relate to sustainability, including: Environmental Design, Policy and Planning; Marine Biology; Marine Vertebrate Biology; Ecosystems and Human Impact; Sustainability; and Environment Studies. Two new degree programs, Nutrition and Environmental Humanities, are moving through the approval process. Graduate offerings include an M.F.A. in Writing and Literature and a Marine Research Center affiliated with the School

of Marine and Atmospheric Studies of Stony Brook University that supports research opportunities for students and faculty.

While three hundred undergraduate students and fifty graduate students are currently enrolled, two-thousand is the target enrollment. The eighty-two acre campus, which accommodates two-hundred resident students, overlooks Peconic Bay to the south. A shuttle runs to the west campus of Stony Brook University, fifty miles away, where students may take classes and participate in campus life. A Manhattan campus, ninety miles to the east, completes the institutional offerings. While the first class of students, who arrived in fall of 2007, had varying levels of commitment to the school's mission, (many enrolled in Southampton with the desire to transfer to the west campus), the current students demonstrate their commitment to the school and mission by their involvement in campus activities and their continued enrollment in the school. Student-run clubs on campus—Wildlife, Gardening, SCUBA Diving, Boating—represent students' interests in the environmental activities.

Three full-time lecturers teach WRT 101 and WRT 102, the first-year writing classes. Approximately twenty-five percent of incoming students take both classes and seventy-five percent place directly into WRT 102.[x] Teaching assistants from the MFA program also teach these classes; I train and supervise these teaching assistants, who usually number three each fall. The Writing Center supports this first-year writing sequence as well as writing across the curriculum. Upper division elective offerings include creative nonfiction and technical communications. Program directors determine upper-division writing requirements, which usually require students to submit two papers from upper-division classes.

The Program in Writing and Rhetoric at the west campus of Stony Brook offers two first-year writing classes: WRT 101 and WRT 101. The goals of these courses align with the WPA outcomes (McLeod 4). These courses are taught by twenty-seven full-time lecturers, a varying number of adjuncts, and a cadre of graduate teaching assistants from English, History, Comparative Literature and other departments. One full-time tenure-track professor directs the program and one associate professor is affiliated with the program. The Writing Center supports the first-year writing program as well as writing across the curriculum and a large population of multi-lingual writers. Beginning the summer of 2009, a number of new upper-division writing courses are being offered. Departments determine their own upper division writing requirement, which, in practice, is often defined as the submission of two papers written for upper-division classes.

Because Stony Brook Southampton is charged with maintaining consistency with Stony Brook in terms of general education requirements and because WRT 102 fulfills one such requirement, my WRT 102 curriculum needs to align with the outcomes of the PWR. Beyond these outcomes, the parameters of the PWR at Stony Brook give writing teachers much freedom in the design of their classes. I taught WRT 101 and WRT 102 at Stony Brook for six years before I left for the new campus in Southampton, but I had used narrative epistemology and cultural studies to organize my curriculum. At CCCC 2009, I attended a number of panels on ecocomposition. I had heard of ecocomposition before, but I had dismissed it as a fad. My resistance to ecocomposition continues to puzzle me because I have a long-standing commitment to environmentalism. After CCCC 2009, when I began to research the origins of ecocomposition, I was surprised to learn it has a recent history of thirty-five years.

The first explicit move to integrate writing and ecology was made by Richard Coe. In his 1975 *CCC* essay, "Eco-Logic for the Composition Classroom." Coe writes: "My thesis is that we should teach rhetorical modes based on eco-logic as well as on analytic logic" (233). He begins by problemitizing the analytic logic that he observes in much of the teaching of writing, a logic that breaks rhetorical modes into smaller and smaller units- which leads to atomistic, decontextualized rhetoric. The eco-logic that he proposes differs from this analytic logic in that it requires a holistic perspective, which includes context. He offers a number of examples to illustrate the powerful role that context plays in perception, noting that perception of data is always framed by perception of patterns. This type of thinking—systems thought—borrows much from work in ecology, which is why Coe calls this an "eco"-logic. While blaming the rise of analytic rhetoric on modern epistemologies that arose following the scientific revolution, epistemologies predicated on mechanistic, dualistic views of nature, he notes that new science, such as quantum physics, is more holistic, so it requires a new rhetoric, one that accounts for eco-logic as well as analytic logic. In conclusion, he qualifies his critique when he writes "our traditional rhetoric was not wrong. Neither was our traditional logic or our traditional perceptions. It is just that the world has changed so much that our traditional perceptions, logic, and rhetoric are no longer a well adapted as they once were. Consequently, they sometimes lead us into error." (237) Attention to principles of ecology and physics is a hallmark of later work in ecocomposition, as is respect for diversity in terms of hybrid methodologies and alternative epistemologies.

Eleven years later, Marilyn Cooper responded to and adapted Coe's call for eco-logic in her 1986 *College English* article, "The Ecology of Writing." She proposed a dynamic model of writing, one that emphasized the social contexts of composing processes, in contrast to cognitivist models. While she credited the later for facilitating a paradigm shift from the product of writing to students and their process, she critiqued it as too static and abstract to account for the complex, changing nature of writing. Cooper connected the marxist literary theory of Fredric Jameson—especially his three concentric frames of interpretation—with the work of linguists, such as William Labov and Shirley Brice Heath, to demonstrate that contexts affect both literary interpretation and literacy practices. This connection between literary theory and literacy studies continues as later work in ecocomposition not only advances social, contextual ways of understanding composition but also uses theoretical work from literary studies to expand our understanding of literacy.

While the fields of ecocriticism, which analyzes nature imagery in literature to understand relationships between culture and the environment, and ecofeminism, which builds on the work of ecocriticism with attention to the conjoined, historical oppression of women and nature, continued to grow through the 1980s and 1990s, Cooper and Coe's arguments for ecological approaches to composition studies were subsumed by the social turn, which emphasized human social contexts rather than natural and built environments. Then, at the 1998 Conference on College Composition and Communication, Randall Roorda, Lee Smith, and Michael McDowell coined the term ecocomposition to describe their work, which emerged from work for the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE)- a group that continues to support work in ecocriticism,

ecofeminism, and nature in literature. Over the past ten years, a number of books and articles have been published on the topic including: *The Wealth of Reality* by Peg Syverson (1999), *Composition and Sustainability; Teaching for a Threatened Generation* by Derek Owens (2001), *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference,* by Nedra Reynolds (2002), *Natural Discourse: Toward Ecocomposition* by Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser (2002), and *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches* Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser, eds. (2002).

Ecological principles are being employed for methodological and theoretical as well as pedagogical purposes. The 2009 Fleckenstein, Spinuzzi, Rickly, and Papper *CCC* article cited above builds on the work of Coe and Cooper to create a productive frame for post-process composition research.*[xi]* Viewing ecocomposition as an extension of post-process theory, Byron Hawk claims even ecocomposition remains bound to dialectics, which restrict it. As corrective, Hawk offers "more emphasis on the material and affective ecologies that exist in…classrooms" (224). At the 2009 Conference on College Composition and Communication, a number of speakers offered a range of positions on ecocomposition, including its connections to the sciences (Jared Grogan, "Entangled Writing: Refracting Hope and Science in Eco-Composition"); classroom applications (Sean McCarthy, "An Example of the Use of Google Maps in a Writing-Intensive Classroom"), means of assessing ecocomposition practices (Margaret Syverson, "The Learning Record for Multimodal Learning"), the phenomenological ground of ecocomposition theory (Robert Yageleski, "Writing, Being, and the Crisis of Sustainability"), the history of ecocomposition (Christian Weisser, "Toward the Ecology of Writing"), and ecocomposition philosophical connection to post-humanism (Sidney

Dobrin, "Post-/Ecocomposition"). Thus, many have finally taken up Coe and Cooper's early calls for understanding the eco-logic and ecologies of writing. And, current ecocomposition scholarship attends to material and affective ecologies, responding to Hawk's critique.

Currently, the two books that most directly address ecocomposition and first-year writing are *Composition and Sustainability: Teaching for a Threatened Generation* by Derek Owens (2001) and *Natural Discourse: Toward Ecocomposition* by Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser (2002). Owens, who not only includes many samples of his students' work but also includes a model syllabus, offers a more fully articulated pedagogy. Interestingly, while he explicitly ties his pedagogy to an environmentalist agenda, in practice, his syllabi require students to choose from a variety of reading and writing assignments and to consider multiple points of view, which ultimately makes their interests the frame for the class. In contrast, Dobrin and Weisser work to define ecocomposition as an extension of ecocriticism and ecofeminism that moves in two directions: to probe rhetorical social constructions of nature and to enable students to exercise their ability to produce discourse. Thus, ecocomposition moves beyond ecocriticism, which historically focused on the explication of published texts rather than the generation of student texts. Their description of classroom practices is less developed than Owens's and their range of sources is less eclectic, which allows them to more directly articulate the connections between ecology as a science and composition as a teaching discipline but also circumscribes their work.

Owens offers three ways of framing students work in a first-year college writing class: via place, via work, and via the future. Owens articulates the rationale for each

frame and offers samples of students work. In the syllabus he provides, we get a closer look into his classroom, which is comprised of four units: the first requires students to write about place and the last requires students to write about the future, the middle two units offer students a number of choices, such as working on oral histories, engaging in service learning, studying education philosophy, creating ethnographies, imaging eutopia (which he defines as a good, not perfect place, echoing Brian Massumi), and exploring consciousness. For the all units, Owens provides reading assignments, informal writing assignments, and formal writing assignments. In the units where students have choice, the class splits into groups to discuss the readings and review each others work. This, the structure of his class, mitigates the didactic tone in the introduction and demonstrates that his classes do focus on students' writing and on students writing in a way that allows for dissent.

Owens's most important contribution to ecocomposition is the concept of reconstructive design- an approach to education that asks academics to appreciate the contributions of generalists and specialists, and, in a related move, looks to other disciplines such as art, design and environmental studies for ideas about writing. While Owens does not explicitly state that this is a systems approach, his moves embody systems thinking, as he demonstrates the situatedness of composition studies and the permeability of the boundaries it shares with other fields. His concept of reconstructive design has much in common with permaculture in that both work with, even celebrate, living material. In essence, this means attending to the material we have inherited- the physical material and cultural material- and acknowledging that we might productively reshape this material, moving beyond the impasse of postmodernism. For Owens, this

means employing a methodology that emphasizes students' stories. As he writes: "part of the reason I have chosen to make this book more testimony than pedagogy, spending more time quoting students than reflecting upon my own classroom dynamic, is to emphasize that our students stories are as pedagogical as anything we can construct" (144).[50]

Like Owens, Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser describe their commitment to environmentalism. In their book *Natural Discourse: Toward Ecocomposition,* they seek to define ecocomposition "not a study of nature writing but a study of writing and ecology and the ecology of writing" (62). They are primarily interested in defining ecocomposition as a field that considers how discourse frames our understanding of nature and how we can use discourse to reframe our understanding of nature to account for biocentric, holistic epistemologies rather than anthropocentric, humanistic epistemologies. Theoretically, this means that they, like Coe and many ecofeminists, take issue with Cartesian dualistic, and mechanistic thought.[51] In its place, they present the work of biologists and systems theorists to demonstrate that discourse communities are always multiple and dynamic systems. They use the concept of zones of tolerance, a biological terms that maps the movement of species along the borders of ecological systems, to frame the work of

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[50] The connects with Kristie S. Fleckenstein, Clay Spinuzzi, Rebecca J. Rickly, and Carole Clark Papper use of the word story to describe the data gleaned from ecological approaches to composition research. This concept of story as evidence that has much in common with Quaker epistemology.

[51] While early ecofeminist theory posited a special relationship between women and nature, more recent theory seeks to overcome dualisms such as male/female and nature/culture. See Susan Griffin *Woman and Nature: the Roaring Inside Her* (1979); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death Of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (1980). Colleen Mack-Canty, "Third-Wave Feminism and the Need to Reweave the Nature/Culture Duality. "*NWSA Journal* 16.3 (2004) 154-179.

student writers, who work at the borders of academic/public discourse and personal/private discourse. They also use historical research to document alternative rhetorical histories and alternative epistemologies that include holistic perspectives, especially a rereading of Aristotle that reclaims the value of *pathos* as a rhetorical tool.

In practice, they advocate three specific positions. First, ecological literacy-understanding of place- must be "an essential component of an ecocomposition curriculum" (141). Second ecocompositionists must be activist intellectuals, who work via "subaltern counterpublics" to expand "discursive contestation" (100). Third, "Ecocomposition must be an active *praxis*: it must engage and involve students. It must encourage students beyond the classroom environment." They recognize two types of ecocomposition pedagogy: one which explicitly seeks to develop in students " a Freire-inspired concept of critical consciousness" and one which they call "discursive ecology 'that "urge[s] students to look at their own discursive acts as being inherently ecological" (117). They advocate the later as "the most progressive and dynamic" (116, 117).

Dobrin and Weisser offer several sample assignments to illustrate ecocomposition pedagogy. One, a service learning assignment, asks students to volunteer for an organization that is involved in environmental clean-up and to create a flyer to promote participation in the organization. Another asks students to create a webpage about an organization of their choice. Both fit into the category "writing for communities" that Tom Deans describes. A third assignment came from a writing class that was linked with a content class called "global Issues". Students worked in groups to create webpages that addressed "environmental and ecological issues on campus (149). The research for these projects taught students about the connections between their university, the city of Tampa

in which the university resides, and beyond "the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay, and in turn, the Gulf of Mexico" (149). Working together, students also found links among their projects. Encouraging students to understand connections in this way comprises the heart of Weisser and Dobrin's pedagogy.

After reviewing the edited collection *Ecocomposition* along with the work of Owens, Dobrin, Weisser, Reynolds, and Syverson, I discerned nine features of ecocomposition pedagogy—student centered pedagogy, place-based assignments, readings with nature themes, interdisciplinarity, use of new media, critical/cultural studies/postmodern approaches, service-learning, and post-humanism—which I elaborate upon below. First, I present those that appear to overlap with mainstream composition practices, such as student-centered pedagogies. I conclude with more controversial features, such as posthumanism. In this review, I connect the features of ecocomposition with composition scholarship to show that ecocomposition is deeply rooted in composition studies.

1) **Student-centered pedagogy:** Because ecocomposition focuses on ecology and writing, it takes us to the local level of lived experience. For some, like Weisser and Dobrin, this is broadly about attention to the dynamic relationship between self and context. An assignment that Weisser describes in "Ecocomposition and the Greening of Identity" asks students to write about their identities in connection with non human communities, thus using a student-centered approach to move to a posthuman position. William Kupinse's Ecological Autobiography Assignment offers a similar assignment. In Derek Owens's classes, a student-centered orientation means making space for students to

recount and reflect on their experience and encouraging students to make informed choices about their education and their future. In Nedra Reynolds's work, attention to students leads to an analysis of their lived experience of place on campus and off campus in the communities they find as college students.

In the greater realm of composition scholarship, student-centered pedagogies have been well-favored. A keyword search for student-centered via the ComPile database resulted in 516 results, the earliest a 1947 essay by Frederick Sorensen titled "What is basic Communication?" and the most recent a collaborative essay in *College Composition and Communication* 60.4 from June 2009. As a point of comparison, a keyword search for teacher-centered generated thirteen records, the most recent from 1998 and the earliest from 1974. Clearly, student-centered approaches received more attention in composition scholarship. In *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, Erika Lindemann offers a representative rationale for this when she argues that college writing classes work best when students and their writing processes are the focus (258).[52]

2) **Place-based writing assignments**: These assignments come in a variety of forms. Derek Owens, who teaches at a largely commuter campus, asks students to write about the places where they live and play so they may celebrate these places, consider the problems they embody, and, if they choose, complete service projects to ameliorate the problems; Reynolds asks her students to map the routes among the places where they live,

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[52] The attention Lindemann asks prospective teachers to devote to their students and their students process*es* (in *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*) serves as a corrective to the post-process critique, or, rather, as an indication that process pedagogy has many forms. The post-process critique of process pedagogy argues against universalizing models of the composing process and against rigid applications of process models. Rooted in social-constructionist views of language and learning, post-process practices can be seen in thirdspace pedagogies*,* such as Rhonda C. Grego and Nancy S. Thompson's *Teaching/Writing in Thirdspaces: The Studio Approach*.

work, study, and socialize and to reflect on the social, economic, and racial factors that structure these routes; Sean McCarthy also asks students to engage in mapping, but his students use Google maps to illustrate communities of NPOs (nonprofit organizations) and to encourage collaboration and shared resources between these organizations- thus illustrating the overlap among service-learning, public writing, new media, and place; Dobrin and Weisser's place-based assignments teach students to understand the university in the context of multiple ecosystems: built, natural, and social.

Place-based writing assignments offer students the opportunity to write from experience and observation, so they do not have to master "content" as well. This aligns with James Moffet's advice, articulated in *Teaching in a Universe of Discourse* and also in a later essay "Bridges: From Personal Writing to the Essay" that students move from close subjects and audiences to more distant ones and that they work inductively from experience, observation, and data to generalizations and conclusions.[53]

3) Nature themes: Composition studies has an established tradition of theme-based classes.[54] Edward Lotto and other extend this to ecocomposition by asking students to read classic texts from the genre of nature writing and to use these texts as models for their own writing and by including texts that demonstrates the historical and cultural specificity of concepts of nature. William J. Kupinse also works in this tradition, but he asks students to move beyond the models they read and to consider the ecological contexts

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[53] Thomas Hothem demonstrates the value of place-based writing in suburban settings in his 2009 essay "Suburban Studies and College Writing: Applying Ecoomposition." *Pedagogy* 2009 9(1):35-59. This essay also illustrates the intersection between ecocomposition and popular culture studies.
[54] The topic of theme-based classes overlaps in many ways with questions about the role of reading in college writing classes, which David Joliffe takes up in his recent review essay "Learning to Read as Continuing Education." *College Composition and Communication* 58.3 (February 2007): 470-494.

from which they write and to consider themselves a capable of redefining nature via the production of creative texts. This model is used in many writing programs including Harvard's, George Washington's, Princeton's, and Purdue University's. A drawback of this model, according to critics, is that it may divert attention from students' writing to the subject matter/content of the theme.[55] Supporters claim it provides a means of teaching writing as inquiry, the approach deemed most effective by Hillocks's meta-analysis.[56]

      4) **Public writing:** Dobrin and Weisser connect public writing with awareness of audience as well as a writing pedagogy based on praxis, which for them as environmentalists, means translating environmental concerns for public audiences to evoke action. Theoretically, they advocate what Nancy Fraser calls "subaltern counterpublics" (100). Such discourse collapses "school" genres and replaces them with writing that grows from particular needs. Public writing serves a number of purposes in composition classes, as I describe in the next chapter. In brief, scholars such as S. Michael Halloran argue that public discourse reunites composition with its origins in rhetoric and civic life. Others, such as Bruce Herzog, see it as a means of revitalizing academic research and connecting coursework with community work. More recently Christian Weisser uses philosophical investigations of the public sphere to outline viable pedagogies for public writing and Nancy Welch traces the history of rhetoric from below, the methods of persuasion used by social justice movements, to create a more informed pedagogy of public writing for college compositions.

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[55] Dobrin and Weisser make this point and emphasize that the goal of ecocomposition is the production of student texts. See *Natural Discourse.*
[56] See George Hillocks *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice.* 1995.

5) **New Media:** Writing for the internet, which offers the option of hypertext connections and live audiences, is a useful way to encourage students to practice the type of systems thought and public discourse that ecocomposition advocates. Dobrin and Weisser offer examples of assignments that ask students to create webpages for environmental groups. In *Embodied Literacies: Imageword and a Poetics of Teaching*, Kristie Fleckenstein has students create paper websites in response to class readings. These "websites" encourage students connect texts with their experiences, and observations via isolating and linking quotations as well as sounds and images. Bradley John Monsma uses the work of new media theorists, such as Cynthia Selfe, and phenomenologists, such as David Abram and M. Merleau Ponty, to articulate a rationale for "inter-networked, ecologically-based student research projects" (289).

Kathleen Yancey's 2004 chair's address at the Conference on College Composition and Communication served to fully usher in the digital revolution in the field of composition studies. A number of scholars, such as Cynthia Selfe, Anne Franscois Wysocki, Stuart Selber, Kathleen Welch, and Kristie Fleckenstein laid the groundwork for attention to new media on historical, theoretical, and pragmatic grounds. Those resistant to new media see it as another challenge to standard English and the canon of literature. A more temperate critique, articulated by Charles Moran, asks teachers to be mindful that students have uneven access to technology.[57]

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[57] On the roles of new media in college writing, see Stuart Selber, *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age* ; *Writing New Media*, *Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*, Anne Frances Wysocki, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc; *Passion, Pedagogies, and Twenty-First Century Technologies* ed Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe. For a historical perspective see Hawisher, Gail E., Paul LeBlanc, Charles Moran, and Cynthia L. Selfe. *Computers and   the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education, 1979-1994*: *A History*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex,

6) Interdisciplinarity: Academically and theoretically, ecocomposition is rooted in the humanities and sciences, as we find in Dobrin and Weisser's brief history. Owens speaks of the practical virtues of interdisciplinary work to respond to transdisciplinary environmental problems we face. He also argues for the intellectual benefits of learning from other fields and moving beyond narrow specialties. This feature has been more difficult to find in the practices of other ecocomposition scholars, so it is a feature that will need more attention if it is to be fully realized. Interdisciplinarity is a useful concept for first-year writing classes, which often include students from a variety of disciplines. More importantly, it allows students to pose questions and pursue answers that transcend academic disciplinary divisions.

A number of projects posit the writing class as an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary space. There are three main approaches to this: one posits writing as a means of learning that is useful in all of the disciplines; another aims to improve the teaching of writing across the curriculum (WAC) ; the third aims to teach the specific conventions of academic disciplines (WID). Most interesting to an ecological view of literacy is the recent collection *Writing Against The Disciplines*, which gathers material about writing classes as important sites of resistance to disciplinary pressures to conform to narrow epistemologies.

7) **Poststructuralism/cultural studies/critical studies**: While there are important differences among these three orientations, I group them together because in terms of ecocomposition, they serve one basic functions: to promote understanding of nature as socially constructed. As a pedagogical feature, this, like interdisciplinarity, is

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1996.

sometimes difficult to see. Nedra Reynolds's work, which requires students to map their communities, is one way of approaching this, because it destabilizes students' understanding of natural routes/places/arrangements/social arrangements. Another way of approaching this is found in William Kupinse's fall 08 syllabus for his class "Environmental Imagination." Kupinse offers a reading sequence that disrupts naïve definitions of nature. Similarly, the syllabus used by teaching assistants at the University of Texas, Arlington also uses readings that encourage students to question received definitions of nature. Bradley John Monsma claims that the success of his ecocomposition class "may rest in its least tangible or quantifiable aspect—the potential changes in the consciousness of students, in their way of thinking about and experiencing language and place" (287).

James Berlin argues for the value of poststructuralism in college composition in his article "Poststructuralism, Cultural Studies, and the Composition Classroom: Postmodern Theory in Practice." As he writes, postructualism helps us understand that "each of us is heterogeneously made up of competing discourses, conflicted and contradictory scripts, that make our consciousness anything but unified, coherent, and autonomous" (18). The composition classroom, according to Berlin, is an important site for students to understand the nature of consciousness. Ira Shor and Henry Giroux are often credited for applying Dewey and Freire's insights on liberatory education to the college curriculum and developing critical pedagogies. More recent champions of critical approaches, which explore the intersections of literacy, students' lives, and social forces, include William Thelin and Robert Yagelski. In comparison to student-centered pedagogies, place-based writing, and new media technologies, consciousness is a vexed

issue as evinced by Maxine Hairston's "Diversity, Ideology and the Teaching of Writing" and the ensuing response to her critique of cultural studies for politicizing the teaching of writing and distracting students and teachers from writing. But, such approaches may serve as a means of helping students "understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power," one of the outcomes from the WPA Statement of Outcomes for First-Year College Writing.

8) Service-learning: Derek Owens offers students the option of fulfilling their service requirement via their writing classes. Providing service opportunities that require students to focus on place, to engage in secondary research, and to use their experience of service as primary research material, these assignments connect ecocomposition and service-learning. Others, such as Dobrin and Weisser, focus service-learning more squarely on environmental issues, such as creating promotional material for environmental organizations. A third type of ecocomposition service-learning asks students to work on environmental projects—beach clean-ups, plantings, park maintenance—and to then write about their experiences. I ranked service low in terms of alignment with more traditional composition pedagogies not because it necessarily diverges from mainstream composition, but because service learning often requires administrative scaffolding that may be beyond the purview of individual teachers.

The three ways ecocompositionists currently use service learning in their classes aligns with Tom Deans's three categories: writing for, writing about, and writing with. As with any service-learning, such projects need careful planning to ensure success. Projects should encourage reciprocity—meeting community and institutional needs—and for

these projects to be successful, students must choose to commit to their projects

(Cushman, Deans, Goldblatt, Flowers).

9) Posthumanism: The most radical feature of ecocomposition, posthumanism argues against the fallacy of individual subjectivity, offering instead a full biocentric- consciousness, which requires understanding the lived connections among humans, animals, plants, and earth and making ethical decisions based upon this understanding, decisions that no longer prioritize what benefits humans but rather responds to the needs of connected ecological communities. Dobrin made this point in his 2009 CCCC's talk. Christian Weisser uses student-centered pedagogies to elicit such shifts in consciousness. This feature, like the poststructuralist/cultural-critical studies orientation remains controversial [xii] N. Katherine Hayles's 1999 book *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* is an important source for composition scholars interested in posthuman perspectives. Her work follows Judith Bulter's 1991 "Manifesto for Cyborgs." Posthumanism is one important site for overlap among transdisciplinary perspectives, critical pedagogies and new media work. In 2000, *JAC* devoted an issue to posthuman rhetorics. Collin Giford Brooke used Hayles's work as well as the work of Bruno Latour (*We Have Never Been Modern)* to explore distributed intelligence in our media age.

While the list of features of above is not exhaustive and the connections cursory, I hope it offers a useful view of the major features of ecocomposition pedagogy in contemporary scholarship and an initial effort to situate these features within trends in

composition scholarship. This review is a step towards demonstrating that ecocomposition extends and complicates contemporary composition theory and pedagogy in a number of ways: 1) by attending to the importance of context; 2) by responding to the rift between academic discourse and lived experience; and 3) by accounting for the provisional, dynamic nature of knowledge. In additional, the principles of reconstructive design and discursive ecology offer important ways of imagining the work of composition studies and first-year writing in the twenty-first century.

Bearing in mind that scholarship does not always reflect practices, I sought more information about how ecocomposition pedagogies are being translated into classroom practices and how these practices relate to the outcomes that the WPA recommends for first-year college writing (See figure #1 for this outcomes statement. See appendix A for the syllabi.). While published work on ecocomposition refers to the range of pedagogies described above, some features- especially post-humanism, public writing, and new media, have not yet made it into practice in the syllabi I found. These syllabi do provide evidence that ecocomposition as a design principle for first-year writing does facilitate meeting the outcomes of the WPA statement. Of the four syllabi I assessed, a syllabus used by a teacher at St. Johns (S#1) ranked highest, meeting twenty out of twenty-four outcomes. Two syllabi used by William Kupinse, who teaches at the University of the Puget Sound, rank second highest, meeting nineteen of the twenty-four outcomes. The syllabus used by the teaching assistants met seventeen of the twenty-four outcomes. As a point of comparison, I ranked the syllabus used by the St. Johns professor when she taught at a different college. This syllabus met eighteen of the twenty-four outcomes.

While S#1 does not explicitly mention ecocomposition, it serves as an example of

the effect of a writing program director's influence on classroom practices because it was created by a teacher at St. Johns University, where Derek Owens directs the Institute for Writing Studies. While Owens leaves many choices to the teachers, he requires a common assignment: the Place Portrait Essay. This assignment, the anchor of syllabus #1, requires place-based writing, an important feature of ecocomposition, and it also serves as a means by which students may fulfill may of the WPA outcomes (more below). This assignment requires students to engage in primary research by visiting, observing, and writing about a place beyond the classroom; it requires students to create an argument based upon their primary research; it serves as the spring board for library research; and it serves as a site of service learning. The teacher who created S#1 scaffolds this assignment with readings about place (Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* and Jonathan Kozol's *Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Years of Hope*); analysis of the techniques used by published authors; in-class discussion of topics and appropriate places to write about; prewriting in the form of field notes; lessons on avoiding plagiarism, crafting thesis statements, and crafting arguments; peer review at early and late stages of the project; deadlines for early and late drafts of the essay; conferences; lessons on revision; and lessons on proofreading. As the instructor connects the Place Portrait with the library research project, she introduces lessons on crafting research questions, library research, and MLA format, and she articulates deadlines for annotated bibliographies, early drafts, and revisions. The third assignment for this course—the Textual Collage—encourages students to experiment with form, as the teacher writes: "a poem, song lyrics, a letter of complaint, an essay, a play, or..who knows....I can't wait to see what you come up with." The fourth assignment, the Textual Analysis Essay, builds on the third, asking students to

analyze their own work.

Together, the assignments and supporting class work from S#1 embody several important features of ecocomposition: place-based writing, reading about the natural world and built environments, attention to the contexts in which discourse is created, and attention to students as creators of discourse. The service-learning option exhibits another feature of ecocomposition. The range of choices the teacher provides within the assignments, the arrangement of peer review online and in class, and the progression of revision workshops from global to local issues show the teacher's awareness of student-centered pedagogies and writing as a recursive process. The two important areas of ecocomposition that are not on this syllabus are use of new media technologies and attention to interdisciplinarity. The later might be part of the research project, but this is unclear from the syllabus.

S #1 directly supports all of the WPA Outcomes except for four: Rhetorical Knowledge #3 (respond to the needs of different audiences); Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing #4 (understand the relationship among language, knowledge, and power); P #6 ("use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences") and Composing in Electronic Environments #3 (Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing process and text). These areas may be addressed in the class in ways that are not evident in the syllabus. The class readings suggest attention to "language, knowledge and power" and the textual analysis suggests attention "to the needs of different audiences." A follow-up interview might help clarify these areas.

S#2, used by three teaching assistants at the University of Texas at Arlington, takes

EcoComposition as its title. The readings for this class (from *Saving Place: An Ecocomposition Reader*) more squarely focus on nature themes and environmental issues than S#1, but this class does not appear to require place-based writing. Projects are titled: Exploratory, Annotated Bibliography, Research Position Paper, and Service Learning Reflection/Response. This syllabus explicitly targets seventeen of the twenty-four WPA Outcomes. Like S#1, this syllabus failed to incorporate Composing in Electronic Environments #3 ("Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts"), Processes #6 ("use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences") and Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing #4 ("Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power), but, like S #1, the readings might have attended to the later. Further omissions in S #2 include Rhetorical Knowledge #3 (respond to the needs of different audiences") and Rhetorical Knowledge #6 (Understand how genre shapes reading and writing). Rhetorical Knowledge # 5 (Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality) and Knowledge of Conventions #4 ("control surface features such as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling) are featured in the syllabus outcomes, but are not mentioned in the schedule of classes.

S#3 and S#4, both used by William Kupinse at the University of the Puget Sound, share many common features: both meet the same nineteen WPA outcomes, both require reading about nature and place-based writing. S #3 assigns an ecological autobiography, while S#4 requires a comparative literary analysis. Thus the former leans slightly more towards a student-centered approach, while the later emphasizes textual analysis. As with S #1 and S#2, Kupinse's syllabi failed to explicitly Rhetorical

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Knowledge #3 ("Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts"), and CTRW #4 ("Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power), but, like S #1 and S #2 the readings might have attended to the later. This class also required presentations, which makes it closer to fulfilling P #6 ("use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences").

WPA Statement of Outcomes for First-Year College Writing

Rhetorical Knowledge

RK 1 Focus on a purpose
RK 2 Respond to the needs of different audiences
RK 3 Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
RK 4 Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
RK 5 Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
RK 6 Understand how genres shape reading and writing
RK 7 Write in several genres

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

CT, R & W 1 Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
CT, R & W 2 Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
CT, R & W 3 Integrate their own ideas with those of others
CT, R & W 4 Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Processes

P 1 Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
P 2 Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
P 3 Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
P 4 Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
P 5 Learn to critique their own and others' works
P 6 Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
P 7 Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

Knowledge of Conventions

KC 1 Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
KC 2 Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
KC 3 Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
KC 4 Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Composing in Electronic Environments

CEE 1 Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
CEE 2 Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
CEE 3 Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts
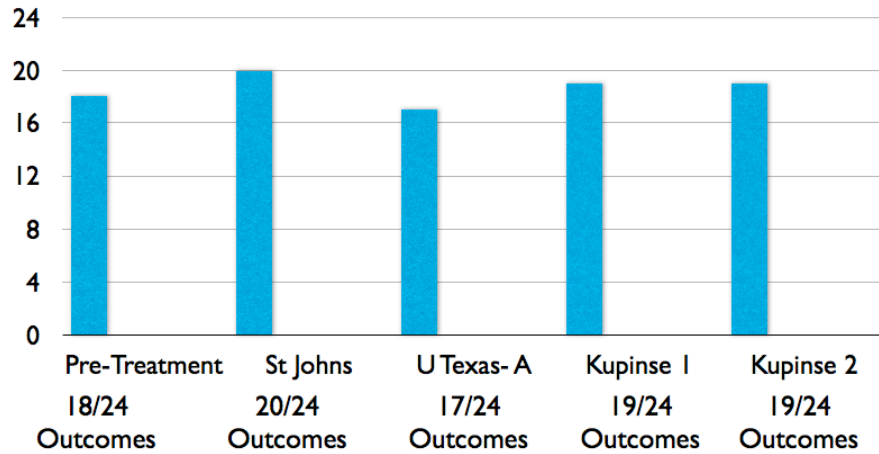
(http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html)

Ecocomposition and WPA Outcomes

Figure #1: Ecocomposition Syllabi

Ecocomposition and WPA Outcomes

- 18 WPA Outcomes Met
- 6 WPA Outcomes Unmet

25%

75%

Pretreatment

- 20 WPA Outcomes Met
- 4 WPA Outcomes Unmet

17%

83%

St. John's
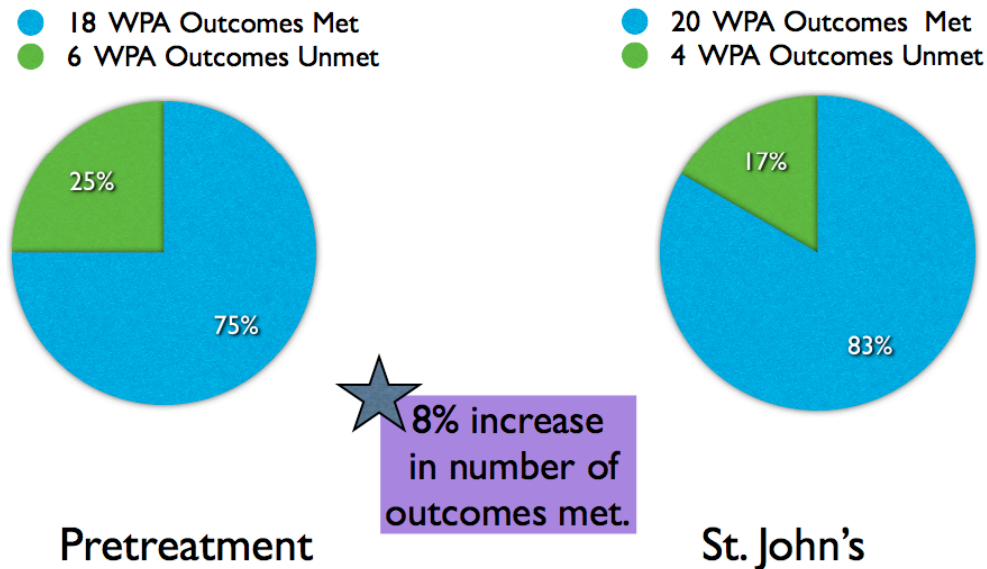
8% increase in number of outcomes met.

Figure 2: Ecocomposition Pedagogies and WPA Outcomes

This analysis is, of course, limited by my personal investment in the topic and the limited number of syllabi I reviewed. A follow-up study would compile a team to collect and assess more data, thus creating a firmer basis for conclusions. This group would collaboratively review a set of syllabi to determine the standard features—such as types of assignments, readings, classroom activities—that align with the WPA Outcomes Statement. This would make the assessment of alignment between ecocomposition practices and WPA outcomes more reliable and avoid the halo-effect. While recognizing these shortfalls, I determined that this review offers sufficient evidence that ecocomposition does offer a viable means for achieving the outcomes that the WPA recommends.

My own experiment using ecocomposition to redesign the curriculum of my WRT

102 classes at Stony Brook Southampton provides more evidence for the efficacy of this

approach and has deepened my perspective on the challenges this approach poses. After

determining that ecocomposition would allow me to meet the WPA outcomes for First-

year College Writing as well as the Program in Writing and Rhetoric's Outcomes, I

revised my syllabus using ecocomposition as a design principle. My first change was to

order a textbook for a reader; this decision was motivated by feedback from my students,

who complained of wasting paper by printing readings I had posted online. In addition,

because I was teaching this new curriculum for the first time, I found Sidney Dobrin's

ecocomposition textbook *Saving Place* useful in terms of the readings it included; the

introduction where Dobrin defines ecocomposition, ecological literacy, and the concept of

discursive ecology; the pre- and post-reading questions he created; and the avenues for

research he provided via links to web material and suggested writing topics. [58]

I kept the basic structure of my class, maintained the same class policies, used the

same formal assignments and kept three readings from fall 08 in my fall 09 syllabus:

"Blizzard Under Blue Sky" a short story by Pam Houston, "The Ones Who Walk Away

from Omelas" a short story by Ursula Le Guin, and an essay by Henry Giroux "When

Hope is Subversive." The three changes I made were 1) to assign eight essays from

Dobrin's reader as well as the introduction that Dobrin wrote, 2) to change my informal

writing assignments so that half of them (four out of eight) used Dobrin's prompts, and 3)

to include additional options for the formal assignments that attended to ecocomposition.

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[58] I also made another change to my curriculum by adopting Andrea Lunsford's *The Everyday Writer*, a handbook that is more fully informed by and more explicitly refers to composition research than *A Writer's Reference*, which I had been using.

(The syllabus for fall 08 and for fall 09 are in Appendix B.) In addition, students wrote informally about Dobrin's introduction, his concepts of ecological literacy and discursive ecology, and they compared their goals with those he articulated in his introduction. For their final assignment, an in-class timed essay, students reread Dobrin's introduction and had the choice of writing about how well Dobrin's text fulfilled the goals he stated.

While in the planning stages I was able to meet all of the WPA outcomes for first-year college writing and incorporate all of the features of ecocomposition pedagogy into my curriculum, in practice I did not completely fulfill my commitment to four features of ecocomposition: interdisciplinarity, use of new media, service learning, and public writing. On one hand, I believe this may have been a matter of piloting a new curriculum, but I can also see how a few of my choices created this situation. While I am glad I used Dobrin's reader because it offers students a strong introduction to ecological literacy and discursive ecology and it attends to historical, social, cultural, political, economic, and aesthetic aspects of environmentalism, the selections rely heavily on essayistic literature and do not include examples of scientific discourse. In revising my curriculum in the future, I would select a scientific study or lab report as means of attending to interdisciplinarity and expanding the attention to genre. I also spent too much time on the second assignment of the semester, the analytical essay, so I did not have enough time to devote to public writing. In the future, I would ensure enough time for both the service learning project and the public document by making one conference optional and by whittling down the time spent in class on textual analysis. Finally, I was reluctant to use Blackboard for each weekly reflection because I was concerned that I would not be able to respond to all of my students (enrollment in my writing classes doubled between fall 08

and fall 09). In the future, I would begin by using Blackboard for these responses. Even given these limitations, quantitative and qualitative measures indicate the efficacy of my redesign.

The most objective, quantitative measure of the efficacy of ecocomposition as a design principle is the attendance rate of my students. In the fall of 2008, prior to my use of ecocomposition, the absentee rate was 2.8866, by which I means that each student missed an average of 2.866 classes. In the fall of 09, when I used ecocomposition, I had 37 students and counted 49 absences, which averages to each student missing 1.3 classes. Thus, the absentee rate was half during the semester that I used ecocomposition. In fall 09, 11 of the 37 students, almost one third, had perfect attendance with zero absences.[59]

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[59] Of course, other factors could have contributed to the attendance rate, but the classes did meet at the same time and our placement system would actually contradict such a gain because we had recently changed our placement system so as to place more students directly into WRT 102, which means my classes in fall 09 were comprised of students with lower SAT scores than my fall 08 students. Furthermore, the scare of the swine flu on campus during the fall of 2009 exacerbated absences across campus.

Quantitative Data: Absence

Average Number of Classes Missed

Absentee rate declined by over 50 %

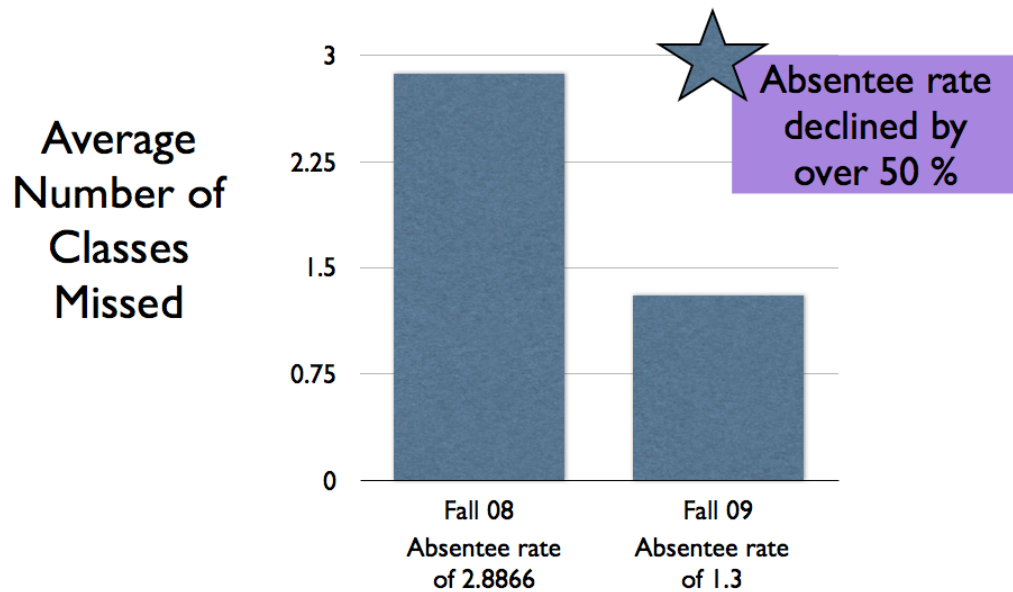| | Fall 08 Absentee rate of 2.8866 | Fall 09 Absentee rate of 1.3 |

Figure 3: Absentee Rates

A second set of quantitative measures are the pass and completion rates of the students. Again, the pass rate for the fall 08 cohort would be expected to be higher based on the placement system that term and, perhaps, the small class sizes. Of the 20 students who began, five dropped mid-semester.

Quantitative Date: Completion rates
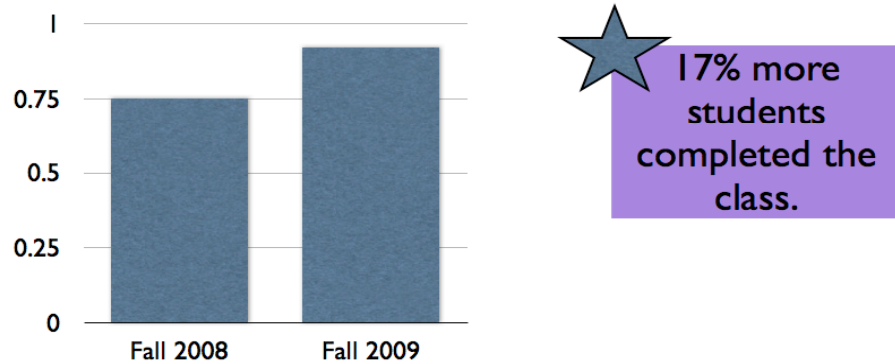
Figure 4: Completion Rates

Of the fifteen remaining students, four did not pass the end of semester portfolio assessment, a strong indication that they did not meet the WPA Outcomes for First-Year College Writing. In fall 09, three of the thirty-nine original students dropped mid-semester. Of the remaining thirty-seven, four did not pass the final portfolio and two received incompletes. Thus, the pass rate was almost twice as high and the drop rate was less than half among the students in class organized by the principles of ecocomposition.

Quantitative Data:
Pass Rates

16% more students passed the class.

90

67.5

45

22.5

0

Fall 2008   Fall 2009
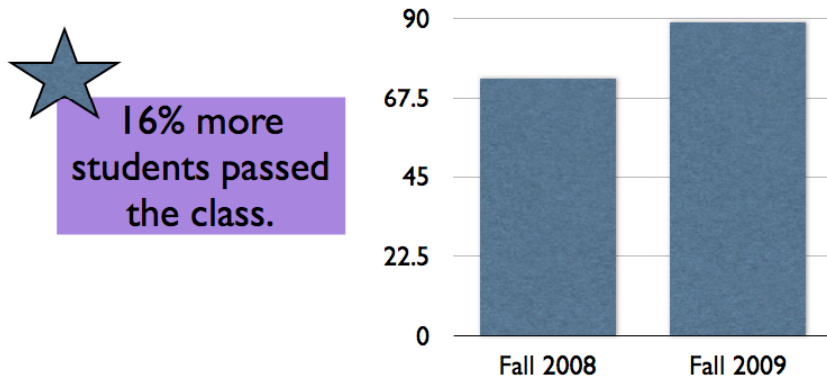
Figure 5: Pass Rates

In addition, my students' reflections on the course and their own work were markedly different in each term. In the fall of 2008, of the twelve final reflections I received, only one mentioned audience. None of them referred to writing as live. Two mentioned their pleasure at being able to move beyond the rigid structures of prior writing assignments, and the students mentioned "risk" (as in they felt emboldened to take risks in their writing) seven times. In the fall of 2009, five students mentioned audience in their final reflections, one specifically wrote about using writing to address an audience and inspire action. Four mentioned reading and writing as means of relating or connecting. Four mentioned writing as something live. Five mentioned the use of

multisensorial details as an important rhetorical strategy. Only one student mentioned risk-taking. My prompt for this reflection, reproduced below: was exactly the same both semesters.

- In this letter, you should reflect on the work in your portfolio.
- State what your work represents about your growth as a writer.
- What risks did you take? What new strategies did you try? What worked for you? What failed?
- How have you grown as a writer?
- How do you plan to keep growing?

Below is a sample of excerpts from my students' final reflections from the fall of 09. These excerpts demonstrate that students became more aware of several aspects of literacy:

1) They became more aware of the importance of audience, and, importantly of an audience that consisted of more that the teacher.

2) They became more aware of purpose- specifically the power of literacy to enact change for the amelioration of environmental problems-in contrast to writing as a merely a means of earning grading.

3) They became aware of the connections between their reading, writing and experiences, a sign of their understanding of discursive ecology.

4) They experienced the benefits of moving beyond individualistic notions of identity, a sign of their understanding of ecological literacy and post-humanist epistemologies.

5) They came to see their own writing alive.

6) They became emboldened to take risks.

<u>Reflection #1: This student emphasizes audiences—plural—as well as connections and risk-taking.</u>

My new work represents my growth because of how much more connected I am to the work and since I have such connections I can exude these same connections to my audiences. Being able to connect to an audience is what I believe to be the most important part of writing and this class has helped me to become aware of my audience. These new connections have inspired me to take more risks with my writing like becoming more emotional as oppose to just emotionless words that satisfy the goal of the paper as oppose to satiating a readers senses.

<u>Reflection #2: This student describes her work as live.</u>

I felt my writing become a living entity that I carried around with me everywhere (bit like a stalker actually)….For the first time I saw the malleability that exists in organization. I began to open myself to looking at my ideas more in how to effectively organize them rhetorically. This interactive method has changed the way I write, in that I see writing as alive and active in my life, a process, not a methodology really, more so a life form with which I can interact, work tangibly….I have learned this semester to go with the flow of my pen and see what happens, it has been a wonderful adventure and I am eager to continue it for the rest of the days of my life.

<u>Reflection #3: This student reports moving beyond an individualist understanding of</u>
<u>identity:</u>

> My first formal paper was the narrative paper, in which I tried to
> flex my writing muscles and show off what I could do. In this first
> stage of writing I look back and see myself and my paper very
> walled off from the rest of society….I was writing for myself
> rather than for the good of everyone. …As the semester progressed
> and the class moved to the analytical paper, I soon realized that as
> a writer I didn't have to rely on myself for everything. I now began
> to branch our and bridge connections….In my writings this
> semester I tried to step out of my comfort zone, one of the major
> factors that influenced my writing, was the idea of audience. I tried
> not to think I was writing for a class but rather for the greater
> public…My pieces are like organisms that move about our
> environment and our society, growing every connection that is
> made. No longer will I hide behind defining borders, but rather
> break down mental and social walls and reach as far as I can to
> influence those who will listen.

Thus, my experiment suggests that ecocomposition pedagogies are useful means
of meeting the outcomes of first-year composition, and, they are also a means of enabling
students to better understand audience, to view writing as a living process, to view
reading and writing as means of making connections and relationships, and to move

beyond individualist notions of identity. The later set of outcomes is especially important if we believe Gregory Bateson, who argues that if humans are to survive the ecological crisis we face, we must develop new habits of mind- especially habits that overcome western hubris and acknowledge the value of connections and post-individualist epistemologies.

This research project taught me three lessons. First, this project taught me about the difficulty of enacting change. Even as interdisciplinarity is an important feature of ecocomposition and even as it was one of my explicit goals, in the end, my class remained in the realm of the humanities. Second, I determined that ecocomposition is a genuine, growing movement in composition studies, as evinced by the connections between ecocomposition and composition scholarship, by the rise in scholarship on the topic and recent syllabi that incorporate features of this pedagogy to meet the WPA Outcomes for First-Year College Writing. Finally, ecological research methods offer teachers a means of assessing design principles and classroom practices While my study assessed ecocomposition as a design principle, a similar method could be used for assessing a number of approaches. The method of my study was simple: a literature review; a review of current practices as embodied in syllabi; the revision of my curriculum to incorporate these practices; and a comparison pre and post indexes of pass rates, completion rates, attendance, and students' reflections. This sort of research might be a useful means of offering classroom teachers flexibility in the design of their classes and at the same time ensuring reflexivity. It also might be useful as a means for arguing for the value of research and research release time for college writing teachers. In completing this project, I was able to move beyond a felt sense about the success of my class to an more fully

documented sense. But, had the numbers and my students' reflections diverged from my felt sense, I am not sure I would be presenting this research. So, I do not want to argue for the use of such research as a means of assessment, but, rather, as a means of generating data and encouraging dialogue, so teachers learn that they have many worlds available to them.

In the next chapter, I specifically look at public discourse as an ecocomposition pedagogy. I present mixed media assignments that embody the concept of narrative ecologies: the stories comprised of words and images that inflect our consciousness, that change in response to our words and images and actions, and that may change the material, physical world we call home and depend upon for survival. And, I present alternative discourse as a means of engaging in both scientific and narrative discourse. In my conclusion, I discuss narrative medicine as an example of change in the scientific community, a moment where the scientific community is listening to narrative discourse, and a reminder to compositionists that narrative discourse has a value that transcends the traditional understanding of the humanities. I close by recalling Lynn Purdy's remarks at the WPA Conference 2009, when she reminded compositionists to listen to the language of scientific discourse. My small experiment with quantitative date along with qualitative date offered me a richer, more exact picture of the successes and shortcomings of my revised curriculum. As Aphra Behn and Charles Brockden Brown demonstrate, scientific discourse can be put to liberatory purposes when unhinged from capital.

Chapter Five: "The Revolution Will Be Live": Public Writing, Alternative Genres and Mixed-Media in College Composition

> The revolution will not be televised, will not be televised,
> will not be televised, will not be televised.
> The revolution will be no re-run brothers;
> The revolution will be live.
> -Gil Scott Heron, 1970

> We need to kick the habit of sedative discourse, particularly the fix of
> television, in order to be able to apprehend the world through the three
> interchangeable lens of the three ecologies.
> -Felix Guattari, 1989

Gill Scott Heron's 1970 song embodies the sedative effects of television, which, along with "skag" (slang for heroin) and "skipping out for beer," he considers antithetical to revolution- especially the social, cultural, economic, and political revolutions necessary to overcome racism. His canny and catchy critique of TV, with its canned laugh tracks and deathly glow, includes the racially skewed and racist representations of television shows, the news, music, and advertisements. This critique demonstrates that television in the 1960s was a white world, one that excluded Black actors, but, importantly, one that aimed to appeal to Black consumers. In this move, Heron successfully captures the awful, awesome power of media driven by capitalism. After excluding Black viewers from the roles of actors (the singers, the main characters of the shows, the salutatory subject of news), the meta-narrative of television offered— continues to offers—the seductive (and sedative) promise that buying Coke-a-Cola, that getting rid of the germs that case bad breath with Scope, will offer entry to the world of

actors, of stars. The rhythmic chords and repetition of phrases mimics the seductive, sedative power of these illusions. Heron's song, of course, reveals the falsity of such phantasmagoric promises. He tells listeners that they will not find change on television, or by buying the things and or by becoming white. He tells us that "The revolution will be live" unlike TV culture, which is dead, which is deadening.

Nineteen years later, in France, Felix Guattari extended Heron's critique of television to include all "sedative discourse," which he outlines as a range of forms, especially mass media in the service of what he calls "Integrated World Capitalism" (28). Guattari, like Heron argues for a live revolution, but he uses the language of ecology—"*heterogenesis*…the processes of continuous resingularization"—to make his argument. Also like Heron, Guattari criticizes the process of interpellation, of the internalization of homogenized ideas that benefits capital, that valorizes the consumer, and that ossifies identity, relationships, social expectations, institutions, and even language and meaning. In particular, he explains that these forms of sedative discourse create a flat understanding of the environment as separate from and beneath human agency when in fact it is the very ground of existence. In contrast, he argues for ecosophical views that include physical environments, social environments, and mental environments. Such multiplicity and lived connections are necessary to overcome the profit motive, which has been naturalized by late-stage global capitalism, commercial media, traditional formal schooling, "Marxist discourse" (but not "Marx's own writing"),

and other aspects of "techno-scientific transformation" by which the profit motive self-perpetuates (28, 32, 34, 19).[60]

In 2010, the screen is more pervasive than ever before—from the larger than life flat-screen televisions in homes and restaurants to the small screens of laptop computers and mobile phones. That college students today live in a media-saturated world is a common-place. In this context, the typical genres of first-year college writing—the research paper, the textual analysis, and even the personal narrative—are increasing incapable of representing our students' perceptions. On the one hand, because they cannot compete with the flashy resources and gigantic budgets of mass medialike television, such genres do not engage our students' attention and thus become another form of sedative discourse (Giroux, Davis and Shadle). In addition, the association between these forms and modernist ideals of knowledge means that these genres, traditional academic discourse, have in another way become a type of sedative discourse—too private, too atomistic, too formulamatic (Sirc, Davis and Shadle). These genres and forms do not meet our evolving understanding of knowledge as grounded, context-dependent, transdisciplinary, and open. They comparmentalize knowledge, separate disciplines, and posit identity as individual. Public writing, multigenre writing, and mixed media writing more fully allow for the representation of post-Cartesian, ecological epistemologies that understand knowledge as siutated, disciplines as constructed, and identity as distributed. This is the type of live discourse that is necessary to respond to the particular challenges of ecology and literacy in the twenty-

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[60] For more on formal schooling and the flattening of experience, see Robert Yagelski "Stasis and Change: English Education and the Crisis of Sustainability" (2004).

first century. These genres are important ecocomposition pedagogies, and, as I observed in the prior chapter, these genres have not yet fully made their way into ecocomposition practice.

In chapter four, I demonstrated the benefits of a ecocomposition as a design principle for first-year college writing and throughout this project, I aim to demonstrate the benefits of an ecological approach to literacy. Because ecocomposition asks us to view all writing as live and holistic and because ecological approaches to scholarship require attention to local needs, use of hybrid methodologies, and acceptance of provisional knowledge while also advocating action, ecocomposition invites composition teachers to question the genres we ask our students to use and the genres we use for our own research. Ecological approaches to literacy allow us to read narrative and scientific discourse together for such approaches demonstrate that epistemologically narrative and science share the same soil, are rooted in the same ground, and that the disciplinary divisions between the two are constructed.

In this chapter, the final chapter of my dissertation, I focus on public discourse, mixed media, and alternative genres as ecocomposition pedagogies—pedagogies that encourage students to understand writing as living systems and that encourage composition scholars to take their work beyond the classroom. In Chapter Three, I used Lyotard's analysis of the alignment of scientific discourse and the business model to detail the negative impact of this alignment on composition studies and writing pedagogies. This chapter continues to outline a path beyond the flattening of experience. Public writing allows us to teach research and argument in ways that demonstrate the ways personal and political overlap. Mixed media and alternative genres allow writers to

transcend a number of false dichotomies, such as those between humanistic and scientific inquiry, because these emerging forms are not yet associated with particular epistemologies or expectations. Writers may respond to their material by developing forms that allow them to represent new knowledge, rather than with traditional genres, where writers sometimes must shape their material to suit the particular genre expectations. Finally, alternative genres, especially those that create room for narrative discourse, are important means for our students, most of whom are on the margins of the culture of twenty-first century late-stage capitalism, to document contestatory positions.

Critics of new media claim it is eroding literacy. It is important to take a long historical perspective on this debate and to remember forms that are sanctioned today, such as the novel, were once considered inferior, not only unworthy of serious attention but also one that would corrupt its readers. The novel originally served as a medium for liminal perspectives and offered a means of cultural critique to those on the margins of culture- those without the classical education of the renowned essayists and epic poets of the eighteenth-century. The criticism lodged at novelists such as Behn and Brown and novel readers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in some ways parallels the criticism lodged at student writing and new media such as social networking and texting. Recalling the fraught history of the novel itself allows us to see that current criticism of alternative genres and mixed media may, to a large degree, be, like resistance to the novel, more a reaction to novelty (which threatens the status quo) than a reaction to the actual intellectual consequences of the media and genre itself (Bakhtin). We might recall Plato's aversion to the very technique of writing, a technique he feared would ruin human intelligence. Finally, we might recall teachers' resistance to the technology of pencils

with erasers, rooted in their fear that it would allow students to hide mistakes (Denis Baron 1999). This allows us to see that the technologies of writing have a long history; practices that seem natural and unmediated today, such as writing with pencil and paper, were once deemed a threat; and resistance to alternative discourse today is part of a historical tradition that seeks to maintain the status quo.

Arguments for alternative genres and public discourse in first-year composition are not new. In his 1969 article, "Finding Your Own Voice: Teaching in an Age of Dissent," Donald Murray asks what the writing teacher's role is at a time when public discourse is (in his words) "crude, vigorous, usually uninformed, frequently obscene and often threatening." Now, forty one years later, his words sound eerily and unfortunately evocative of much discourse in the contemporary public sphere, where radio stars like Howard Stern broker the ability to insult into multi-million dollar careers, where news columnists like Maureen Dowd use unfair emotional appeals to conceal the lack of logic in their editorials, and where elected officials like the past president of the United States George W. Bush conjured up enemies based on rumor and use antidotal evidence to lead the United States to war. For these reasons, the stakes are high. When we consider the work of Bruno Latour, Henry Giroux, Walter Fisher, Felix Guattari, Melea Powell, Nancy Welch and Gil Scott Heron, who in various ways, help us understand the devolution of public discourse as the result of the cumulative effects of mass media, specialization in academic research, the rise of the scientific paradigm for evaluating education, the power of late-stage global capitalism, and the break-down of the nuclear family For these reasons, college writing teachers must move beyond the confines of

academic discourse to public discourse. This requires scholars to look back- to ancient traditions of rhetoric, and poetics, of course, but also—more importantly to alternative genres: forms that have historically been excluded from the canon, forms that have historically given voice to contestatory positions.

We must consider how to make alternatives to the popular models of discourse, alternatives that offer good, critical attention and that also come alive for our students. We have to learn to compete with the gigantic budget of the entertainment industry as it competes for our students' attention (Giroux). Murray's answer is that his job, the job of writing teachers, is to teach students to "accept the responsibility of free speech" through writing and publishing. This, he continues, requires students to be responsible for finding their own subjects, their own evidence, their own audience, and their own forms. This requires teachers to be responsible for creating an environment where students actually can write, for enforcing deadlines so students actually do write, for sharing our work with our students—our successes and our failures—so students take risks, and by responding to students' concerns without correcting their work so that students own their work. This is hard to do in genre/assessement/outcome-driven writing programs. But it can be done, as I describe below. We can also use what the past forty years of research in composition studies has taught us about best practices to create scaffolding to help those students who have grown accustomed to a passive role in the classroom to learn to take an active part in their education and in civic life.   We can craft viable public discourse pedagogies by reviewing research on college writing and public discourse.

S. Michael Halloran's 1983 article "Rhetoric in the American College Curriculum:

The Decline of Public Discourse" marks compositionists renewed interest in public discourse. He reviews the classical ideals of rhetoric from Quintillion and Cicero as they were received and adapted through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe and colonial America. In doing so, he demonstrates that rhetoric had a central role in colonial education until the 19th century, when oral discourse declined, written discourse rose, and the purpose of education shifted from the preparation of civic leaders to serve the community to the use of community resources to prepare individuals for commerce. In addition, Halloran points to the specialization of the disciplines and bellestric view of language as factors that distracted rhetoric from its original concern with public discourse.

I agree with Halloran's stated purpose- to illustrate "rhetoric in the sense of an art of public discourse" and "the need for a revival of public discourse" (185). His historical overview is very useful, especially his assessment of the effects of the colonial situation- frontier life- on the attitudes towards rhetoric, attitudes that demonstrated the value of "lean" rhetoric, rather than elaborate forms. Also interesting and important is his assessment of the move from the use of classical language for discourse in the university and public sphere to the use of the vernacular. He writes: "The shift to English meant that learning could more readily be brought to bear on problems in the world of practical affairs, the world defined by the English language" (187). His point here, that the language used shapes the problems that may be addressed, is especially important in the context of contemporary language debates. Writing teachers need to consider what happens when students' home languages are excluded, as Nancy Fraser, Nancy Welch, and Christian argue. We need to make room for the changing vernacular languages of the

public sphere and our students' home to make our classes places where we can address contemporary problems. Today, this means using the forms of mixed media and alternative genres as well as vernacular languages.

What is troubling is Halloran's sole attention to what Nancy Welch calls rhetoric from above: the attention he pays to the canonical figures in the rhetoric tradition and his exclusion of those on the margins who used alternative forms to engage in public dialogue. He ignores Murray's 1969 article, which is another sign of his focus on a narrow, reified realm of public discourse, not the messy popular arena. Another problem is the symptom of atomistic thought he reveals when he reads the rhetorical tradition as necessarily interested in "public problems, problems that arise from our life in political communities" thereby perpetrating a false dichotomy between public and private life (185). He continues:

> Many other sorts of problems that might be addressed through an art of communication—problems of business and commerce, of self understanding and personal relationships, of scientific and philosophical investigation of aesthetic experience, for example, are in the tradition of classical rhetoric subordinate. (185)

An ecological approach to literacy demonstrates that the public and private, business and personal, aesthetic and philosophical are all necessarily connected and that our separations are constructions. Relying on this dichotomy, Halloran's argument does not get to the very root of the need for public discourse: to connect class work, public issues, and students' lives.

Unlike Halloran, Bruce Herzog begins his 2000 article "Service Learning and

Public Discourse" in the space where public, personal, and academic concerns overlap.

Herzog describes his own personal experience with the public issue of tracking in middle

school, a topic he uses in his first-year writing classes. He observes that on the topic of

tracking and other topics, he and his students find "academic knowledge and public

policy are at odds—or in an odd relation" (444). He asks students to consider this gap

and poses the questions: "how could you…bring your arguments effectively to the

public?" (445). In essence, he says, given the failure of academic discourse to effect

public policy, how can we communicate the results of academic research to effectively

change public perspectives and policy? He confesses that as a "composition teacher" he

feels compelled to teach forms of academic writing. As a rhetoric teacher, he feels

uncomfortable doing so (445). In this move, he presages the work of Christian Weisser

and Nancy Welch who write in support of students' counter discourse, as I develop

below. Herzog reveals one of his main concerns, a concern that bridges the division

between public and private, when he writes:

> If we wish to claim the composition class is truly about rhetoric, about
>
> civic virtue, and about public as well as academic discourse, we must learn
>
> how to conceptualize the connections between the academy and society in
>
> ways that our students, our administrators, and we ourselves find
>
> convincing. (445)

In these lines, Herzog reveals a project very similar to the one I am undertaking,

but, unfortunately, his project is truncated. He only offers a cursory review of the

theoretical justifications for using public discourse in first-year composition and

discounts each of the four common justifications for public discourse that he was able to

discern: engagement, which he discounts as a weak argument; awareness of audience and genre when students create written material in service-learning projects for nonprofits, which he discounts because he does not believe first-year writing students are ready to successfully complete such writing; critical pedagogy, which he suggest offers the most compelling argument; and finally, the argument Halloran makes—the historical role of rhetoric, which Herzog questions as possibly untenable given the changes in higher education. In this critique, he demonstrates that he has not come to a viable theoretical justification for public discourse in first-year college writing classes.

While Herzog does not make a final comment on the theoretical justification for public discourse, he offers a practical pedagogical solution. He asks students to consider their investment in their research and to consider the next steps their investment suggest. This is the very same step I took with my students and it is a good first step, but, as I review below, more informed understanding of the public sphere and closer attention to sound composition pedagogies can help us improve public writing pedagogies. Herzog's student brought to class a variety of ways of engaging in public discourse: writing a letter to the editor of the local paper, making phone calls, running for office, and attending pubic meetings. Next, students picked assessed the "rhetorical characteristics" of one of these forms (446). Finally, students created a document that enacted the characteristics of the form. This exercise, according to Herzog, led to rough products, but he claims that it succeeded in enlivening students' recognition of counter arguments in research papers and helped them more fully understand the range of sources they viewed in their research. Herzog concludes with a review of Susan Wells's analysis of the perils of public discourse to illustrate teaching public discourse requires a good deal of difficult

preparation.

Two recent book-length studies of public discourse—Christian Weisser's' 2002 *Moving Beyond Acadmeic Discoure: Composition Studies and the Pubic Sphere* and Nancy Welch's 2008 *Living Room: Teaching Public Writing in a Privitized World*— signal the more serious, sustained attention to public discourse in composition scholarship in the last decade. Weisser and Welch offer, in different ways, useful frames for thinking about public discourse in college composition because they both look beyond Halloran's narrow focus on classical rhetoric and pay close attention to developing sound pedagogies of public discourse. Weisser and Welch take similar positions in that they support students' counterdiscourse: what Weisser calls "subaltern counter publics," using Nancy Fraser's terms, and what Welch calls "rhetoric from below." They differ in their research methods, the theorists upon which they base their arguments, and their pedagogies. The stength of Weisser's work is that it is more squarely situated within the field of composition studies, which allows us to better see how public discourse relates to other composition pedagogies. Indeed, Weisser seems to argue that public discourse is the next step in the evolution of compositions studies. The strength of Welch's work is that it is more deeply entrenched in the history of social justice movements and a Marxist analysis of late-stage capitalism, which allows readers to see the connections between public discourse and the world beyond the classroom. Both offer an arrary of rich perspectives on public discourse in college composition, but neither focus on the first-year writing class. After I review what they can teach us, I will describe my experience using public writing in introductory and intermediate writing classes and use Weisser and

Welch's work to make recommendations based on the successes and failures of my efforts.

Weisser works from Nancy Fraser's concept of "subaltern counter-publics" which stems from her critque of Habermas's idealized bourgeois public sphere. He uses this concept to navigate major trends of composition studies over the last 50 years- especially expressivism, cognativism, and social sonstructivism. He explicitly situates his study amidst the recent history of composition and rhetoric, reviewing the field's movement from expressivism to cognitivist and critical pedagogies and positing public discourse as composition's next frontier. He primarily seeks to redefine the public sphere via the work of Richard Sennet, Jurgan Habermas, Oskar Negt, Alexander Kluge, and Nancy Fraser in order to generate public writing pedagogies based on a more critical understanding of the public. From Sennet, Weisser gain a historical perspective on the words "public" and "private." From Habermas, he claims what he calls a controversial, but still useful definition of the public sphere as "a political public of private persons reasoning publicly [in order] to exercise a critical function in mediating the relations between the separate realms of civil society and the state" (qted in Weisser 88). Weisser acknowledges Negt and Kluge for opening the definition of public sphere to include multiplicity and for drawing attention to issues of access. As he writes, they demonstrate "the principle of inclusivity, and the premise of open access, are…often rhetorical assertions used to reproduce dominant ideology and reinforce dominant power" (89). Nancy Fraser's concept of subaltern counterpublics enables Weisser to acknowledge history, ideology, and multiplicity.

After re-theorizing the public sphere, he specifies how to generate productive,

theoretically-informed pedagogies of public discourse. First, he reemphasizes the importance of having a more nuanced understanding of ideology because ideology delineates what can be said, how it may be said, and what "registers" (97-99) . His second point, related to the first, is that difference does matter because there is no universal logic or clarity that liberates the individual from race/class/gender. In practice, he explains that this means: "One task of an effective public writing assignment is to render visible the ways that societal inequity inflects formally inclusive existing public spheres and taints discursive interaction within them" (104). Bearing in mind the multiplicity of counter-publics, Weisser suggests that students' initial experiments with public discourse might be most successful if they write for an audience who is like them (107). Once students develop facility here, they are more prepared to take the next step and develop the ability to address different audiences. He says, "As compositionists, it should be our responsibility to help students discover the various counterpublics where their public writing might have a receptive audience (107). In terms of content, he explains that a more nuanced understanding of the public sphere debunks the myth that such classes must address topics of common concern, because, as he (in contrast to Halloran) shows, there is no unitary public sphere and therefore no way to ever ascertain that a topic is of common concern.

Useful to my argument is Weisser's understanding of the goal of composition. He writes: "Composition is unique in that it revolves around not a particular body of knowledge, but around the goal of helping students use writing to improve their lives" (91). This serves as a nice counterpoint to Fulkerson's suggestion that composition was at its apex when teachers agreed upon rhetorical goals of good writing for a particular

audience, as I reviewed in Chapter Three. In this difference, I see hope that twenty-first century composition pedagogies will continue to make connections between school work and life beyond the classroom. In his conclusion, Weisser reaffirms my hope when he presents reasons for public discourse: a real sense of audience and purpose, a connection to service learning, and the opportunity for compositionists to take their work beyond the classroom as "activist intellectuals." In working towards this final goal, writing teachers may provide living examples for their students. I describe my work in this area in the afterwards of my dissertation.

While Weisser situates his work within the evolution of composition studies and concludes by promoting the composition teacher as activist, Nancy Welch's 2008 *Living Room: Teaching Public Writing in a Privatized World* grew from Welch's experiences with activism, and her students' experiences, and, finally a campus-wide protest staged in a Tent City, waged to highlight the university's failure to engage in fair wage practices. The differences in these frames suggest a difference between the two: Weisser formally acknowledges stand-point theory as a means of moving to strong objectivity—Sandra Harding's term for the necessity of pluralistic perspectives as a means of accessing truth—but the structure of his book follows a positivist model in that it posits public discourse as a natural extension of the progress on composition research.[61] The benefit of this structure is that it would appeal to mainstream composition scholars because it fits

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[61] See Sandra Harding's "Women's Standpoints on Nature: What Makes Them Possible" (1997) where she studies "local knowledge systems" to account for the cultural divides between men and women as well as the material effects of these differences. She explains that the goal of science is not to reveal universal knowledge, but rather to acknowledge that knowledge varies because it is always dependent upon context. Thus multiple standpoints offer richer representations of this variety than models that favor consensus.

with the grand narrative of the progress of knowledge. Welch, in contrast, more fully

embodies stand-point theory in the form and the content of her work. She does not seek

to convey a grand narrative about composition studies or the evolution of public

discourse. Instead, she amplifies a number of moments to illustrate the complexity of

public discourse in the university and beyond. These moments allow Welch to

demonstrate a variety of forums for public writing and especially public argument in the

twenty-first century. She contextualizes these contemporary moments in a number of

ways: theoretically via a nuanced critique of " postmodern ennui" that she aims to replace

with a more materialist, Marxist understanding of capital—especially global,

transnational capitalism—that allows for public declarations of right and wrong (101).

Using historical research, Welch documents a number of rhetorical movements to

map what she calls "rhetoric from below" the strategies and tools used by ordinary people

to advocate successfully for progressive change. Throughout, she describes a number of

classroom practices she uses to facilitate her students' engagement in public discourse

and understanding of their authority to engage in such work. The latter is necessary, she

argues, quite successfully, because a number of factors on the contemporary scene work

together to create a situation where individuals—even educated individuals—feel that

important public topics, such as health care, the Iraq War, and labor are best left to

experts. The roots of this syndrome—the disinclination to (or, rather, the lack of

confidence to) engage in the public sphere, according to Welch, comes from a number of

sources. To make these sources visible, she traces the rise of market logic, which hides

itself as natural progress, but, actually, serves to mask the increasing gain for the wealthy

and the eroding rights, autonomy, room, and means of survival of the working classes- a

group that is growing to include college graduates and also college teachers, many of whom are now untenured and/or hired part-time. This logic, then, infiltrates physical spaces, such as town squares and campus greens, and circumscribes activity (including rhetorical activity) that interferes with the commercial purposes of the space, for example, the rights of shoppers to enjoy the bucolic setting of a weekly farmers' market without intrusion from student advocates (97). Welch teaches students about rhetoric from below in order to denaturalize the logic of the market and to recuperate public discourse.

The pedagogical practices she suggests range from "soapbox day" when she brings an actual soapbox to class and students use it as a platform for rants to the inclusion of historical texts that embody what she calls rhetoric from below, such as the "handbills, comics, song lyrics, and graffiti" and "flying pickets, and the vernacular rhetorical arts" that ordinary people use to make successful arguments for social justice (98, 103). She explains that "These archives offer lessons in 'rhetoric from below' to be read side by side and, importantly, in tension and contrast with the many examples of 'rhetoric from above' that are a writing class's standard fare" (99). In this way, her pedagogy is in keeping with Peter Elbow's both/and strategies, and more to the point of this chapter, her work supports mixed media and alternative discourse. She acknowledges Jacqueline Jones Royster, Jean C. Williams, Jane Greer, Anne Ruggles Gere, and Susan Jarrett as pioneers in the field of defining rhetoric from below (5). Taking what Welch and Weisser teach us about the writing classes as a subaltern counter-public, we can better extend Halloran and Herzog's work and consider practices for first-year composition classes, which I will do after I trace one more line of reasoning that leads to

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public discourse.

Before I had formally studied the history of public discourse in the contemporary college composition curriculum, I started to think about it at CCCC in 2006, where Robert Davis and Mark Shadle described their work as part of a panel devoted to connecting civic, aesthetic, and rhetorical education. Mark Shadle began by playing harmonica, then a representative from he American Democracy Project's discussed their response to decreasing civic participation, a poet from Canada read her work and described online poetry writing classes, and Robert Davis explained his students' multiwriting projects. The term multiwriting was new to me, but the ideas were not because multiwriting builds upon and synthesizes composition and rhetoric research both old and new. Multiwriting asks us to make places for students to write in multiple genres, with multiple voices, attending to multiple cultures, using multiple media, incorporating multiple disciplines, multiple meanings and multiple selves into their work. To put it simply- multi-writing insists that students write about what matters to them in forms that matter to them in ways that will make their concerns matter to others: in other words, it is a means of alternative discourse.

Davis and Shadle present a moving argument that multiwriting offers a place for teachers to meet our students in their 2000 CCC article "Building a Mystery': Alternative Research Writing and the Academic Act of Seeking." In this paper, they extend Richard Larsen's 1982 critique "The 'Research Paper' in the Writing Course: A Non-form of Writing." Research writing, as characterized by all three, all too often becomes an exercise in what Robert Conners calls "regurgitation" as students stift through too much information, struggle to craft simulations of academic arguments, and wrestle to make

meaning in a form that is all too strongly entrenched in increasingly irrelevant modernists ideals of representations and reality. The alternative they propose, multiwriting, starts with students' interests, teaches the skills of research and analysis, and asks students to produce hybrid forms that that forstall false certainty and that move beyond the eight and a half by evelen inch page into the public sphere. Because Davis and Shadle offer sequenced assignments, they present a balance between Murray's 1969 call for student responsibility with twenty-first century understanding of education. Students develop skills that are fluid and exportable. They create works that are relevant in their world in and out of school.

Davis and Shadle's later book-length project extends their analysis of the formative power of open, multiwriting assignments and provides a range of suggested readings, films, and music for teachers and students interested in this approach. Davis and Shadle conclude both the article and book by describing examples of the many interesting projects their students have developed. Students begin with personal narrative writing, but they have the option to craft alternative and/or multiple life stories, and thus are liberated from notions of singular identity, which demonstrates that Davis and Shadle are informed by Candance Speigleman and Dan Morgan's research on the possible perils of personal writing. In their classes, students research the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts of their stories and their interests, which aligns with Rochelle Harriss's research on critical, rhetorical, and personal lenses for viewing students' experiential writing (2004). One student titled her project "A Feminist Education for Barbie" and created a series of assignments for Barbie that demonstrated her research on gender and commercial, popular culture. Another student explored her family history in relationship

to the Japanese American Internment. Her project contained narrative writing, historical documents both found and recreated, and a reflection on the process.   In these ways, students contribute to the creation of culture and question the cultures they have inherited.

While Davis and Shadle focus on print and physical, visual projects, new media also offers multiple means of engaging in public discourse. At CCCC 2007, Ryan Trauman presented two short digital stories—public multigenre works—created by students who worked at Berkley's Center for Digital Storytelling. One, a thank you letter from a son to a father, explored ideas of masculinity, love, and violence; the other told of a young women's gradual acceptance of a chronic blood disorder. Both used photographs, music, and graphics to tell multi-media stories that made unique arguments. Such cultural productions offer young people the means to create their own counter discourse, to talk back to the representations of youth generated by the mainstream entertainment industry.

In the world of literacy studies today, David Kirkland and Valerie Kinloch stand out for their focus on vernacular literacies and public discourse in K-12 education. Kirkland uses the techniques of literary analysis to unpack a 12th grade student's My Space page- a part of an electronic, social networking site that, according to Kirkland, teenagers use as a means of identity work and cultural critique. While this student's high school English teacher labeled him a poor writer, Kirkland's analysis demonstrates the rich literacy practices he exercised on his MySpace page via poetry, rap, and video. This multimedia space allowed the student to represent himself and his world in ways that the traditional high school English class excluded. Similarly, Valerie Kinloch's work in

Harlem takes students outside the white walls of the classroom, a space where, she reports, they feel they have nothing to say, to their neighborhoods, where, via video, they document the literacies embedded in the places they inhabit beyond the class. Kirkland and Kinloch use the approach of additive multilingualism to honor the literacies their students bring to class, to help them see the similarities and differences between these literacies and academic literacies, and to enable them to expand their repertoire of literate moves.

My own desire to incorporate public discourse, mixed media, and vernacular languages into my first-year writing class crystalized when I listened to Amy O'Brien at CCCC 2007 describe her use of community writing projects in a professional writing class. Students collaborated with local business and organizations to create brochures and newsletters. This made me think about how such genres might be used in first-year writing classes. Having had a number of students thrust their work at me, eyes averted, as if they were pained to even look at their work, I wondered if alternative forms might be more attractive to students. Would students be more interested in rereading their work, strengthening their ideas and proofreading and editing, too, if they selected their own forms, if they wrote for audiences beyond the class?

Since 2004, I have begun to integrate alternative genres, mixed media, and public discourse through my syllabus for introductory and intermediate writing classes. On the syllabus I distribute in my WRT 101 and 102 classes, I begin with a few lines from Kristie Fleckenstein's 2003 book *Embodied Literacies: Imageword and a Poetics of Teaching*. Fleckenstein, who builds on Gregory Bateson's work in ecology, articulates a liberatory pedagogy that cultivates reflection on old habits and the development of

flexibility and adaptability of mind. Describing her view of literacy, Fleckenstein writes:

> We balance on the unstable ground where realities materialize and
> dematerialize in response to our own literate moves. The beauty that we
> derive from this balancing act is that we have the ability to change our
> dreams even as we dream them.

As part of their first day writing sample, I ask students to reflect on these lines, so from the start, we are reading about literacy and about change. I want students to learn that our class will be a place to critically assess public discourse and to contribute to public discourse and to learn that while free speech is a misnomer, because meaning is always partly constituted by context, by history, by culture, by audience, we can engage in change. I also ask all students to do some in-class brainstorming (to make a list in response to a prompt such as "who are you" or "what matters to you") on the first day and then to select a few items to share with the class. Thus, I convey the expectation that their work will be public and also that they will have some control over what is public. The theme I use for Writing 101 is the concept of definition and each of the three major assignments asks them to consider their ability to question and ultimately redefine the definitions they have inherited. For each assignment, I invite students to include multiple media. For example, for the first assignment Defining Identity, a number of students have created pamphlets that represent their identities, one student brought in a painting, others chose to write stories, and others fulfilled the assignment via textual analysis. Students who created visual projects also completed written reflections on their work, thus incorporating the alphabetic literacy demanded of academic writing. The second assignment, Defining Place, asks students to use words and images to represent a place

they care about or to argue about a place they think needs repair. The final project I assign, Defining the Future, a slight emendation to the assignment that Cynthia Selfe describes in "Toward New Media Texts; taking Up the Challenge of Visual Literacy," requires students to curate and stage an exhibit of images that represent their hopes and dreams as well as their fears about the future. In this way, our curriculum follows James' Moffet's work on inner versus out-directed discourse in subject and in form. I also employ Derek Owens's concept of reconstructive design by asking students to interrogate the definitions they have inherited and to reconstruct them in ways that reflect alternative perspectives. My use of the frames of place and the future are also adaptations of Owens's syllabus in *Composition and Sustainability.* (See Appendix for full descriptions of each assignment.)

One theme I have used for my WRT 102 classes is praxis: the concept of using writing to make change. After analyzing Henry Giroux's essay "When Hope is Subversive," students crafted research question based on their hopes. Students did this collaboratively, online via a threaded discussion and in class. So, their early, low-stakes work was public. After completing annotated bibliographies, students composed fast drafts, writing in spurts in the computer lab with the screen turned off, an idea suggested to me by Pat Belanoff. They took a break, and read their work, and then pressed on. We usually complete three of these loops, after which students compose provisional thesis statements, also via a thread on line, and then give each other feedback. For the next class, I asked students to bring their fast draft and research notes to class for what I call the Mobile Post-Draft Outline. First, students listed the points from their fast drafts. Then I distributed butcher paper and post-its. Students transcribed their main points to the post-

its and experimented with clusters of points and organizational patterns, adding

transitions, examples, and details from their notes as need be.

Here's what it looks like:

<div align="right">Figure 6: Mobile Post-Draft Outline</div>

You'll see that here, again, students are privy to each others work and that the

materials we use allow students to experiment with provisional connections and

arrangements. Towards the end of this class, students talk through their post-draft

outlines in small groups and give each other feedback. They conclude by writing up a

plan for revising their research papers based on what they learned during their

experiments with organizational patterns and what they learned from their peers.

After writing their research essay, students select an audience outside the classroom and translate their research into a public document for that audience. Students have made posters, pamphlets, movies, web logs, facebook groups. In their reflections, students describe this as a challenging and rewarding experience. Below, are excerpts from these reflections. Following the reflections, I describe how I will use Weisser and Welch's work to more successfully integrate public writing into my first-year writing curriculum.

Student #1

This student created a Facebook page which she called "Voices Against Hate Crimes", motivated by a recent hate crime—the murder of a Latino man named Marcello Lucero in Patchogue by a group of young men from the high school from which she had graduated. She writes:

> At first I was nervous about presenting this information, but once I got the courage I didn't hesitate to post up every piece of information I could relating to the topic…I figured a group [on Facebook] would be the easiest way to put this information out there because my friends…love Facebook….It took a little while to convince them to actually read the information I put up there, but it was worth it when I get the amount of feedback I did when I spoke to my friends over the phone during the course of the next few days.

All my friends were basically shocked with how high the statistics were, even those of us who were from the district, and when they read about the fact even more went on unreported it encouraged a good amount of them to spread the word to their friends. A few more are planning to get together with me to work on posters; we're hoping to hang these posters up at local stores with websites and phone numbers to local victim clinics and hotlines. One of my high school friends is thinking about presenting the information to her Introduction to Government class to encourage them to spread the word to their friends as well. One friend from another school is thinking about doing something at high school….We're all hoping to make an impact somewhere along the lines to reduce Hate Crimes, be it writing to a Senator or simply getting a small peaceful rally going to get our voices heard

One interesting aspect of the students' experience is her initial use of social networking, her follow-up by phone calls, and her desire to continue by making posters. Thus, this project motivated her to use multiple media and to engage in live discussions, discussions that had a ripple effect and inspired her peers to take further action, too.

Student #2

This student started by making a poster. She chose the topic of environmentalism and targeted her home community because, as she reports, "Growing up, little stress was put on the importance of the environment." While she did not report the type of concrete

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effects as those reported by student #1, she did write "presenting this poster to some of my fellow neighbors and people from my hometown left with a positive attitude for change. I'm glad that I was able to share mt knowledge ad enlighten others with vital information. I am proud to do my part and participate in the movement of recognition to help our planet."

Student #3

This student created a pamphlet with information about alternative energy- the topic of his research paper. He described the choice of this topic, audience, genre, and the feedback he received.

My topic was based off of my research paper, which was alternative energy sources and stopping global warming. I chose this as my public document because it is one of the most important topics right now….I chose the general public because that is who needs to know….I chose the pamphlet format because it is the best to reach the public. Other forms of public documents are Facebook groups, internet blogs and email. These are not the best because you are limited to people you know or people that will not take the document seriously. When I presented my work to the public it was fun and exciting to know I made something that people were going to read and hopefully it would have an impact on them. I went to the computer lab and made about 30 copies and then drove into Southampton by the movie theater. Before I gave away all my pamphlets I kept one. I would walk up to people that looked like they were not in a hurry and talk to them showing them the pamphlet. I talked to them about things like global

warming and alternative energy sources and what they could do to help. I did not

get much feedback from the passerbys who just grabbed the pamphlet, but when I

talked to people about it they opened up more and gave me their opinions. I got

some great feedback. People liked that I was reminding people of the importance

of recycling and techniques of making less of a negative impact on our planet.

People also thought some of the facts I had were a shock and felt that I had helped

them understand the importance more. I also felt that when I told people that they

could save a lot of money and energy by replacing house hold utilities with

energy saving ones, they were surprised. Most people never heard of geothermal

heating and cooling….They loved the idea of cutting their energy bill in half.

When I asked people what they knew about energy saving technology 80 % only

knew about solar. They thought it was expensive and aesthetically unpleasing. I

then told them that with the technology today solar power is getting cheaper and

cheaper ever day. Certain states even have incentives for installing solar panels

and will give you money or a discount on the purchase of one and how nowadays

the panels can be integrated into your roof instead of having a big bulky panel that

sticks out like a sore thumb. I think this was a great assignment and enjoyed

spreading the word and informing the public.

What I find interesting about this student's response is that he documents the live

interaction this project generated. In fact, the student actively sought to use this as an

opportunity for live interaction. The feedback he received—that most people were

uninformed about this topic—seems to have emboldened this student and to have

increased his confidence. Although he does not report this, I would conjecture that this experience taught him about the value of his education and the value of research. In contrast to Nancy Welch's students, who report their inability to take positions on controversial topics, this student not only took a position and advocated action, but in doing so, he appears to have developed more confidence and appreciation for research, writing, and public discourse.

Student #4

This student was the only one to use the medium of digital storytelling. She created a short digital story based on her research about the Vietnam era student protest movement. With a 1960s song as the background, she created a slideshow of images of stduent protests from the peaceful to the violent. Her final slide, a text slide, asked "What will you do." She posted this on Youtube and in her reflection described the choices she made and the feedback she received.

> I thought this was an interesting topic to do my public document on because I am a colllege student myself. We are facing similar situations in today's world such as an unfavorable war in Iraq. Today we also have different problems from back then. Big issues include global warming and the failing economy. We need action to find solutions. As college students we are the ones who will be tackling these problems, especially climate change. We should start to think differently and become more aware of what is happening around us instead of just being involved with ourselves.

I decided to make a video for my public document, It was a mix between a tribute to the anti-war movement and showing how large-scale it really was. I looked for pictures of protests online, which was a bit difficult bcause there wasn't a lot….For background music I put a song that came out after the Kent State shootings. I chose this because it was a very important and momuntal event for the movement….

I posted my video online on youtube; a site where everyone is allowed to express themselves through videos. The internet is a great tool to spread your message to young people because they are the ones who are online the most. On YouTube any person in the world can see my video so this is an effective way to broadcast ideas.

After one week on youtube, my video had forty-five views and four posted comments.

[She posted the comments]

C1 'I love the ending, It really hits home.'

C2 'Very interesting. Gets the points across'

C3 "makes you wonder what stduents are doing nowadays to make a difference. I think most need to realize that we have the power to change the country as a whole, but we all need to care as a whole'

C4 'I think students should join the military'

I am glad they understood what I was trying to say. I hope other people who saw my video feel the same way and will try to use their potential to do something good. I thought the last comment was interesting

since my video was based on the anti-war movement where students try to avoid being sent off to war. However I do think the military has a lot of great opportunities fo young people if they want to join The problem in the sixties was that students were being drafted against their will.

I have also showed it to my friends and family. For the most part they liked the idea and message of it. A couple of them told me that my video would be better if I added pictures of today's problems in American such as the Iraq war and the struggeling economy. I think this is a good idea because it tied together the action that was taken in the sixties with what can be done today.

This student, like the others, did not reman satisfied with the feedback she received online, so she also sought live feedback from her friends and family. In her final refelction (separate from her reflection on the public document) she reports that she felt "nervous about posting it online" but that after the experience she's "thinking of making another video to continue to try to motivate students to take action."

Student #5

This student reported a less than successful experience. She also chose to create a public document about her research topic and she chose to use a Facebook group as her genre.

I chose a Facebook group because there are so many people that have Facebook accounts. These are people from so many different places

and backgrounds. They have different dialects and cultures, but we still have something in common. Because of the sheer amount of people on facebook, I felt like I could definitely find people who ewer interested in my topic…I also hoped that I would be able to get a number of responses from facebook because it is easy to respond to the content and it is open to anyone who wants to respond.

In actuality, I did not get as many responses as I would have liked, but I feel this is because this is an often overlooked issue. Given more time, I believe more people would become aware of the group….The downfall of something like a Facebook group is similar to the downfall of the internet at times: there is so much information out there….I did not realize how hard it can be to really get your information out there to the public. I did get some feedback, both agreeing and disagreeing with my points. I felt like everyone was respectful and I really did get some people to realize the difficulties of owning a wolf dog. Overall, after looking at the responses I received and thinking about the process of putting my work out there, I feel like public documents are a good way to make people listen to an important message. Even still, it was definitely hard to put myself out three and be bold enough to just state my opinion on something I felt was important. It's one thing to write a paper about something you care about and hand it to a teacher, but it's an entirely different scenerio to bring your work out in front of an audience of peers. This process has given me a great amount of respect for the

people who put themselves out there, where everyone can see and judge something you worked very hard on.

This student's report conveyed three points to me: 1) she had expectations about the amount of feedback she would received and these expectations were not met; 2) this project did make her uncomfortable, 3) leaving this project until the end of the semester has drawbacks. Students such as this one would have benefited if we had spent more time in class, with students working in small groups, checking in about their projects, and learning from each other about obstacles and ways of navigating them and acheving their goals.

Student #6

This student also reported trouble in regard to getting the material to create his project and in regard to the feedback he received.

The subject I chose for my public document is the relationship between society and those who partake in it. I didn't want to completely denounce a civilized world, but I also want to have an unwavering voice as I requested of my audience to simply question society….I feel that we as a people need to dramatically change the way that we live and rethink our place in the world. We take a lot of things for granted and as a people we have destroyed a wonderful thing. Nature is miraculous, and we have seen fit to undermine and utterly exterminate each tiny miracle I think this

barbarous reality is overlooked continuously by far too many members of our species.

I originally planned to construct a large wooden box adorned with colorful messages urging readers to rethink their actions. I intended to use the cliché "think outside the boox" to explain to those reading that they themselves *are* outside the box, and therefore should think and react in original ways, instead of respecting the boundaries of what society says is normal. When I was unable to secure plywood to construct the box, I condensed my messge and made a poster. I hung the poster in my building, and my peers became my audience. I chose to hang it in on campus, in my bulding, because I would be more likely to receive feedback than if I put a display up in, say, Southampton Village. Also, I have high hopes for my generation to be the first generation to recognize that society is no longer working out the way it should be, and we need to do something. I realize a poster in a 35-person building can hardly serve as a catalyst for dramatic social change, but like I said, my hopes are high.

I didn't expect much feedback on my document, and I really didn't get much at all. The few comments I did receive were mainly from friends who already understood my views on the matter. In my observations, people seemed vaguely interested in my message, but certainly not enthused. Most I assume, merely skimmed the message and continued en route. I am not disheartened by this response, though, because in my

observation of society, people are rather unappreciative of anything that
can't be bought.

I see a clear shift in this student's expectations from the beginning when he reports that
"my hope are highs' to the end, where he reports "I didn't expect much feedback, and I
really didn't get much at all." As his teacher, I have to question my role in his lower
expectations, the consequences of this, and what I could do in the future.

Of course it is difficult to make generalization from such a small sample, but
considering my students' reflections in light of Welch and Weisser's work allows me to
see the benefits of using public writing in first-year college composition and to make
suggestions for more successful public-discourse pedagogy. The benefit that is easiest to
observe is that the public writing assignments get students to practice a wide variety of
genres. Since I began these projects in 2005, my students have created posters, web logs,
Facebook pages, pamphlets, three-dimensional art, newsletters, and digital stories. In
some cases, students have taught themselves to use the various tools and media, so an
ancillary benefit is that these projects promote active learning. The second benefit, which
has been less predictable, is that students learn that writing has real effects on live
audiences. In order to realize both benefits more consistently, I will make several
changes.

- I will more fully integrate public writing assignments into the course
  work. Ways to integrate these assignments into the curriculum include
  creating a set of deadlines for project proposals, drafts, peer review, and

revision. This is also a means of attending to difference, as Weisser suggests, for the processes of peer review and dialogue allow students to get multiple perspectives on their work.

- I will devote more attention to "rhetoric from below" in our class readings and discussions so students have a better sense of the rhetorical choices available and a sense of some of the responses they may receive. Last semester, I had students review global protests posters from the 1960s in the book *Alternative Press*. Next semester, I will more closely situate this material via use of the free paper *Slingshot* published by a collective in Berkeley so as to more fully teach about rhetoric from below and to illustrate some of the possible consequences of public discourse.

- I will linger more on the possible responses students will get, create time in class for students to share their initial responses, and allow students to brainstorm ways of generating more responses.

- The most ambitious step I aim to take is to work on a cyclical, vertical curriculum comprised of inquiry-based research, public discourse, informed action, and back again. This is a means of moving students beyond the postmodern ennui that Welch describes, helping them to explore open questions as Davis and Shadle promote, and encouraging them to understand their ability to act on provisional knowledge, as Weisser advocates.

Even given the limitations of my own efforts to teach public discourse, I am encouraged by my students' reports, especially the one I reproduce below:

The whole research paper experience has definitely taken a toll on me. In the beginning I dreaded having to write the paper, and by the end I was excited and anxious for people to read my paper. The experience was one that I can never forget because I came out of it somewhat of an advocate for educational reform.

I was a bit nervous presenting my brochure to an audience mainly because I had never done anything like this before. I'm usually the laid back kind of a guy and who never wants anyone to know what I'm thinking. Presenting something like this to my peers had me a bit anxious and up shook. However, I knew I had to go through with it, so I just put my fears aside as I handed the brochures out. I asked them to give any kind of feedback, to let me know if the brochures made them feel uncomfortable, if it inspired them too to advocate change, or plainly if they just didn't care about it.

Luckily no one displayed discomfort or any type of or dismay for the brochures.. I was surprised that mainly every one agreed with what I was fighting for and gave high remarks to my brochure. One student wrote "the brochure makes me reflect on SBU in ALBANY day, I wonder if we can go back there and advocate for better teaching curriculums for inner-city kids, not just High Schools, but all inner- City Schools." Another

student quotes that my brochure "offers a great alternative." One student stressed to me verbally just how much the brochure made her want to grab a pen and paper and write a letter to our senators voicing her disagreement with the NCLB act. One of my high school teachers explained just how much he admired me for wanting to go all the way and get rid of the NCLB act completely. He too is an advocate for educational reform and believes that revision of the NCLB and getting inner-city students more money will help to enhance their educational gain.

Overall I was surprised by the feedback I received. I didn't think I would have so many people in my corner when it came to things like education. I figured no one would be interested in hearing what I had to say about high school, since we all are in college. I don't want to say that this paper and public document has changed my life; however I do feel as if it opened my eyes up a little bit more. I walked into this experience just wanting to get an A on a paper and now I'm walking out not caring too much about the grade, but caring more about how much education could be failing students in society and what I can do besides writing a research paper to create change.

What I learned from this student is that one assignment in one class is not enough— we , as teachers, need to be able to point students to what else they can do besides write a research paper to create change—but this is the first step. Even one small public writing assignment taught this student that his own discomfort with his education was not an

individual experience, but, rather, his experience was part of a larger trend, part of a dominant narrative about standards and education. He learned that his experience, research, and writing offered him the means to question this narrative, to create a counter-narrative, and to educate others. In this way, the public writing project taught this student about the structural problems of testing in public education and the agency that literacy provides. Important to my argument about narrative and scientific discourse, this student learned to criticize the language of scientific discourse as it has infiltrated education with its emphasis on numbers, simplicity, and quantitative measures. This student resisted the objective, authoritative language of the experts—the scientific discourse—and he used academic research, textual analysis, narrative writing and pamphleteering to generate his counter-narrative. His success serves as an example of the value of multiple genres in first-year college writing.

Research on service learning, community literacy, and advocacy offers a wealth of resources for beginning the process of helping students take the next step from writing to action: "The revolution will be live." But, the first step is to give students the openings to understand their ability as agents of change so they are emboldened to forge alternative paths, to change their dreams, to make their own maps, and to discover new worlds. I admit that this student's story is a very small thing. I dream of more for my students, for us all. In a way, though, I have learned that such small things are a way to move toward our dreams.

Conclusion: A Cautionary Tale

My dissertation question originally grew from the local situation of assessment debates in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stony Brook University. As I said in my introduction, my own personal narrative of those debates had a happy ending, but on the national scene, the situation has been less than happy in that an emphasis on standardized tests in secondary school and over-reliance upon contingent labor in higher education increasingly create constraints on education.[62] Through the body of my dissertation, I argue that an ecological approach posits narrative and scientific discourse as part of a multilayered, dynamic spectrum that allows us to imagine futures beyond these constraints. While I trace the rise of scientific discourse in its conservative mode, especially in the fields of assessment and composition studies, and the resultant, unhappy pressures towards uniformity, I find hope in post-Newtonian science, mixed media forms, and public discourses as means of allowing college composition to regain it's connection to narrative, to value both narrative and scientific discourse, and to fulfill its liberatory potential. I argue that ecological concepts of literacy allow us to create both/and pedagogies for first-year college writing that attend to the languages students bring to class and enable students to develop facility in the conventions of academic writing. Such pedagogies extend to rhetorical theory by supplementing logocentric rhetoric with eco-poetic aesthetics, such as Longinus's articulation of the sublime that, presaging postmodern aesthetics, considers how to represent the unrepresentable, or, in other words, that which moves writers and readers to post-humanist epistemologies. This both/and approach could allow college writers to consider a fuller range of the means of persuasion

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[62] See *How the University Works* by Marc Bousquet on the rise of contingent labor in higher education.

and rhetorical choices available to them as college writers, professional writers, and public rhetoricians. It allows them to explore narrative and scientific discourse an part of a continuum.. Ecological approaches to literacy allow us to move beyond disciplinary divisions in our reading and writing; and they allow us to design writing classes that respond to the dynamic nature of knowledge- knowledge that defies Cartesian epistemology, knowledge that transcends disciplinary conventions, that demonstrates connections between public and private, and that connects school work with action.

I had planned to concluded with a happy ending by documenting the rise of narrative medicine as an example of a scientific community (of doctors) learning to value the work of the humanities, especially narrative, and a sign of hope. But the local situation in which I am writing tempered my optimism. So, I will conclude with a cautionary tale.

On April 6, 2010, *27 East*, online paper that focuses on the East End of Long Island, published a story announcing the closure of the school where I currently teach, Stony Brook Southampton, the setting for the study of ecocomposition I described in Chapter Four. The President of Stony Brook University had announced what was essentially the closure of the school that Tuesday evening in a closed meeting with a small group of local government officials. One of these officials leaked the story to the press. The explicit reason for the closure: the budget, a savings of 6.7 million dollars. The next day at a meeting with faculty, the President refused to entertain any possibility other than shuttering the campus. But his words revealed some linguistic dodges. "We are closing our residential programs," he said. When our Director of Admissions proposed offering a line-up of undergraduate class for commuter students in the fall, the President

said no, revealing his prior statement about residential programs to be a dodge. As the end of the meeting, one of my colleagues, a visiting professor who has worked for the UN and teaches advocacy, beseeched the president by standing, arms raised to the sky and asking in somber tones "Is there anything on heaven and earth that we could do to save this school." The president barely paused. He certainly did not take a more than a moment to consider, before answering again, "No."

Prior to the meeting, I had stood with students outside. It was unusual weather for us in early April, often a wet, chilly, bleak time on the East End of Long Island. On the day of President Stanley's visit, the sun was out, the sky bright blue, the wind warm and fresh, the grounds shimmering green with new grass, unfurling leaves. Around three hundred students came out, most wearing school t-shirts that read L.E.E.D. By Example, Trailblazers, First Class. The students wore the lessons they had been learning and they held signs proclaiming "I am not a number," "New York: The Vampire State," that demonstrated what they had learned. Many were sobbing. A few student leaders requested that the group maintain silence when the President arrived and all complied. The president and his entourage (who, one paper reported, earned a combined salary of 1.4 million dollars) walked through the living wall of silent protesting students without making eye contact.

The students packed the Avram Theater, which has 429 seats. President Stanley's opening remarks rehashed his presentation to the faculty. More importation to me were the students' questions and comments, which ranged from concerns about finding classes and losing rent deposits to questions about his salary and the values guiding his decision to close the campus. Many simply asked for the chance to work to save the school. Just

give us time to raise the money, they asked. We are problem-solvers, that is why we came to this school. Just give us time to explore alternatives. His answer, again and again: No. The decision was made, he said, again dodging his responsibility as head of the school for having made the decision. President Stanley left after two hours, but the students still had questions. They were not finished.

The students mobilized a quick response on a number of levels. They started a Facebook group to support the school; it has 18,604 to date. This website has served to create an online community of students, parents, faculty, staff, and community members and it has served as a vehicle to raise awareness and to garner support. For example, the Facebook page offers a link to an online petition, it provides information about letter writing campaigns and fundraisers, and it facilitates discussion of news and tactics. A week after the announced closure, almost two hundred students marched twelve miles to the President's office on the Stony Brook campus, where they were joined by supporters from that campus. Four student leaders met with the president, who suggested they approach the state legislature. The students along with community members revived a non-profit to generate money for efforts to save the campus and raised over twenty-thousand dollars in under two weeks. Three students spoke at a press conference along with local and state government officials to announce a legislative and local initiative to preserve the campus as an undergraduate college devoted to sustainability studies. Three weeks later, over seventy students took buses to Albany to meet with the state government officials to advocate for action.

In these actions, the students exercised their public voices and collective power. In a neat parallel to my research on mixed media and public discourse, the students did

this by employing new media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; traditional media, such as letter writing; and group activism. In this way, their efforts support my tentative conclusion in Chapter Five: that public discourse in first-year college writing classes is most successful when students use both the internet and face-to-face communication. The story of the students' protest will continue to unfold and it will persist in memory and in material forms. This narrative, comprised of words, images and actions exists in multiple media: on the news and on the internet; in the letters written to newspapers, to college officials, and to government officials; and in private journals, personal recollections, and memories. This story, an example of what Nancy Welch calls "rhetoric from below" might comprise the material out of which others may imagine resistance.

While the ecology of power in the college allowed President Stanley to make and institute his decision, to close the undergraduate programs in Southampton, Stony Brook University exists in connection with a number of other communities: the local communities of Long Island, especially those on the East End, who had come to appreciate the resources of the college; the parents who had expected their students to earn degrees; the business in Southampton who benefited from the university's presence; the taxpayers who paid for the purchase of the property; the legal community of the state; and the communities of environmentalists committed to the school's mission. As these communities continue to debate the future of Stony Brook Southampton, an issue with economic, social, personal, political, cultural, and scientific dimensions, they demonstrate that not only is public discourse inherently transdisciplinary. More importantly, these debates situate the work of higher education in the context of live, multiple, local

communities, reminding us that universities and those of us who work in them have much to learn when we direct our gaze to where we work and listen to the voices of those who live in these communities.

Coda: Phantom Projects

Pamphlet is the oldest word for a genre that includes leaflets, brochures, and flyers, as a way of engaging students in live, public writing, writing that moves all of us away from television screens and computer screens, toward each other, toward community. When we remember pamphlets as a poetical and rhetorical form , we can reclaim pamphlet's historical role as a medium for liminal perspectives, providing voices to those on the margins. Pamphlets, with their various folds and openings, their blend of word and image, allow us to experiment with our intellectual commitments, to adopt multiple voices, to use words and images, and to write for living, public audiences. They answer Geoffrey Sirc's call that we " see writing elementally, as a material encounter, rather than commodified production" (146). A quick look at the history of pamphlets shows their metamorphosis from a handmade means of distributing love poetry to their current incarnation as vehicles of commerce: the brochures we see advertising pharmaceutical drugs, vacations and real-estate, have replaced *Pamphilus seus de amore* the title of a 12th century Middle French translation of a Latin amatory poem, which gave us the word pamphlet. This story apparently was popular among students back then, which angered their teachers, who didn't want students distracted from the curriculum. So the very etymology of the word returns us to students, to their interests.

Composing pamphlets in the older sense of the genre asks us to be poets in the old sense of poetics.

We find this old sense of poetry, or poetics, back in ancient Greece, in the words of Sappho, who sometime in the 6th or 7th century BC wrote, or more likely said: "No woodland blooms in spring without song." This line embodies the classical Greek concept of *poesis.* While we often translate *poesis* as poetics and further define poetics as the literary and aesthetic aspects of poetry or verse- a more literal translation is maker. The Greeks considered poetics a type of production, an elemental, material production. And Sappho demonstrates this in her connections between words and creation. The earth blooms with song. The writer is a creator. The woods sing; we sing. Words and worlds come alive together.

This is was David Abram talks about in *The Spell of the Sensuous* when he talks about restorying the earth.

So, if we, as Abram eloquently argues and as I urgently agree, want students to listen to the language of the material world, to be inspired…to experience the live spirit of the nature and to find ways of representing their connections to place as living connections; if we want an ecological revolution that returns us to the nest of living earthly, material culture, then we need to reclaim the connection between poetry and rhetoric. Sure, Abram says, print and electronic literacies are useful. But…we need to remember the oral cultures, the place specific stories that preserve local cultures…the aesthetic nourishment that makes us bloom…the sublime understanding that moves us beyond commodified self-understanding to a sense of community that includes all living things…a sense of community that understands the material world as alive…

The old definition of pamphlet, according to the *OED* is "A short handwritten work or document of several pages fastened together; a handwritten poem, tract, or treatise." This definition plants pamphlets in an embodied, material world. And, in addition to underscoring the connection between pamphlet and poetry, this definition twice uses the words "handwritten." The handwritten pamphlet implies a hand which implies a body and this sense that the pamphlet comes from an embodied individual is important. While we may today use computers to make pamphlets, we don't have to. We can use pamphlets to engage in hands-on work, to represent embodied perspectives, and, furthermore, the activity of pamphleteering, or leafleting, takes us from our desks and computers, takes to into the world, connects us with others, our audience and their bodies and words.

"It is the responsibility of the poet" Grace Paley wrote, "to stand on street corners giving out poems and beautifully written leaflets also leaflets they can hardly bear to look at because of the screaming rhetoric"

While the poet's work, our work, our students' work in first-year writing classes and beyond is a type of creation, it is also rhetoric, a type of persuasion, a persuasion that screams, that needs to scream, because of the scope and depth of the project of revolution. The screaming rhetoric, this personification, dramatizes the abstract concept of the power of words. Now the poet may not want to look at screaming rhetoric, we-as writers and students and teachers- may not want to engage in it. The ills of the word may make us squirm, may make us squeamish. But as Susan Sontag argues about violent images in her essay "Watching Suffering from a Distance," "Someone who is perennially

surprised that depravity exists, who continues to feel disillusioned (even incredulous) when confronted with evidence of what humans are capable of inflicting in the way of gruesome, hands-on cruelties upon other humans, has not reached moral or psychological adulthood" (391).

Life beyond screens, with joy and pain, not disillusionment but rather inspiration in attending to the task at hand. Work as the antidote to war, as the poet Paul Merchant said to me.

Grace Paley describes the poet-pamphleteer as one who has researched moral and psychological adulthood, who sees the ills of the world as well as the beauty, who makes the suffering and the beauty live. And I think is one of my main goals as a writer and teacher. Those of us who are teachers especially need to listen our students- the young, the marginalized. We need to help they see there are places for them to record, to explore, to question, to re-imagine the world they have inherited- a world still full of beauty, and still with much to scream about.

This world, while growing smaller, is one we cannot wrap our heads around, although screens sometimes make it seem like we can, which is one of their dangers. Gil Scott Heron critiques the screen, the television screen, now bigger, more ubiquitous than when he wrote in 1970. The screen, in Heron's song, is biased, corrupt by corporate sponsorship and by racism. Thus we must be ever aware of the way the screen constructs our perception.

Pamphlets, especially when they are handmade, move us from the screen, while allowing us to incorporate images as well as words and in this way we (students and teachers) talk back to the biased representations the screen creates. And we want to use words and images, we want our students to use both, to create both, because our world is saturated with images, and, as Kristie Fleckenstein and Anne Wysocki explain, these images interpolate our consciousness, our sense of self. The very way we see and judge images is biased. As these images become part of our consciousness, the very way we see judge ourselves is biased, and may constrain our ability to change and imagine better futures. Manipulating images, generating our own, is a necessary part of moving toward freedom.

Historically pamphlets have served revolutionary efforts toward freedom. In his 1967 study The *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* Bernard Bailyn he argued that the pamphleteers readied the public for the American Revolution. According to Bailyn, "Then, as now, it was seen that the pamphlet allowed one to do things that were not possible in other forms" (2). Laurence Manley's 1995 work on pamphlets in 17th century London also explores their unique status. Of the pamphlet, Manly writes: " its performative, provisional clowning cleared a space in which destabilized conventions, both moral and verbal, yielded new interpretations of a changing urban scene" (301).

Today, many new technologies allow for increased personal expression and political engagement- and I am a big fan of Twitter and Facebook and Web 2.0. But, the live, physical, embodied interaction of pamphleteering makes it an important way to expand our sense of self, our agency, our understanding of our individual and collective potential.

I really only started pamphleteering because I knew I would ask my students to and I felt it unfair to ask them to do it without doing it myself. But first, a little about where I live in New York, in East Hampton, on the East End of Long Island. People call this area the Hamptons and this makes me mad. There is so much to love about where I live, intimate bays and wide expanses of beach, white pine forests with oak and maple trees, Montauk daises, deer and wild turkeys, historic homes, stately Main Streets with grand old trees, so much natural beauty and such rich resources and yet people plunder the farmland with their second home and then come on the weekends and in the summer to shop and show off. I was thinking about this one day almost a decade ago as I drove my 91 Ford Festiva down Main Street East Hampton past the Mercedes and Lexuses and BMW's and Polo Ralph Lauren and Coach, thinking about my work as a waitress, as a writer, as an adjunct writing teacher in Harlem, thinking about my friends, the carpenters and fishermen and landscapers, all of us living north of the highway by creeks, in the woods, away from the ocean front mansions and their cousins, the mcmansions with rollout lawns and gunite pools poisoning the old farmlands they replaced, substituting ornament and entertainment for the natives plant and animal habitats, the livelihood of old-timers.

I was thinking of rock and roll shows in my friend's garage and in my basement and down at the landing and by the bay. Of the work we did and the joy we found in the shadows. I realized that we are the phantoms. And I wanted to celebrate this somehow, but I didn't know what to do about it. Then, I started making pamphlets, my Phantom Projects, and sharing them in town.

Phantom Project #4

SLOW DOWN!

WE

LIVE

HERE!

Live: To **be alive**; to have life (see LIFE 1b) either as an animal or as a plant; to be capable of vital function. To exist, **be found**. To supply oneself with food; to feed, subsist. To procure oneself the means of subsistence. To pass life in a specified fashion. To personal conditions, e.g. degree of happiness, comfort, splendor, repute, or the contrary. To the rule or guiding principle, or to the object and purpose of one's life.. *OED*

Figure 7: Phanton Project #4

children, dogs, cats, parents, senior
citizens, teachers, painters, writers,
librarians, mechanics, waiters, bussers,
food runners, bartenders, chefs, cooks,
dishwashers, bus drivers, raccoons,
mice, farmers, **frosted elfin** or
Incisalia irus, grasshoppers, osprey,
horseshoe crabs, spider crabs, sea stars,
sea bass, scuba divers, boat captains,
artists, shopkeepers, gallery owners,
builders, lady's slipper or
Paphiopedilum, plumbers, movie
makers, movie stars, nettles, pine trees,
maple trees, Montauk daisies, roses,
caterpillars, butterflies, fox, deer, dog
wardens, seminarians, vegetarians,
carnivores, chickadees, squirrels,
opossums, receptionists, doctors, poison
ivy, weeping willows, weeping bubbas,
poets, singers, saints, sinners,
songwriters, activists, pacifists, veterans,
populists, elitists, democrats,
republicans, libertarians, priests, rabbis,
cantors, atheists, Unitarians, muskrats,
chipmunks, robins, swallows, tax
collectors, tax evaders, accountants,
project managers, reporters, jugglers,
social workers, sociologists,
philosophers, dreamers, trouble makers,
bubbler makers, cynics, bamboo, snakes
and worms aerating the soil, mollusks,
chickadees, butterflies, weight-lifters,
backpackers, pilots, cab drivers, sharks,
jellyfish, seaweed, owls, apple trees,
cherry trees, peach trees, blueberry
bushes, blackberry bushes, beer
makers, fields of corn, sweet tomatoes,
basil, broccoli, mint for your moijitos and
tea, grapes ready to become heady
wines, pumpkins, transcendentalists

Figure 8: Phanton Project #4

I have since found more secure work. I have learned about post-colonial theory and composition theory and cultural studies and the age of revolution. I know the word Hamptons makes me mad because it enacts violence, lumping together all of these divergent local and hybrid cultures, shrouding them, erasing them, replacing the local cultures- silver fish under moon-light, the glow of fireflies as dusk, the warm embers of a wood-stove, with the bling-bling of the boutiques, designer cocktails, fancy celebrity sprinkled fund-raisers. I now use pamphlets to share what I have learned, what I see where I live. In this way, I learn that I am not alone.

And I share this because the local issues I face at home are part of national, global trends. I wonder, what's been happening where you live?

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Appendix

Stephanie Wade
Office- Tech 110→ Library 205 (I will be moving sometime this semester)
Office Hours- Monday 1:00-2:00, Tu/Th 1:15-2:15PM, 3:45-4:30PM and by appointment
WRT 102.81/102.84 Fall 09
TuTh 11:20AM - 12:40PM CH 236/ TuTh 2:20PM - 3:40PM CH 235

Welcome to Writing 102: Intermediate Writing Workshop: Ecocomposition

"We balance on the unstable ground where realities materialize and dematerialize in response to our own literate moves. The gift that we derive from our balancing act is that **we have the means to change our dreams** even as we dream them."   -Kristie Fleckenstein

Course theme- Our theme will be ecocomposition, which means we will look at writing as an ecological act that emerges from a web of living contexts: personal, social, academic, and professional. One of our primary questions will be how our "literate moves"—our reading, writing, research, and rhetorical abilities—relate to ecology. We will address this by considering how writing relates to environmentalism. We will also explore ecological issues, representations of nature, environmental literature, our relationships to nature and competing definitions of nature. The major genres we will cover will be storytelling, analysis, research, and public writing.

Course description- Writing for academic purposes is emphasized. Students learn strategies for extended writing assignments at the university. At least three major essays, multiple drafts, and short papers are required. A through C/Unsatisfactory grading only. The Pass/No Credit option may not be used. Due to the content of the course, enrollment after the first week of class is not permitted. Prerequisite: Level 4 on the writing placement examination or WRT 101, 3 credits, ABC/U grading. Satisfactory completion of this course satisfies the University's D.E.C A requirement.

Course objectives- To enable students to: produce texts within common college-level written forms; to identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or other's work; to develop well-reasoned arguments; to research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details; to revise and improve such texts.

Courtesy policies-

- Please do not use computers and printers when we are in the computer class unless I have given permission. The sound of typing and printing during discussions is distracting.
- Please also turn off your cell phones unless you are having some sort of emergency.
 -Thanks.

Reflections-

- I will assign informal writing, called reflections, most weeks in the beginning of the semester. I will include them in the formal class outline available in class and on Blackboard. Each reflection will be worth 10 points.
- By informal writing, I mean that you should be concerned with content, which is considered writer-based prose, rather than correctness. You may write in any voice you feel comfortable with.
- Each reflection has three parts. One part focuses on textual analysis, which will help you develop strong reading skills and give you an understanding of various literary and rhetorical strategies to use in your own writing. This will help you with all your formal essays. Another part focuses on your own stories and experiences, thus helping you generate material for the first formal essay- the narrative essay. The third part asks you to consider how the ideas in the text relate to our world, which is meant to help you generate ideas for the researched essay.
- As we proceed through the semester, we will work on revision strategies to help you craft informal writing into more persuasive reader-based prose.
- You may use your informal reflections as the basis for any of your formal assignments.
- Save your reflections in your writing folio (see below).
- Reflections should be > 750 words. 2 FULL pages at 1.5 spacing.
- Mini-reflections should be 1 FULL page at 1.5 spacing or > 250 words.
- They will be graded as follows:
    Check + = full credit plus
    Check = full credit
    I = Incomplete, no credit. To earn credit, you must complete it within a week.

> *This semester, I want to pilot an electronic submission program. Details to follow.*

Texts and other materials-

> 1) *The Everyday Writer.* (EW) by Andrea Lunsford. Bedford/St. Martins, 2009.
>
> 2) *Saving Place: An Ecocomposition Reader* (SP) by Sidney Dobrin. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2005.
>
> **Please bring the books to class when readings are assigned in them and when the course outline directs you to.**

Throughout the semester, I may post readings and links to readings on our class BLACKBOARD site. You will need to print these readings. If printing these readings becomes a problem, I will create a course pack for you to purchase. **Please keep these readings in a folder or a binder and bring this to class.**

You will need: pens, paper, writing folio (see below), an email address, a floppy disk/USB drive and access to a computer and printer, a stapler, a dictionary and access to a hole puncher.

Writing folio: This may be a binder or folder where you keep all of your writing for this class. **Please bring this to each class and to your conferences.**

Attendance-

Attendance is mandatory and absence will lower your grade. When you miss class, not only do you miss lessons, but you also miss in-class writing that contributes to your grade.

First absence = 10 point grade reduction

Second absence = 30 point grade reduction

Third Absence = 90 point grade reduction

Fourth Absence = 270 point grade reduction/
        U for final grade

As per program policy, you will fail the class if you miss two weeks of classes (which means four absences, eight lateness, and/or any combination).
Missed conferences count as absences.
You may make up one absence via extra credit (see below).
If you are absent, please check BLACKBOARD for assignments and handouts; you should complete these to earn credit and email me if you have any questions.

Timeliness-

Be to class on time. Late students interrupt the class, obstructing both their own and their peers' education. For grading purposes, I will mark you absent for each two times you are late to class.

Preparedness-

Attendance only counts if you are prepared. Therefore, if you come to class without your work, you may be marked absent.
Throughout the semester I will distribute handouts. Keep these, as well as all the writing you do for the class (papers, rewrites, reflections), and readings you get from Blackboard in your writing folio and bring this as well as your homework, reading, paper and a pen/pencil to each class. When we meet in the computer classroom, please bring electronic copies of your drafts on either a pen drive, via email, or saved on the SBU server.

Participation-

Students who actively participate in class learn more. I encourage this by awarding credit for to students who participate by:

1) Asking questions.

2) Answering questions.

3) Demonstrating attention to me and your classmates.

4) Demonstrating attention to the coursework.

5) Completing online discussions in class and outside of class when assigned.

You need to talk in class to earn credit for participation.

If you are on the phone, texting, checking email, or visiting websites during class time, you will lose credit.

Conferences-

- We will have three scheduled conferences over the course of the semester. These count towards your attendance grade, so if you miss your conference, it will count as an absence; if you are late, it will count as lateness. If you find you will not be able to make a conference, please email or call me ASAP.
- I encourage you to come by during my office hours or to schedule meetings at other times so we may work one-on-one. This can be useful in a number of ways: to help you generate ideas for the formal assignments, to review coursework that is difficult, to go over revisions, and to discuss how this class connects to the rest of your coursework.

Grading-

- Final grades are distributed from A-C and U.
- Students assigned a "U" will need to repeat the class, but the "U" does not influence GPA. This is because writing is a developmental ability so individuals improve at varying rates. Some need more practice than others and our grading system allows for this.
- Work that is completed on time will earn positive credit.
- Incomplete work must be completed for credit.
- Late work will earn zero credit, but still must be turned.
- I will deduct points for missing work.

Formal essays-

1) The first draft of each must be submitted on one time to receive credit. I will be evaluating the expression of your ideas in these drafts.
2) Your revised essays will be worth an additional points. I will be evaluating your ability to revise as well as the development and organization of your ideas and

your use of language in these essays. I will hand out grading rubrics to clarify this and I will also distribute assignment sheets to describe each of these assignments in detail.

3) I will provide deadlines for initials revisions. In some cases you may need to complete further revision to meet portfolio standards and/or to meet your own standards. You will responsible for setting your own deadlines for these revisions.

4) I aim to read and return all work submitted before November 24th within a week.

5) You will need to submit your initial drafts with my comments along with your revision.

6) **If you need an extension for an assignment, discuss it with me before the assignment is due.**

Portfolio-

• At the end of the semester, you will collect your drafts and revised essays into a final portfolio that will be read by me and at least one other instructor.

• The other instructor must deem your portfolio meets PWR standards in order for you to pass this class.

• Your portfolio will need to include a cover letter. More detail to follow.

Revision- You will be required to revise all of your formal writing at least once.

• When you turn in a revision, please include earlier drafts and my comments. Also include a brief note in which you tell me which parts of your essay are giving you trouble and which parts seem strong.

• I will provide feedback for all revised essays received when due and I will grade the final drafts you submit in your portfolio.

• To revise, you need to move beyond simply proofreading or editing. You need to demonstrate that you have listened to feedback and that you have in some ways re-seen and reworked your writing and your ideas in terms of content, organization, and development.

• You may hand revisions in before any of the dates below. You may need to revise more than once.

Major assignments and grade distribution-

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Narrative Essay	20 for draft	Week #3—Sept 18
	80 for revision	Week #15- Dec 10
Service Learning Project	20 for draft	Week #14- Dec 4

or	80 for revision	Week #15- Dec 10
Public Document		
Analytical Essay	20 for draft	Week #8- Oct 21
	80 for revision	Week # 9—Oct 30
Researched Essay	20 for draft	Week #11- Nov 19
	80 for revision	Week #14—Dec 2
Annotated bibliography	20	Week #10—Nov 10
Reflections/mini-reflections	140	
Peer Review	60	
Attendance & participation	340	
In-class writing		
Quizzes & reviews		
Portfolio, timed writing, & cover letter	40	December 15th
Total	1000	

 To calculate your final grades, I will divide by 10 to arrive at a score on a scale of 100. 93-100=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 73-76=C, 72< =U

Homework-

- Formal writing assignments are to be typed according to the manuscript format on page 371 of your grammar handbook. Use 12-point fonts, 1-inch margins, 2 spacing, number the pages and staple the manuscript. Follow MLA format.
- Other work may be written or typed, but must be legible.
- To save paper, you may single space your informal writing and use both sides for drafts of all work.
- Keep copies of all notes/drafts/freewriting to serve as raw material for later projects and as a record of your progress throughout the term.

If you submit work to me by email, you must submit a hard copy ASAP in order to get credit and timely feedback. This semester I am piloting an electronic submission system. Details to follow.

Extra credit- You may earn extra credit of up to 30 points by (added to your final grade

on the scale of 1000):

Completing extra reflections for up to 10 points each.
Attending a reading or talk and writing a 2- page summary and response.
You may use one extra credit to make up one absence.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT (If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website:
http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities/asp.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

- If I find you have plagiarized another's work, I will refer the matter to the Academic Judiciary Committee. I will assign homework to help you understand plagiarism and we will review it in class. If you have questions, I urge you to raise them in class, during conferences, or during my office hours. You will find the PWR statement on plagiarism as well as helpful material about avoiding it via this link:
http://www.stonybrook.edu/writrhet/faq/plagiarism.html

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Other Class Policies- 1. Discuss your classmates' work with respect. 2. Challenge opinions, not people. 3. Constructive criticism is the only criticism I find useful. 4. I hope you will carry on the discussion of the course beyond the classroom, but maintain confidence about the ideas expressed by your classmates. I believe that good writing requires honesty and that honesty requires trust.

PLEASE NOTE: I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER THIS SYLLABUS. If I

do, I will post changes on BLACKBOARD and alert you in class.

WRT 102 Fall 2009 Unit #1: Storytelling, nature and experience

"I have told many that I walk every day about half the daylight, but I think they do not believe it." Henry David Thoreau

Objectives:
Critical and Creative Thinking Skills:
- Active reading
- Storytelling as argument
- Multiple perspectives
- Experience as evidence

Writing Process Skills:
- Generating material
- Development
- Peer review
- Quick revision

Rhetorical and Literary Skills
- Narration
- Dialogue
- Voice, description, allegory, analogy, details

Grammar and Style
- Postponing concerns with language
- Creating a clear first draft
- Voice and dialect, form and content

- Week # 1

Tuesday (9/1)

In class	Homework
Introductions. Review writing process & active reading. Write two pages in response to the following: Who are you? What other classes are you taking? What do you expect from this class? How do you feel about writing? How do you express your self (in words, images, dance, sports, music, science)? What are your goals? What do you do outside of class? Who are you? Why are you here? Where are you from? What matters to you? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What are your hopes and dreams? Who are you?	Buy textbooks. **Read** Preface of *The Everyday Writer* (EW) vi-xiii and "Critical Reading" p 105-112. **Read** handout, "Blizzard Under Blue Sky." Engage in active reading by taking notes, looking up vocabulary, and asking questions. **Write** reflection #1, which should be three pages (@800 words)of informal writing in which you answer the questions below and include any questions you have about the reading.

Reflection #1:
A) What does the narrator of "Blizzard Under Blue Sky" learn? How does she learn it?
B) Pick an place where Houston describes nature and analyze this description. What does this description mean? What purpose does it serve in the story?
C) Tell your own story. It could be real, invented, or a bit of each. It might be about a time that you leaned something, either in nature or elsewhere. Or, you might tell a story about how you became interested in environmentalism. Or, you might tell a story that illustrates your relationship to the outdoors. Try to use description (of sight, sound, taste, touch, scent) to convey this story.

Thursday (9/3)

In class	Homework
• Active reading • Methods of persuasion #1- description, symbolism, nature imagery, dialogue, narration • Development- Decoding code phrases • Review syllabus	**Read** "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula LeGuin http://harelbarzilai.org/words/omelas.txt **Read** 42-57 (EW) **Skim:** 57-102 (EW) **Write** Reflection#2

Reflection #2:
A) Briefly summarize Le Guin's story. Consider the allegorical meaning of this story; in other words, consider what the suffering child might represent about our world. Support your opinion via reference to your experience and observations. B) Have you ever had to walk away from something? If so, you may tell this story. Or, tell a story about something else. Or continue Le Guin's story, but take it in another direction. What could the characters have done if they had stayed? What might they place they walked to be like? Continue practicing description.
C) Say a bit about Lunsford's description of writing processes. Compare her "textbook" definition with the way you write.

• Week #2

Tuesday (9/8)

In class	Homework
• Methods of persuasion #2: allegory, description, narration • Writing processes • Breaking the rules	**Read** Introduction xi-xix (SP), Ray 412-414(SP) Read Cronin (SP 397), Walker (SP 237-238), Hughes (SP 393-394). Remember to practice "critical reading." **Write** Reflection #3

Reflection #3:
A)Write about Dobrin's introduction to *Saving Place.*   What is his purpose for creating this textbook? How does it compare with your goals?
B) Select one choice: 1)Answer the writing in response questions about Ray's story p.415. These questions ask you to describe a place as you imagine it before human

intervention. OR 2) : Describe a time that nature/wilderness/place offered you refuge, or imagine a place that could offer you refuge, or invent an event and a place of refuge.

Thursday (9/10)

In class	Homework
• Methods of persuasion #3: Writing about place- poetics • Voice: CW Sig workshop-collective voices and identities	**Read** Adams (SP 445-448), Bear (SP 52-56) **Read** 244-248 (EW) on sentence style **Write** Reflection #4

Reflection #4:
A) Writing in response questions (57)
B) For Discussion questions (448) or Writing in response questions (448)

• Week #3

Tuesday (9/15)

In class	Homework
• Place, cont. • Sentence style • Development via BMR	**Read** Williams (SP 404-411) and Leopold (SP 87-90) **Read** 191-192 (EW) **Write** Reflection #5

Reflection #5:
A) Writing in response questions (57)
B) For discussion questions (448) or Writing in response question (448).

Thursday (9/17)

In class	Homework
• Topics workshop • Avoiding Plagiarism #1	**Write** first draft paper #1 ***Remember to 1) complete your cover memo and 2) bring one copy (with cover memo) to class and to post one copy (with cover memo)on Blackboard. **Read** 82-94 (EW) on drafting, peer review, revision

WRT 109 fall 09 outline continued
Unit 2: Analysis "You must make your own map." Joy Harjo
Creative and Critical Thinking Skills
- Analysis- taking things (texts, ideas, experiences) apart to understand how they work or why they don't work
- Synthesis- putting things (texts, ideas, experiences) together, making connecting, integration.
- Understanding arguments
Rhetorical and Literary Skills
- Working with texts
- Quotation, paraphrase and summary
- Writing in the humanities/Aristotelian Rhetoric
Writing Process skills
- Development
- Structure
- Revision
Grammar and Style
- Punctuation

- Week #4
Tuesday (9/22)

In class	Homework
- Peer review: focus on description, details, ecopoetic aesthetics. - Practice peer review p.531 EW - Review Unit #1	**Complete peer review:** At least three paragraphs about each of your partners' work. See handout for full instructions **Read** "Analyzing Arguments" 113-125 (EW) **Write** In a page or more, describe an argument you recently engaged in, read, or observed. Use Lunsford's criteria to analyze it.

Thursday (9/24)

- Peer review - Plan for revision - Intro unit #2 - Analyzing arguments- Aristotelian Rhetoric - Review Formal Assignment #2: Analytical Essay	**Read** Capra (SP 81-87) and Abbey (SP91-94) Write reflection #6 **Read** 521-526 (EW) on writing in the disciplines: the humanities **Read** 180-192 on working with texts and 371-384 on MLA format (EW)

Reflection #6
   A) Summarize Capra's argument in a paragraph or two. Then, describe how he supports his argument. Finally, assess his argument using Lunsford's criteria from EW 114
   B) Writing in Response (p 94)

C) Compare and contrast Capra and Abbey's solutions.

- Week #5

Tuesday (9/29)

In class	Homework
NO CLASS MONDAY SCHEDULE	

Thursday (9/31)

In class	Homework
- Analyzing arguments continued: Capra and Abbey - Writing in the humanities - Avoiding plagiarism: in-text citations, more QPS, works cited	**Read** Kerasolt 32-39 (SP) and Oates 57-65 (SP) Complete reflection #7 and Blackboard discussion- details TBA

Reflection #7: A) Summarize and analyze Kerasolt's argument. B) Summarize and analyze Oates's argument. C) Compare and contrast their arguments and methods of persuasion.

- Week #6

Tuesday (10/6)

In class	Homework
No class, conferences	Instead of class, please complete the blog assignment below.

Blackboard Blog

By class time on Thursday, October 8, post a link to a text that relates to our coursework. This text may be written or visual- a book, story, film, song, website, organization, video game- you name it on our class blog, which you will find in the TOOLS section of Blackboard.

Along with the link, please write a paragraph of summary about this text.

Then, describe the purpose of the text, how it relates to our class work, and why you selected it.

Analyze the methods of persuasion:

Does it use ethos, logos, pathos?

What sort of evidence does it include?

What literary techniques does it embody?

How well do the methods of persuasion suit its purpose?

Read over your classmates' posts and follow links to the texts they posted.
Write one final blog post in which you comment on your classmates' links:
What do they tell you about your classmates' interests?
How do they compare with the texts we have discussed in class?

Thursday (10/8)

In class	Homework
No class- conferences	Read 326-368 (EW) on punctuation ~~Write response #8~~ ~~Read: Your choice. Select two essays from~~ ~~*Saving Place* that embody good writing.~~

Reflection #8: ~~Why did you select these essays? Briefly summarize each, analyze each author's methods of persuasion, and compare/contrast them.~~

- Week #7

Tuesday (10/13)

In class	Homework
Punctuation In class reading(collaborative, active reading): "When Hope is Subversive."	Make map Read (EW) 58-60 on thesis statements

Thursday (10/15)

In class	Homework
Peer review of maps Thesis statements	Write textual analysis Cover note

WRT 102 fall 09 outline continued
Unit #3 Research "To see with our own eyes is second sight" Norman O. Brown

- Week # 8

Tuesday (10/20)

In class	Homework
Peer Review Review unit #2 Post-draft outline	Peer review Review unit #2 Read 149-154 (EW) on research and 458 (SP).

Thursday (10/22)

In class	Homework
Peer Review, continued Review unit #2 Review Formal Assignment #3 Research questions	Read: 154-167 (EW) Write mini-reflection # 9: 3 research questions

- Week #9

Tuesday (10/27)-

In class	Homework
Research questions Research proposal Research workshop #1: Ordering books from Stony Brook Library	Read 168-180 (EW) on research Write mini-reflection # 10: research proposal

Thursday (10/29) *Revised textual analysis due
Meet in Computer Classroom

In class	Homework
Research workshop #2: Academic & Web resources Peer review of research proposals	Complete peer review of research proposals

- Week #10

Tuesday (11/3)

In class	Homework
Conferences	

Thursday (11/5)

In class	Homework
Conferences	Compete annotated bibliography Read 193-197 (EW)

- Week #11

Tuesday (11/10)- ***Meet in Computer Classroom***

In class	Homework
Fast draft Titles Thesis statements #2	Response # 11: post-draft outline Read 126-146 (EW)

Thursday (11/12)

In class	Homework
Mobile post draft outline	Researched essay Response # 12: find a public document and analyze it. Be prepared to talk to the class about this document, and its rhetorical effectiveness.

- Week #12

Tuesday (11/17)

In class	Homework
Researched essay due Peer review Public writing, public genres Review unit #3	Peer review Read TBA PBS "How to Speak American" Read 201-213 (EW) on language

Thursday (11/19)

In class	Homework
Peer review Language debates Revision workshop: Concise language/using a grammar handbook	Pick topic for public document Read 3-12 (EW) on expectations for academic writing & 94-102 on editing and reflecting

Unit #4 Public writing: "A Public World is Possible." Nancy Welch
"I need to speak about a living room
where the land is not bullied and beaten into a
tombstone." June Jordan (quoted in Welch)

- Week #13

Tuesday (11/24)

In class	Homework
Conferences	Work on revisions Create proposal for public document

Thursday (11/26) Thanksgiving Break
- Week #14

Tuesday (12/1)

In class	Homework
Conferences	Complete public document

Thursday (12/3

In class	Homework
Writing Under Pressure Public document workshop	Work on revisions

- Week #15

Tuesday (12/8) **second half of class in computer classroom**

In class	Homework
In class writing	Bring in assignment from other class Read 521-566 (EW) Writing in the Disciplines

Thursday (12/10) FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE

In class

Writing in the disciplines and writing across the curriculum Final review and celebration

Instructor: Stephanie Wade
Course: WRT 101.35, T/TH 11:20-12:40, CH Hall 234 (computer classroom as needed)
Office: CH 250
Office Hours: Office Hours: T/Th 9:30-9:45, 12:45-2:00 and by appointment
Email: Stephanie.Wade@stonybrook.edu & wadestephanie@yahoo.com
Cell phone #: 631-335-6325

Welcome to Writing 101!

 "We balance on the unstable ground where realities materialize and dematerialize in response to our own literate moves. The gift that we derive from our balancing act is that **we have the means to change our dreams** even as we dream them."
-Kristie Fleckenstein

WRT 101-A 1 Introductory Writing
Workshop
Frequent short papers are designed to help students
develop fluency and correctness. The basic requirements
of academic writing are introduced. A through
C/Unsatisfactory grading only. The Pass/No credit
option may not be selected for this course. WRT 101
Does not count towards D.E.C. A requirement for students
matriculating before fall 1999. WRT 101 is not
for credit in addition to EGC 100. Due to the content
of the course, enrollment after the first week of class
is not permitted.
Prerequisite: Level 3 on the writing placement examination
or ESL 193, *3 credits, ABC/U grading*

Course Objectives: To enable students to develop fluency and correctness in writing, to become familiar with conventions of academic and public writing, to strength the skills necessary to successfully complete WRT 102-A.

Courtesy policies-
- Please do not use computers and printers when we are in the computer class unless I have given permission. The sound of typing and printing during discussions is distracting.
- Please also turn off your cell phones unless you are having some sort of emergency. -Thanks.

Reflections-
- I will assign informal writing, called reflections, most weeks in the beginning of the semester. I will include them in the formal class outline available in class and

on Blackboard. You will need to write about 1 page of informal writing a day to keep up with these and I will collect them in class and return them within a week.

- By informal writing, I mean that you should be concerned with the expression of your ideas, which is considered writer-based prose, rather than correctness. You may write in any voice you feel comfortable with.
- Each reflection has three parts. One part focuses on textual analysis, which will help you develop strong reading skills and give you an understanding of various literary and rhetorical strategies to use in your own writing. This will help you will all your formal essays. Another focuses on your own stories and experiences, thus helping you generate material for the first formal essay- the narrative essay. The third part asks you to consider how the ideas in the text relate to our world, which is meant to help you generate ideas for the researched essay.
- As we proceed through the semester, we will work on revision strategies to help you craft informal writing into more persuasive reader-based prose.
- *You may use your informal reflections as the basis for any of your formal assignments.*
- Save your reflections in your writing folio (see below).

Texts and other materials-
- Hacker, Diane. *A Writer's Reference*. 6th edn. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006. ** available at the University Bookstore. **Please bring this to class when readings are assigned in it and when the course outline directs you to.**
- Throughout the semester, I will post readings and links to readings on our class BLACKBOARD site. You will need to print these readings. If printing these readings becomes a problem, I will create a course pack for you to purchase. **Please keep these readings in a folder or a binder and bring them to each class.**
- Pens, paper, writing folio (see below), an email address, a floppy disk/usb drive and access to a computer and printer, a stapler, a dictionary and access to a hole puncher.
- Your writing folio may be a binder or folder where you keep all of your writing for this class. **Please bring this to each class and to your conferences.**

Attendance-
- Attendance is mandatory and absence will lower your grade. When you miss class, not only do you miss lessons, but you also miss in-class writing that contributes to your grade.

First absence = 10 point grade reduction
Second absence = 30 point grade reduction
Third Absence = 90 point grade reduction
Fourth Absence = 270 point grade reduction/
      U for final grade

- As per program policy, you will fail the class if you miss two weeks of classes (which means four absences, eight lateness, and/or any combination).
- Missed conferences count as absences.

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If you are absent, please check BLACKBOARD for assignments and handouts; you should complete these to earn credit and email me if you have any questions.

Timeliness-
Be to class on time. Late students interrupt the class, obstructing both their own and their peers' education. For grading purposes, I will mark you absent for each two times you are late to class.

Preparedness-
Attendance only counts if you are prepared. Therefore, if you come to class without your work, you may be marked absent.
Throughout the semester I will distribute handouts. Keep these, as well as all the writing you do for the class (papers, rewrites, reflections), and readings you get from Blackboard in your writing folio and bring this as well as your homework, reading, paper and a pen/pencil to each class. When we meet in the computer classroom, please bring electronic copies of your drafts on either a pen drive, via email, or saved on the SBU server.

Participation-
You earn credit by participating in class. This means:
1) Asking questions.
2) Answering questions.
3) Demonstrating attention to your classmates and me.
4) Demonstrating attention to the coursework.
5) Completing online discussions in class and outside of class when assigned.
You need to talk in class to earn credit for participation.
If you are on the phone, checking email, or visiting websites during class time, you will lose credit.

Conferences-
- We will have three scheduled conferences over the course of the semester. These count towards your attendance grade, so if you miss your conference, it will count as an absence; if you are late, it will count as a lateness. If you find you will not be able to make a conference, please email me ASAP.
- I encourage you to come by during my office hours or to schedule meetings at other times so we may work one-on-one. This can be useful in a number of ways: to help you generate ideas for the formal assignments, to review coursework that is difficult, to go over revisions, and to discuss how this class connects to the rest of your coursework.

Grading- Final grades are distributed from A-C and U. Students assigned a "U" will need to repeat the class, but the "U" does not influence GPA. This is because writing is a developmental ability so individuals improve as varying rates. Some need more practice than others and our grading system allows for this.
Work that is completed on time will earn positive credit.

Late work will earn zero credit, but still must be turned.
I will deduct points for missing work.

Informal writing will be assigned throughout semester. You will need to complete a minimum of four pages of writing each week, but you may write more. While I will check to make sure you have completed your informal writing n time, I will not collect it until I collect your formal essays. This writing is meant to serve three main goals:

1) Writing is like a physical activity such as skiing, baseball, or dancing; the more you practice the better you will be. Writing regularly will give you this practice and help you develop fluency.
2) Each writing assignment asks you to analyze the techniques used by authors in our textbook. This will make you aware of the variety of options you have to experiment with in your own writing
3) Each assignment is specifically linked to one of the formal assignments, so this informal writing will help you find topics and generate material for your formal essay. You may use any of your informal writing as the basis for your formal essays.

Formal essays- The first draft of each must be submitted on one time to receive credit. I will be evaluating the expression of your ideas in these drafts. Your revised essays will be worth additional points. I will be evaluating your ability to revise as well as the development and organization of your ideas and your use of language in these essays and I will hand out grading rubrics to clarify this. I will also distribute assignment sheets to describe each of these assignments in detail.

 If you need an extension for an assignment, discuss it with me before the assignment is due.

Portfolio- At the end of the semester, you will collect your drafts and revisions essays into a final portfolio that will be read by me. Your portfolio will need to include a cover letter.

Revision- You will be required to revise all of your formal writing
- When you turn in a revision, please include earlier drafts and my comments. Also include a brief note in which you tell me which parts of your essay are giving you trouble and which parts seem strong.
- I will provide feedback for all revised essays received when due and I will grade the final drafts you submit in your portfolio.
- To revise, you need to move beyond simply proofreading or editing. You need to demonstrate that you have listened to feedback and that you have in some ways re-seen and reworked your writing and your ideas in terms of context, organization, and development.

Major assignments and grade distribution

Assignment	Points	Due Date

Defining Identity	30 for draft	February 26
	100 for revision	February 28
Defining Place	30 for draft	March 25
	100 for revision	March 27
Defining Hopes & Dreams,	30 for draft	April 16
Despair & Hatred	100 for revision	April 23rd
Informal Writing (Reflections)	100	
Peer Review	60	
Attendance, Participation	300	
In-class writing		
Quizzes		
Portfolio	50	
Cover letter	100	
Total	1000	

To calculate your final grades, I will divide by 10 to arrive at a score on a scale of 100. 93-100=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-89=C+, 73-76=C, 72< =U

Homework-
Formal writing assignments are to be typed according to the manuscript format on page 371 of your grammar handbook. Use 12-point fonts, 1-inch margins, double space your work, number the pages and staple the manuscript. Follow MLA format.
Other work may be written or typed, but must be legible.
Keep copies of all notes/drafts/freewriting to serve as raw material for later projects and as a record of your progress throughout the term.
If you submit work to me by email, you must submit a hard copy ASAP in order to get credit and timely feedback

Extra Credit- You may earn extra credit of up to four points by:
- Completing extra reflections for up to two points each.
- Attending a reading or talk and writing a 2- page summary and response.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT (If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website:
http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities/asp.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

- If I find you have plagiarized another's work, I will refer the matter to the Academic Judiciary Committee. I will assign homework to help you understand plagiarism and we will review it in class. If you have questions, I urge you to raise them in class, during conferences, or during my office hours. You will find the PWR statement on plagiarism as well as helpful material about avoiding it via this link:
http://www.stonybrook.edu/writrhet/faq/plagiarism.html

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Other Class Policies-
1. Discuss your classmates' work with respect.
2. Challenge opinions, not people.
3. Constructive criticism is the only criticism I find useful.
4. I hope you will carry on the discussion of the course beyond the classroom, but maintain confidence about the ideas expressed by your classmates. I believe that good writing requires honesty and that honesty requires trust.

PLEASE NOTE: I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER THIS SYLLABUS. If I do, I will post changes on BLACKBOARD and alert you in class.

Unit #1: Defining Identity

"Our little lives get complicated/It's a simple thing/Simple as a flower/ And **that's a complicated thing" – The Hothouse Flowers**

Objectives

Writing Process Skills: Generating material, peer review: mirroring, center of gravity

Critical Thinking Skills: Multiple perspectives, questioning definitions

Rhetorical Strategies: Description and details, portraits

Grammar and Usage: Postponing concerns with grammar and language, creating a clean preliminary draft

Week #1
Tuesday, January 29th

Class-work	Homework
Introductions Writing processes Syllabus	#1 Pick a current newspaper article and a song, movie, short story, poem, prayer, TV show, or novel and write two pages in which you summarize them and explain why they matter to you and why they should matter to others

Thursday, January 31st

Class-work	Homework
What matters? Civil dissent. Sentence patterns.	#2 Read p.1-24 & 36-55. Write 1 page about Cofer's texts. What was her childhood like? How does she represent her childhood? Make a time line of important events from your childhood, and then write 1 page about yourself. What was your childhood like? Use one example/story to represent an aspect of it.

Week #2
Tuesday, February 5th
Meet in computer room

Class-work	Homework
Representing childhood Memory & Multiple perspectives Timeline	#3 Read 56-69. (Freyer) Write 1 page about the message questions on page 69.

	Make a list of your belongings and then write 1 page about your stuff. What does it say, or not say, about you. P

Thursday, February 7th

Class-work	Homework
Details and description Decoding code phrases	#4 Read 70-78. (Allison) Write 1 page about Allison's essay. What does she look like? How does she feel about her appearance? How does she convey her feelings? Write 1 page about yourself. What do you look like? Is there a picture that particularly represents you, or that fails to? You might describe this picture and explain how/why it represents/fails to represent you.

Week #3
Tuesday, February 12th

Class-work	Homework
Voice Visual representations	#5 Read p.79-88 (Sexton) Write 1 page about Anne Sexton. What sort of person is she? How does she convey who she is? Write one page about yourself: either a resume or poem or song that represents who you are.

Thursday, February 14th

Class-work	Homework
Medium Multiple voices and identities *cw sig exercise	#6 Read p.132-154 (Sedaris) Write 1 page in response to the method questions on page 154 Write 1 page in response to the medium questions on page 154

Week #4
Tuesday, February 19th

Class-work	Homework
Humor Voice Quotations & dialogue	

Thursday, February 21st
Class-work	Homework
In-class exercise page 126 In-class work on formal assignment #1 Narrative as argument, description as evidence	Complete first draft of formal assignment #1

Week #5
Tuesday, February 26th
Class-work	Homework
Peer review Revision- global revision, reading aloud	Complete first revision of first formal essay

Thursday, February 28th
Formal assignment #1 due
Class-work	Homework
Revision continued Place In class mapping home (Fleckenstien)	#7 Read 224-254 (Lamy & Wideman) Write 1 page about the places that are important to Lamy and Wideman. How do they represent their feelings about these places? Write 1 page about your home. You might sketch it first, or list the parts of your house, or list important events that happened there. Write I page about another place that is important to you. Try the brainstorming techniques above.

Week #6- No class, conferences
Tuesday, March 4th

Thursday, March 6th
Class-work	Homework
	Select at least three images of homes from contemporary magazines and bring them to class. (I'll have some in my office if you want to look through them.) Write 1 page about what these images represent about contemporary ideas of home. How do these ideas compare with actual homes you have been in?

Week #7

Tuesday, March 11th

Class-work	Homework
Description	#8 Read 271-280 Write 1 page in response to either the message or the method questions on page 280. Write 1 page about a place that is sacred to you. First use the senses to help you generate material by listing what this place looks like, sounds like, smells like, feels like, and tastes like. Bring unit #2 informal assignments to class

Thursday, March 13th
Meet in computer classroom

Class-work	Homework
In-class workshop- observation	Complete formal essay #2

Week #8- Spring Break

Week #9
Tuesday, March 25th
Formal Essay #2 Due

Class-work	Homework
Peer review Concise language-local revision	

Thursday, March 27th
Formal essay #2 due

Class-work	Homework
Movie	#9 Read 411-496 Pick two pieces that are the most interesting two you. Write two pages about them, why they are interesting to you, and the literary/rhetorical strategies they contain. Write one page about what they represent about contemporary American hopes and dreams and hatred and despair. Write one page about your own hopes and dreams and what causes you despair and hatred.

Week #10

Tuesday, March 31st
Conferences
Thursday, April 2nd
Conferences

Week #11
Tuesday, April 7th

Class-work	Homework
Hopes and dreams, hatred and despair Voice and tone Writing arguments for consensus	

Thursday, April 9th
Meet in computer classroom

Class-work	Homework
In-class research workshop- finding and documents images	

Week #12
Tuesday April 14th
Meet in computer classroom

Class-work	Homework
Documenting images continued, MLA format Mounting images- an introduction to PowerPoint.	

Thursday, April 16th
Formal assignment #3 due

Class-work	Homework
Patterns of organization Transitions	Revise formal assignment #3

Week #13
Tuesday, April 21st Passover- no classes

Thursday, April 23rd
Formal Assignment #3 due

Class-work	Homework
Peer review	

Week #14
Tuesday, April 28th

Conferences
Thursday, April 30th
Conferences

Class-work	Homework
	Bring in the assignment sheet from a writing activity from another class.

Week #15
Tuesday, May 5th

Class-work	Homework
Portfolio format Writing across the curriculum	

Thursday, May 7th

Class-work	Homework
Final review Celebration	