Breaking out of the Ghetto: The Theory and Practice of Using Critical Embodied
Writing to Build Inclusive Spaces of Identification and Alternative Notions of Progress
in Writing Studies

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Chapter 1: Breaking out of the ghetto: Conflicting assumptions of progress in Writing Studies

I stumbled upon Janice Lauer's surely well meaning but questionably racist and historically insensitive statement in a Lester Faigley article several years ago and decided that she and I probably couldn't be friends (1986). Even in the case of an actual ghetto, the circumstances of leaving are not so simple. Moreover, leaving the ghetto does not necessarily constitute progress. The ghetto, from a material perspective, is created both by internal and external conditions that constrain those within it from simply leaving it behind and vice versa. From a discursive perspective, in part, it is statements like Lauer's about what Freshman English is *not* that define what the "ghetto" is. Lauer needs the ghetto to identify her goals as outside of it. Stylistically speaking, within the context of Freshman English, the metaphor belies confusion about the juncture between politics, economics, and fear that creates the conditions of possibility for a ghetto to exist in the first place—academic or otherwise—and what to do about it.

Unlike Lauer, Stokely Carmichael finds dignity in the ghetto and in the case of the speech quoted above, he speaks even more specifically to the "honor and privilege" of being in what he terms the "white academic ghetto" of Berkeley in the 1960s. That "ghetto" and the current of thinking coursing through it in the 1960s, was operating in

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solidarity with the kinds of movements that created the Composition ghetto that Lauer wishes to leave in 1970. Lauer's othering of the ghetto as a means of creating a disciplinary identity has stuck with me for several years in large part because of my interest in its conception of the notion of progress or implied time, geographical location and movements from one location to another or implied place/context, and its appeal to a sort of emotional shaming with roots in embodiment and emotion that reifies norms of whiteness. The interplay of these three things—time, place, and embodiment—offers insights for those who, like me, are seeking ways of expanding how we think about the relationship between newcomers to the academy and long-standing members, including those we in Composition Studies consider: "non-native speaker students", "basic writers", "indigenous students", "minority students", and those operating within the historical mainstream including: "experienced writers", "technical writers", "Academics", "writing teachers", "scholars", and "researchers".

   As a person who shares a few salient characteristics with basic writers but has been, to some extent, instructed in the ways of a writing teacher and an academic fancy pants, I generally read with an eye for those writers from whom I would accept an invitation to dinner and those from whom I would decline an invitation. I first read everything as though I am the writer's primary audience even though I know I am not. I write in much the same way. This sort of self-centered approach to reading and writing, it should be noted, has been considered a "basic writer" thing to do (Kroll, 1978). The notion of the egocentric basic writer has been contested, but the history of the creation of the perspective itself, has embedded it as a significant ideological thorn in the side of many folks in composition studies (Harris, 1988). In my own experiences with legitimacy,

reading and writing in a way perceived by mainstream readers and scholars to be self-centered is viewed with suspicion and even, at times, disdain.

In a survey of the content of the writing of Basic Writers taken early in her career, Andrea Lunsford notes that, "if we look at the grammatical subjects used by the basic writing student, we find that the focus is consistently on the writer or on those with whom he identifies…The skilled writer, on the other hand, focuses not on herself at all" (Lunsford, 1981). Lunsford concludes that this tendency is caused by basic writers' "egocentric rhetorical stance and their inability to achieve the level of cognitive development Vygotsky labels "true concept formation". Lunsford is generous here in not simply giving up on basic writers' ability to transcend their cognitive limitations and yet her argument is weakened by a failure to recognize the interwoven nature of egotistic stances and the socio-cultural context in which they occur. Michael Cole's interpretation of Vygotsky's stance on culture and individual is instructive here. In a critique of Vygotsky's understanding of egocentric speech, Cole asserts that individual and society cannot be separated and placed into a temporal hierarchy but rather that both culture and individual are ever-present before a speech act even occurs (Cole, 1992).

More instructive perspectives on the notion of "egotistic speech" can be found in a body of boundary breaking work spanning from Black Feminist Geographies to Postcolonial Theory, to Black Power Nationalism. Many of these works argue that minorities (often indigenous and/or ancestors of enslaved Africans) have been denied place, language, and identity and must therefore cultivate their own spaces, places, and identities by beginning precisely with the individual semi-autonomous/semi-oppressed self. Marlene NourbeSe Philip's series of reflections and theories on writing oneself into

existence in a particular place is both instructive and extremely useful for contemplating the continued challenge of egocentric rhetoric and the academic ghetto. Additionally, Katherine McKittrick's work on Black Women's Geographies addresses subversive ways of looking at the intersection of identity, place, and language. Together with several other works, the writing of NourbeSe Philip and McKittrick, specifically, helps to form a theoretical foundation for the purposeful use of egocentric rhetoric and writing. None of this work, I argue, has been taken up by the field of Composition or Writing Studies to address the question of what constitutes progress in the field.

Lunsford simply suggests that the solution to the problem of the egocentric rhetorical stance "lies in helping our students become more proficient at abstracting and conceptualizing and hence at producing acceptable academic discourse, without losing the directness many of them now possess". The idea here is twofold: Firstly, there is an implied norm of "indirect" and "other-centered writing" which is a kind of "acceptable academic discourse" that only exists when the "other" is a mainstream other. And secondly, there is an implied idea that students can assimilate to appropriate conventions of correct content and still maintain their "directness", for whatever that's worth once they've given up on content deemed unbecoming of academic thought. The problem, as Cole would later recognize, is that neither does the individual come before the society, nor vice versa. In attempting to understand "indirect" writing in the absence of a cultural context, Lunsford overlooks her own cultural and political bias. In Lunsford's argument we have a vision of progress that moves from basic writer individual to, and I use these specific words very intentionally, the highly technically skilled writer or, for short, the technical writer.

A decade later, Tom Fox addresses the same quality of self-focus theorized by Lunsford in a dramatically different way. He acknowledges a pattern in African American literacies of emphasizing self in context or self in position. Citing examples of position-based autobiographical writing like Frederick Douglass' autobiography and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, he suggests that in negotiating a position for themselves within the academy in their writing courses, African American students' (often also known as basic writers) are drawing on a strong rhetorical pattern that must be recognized and understood by writing teachers if they aim to be effective at including and serving the needs of African American students and "future teachers" (Fox, 1994; 301).

Still, in spite of noteworthy outliers like Tom Fox and a small group of like-minded thinkers within Composition Studies, as I will argue in Chapter 2, the deficit model persists in fields associated with Writing less because people in the field are openly espousing it, and more so for two reasons. Firstly, several sub-disciplinary locations in the field tacitly uphold a progress narrative that associates basic writers and basic writing with primitivism (the ghetto as depraved space) and technical writers with expertise, technology, and progress (the not ghetto). The field therefore seems to be unable to recognize and critique this progress narrative from basic to technical writer. Secondly, the field of Writing Studies as a whole is resistant to allowing for the possibility of being acted upon and changed by the work and identities in practice of these "other" students. If students employ "egotistical writing", like, DuBois and Jacobs, it is because they are working to either write a location into existence or to write themselves into a location that rejects their bodies, methods, and posititionality as less than fully legitimate. Scholarly, role models like DuBois and Jacobs are great, but it would be fantastic if the field itself had

more than a handful of scholars of color and writing methodologies to serve as potential models of the kinds of position-based writing Fox's students are doing. I argue that we need a theory and that that theory can be found by analyzing the work in Black Feminist Geographies, Feminist theory, and interdisciplinary theories of affect and embodiment that I mentioned above and will use to draw connections in Chapter 3.

Twenty years after Tom Fox wrote the article above, I, a half-African American who might have become one of the "future teachers" Fox was talking about in 1994, have persisted in academia by sheer force of will and the support and confused compassion of a handful of teachers who have wanted me to succeed. I, like many "basic writers" continue to be puzzled by some of the tacit expectations of legitimacy and subtle rejections of the validity of experience or anything associated with "basicness" in the field. I am extremely grateful for the folks who have believed that I had something to say, even though nobody could really figure out what it might be or how it might conform to recognizable standards of disciplinary legitimacy. And yet, I know that students who share my perplexity about unspoken assumptions about writing and legitimacy need more than confused compassion. Notably, it is often the case that it is the very people left behind by notions of progress that are best able to see these kinds of assumptions. I will argue that they need the field to be self-reflexive and critical about the tacit assumptions that create notions of progress and legitimacy within Writing Studies. I will also argue that it might be helpful to continue to investigate the potential for practices that engage in identity-building, restructuring of language, and place-making.

When I read and write for the work I do at the University, I often feel the need to erase some of myself in order to pretend at identification with an academic community

that frequently relies on the foundational discourses of a history of violence, shies away from revolutionary thought, and therefore rejects my most hopeful and dearest thoughts/ambitions and many of the thoughts/ambitions of all people imagining an alternative to oppression. For this reason, I have increasingly learned to center myself as a reader outside of the academic context in which I am an increasingly ambivalent participant while maintaining an awareness of myself as an agentic participant in academic discourse. I do this out of a sense of defiance and out of a desire to make a tentative space for myself in a discipline that often disappears people of color by equating normativity with legitimacy. In a field that claims expertise over the ways people express their thoughts through writing (style), receive and transmit the written ideas of others (memory), organize written ideas (arrangement), conjure up new ideas (invention), and establish the contexts, modalities, or genres in which all of this is accomplished (delivery), often though not always, in spite of the hard work of folks who care about restructuring the university in ways that center difference, it still seems that the distance between expert and not-expert is determined by the extent to which one is able to adhere to the status quo in terms of acceptance of particular ways of remembering, agreement on what is important to say, and where and how it is appropriate to say it. Novice writers have been infantilized (time), ghettoized (place), and primitivized (embodiment) for the sake of a more scientific (disembodied), expert (timeless), vision of institutional (placeless) writing that seemingly comes from nowhere but is, in actuality, driven by forces of capitalism. Subsequently, the writing practices, or "errors", or processes of those deemed novice writers are reduced in status and delegitimized. To take the work being done in those practices seriously risks exposing the ideologically driven progress narratives

within certain parts of the field and thereby making more humane—though probably less economically viable—alternatives possible.

While in some domains of Writing Studies, researchers and theorists are driven to engage with expanding notions of linguistic norms and who is able to participate in those norms (Lu, Horner, Fox, New London Group, Street), in other domains of Writing Studies, researchers and theorists are driven to view expertise as the ability to assimilate to status quo writing imperatives (Flower, Hayes, Haas, Witte). By status quo, I mean the kind of power-driven, not-ghetto, timeless, disembodied/voice from nowhere thinking and practice that many folks in Writing Studies are attempting to move away from while others grip ever more tightly to them. Much of the latter research masks the gnarlier elements of its ideology with the stated goals of better facilitating digital communication and workplace writing. Within this status quo, priorities of writing research (like empiricism, clarity, and relative objectivity) are placed higher in the hierarchy of research than other priorities like narrative, confusion/discomfort/uncertainty, translation, and critical engagement with relative subjectivi*ty.* I am especially interested in the ways the increased emphasis on the relationship between writing and digital technology (disengagement with place, location, and posititionality), narrow use of individual "memory" (disengagement with collective or historical time), and the turning of embodiment into a scientific object (disembodiment), are increasingly being used as tools of empirical research following the intensely persistent legacy of Flower and Hayes' cognitive model of process and the field of technical writing's reduction of conversations about difference to problematic understandings of intercultural communication (a field disciplined by an assimilatory and/or management approach to difference)*.* This project

will address these trends through a combination of rhetorical analysis of central works in the field, a look at what is being offered in other fields—namely, Black feminist geographies and post-colonial feminisms—and a relatively personal narrative of my embodied experience in a particular geographical and historical location.

I will return, for a moment, to my story. In the spirit of opposition to feeling like I was the ghetto that Lauer was explicitly trying to get away from, I avoided reading anything from her other than the quote she wrote about Freshman English for about four years before deciding that reading as a "scholar" within a discipline requires imagining myself to be a part of an audience that may or may not make for a pleasant dinner party. After many years of trying to become an expert at having timely and contextually fitting things to say about writing (and mostly failing miserably), out of respect for intellectual curiosity and the necessity of trying to figure out how to invent something meaningful to write, I took it upon myself to see where Lauer's thinking took her in her long career, whether or not she had anything to say that might be useful to me, and whether or not she figured out how to break out of the ghetto. As it turns out, it's difficult to say whether or not she devised a successful plan to free herself and her discipline from the ghetto. She did, however, have some useful things to tell me about invention.

Lauer told me about the cognitive dissonance that writers and thinkers feel when they realize that there is a "gap between a current set of beliefs or values and some new experience or idea that seems to violate or confound those beliefs" and that this gap might lead to further inquiry or even a practice of writing as inquiry (Lauer, 1982). The idea of a cognitive gap is interesting to me because it references a spatial, temporal, and embodied phenomenon taking place at the intersection of the mental, social, historical, and potential

or not yet become. The cognitive gap is a space of hope and possibility. Lauer emphasizes that, "if inquiry begins with dissonance and well-articulated unknowns, further questions arise" (91). She offers one question that I really like: "How can we encourage students to become sensitive to the enigmas in their experience?" and in so doing, engage them in practices of inquiry (91). Again, here we see reference to becoming or looking to the past and present to create conditions of possibility for the future. I want to note two things about this quote. Firstly, there is a refrain here—time, place, embodiment—that I will continue to explore throughout this project. Secondly, while I am definitely interested in figuring out the answer to the question of engaging students in practices that engage their sensitivity to their experience for the benefit of my students, because I am also writing a dissertation, I am equally interested in how the question might help me and how best to articulate the unknowns I seek to address here—namely, how the field can best prepare itself, across a wide spectrum of seemingly disparate writing theory and practice, to more fully engage with language as a historied practice of difference and to thereby allow itself to continually be changed by "outsiders" and/or academic "others".

In turning Lauer's question toward my own project, I wonder how being sensitive to the enigmas in my experience might yield information interesting or useful to an audience other than myself by addressing the gap I see between some of the transformative goals of critical pedagogy and some of the realities of much of the work happening in the field of Writing Studies. I also wonder how I might most skillfully encourage myself to become sensitive to the enigmas of my experience as a teacher, student, and researcher in the field of Writing Studies—both reflexively and for the sake of future insider-outsider writers. I'll briefly review the word history of the words

"encourage" and "enigma" in order to attempt to offer a clearer explanation of how these concepts fit into a bigger picture. "Encourage" comes from either the Middle English word encoragen and/or the French word encourager both of which suggest a relationship between courage and "in" or "en" which means making or putting in. "Enigma" comes from the Greek word *ainos* which means fable that morphed into *ainissethai* which means "to speak allusively" or "to speak in riddles" (Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, 1966). The choices of words in Lauer's very good question, we might say, are remnants of an impulse to promote courage in telling a story. But why is there the need for this courage in the face of contemplating and organizing the confusing bits of our or our students' experience? What's the threat? Using my own experience I have developed some potential insights on this matter. If the cognitive gap is a space of hope and possibility, it is also a space of danger, threat of change, uncertainty, and discomfort.

In my case, and arguably in the case of many other minority writers, the threat of attempting to engage with puzzles of my own experience is the shame and frustration of not figuring out how to present those puzzles in a way that means anything to anyone else—and to therefore be hypervisibly helpless in our condition of invisibility. This feeling has characterized much of my experience in graduate school and I think exploring the conditions that have contributed to my experience is a useful exercise not just for me but also for many folks in the field of Writing Studies who care about both being inclusive and transforming the foundations of the discipline. I want to be careful to avoid posing my experience as universal or even transferable in a scientifically provable way. That said, I definitely think that the semi-"egotistical" writing that happens in the context of critical auto-ethnography is a useful and necessary method for attempting to navigate the tricky

practice of representing local experience as it is constructed within the context of larger or more global relationships. I borrow from several traditions in the critical study of Rhetoric and Composition, New Literacy Studies, and Anthropology in order to build a method that attempts to bring attention to the complex relationship between a particular constellation of literacy practices (i.e., "Rhetoric and Writing Studies"/"Rhetoric and Composition"), some gaps in disciplinary knowledge related to those practices and their impact on minority writers/participants, and interdisciplinary approaches to those gaps.

So, what are those gaps? The overall goal of this project is to use a combination of literary critique and a critical rhetorical and autoethnographic approach to my particular experience within one Writing Studies department to assess the relationship between embodiment, memory, and experience in the context of critical writing pedagogy and practice. The goal of this assessment is to address what I perceive as a call for connecting the literacy agendas and the literacy "labors" of subordinated groups of people to the agenda of the folks in Writing Studies who care about writing as a democratic or even revolutionary practice (Horner, 2014). I do this in large part because I want to better understand the assumptions behind the creation and maintenance of the categories of "basic writer" and the sometimes implied/sometimes explicit category of "expert/technical writer" and how memory and embodiment (and perhaps/probably critical emotion) studies might help to shift the assumptions that exclude ways of knowing, sharing, and receiving knowledge that are operating as an alternative to dominant social politics/economics. I argue that we can do this by recognizing and developing embodied, emotioned, historically and geographically situated pedagogical practices for teaching writing and for fostering self-reflexivity within the field. I want to

elucidate the ways that the field's habit of drawing distinctions between the foundational

understandings of writing and power in technical writing, basic writing, first year

composition, and critical composition studies (often as though they are distinct fields of

inquiry) limits the discipline, the diversity within the discipline, and the ability for the

discipline to serve as a site where alternatives to oppression can be generated. I will argue

that some of the work happening in some of the subdisciplines of Writing Studies upholds

racism and oppressive epistemologies in its reification of norms and hierarchies that

tacitly promote standardized language as an asset of white property value. This, I think, is

harmful to students of all racial, economic, and linguistic backgrounds. Throughout this

project, I will draw on women of color feminist, postcolonial theory, and emotion studies

to articulate some alternatives that offer solutions for what might be called "challenges of

working with difference" in Rhetoric and Composition.

What kind of labor can literacy work do?

Within the realm of New Literacy Studies (NLS), Brian Street characterizes NLS as a

body of scholarship that resists what he calls the autonomous model of literacy which sees

literacy as a largely decontextualized skill in favor of an ideological model of literacy

which sees literacies as socially constructed (1985, 2003). According to Street, the

socially-situated and socially-contested nature of literacy practices is a participatory

activity that can productively be addressed by researchers who engage in critical

ethnography. This is the case, however, only when critical ethnography is able to account

for the factors that contribute to the experiences and contexts of its' subjects (2004).

Coming from a Rhetoric and Composition background, Bruce Horner has taken on the task

of recognizing the work that the autonomous model of literacy has done in Rhetoric and

Composition Studies and repeatedly asserted that the not-necessarily purposeful use of this model has obscured the labor subordinated groups of writers are doing in literate practices that defy commodification and easy assimilation into academic contexts (Horner 1997, 2014; Lu and Horner (Re)Writing English: Putting English in Translation, 2012 in *English a Changing Medium for Education*). The question of who gets to decide what labor is important and what that labor means in a given context is of interest to folks like me who study rhetoric and composition with the goal of engaging more people in deeper ways with writing as a tool of communication and peaceful revolution in times of economic and social violence. Merging Street's call to action with Horner's emphasis on labor and subordination and my own (WOCF) emphasis on the importance of discursively contextualized experience, I wonder how we can use rhetoric and critical autoethnography to address the context and conditions in which the labor of subordinated groups of writers is overlooked. What kinds of risks do subordinated or minority writers take when they focus on their own experience and the differences between the labor enacted in their literacies when those literacies are different from mainstream literacies? And lastly what kinds of ideological assumptions and practices prevent the field from taking that labor seriously?

Defining the ways literacy works in a given context, arguing for the legitimacy of particular literacies, and doing either of these things in a particular location through critical exploration of experience in context involves struggle and the risk of not being taken seriously, wasting one's time, potentially losing the respect of colleagues, or failing out of High School, College, or Graduate School. In the interest of justice and equity, I think that users of language *should* have to negotiate for the legitimacy and acceptability of

using certain kinds of literacy in a given context. I also think that the people with the power to decide who gets to participate in that negotiation have an ethical obligation to bring people with a more diverse set of goals, bodies, and identifications to the bargaining table.

Bruce Horner points out that while there is still a strong need to legitimize the literacy practices of "subordinated groups", even well meaning attempts to legitimize these kinds of literacy risk imposing the problematic reductions of the autonomous model of literacy onto diverse literacy practices. One way to avoid this, he posits, is to "find ways to focus on the labor of these groups as they continuously rework, and thereby renew, literacy, texts practices, and contexts—whether deemed "academic" or otherwise" (2014). In other words, Horner advises that we contemplate the work and working goals of literate practices rather than essentialize their users and their practices. Moreover, we need to expect that this contemplation will involve some discord and change. I largely agree with Horner's perspective and yet, I feel that it needs to be made more complicated.

As with the strategic essentialism of identities, strategic essentialism and the heuristic notion that particular subordinated groups can claim a space within a strategically "autonomous" kind of literacy remains a necessary and empowering project within critical composition studies. For example, Elaine Richardson's *African American Literacies* is a necessary and hugely beneficial text within the Writing Studies canon. It seems to me though, that the title indicates Richardson's tendency to treat literacy in a way that Horner aims to resist—as an essentialized practice. And yet, the fact that Elaine Richardson even wrote a book called "African American Literacies" here in the 21 century is a testament to the reality that, while there is certainly a group of advocates working on

behalf of literacy equity—and by that, I mean recognition of various forms of literate

practice as legitimate and potentially valuable contributions to an intellectual economy—

in Writing Studies, the field has a long way to go toward recognizing difference as the

norm. Until more of the field is able to agree that practices identified with difference are

central to the entire field, the need remains for seemingly essentialized and historically

situated practices of literacy. This kind of essentialism is an identity-based practice closely

aligned with the theory of strategic essentialism initially posited by Gayatri Spivak. Such

strategic identifications are necessary to understanding not only the revolutionary

strategic identifications of folks relegated to the margins of legitimacy through discourses

of literacy but also to understanding strategies for shifting the identity of the field of

Writing Studies itself.

 If we think about the conceptual metaphors of ownership, process, and being most

commonly associated with literacy in academic discourse outside of the New Literacy

Studies and critical approaches to Composition/Writing/Rhetorical studies—*becoming*

literate (literally, the process of owning literacy as a kind of identity); *being* literate

(literally, the act of assuming literacy as an identity); or even *participating in* literacy or

literacies (literally, entering into the animated body or space of the literate)—we can see

that identity, embodiment, and literacies go hand in hand. However, the relationship and

interaction between literacies-self-identity and discourse community-identity is confusing

when it comes to the context of writing. In an essay entitled, "Writing as a Mode of

Learning", Janet Emig offers an account of the differences between discourse in a written

context and discourse in an oral context. One of the differences she highlights is the idea

that "with writing, the audience is usually absent; with talking, the listener is usually

present" (1977, 9). While theoretically this is the case, a more embodied (literally, "in body") understanding of presence and the traces of presence suggests otherwise. For example, in the *This Bridge Called My Back* anthology, Gloria Anzaldua makes a variety of claims about writing that suggest that the imagined audience is always present, even when that audience exists as a memory trace, casting aspersions at the writer, telling her that she is less than worthy of existing on the page. A general understanding of this phenomenon has existed for some time in the thought of W.E.B. DuBois (double consciousness) and George Herbert Mead (symbolic interactionism and the "generalized other") (DuBois, 2008; Mead, 1934). Anzaldua writes simultaneously in opposition to an audience that fails to be able or willing to hear her or to recognize her legitimacy and to an audience that can identify with her sense of being silenced. She does this, "to record what others erase when [she speaks], to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about [her]" and she asserts that she "will [therefore] write about the unmentionables, never mind the outraged gasp of the censor and audience" (1981, 169). The work and positioning she does in her writing is a kind of revolutionary labor. More bluntly stated, identity work can be revolutionary labor.

As I mentioned a few paragraphs ago, in the 1980s several writing scholars addressed some of the challenges of "audience awareness" in terms of Piaget's notion of "egocentricity", suggesting that if writers could write from a decentered approach that recognized that their readers may not understand where they are coming from, this would help them to better address the needs of the audience (Kroll, 1978; Lunsford 1978, 1979). Even though this explicitly stated assumption primarily exists in tacit ways in the field these days, Tom Fox, Chela Sandoval, and I continue to think there is something far more

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complicated happening for minority student writers than mere unawareness of an outside audience. As evidenced by Anzaldua's statement on writing (and many others shaped by her work that I will cite throughout this project), because she knows that her voice is not the norm, she has to write to two perceived and/or theoretical audiences. Firstly, she writes to the perceived audience that silences her, and secondly, she writes to, for, and with the imagined audience that is also silenced. We can look at this as a kind of authorial double-consciousness, wherein the writer must always contend with viewing themselves through the multiple lenses of perceived audiences (DuBois, 1994). We can also look at it as a part of the process of meta-ideologizing in Chela Sandoval's five-part "methodology of the oppressed" in which a writer or theorist must "see what they do as they do it from the dominant viewpoint as well as from their own, shuttling between realities, their identities reformatting out of another third site" (Sandoval, 2000; 85). This movement performs the revolutionary labor of shifting identities and meanings, creating contingent significations, and potentially leading toward a politics of love and differential consciousness (Sandoval, 2000; 165 & 184).

Arguably, a student writer who already suspects that a reader or a discourse community won't understand where they are coming from may be so heavily burdened with the idea of appealing to their audience that rather than engaging in any sort of agentic labor practices, they simply freeze in the face of attempting to appease the demands of a group of relative strangers (the normatively white audience with normatively white expectations) who have proven repeatedly to either be unable to, or to refuse to understand the position of that writer, much less attempt to allow that position to alter the status quo. In order to work with a sense of agency, students, writers, and

student writers need a framework within which to labor. Students, writers, and student writers need a context within which to begin to theorize and enact that labor. I argue here that the writing classroom can and should be one such space.

What kind of labor does this project seek to do?

Following a budding trend of shared theory building between research and practice in "academic literacies" happening mostly in the UK, Australia, South Africa, and the field of critical composition studies happening in the critical literacies, post-colonial, Marxist, basic writing sections of composition studies in the US, I initially decided I needed to do ethnographic research. My first thought was to do it "on" students in the classroom but then I realized that creating an account of my own experience with composition studies might be far more useful both to my research/life goals and (theoretically) to the discipline more broadly. This project has therefore turned into a combination of literary analysis (engagement with the theories and writing of people of color, especially women of color) and critical autoethnographic study of my five or six years as a graduate student in the department of Writing Studies at the University of Minnesota. Using the collection of writings I have muddled through in my time here, stories I have recorded in journals about my interactions with members of the department's faculty and students in the department, in conversation with writings in the field, I aim to create a picture of a particular embodied experience with and practice of writing that could (theoretically) serve as a model for other students trying to write themselves into the university. It might also offer clues as to how the tensions in such writing and the discomfort those tensions engender might serve as part of the foundation of a transformational pedagogy that uses writing and the teaching of writing to transform the university and, hopefully, society

more broadly. At the very least, it will call for an integration of theory and discourse across multiple literacy practices within Writing Studies.

In some ways, I want to speak for and to an audience that doesn't really seem to exist in Writing Studies. I want to write as though I am speaking to a group of imaginary student-writers of color and Women of Color Feminist Composition Scholars who (though they have existed on the margins or outside of the discipline) have come before me in making the following necessarily reductionist accusations to disciplines like Writing Studies in which we are, in many ways, disappeared: Many of you have failed to embrace linguistic difference as anything other than an obstacle to be overcome. Many of you have prioritized "clear" writing as a means of better facilitating the smooth flow of money to the same people who have always had money at the expense of "complicated" writing that might better illustrate my complicated history. Much of your history is based on a prioritizing of the masters of Western Thought and a denial of the ways of knowing of so many of our ancestors. And yet, in spite of all that, you want us to talk in a way that you will understand? You want us to conform to the discourse rules of your community without working to translate the contributions that we have to offer in our difference? "I don't want to do that because I have more to offer", says my imaginary Chicana feminist writer audience, my imaginary Black revolutionary feminist writer audience, my imagined Peminist critical theorist audience, and the Basic Writer audience who fail out of their Basic Writing class and thereby fail out of college in a fit of anxiety.

Just like I am quick to theorize and declare my privilege relative to, for example, a Chicana farm worker, I clearly recognize the many differences between my relationship to the academy and that of a diverse group of students who fail out of undergrad because

they can't pass their Freshman English courses. The most obvious difference being that I'm still here in my 11ᵗʰ year of higher education, hanging on for dear life. Still, I write from the context of having repeatedly straddled the border of failure as a participant in performing academic literacies. I position myself in this work from the perspective of a self-defined perpetual semi-outsider in Writing Studies who seeks to offer insights on difference, processes and embodiments of identity, and literate practices for the benefit of the field's frequently stated desire to respect and appreciate difference. Questions I address from an attempt at a more "insider" perspective include: Has the idea of Freshman English as a ghetto disappeared or has it just gone underground? What traces has that notion left behind and how does it continue to divide the field? Is it possible for the alternative community imagined in the preceding paragraph that values embodiment, emotion, contested memory, and strategic place-making to flourish throughout Writing Studies or is it necessary to preserve, oppositional, separate spaces within the field? What kinds of priorities would characterize those spaces? What kinds of "labor" could that contested documentation accomplish and who would get to participate? What kinds of internal and external resistances might they encounter? What is the pedagogical and disciplinary value of such an exercise? Is there a relationship between the struggle over disciplinary identity formation and the identity formation that happens in student writing and if so, what is it? In short, this project seeks to answer these questions in an attempt to build an understanding of the contexts that enable or constrict students in performing counter-hegemonic labor in their writing.

Labor and Identity Work

Arguably, as I have alluded to in a previous paragraph, there is a relationship between the rhetorical self-making functions of writing and the processes of rhetorical formation and reformation of the discipline itself. The statement that James Berlin makes in his posthumously published final book *Rhetoric, Poetics, and Cultures*, that "English studies is in crisis", is a reflection of what might be called a disciplinary identity crisis occurring at the nexus of a shifting political economy that for every inch of theory on the social construction of reality, seems to be shifting four inches in the direction of scientific rationality. What writing at the university should be depends on what one's understanding of the agenda of education—and perhaps more specifically, a university education—should be. Historians within the discipline have attempted to define the societal role of the university broadly as well as the function of English or Writing or Composition studies more specifically (Berlin, 1987, 1996; North, 1987; Faigley, 1992; Harris, 1997; Crowley, 1998). The rhetorical roots of the discipline can be seen as the locus of a long-standing disciplinary divide regarding the functions of language use and instruction. This divide is characterized by conversations related to three very old primary questions: Firstly, is there an ethical imperative in the teaching and usage of language? Secondly, if so, how do we enact it? And thirdly, is it desirable or even possible to teach writing from a perspective that operates outside of ethics and the material consequences of ethics? Both the narratives and the silences have implications for forming a disciplinary identity around cohesive sets of practices.

If Rhetoric and Composition exists in a perpetual state of redefinition, it is in part because of the discipline's history of self-reflexivity—a disciplinary tendency that, as evidenced by the many different iterations of the "history of the field" has only grown

stronger in the absence of agreement on the purpose, function and scope of the discipline and its component parts. This is so for at least three reasons. Firstly, the relationship between historical, economic, and political trends and pervasive disciplinary assumptions about the ethics of "difference" writ broadly are not immediately apparent. As perceived societal needs shift and change, so too does the discipline's awareness of former blind-spots and the need for refined disciplinary self-awareness. Secondly, there is no solid unified theory of composition. In order to achieve disciplinary status, folks in the field have long sought to find unifying themes of disciplinary identity by creating and agreeing upon Writing Studies' constituent parts. Thirdly, in a "humanities crisis" that has, according to Christopher Newfield, been growing since the conservative response to the Civil Rights movement, and/or in an "English studies crisis" noted by Berlin that has developed during the same period, the pull toward achieving a strong sense of disciplinary legitimacy (which, in Writing Studies has often been sought out by turning writing into an empirical—whether qualitative or quantitative—science and calling that progress) is as great if not greater than the drive to assert moral and ethical resistance to capitalist and post-colonial urges driving said humanities crisis (Berlin, 1996; Longo, 2000; Newfield, 2008).

I will juxtapose my own experience with the contextualizing discourse of scholars in Rhetoric and Composition who make a practice of identifying, theorizing, and critiquing assumptions in the field in order to provide alternative theories and practices of writing and literacies. What I want to do, and think that I can do, is identify one under-theorized area of discord, conflict, and identity-confusion within the field, analyze how the narratives driving that conflict represent students and their goals, and contemplate how

some other discourses including those found in, WOCF, post-colonial theory, and critical emotion studies, may offer representations of students and pedagogical assumptions that better suit some of the stated ideals of the discipline. The under-theorized area of discord I want to address is the field's narrative of what makes the study and practice of writing "legitimate work", how that narrative divides beginners/basic writers/novice writers based on narratives of progress and technology, and thereby imposes discrete and disconnected writing tasks these people are expected to do and skills they are expected to have rather than foregrounding the ideological and cultural work that literate practices can perform. I address the questions of why we are asking students to learn what we want them to learn, what we are hoping to gain from them in return, and what they have to offer the field.

Overview Chapter 2

Often, I have witnessed well-meaning folks in Rhetoric and Composition Studies expounding the virtues and necessities of teaching writing as an emancipatory practice, a critical practice, or a social practice working toward democratic aims, only to receive the question: "What does this have to do with writing?" from equally well meaning writing scholars and practitioners. This question is echoed, in some ways, by the contrasting silence on questions of equity and justice in many other texts and by an emphasis on notions of progress and technology that overlook the humane goals (facilitating equity, democratic compassion, and inclusion) of critical compositionists in favor of foregrounding instrumentalist goals related to facilitating the flow of largely depoliticized information. In this context "what does this have to do with writing" is a question that fails

to fully recognize the implications of history and collective memory on contemporary writing practices.

Joe Harris outlines the above contrast well in his article, "Revision as a Critical Practice", stating that "critical views of teaching, following the work of Paolo Freire, aim to reform the *consciousness* of students, to lead them to understand and resist the ways they are positioned by broad social forces and discourses" (2003, 577). This view, also commonly known as defining the "social turn" in Composition Studies, he thinks, is misguided because it deemphasizes the actual writing and foregrounds other topics entirely. He cites Ira Shor's 1996 *When Students Have Power* as advocating what Harris sees as intellectually "canvassing for votes" rather than teaching writing. He sees little evidence of teaching actual writing practice in Shor's text. By writing practice, it seems that he means the practice of *doing* writing in the absence of contemplation of the historically-constructed political context in which it is being done. Harris, I think, misses the point of critical pedagogy and he is not alone in this misinterpretation. One is "canvassing for votes" whether or not one overtly states a political perspective and attempts to present an argument about the virtues of democracy as a tool of counter-hegemony.

In a time when democracy and justice have more power in name than in practice, deemphasizing the historical context in which one is performing the theory and practice of writing is an exercise in erasure. I cite Harris' argument because it exemplifies a greater problem. The problem, as I see it, is that although recent work in the new literacy studies, critical literacy, and translingualism seeks to center difference, much work in the field still seeks, in various ways, to create uniformity and clarity, and equates successful writing

with white normative writing. As I have mentioned, I am especially concerned with the ways a disembodied and dehistoricized understanding of cognition has contributed to the neglect of some of the ethically driven foundational theory of technical writing and the ways the imperatives of technical writing impact the rest of the field (Campbell, 1995; Katz, 1992; Miller, 1979). As any group of scholar-practitioners within Writing Studies offers new practical and theoretical approaches to concepts—like embodiment, memory, and place—we might ought to recognize that these concepts have long been theorized with a deep focus on ethics in fields outside of Writing Studies.

Many scholars perceive and tacitly (and sometimes explicitly) claim neutrality in writing classrooms/practices in which there is, in fact, a decidedly white normativizing pedagogical emphasis working in conjunction with an unproblematized notion of progress. This point, I think, has been fairly well argued on numerous occasions and yet, many folks in the field overlook it precisely because our disciplinary understanding of the implications of memory and history are limited (Marshall & Ryden 2012; Prendergast, 1998; Kennedy *et.al*, 2005; Ratcliffe, 2006). My goal in Chapter 2 is to make use of my experiences with university writing and the narratives used within the context of the hierarchically divided field of Writing Studies to produce counter-readings of some current discourse about the politics, methods, and tools of memory in Writing Studies. I will argue that scholars who have been unable to recognize/theorize the history behind the teaching of writing standards have an ethical responsibility to consider how writing that promotes goals of clarity, organization, and an "audience-centered" approach are in fact deeply racialized and imbricated within racial and class-based histories of violence. Moreover, students need theories of memory in order to perform the labor of

writing themselves into the university in ways that resist economic and cultural oppression.

I will argue that there is, indeed, a hierarchy in Writing Studies that places technical writing at the height of writing skill and basic writing at the bottom. This hierarchy has strong implications for how we see our various students. Attempts to teach uniformity and universality as ideals in writing design and structure, while certainly useful in certain professional contexts, is harmful to students for whom assimilation and conformity enacts violence in their everyday lives and in their writing practices. I will argue that assimilation imperatives have long done a kind of violence to students of color. Writing research, pedagogy, and practice that attempts to aid writers in fostering uniformity and depoliticized notions of progress (whether intentionally or unintentionally) is doing so primarily in the interest of neoliberalism at the expense of inclusive ways of remembering. This depoliticization of writing prevents movement toward centering difference in writing pedagogy.

Overview of Chapter 3

My goal in Chapter 3 is both to articulate a rationale for and offer an example of embodied, geographically, and historically situated writing. I discuss the notion of writing from the body and the ways that such writing requires awareness of affect and emotion, identification, and the ways writing creates conceptual and physical geographies. I offer an introduction to an alternative framework and method of writing that includes and values strategies used by women and people of color for the purpose of resisting geographic and individual oppression. I call this method "critical embodied writing".

Critical embodied writing and thought is comprised of theories and practices I have found to support a writing pedagogy in which difference can be seen as the norm. It incorporates Women of Color Feminist theory and literary practices, postcolonial theory, and theories of writing, place, and embodiment. Because the connection between geographies, memory, embodiment and language may be unfamiliar to many readers, I explain the ways that this connection has been understood by a few experts on the subject. There is a strong argument to be made that geographic, memory-based, and embodied practices are constituted, policed, and resisted by language.

In order to offer an example of critical embodiment, I use examples of three approaches employed by the Black Lives Matter Movement to resist geographic and physical oppression. They are united by their intention of bringing complexity to oversimplified understandings of personhood, rationality, and history. These include: making explicit reference to bodies and bodily experience of suffering; inverting the binary between black hypervisibility and invisibility; and, disrupting the notions of rationality, innocence and guilt historically mediated through and imposed upon black bodies.

Overview of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 digs deeper into women of color feminist writing practices and how those practices speak to the need to combine theorization of bodies, spaces, identity, and history and language in order to resist marginalization and in order to create spaces and identifications that include the multiplicity of experiences and knowledge of people of color. While autoethnography, as a method, shares many of the goals of what I have termed critical embodied writing, critical embodied writing makes a handful of significant

departures from the work of autoethnography. I begin the chapter, therefore, by offering a history of some of the ways autoethnography has been used for the purpose of making a space for self and identity within the context of writing. I then describe the ways critical embodied writing differs from autoethnography.

I continue chapter 4 with a discussion of the contributions of six women of color writers to the theory behind and method of critical embodied writers. Although there are many women of color feminist writers I could have chosen from, in the interest of time, I highlight the work of just five of them: Audre Lorde, Marlene NourbeSe Philip, Trinh Minh-ha, Gloria Anzaldua, and Zora Neale Hurston. Each of these writers, I suggest, has something to offer in terms of the ways we are able to understand writing as an intervention into historical refusals to see language as a location where the complexities of space, geography, and identity can be dialogued and changed--not solely for the purpose of contributing to a body of academic knowledge, but also for the purpose of individual or personal knowledge-making.

The solution of scholars like Lu and Horner to the problem of marginalization and exclusion represented by normative notions of writing—to recognize difference as the norm in language and to see literacy practices as practices of translation rather than simple practices of reception, and to therefore recognize the labor of both reader and writer—leads me to conceptualize the labor of critical embodied writing as an embodied and emotioned practice rooted in history, place, and identity. In the spirit of this kind of labor, at the end of chapter 4, I perform a critical autoethnography of my literacy experiences both prior to coming to graduate school and in my time here. In this final section, I use my writing to offer a critically embodied account of one of my experiences within the field of Writing Studies. I take my Plan B/Master's paper, notes taken while writing the paper, and journal entries from the time when I was writing

that paper in conjunction with reflections on the paper after it was written, as a set of artifacts that exemplify critical embodied writing, make sense of some of the complexities I experienced in relationship to the process of writing the Plan B paper, and offer something of value to teachers who may, at some point, encounter other students who struggle with papers for reasons similar to the ones I outline in the final section of chapter 4.

Overview of Chapter 5

In the final chapter, I seek to re-imagine the notion of an academic ghetto, the work that might be done in such a place, and how that work might change the field of Writing Studies. Basic writing is still perceived as a low-value space—by students placed in basic writing courses and by would-be teachers alike. I argue that critical embodied writing can be especially useful to students in basic writing classes. I also argue that it can be useful to students who are neither in basic writing classes, nor identify as marginal to the university in any way. I end the chapter with the assertion that the geographical and linguistic work mentioned in the preceding chapters constitutes a kind of technical knowledge and skill.

Chapter 2: Politics, methods, and tools of body-memory in Composition Studies

Whether the task is making stories, making histories, or remembering, most people have the power to perform these kinds of acts of construction. However, although some constructions are perceived as legitimate and therefore able to work toward the self/group-interest of those in power, other makings are perceived as less legitimate and are, for this reason, marginalized by folks in power. The people in a discipline with the power to consciously participate, to shape, to build identifications—to make, build, and define—are often the same people who wield that materially consequential power outside of academia. In this chapter and the next, I will argue that within the field of Writing Studies, we can and should shift that dynamic both inside of and outside of Writing Studies by recognizing that bodies, historical narratives, affective responses, and geographical spaces are all involved in the shaping, policing, silencing, and prioritization of the members of our discipline.

I argue that both the shaping of the historical narrative of the Technical Writing sub-discipline of Writing Studies and the related policing of disciplinary priorities in Writing Studies is driven by a progress narrative that ghettoizes and infantilizes basic writing, basic writers, and writing that fails to conform to technical and mainstream writing standards; emphasizes production over democratic participation in writing practices; and fails to recognize the kinds of labor a broad spectrum of often marginalized voices and bodies—often the voices of "basic writers"—can perform. Writing Studies has a hierarchy of sub-disciplinary priorities culminating in the most marketable element of the discipline—technical writing. The relationship between the subdisciplines, including Basic Writing, First

Year Writing, and Technical Writing, dictates an ethically problematic set of priorities at all levels of the discipline. In this chapter, I address the role of the body and memory in creating and ameliorating the above-stated problems. The first part of the chapter outlines the progress narrative and its relationship to bodies, memories, and histories. The next part of the chapter offers an intersectional analysis of one example of the progress narrative in action followed by several examples of the ethical failings of even the most subversive thinking in technical writing. The final section of the chapter offers an introduction to the rationale behind an alternative framework that transfigures the cognitive model of process by incorporating theories of geography and language, Women of Color Feminisms, and postcolonial theory into writing practice as *techne* or practice/craft or technical skill.

Configurations of Mind and Body in Technical Communication

The field of Rhetoric and the relatively younger field of Writing Studies have a long history of considering the relationship between mind and/or body and communication/persuasion. Although particular emphasis has been placed on the mind and the ways the mind structures thought and influences writing processes—and especially the relationship between memory and writing—less emphasis has been placed on the ways the body, through processes of memory (remembering/forgetting/storytelling/historicizing), affect (subconscious) and emotion (conscious) may do the same. With regard to the mind-memory-writing relationship, the research of Flower and Hayes on the cognitive theory of process continues to be one of the most cited pieces in the history of Writing Studies (1981). This renown is for good reason. With the cognitive theory of process model, Flower and Hayes sought to disrupt what they perceived as an overly simplistic linear process model that moved neatly through three or four phases of writing and generally ended with revision and a

final product. The cognitive theory aimed to understand how writers made decisions by asking them to document their decision-making processes as they wrote and thereby to, "really understand the nature of rhetoric choices in good and poor writers" (366). This way of conducting writing research represented a novel shift in the field that led to an understanding of the study of "mind" that, following the tradition much like computer modeling, treated the mind as a machine of sorts.

The idea of asking a writer to document their decision-making process shows promise in certain ways while presenting problems in other ways. Think-aloud protocols represent a context-dependent interpretation of the way an individual is performing a given task and their reasons for doing so. They do not necessarily reflect the actual cognitive processes occurring during that performance (Smagorinsky, 1998—*Thinking and Speech…*). For this reason, it seems to me that think-aloud protocols are accurate more for their value in explaining a given person's interpretation of their writing process than explaining the actual process. This value can be used in concert with other methods of collecting data to provide a more robust picture of the interaction between an individual, their task, and their environment. Three of the gifts of Flower and Hayes' contributions are as follows: their support for a brand of research that places the writers' experience at the center of scholarly inquiry; their recognition of the importance of memory in writing studies; and their complication of the notion of process. Alas, while these three gifts have been important to the field, the model's shortcomings represent a dangerous trend in Writing Studies. This is evident especially the cognitive model's inability to recognize its elision of mind, body, and technology and how that elision enables others to take up cognitivist theory to glorify technology at the expense of real human bodies.

While, indeed, the cognitive model encouraged writing researchers to study writing practice and process in a far more nuanced way than other process models, the model relies on at least three assimilationist and dehistoricized premises. Firstly, the basic premise underlying the model—that writers' rhetorical choices could be studied in a somewhat objective way and that understanding those choices could help writing researchers to understand the different choices made by "good and poor writers"—implied both that the decisions of some writers could yield information about the decisions of many writers, and that there was some reason for wanting to know the choices made by good and poor writers. Arguably, the unspoken reason for engaging in this line of inquiry was and is to change the choices of "poor writers" to better conform to those of "good writers" without asking what I consider important questions about the political, social, and embodied context and power dynamics in which "poor writers" are writing. Another basic premise of the model is that writers use long-term memory to recall information to be used in their writing. This notion of memory suggests that all writers are working with some sort of politically neutral, disembodied, and historically detached kind of remembering that avoids the messy fact that each person's memory is historically, physically, and socially constructed. Recall, I argue, is not so simple as merely "getting things out" of the mind in order to "meet the different needs of a reader" (371). There are other dynamics at play including which information is deemed worthy of memory, and which information is considered as something that might "meet the needs of a [disembodied and presumably normatively aligned] reader. Thirdly, Flower and Hayes rely on the assumption that writers engage in a practice of "goal-setting" and that "the act of defining one's own rhetorical problem and setting goals is an important part of "being creative" and can account for some important differences between good and poor writers"

(373). Additionally, Flower and Hayes offer that, "all those forces which might "guide"

composing, such as the rhetorical situation, one's knowledge, the genre, etc., are mediated

through the goals, plans, and criteria for evaluation of discourse *actually set up by the writer*"

(379) (my emphasis added). This, however, is arguably rarely the case—especially with

regard to the writing classroom.

The above three assumptions: 1) that writers choices can be studied and that they

should be studied for the purpose of changing "bad" writers into "good" ones, 2) that

memory is politically neutral and recalled in the same basic way by all writers, and 3) that

writers define their own goals, led to a model that supports what appears on the surface to be

a politically neutral view of writing which, upon second thought, works strongly in favor of

standardized writing process that neglects the actual embodied experiences, histories, and

memories of many writers—especially minority writers—and instead advocates for a version

of progress that considers computerized thought to be expert thought without considering the

context or place in which that "progress" is occurring. The practice of overlooking the

political bias of a "neutral stance" and the silencing of certain histories in writing research

contributes heavily to the unexamined and under-recognized notion of a ghetto in the

discipline as well as to the progress narrative of leaving the ghetto behind. In understanding

the extent to which the mind, body, and memory are mediated differently through the

different writing practices of differently embodied, historically constructed, thinking/writing

people, we can begin, as a discipline, to theorize the function of the composition ghetto, we

can take a more serious look at the benefits and harms of prevailing disciplinary trends

regarding "difference", and we can consider the possible benefits of altering our approach to

difference and progress.

Disembodied bodies: the body as a means of production in Technical Communication

For much of the history of the field, mind, memory, and body have been theorized as separate entities. However, drawing on advances in cognitive neuroscience, and a shift in theoretical orientations to affect and emotion, recent theory in Writing Studies has contemplated the three as part of the same system. Additionally, some have linked body and mind through the notion of memory. Unfortunately, even among those few scholars who have contemplated the relationship between body, mind, memory and writing, most have done so for the purpose of upholding the problematic notion of progress outlined above. For example, in a study conducted by Christina Haas and Steven Witte, the two draw connections between the relationship between the body and memory, offering that "…the bodily movements and interactions in which writers engage are repeated by individuals and across individuals over time". They draw on Bourdieu to assert that, "a habit is a kind of remembering in and by the body" (2013, 228). These kinds of connections between memory, emotion and embodiment, I think, are really important for folks studying Writing Studies. That said, divorced from their theoretical underpinnings in locations like Critical Theory and Feminist Critique and applied to workplace writing without significant discussion of the politics underlying the context of the "workplace", discussions about embodiment, memory, and understanding/identity/self-making fail to uphold the ethical imperatives upon which modern day technical writing claims to strive toward (Katz, 1992; Miller 1979). An intersectional analysis that contemplates race, gender, class, and geographical practice in the formation and maintenance of this progress narrative can help to clarify the weakness of focusing on the body primarily as a means of production in a capitalist workplace.

Taking the Haas and Witte piece as an example, these two researchers claim that in the case of writing at least, the distinction between mind and body is erroneous and that while "the *body* is a cultural, social, and linguistic construct, *embodiment* is lived experience [that] signifies a unification of mind and body that, in fact, denies the possibility of abstracting the body as an analytic category, at least in studies of everyday human acts such as situated writing". While I agree with them that the mind and body are only split because of a particularly salient line of cultural thinking, I'm not convinced about their characterization of embodiment. Most importantly, splitting the body from embodiment is not a choice for every kind of body. While one might be able to split their culturally constructed body from their lived experience of mind and body for heuristic purposes, it is a power move (a move that can only be effectively enacted by people in power) to separate the socially/linguistically constructed body from the lived experience of body. There is a difference between the ways in which differently raced, classed, and gendered bodies are constructed and lived.

I'm particularly concerned that Haas and Witte seem to suggest that whereas the body is socially, linguistically, and culturally constructed, somehow embodiment is not. Still, I appreciate the move they make in articulating embodiment as both a mind and body performance. Defining embodiment as "a lived experience [that] signifies a unification of mind and body" suggests that we might understand embodiment as a close cousin to the concept of identification. Identification, as I see it, seems to be a more useful concept when thinking of issues of embodiment insofar as one can become conscious of one's identification and can therefore alter their ways of identifying and form allegiances in a conscientious way. When embodiment is taken as a given, or as operating outside of the realm of social construction and therefore operating outside the realm of power and memory/history, there is

a danger that it will be taken up by an ideologically dominant perspective and used toward power-driven ends.

Hass and Witte's article exemplifies that process in action. The article discusses the way a standards document comprised of multiple representational systems "requires distinct embodied production processes using different material and computer-based technologies". I take issue with their use of the notion of embodiment. The conclusions of their findings are illustrative:

> Understanding writing as embodied has profound implications for conducting research on written communication generally and on technical communication particularly. For us, one of the most important implications of this work is that it brings the notion of writing as production back to the fore. (445)

In the absence of an emphasis on the social construction of body, Haas and Witte are very quickly able to take an oversimplified approach to embodiment in which the body is associated with production processes without any recognition of the history of violence, racial limitations to economic participation, and historically constructed racial and gendered implications of serving as a productive body that might cause certain people to bristle at drawing the unproblematized connection between embodiment and production that pervades the argument of Haas and Witte. This kind of argument seems to operate either in ignorance to or in refutation of the marginalized histories of people of color, women, and economically disadvantaged people all the while further entrenching the beneficiaries of that marginalization (the authors of this piece included) in capitalist production. In this way, Haas and Witte's iteration of embodiment becomes embodiment for people in power, which is, arguably, a kind of disembodiment for people on the margins of power. The question for this chapter centers around how the discipline has made unskilled use of the socio-political

connections between mind, body, and history/memory made by folks in other fields. The next chapter focuses on how we might make more skillful connections and the final chapter focuses on where making use of these connections might lead the field.

Writing Progress/Writing hierarchies: Bodies in the service of capitalist production

Lest I be accused of constructing a straw man argument, I will provide evidence that in the field of Technical Writing—as evidenced by even the most socially aware scholarship—the end goal of writing and of writing bodies supports capitalist production at the expense of using writing as a path toward democratic participation (which is, arguably, the goal of some of the other participants in the field's hierarchy like basic writing and critical composition studies). I will begin this section with a rationale for an ethics of technical communication laid out by foundational theorists in technical communication. I will then show that while, many of these arguments, in spite of their stated goals of viewing technical writing as something other than a means of transmitting "reality" end up defining technical writing as operating in direct assistance to capitalist production, or as a practice of facilitating the transfer of goods. I will then provide ample evidence that in spite of some of the idealist foundational narratives of technical writing, technical communication holds such a narrow view of communication that it fails to fully recognize the political nature of writing or support some of the ethical imperatives that have been set forth by a minority of its academic theorists. In reviewing the following well-meaning articles, I am seeking to define the concept of progress in Technical Communication as something that can be inclusive of Katz and Miller's foundational ethics, in spite of the fact that the marriage of technical communication to capitalism seems to hinder that potential.

Foundations on the ethics and revolutionary potential of Technical Communication

Although the subject of ethics makes a somewhat frequent appearance in Technical Communication, Steven Katz and Carolyn Miller may have written two of the most formative articles addressing the issue of ethics in the field. Carolyn Miller begins her argument linking humanities to technical writing by outlining some common assumptions about rhetoric and technical writing. Although many scholars consider rhetoric to be emotional and biased, and therefore a thing to be avoided in technical or scientific writing, Miller deems this a manifestation of "the positivist view of science". She defines positivism as, "the conviction that sensory data are the only permissible basis for knowledge" (2). Within this way of thinking, there is no room for rhetoric—namely because rhetoric is designed to persuade and facts have nothing to do with persuasion. This way of thinking leads to problems, including: "unsystematic definitions of technical writing, emphasis on style and organization [at the expense of invention], insistence on certain characteristics of tone [impartial and void of character], and analysis of audience in terms of "level" (3). Miller argues that we need an alternative to the positivist perspective of technical writing that allows for rhetoric to be at the center of technical writing rather than relegated to the margins. Even scientists, she tells us, are moving away from positivist perspectives of science. She offers a humanistic rather than a positivist approach to technical writing that recognizes that "reality cannot be separated from our knowledge of it; knowledge cannot be separated from the knower; the knower cannot be separated from a community" (5). In the end, she suggests that from a humanistic perspective the function of "good" technical writing is to offer a convincing understanding of experience rather than the accurate portrayal of a fundamental truth.

Miller is adamant that one of the most important aspects in defining scientific and/or technical writing lies in recognizing the community in which that writing takes place. This, she terms the "communalist perspective" which views the study of technical writing as a necessarily cultural study involving ethnography. Ethnographic studies in technical writing took on greater legitimacy and numbers because of the shift that Miller outlines in the above-mentioned article. Although some have emphasized gender, the most widely cited of those ethnographic studies have, for various reasons, largely failed to include any sort of analysis of the role of race and class (Brown & Herndl, 1986; Doheny-Farina, 1986; Lay, 1991). The reason for this absence, I hope this next section will reflect, is that the field of technical writing represents the pinnacle of marketable progress and, for this reason, some would argue also for disciplinary legitimacy for Writing Studies as a field. The progress we make in our intellectual advancements in technical writing should therefore be *marketable* and while lip service to diversity is marketable to some extent, sustained engagement with race, class and gender are not.

Mary Lay Schuster attempts to bridge the gap between technical writing and one brand of feminism by suggesting that the growing research on collaborative writing in technical communication requires the field to contemplate issues highlighted in feminist theory such as: the polyvocality of experience, self-disclosure of experience, and recognition of former gaps in thinking. All of this, she asserts, may help technical communicators to "identify new sources of knowledge that may challenge dominant or traditional cultures". To what extent, however is she contemplating a challenge to dominant or traditional cultures? Early in the article, Lay-Schuster claims that the shifting emphasis on objectivity in conjunction with increasing use of ethnography may cause a need for a "revolutionary

affiliation for technical communication and feminist theory" (349). Toward the end of her argument she asserts that "the mission of most technical communication scholars is to prepare future technical writers to enter industry and to improve the industrial processes that produce communications" (365). In what way can we prepare students to be more efficient industrial agents while simultaneously taking seriously the mandates of feminism proposed by Lay-Schuster—some of which include a "celebration of difference", or as inclusive of women's experiences? Which women's experiences are considered here? It seems that the women's experiences Lay-Schuster implies are those women with access to industry who are able to participate as agents of power in said industry. While I appreciate her impulse to connect feminism with technical communication by way of collaborative writing, it is worth noting that Lay-Schuster's entire article references exactly zero women of color—a fact that severely hinders the credibility of her survey of feminist theory and undermines the potential for any truly revolutionary affiliation between technical communication and a brand of feminism not solely reserved for white women.

Greg Wilson has contemplated a post-modern approach to technical writing, but as I will attempt to show here, this approach does little more than reinstate the fundamental tenets of individualism, corporate capitalism, and neoliberalism into the center of the field of technical writing. Wilson's objective is "to instill the students with a sense of agency as communicators and workers in order to improve the profession of technical communication and the products of companies that employ technical communicators" (74). One might initially think that this goal is at odds with the broader goal Wilson asserts earlier in the article, of giving workers skills to alter the economy. At second thought, however, one realizes that Wilson's understanding of the economy is an individualist understanding, in

which individual technical writers cultivate stronger skills at improving their individual economic conditions and thereby improving the economic conditions of a compartmentalized field. In spite of Wilson's citing of Harvey's work, this solution to the problems of individual technical writers or even technical writing as a field of work does nothing for the underlying system of neoliberalism that Harvey sheds light on in his "Brief History of Neoliberalism". It is disturbing that Wilson's goals are so individualistic as to fall directly into the trap of glorifying privatization and corporatization. He asserts that, "by attuning students to the ways that modernist conceptions might hem in their agency, we can empower them by helping them intervene in corporate structures…What is good for our students is good for General Motors" (79). And apparently vice versa?

Some of the kinds of agency Wilson details include: the ability to "increase their value in the company, their job satisfaction, the efficiency of their company's technical communication, and their power to shift conceptual structures" (84). The first three of these goals are fully embedded in the neoliberal structure Wilson articulates as problematic in the first place. The final goal is so nebulous as to seem far from helpful in reversing the "cogs in the machine" status of technical writers that Wilson suggests is problematic. In a sort of ideal situation, Wilson presents us with technical communicators who "became product designers (symbolic analysts), not because they were told by management to do so but because they took the initiative to improve their company's products. In doing so, they are changing corporate culture, elevating the role of the technical communicator in the product development process…" (85). While this is great for the technical communicator, how does it shift the modernist conception of technical communication? In what ways does it support the ethical imperatives asserted by foundational theorists in Technical Communication? In short,

creating a theoretical foundation from Wilson's arguments about post-modernism will lead to a version of technical communication that teaches a form of agency that does little to care for the needs of all vulnerable populations of people and does little to increase their opportunity to use writing, rhetoric, and literacy to make meaningful change and to participate meaningfully in the economy at a macro and a micro level. What kind of progress is this?

Alternative iterations of progress in Writing Studies

There is, however, another way of looking at the notion of "progress" in Writing Studies. We needn't tie ourselves to the end goal of facilitating capitalist production and at the very least, if we decide to do so, we should clearly articulate this as our goal and subject ourselves to a public critique of our questionable ethics. Alternative frameworks of progress would recognize that "labor" and "production" in Writing Studies are concepts loaded with history, mediated through different socially constructed bodies, embodiments, and embodied identifications. Alternative frameworks of progress would encourage students to consider writing performance and labor as both a potential means of participating in Capitalist production as well as a potential means of resisting or at least altering that kind of production in favor of the production of democratic participation.

In my estimation, we need to rethink the labor being done by Technical Writing and create a space for a kind of writing that respects the notion of labor and treats the "workplace" as somewhere other than just the capitalist marketplace and the "worker" as someone other than those corporations and technical writers nurturing that market. We need to assess the techniques of writers in various locations—academic and otherwise—resisting that market and its dehumanizing priorities and we need to build writing classes that offer these techniques to students. This, I argue, would constitute real progress in Writing Studies.

In the remainder of this dissertation, I will argue that there are three lines of research and theory that will help us reach this goal: counter-hegemonic theories of body/embodiment, memory, and geographies. Theories on these subjects are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, to the possible frustration of my reader, the theories may not even be considered unified theories either. Rather, I argue that while some of the work I will cite could be said to constitute "theory" in a canonical sense, much of it consists of disparate lines of work being done to facilitate the kinds of writing and discourse that encourage recognition of the labor of vulnerable populations of people and the transformative contributions that their methods may have to offer. In creating this kind of collection, and assessing the ways previously unconnected writing, theories, and theorists can be put into conversation, my work has on more than one occasion been accused of being little more than a literature review. While this accusation has injured the miniscule thread of dignity still connecting my heart to my head, I persist in doing this kind of work because I see it not as literature review, but rather as archive, an analysis, and a kind of mapping/re-mapping project with strong implications for how we might rethink writing pedagogy.

Here, I offer a brief introduction of an alternative framework that transfigures the cognitive model of process by incorporating theories of geography embodiment and language, Women of Color Feminisms, and post-colonial theory into writing theory as a kind of *techne* or practice/craft/technical skill and importantly, also a kind of art or creative practice. This skill/art is a method that has been employed for some time and yet the method has not been fully outlined or taken up as useful in scholarship of writing and writing pedagogy. In the next chapter I will go into greater detail with regard to the development and rationale for this theory of practice. Then in the fourth chapter, I will offer examples of

writing done using this technique/practice/skill/art. In the fifth and final chapter, I will

explore potential pedagogical uses for this kind of writing practice.

Diasporic people and people who have been forced into positions of marginalization

and oppression have been required to do a kind of battle for their livelihood, language and

geographical standing. This same population has also been confronted with the need to

theorize themselves in the context of a "New World" conceptualized as a land of opportunity

and progress by many (though certainly not all) white people, their ancestors, and imperialist

allies. People who cannot relate to said historical vision of progress and opportunity, and I

include myself among them, have created alternative spaces for them/ourselves in many

ways and for many reasons including: survival, emotional well-being, and the need for

artistic expression/communication. In the remainder of this dissertation, I am primarily

interested in the ways people of color have used language to resist "New World" iterations of

progress and opportunity and created their own geographical, social, and communicative

boundaries by using writing. I am equally interested in how we might view the writing skills

and practices cultivated by these people as a labor that resists oppression and treats

difference—in ideas, bodies, language, and places—as the norm and how we can facilitate

these kinds of practices in writing classrooms. This, I argue, would be progress in the field of

Writing Studies. Just as Flower and Hayes cognitive theory of process attempted to disrupt a

previous model of writing process, the writing I focus on for the remainder of this project—

writing that takes into account the linguistic constitution of geography, bodies and memory—

disrupts computerized, digitized, and easily commodifiable understandings of what writing is

and can do. In the next chapter, I will look at the following three intellectual arenas where

this kind of writing work and practice is being performed: writing as a site of contested

memory, writing as embodied practice, and language as constitutive of geographical space. Again, although I am distinguishing between them for the sake of clearly explaining some of their functions, these arenas are not mutually exclusive and there is significant overlap between them.

Writing as a site of contested memory

The central question behind considerations of diasporic memory is this: How do we remember a past that was seen as so inconsequential and subhuman that it was never formally recorded? In other words, the memories of diasporic peoples were overwritten as they were being enacted. Enslaved Africans, for example, were not thought to have memories worthy of preservation. Their lives were valued solely on the basis of the abilities of their bodies to produce. Most forms of cultural remembering were antithetical to capitalist production. The recollection of African languages, religious customs, and literary traditions were deeply threatening to production and for this reason, European and Colonial powers dictated that all of the important remembering was to be done in accordance with dominant perspectives (or, more bluntly, people thought to be fully human). These perspectives excluded the articulation of the innumerable sufferings and joys of Black and Brown people. Though this suffering and joy has surely changed in many ways, notions of official memory—that which is worthy of being recorded—and the methods of recording it are still very much a part of our current understanding of memory. For this reason, any existing traditions of remembering and generating counter-memory as forms of resistance must be preserved. Additionally, as archives of these traditions are slim, counter-memory and practices of remembering as resistance must also continue to be cultivated.

As memory work is always related to language or the lack thereof, we can look to various forms of writing to see what is being recorded and how it is being recorded. Importantly, although all language participates in the production of some kind of memory, not all language work does counter-memory work as a practice of resistance. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is my perspective that writing that pretends at being neutral and/or outside of histories of violence tacitly re-enacts those violences. Am I saying that all writing should have an ethical imperative to address or redress histories of violence? No. I am, however, saying that domains of writing that are persistent offenders in their failure to consider themselves in a complex historical context do have an ethical imperative to address that lack of consideration.

All writing either recalls some sort of historical context or implies one. Some forms of writing in Writing Studies operate as though they have transcended all historical context to exist in an ever-present technologically progressive now. Although we can force such a present into the realm of imagination, there is nothing progressive about it in practice. This version of progress must be contested. In the next chapter, I will address the ways this understanding of progress is being contested by writing that incorporates awareness of body-memory and space, and I will entertain the question of whether or not it might be successfully challenged not only from the outside (resistance against dehistoricized notions of progress) but also if it can perhaps also be contested from within as a sort of built-in practice of self-critique.

Language as constitutive of geographical space

Writing Studies, I will suggest in the next chapter, is a great place to begin to do this work. If we were to imagine our writing as building a kind of architecture for the world we

would like to see and to see writing as a practice of analyzing and navigating the pre-existing architecture, the art and skill of writing would take on a greater meaning. The "ghetto" of composition might come to serve as more of a site of power than a space to be broken out of. Future technical writers for Wells Fargo might be confronted by a deeper understanding of the ways predatory lending practices have been aided by writing that was technically sound and user friendly. Perhaps this would lead to realizations of how the ghetto is and has always been created by the desire of one group to secure economic stability at the expense of other groups.

Not surprisingly the same groups of people who occupy classrooms in the composition ghetto and stand at the margins of the university share similar colors of bodies as those folks who exist in the geographically uncertain terrain of government housing. An awareness of these connections between bodies, history, and spaces can and should be a part of writing practice. This will benefit low-income, first-generation, students of color, and/or any combination of the three. It will also benefit students who occupy present and future positions of power. I can hear the voices of confused opposition already, scratching their heads and saying, "But what does geography really have to do with writing?" Answering this question will be the major part of my next chapter.

Marlene NourbeSe-Philip claims that "the havoc that the African wreaked upon the English language is, in fact, the metaphorical equivalent of the havoc that coming to the New World represented for the African" (1997; 49). While, indeed, language does work in ways metaphorically similar to geography—roads are like grammar, street signs like punctuation marks, big houses like large vocabulary words and small houses like pedestrian vocabulary— language also constitutes geography. We describe our homelands and neighborhoods, choose

which stories are important to tell about them, neglect certain tellings and explanations, and record all of this in everything from official records to oral histories. All tellings are important to the creation and maintenance of a given place and yet, not all tellings are prioritized and not all tellings hold the same power to change the geography. In the next chapter, I will argue that this should not be the case. The more ways of understanding and speaking and claiming responsibility for our spaces, remembering how they formed, and determining how we fit into them, the better able we will be to include a plethora of voices and people in the construction of peaceful boundaries and the dissolution of exclusionary and oppressive ones.

Sites of promise in Rhetoric and Composition

In an inspiring piece of work regarding bi-dialectalism written in 1969, James Sledd outlines the problem of unwritten or assumed white normativity in writing practices:

> The basic assumption of bi-dialectalism is that the prejudices of middle-class whites cannot be changed but must be accepted and indeed enforced on lesser breeds. Upward mobility, it is assumed, is the end of education, but white power will deny upward mobility to speakers of black English, who must therefore be made to talk white English in their contacts with the white world.
>
> (1309)

We are still operating under these assimilationist assumptions in 2016. Whereas Sledd's focus is about language at large, and specifically the way in which schools "cultivate linguistic insecurity" (1308) by emphasizing one "correct" way of doing language, in this project, I am interested in writing techniques for cultivating not simple linguistic security but linguistic security and aptitudes that resist the very need for oppressive practices in the first place. This cannot be thought of as simple security, but rather a more troubled kind of safety. Within rhetoric and composition studies, there are a handful of scholars thinking in this

direction. In 1999, Kristie Fleckenstein began theorizing the role of the physical body in composition studies, suggesting that poststructuralism has erased the function of the body by turning everything a body does into discourse and negating the reality of oppression by viewing oppression as a product of social construction. I do not agree entirely on the two above points, because there are plenty of women of color feminist writers who are entirely able to see the body as a temporal-spatial entity, racist/heterosexist/capitalist oppression as a real oppression, and social construction as equally real, but in spite of my disagreement on that point, in working to articulate the function of what she calls somatic mind, and, in future work, on embodied literacies, Fleckenstein does a similar labor to the work of women of color feminists like Hattie Gossett and Trinh Minh-ha without recognizing the women of color feminists who have already done the work of bringing the body together with poststructuralist thought. She neither cites these women, nor seems to recognize that they exist, but insofar as her insights have resonances with them, I think her work represents a positive development in composition studies (2003).

Sardar Anwaruddin has contributed to the idea that bodies and spaces are important for rhetorical scholars and compositionists seeking to bring critical literacy into the classroom (2016). He confronts the rationalist bias in critical literacy and suggests that in the absence of using the knowledge created within affect studies to bring the body into the composition classroom, our efforts at encouraging students to read, listen, and think critically about issues of power as they write will be unable to attend to the emotions that arise when approaching uncomfortable subject matter. He suggests that we "examine why we feel what we feel", "enter into a relation of equivalence with [victims of suffering]", question "the production and circulation of objects of emotion in everyday politics", and attend to the ways

that emotions work through us through our language practices and make sure our words "do what they say" (10-13).

Let me just take a minute to be clear, even the most promising interventions into disembodiment, de-historization, and de-spatialization/marginalization, will fail if they refuse to cite and seriously engage with women of color feminist writers who have been thinking about matters of affect, body, history/memory, and space for decades or longer. The absence or refusal of folks like Fleckenstein and Anwaruddin to seek out and take seriously the work of women of color feminists on the very issues they claim to care about in composition studies is a manifestation of white supremacy. It's great that these scholars are citing Ahmed and Harraway and Butler and Bourdieu and maybe even a tiny quote from bell hooks here and there in order to bring a very necessary focus on embodiment and emotion and space into our conversations on writing, but failure to take seriously the work of the large body of women of color writers who have long theorized these issues continues to baffle me. Sarah Ahmed herself, the goddess of the affective turn, has aligned her affinity and lineage directly to black feminist scholarship (2007). It's time that all the rest of us catch on to the insight that without looking to black feminists and women of color feminisms to better understand our research on positionality, identity and identification, memory, spatial identification, and resistance to oppressive linguistic, identificatory, and temporal-spatial ways of knowing, we are perpetuating white normativity and continuing to marginalize thinkers and thoughts that are central to our work.

Many people who identify as somehow diasporic or marginalized learn to thrive in spaces of uncertainty, insecurity, and lack of safety. Students of color at the university, scholars of color, and people of color seeking to complicate oppressive language/rhetorical

practices need techniques for creating space, place, and identity on uncertain ground. White-identified students need this knowledge too. The creation of a skill set and framework, what I am calling critical embodied writing, is being performed in geographical work, memory work, and affect studies. All of these locations are centered around creating transformations by communicating place, body, and history through language. Writing is central to this task.

I consider myself a part of a collective of loosely organized thinkers who are seeking to create transformations in access to power through language and the ability to use language for the purpose of changing personal and social conditions. Together, thinkers concerned with these issues work toward creating transformations at the level of placemaking, identity and identification, and the language used to productively express suffering, give voice to marginalization, and thereby resist oppression. In making a sense of place, we want marginalized populations of people to feel a sense of agency in forming, naming, and altering the physical and ideological spaces around them. This sense of agency needs to be made possible in home spaces, public spaces, and institutional spaces. A sense of being able to alter spaces should be extended beyond folks who have traditionally had the power to alter spaces—physical and theoretical—and those who have been denied that power, often through the means of linguistic oppression and limiting notions of progress. With regard to making identities, we want marginalized populations of people to have the tools to become the most authoritative namers of their experiences and ways of identifying. This involves multiple processes, including training everyone not identified with notions of being "marginal" to listen to understand other people's identifications rather than imposing presumed or stereotypical identities on people who identify with a sense of marginality. It also requires a pedagogy rooted in self-reflexivity and a tradition of resistance to oppression. With regard to

altering language practices, we want to theorize methods of speaking and writing that step outside of normative linguistic practices—not all the time, but enough of the time for marginalized speakers to feel like they are language-makers and operators rather than the mere beneficiaries and sometimes victims of language owned by someone else.

Within the field, one scholar has recently been engaged in scholarship that fully addresses emotion, embodiment, and race. Although the she was not working with women of color texts, her work sought to recognize the ways that emotions mediate our understanding of race and position, the ways that attention to the body can help us understand and intervene in the ways that emotions are working among and between us to affirm our stances on race and racism. Unfortunately Winans died last year, at the age of 48, a fact I discovered just moments ago as I was exploring an anthology on emotion, embodiment, and pedagogy published this year. It seems inappropriate to simply go on writing about her work as though her death didn't just happen, but I guess that's what I'm going to do.

Winans made three contributions to my work. The first two were articles and the third, a chapter from the book I mentioned above. The trajectory of these articles took her from talking about emotion and the importance of attending to the ways emotion plays a role in students' understanding of race and racism (2010), to emphasizing how we need to attend to the body in order to address emotions (2012), to offering specific suggestions for how to do all of this in the classroom (2016). When I read her work in 2010, I felt like it was great and very much helpful in reaffirming my own perspective but it didn't offer enough by way of connecting the emotions to the physical bodies of writers. When I read her work in 2012, she had done exactly that, but offered very little by way of explanation on how exactly to address the body in the composition classroom. Between 2012 and the time that I read the

essay published in 2016, I had written the vast majority of my dissertation (this that you are reading right here and now), and Winans had articulated some specific approaches to making use of mindfulness/bodyfulness in and out of the classroom.

Winans final work on embodiment, emotion, and mindfulness/bodyfulness is the most promising research on the subjects of teaching writing for the purpose of engaging with language, race, and power (2016). In this chapter, she and Elizabeth Dorman make the broad claim that nothing prepares academic workers for the task of paying attention to the embodied processes that comprise emotional responses to uncomfortable situations that arise in the classroom and outside of it. They assert that, "bringing conscious awareness to the body, and to the embodied, emotional experience of the instructor-researcher is crucial if we are to engage fully with our intellectual work", and suggest that, "given the wealth of insight that is embedded in our embodied experiences of emotion, we must find strategies for navigating and understanding those experiences and to work with our own bodies differently so that we can work with students differently" (2016, 97). Indeed, if we are to engage students in a way that enables them to recognize the relationship between argument, logic, language, and the emotions that mediate between all of these things, we need offer them guidance in both the theory behind the necessity for understanding the above relationships as well as the tools for intervening in affective responses.

Winans and Dorman provide four examples of sites of intervention: the self reflection of the teacher/researcher, during all classroom discussions, in written and embodied responses to intense emotions, and in using movement in moments of classroom discomfort. Their approach to embodied awareness is rooted in secular mindfulness and contemplative practice and pedagogy, proponents of which refer to mindfulness as bodyfulness to disrupt

the mind/body binary affirmed by the term "mindfulness". Contemplative practices create a distance between emotion and embodiment and ways of understanding the self as a process that occurs internally and in connection with others. The examples they offer for how to make use of this practice include making a practice of reflecting on what may appear to be negative or uncomfortable experiences and using embodied awareness to reconsider how to "act—consciously, compassionately, and mindfully" rather than to simply react in the face of discomfort. Other examples include directing our attention to the ways our emotions inspire us to be reactive and judgmental in classroom discussions and how conscious attention to emotions associated with reactivity and judgment can better equip us to thoughtfully and compassionately respond to our students in ways that move them away from reactivity— especially in difficult discussions on race and privilege. Additionally, Winans and Dorman direct us to pay attention to the body and emotions while doing writing. Finally, they offer a few words on the potential for using movement to increase bodily awareness of discomfort and to facilitate thinking and decisions based in awareness of embodied emotions.

Winans and Dorman offer a strong contribution to the fields of Writing Studies and Education to take embodiment and conditioned affective responses seriously in the teaching of rhetoric, writing, and critical thinking. Their use of mindfulness and bodyfulness is helpful in offering one method that could be used for performing this kind of pedagogy and self-reflection. I am grateful for their work. Simultaneously, I think that our students deserve to have multiple potential ways of approaching their emotioned responses, and, even more specifically, of understanding those responses as a part of a process informed by time, space, and identification. While secular mindfulness may speak directly to the needs of some populations of students, teachers, and academics, women of color feminist thought, theory,

and practice will certainly address similar needs and offer a deeper level of complexity

grounded in complex understandings of the ways embodied knowledge and language practice

can inform and alter notions and realities of selfhood, space, identity, and position.

Chapter 3: Writing as embodied, historical, and geographical practice

The field of Writing Studies has already recognized that writing is something done by people with bodies for the purpose of enacting power (Haas and Witte 2001; Fleckenstein 1999). What is missing from this account is a survey of how people can use their bodies and embodied knowledge to resist the discourses of power that can be written upon them and spoken through them. I am terming this process of resistance "critical embodied writing". Critical embodied writing involves understanding and maintaining awareness of the historical construction of emotion as a process of directing individual and group attachments, identifications, and aversions, realizing the ways these attachments, identifications, and aversions inform our understanding of rationality, and writing from and about the body thus informed.

I have been told that when I say "writing from the body", it sounds either too vague or too obvious. Isn't one always writing from the body, in a literal sense, using hands and fingers or even, in other cases, speech translation software? There is a distinction to be made here. The fact that I type with my fingers must be distinguished from the fact that I write from an awareness of the implications of being a person with a politically, socially, and historically situated body. The physical act of writing must be distinguished from the fact that I use my body for the purpose of intervening in that situation. In writing from my body, I maintain a constant awareness of myself as a physical and theoretical presence existing within a historical situation. While I always write *with* my body, I don't always write from it. Writing from the body makes new spaces and ways of embodiment possible. Several scholars have contemplated the possibilities of writing in an embodied way.

Abby Knoblauch, in particular, outlines three of the ways "embodiment" has been used in Rhetoric and Composition. She suggests that the field uses embodiment in reference to three distinct ways: "embodied language, embodied knowledge, and embodied rhetoric" (2012). Identifying and utilizing these categories, she suggests, is important because the field has used "embodiment" for multiple purposes and failure to recognize the differences in usage challenges our ability to mobilize embodiment for specific goals. She defines "embodied language" as "the use of terms, metaphors, and analogies that reference, intentionally or not, the body itself. Embodied knowledge, she asserts "is that sense of knowing something through the body...often sparked by what we might call a "gut reaction". And embodied rhetoric "is a purposeful decision to include embodied knowledge and social positionalities as ways of meaning making within a text itself". Knoblauch recognizes that embodied language facilitates both identification and disidentifications. She cites Peter Elbow and his frequent use of the body imagery like wrestling or eating and the ways this language draws a reader in through the relatability of the experience of using a body to eat or to wrestle. Conversely, she points to the ways some of his embodied language alienates readers by using, for example, a metaphor of marriage that some gay people can't relate to (or couldn't prior to the legalization of gay marriage), and, in another example, a series of cringe-worthy metaphors of rape and female passivity. I will be specific here and say that while I find embodied language important and will discuss it at greater length in the final chapters, this chapter is primarily about embodied knowledge, which, according to Knoblauch, "often begins as a bodily response--or what we might call "gut reactions". She asserts that, "as a trigger for meaning making that is rooted so completely in the body, embodied language is rarely legitimated in academia". Still, Knoblauch believes that this

kind of knowledge is central to the impetus for academic writing. While I agree with her on this point, to the extent which Knoblauch reduces embodied knowledge to "urges", and "responses", without explicitly acknowledging the ways even urges and responses are historically constructed and serve to shape bodies and spaces, she leaves what I believe to be the most significant components of embodiment out of the conversation.

Additionally importantly, once we become aware of affective responses, we are able to intervene in our understanding of ourselves and others. For Knoblauch, this happens not at the level of knowledge, urge, or response, but rather at the level of rhetoric. Knoblauch reduces embodied knowledge (including both emotion and affect) as a less than fully academic pursuit and raises rhetoric as the place for embodied knowledge to appropriately intersect with meaning making. Knoblauch defines embodied rhetoric as "the purposeful effort by an author to represent aspects of embodiment within the text he or she is shaping". Embodied rhetoric, according to Knoblauch, emphasizes the particularities of bodies and gives voice to the specificities of difference and the different needs and demands made by specifically embodied people. This enables writers to more skillfully participate in the politics of location, which, Adrienne Rich promotes as a way to situate ourselves socially and geographically within our lived experience. Although I find the need to legitimize embodied knowledge by viewing it through the prism of academic disciplinary boundaries problematic and frustrating, I am with Knoblauch in most of her thinking about embodied rhetoric. I agree with her that what she calls embodied rhetoric can, as a practice, serve to highlight the specificities of experience, locate those experiences in both highly individual and socially informed bodies, and undermine the power-heavy notion of academic expertise that excludes so many voices.

Critical embodied writing does all of the above with an explicit focus on the goal of resisting oppression and building new conceptual spaces of identification and literal spaces of embodiment. Rather than adopt Knoblauch's term "embodied rhetoric", I chose "critical embodied writing" as a way of resisting the pull of forcing everything through the lens of the need for high-ranking academic people to see everything as legitimate. Critical embodied writing is, yes, for students, but it is also for everyday people--perhaps it is even more for those people. I think that people outside of academia can more skillfully assert their perspectives about their circumstances and alter those circumstances by critiquing them. Critical embodied writing, therefore, is writing that takes account of the ways people can use their bodies and embodied knowledge to resist discourses of power that can be written upon them and spoken through them. In this chapter I will outline several theoretical and practical contributions to the art and skill of writing as, 1) a way of being in space, 2) a practice of creating spatial boundaries and geographical places, and 3) an embodied and historical practice of creating and intervening in memory.

Writing and space: **theoretical and practical contributions to the art and skill of writing as a way of creating spatial boundaries**

In order to think about the body, it is helpful (and perhaps even necessary) to think about space because the two go hand in hand. Without one, the parameters of the other fail to make much sense. What is the meaning of a "*my"* body if there is nothing distinguishing between "*my"* body and everything/where else. Our bodies exist somewhere. Our writing bodies exist somewhere as they write and as they think about writing. And even when we are no longer actively in the process of writing, our writing exists somewhere. If writing is read, then it exists in more than just one place and contributes to the bodies of multiple people and informs the creation of the spaces around those people. Perhaps this is inherently obvious but

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I don't think most of us think of writing and our writing selves in this way, and in not thinking of writing and our writing selves in this way, we are unable to address the implications of the fact that when we write, we are writing ourselves into space and constructing space in very real ways.

Imagine for a moment, if you will, that the most familiar writing creates a monument to itself in the landscape. Shakespeare, for example, would have a large island. My dissertation would be a speck of dust somewhere at the bottom of the ocean. More importantly than its lowly geographical location, is the fact that this writing would sit down there forming some sort of reef structure together with most of the writing cited in this chapter. While I, and likely the writers I cite here are okay with this reality--because we are aware that we are building something together, no matter how obscure it may currently be--folks who do not perceive the networked nature of their writing may not feel compelled to write at all. What, after all, is the point of writing something that won't leave any imprint because no one is going to read it? Arguably, there is a point to even this kind of writing, but it doesn't serve the same function as writing that marks space in a more remarkable or obvious way.

Writing that isn't read by anyone other than its writer still exists in space and informs the identity of the person whose body is writing it. The writer of this kind of work has a body and a way of identifying that subsequently informs the landscape not directly through the writing, but as a result of it. The basic premise of critical embodied writing, then, whether it is widely read or solely read by its writer, is that it is accomplished by bodies existing in space and enacting efforts to move the contents of minds through space in a particular way, and thereby to impact space in an effort to resist historical and present oppression--both

physical and ideological. We can have more agency with regard to how we write by asking the following question: How do we write with an explicit understanding that we exist in space and that others do so as well? This isn't a question that everyone is required to ask when they write. For those of us who have experienced the negation of our language of nurture, or the historical destruction of our language of ancestry, or the dismissal of the significance of our ideas because they are considered too egocentric, "How do we write with an explicit understanding that we exist in space and that others do so as well" is a crucial question. Even those who haven't experienced the aforementioned negations may find the question useful.

Hattie Gossett considers her own position in relation to writing as she asks the following question of herself: "Who do you think you are [to be writing a book]? and who cares what you think about anything enough to pay money for it... a major portion of your audience not only cant read but seems to think readin is a waste of time? plus books like this arent sold in the ghetto bookshops or even in airports." (Gossett in Trinh Minh-ha, 8, 1989). As she contemplates the problem of space, writing, and the ways writing moves through people and through space, she highlights the importance of the fact that the parameters of her thinking about herself as a writer very much rely on assumptions about her audience. For those of us writing, in large part, to or in the service of an imaginary audience of people who are not able or likely to read our work, writing itself can feel like an absurd task. 'Why', I frequently ask myself, 'am I doing this'? I also ask myself questions like, 'Why do I feel this extreme discomfort while I am writing?'; 'Why does my writing make me feel so massively insecure even though no one has read it yet'?; and, 'Is it possible to change anything about myself or the space around me with the writing I'm doing?' Again, it is

significant--particularly for those of us who dare to teach writing--to maintain awareness of the fact that while some folks would never think to ask such questions, others are forced to do so in order to create the sense of agency necessary to write anything at all. The contours of the literary landscape can be drawn by a distinction between those who ask themselves 'who am I to write anything at all' and those who feel no need to ask these sorts of questions. We can resist the historical silencing and oppression of people of color and women by bridging the gap between these two camps.

From what position of agency do I write if I am a writer who writes in the service of people who will never read my writing? What kinds of metaphorical structures does my writing build if the audience I dream for is not the audience who will actually read my work? The purpose of such writing--writing that is done on behalf of people with whom I identify, few if any of whom will read this, for an audience with whom I frequently do not identify--is a bridge to an island I'm continually ambivalent about being on. In spite of this, I still write with the hope of creating a body of work that can speak the silences that have characterized the history of women of color. In the process of building this body of work, I am altering my own body, sense of space, and sense of embodiment. Arguably, as I create these shifts for myself, I inspire shifts in the bodies, senses of space, and senses of embodiment of others.

When I write about my lack of identification with my audience, or of the general loneliness of writing as a sort of literary outsider, I realize that there is a risk of sounding as if I'm inviting pity. I want to take a moment to address this risk and to emphasize that that isn't the case. My point is not, "poor me and my lack of body and place", or "poor us and our lack of body and place", but rather, "without creating this body of work, and without creating these metaphorical spaces that come to literal life on the page, there is no free and agentic

space for women of color to exist in history or at present". We (the people of color *we*, the women of color *we*) are choking on our silences.

What are we (the collective *we*, as in we all of every color and gender identification) missing out on when we fail to encourage women of color, historically marginalized women, and historically marginalized people in general to write? The feeling of choking on one's own words for fear that the words coming from the one's particular historically-informed body don't matter outside of that body is reserved for individuals who have experienced a kind of negation--of self, and of the ability to move their ideas around freely. The feeling isn't only for people of color or women or people living in conditions of poverty, but the people in those categories are disproportionately impacted by the urge to self-silence and the amelioration of this feeling can be particularly powerful for them. What this self-silencing urge means for writers, is that some writing bodies will exist in a particular space but will refuse or be unable to write themselves into the landscape--to embody literacy.

The implicit assumption about literacy is that it can create freedom and opportunity-- and indeed in many cases and for many reasons, it can and has--but we might do all of ourselves a service by recognizing that literacy, in and of itself, isn't inherently liberating. In fact, being able to read and write but lacking anyone to take your writing seriously is the opposite of liberating. It is this dynamic that informs students' self-perception when they say things like, "I'm not a good writer". If this, "I'm not a good writer" limits the not-good-writer's access and ability to move through the world in materially consequential ways, then arguably, the sense that one is a "good" writer both opens doors and enables mobility. In recognizing the relationship between history, emotion and embodiedness, geography, and writing, we can better understand the complexities of the notion of the individual "bad"

writer, and create interventions that more fully recognize that writer as socially and

historically constructed and enable us to recognize the malleability of their self-perception.

We might then tell our students who think that they are bad writers that this self-perception is

complicated and formed not solely as a result of ontological fact or even epistemological

perspective, but rather as a creation of multiple intersecting socio-historical factors. Rather

than embodying the bad writer, isolated on an island (or in a composition ghetto), equipped

with a more complex understanding of their context as writers, these students may be able to

write from a differently informed body and to create new spaces of possibility for themselves

both within the university and outside of it.

Writing, embodiment, emotion, and the creation of geographical spaces

According to Katherine McKittrick, there are two reasons to pay attention to the

interaction between people, the things people do, and space. The first reason is because

people have been spatially positioned in ways that are unjust and limiting, and the second

reason is because we can intervene in the aforementioned injustice only by emphasizing the

relationship between place and people (Demonic Grounds, 2006). What is the nature of this

relationship? McKittrick says:

> Geography and geographers' well-known history in the Americas, of white masculine European
> mappings, explorations, conquests, is interlaced with a different sense of place, those populations
> and their attendant geographies that are concealed by what might be called rational spatial
> colonization and domination: the profitable erasure and objectification of subaltern subjectivities,
> stories, and lands (2006, X).

The idea here is that one of the privileges of whiteness involves the assumption that the

notion of rationality can (and often must) be used to diminish and discard the ways of

knowing, stories, and spaces of people of color and particularly women of color in order to

uphold white normativity and white supremacy. How do we *not* do this if we, even those of us who are aware of the socially-constructed nature of writing, are nevertheless primarily informed by this history of domination and it's rules about rational thought and "good writing"? In conjunction with the awareness that we need to find ways of inviting, including, and amplifying the ways of knowing, stories, and spaces of people of color, McKittrick's larger point, that "racial-sexual domination is an ongoing spatial project" requires us to acknowledge feelings of domination, to give voice to experiences of domination, and to do all of this bearing the intersection of racialized/sexualized bodies and space in mind. In this way, geography is interwoven with bodies, historical memory, writing and storytelling.

In order to acknowledge and give voice to feelings of domination, one must first make sense of the meaning, role, and function of feelings. In order to make a claim that domination exists, someone has first to feel as though they are being dominated. What is the meaning of feelings within the context of domination within the context of writing? First, a few words about the recent history of the idea of "feeling". For example, I may occasionally use "feeling" very purposefully to trace my thinking specifically to the work of Megan Boler, or I may specifically use "affect" to trace my ideas to Sarah Ahmed or Brian Massumi. Although emotion, feeling, and affect, have long been concerns of the study of psychology, at the end of the 20th century and early 21st century, they permeated the awareness of other fields ranging from philosophy, rhetoric, queer and feminist studies, and cultural studies, to fields like business, and education (Ahmed, 2004; Boler, 1999; Elias *et. al.* 1997; Goleman, 1995; Massumi, 1995) The concepts have been used for so many purposes that a careful consideration of both the ways they are used as well as the genealogy behind each use is important.

Within academic contexts, the difference between the terms "affect", "emotion", and "feeling" have been made meaningful primarily by their use within different academic lineages. Among other folks in the humanities, cultural studies, the field of rhetoric, queer theory, and feminist theory are linked to a movement called the "affective turn" in post-structuralist theory. This shift in thinking moves away from post-structuralist thought. Although thinkers associated with the affective turn are concerned with deconstruction of power and the implications of power, whereas poststructuralist thought deconstructs primarily on the basis of structures of power outside of their roots in bodies and emotions, the affective turn places emphasis on deconstructing the ways emotion works not solely as a mental or psychological phenomenon in individuals, but rather as individual physical responses motivating social action (Hemmings, 2005). Both Sarah Ahmed and Brian Massumi seem to parse the difference between affect and emotion along the lines of cognition (Ahmed, 2004; Massumi, 2005) . Whereas affect is the physiological reaction to a given stimulus, emotion is what happens after cognition mediates between physiological reactivity and produces a thought-plus-feeling response. In short, at the risk of being too reductive, for the sake of simplification, we might say that affect happens subconsciously and emotion happens consciously. I use and differentiate between the terms in this way. It is the aware quality of emotion that allows us to use emotion to purposefully structure our thinking and actions, to alter the emotions we recognize, and to be molded by them. Whether we are entirely conscious of how it is happening or not, emotions structure our material reality in very real ways.

The slippage between fully conscious negotiation of affective responses and subconscious negotiation of affective responses allows for emotions to create identifications

and disidentifications between people that happen subtextually. When we read, for example, about hate or anger, it is the negative or positive attachments to our emotional responses to others that dictates our understanding of how we feel and with whom we believe we share similar feelings. This semi-subconscious process, suggests Ahmed, is mediated by what she terms "affective economies" that "move sideways (through 'sticky' associations between signs, figures and objects) as well as forwards and backwards (repression always leaves its trace in the 'absent presence' of historicity)" (2005, 45). Alternatively stated, we define ourselves, in part, based on the relationship we perceive ourselves to have with history, even when we are repressing our individual or collective recollection of that history or when the historical nature of the construction of our emotions is hidden from our view. This semi-subconscious relationship to our emotions is traded among us in our chosen associations and identifications as well as used as a kind of currency to motivate groups of people to share a sense of feeling with one another. All of this identification is directed both by an internal history or way of knowing oneself as well as by the persuasive impact of those signs which are most effective in facilitating identification around a certain set of emotional attachments to a given thing, group, or current event.

While I certainly owe a fair amount of my understanding of the workings of emotion and affect to the work of Ahmed, Massumi, and a few feminist thinkers, I have found at least some of the "affect theory" of cultural studies, rhetoric, and, more recently, queer theory, to be overly burdened by what I see as its emphasis on explaining large-scale social phenomenon at the expense of focus on practical applications. I have, in some instances, found the work of philosophers of education to be far more useful to my project because the philosophy of education is grounded in practical applications in teaching. This is not to say

that there is no overlap between affect theory and theories of emotion in education. Rather, theories of education can help us to figure out how to put the relationship between bodies, power, and emotions into play in material ways in the classroom. Particularly useful in this regard, have been the ideas of Megan Boler in her book, *"Feeling Power"*.

In Boler's work on feeling, she frequently employs the term "feeling" instead of affect or emotion because of the dual nature of the term "feeling". "Feeling" can be a thing or an action. We can undergo the process of feeling emotion as an active happening or we can experience feelings as objects. The difference has implications for how we associate power with emotions. For Boler, the passive view of feeling, or "feeling" as a noun, "suggests an approach to the question of " (1999, 4). The things we feel and the process of moving from one emotion to the next become authoritative because feelings are created socially and are socially enforced. Conversely, the active view of feeling, or "feeling" as a verb, "directs us to explore how people resist our oppression and subjugation". All of this leads us to a re-thinking of feeling as not an individual thing done solely within the head and body of an individual, but rather as something heavily influenced by social interaction and subject to potential intervention. Boler's ultimate concern in *Feeling Power*, are the pedagogical interventions that this dual understanding of "feeling" makes possible.

The concept Boler uses that I find most useful for my project is that of facilitating a pedagogy of discomfort. For Boler, making use of a pedagogy of discomfort has three goals: firstly, it asks students and teachers to recognize that we are motivated by emotions in our decision-making, and that, in order to make more nuanced and informed decisions about our thoughts and actions, we have to pay closer attention to the ways emotion mediates between what we know and how we use our knowledge. Secondly, a pedagogy of discomfort requires

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us to reflect both on our own condition but also on how our conditions relate to the conditions and well-being of others. Finally, Boler's pedagogy of discomfort requires us to take action based on critical and ethical inquiry into how our feelings are formed, how others' feelings are formed, and how the interaction between socially-mediated emotions and power creates realities that enhance the power of some people while limiting the power of others. I think such a pedagogy can and should extend to a broader way of thinking outside of the classroom--not just for students, but as a guiding principle for anyone concerned with facilitating equitable access to power and decision-making. Boler claims that a pedagogy of discomfort normalizes an approach to critical inquiry that pays attention to the ways "emotions define how and what one chooses to see, and, conversely, not to see" (1999, 177). This approach, she asserts, is more specific and therefore more useful than emphasis on less immediately accessible or more vague concepts like justice, appeals to rational thinking, democracy, or even critical thinking. Emotions, often overlooked though they are, can represent a more accessible, if slightly murky, point of access to our aversions and desires. Only in beginning to engage with emotion in more purposeful ways will we enable ourselves and our students to participate in critical embodied writing.

This brings me back to the question of the meaning, function, and role that feelings of domination and oppression play as individuals with individual bodies are doing the work of writing. How do we give voice to feelings of and realities of domination that occur along, among other axes, racial and sexual lines? Or, more specifically, how do we address McKittrick's question; how do we write with an explicit understanding that geography, including the structures we create and the ways we move our bodies through the landscape, has long been a project of racial-sexual domination? It is helpful to note that racial-sexual

domination is an infliction of pain and that experience of domination is a kind of suffering. Suffering is difficult to convey in writing. It's easy to sound pathetic and lacking in self-respect when one is articulating suffering. And yet, there are ways around the disconnect between a suffering speaking/writing subject and subjectivities/audiences who may come into contact with that suffering.

Ahmed speaks to the illegibility of certain kinds of suffering and the need to give voice to it in spite of the fact that others are unable to understand it: "The call of...pain that cannot be shared through empathy, is a call not just for action, and a demand for collective politics, as a politics based not on the possibility that we might be reconciled, but on learning to live with the impossibility of reconciliation, or learning that we live with and beside each other, and yet we are not as one" (Ahmed, 2005). While we cannot override the suffering of others with our own notion of understanding their position, we can and must recognize that suffering is occurring and that something should be done about it. The point I'm getting to here is *not* that we need to use writing to make suffering translatable so that each of us can understand the suffering of others and build more inclusive spaces. If that were possible, maybe equitable spaces would simply form themselves around all of us. Rather, my point is that even though it is impossible to fully embody the suffering of another person, in order to avoid perpetuating domination, we have to be conscious of the ways suffering is happening, we need tools to convey suffering as well as to effectively witness it, and we need writing/speaking practices and locations in which suffering can be speakable and hearable.

Recognizing and taking action on suffering that cannot be directly transferred from person to person requires us to witness, in a limited capacity, the suffering of others, to take action to alter the conditions that created the suffering, and to continually recognize that

although we cannot appropriate the suffering of others by entering the space or body of the suffering of another person, we can take on enough awareness of their suffering to take action to resolve it. According to Ahmed, the act of "witnessing" enables pain to create the "surfaces" of different bodies rather than to simply reside in one body. It is the job of the witness, the reader, the audience, to be receptive to the physical feelings of discomfort that happen as a result of reading and seeing suffering but to allow for some distance, or a level of curiosity about the suffering. If we can't assume the body of another person to completely understand where they are coming from, then we need, therefore, to listen not for some complete sense of knowing but rather for spaces of possibility. But before we can find those spaces of possibility, we simply need to listen and sit with the discomfort of the unknowable or not-completely-knowable. Simply by listening, recognizing, and acknowledging the suffering of others, we can arguably alter the surfaces and boundaries of our own bodies and what we are able to imagine into possibility.

One of the major challenges to this kind of listening is that one of our reactions to the suffering of others may be pain or anger. The function of emotions like pain and anger is, in part, to preserve historical memory of some folks' suffering, while negating and silencing historical memory of the suffering of others, with the ultimate goal of dictating who deserves to feel suffering in any given context. Rebecca Wanzo suggests that it is possible to intervene in this historical memory and in the structure of emotions and the ways those emotions move through different groups of individuals. According to Wanzo, "sentimental storytelling" is fraught with the danger that in spite of the fact that its participants may seek to use narratives and testimonials to inspire socio-political change, the history of sentimental storytelling can make it very difficult for those not suffering to take seriously the suffering of others.

Historically, Wanzo tells us, the association made between suffering and sentimentality is one of excess. That is, though sentimental stories are often used to represent suffering, sentimentality is, itself, perceived as an "excessive" approach to feeling. For this reason, creating an effective narrative about suffering requires that those seeking to make suffering readable must exercise what she calls "affective agency". This, she defines as "the ability of a subject to have her political and social circumstances move a populace and produce institutional effects" (Wanzo, 2009). Witnessing suffering for the purpose of altering one's own perception of what is possible as well as speaking to suffering for the same purpose, requires us to tell our stories and hear the stories of others with an awareness of the fact that some emotions may be seen as "excessive" and an understanding of the socio-historical construction of such judgments.

For Wanzo, sentiment and the sentimental are created by assigning value judgments about who is able to feel which emotions, by homogenizing suffering, and by seeking to mobilize change through emotional appeal to the empathy of a given audience. All three of these elements of sentimentality represent challenges to anyone wishing to use emotion and appeals to empathy to foster a movement. Society creates a differentiation between emotions that are acceptable to feel and those that are unacceptable to feel. There is a value judgment implied, therefore, in feeling a particular emotion in any given situation. Rather than the emotion arising from a person through interaction with events and other people, the person suffering--the body of the person--is already associated with the ability to be perceived as suffering. Emotions are both internal/private insofar as they can arise somewhat independently of external social interaction, and also external/public insofar as they often require external social stimulus. Ahmed takes this one step further to assert that the

"surfaces" of people are created by emotions. For instance, those who are perceived to feel too much can be shunned or seen in a negative light. Aversion can therefore come to be associated with people who feel the "wrong" emotions in the "wrong" situations. For this reason, there is both tremendous social pressure not only to act the right way, but also to respond to the outside world of social interaction with the appropriate feelings and to trade in those feelings accordingly, oftentimes by creating a verbal display of emotions. Here's an example. In 2013, on a day when I was feeling extremely uncertain about my future and about my general competence, during a conversation with acquaintances, I found out that a person I had been friends with in high school had published her first book and signed a multimillion dollar book deal with a major publisher. I wasn't in an especially grounded or generous mood and my emotional response was far from the social ideal. I knew that I was supposed to say something like, "that's so amazing" and, "I'm so happy for her", and "I always knew she was a genius". I did, in fact, say all of those things. This, in spite of the fact that my emotional response was utterly focused on envy, fear for my own future, dejection over my lack of direction and accomplishments, and a general sense of uncertainty, insecurity, and malaise. I might have said something like, "I'm a total failure", or "If my parents were filthy rich, maybe I would have written a multi-million dollar book", or "who cares about Anton and her stupid book about rich girls and horses?". Of course, anyone reading this will know that to express the feelings I was actually feeling in any of the aforementioned ways would have been thoroughly distasteful and likely to have cost me my social standing with the group. In this case, perhaps it's fortunate that there are rules for acceptable emotions and unacceptable ones. On the flip side of the pressure to conform to standards of emotional acceptability, is the power of giving expression to socially

unacceptable emotions. Just as emotions can be used to limit ourselves and our responses to our struggles, they can also be used more constructively (or deconstructively) to rethink the limits of acceptability and to create more inclusive limits that allow for a greater breadth of feeling and emotion, and, ideally to rethink ourselves in relation to our surroundings. I want to make a distinction between the example of the social boundary making of emotions given above, and the examples I will offer below. Whereas in the example above, my immediate emotional response had little potential to beneficially serve anyone and the social boundaries of emotion likely served to protect me from outcasting myself, the examples below represent the ways emotions can serve as sites of productive rupture and resistance to social boundaries of emotion that are harmful precisely by motivating discomfort at the nexus of emotional acceptability and emotional unacceptability.

I will use elements of the Black Lives Matter movement to exemplify a more effective approach to giving voice to emotions seen as unacceptable, successfully inspiring empathy, and motivating a cultural response to these emotions. Additionally, I will address the challenges of BLM's attempt at altering material oppression by deconstructing some of the responses to BLM of those Americans who primarily see this movement as an exaggeration of suffering. I will explain BLM as a series of suffering-related claims and demands made by its participants operating in concert with an ongoing backlash against the movement. I am especially concerned with how the presence of both the bodies of people of color as well as demands being made on our/their behalf are perceived as threatening to many people who identify as members of the societal norm. The presence and demands of black and brown bodies through the BLM movement and the negative reaction to both those bodies and their demands, illustrate the sense of threat or fear that suffering is contagious and

that simply by seeing it, a fear of having to experience the suffering and to take responsible action arises. Earlier in this chapter, I dropped this little pearl of poetic wisdom, "the contours of the literary landscape can be drawn by a distinction between those who ask themselves 'who am I to write anything at all' and those who feel no need to ask those sorts of questions". Analogously, lines can also be drawn between those who are able to allow their emotions to operate largely without assessment or self-reflection, and those who ask 'who am I to take seriously the emotions I am feeling and to speak about them?'; or, between those who assume that it is their right and entitlement to go to college, get a great job, and go wherever they please and those who ask 'who am I to be here at this university/at this job/riding down the road in my car right now'; or even between those who suffer "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" in silence and those who make claims like "black lives matter" (Garza, Cullors, & Tometi, 2015; hooks, 1999). This is a particularly potent point when we look at the role of suffering in creating material and embodied injustices. Geography as racial-sexual oppression structures everything from the buildings we enter, the streets we drive on, the ways we are allowed to feel, and the ways certain people are able to have control over the bodies, lives, and thoughts of others, to the ways we identify, the ways we move our bodies, and the ways we feel inside of them. Here is the basic outline of the argument that follows: Certain kinds of suffering is unintelligible to folks who see themselves as the majority or who can lay claims to living in line with social norms in (Wanzo, 2009). Emotions can be "sticky" or have the property of holding people together or motivating them to move together in particular ways (Ahmed, 2004). The threat of harm from the bodies of people of color has been a theme for those benefiting from imperialism, globalism, and capitalism. Threat--specifically the future threat of "others"--has become

increasingly ubiquitous in the North American psyche (Massumi, 2005). The suffering of others is perceived as a pervasive and ever-present threat of the potential for the suffering of others to stick to us if we get too close to it. For this reason, if we want to make suffering legible to those who are not suffering, or to those who are suffering differently, then we need to understand what makes feelings of suffering stick, how they stick, and how they can work to mobilize people across difference. I have identified four strategies for doing this that are a part of the women of color feminist rhetorical tradition, all of which participate--to varying degrees--in what I am calling critical embodied writing.

The majority of the final chapter will be devoted to what the writer occupying, representing, or identifying with spaces of suffering, oppression, and exclusion can do to intervene in the historically silencing and disembodying status quo, so I won't go into extensive detail on that now. I will, however, briefly address and provide examples of three strategies for participating in critical embodied discourse before laying out some general ideas about putting the notion of critical embodied writing into practice. I use the term discourse not to draw connections between my ideas and discourse theory but more as a way of asserting that I'm talking not solely about writing but also about speaking. The first two of the strategies I will discuss are currently widely employed by folks operating under the BLM banner and the third and final one should, I argue, be employed more regularly if the movement is to sustain itself. All of the strategies could use a little support from white allies in positions of power in order to compel the least receptive members of our society to take action on behalf of BLM. The strategies are as follows: 1) making explicit reference the suffering body, 2) inversion of the invisibility/hypervisibility binary, and, 3) disrupting the

notion that a body can only be innocent and worthy/acceptable if it is entirely absolved of guilt and free of unacceptable emotions.

I use the terms pain and suffering synonymously even though I am aware that some of my sources draw distinctions between the two. Whereas pain, for example, is often construed as a physical feeling, suffering, is seen more as a kind of mental anguish. To me, while this distinction may be helpful in trying to understand the kinds of pain that appear to reside primarily inside of a body--although, arguably, even internal pain is mediated by socio-cultural understandings of what pain means and what to do about it--distinguishing between suffering and pain is not particularly helpful in trying to understand the impact of violence and oppression.

Having a sense of control over oneself and one's environment plays a huge role in dictating the movement of emotions between and among different bodies. Although we don't always pay attention to the ways our emotions enact power over and among us, for many if not most of us, emotions that take on a positive valence as they move among and shape bodies, for example, happiness or confidence, are closely related to a sense of being in control and having power. Negatively valenced emotions like fear, anger, and disgust are also associated with control but they work in a different way (Ahmed, 2004). Rather than representing control itself, fear, anger, and disgust stick to us because they work in an economy of a persistent threat of a loss of control. Brian Massumi suggests that threat is an operative logic. By this, he means that threat is a self-perpetuating logic that turns that which has not yet happened into a logical factual entity or eventuality that demands a response in the present moment. Threat operates by commanding individuals to perpetually maintain awareness of the potential for danger as an ever-present reality, now (Massumi, 2005). In this

state of ongoing lack of control, anyone who claims to protect against future danger can mobilize support for preemptive action against things which have not happened, and indeed may never end up happening. Conversely, although Massumi does not specifically delve into this territory, anyone or any individual associated with that future threat must be preemptively disarmed.

Using the example of black people in America, insofar as America has long recognized the essential importance of liberty, freedom, and access to opportunity, but has always denied these things to black people, it is easy to see that this population has always existed as a threat to white dominance. Using the very logic that the dominant majority has asserted as fundamental to American rationality, black people--unless they can be discounted as less than fully human--deserve to have liberty, freedom, and access to opportunity. It only makes sense that if they are denied these things, at some point in the future they will demand them. In order to heed this demand, Americans would have to face black suffering with empathy and an alteration of the material conditions of black people. Black suffering is a threat to the rationality of white supremacy and those steeped in the tradition of white supremacy respond to that threat affectively by turning away from it, at the very least in disgust and disbelief, and at worst with violence.

Although there is nothing especially new about socially-sanctioned violence and oppression of people of color in America, the period since the 2012 shooting and killing of unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin by a man who was subsequently formally absolved of guilt has represented a remarkable shift in the ways (mostly) young black people have publicly asserted themselves in defense of their lives, perspectives, and livelihoods. Since that time, police have continued to shoot and kill black people at rates disproportionate to

people of any other racial category, a large percentage of the white population in America have rallied around a maniacal racist demagogue espousing both explicit racism as well as not-so-thinly veiled racism, and many of the supporters of said demagogue have pushed back against the notion that Black Lives Matter with often unconscious white supremacist rallying cries like, "Blue Lives Matter", "All Lives Matter", and "White Lives Matter". Black Lives Matter has become a large movement shaped around the concept that, um, obviously black lives matter. Unfortunately, this has not been obvious to much of white America for a very long time. Complaints about the movement are instructive insofar as they point to some of the broader challenges behind advocating for people's rights based on the realness of their suffering and the fact that that suffering deserves both a call to resistance and support for change.

Participants in the BLM movement are perceived by many of its detractors as displaying an excessive amount of emotion. How might ideas about critical embodied writing expand the ability of those who see themselves as "normal" to see suffering. Conversely, how might folks making claims of suffering be able to do better articulate those claims by being more aware of what they are resisting and what they are trying to build?

Explicit reference to suffering

The last words of at least a couple of the black men recently killed by police officers have involved specific reference to their physical bodies and the oppression of those bodies. In April of 2015 some of Eric Harris' final words included: "I'm losing my breath" to which the police deputy who had him replied, "I don't give a fuck about your breath" (Guardian UK, 2015). This was a thoroughly honest exchange. Fortunately, unlike all of the officers who killed the majority of the other unarmed black Americans including Eric Garner--

famous for his final words: "I can't breath"--the officer who killed Eric Harris was sentenced to a little jail time for his cavalier response to having murdered Eric Harris. In the case of Eric Garner and Eric Harris both of these men were speaking to the reality of the physical and psychological suffering resulting from the most severe iteration of physical oppression--murder at the hands of an aggressor so powerful that the victims are able to do little else than make known the thoroughness of the oppression of their physical bodies in their final moments.

BLM mobilized Garner's last words with relative ease to propel the movement forward for those who identified with black suffering because of the power of the anger provoked by depictions of visual imagery, words, and historically-informed identification with suffering black bodies. BLM used these rhetorical tactics to draw thousands of members of a population of people who had been relatively politically inert for forty years. Why did this work so well? Why did "I can't breath" serve as a major mobilizing force for BLM? I think it worked because of the slippage between empathy and sympathy enacted by people identifying with Garner's embodied language.

In the words of Sarah Ahmed, "empathy sustains the very difference that it may seek to overcome: empathy remains a 'wish feeling', in which subjects 'feel' something other than what another feels in the very moment of imagining they could feel what another feels" (2005). When I, with my brown body, hear the voice of another dying brown man or a representation of his voice saying "I can't breathe"--particularly when spoken or written by another brown person--I am able to quickly and easily imagine myself in his place, unable to breath, but importantly, unlike him, I am still breathing. However, in spite of this crucial difference, because the image and feeling of a loss of breath is a representation of a physical

reality that spans hundreds of years of American history, even though my empathy has limits, it moves me to take action. The body of Eric Garner, in his inability to breathe, recalls traces of historical instances of suffocation at the hands of white supremacy and the continued need to do something to alter our history of oppression. The myth of black inferiority has a metaphorical body and that body is bound, subordinated, whipped, and crushed by the myth of white supremacy metaphorically embodied by white bodies, those bodies metonymically represented as white whipping, crushing, choking hands, whipping, crushing, and choking both figuratively and literally.

So many black and brown bodies exist in this country today as ancestral representations of people who were forced to come here in conditions in which they were unable to breath. The image of a black or brown body being held down by the weight of systemic oppression speaks to a history that has systematically been silenced and treated as unspeakable. In some instances, that historical suffering was quite literally unspeakable. "There is no telling, this story; it must be told" says Marlene NourbeSe Philip of a ship called the Zong, whose captain failed to properly prepare the route he was to navigate to Jamaica with 470 slaves in tow and failed, therefore, to properly estimate how much water to bring. As a result in this failure in preparation, in 1781, of the 470 slaves forced onto the Zong, roughly 150 of them were thrown overboard to drown, and a total of over half of them either died of thirst or volunteered to throw themselves overboard. For NourbeSe Philip although the bodies were not able to speak for themselves, the story of their suffering is no less in need of telling. Her question is a tricky one: How do bodies speak when bodies cannot speak? In reply, she answers through her very long book of poetry, that bodies which cannot speak must be spoken on behalf of, with explicit reference to bodily suffering, in language

that purposefully disrupts in its lack of conformity to standards of grammar and cohesion my. And so, in English purposefully broken in so many ways--words separated from words, letters separated from words, a mix of languages strewn throughout anti-paragraphs, anti-stanzas, and anti-grammars--NourbeSe tells the disembodied tale of the bodies cast overboard and the people who jumped on purpose. For those who jumped, "I can't breathe" was preferable to living under the oppression and disembodiment of white supremacy. Judging from more of the final words of the men and women killed by police officers in America, words like those of 25 year old Kajieme Powell in 2014, "Shoot me! Shoot me, now!", or that of 23 year old Korryn Gaines in 2016, "They're going to have to kill me"--it seems that this sentiment carries weight today.

The actions of both Powell and Gaines as well as countless others, like Robert Dentmond killed this year 5 miles from my house, committed the modern equivalent of jumping overboard a ship seemingly run by people who are happy to throw you overboard if the need arises. The notion of "suicide by cop" or analogously, of "suicide by drowning oneself behind or over the side of the slave ship" is, in rational terms, an utter negation of the body and of life. It is a choice that makes the body and its value or lack of being valued inherently obvious in its negation. It is also a choice that turns the body of the person choosing to be killed or drowned into a representational conundrum. For those who identify with this choice, for those whose bodies have felt the similar emotion, the message is clear, 'I wish one of these cops would fucking shoot me today'. There is a rational logic to this message, but it is a message, perhaps, most obvious to those who have perceived the utter lack of value of their bodies in the logic of white supremacy firsthand. For the most part, the popular/dominant message about "suicide by cop" is that it is an irrational decision made by

mentally unstable people. The conundrum is this: is suicide by cop a rational decision or an irrational one? Since arguments can be made to assert the rationality and the irrationality of the act, it may be more useful to ask a different question: In what ways does the taking of one's own life by subjecting oneself to the seemingly inevitable violence of racial domination differently define embodiment for people of color and for white people? My answer: white people don't know much about the inevitable violence of racial domination because they aren't racially dominated and perhaps in instances such as this, it would be wiser for them to take a non-normative stance and look at the decisions of people of color with *restraint,* respect, curiosity, and perhaps horror--horror, not at the decisions themselves, but rather at the conditions that inspire them. This kind of approach and its rationale can, and arguably should be taught to students, particularly those students who would otherwise go about their business beyond the university and override the complexities of the experiences of others with rhetorical stances reflecting unquestioned white normativity and an assumption of the supremacy of white subjectivity.

Pedagogical ethics aside, the aforementioned conundrum represents a challenge for people of color wishing to expose the shameful treatment of black bodies. That challenge speaks to the limitations of the critical embodied discourse approach; making explicit reference to the suffering body is only effective if an audience is willing to suspend their sense of conceptual ownership over black and brown bodies and their assumption that it is their right to dictate the terms of rationality on behalf of the people living in those black and brown bodies. The answer to this challenge, I think, involves facilitating white identification with black and brown bodies across the difference of the embodied racial history that all Americans inhabit. There are limits, however, to the ability for white identified people to

identify with brown bodies and these limits are related to how emotion-related currencies stick and don't stick. For example, I believe that "all lives matter" was, in part, an attempt to identify with the struggles of black people which, through the elision of suffering of truly oppressed people with the suffering of the dominant majority (white people), failed to create any measure of agency in the process of obfuscated identification. What "stuck" for adherents to "all lives matter" was, in part, the sentimental notion that we're all in this together and the competing sentimental notion that no one kind of life should ever be singled out as mattering more in any instance. "All lives matter" is a sentimental response that belies its assumptions about who gets to make claims of suffering. In this logic, "all people" get to make claims of mattering and suffering but "black people" do not. Is there a space of potential for identification across embodied difference that doesn't lead to the loss of the significance and negation of the suffering subject, particularly when that suffering other is not white? If such a space exists, it has to involve unseating the affective assumption that the dominant perspective (or any perspective which comes to dominate) holds any legitimate claim to dominance.

Inversion of the invisibility/hypervisibility binary

One way of unseating the dominant perspective and the very notion of the necessity for a dominant perspective is through facilitating identification with non-white "others" by inverting assumptions about "the way things are", otherwise known as normative rationality, or by flipping the notion of what is taken as a given on its head. The Black Lives Matter movement is doing precisely this by inverting what might be called the invisibility/hypervisibility binary of people of color in America. For the entire history of this country, this binary has situated black and brown people in positions of invisibility in times

when it would have been socially and economically beneficial to them to be visible, and in positions of hypervisibility in times when it would be socially and economically preferable for them to be less in the public eye. Historically, black bodies have been perceived as having excessive characteristics (hooks, 1992; Fanon, 1968; Shaw, 2006; Yancy, 2008). These perceived characteristics coincide with the reality of America's history of white supremacy and dominance and the related implication that black bodies (and their presumed physical, verbal, and sexual excesses) are expected to be found in certain places while being prohibited (eg. city busses), either in practice or in fact, from other places, like, for example, any number of upper class neighborhoods, shopping locales, or hotels (Adelman, 2004; Gabbidon, 2003; Hess, 2012; Lubiano, 2012). For people inhabiting black and brown bodies, to be seen as an excessive and public spectacle at, for example, a bus stop waiting for a bus one is forced to ride because one doesn't have a car, can be a frustrating reality. This is all the more so when one happens to be a visible and stereotyped spectacle who also has complex and invisible needs and vulnerabilities that are routinely either overlooked or denied. The fact of hypervisibility is exacerbated by the simultaneous invisibility of the everyday realities of and challenges faced by people of color. For example, whether one happens to be a black man crying at the bus stop, or a brown woman vulnerable to losing her job because her bus is late, in either case history has not painted you to exist as a complicated character in the minds of the dominant majority of the people around you. This dual weight of being ever seen and not seen is imposed by white supremacist assumptions about representation and reinforced by white normative affective responses.

I don't mean to suggest somehow that all black people have had the above experiences. In fact, I want to take a moment to emphasize that the point I wish to make is

precisely the opposite. Black people, as should be obvious, at least to the folks I know will read this dissertation, are complex just like everyone else. My point is that many Americans have a habit of being unable to see that complexity and of imposing evaluations that limit normatively aligned people's ability to see people of color as complex, to act on their behalf, and to facilitate their access to power. When confronted with complex representations of people of color, these limiting evaluations so undermine normative understandings of rational black subjectivity that the very act of successfully representing complexities of people of color is an act of resistance and restructuring.

In a 2010 essay on happiness, Ahmed states that "to be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things" (31). How do people embodying white normativity evaluate and turn toward black and brown bodies and how can this evaluation and "turning toward" be complicated by affective confrontations with the complex subjectivities of real, feeling, thinking, black and brown people? In the case of the public spectacle of black and brownness, the relationship between the appearance or representation of black and brown bodies and the affective reaction of onlookers, renders black and brown people excessively visible and also invisible at the same time. By way of example, Mowatt, Malebranche, and French contrast the relative, though complex, invisibility of black women in academia and their hypervisibility in in popular media. They suggest that black women's level of visibility, and, I would add, legibility, are confined by four of the most-used stereotypes about black women, that of the spectacle of the overly sexual and easily commodifiable "Jezebel", the largely invisible but ever useful and infinitely generous Mammy, the loud, angry, and excessively visible black "Sapphire", and the matriarch or "superwoman" who is forever working to take care of everyone but themselves.

None of these stereotypical evaluations allow for full recognition of the humanity of real black women but they do contribute to the notion of hypervisibility and spectacle. On the other hand, all of the above stereotypes serve to erase the reality of the plurality of skills, contributions, emotions, needs, and complex/shifting identities of black women, thereby challenging the ability of many Americans to take black rational subjectivity seriously. Reliance on ubiquitous stereotyping can create a feeling of comfort for white Americans and a sense of discomfort when faced with more complicated representations.

The Black Lives Matter movement, in presenting a nuanced view of people of color, is complicating representations of the realities of black people and providing more points of access for identifying with them. By making vulnerable black bodies visible in their vulnerability, participants in BLM are inverting assumptions about black vulnerability or a stereotypical lack thereof. Working together with or under the banner of BLM, many if not most of the families of black men and women killed by police have taken a reserved approach to reacting to the deaths of their loved ones. The self-restraint shown by mothers like Joy Reid--the mother of Tamir Rice, the 12 year old shot and killed by a Cleveland police officer--in her reaction to the death of her son undermines many salient notions of black spectacle. While Reid has spoken of her anger and frustration, she has done so with a shocking level of self-restraint. She is not alone in her embodiment of the complicated intersection of black motherhood, despair, frustration, and loss. Although some protests associated with BLM have involved anger and violence, as a rule BLM participates in black spectacle almost exclusively for the purpose of showing masses of black and brown people protesting in relatively peaceful solidarity. This is not to suggest that displays of anger are non-existent within BLM, but rather to acknowledge that even when anger is expressed by

people operating under the BLM banner, it is expressed in conjunction with a variety of complex emotions that force onlookers to either see complexity of its demands or deny the validity of its rationality entirely. This is, I would argue, a step forward in restructuring "common sense" about the presence and practice of racism in America, and altering the affective response of bystanders.

In spite of any advances in altering dominant perspectives on race and racism, many Americans continue to cling to affective responses to BLM that turn them away from acting to change the material conditions of black and brown people. This population of BLM skeptics evaluate the realness of black claims of suffering, find it lacking in credibility, and refuse to acknowledge its rationality. For BLM skeptics, complex imagery and representations of black and brown people are illegible. They don't stick. It is precisely because BLM skeptics cannot open to the possibility of black vulnerability, complexity, and history that they are forced or compelled to negate the legitimacy of the sense of exigency being expressed by BLM--i.e., to assert that, yes, obviously, all lives matter, but that police brutality isn't real OR that it is the police who are the real victims of BLM, OR that black and brown people wouldn't be subjected to that brutality if they would just behave like rational citizens. Affective resistance to the notion that black lives matter is, I think, malleable. Affective responses require shifts in identification and enhanced capacities for understanding--both self-understanding, and the understanding and evaluation of others. Populations of people most informed by affective resistance to the complexity of people of color, will likely need to complicate their self perceptions before they are able to complicate their perceptions of others. In this way, pedagogical interventions that support normatively aligned students, who may never have thought about the needs and complex realities of

others, in paying attention to their emotional and embodied reactions to others might be extremely effective.

Disrupting historically informed understandings of guilt, innocence, and rationality

Because affective responses determine which emotions are acceptable to feel and which are not, interventions in the range of emotions rendered acceptable in response to a given situation is a form of resistance that has the power to restructure bodies and spaces. Many of the reactions of people resistant to the logic of BLM are associated with the notion of black irrationality, or an excess of black emotion. This resistance is directed at both the level of BLM activists' activism, logic, pathos, and argumentation, as well as at the potential for seeing the black people killed by police as rational human beings behaving in logical ways to historical and present mistreatment. Dartmouth student, Brian Chen, writes in the Dartmouth Review, "...beyond its gaping credibility issue, Black Lives Matter is a movement devoid of substance, one whose obsessive identity politics do not coincide with reality outside of the ivory tower…" (2016). According to Chen, BLM fails to have credibility because they lack "individual accountability" and promote "nothing more than irrational anger". Within this logic, claims that black lives matter are excessive, unnecessary, and beside the point. The anger related to those claims therefore exists outside of the realm of acceptable affective responses. Chen is likely unaware that his critique of the excessive emotionality of the members of BLM holds a trace of more overtly racist historical notions that black people are excessive in any number of ways, including emotionality, sexuality, and in terms of physical features. Those who are aware of that history will most certainly hear his critique differently than those who do not, and, I would like to think that if he were aware of the lineage behind his thinking, he too may think differently about his argument.

On a similar note, University of Missouri student Chris Vas claims that President Obama, in speaking out against the problem of "walking while black", "driving while black", and generally feeling "targeted by law enforcement", had "used the power of the bully pulpit to spread fear and anger to the general population" (2016. He suggests that, in addition to the threat of "spreading fear", the real problem facing black people is a crisis of individual responsibility and a pathological lack of strong black families. These, according to Vas, are acceptable issues around which to rally emotions like fear and anger. His is an argument so tired that it pains me to repeat it here, but it bears repeating, I think, primarily because it is so firmly entrenched in some folks' mindsets. In Vas' perspective, the black people who are speaking in resistance to police aggression against black people are not capable of understanding their emotions or the roots of their troubles. In supporting BLM, leaders like Obama are encouraging unruly black emotions and little else. The perspectives of Vas and Chen are echoed in countless Twitter and Facebook posts, editorial essays, comments, and public commentary made by public and political figures. Such perspectives reveal an inability to see black agency, rationality, and black humanity. In place of agency, rationality, and humanity, perspectives like those of Chen and Vas substitute oversimplified representations of black people as guilty, irrational, and inhumane. These reductions delegitimize, undermine, and halt the progress of our (American *our*) ability to discuss black subjectivities in all of their complexities.

The idea that black people must be innocent and rational in order to be taken seriously and in order to be counted as legitimate members of American society is longstanding, related to an underlying fear that black people cannot be controlled, and closely associated with attempts to contain them by reducing everything from their access to decision-making to

their ability to exist in a variety of locations and determine the structure of the spaces around them. During slavery, black people were perceived as both innocent and dangerous in much the same way one might say a domesticated German Shepherd is innocent and dangerous-- innocent insofar as both were seen as less than human and dangerous insofar as both were seen as trained animals who retained their innate wild, violent, and unpredictable qualities. Once slavery ended and slaves were freed, the need to control them was no less pressing for white people who feared losing the economic advantage that slavery had conferred upon the inhabiters of whiteness. Controlling black people by claiming their inferiority and limiting their ability to participate in economic and political life was the primary strategy enacted for retaining white economic, social, and political supremacy. The Black Codes, particularly aspects of those laws regarding the inequitable economy of sharecropping, rules about vagrancy, and laws prohibiting miscegenation reveal that the freedom conferred upon black Americans continued to deny them their legal right to humanity (Du Bois, 1935).

The practice of equating humanity with rationality is one that both predated slavery and had a resurgence in its wake. Slavery, as most of us know, was rationalized in part by the belief that black people were subhuman and unable to think for themselves or act on behalf of their best interests. The end of slavery didn't effectively overturn this belief for the vast majority of Americans. In the wake of emancipation many white folks still felt that black people needed to prove their humanity. Part of doing this involved being rational and participating in white social, economic, and political infrastructure in ways that were deemed acceptable by white people. White normativity defined the rules of rationality because black people were not allowed to participate in white economic, political, and social life. The notion that black people are irrational took the place of the notion that black people were

subhuman, but the end result was the same. The message was and continues to be this: if America is going to allow its black people to be human, black people must pay the price of having to constantly prove their docility, utility, and rationality. Claims of black irrationality are the modern equivalent to claims of the inhumanity of black people. These claims fulfill the same function of allowing white identified people to refuse to hear or take black people seriously.

Black Lives Matter has yet to find a way of addressing this problem. How can an average, law-abiding white American with limited understanding of the historical construction of race identify with a person of color they perceive as irrational? How can the majority of Americans relate to the suffering of black people when historical racism has effectively created an affective resistance to representations of black people as more than criminals, welfare recipients, dancers, and professional basketball/football players? Is there any point of access for identification across the historically constructed affective barriers to identification? One point of access requires everyday Americans to recognize and confront the role of history in the creation of limiting representations of blackness. How do symbols do this? How can we continue to connect the present with the past for the purpose of reminding those resistant to the BLM movement that BLM is necessary precisely because America has repeatedly proven to many black and brown people that black lives have never mattered in America. How can we inform those who unconsciously participate in an economy of affective affinity toward white supremacy that this economy is firmly entrenched in America's racist history?

BLM and associated activists are doing this in some ways. Arguably, the more connections that can be drawn between past embodiments of racism and their present

counterparts, the more white-normatively identified white people will be able to identify with black and brown bodies rather than see those bodies as operating in sentimental excess. Identification with complex black lives is possible when those lives are seen in conjunction with complex understandings of the economies of emotion that create affinities for historically constructed stereotypes of the goodness and rationality of whiteness and the badness/criminality and irrationality of blackness. In America, racism has become associated with disgust and shame. White people, even many of those who unwittingly espouse racist ideologies, respond to accusations of racism with disgust. Most white people simply don't want to be considered racist. Think, if you happen to be white and reading this, of the physical feeling you might have in response to my standing in front of you and accusing you of behaving in a racist manner. This aversion, it seems, is very present in the bodies of white people. It can be used to the benefit of those seeking to complicate popular understandings of where black people are coming from. If most white people don't want to be identified with racism, then they certainly don't want to be associated with historical images and symbols of overt racism. Connecting present events and happenings directly with overt historical racism, whether through argument, imagery, or symbolism, is one way to alter the affective responses and emotion-based decision making processes of people who unconsciously trade in an affective affinity for historically constructed racist ideology that has been partially cleansed of its racist connotations.

One of the most effective ways I've seen this done is by superimposing past structures, symbols, and logic onto present day racial logic. I will provide a couple of examples. In the 1920s and 1930s, the NAACP, in response to the many many lynchings throughout the country, habitually raised a flag that stated "A MAN WAS LYNCHED

YESTERDAY" outside of of their New York City headquarters. This sign would serve as a reminder to those living in the North of the realities of black people in America. In the summer of 2016, artist Dread Scott resurrected the flag with a slight alteration. It now states: "A MAN WAS LYNCHED BY THE POLICE YESTERDAY". It has the same font and, arguably, a similar impact. In creating such a direct reminder of the parallel relationship between the past and present, Scott implicates those looking away from the police violence of today with participation in the racist violence of the past. He creates a simple symbolic reminder both that the lack of societal value for black lives 80 years ago remains a reality today and that failure to resist this kind of violence positions one on the side of the most disdainful elements of our country's history.

In one particularly effective portion of Ava DuVernay's most recent documentary, "13th", DuVernay juxtaposes selected excerpts from the speeches of presidential candidate Donald Trump with some of the most familiar historical imagery of the white racist resistance to the Civil Rights Movement. As we hear and see Donald Trump saying things like, "Knock the crap out of him, would ya. Get him out of here," watching the scene, we see footage of a black woman repeatedly being pushed by white men at a crowded Trump rally immediately followed by historical black and white images of a black man being repeatedly pushed by a crowd of white men, dropping his hat, peacefully attempting to walk away with dignity as the men continue to push him. "In the good old days, this [heckling/protesting] doesn't happen because they used to treat them very very rough, and when they protested once, they would not do it again so easily". As Trump speaks the words, "I love the old days. You know what they used to do to folks like this in the old days? They'd be carried out on a stretcher", DuVernay provides us with images of exactly this, black men immobilized on

stretchers. We then see a white man at a Trump rally saying, "We knocked the hell out of that big mouth. The next time we see him, we might have to kill him" followed by more images of black people being beaten by white people during the Civil Rights Movement, followed by yet another white person espousing violence, followed by still more imagery of white violence, past and present. In the end, we see Richard Nixon telling us about Law & Order and Donald Trump informing us that he is the "Law & Order" candidate.

Few people watching the above scenes would be able to deny the relevance of the comparisons drawn or the fact that Donald Trump is invoking the memory of historically informed racial violence and successfully trading in the currency of anger to motivate the bodies of his followers to respond both affectively and physically. While the extreme response of the, perhaps, minority of his supporters would be frowned upon in most of the rest of polite society, the affective rationality of Trump's claims is part and parcel of the identification shared by Trump supporters of all socioeconomic levels--even those who would stand to lose social and economic standing if they, themselves were seen as supporters of Trump. Making obvious the historicity of this particular kind of racist embodiment is no simple task. Words alone are unlikely to dissuade Trump supporters from their identification with his affective logic in the same way as DuVernay's collapsing of the clear resonances between past and present. Such scenes force viewers to directly assess their identification with the prevailing underlying racist logic and the ways of embodying that logic shared by huge numbers of conservative Americans.

Returning to the specific notion of writing as embodied practice

For those of us who have directly felt the impact of a socially sanctioned and economically mandated sense of marginalization, the question of "Who am I to write

anything at all?" is one of the first that must be answered if writing is going to come out of our brains, through our bodies, and onto paper. This question is very much associated with an embodied sensation. If we want to intervene in the dynamic that has historically enabled writing instruction to be used as a tool of exclusion, we need to be able to explain this physical, emotional, and embodied phenomenon. What is happening for students when they "can't write" or when they claim that they aren't "good writers"?

Bodies can be read as a kind of geographical space and as a way of taking up, existing in, and altering geographical space. Most of the time, as long as our bodies are functioning normally and comfortably, many of us take them for granted. They simply exist. A subtler look at embodiment suggests that far more is happening with the body. It operates. It is operated upon. It performs and others perform in response. It constitutes self and is constituted by others. When one exists in a body that is functioning differently than it normally functions, or is in some way obviously different from the bodies around it, one becomes far more aware of the body as a spatial entity, a process, and as a performative agent. Most of the time, all of these happenings occur silently. Many of us don't discuss any of this in polite company, but feminist studies have long made the demand that, because the distance between the inside and outside of the body is socially structured and bounded by rules determined by structures of power, we need to think differently of public and private spaces (Grosz, 1994). For people able to deem their bodies "normal" or at least in line with some standard of normalcy, this silence of living in a body presents no clear problem, and analogously, space simply exists. For people with bodies frequently or consistently read as somehow "abnormal", the silencing of the body, the silencing of its practices, its physical

feelings, its ways of moving and its ways of performing and being performed upon, and constructing space can create suffering, stagnation, and a sense of being disappeared.

Discussing the suffering body (and this must include both discussions of physical and emotional suffering that a body can experience) can be an act of physical resistance and of claiming determination over the ways oppressed bodies are situated and in broadening the ways it is possible to read and understand them. For this reason, discussions of embodiment go hand in hand with discussions of geographies. The body is a dynamic map, of sorts. When we write from the body, we create a guideline for reading the map and for how to navigate space. When we give voice to silences, we act as agents in the making of space and identity (who stands where, does what, and how). In the practice of "writing from the body" we maintain an awareness of the multiplicity of ways our individual and collective bodies have been construed in the past, are currently construed, and may be reimagined for present and future agency. Writing from the body enables us to be more skillfully able to negotiate the differences between our positions, our physical responses, and our sense of place. Writing as an embodied practice shows promise for understanding issues of difference as ongoing and in process. Just as no body is static in its difference, no space is truly static in its landscape and design. It is only in writing from the body that we are able to recognize this dynamism.

Without writing from and about embodied perspectives (sometimes both at the same time), efforts to negotiate and understand the ways difference functions to limit certain bodies from meaningful access to power are stunted. Moreover, when we can't offer our students a practice, art, and skill of negotiating the presence of their physical selves on university campuses, they are left to figure this out for themselves. The silencing of physical bodies, emotions, the quality of suffering, and the subsequent inability of people to use those

bodies to name their place in space and to create and negotiate space and place, I argue, is a significant factor in the departure of people of color from places like the University of Minnesota.

Through giving voice to historical silences and experiences of domination, acknowledging the role of feeling and emotion in the creation of identities, embodiments, and spaces, and recognizing how all of this is mediated through individual racialized and gendered bodies with the power to write and rewrite their experience, we can make new conceptual and physical spaces possible. All of this is a practice or a way of being in our writing and in our bodies.

It is, perhaps, rather new for many to pause and reflect about how they are existing as writers at so many levels--at the literal level of being in a specific physical body in a specific physical place, at the metaphorical level of being in a community of writers as one writes, at the emotional level of feeling feelings rather than simply rationally laying forth thoughts. This is the task of critical embodied writing. Writers--all writers--operate at so many complex intersections as we write. Awareness of at least some of those intersections is central to writing responsibly. And for folks who feel negated before they type a single letter, awareness of many of these intersections may be the only way forward in truly existing in our writing, in a writing community, and in space--both metaphorical and literal. Pre-writing, for us, takes on an entirely greater significance than simply making an outline and gathering sources.

Chapter 4: Autoethnography, critical embodied writing, and practice

The goal of the previous chapter was to theorize and provide examples of an approach to writing that has the potential to intervene in the historically constructed spatial, affective, and embodied marginalizations that inform institutional power structures ranging from the academic to the political. The goals of this chapter are threefold. Firstly, I draw parallels between my experience with the practice of critical embodied writing and the study of writing within the field of anthropology--primarily in the practices of ethnography and autoethnography. Secondly, I provide examples of the ways that women of color who write have been able to intervene in disembodying oppression by using writing to build metaphorical spaces of inclusion and accessibility, and I outline the ways that this kind of writing shares resonances with some of the goals of postmodern autoethnography as well as the ways in which it differs from it. Thirdly, I offer my own experience as both an example of critical embodied writing and a self-reflexive critique of my participation in the field of Writing Studies and of certain elements of the field itself. I suggest that the embodied details of my particular experience, when viewed in their larger context may serve to inform members of the field who want to see Writing Studies as a dynamic and inclusive space and to be seen by others as such.

I have been encouraged time and time again, throughout my graduate career, to make use of a recognizable and legitimate method. My resistance to this not-so-subtle pressure to conform to method stems from the extent to which I am bothered by the idea that some people have to work so hard to establish legitimacy at every level of their lives while others

are simply perceived as more legitimate by virtue of their color, or gender identification, or country of origin, etc. While I realize that consistency and legitimacy are important within the context of research, I think it is equally important to acknowledge that for people who have never been easily granted legitimacy, who have always had to prove their legitimacy, being asked to prove that their ideas are worthy by associating them with someone else's methodology may exacerbate pre-existing feelings of inadequacy. And while I certainly don't think this is a reason to abandon method altogether, I think it may be a reason to contemplate practices that allow for an analysis of the complicated relationship between subjectivity and legitimacy.

Employing a method, in embodied terms, gives research a familiar face. Adherence to methodology gives that face a look of trustworthiness. It has sometimes appeared to me that a few folks seem to get by more on method than on the profundity of their ideas. In such cases, it seems as though having and strictly adhering to a method is enough to get one's work noticed and even respected. This is just a hunch, and/or, because I'm not going to name any names, it's most appropriate to the present context to frame this "hunch" as a biased perception that has informed my self-understanding as non-academic "other". To the extent that objectivity is possible, it might be more factually accurate to assert that in most of academia, upholding an ethical and passionate agenda, if such an agenda is even present at all, isn't especially translatable in the absence of an academically legitimated method. Although I understand the reasoning behind prioritizing method, among other things, adherence to method at the expense of self-reflexivity and historicity has the potential to exclude people embodying non-normative subjectivities. With all of the above in mind, the methods that resonate most with my academic goals are postmodern and/or feminist

autoethnography. These methods have clear resonance with Writing Studies because of their obvious intersections with writing and because of the ongoing struggle of users of postmodern and feminist autoethnography to advocate for the legitimacy of has the potential to inform a similar struggle within Writing Studies.

Ethnography, autoethnography and critical embodied writing

My hope here is, in part, to participate in shifting understandings of validity and legitimacy within academic contexts. Challenges of method and validity have plagued autoethnography from its origins and perhaps this is, in part, why I find the method so useful for the work I am doing. In order to make sense of some of this resistance, one has to review the history of ethnography and autoethnography. Ethnography is, quite simply, the study of culture done with the intention of understanding cultural phenomena from both outside of a culture and from within it (Malinowski, 1984; Abu-Lughod, 1990; Maso, 2007). In the early days of ethnography, it was thought that research could be completed by cultural outsiders taking an objective stance in observing another culture (Maso, 2007; Ellis, 2011). Although ultimately the field realized that objective observation was not possible, this realization was not linear. It happened slowly over the span of many decades and created multiple ruptures in the field's understanding of the definition and scope of ethnography.

Anthropology emerged from the need of scholars previously associated with the field of sociology to produce knowledge not from a wide institutional-historical vantage point and a desire for overarching theoretical truths, but rather from within the culture itself as participants and observers in cultural phenomena. Although some trace the practice of ethnography back to Ancient Greece, the method itself is most often traced from its academic origins with Bronislaw Malinowski in the field of Anthropology, who at the turn of the 20th

century, established participant observation and ethnography as way of interpreting the culture not solely through the ethnocentric perspective of European colonialists but rather from an attempt to understand the perspective of "the native" (Malinowski, 1984). Participant observation and the recording of these observations through the writing of ethnography represented an initial movement away from imposing outside perspectives on cultural understandings of socio-cultural groups. Autoethnography represented inclusion of the realization that even when using the practice of participant observation, participant observer/researchers were unable to be neutral. Methods for doing autoethnography were therefore developed for the purpose of making the bias and lack of neutrality of the observer evident in the writing of ethnography.

According to Ellis, "autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (2011). As such, whereas ethnography seeks to put the researcher in the position of participant interpreter of external experience, autoethnography encourages the researcher to use self-reflection and analysis of personal experience in the writing of accounts of culture in an effort to better understand both culture and self (Ellis, 2000; 2006; 2011). Perhaps the biggest critique of this form of doing ethnography has come from those within the fields of Sociology and Anthropology who view the kind of autoethnography Ellis advocates as little more than pseudo-academic navel gazing and, perhaps even worse, intellectual laziness due to the lack (or impossibility) of objective analysis in autoethnographic work (Anderson, 2006; Atkinson, 2006). These folks suggest that, in order to be taken seriously, researchers must move away from "evocative autoethnography that draws upon postmodern sensibilities and whose advocates distance

themselves from realist and analytic ethnographic traditions" toward claim-making about broad socio-cultural theories (Anderson, 2006). Scholars hoping to move away from the ethereal qualities of evocative ethnography promote analytic autoethnography, defined by Anderson as a "value-added quality of not only truthfully rendering the social world under investigation but also transcending that world through broader generalization".

In the mid-1980s when autoethnographic approaches were still somewhat new, James Clifford *et al* spoke to the critiques of autoethnography of many within the field of Anthropology in the anthology *Writing Culture*. The anthology builds resistance to that critique with a series of essays written in contrast to a historical focus on anthropological writing/ethnography as strict adherence to method. *Writing Culture* is comprised of essays which "see culture as composed of seriously contested codes and representations", and "assume that the poetic and the political are inseparable, that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic practices" (Clifford, 1986). Clifford asserts an affinity between ethnography and fiction, suggesting that both shape reality through interpretation and meaning making. In a similar fashion and many years later, other anthropologists have defined autoethnography as operating at the intersections of art and science as a method that purposefully works to "disrupt the binary between science and art" (Ellis *et al.* 2011). That said, even scholars advocating for a blurring of such boundaries, assert that in order to maintain credibility, validity, and reliability, writers of autoethnography should be careful to make sure that the stories they tell are clearly situated within the realm of nonfiction (Ellis, *et al.* 2011).

Many forms of autoethnography have been created to conform to the needs of scholars both in terms of research and practice. Some of these include: indigenous, narrative,

reflexive dyadic interviews, reflexive ethnographies, layered accounts, and interactive

interviews, community autoethnography, co-constructed narratives, and personal narratives

(Ellis *et al.* 2011). Beyond the specific forms that autoethnography can take,

autoethnography can be categorized according to its theoretical underpinnings.

Autoethnographic affiliation with a given theory is generally related to facilitation of

adherence to the demands of creating validity for the benefit of a desired audience. The

extent to which users of autoethnographic method adhere to various writing conventions is

related to the ways they wish to be perceived by their readers and who they wish those

readers to be. Social constructivist perspectives are more closely associated with meaning-

making through postmodernist, feminist, and critical autoethnography while meaning-making

through essentialist perspectives are more closely associated with analytic autoethnography.

Meaning-making through postmodern and feminist autoethnography is representative of a

postmodern turn in ethnography, which, Faye Harrison defines as making use of several

techniques, including: "bifocality or reciprocity of perspectives (that is, seeing others against

a background of ourselves and ourselves against a background of others), juxtaposing of

multiple realities; interlinguistic play (such as moving from standard English to dialect [code

switching] to Spanish and back to English), comparison through families of resemblance, and

emphasis on dialogue and discourse" (1995, 235). Still, Harrison cautions that the field must

override its tendency to "see dialogic relationships as textual strategies rather than as

concrete collaborations", and to ensure that the fruits of studies of culture are traded between

and among both privileged researchers and the majority of the rest of the world (Harrison,

1991). Postmodern autoethnography shares many goals with feminist autoethnography and,

to a certain extent, the two emerged in parallel with one another.

The need for autoethnographic research of the feminist variety arose from debates about the impossibility of doing feminist ethnography. Much of the early work in feminist ethnography dealt with the question of whether or not it was possible to do such a thing as "feminist ethnography", and the extent to which the very notion of postmodern ethnography was problematic (Stacey, 1988; Mascia-Lees, 1989; Abu-Lughod, 1991). The challenges of doing feminist ethnography ranged from problems of feminist ethics in the writing of ethnography to ethical challenges of conducting ethnographic research. The evocative ethnography of feminist and postmodernist ethnographic methods has experienced resistance from those who claim that the method fails to fulfill ethical obligations obligations to specific populations of third-world and other socio-politically oppressed people (Enslin, 1994). Elizabeth Stacey outlines a variety of ethical challenges encountered in the process of doing ethnographic research. Ethnography encourages a sense of equality among researcher and participant as well as efforts at building genuine relationships. Stacey notes that in reducing the distance between researcher and those being researched, those being researched become vulnerable to the ways they are represented in ethnographies. The ideals of feminism suggest that personal experiences are no different from political experiences and should be viewed as such. What to do, then, when participants in research want certain elements of their experience to remain unspoken and invisible? In failing to write the personal details of those being researched, is a feminist researcher really living up to the ideals of feminism? Stacey suggests that for this reason, no, they are not, and that although fully feminist research is not possible, partial feminist research can be accomplished through attempts at respecting the needs of participants while maintaining awareness of feminist objectives (1988). In response to Stacey, others argued that it is precisely the tension between the impossibility of a fully

feminist ethnography and the need for ethnography that makes attempts at such a method a necessity (Abo-Lughod, 1991; Wheatly, 1994). From this debate emerged the possibility for autoethnography to bridge the gaps between the impossibilities of feminist ethnography and the ethical demands of feminism through a focus on the intersection of self-making and cultural understanding. Even still, in many cases, feminist autoethnography arguably participates in largely self-referential knowledge-making that fails to offer much by way of either tangible benefits to oppressed people or the amelioration of the suffering of those people.

Within the field of rhetoric, composition and writing studies, there are surprisingly few systematic treatments of the subject of autoethnography. In some ways, this is surprising because autoethnography is a phenomenon deeply rooted in the history of writing use as a tool of cultural and individual understanding. The method is rhetorical by nature. On the other hand, writing about oneself is an act most comfortably situated within the context of the literary. As I mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, self-focused writing--even when such writing is done for the purpose of drawing conclusions and inferences about the intersections between self, culture, and others--has been cast aside as a largely suspect and egocentric activity performed by beginners and novices. There are two noteworthy exceptions to the avoidance of autoethnographic theorizing within the field. One of them is Linda Brodkey's book *Writing Permitted in Designated Areas Only*, and the other is an article written by Brett Lunceford in 2015 in *The Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*.

I will start with Lunceford's article, "Rhetorical Autoethnography" because it provides the most explicit definition of autoethnography as it might be used in rhetorical studies. Lunceford notes that there are very few rhetorical scholars employing

autoethnography in their work and suggests that this is likely so because of the lack of acceptance among academic journal reviewers of any form of writing that might be considered "experimental". He ponders the lack of clarity about what autoethnography is and how it can be correctly done and asserts that this lack of clarity exists even among the very folks who have written the greatest volume of writing about autoethnography within the field of anthropology, Ellis and Bochner. He provides some examples of autoethnographic work in the field and explains the ways that autoethnographic method can help writers to perform better rhetorical analyses by interspersing the writer's personal stories throughout the writing/analysis for the purpose of helping readers to better understand specific elements of the story the writer is telling as a way of connecting with the reader through the use of both *logos* and *pathos*. To a certain extent, rhetorical autoethnography, according to Lunceford, flips the relationship between the writer as rhetorical critic and the audience as receiver of rhetorical critique on its head. Upon reading rhetorical autoethnography, the reader is invited to play a role in the critique of the writer's autobiographical connection to the argument being made in the writing. Lunceford argues that, for this reason, rhetorical autoethnography encourages the writer to give greater thought to audience as they do the following four things in their critique: "draw on theory to help illuminate some aspect of rhetoric,… draw on the critic's experiences with the rhetorical transaction in question,... be honest,... [and] be well written and engaging" (17).

Linda Brodkey is one of a very few scholars in rhetoric and composition studies who has both attempted to "correctly" make use of autoethnography and connected it to broader theoretical approaches to her work as a composition pedagogue and theorist. Her use and theorization of autoethnography (or critical ethnography, as it was mostly called at the time)

is most salient in her book *Writing Permitted in Designated Areas Only*. The book consists of a series of essays and articles about writing, socio-linguistic theories of writing, and writing pedagogy. Some of the essays included are written by student writers from her classes. The three essays that have the greatest pertinence to the subject of autoethnography are "Writing on the Bias" and "Critical Ethnography" by Brodkey herself, and, "An Autoethnography in Parts" written by Kate Burns.

In the first essay, "Writing on the Bias" which Brodkey calls both "experimental" and "autoethnographic", she talks about the joys of experimentation in writing and offers an account of her own recollections of learning to engaging with reading and writing. She uses this account to try and clarify the primary points that writing is subjective and processual. In the second essay, "Critical Ethnography", Brodkey asserts the need, in studies of writing, for connecting stories and descriptions to analysis of discourse in order to best support analyses of discursive practices and the power embedded in language. She uses an autoethnographic account of her own experience as well an ethnographic account of the writing experiences of a child with whom she is conducting research on writing to make several points about the process of writing. Brett Lunceford's four elements of effective rhetorical autoethnography are useful in analyzing the success of Brodkey's autoethnographic writing. Does she, "draw on theory to help illuminate some aspect of rhetoric,… draw on [her] experiences with the rhetorical transaction in question,... be honest,... [and is she] well written and engaging"? From my perspective as a reader, the question of honesty is impossible to ascertain and the question of how engaging Brodkey's writing is is so highly subjective as to make it less than fully useful to my analysis. The other two questions are more helpful. Does Brodkey draw on theory to illuminate aspects of socio-linguistic theories of writing? Yes, arguably, she does.

And does she draw on her experiences with the rhetorical transaction (in this case, her entrance into the literary world as a participant in meaning-making)? Yes, arguably, she does this as well. But in reading her writing, and using Lunceford's four qualities of effective rhetorical autoethnography to assess it, I find myself feeling as though neither the method of rhetorical autoethnography, nor its use in Brodkey's writing is especially helpful in either doing rhetorical criticism or of using the personal as a point of access into interventions in the power dynamics of language. I have not been able to find examples of autoethnography that inspire me to feel like this particular method alone can do the kinds of work that need to be done in studies of writing in order to make the discipline of rhetoric and composition studies a more dynamic and inclusive space where resistance to historical, spatial, and individual oppression can take place.

Critical embodied writing shares similarities with the many forms that autoethnography has taken--not so much within rhetoric, composition, and writing studies, but more so in other fields. It operates at the intersection of critical literacy and autoethnography's focus on revisiting the familiar, recognizing the presence of multiple ways of seeing any given situation, and analyzing identification, notions of selfhood, culture, and power in order to intervene in causes of social justice. Requiring writing to include many of the techniques of both critical I literacy as well as postmodern and feminist autoethnography--such as an awareness of multiple perspectives and the social constructed nature of those perspectives, an awareness of the involvement of power in meaning-making, and a posture of dialogic rather than monologic claim-making--is necessary if we wish to represent ourselves and others in complex and thoughtful ways. What I find missing from autoethnography, is a commitment to allowing inclusion of the imaginary, the creative, and the fictitious in writing

for the purpose of rethinking power, identity, and positionality. The biggest departure between autoethnography and critical embodied writing is in the insistence of those who write critically from the body, to include a space for writing the realm of the possible, and and to use fiction to identify new ways of embodiment and new spaces of power and possibility. Whereas autoethnography is designed to create awareness of selves creating culture, critical embodied writing is designed to take an explicitly activist stance on issues of power and to advocate for change through broadening the realm of possible identifications and ways of knowing. Even more specifically, critical embodied writing seeks to encourage new spaces of potential as imagined by people who have rarely been afforded access to positions of power or decision-making.

Women of color writing: building spaces of inclusion by writing difference

In spite of the best intentions of practitioners of critical literacy, autoethnography and writing that pays attention to the body and emotions, it seems that stories about selfhood, identity, embodiment, power, and suffering often run the risk of being unhearable. This, as I asserted in the previous chapter, is in large part due to the affective resistance to witnessing and engaging with the embodied realities and suffering of others, and the relegation of those realities into the marginal and illegitimate realm of the sentimental. Affective resistance makes it impossible for certain novel emotional responses to stick and regulates our ability (or inability) to see others' suffering (Ahmed, 2004; 2010). Critical embodied writing offers tools for avoiding the sentimental and for redefining the emotion-based contours of bodies. Additionally, it pays heed to Sardar Anwaruddin's call for composition teachers to include critical affective literacies in the teaching of composition and critical literacy (2016).

I have identified several ways that women writers of color make new spaces, identifications, and ways of embodiment possible by engaging in critical embodied writing. Some of the primary goals of critical embodied writing include understanding and emphasizing the historical construction of emotion as an ongoing way of focusing individual and group identifications, aversions, and attachments and how these affective responses help us to make meaning, construct identity, and build communities and spaces around ourselves. Critical embodied writing is an intervention that enables us to write from an awareness of the implications of being a person with a politically, socially, and historically situated body. It employs all three of the forms of embodiment used in Composition Studies identified by Abby Knoblauch including: embodied language, embodied knowledge, and embodied rhetoric (2012). Women of color writers have been doing all of these things in various ways. Much like Chela Sandoval who analyzes women of color philosophy and activism for patterns of theory and practice and subsequently advocates for a "Methodology of the Oppressed" which offers five methods used by third-world women and women of color activists to resist and alter oppressive realities, the writing in this chapter performs a similar labor. Women of color have a rich, though uncategorized, history of using critical embodied writing practices.

In compiling and offering examples of these practices, I hope scholars and practitioners in Writing Studies will take seriously the contributions of women of color to a writing methodology that can and should inform us in the ways we understand and teach writing. In part, I am advocating for an expansion of the realm of the rational by fostering an understanding of emotional, historical, and spatial complexities. I am particularly concerned with the constellation of emotions that informs our ability to deal with suffering--both our

own suffering and the suffering of others. Suffering doesn't happen in isolation, away from rationality or away from other emotions. It is closely related to our understanding of ourselves as rational beings and it happens at the intersection of a variety of emotions including but not limited to fear, joy, helplessness, hope and optimism, resignation, and defensiveness. Writers who point first to those emotions and situate their suffering within the broader and more complex context of historical and power-mediated identifications and material circumstances can avoid the trap of sentimental storytelling by circumnavigating the reductionist tendencies of sentimentalism and an inability/refusal to perceive multiple interlocking emotions. When we respond to others' suffering by relegating it to the realm of the sentimental, we severely undermine our ability to witness oppression and do something about it. Conversely, when we are unable to write and share our suffering in ways that highlight complexity, we are severely undermined in our ability to speak to suffering, to take action against it, and to inspire others to do the same. The examples of women of color writers I will present in this chapter have successfully done exactly this. In the absence of paying close attention to these folks, people working under the umbrella of Composition, Rhetoric, Writing Studies, and Critical Literacy are going to be undermined in their efforts to advocate on behalf of people of color and teach them how to do so themselves.

There are more women of color writers doing what I am calling critical embodied writing than I can possibly give credit to in this dissertation. In order to do attempt to do justice to the work they have done in their writing, I will limit my focus to five women: Audre Lorde, Marlene NourbeSe Philip, Trinh Minh-ha, Gloria Anzaldua, and Zora Neale Hurston. These women have used--and some continue to use--their writing to create new spaces of agency for women of color, people of color, and inadvertently, also for those who

don't fit into "other" status. By using language about their bodies, describing those bodies in affective terms, theorizing their embodied experiences, drawing connections between historical and present oppression, ways of being, geographical spaces, and uses of language, analyzing the role of discomfort and uncertainty in understanding self and other, and using fiction, poetry, and nonfiction to perform storytelling, all of these writers expand what can be included in the sphere of "rational thinking", who can be included in rational conversations, and how the spaces informed by these conversations can be constructed.

The perspectives, ways of writing, and ways of knowing of all six of the writers I have chosen to discuss in the following section interanimate one another. In saying this, I want to make explicit that although the ideas of the writers I have chosen speak to one another about a variety of issues related to space, embodiment, emotion, and history/memory, there are many differences among them that I will not address. They are far from a homogeneous group, but on the issues of pertinence to critical embodied writing, they have much to offer. Though I create sections based on the specific writer/s I will be talking about under each section-heading, the writers, at times, seem as though they are speaking to one another in ways that don't always neatly fit under a single heading. Therefore, I cannot fully describe the writing and ideas of any individual writer in isolation from the contributions of all of the others. To make matters more complex, these writers offer contributions to thinking about specific topics in multiple ways. So, for example, there are two sections that include the topic of silence because Trinh Minh-ha's use of the concept of silence offers something different when placed in conversation with Gloria Anzaldua's understanding of uncertainty than does Marlene NourbeSe Philip's analysis of the function of silence when placed within the context of history. The following section will use headings and attempt to focus on the

ideas of just one or two writers at a time writing about just a few concepts per subheading, but occasionally, more than one or two writers will be addressed under a single heading and some concepts will be addressed multiple times in different ways.

Gloria Anzaldua and Trinh Minh-ha on Embodied Language, Silence and Uncertainty

Embodied language, as defined in an earlier chapter by Abby Knoblauch, "embodies bodily functions and bodily motions" (2012, 52). It incorporates specific details about bodies into arguments and stories for the purpose of drawing a reader in through identification based on shared bodily experiences and shared knowledge about what it means to be a person with a body that feels things. Gloria Anzaldua does this frequently and with great skill. In "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" from *Borderlands: La Frontera*, Anzaldua uses the tongue metonymically:

> "We're going to have to control your tongue," the dentist says, pulling out all the metal from my mouth. Silver bits plop and tinkle into the basin. My mouth is a mother lode.
> The dentist is cleaning out my roots. I get a whiff of the stench when I gasp. "I can't cap that tooth yet, you're still draining," he says.
> "We're going to have to do something about your tongue," I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. "I've never seen anything as strong or as stubborn," he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down? (Anzaldua, 1987).

She concludes with a quote from Ray Gwyn Smith: "Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?" and then recounts a series of stories about being punished as a child for her failure to conform to the linguistic and social demands of teachers and other authority figures (53). Anzaldua is doing several things in the above sample of her writing. She exchanges the tongue for the entire body and mind. She speaks explicitly about her own tongue and mouth. Her own personal tongue is unruly. Her own personal tongue

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exists in a mouth that smells disgusting. Her own personal tongue is a problem to be solved, and the only solutions involve either violence and silencing, or the purging of speech (or infectious bodily fluids). Her juxtaposition of a foul-smelling mouth at the dentist with the problem of embodiments of unruliness creates an analogy that inspires an affective response: a dirty mouth is to solving a dental problem what an unruly tongue is to the problem of white linguistic normativity. Whether one is disgusting at the dentist or on the playground, one either has the choice of suffering in silence while the infection hopefully drains, suffering in silence while one receives physical punishment from white people, suffering in silence while one receives admonishment from one's own people, or being a problem.

Anzaldua makes the choice, time and time again, to be a problem rather than to suffer in silence. Judging from various autobiographical and biographical accounts of her life, although this choice didn't simplify her existence it enabled her to create a rich theoretical framework for those of us dealing most directly with the need to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity (Anzaldua 1981, 1987, 2009; Lunsford, 1997). However, silence does not always imply passivity, and I would be remiss in failing to address an alternative understanding of silence. To impose upon silence a quality of inferiority and nothing else is to dominate language with a one-sided, power-laden, unthirdworldfeministlike reduction of the values of speech and not speech as a primarily binary relationship. Such reductions are not only unnecessary; they are repressive.

Anzaldua calls this a tolerance for ambiguity. It is a tolerance hard earned through a kind of labor that rarely pays her bills. In order to move closer to this tolerance, Anzaldua tells us of her many challenges. They are instructive and worth quoting at length:

> There are many defense strategies that the self uses to escape the agony of inadequacy and I have used all of them. I have split from and disowned those parts of myself that others rejected. I have used

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rage to drive others away and to insulate myself against exposure. I have reciprocated with contempt for those who have roused shame in me. I have internalized rage and contempt, one part of the self (the accusatory, persecutory, judgmental) using defense strategies against another part of the self (the object of contempt). As a person, I, as a people, we, Chicanos, blame ourselves, hate ourselves, terrorize ourselves. Most of this goes on unconsciously; we only know that we are hurting, we suspect that there is something "wrong" with us, something fundamentally "wrong".

In order to escape the threat of shame or fear, one takes on a compulsive, repetitious activity as though to busy oneself, to distract oneself, to keep awareness at bay. One fixates on drinking, smoking, popping pills, acquiring friend after friend who betrays; repeating repeating, to prevent oneself from "seeing."

Held in thrall by one's obsession, by the God or goddess symbolizing that addiction, one is not empty enough to become possessed by anything or anyone else. One's attention cannot be captured by something else, one does not "see" and awareness does not happen. One remains ignorant of the fact that one is afraid, and that it is fear that holds one petrified, frozen in stone. If we can't see the face of fear in the mirror, then fear must not be there. The feeling is censored and erased before it registers in our consciousness" (1987, 45)

The symptoms of the disease described here by Anzaldua are most obvious among those of us who are least able to hide behind successes of academia and capitalism, but the willful avoidance of uncertainty isn't restricted to third-world folks, Chicana feminist writers, and people of color. The avoidance of the intimacy of uncertainty is as much (and arguably more) rooted in attempts at embodying civility through conformity to Western ideals as it is in the pathological response of non-Western "others" to having those rules of civility imposed upon them. In her detailed self-reflective analysis, Anzaldua animates her embodied knowledge about the emotion-related (fear, contempt, anger, shame, hate, pain) experience of her failure to conform.

Like Anzaldua, Trinh Minh-ha works to articulate embodied knowledge against the grain of power and conformity. She writes:

> Nothing could be more normative, more logical, and more authoritarian than, for example, the (politically) revolutionary poetry or prose that speaks of revolution in the form of commands or in the well-behaved, steeped-in-convention-language of "clarity."...*Clear* expression, often equated with *correct* expression, has long been the criterion set forth in treatises on *rhetoric,* whose aim was to order discourse so as to *persuade*. The language of Taoism and Zen, for example, which is perfectly accessible but rife with paradox does not qualify as "clear" (paradox is *"illogical"* and *"nonsensical"* to many Westerners), for its intent lies outside the realm of persuasion. The same holds true for vernacular speech, which is not acquired through institutions--schools, churches, professions, etc.--- and therefore not repressed by either grammatical rules, technical terms, or key words. Clarity as a purely rhetorical attribute serves the purpose of a classical feature in language, namely, its instrumentality. To write is to communicate, express, witness, impose, instruct, redeem, or save--at any rate to *mean* and to send out *an unambiguous message*. Writing thus reduced to a mere vehicle of thought may be *used* to orient toward a goal or to sustain an act, but it does not constitute an act in itself. This is how the division between the writer/the intellectual and the activist/the masses becomes possible. To use the language well, says the voice of literacy, cherish its classic form. Do not choose the offbeat at the cost of clarity. Obscurity is an imposition on the reader. (1989, 16)

Within this passage, ambiguity looms large, clarity and persuasion are exposed as potential sites of violence, and those of us attempting to use "the master's tools" to dismantle the master's house are warned of our complicity with oppressive and authoritarian forces. The tolerance for uncertainty as a quality and process undertaken by real people with real bodies contributes to and informs Megan Boler's pedagogy of discomfort.

Trinh Minh-ha and Marlene NourbeSe Philip on Silence and Truth

Trinh Minh-ha reminds us that, "within the context of women's speech silence has many faces… silence can only be subversive when it frees itself from the male-defined

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context of absence, lack, and fear as feminine territories….Silence as a will not to say or a will to unsay and as a language of its own has barely been explored" (1997). In making the choice to be silent, and or to embrace silence as a dynamic space rather than an absence of speaking/writing/expressing, silence can exist as a form of expression with multiple interpretations. Precisely because of those multiple potential interpretations, silence interrupts oversimplified understandings of belonging and agency. Where do I fit in if I refuse to speak? In my silence, I deny others easy access to the ability to make informed assessments about my position. Silence can, in this way, perform embodiment that enables me to create a space for myself. Differently stated, the fact that I am silent or choose not to speak, explain, or clarify doesn't imply a lack of agency or a refusal to participate. Silence and lack of clarity can be ways of actively participating by using my body as a temporarily impermeable container for complexity and uncertainty in the face of circumstances that would otherwise deny me of my complexity.

Of her poetic account of the Zong massacre, Marlene NourbeSe Philip writes: "There is no telling this story; it must be told" (189). Within this paradox lies not only NourbeSe Philip's personal call to action, but an imperative shared by many other women of color writers to enable silence to coexist with the subjectivities and stories of marginalized people and their unrecorded histories. NourbeSe Philip's contribution is her insistence that in the face of the impossibility of telling, we tell our stories nevertheless, approximating them, inching ever nearer to truths which are impossible to reach. In this way, women of color have been engaged in poststructural deconstruction since well before it had a name. The only thing certain in the paradox laid out by NourbeSe Philip is the surety that "the truth" will never be reached even in the most careful of tellings, but that we are going to write the stories

nevertheless. This is possible, in large part because of NourbeSe Philip, like Minh-ha recognizes the many functions of silence. She sees silence not only as negative or empty space, nor as a simple absence, but rather as a tentative position that some people use out of necessity which points to the possibility for truth but refuses to claim any finite understanding of truth. Minh-ha elaborates on the preceding point:

> Storytelling as literature (narrative poetry) must then be truer than history. If we rely on history to tell us what happened at a specific time and place, we can rely on the story to tell us not only what might have happened, but also what is happening at an unspecified time and place. No wonder that in old tales storytellers are very often women, witches, and prophets. The African griot and griotte are well known for being poet, storyteller, historian, musician, and magician--all at once. But why tell truth at all? Why this battle for truth and on behalf of truth? I do not remember having asked grand mother once whether the story she was telling me was true or not. Neither do I recall her asking me whether the story I was reading her was true or not. We knew we could make each other cry, laugh, or fear, but we never thought of saying to each other, "This is just a story." A story is a story. There was no need for clarification--a need many adults considered "natural" or imperative among children--for there was no such thing as "a blind acceptance of the story as literally true." Perhaps the story has become *just* a story when I have become adept at consuming truth as fact. Imagination is thus equated with falsification, and I am made to believe that if, accordingly, I am not told or do not establish in so many words what is true and what is false, I or the listener may no longer be able to differentiate fancy from fact (sic). Literature and history once were/still are stories: this does not necessarily mean that the space they form is undifferentiated, but that this space can articulate on a different set of principles, one which may be said to stand outside the hierarchical realm of facts. One the one hand, each society has its own politics of truth; on the other hand, being truthful is being in the in-between of all regimes of truth. Outside specific time, outside specialized space: "Truth embraces with it all other abstentions other than itself" (T. Hak Kyung Cha *in* Minh-ha, 1989).

Here it may also be useful to have a little context on the quote Minh-ha includes from T. Hak Kyung Cha. Cha concludes the text quoted by Minh-ha by discussing the ways that the

concept of truth attempts and fails to exist as a finite entity distinct from history, location, and subjectivity. Minh-ha allows for a space to exist around storytelling that neither claims truth nor requires it, that neither negates truth nor promotes it. She associates facts with consumption and resistance to adherence to facts as a way of breaking free from the hierarchy of fact and fiction that serves as a negation of stories and ancestral knowledge. If, as she asserts, truth and not truth are necessary primarily to those for whom truth can be used to further power-related interests, wandering through the realm of the imaginary has the potential to partially enable writers to create spaces that refuse to adhere to the regimes of truth.

Audre Lorde and NourbeSe Philip on Embodiment, History, and Language

Women of color writers doing critical embodied work use language to carry history to readers through affective identification with struggles and triumphs around language, meaning, and structure (both linguistic structures and physical structures/geographies). In *Sister Outsider,* Audre Lorde gives grammar a temporal-spatial-processual quality in her assertion that "tenses are a way of ordering chaos around time" (95). The reader of this phrase is invited to see this ordering of tenses as a process of conceptual structuring as well as a physical physical structuring. We gather our minds around the meaning of time, present, and history, and collect our words accordingly on the page. For Lorde, just as structures of grammar can make more possible in terms of understanding ourselves, our memories, and the spaces around us, structures of thought and embodiment can inform empowered notions of self.

Lorde uses the concept of "the erotic" as a way of situating a grounded sense of identity directly within the body as it interacts with and informs individuals spiritually and

politically. According to Lorde, "every oppression must corrupt or distort those various sources of power within the culture of the oppressed that can provide energy for change. For women, this has meant a suppression of the erotic as a considered source for power and information within our lives" (53). She asserts that spirituality and politics are connected through the theoretical lens of the erotic, defined as "the sensual--those physical, emotional, and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us, being shared: the passions of love, in its deepest meanings"; the erotic, Lorde tells us, "is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge" (56). Lorde's poetic definitions and descriptions of the erotic are nebulous and imprecise. In "Uses of the Erotic, The Erotic as Power", rather than pinning down the concept in a finite way, she seems to purposefully leave space for multiple interpretations of the ways that women's embodied and impassioned knowledge can serve as a site of power and resistance to oppression. The erotic is a kind of grammar that enables women, particularly women of color, to structure their identities and their very physical beings around deep rather than superficial desires rooted in body knowledge and positionality.

Digging deeper into the subject of grammar and spatiality, subversive uses of language, and language use as a tool of purposeful alliance with history and diasporic identity, NourbeSe Philip offers a history:

> In the vortex of New World slavery, the African forged new and different words, developed strategies to impress her experience on the language. The formal standard language was subverted, turned upside down, inside out, and sometimes even erased. Nouns became strangers to verbs and vice versa; tonal accentuation took the place of several words at a time; rhythms held sway. Many of these "techniques" are rooted in African languages; their collective impact on the English language would result in the latter being, at times, unrecognizable as English. Bad English. Broken English. Patois. Dialect. These words are all for the most part negative descriptions of the linguistic result of Africans attempting to

leave their impress on the language. That language now bears the living linguistic legacy of people

trying and succeeding in giving voice to their experience in the best and sometimes only way possible.

The havoc that the African wreaked upon the English language is, in fact, the metaphorical equivalent

of the havoc that coming to the New World represented for the African. Language then becomes more

than a distillation, it is the truest representation, the mirror *i-mage* of the experience.

Language of the people. Language for the people. Language by the people, honed and fashioned

through a particular history of empire and savagery. A language also nurtured and cherished on the

streets of Port of Spain, San Fernando, Boissiere Village and Sangre Grande in the look she dey and

leh we go, in the mouths of the calypsonians, Jean and Dinah, Rosita and Clementina, Mama look a

boo boo, the cuss buds, the limers, the hos (whores), the jackabats, and the market women. These are

the custodians and lovers of this strange wonderful you tink it easy jive ass kickass massa day done

Chagaramus is we own old mass pretty mass pansweet language. A more accurate description of this

language would be to call it a *demotic* variant of English. The Caribbean demotic. The excitement for

me as a writer comes in the confrontation between the formal and the demotic within the self.

(NourbeSe Philip, 1997; 49-50).

NourbeSe Philip, a Trinidadian woman living in Canada here recalls, recounts, and redresses

the history of a failed attempt at linguistic genocide. Forcing African slaves into the New

World to speak English, she commands us to recognize, was an attempt at linguistic genocide

thwarted by the ingenuity of a people who created their own colloquialisms, or demotic, for

the purpose of preserving culture, making a space of resistance, made by "the people"

dancing at on the margins of empire, maintaining an identity through a language viewed

through the lens of Eurocentric rationality as "easy jive" or "Bad English". Such narrow

views of African demotic have been addressed within our own field by Geneva Smitherman

(1977; 1988). What NourbeSe Philip adds to Smitherman's account, is a seamless integration

of dialectical form as well as linguistic and poetic representation with temporal-spatial

analysis. Whereas Smitherman models linguistic otherness primarily through the

representation of dialect, in her body of work, NourbeSe Philip adds to that a modeling of the language enacted through an embodiment of the repression of the people who speak it made possible through spatial enactments of resistance to standard grammar as well as the physical rules of the ways words are structured on pages. While this is a strategy frequently employed by practitioners of poetry, NourbeSe Philip's use of word position in her writing, most notably in *Zong* is qualitatively different from other poets insofar as it serves the purpose of spatially disorienting its reader while presenting a message, disjointed, hybridized, and more historically accurate than what would be possible through traditional structure.

Zong! is a book of poetry and prose created from words taken and rearranged from the legal case, Gregson vs. Gilbert, that determined whether or not the owners of the ship deserved to be paid insurance for their lost "cargo". NourbeSe Philip restructures the words of the case to give voice to what will never be directly say able by the slaves who were thrown over or chose to jump overboard. She takes one of the only legitimated pieces of historical documentation of the massacre and repurposes, reformats, and puts it to use in the service of maintaining the memory of the chaos, disorder, and desperation of the slaves who died in the massacre. A sample of a fairly conventionally formatted page from *Zong!* looks a bit like this:

Zong! #22

lives own their facts

of spent lives

       murder

       market

        misfortunes

&

policy

lying dead

under seas

facts own their lives

in circumstance

&

happening

in trial &

declaration

in the absolute

of rule

&

lord

in the absolute

of water

There remain as many things unsaid in this section of text (and many others throughout

Zong!) as there are things said, but in taking what has been handed down in the official

memory of the catastrophic injustice of the Zong, altering its structure, and using it to give

some semblance of voice to those who died, NourbeSe Philip purposefully writes confusion

and multiple interpretations into her poetry to reflect the impossibility of speaking for the

dead, and more specifically the impossibility of speaking for a group of people who were

killed or took their own lives at a time when their captors had absolutely no concern for the

human lives, ideas, thoughts, or potential contributions of slaves. She writes to allow for the complexities, the silences, and the lack of order of the people whose memory she seeks to conjure up and preserve. Zong! is often frustrating and challenging to read, in no small part because it is written such that the very structures of words are falling apart along with their grammar. While some might question the necessity of such extreme measures to make a point about spaces, losses of history, and historical silences, I argue that this kind of spatial enactment and restructuring of grammar and purposeful destruction and dismantling of words is both useful and necessary to the task of rethinking history, reclaiming the spaces of silence and oppression, and thinking about the present inn new ways.

NourbeSe Philip gives body to her poems in multiple ways. She is triply embodied in her use of poetic language, academic language, and performance. She talks about her words using language about bodies, her body included. She explains and analyzes her words using academic prose. And, like many poets, she performs her poetry, reading it aloud and offering her own dramatic cadences and interpretations and affording her audience entirely new understandings of the writing. On the one hand, perhaps it can be said that in the absence of this tripartite scheme for honoring her poetry and (at times) unconventional prose, few people would read it. On the other hand, it can also be said that the rest of us doing work in the humanities could benefit from taking the kind of care in our work that would enable us to read it aloud before audiences captivated by the words come to life, and to care so much that we write about and analyze our own written constructions of self and other, and to invite continued self-reflection and deeper critique as well as the critique and reflection of our audience. Using the multiple levels of embodiment, reflection, and critique NourbeSe Philip employs to think about the academic writing we're doing in academia would offer

tremendous benefit to students and academics who study and teach writing. How much could we learn by committing to bring our writing to life, to perform our writing, not solely to conduct verbatim readings of convention papers and presentations, but for the purpose of bringing them to our audience in a physical way, in a way that might enable deeper identification with our perspective and facilitate action on behalf of the needs of those we are serving with our academic work?

Zora Neale Hurston and NourbeSe Philip on Fiction and Telling Lies

According to NourbeSe Philip "Fiction is about telling lies, but you must be scathingly honest in those lies" (1998, 141). Autoethnography, or, an exploration of the self done for the purpose of finding truths or deeper understandings about the culture in which one is embedded is a helpful task for those of us wishing to alter oppressive realities by amplifying the voices of the oppressed and also of analyzing our complicity with systems of oppression. Somewhat challengingly, autoethnography, insofar as it requires us to construct something autobiographical about ourselves, also requires us to find some point of realness from which to begin. The question "who am I to write" that I propose in chapter four becomes, "If I am to write about a self, which elements of selfhood should I write about" and "Which understanding of self can enter into the space I'm writing"? Within the realm of the autobiographical, questions of authenticity loom large. According to Timothy Adams, in his analysis of the notion of truth in works of autobiography, what we should seek out in tales about selves, "is not literal accuracy but personal authenticity… [because] narrative truth and personal myth are more telling than literal fidelity" (1990). While I agree with Adams that more is often revealed in the choice to misrepresent the truth than can be revealed with attempts to represent some sort of absolute truth, for anyone who sees themselves as a

complex and dynamic human, insofar as the self is always shifting, the idea of striving for authenticity is problematic. Arguably, more complex ways of identifying involve not authenticity, but rather situating oneself with a statement of position and desire. Rather than simply say, "I am authentically X", there is more power in following an alternative formula that asserts, "I stand here in location X, presently inhabiting qualities A, B, C, because of socio-historical events D, E, and F, and I have the desire to make the following fiction a future possibility by doing things G, H, and I". This, I argue, is a far more fruitful exercise than striving for either truth or authenticity, and it is the point of entry into critical embodied writing.

If the truth you're faced with, the reality you're faced with doesn't resonate with you, what do you do to align the version of the truth you would like to see with the version of the truth in front of you? Lies can play a central role in the construction of emancipatory realities. To an academia populated mostly by privileged white-identified people unfamiliar with traditions of questioning privilege, the idea of telling lies stands in opposition to the goal of truth-telling that has so long characterized goals of legitimacy and objective truth. For those of us who want alternatives to objective truths that negate us, "telling lies" is a longstanding and transgressive practice. "On lies, secrets, and silence" (Adrienne Rich). The ability to alter future realities and construct meaning through the practice of "telling lies" is an African American storytelling tradition perhaps most famously explicitly employed by Zora Neale Hurston. While Hurston's work speaks to the great need for and reliance on storytelling that can elide the boundaries between nonfiction and fiction within the African American community, Hurston herself was less concerned with creating a genre that could empower her people and more interested in simply valuing the oral traditions of that

community (Ward, 2012). Hurston herself is been frequently accused of telling autobiographical lies, misrepresenting truths, and failing to establish an academically legitimate representation of herself. In *Of Mules and Men,* she offers up a rich series of "lies" told by the men and women of her hometown, most of which work to empower the tellers through the power over naming, claiming, and making meaning through creative narrative. For example, in one such "lie" a woman explains the power dynamics between men and women. It is a long and complicated tale about God and the devil and the various powers of men and women. The moral of the story is, while men may have the power of brute force, women have the power of intellect and control (Hurston, 1978). The significance of this particular telling, is that it restructures notions of power between women and men an in the process of restructuring, it alters the contours of women's bodies and agency. The tale is folklore animated by the intention to upend simplified notions of power and oppression. It relies on the magic of fiction--the ability to create unencumbered by the limitations of reality--to conjure up new ways of embodiment. While writers employing critical embodied writing will often use methods related to autoethnography, it is here at the nexus of reality and possibility, that it makes its greatest departure from autoethnography. In allowing for spaces to be molded around creative constructions of 'reality', rather than relying on traditional notions of objectivity, validity, and legitimacy, critical embodied writing recognizes the importance of the imaginary in the construction of spaces and ways of embodiment. If we are trying to make new spaces possible, we must first imagine them from our complex and shifting sense of embodied identification with our location in history and present. If historical spaces, identifications, and ways of understanding language and writing have been constructed through the prism of white supremacy--and arguably, they have been--then we

need ways of understanding that know how to recognize and resist white supremacist frameworks.

A critically embodied experiential essay on power and agency in the University of Minnesota's Writing Studies Graduate Program

Earlier I mentioned a template for considering one's position and identity that circumnavigates the need to construct a static and authentic self. That formula was as follows: "I stand here in location X, presently inhabiting qualities A, B, C, because of socio-historical events D, E, and F, and I have the desire to make the following fiction a future possibility by doing things G, H, and I". I will begin the final section of this chapter by using this construction because I think it is a useful way of contextualizing the complexities of identification, positionality, and space. I don't advocate strict (or even any) adherence to formulaic ways of writing but I do think that writing in ways that purposefully bring the body and embodiment into the text need somehow to situate the body as a historical and spatial process, as a point of entry into this particular writing I will follow the formula.

I write this from Gainesville, Florida, approximately 1500 miles away from the Writing Studies Department at the University of Minnesota. Presently, although I am anxious as I write--because I am almost always anxious when I write--I'm a reasonably peaceful, privileged, home-owning, bi-racial, mother of one, comfortably sitting on the floor in my son's playroom which is filled with toys, most of which will end up in a landfill, and most of which were purchased by either my own white upper middle class parents or the white upper middle class parents of my husband. Brown as I am, with the exception of a few years of intense childhood turbulence/geographical upheaval, I've been riding the privilege wagon of my white family and their ancestors for more than 30 years. That said, because I am brown, and because I grew up brown in a town of white and black-identified folks deeply steeped in

embodiments and enactments of racism, and because I always perceived myself as sharing in and feeling a bit tortured by at least some of the longstanding material and psychological vulnerabilities of brown and black people, I am writing this paper in the service of ameliorating the many traces of America's racial trauma that limit the opportunities and access of people of color to power and decision-making. And because I could never do math, and because I was always verbally and theoretically inclined, I seek to alter that history through the use of writing and theory. I want to make possible a future where people of a variety of colors, genders, and economic statuses have the opportunity to democratically decide how the world around them is going to look and feel in a sort of ongoing and dynamic way.

I didn't arrive at the University of Minnesota with this understanding of myself. Moreover, as I write, the understanding shifts. By the time this chapter is complete, I will have changed in ways that won't be clear to me until well after I have "finished" writing it. More on that later… For now, my goal is to provide a critically embodied written account of my writing of the University of Minnesota Writing Studies' Plan B paper which was a requirement for earning an M.A. in Writing Studies. I will suggest that this paper was an early attempt at theorizing myself within the framework of critical embodied writing that I had yet to create. The paper, it should be added, felt like a failure. The process of writing the paper was painful and the feelings I associate with writing from that time have left lasting traces on my writing processes and on my shifting understanding of myself as a writer. Although the paper was technically completed, it felt entirely incomplete. For a person who has learned to view successful writing as "completed" writing (as, arguably, many if not most of us have), my Plan B paper was a failure. For a person who has wondered if I have

deserved the titles I've "earned", receiving an M.A. for a paper that felt like a failure only deepened my suspicion that I was coasting on pity and affirmative action. I had to get okay with these feelings of failure, ineptitude, inadequacy, and lack-of-deserving in order to continue working on the Ph.D. Moreover, I had to find a way of integrating a sense of self and purpose into the fragments of my experience. As an informal case study in critical embodied writing, by piecing together notes recorded in my own records and journals as well as an analysis of the Plan B document itself I trace structures and ruptures in the coherency of the experience that led up to the writing of the paper, the process of writing, and what I've created in its aftermath for the purpose of using awareness of my own experience to inform the labor of other students and people who may share some of my experiences, needs, and ways identifying.

It seems improbable that after 6 or 7 years in an academic community, I still see myself as very much on the outside of it. Perhaps if I had performed more skillful contortions, spent less time publicly crying at socially inappropriate moments and more time asking the right questions in various office hours, I could more convincingly perform the role of 'competent young researcher'. I have often wondered why I stayed for so long and where I thought I was going. At some level, I knew I didn't want to make a career of subjecting my ideas to the approval or disapproval of invisible authorities. I saw friend's revise-and-resubmit letters and their rejection letters and I understood that in order to play that game, one had to develop a thick skin. My skin, having been thickened in so many other ways, did not want to be any thicker.

Had academia been about friendly sharing of epiphanies and less about building a name for one's ideas, I would have felt more of a sense of belonging and less of a sense that I

was ambivalently dragging my body onto campus. Eventually I realized that sticking around

as a sort of perpetual outsider (even if only in my own mind) wasn't working for me.

Somewhere around the time of this realization, I received an email from one of my peers in

the Writing Studies Department who wrote to inform me that the department would be

creating a diversity statement, that this particular student was leading this effort with a few

other graduate students, and that it was decided that I would write the section on race—

presumably because I was the most visible minority in the department. I attempted to

tactfully voice my frustration at this proposition coming from a white person who, from what

I could tell, was far more concerned with claiming to have initiated the making of a

departmental diversity statement than he was with shifting the way the department thought

and acted in relation to difference. In the absence of real change in terms of the departments'

diversity status—including rethinking the mandatory readings on the doctoral exam list

which, in their entirety, included a handful of scholars of color (minus a finger or two), and

in the absence of considering how diversity played a role in the actual coursework, hiring and

maintenance of an all-white faculty, and in the absence of consideration of the departmental

identity as indicated by the focus of the faculty's scholarship—in what ways was this

statement going to truly benefit anyone? I voiced all of the above to the departmental

diversity committee and my concerns didn't resonate with them. They felt that having a

statement was an act of solidarity with "diverse" folks in and of itself. I marveled at the

difference between my reading of the situation and theirs. How could my understanding of

the context behind this statement have been so extremely different? I felt inadequate to the

task of continuing to work with these people in this environment. I also knew that they were

differently informed than I was. If, contrary to my intuition, these folks actually wanted to

make change and truly believed that the way of going about it was to make a statement, and if I wanted to create something with them, I had to understand more about their position and their connection to writing this document.

I took my constellation of concerns of inadequacy and feelings of difference to my advisor and he kindly told me that he thought many if not most people felt somewhat inadequate and different in graduate school. It was a nice thing to say, a generous thing to say even, and I tried to be comforted by it. However, I realized that while it was important to recognize the ways that his statement was true, it was equally important to recognize the differences between the historical conditions that come to structure emotions like inadequacy and feelings of otherness. The differences between those conditions and my location in relationship to the ability to shift those conditions--both inside and outside of the academy-- was contributing to feelings of inadequacy in me that were quite different than the feelings of inadequacy other people may have been feeling. My conditions were differently constructed and they constrained me and structured my participation in the department in different ways. In the case of folks committed to participating in the habits, rituals, and power relations of academia, perhaps a diversity statement was the first step toward making change. Statements, after all, have power, right?

In my own case, I grew up in a school system that was de facto desegregated a just a few years prior to my first year of kindergarten. Many of my teachers were opposed to having to teach black students and they made no effort at pretending otherwise. I witnessed black students being treated differently from their white peers in many of my classes, placed at separate tables, eagerly raising their hands to answer questions and never being called on. I only rebelled against this structural inequity once, and, because my rebellion met with swift

and decisive resistance, I learned that my agency was a problem to be dealt with rather than a skill to be cultivated. During a first or second grade language-arts assignment, our teacher asked to write a single sentence stating an object that we could relate to and to draw a picture of it. I wrote: "I feel like a piece of black trash" and I drew a piece of black trash. In retrospect, I certainly wasn't trying to start a race riot at my elementary school and certainly didn't have any well thought out revolutionary agenda. I don't even remember what inspired that particular moment of literary resistance. In my recollection I wrote what I wrote in the spirit of anger and refusal to participate. Upon receipt of my assignment, my teacher sent me to the principal's office where I was asked some questions that I can no longer remember and I was informed that I shouldn't disrupt class in that way in the future. I did as I was told.

While I don't have empirical evidence of any of the above information, presumably, in part, as a result of my 13 years of public school in the racist rural South, I override a deeply internalized and visceral sense of self-disgust, inadequacy, and incompetence every time I attempt to do something "smart". The loss of empirical evidence over time and the subsequent erasure of the validity of minority experiences of racially related oppression (and presumably many other kinds of systematic oppression), like the loss of any history, is just one of the many violences that happens when vulnerable students are placed in a power structure controlled by historically and socially ignorant people (Delpit, 1988). In using writing to conjure a dynamic space for third world women, or women of color, or others of all kinds, I don't want to erase the normative perspective. I also don't want to implicate individual people who, in their lack of awareness of the histories, discourses, and positions of "others", limit the conditions of possibility for recognizing oppression and doing something about it. Rather, I am making a call to recognize the significance of the offerings of "others"

as a population that, by necessity exist not as static entities but as a process of shifting identification and positionality, and in so doing, to shift practices of erasure and marginalization.

The particularities of the dynamic between those who choose to forget and/or to ignore oppression and those who are physically forced to remember are historically situated, rooted in memory through language practices, rooted in locations where particular literate practices are considered legitimate and worthy of attention, and rooted in actual physical bodies, their aversions and desires. The ability to theorize, to give voice to, and do something about experiences of oppression has everything to do with literacies, rhetoric, and writing. Returning for a moment to the departmental diversity statement, perhaps the best way of working with those folks, was for me to use my initial aversion to their proposed statement as a point of entry into the restructuring of the department--as a conceptual entity, if nothing else.

Within the department, I have several times been faced with the question, "What does race/difference have to do with writing?". I realize that the only way a person can reasonably ask that question is if they have never been told that their language, the ways they choose to/are able to use it, and the very structure of their thought isn't good enough, is unintelligible, and/or needs to be corrected or to find an audience elsewhere. The relationship between race and language or difference and language isn't easy to articulate, and, as I have argued throughout this chapter, there is tremendous informative power inherent to the complexity. The simplest explanation I can give is as follows: Language cannot be used in a neutral manner and any time we use language, writing, and literacy practices, we choose to do so either to build alternatives to a history of trauma and oppression or to reinscribe that

trauma. Sometimes this decision is subconsciously made. Sometimes the decision is conscious. I advocate for processes and ways of thinking that bring greater consciousness to the decisions all writers make in our writing--particularly writers who have historically been marginalized.

The presence of bodies forced to remember and the stories that people inhabiting those bodies have to tell about their relationship to language and power hold the potential for a radical rethinking of language use that can make more just and humane communication possible. In order to take seriously the various discursive and literary offerings of subjugated people, those of us in power (that are clinging to the margins of power) have to dialogically engage with the frustration of taking seriously stories that don't follow dominant conventions, patterns of speaking, or "logical" organization because those conventions, patterns, and logics of rationality were defined in conditions of exclusion and oppression. Truly valuing this dynamism and can be painful, uncomfortable, and unsettling. Bringing that unsettling to the dominant, the correct, the standard, and the "clearest" way of doing writing is one of the most valuable kinds of labor that those of us whose language and ways of thinking differ from historically constructed norms have to offer.

I might say that Plan B paper was born of a lack of preparation. I could also say that it was the result of my own lack of clarity with regard to what the heck I was trying to do. I was not, I don't think, as clear on what I was doing in my work as other students seemed to be, and my arrival in the department was based less on an obvious intellectual trajectory and more on the intersection of a variety of factors including uncertainty, genuine interest, and a feeling of desperation. In no small part, it can be said that I found the department of Writing Studies at the University of Minnesota because I was trying to figure out a way of making

money without having to know much about math. I'm terrible at math and I can't count much higher than five before I start getting confused and upset. A friend of mine told me that a mutual acquaintance was a technical writer and that she made reasonable money doing it. I wanted to understand more about technical writing and how I might use it to get paid but I was resistant to the idea of writing manuals (as that's what I imagined technical writers did). Becoming a technical writer seemed a lot like selling out and yet, I was terrified of continuing to clean fryers and smiling while I sold things to people with way more money and power than I had. I happened to be visiting my father in Minnesota and I meandered over to the UofM campus to talk to Bernadette Longo about the program.

As I waited for Dr. Longo on a bench at the top of the stairs in the now bulldozed Wesbrook Hall, I chanced upon a discussion with a former graduate student (who has subsequently graduated with a PhD) and a former faculty member. The conversation was heated, so much so, that I questioned my decision to continue with my meeting. The former faculty member was telling the graduate student that if he had issues with how the program was run, he should express that sentiment to the faculty and not to incoming graduate students. I clearly lacked the context to understand what was going on. Perhaps these two people weren't even affiliated with the department, I told myself. As I later found out, the context behind that conversation involved a group of graduate students seeking to create an explicit departmental identity in the wake confusions over the academic and intellectual priorities of the newly formed "Writing Studies Department".

I decided not to think too much of the conversation I had overheard because I found Dr. Longo to be kind, welcoming, and encouraging during our meeting. When I asked her what I might read to get a better feel for the department, she suggested her book Spurious

Coin: A History of Science, Management, and Technical Writing and an article by Stephen B. Katz entitled "The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and the Holocaust". Both works expressed a quality of resistance that resonated with my own identification with finding ways of resisting injustice that made me feel like maybe I could carve a space out of the field of "Technical Writing" for myself, not a career writing manuals, but one trading in ideas. So began my efforts to write myself into the field of Writing Studies.

Although I wasn't fully cognizant of the embarrassing implications of what I was doing at the time, I wrote an application essay that exploited emotional appeals to white guilt and an encomium to how sincerely I cared about technical writing. Then I crossed my fingers, and I waited for the reaction to my sentimental story with baited breath. Had my essay said what was really on my mind at the time—that I hoped to become a graduate student so I could stop thinking about what I was going to do with my life and pretend that I already knew for a few years—I doubt I would have been accepted into the program. Presumably, in no small part as a result of the fact that I was able to get a diversity fellowship from outside of the department, I was accepted into the program.

After starting the program, I maintained my focus on technical writing for just long enough to realize that there weren't many Steven B. Katzes in the field. I realized that many of the studies being done by technical writers were being conducted in the service of a symbiotic relationship between technical writing and corporate interests. I cynically lamented my increasing perception that much of the work in Technical Writing was done in defiance of the information presented the Katz article that had excited me so much. In drawing attention to this, I don't mean to discredit the intelligence or hard work of members of the

field whose work is easily coopted to facilitate the violence of capitalism, nor do I wish to deny the utility of their work in performing that service in the most clear and efficient way possible. I mainly want to investigate how all of the above informed my understanding of academic work as disembodying and disorienting.

I began this work by talking about the ghetto and the fact that Basic Writing was (and still is) perceived as a kind of ghetto. What kind of ghetto was I working in at my office in Nolte Hall? No one from any other ghetto would claim me as a member—because I was raised in a rural,white, lower middle class, post-agricultural neighborhood with white parents to feed me and pay for the undergraduate education that was supposed to prepare me for independence. Still, many years after moving away, I was the ghetto in Nolte Hall, or so it felt. I had conferred upon myself a kind of geographical identity by virtue of my academic choices. Me, studying my ghetto studies, prodding through the margins of the academy, doing research without any semblance of acceptable method—I was, in this way, the ghetto and the outside and the other that couldn't get a foothold in traditional academic discourse and opted instead to cling to the margins. Was this experience any less valuable for me than for folks learning to use acceptable methods operating in a position of centrality within the field? Others may disagree but I think not. For me, there was sustenance and growth to be had outside of the purported center of the University. But did other people of color scholars find the same sustenance? In what ways have other people of color been marginalized in American Universities and what are they doing to resist this marginalization? And more specifically, what is the relationship between language and the sense of being expelled

to the margins and how are scholars of color navigating that relationship in productive ways?

In an article entitled, "Resisting from the Margins: The Coping Strategies of Black Women and Other Women of Color Faculty Members at a Research University", Gloria Thomas and Carol Hollenshead explore the struggles of women of color in the context of a research university by surveying the entire faculty. The women of color who returned the university-wide survey, they suggest, claim the margins for themselves not as a tragic space but as a site of resistance and as a place where resisting identities can take shape. Nevertheless, these women still faced challenges and conflicts to which their white peers were oblivious. Many of these challenges were language-based. One women expressed frustration and ultimately, "resistance to the unwritten rule that academics should write primarily for academic audiences", claiming that although she perceived her work as academically rigorous, she preferred to create writing that a non-academic audience could relate to (2001, 172-73). The style of the writing alone created a self-perceived rift between this particular scholar and her white colleagues who would likely never think to write in a way that would be fully accessible to a non-academic audience. It is interesting to note that this particular scholar never mentioned overt resistance to her style of writing. The simple perception of being an outsider based on one's chosen audience is a burden of double consciousness—of having to be preemptively aware of the threat of one's difference to one's peers and career.

Here I will analyze my own train wreck of a Master's thesis through the lens of embodied writing and present a couple of hypotheses about my failures and what can be gleaned from them. My ultimate questions in revisiting my Plan B paper are as follows: What

was I doing in my failed paper? What did I contribute to the university in my writing of the Plan B paper? And lastly, what did my process and product offer to the subsequent understanding of critical embodied writing that I am developing here?.

I cried throughout the entirety of my Master's defense. Why did I cry? There were several reasons but the biggest one, the one that has been most helpful in forming my understanding of the needs of many of my students of color and non-traditional students is this: unlike my peers, I didn't feel any sense of belonging over the space I was in when I entered graduate school and I was excessively vulnerable for this reason. Other people took notes and organized them into tidy files. I highlighted almost every single line of books like James Berlin's Rhetoric and Reality, and Susan Crowley's Composition in the University--not that it did me a whole heap of good. Other people had a plan for both their careers and their writing. They made outlines for their writing and it fit within the context of a larger project. What was my larger project? I didn't know. I had no clue, in fact. I cared about writing but felt increasingly alienated from my sense of voice and from my body in my own writing. Simultaneously, strangely, I was feeling an increasing sense of familiarity with the physical landscape. I knew the names of so many of the buildings and how to arrive at point A from point B on campus and how to understand the various quirks I saw around me on campus. The ice cream cone I one day stumbled upon, soft serve smashed eye-level against the bricks of Boynton Hall, cone sticking out the side of a freezing building in the middle of the winter--that was my ice cream cone too, my absurd fusing of a frivolously sweet dessert object to the ice cold brick walls of the academy.

In this section, I will review some of the specific elements of my Plan B paper in an attempt to make sense of what was, in my own eyes, a failure in terms of offering writing that

successfully added something clear and precise to the field. I write about the conventions I followed, my embodied and affective rationale in writing, and the unfinished product that resulted. I conclude by briefly entering the realm of fiction to imagine a different outcome and an alternative interpretation of the Plan B paper. In order to write this section, I have cobbled together notes used to create the Plan B paper, the "final" paper itself, as well as journal entries about the process of writing that were informally created and recorded (as opposed to being taken for the purpose of using them in future academic work). Using these three artifacts--notes, the paper itself, and journal entries, I make sense of what went "wrong" in the paper and I intervene in my former understanding of the paper as a "failure" in order to understand it as part of a personal process of theory-building. In a way, then, this is a sort of informal autoethnographic case study that took place from the time I started writing the paper to the present moment. I situate this informal autoethnographic case study within the realm of critical embodied writing because it pays attention to the ways I was attempting to create new spaces of possibility for myself and others, the ways I refused or was unable to conform to conventions and in my refusal/inability performed a kind of resistance which culminated in a painful defense of the paper. Additionally, I use the imaginary/fiction to envision the possibilities that could have resulted from a clearer understanding of what was going on in my writing and in my affective response to the process of writing and defending the paper. I do this with the hope of offering something to future writing teachers who may encounter disorientation in student writing.

If there's one positive thing I can say for sure about my Plan B paper, it's that it pays homage to the structural conventions of academic argumentation. I tried very hard in the paper to conform to structural standards of academic argumentation as I understood them at

the time. I foreground some context for the novel contribution I wish to make in the paper by aligning myself with "blues people", who, I claim, are a people whose survival and celebration has depended (and continues to depend) upon their ability to respond to dehumanizing isolation with song. The song itself is always changing, responding to, and acting to shape the society. Baraka's history of the blues is a history of a people who have used song to write themselves into the history of America and in so doing, have actively worked to reshape the malformed structure of the country. Although I fail to bring this to the forefront of my argument, I use the notion of song as a metaphor for writing throughout the paper. I continue my argument by responding to the need for a theoretical framework and I attempt to contextualize the theoretical framework within the realm of the personal: The theoretical theme that unites this paper is a view of teaching writing within the context of difference as an improvisational practice based on the desire to, in the words of Cornel West, "change and be changed". I identify a point of exigency, the university is deformed and in need of change, and then I suggest that some folks are participating in this change, through the collective efforts of a growing band of academic tricksters however, and assert that potentially, a re-formation might be in process.

It is at this point that the paper sort of falls apart. I attempt to fit myself into a pre existing conversation, but I do so using terms diluted by overuse and discourse "difference". I perform the academic convention of differentiating my position from others in the field and take Linda Flower and Catherine Pendergrast to task for defining difference through the lens of white normativity, but my critique is confusing and unclear. Ultimately, I fail to clarify or define the term difference in a way that's useful to my own argument. I then try to create a position for myself that critiques the historical boundaries of access and exclusion in

academic contexts but I do so in ways that are conceptually abstract and rely on a series of unpacked metaphors and metonymy. It is clear to me by this point in the paper, as a retrospective reader of my own former writing, that I am desperately clinging to conventions of academic paper-writing without having much mooring.

I entered myself into the paper in explicit ways as an afterthought. Throughout the paper, there are traces of me, practically begging to focus on myself. For months, I was obsessed with situating myself in the paper and into the university. Questions I sought to answer, as indicated in my notes, included: where do I belong? Who am I working with? Whose work isn't working for me? What kinds of terms am I concerned with and what kinds of language is being used to talk about my concerns? In spite of these questions about me, I failed/refused to ask them directly and I was subsequently lost in my own paper.

The profound epiphany I was pointing toward was that I was lost in my own paper. I use the words disorient or disorientation a total of 11 times in a 30 page paper. The theme weighed heavily in my work at the time. In retrospect, I realize that I was trying to turn disorientation into a value by calling it improvisation. Rather than seeing this disorientation as undermining my authority, I have come to think of what I'm doing in my reading, writing and pedagogy as improvisation on the theme of change. The goal of using this theme of change was to create a space for people of color (aka, myself) in writing and at the university. I was trying to do work on behalf of a group of vulnerable people who stood in metaphorically as me. The paper reads as if I wanted to say, "I have needs here. I don't know where I fit in" but felt that the only legitimate way of saying this was to do so on behalf of others. I wasted a lot of time wanting to exist in the paper and simultaneously trying not to

write about myself too much for fear of failing to be legitimate or sounding whiny and amateurish.

In fearing my position as a novice and outsider, I wrote a paper that didn't make much sense to me and didn't have much to offer other people either. Imagine a long road with numerous intersections and a series of arbitrary signs posted at random intervals: a yield sign with nothing to yield to, a stop sign appearing from nowhere, a children at play sign in the middle of the desert, an airport sign with no airport in sight. This was my paper. I knew that the signs representing legitimate scholarship were supposed to be there, but I used them to point to realities without a cohesive context. Rather than trying to understand my own personal disorientation, I sought to make some sort of theory about it that addressed the needs of other folks because I thought that's what academic people did.

Shortly before writing the paper, I had completed a course on imperialism. In several journal entries, I mused about how I was dressing up as a legitimate scholar much like Fanon's colonial subjects who adopted colonial garb in an attempt to situate themselves higher up the economic hierarchy through mimicry. If I could successfully mimic the moves I thought scholars already recognized for their legitimacy were making, I thought I would be able to become like them. Had I not been so resistant to method, I would have used method to conform. My recorded notes at the time assert that method itself felt overbearing at the time, as if using a method to put something under a microscope was commensurate with putting myself under someone else's microscope. I wanted to claim my own methods, to be the one putting myself and all of my disorientation under my own microscope. I found my first two years of graduate school to be extremely disorienting, I write. And indeed I did.

Most of the paper can be read through the lens of disorientation and attempts to find a location/firm ground from which to make a cogent point. I included a section in the paper on the concept of asymmetrical reciprocity and gift giving. While I understood the concepts as broadly useful, I included them solely because a member of my committee seemed to recognize that I wasn't sure how to proceed with the paper and suggested I look to Iris Marion Young's ideas as a way to structure an argument. Upon review of the Plan B paper, this section in particular, reads awkwardly. Asymmetrical reciprocity and gift giving have been forced into the paper like a hamburger into an ice cream sandwich. There's a greasiness to the section. The use of Young's ideas added substance in a way that was texturally awkward and poorly integrated. Elements of logic like claims and warrants are present but the connections made between the two, as in the arguments of a con artist or a sophist, are slippery and overly wordy.

My Plan B paper was, ostensibly, about improvisation, but my understanding of the contributions of the concept of improvisation to the field remained as unfinished as the paper itself. Improvisation exists metonymically throughout the paper, standing in for every kind of agency that a marginalized person could possibly take to gain footing on foreign ground. I use improvisation as way of understanding how to create conceptual space in an ever changing mind, and physical space in an ever changing material world. I was unable to spit this out in the pages of my Plan B paper, and I was unable to dissect the relationship between the part (improvisation) to the whole (black/people of color agency) but the painful act of writing the paper and revisiting it over time has enabled me to have a place to stand in writing this dissertation. Most of I wanted to say in the Plan B paper can be found in the various chapters here.

The Plan B paper was unfinished. It was a step in the process that I needed in order to name, to pin down a clear argument. Of course, such naming is a violence and an oversimplification. Just as the Plan B paper remains in process (even if only in my own head), this dissertation does the same thing. The Plan B project was a moldable landscape, but as I was writing it, I thought it was supposed to be a permanent monument to finite knowledge. Only in revisiting the Plan B paper have I been able to find stability in the disorientation of writing. This dissertation is a moldable landscape and because of my "failed" Plan B paper, I am able to accept it as such. Rather than feeling disoriented by the idea that this, too, will remain unfinished, I feel emboldened by it. It has only been in accepting the malleability and unfinished nature of all writing that I have truly felt able to write anything at all.

Arguably, the Plan B paper itself served my own selfish scholarly needs far more than it contributed to knowledge within the field. I certainly couldn't have published it, and, even in a small crowd of people who knew me, I didn't successfully pull off a performance of having created a finished paper with a clear argument. I cried at the defense because I was defending something so vulnerable in it's lack of completion. In some ways this vulnerable something was the paper, and in other ways, it was me, myself. What if, I wonder, I had known what I was doing--that I was attempting to write a space for myself in the Plan B paper--would I still have felt so lacking in footing and so defenseless? Were I to return to that Masters defense from my current position of understanding, this is how I would have introduced the paper:

This Plan B paper is a necessary disaster. It is a work of mimicry in which I attempt to dress up as a theorist by speaking to the words and arguments of other theorists, by using

the formal conventions of an academic argument, and by attempting to offer something novel. As I was writing, I was unaware of the profundity of my need to exist in the paper, to exist in the university, and to exist within the field. Only in revisiting the writing have I realized that everything I have done in this paper points to an unfulfilled desire. I use improvisation to point to the desire to work from a method named, claimed, and inhabited as a space of vulnerability, possibility, and the trauma of marginalization. I seek, in the subtext, to give value and agency to that moment when suddenly one's own marginalized subjectivity is in the spotlight and given the opportunity to break free from structure--but only to a limited extent through improvisation.

The value of the paper exists less so in the words themselves and more so in my reflection of them. I won't know this as I defend myself here today, but I will come to understand over the next five years that the value of this paper is aimed at serving my own needs as a person on the outside wishing to be more on the inside as well as the needs of people with whom I identify. I have written a paper for myself, on behalf of a concept I don't yet fully understand. Although in many ways it is incomplete, it fully represents the discomfort and uncertainty that animates the thinking I have done in order to try to take part in the academic knowledge being constructed within the field.

Please accept me in my incompleteness and give me the stamp of approval that will enable me to continue to formally reflect upon my interests and upon the needs of marginalized people, because, try as we might to offer concrete ideas in academia, all of our ideas are on shaky ground. It is only adherence to convention and agreed-upon structure that enables us to pretend otherwise. Moreover, in the future, please see a bit of me in your future students as they struggle to write themselves into their papers sideways, covertly, desperately

trying to hide their needs behind legitimate methodology, sensible transitions, and cogent participation in and novel contribution to an academic argument.

To the folks in attendance here at this defense today, I hope that you'll take what you are about to witness during this defense--my account of uncertainty and my current embodiment of physical discomfort, embarrassment, shame, tears--and feel along with me some of the realities of the outsider trying to write their way into a world that has boundaries and conventions she doesn't fully understand using a body/mind that is very much in process and has been overwhelmed to the point of shutting down. The paper is unfinished because I could write no more without taking the necessary time to walk away from it. I ask that you take this moment to witness together with me the point at which the writer can no longer make sense of herself within her writing. As you sit beside me, as you sit across from me, as you sit near me in this very tiny room and listen to me choking on my replies as you question my logic, as you hear me attempting to hide the fact that I am gasping for air, and as you watch me shaking in my desire to bring my emotions under control, know that this is too what it means to write at the university. All of this discomfort belongs here in the department of Writing Studies. Thank you for witnessing it. I can't assure you that it is taking us somewhere brilliant, but I can assure you that it is taking us to a space of greater inclusion.

Chapter 5: What spaces of identification are possible for students as they investigate and critique the norm?

The silent majority has spoken. They tell me we're going to make America great again. They tell me the white working class has suffered under crippling oppression for far too long, and judging from their votes, they seem to think that the best way to better their circumstances is through identification with vitriol, misogyny, racism, and greed. If people of color thought we were alone in navigating the trauma and confusion of the embodiment of a history of race, language, and power, we were wrong. All these poor and working class white people were feeling it too, in their own way. My undocumented worker colleagues and I, and my people of color community who need government assistance because no one will hire us, and our white allies, and our queer bathrooms, and my black president have been oppressing these hard-working white people, they say. So they were forced to find themselves a great leader who spoke to their pain and their marginalization and their confusion.

Racial trauma is real, apparently also for white folks, albeit in some fairly different ways. We need to take it seriously in all of its many forms. Economic oppression is real too. White people are under siege, they say, and in a way, I believe them. Working class people of every color have long been marginalized and threatened by the violence of America's economic system. This, in conjunction with the fact that the very construct of whiteness is under attack, has caused nearly half of our voting citizens to lift a racist, misogynist, greedy xenophobe into our country's highest position of power. Yet, as I've been arguing throughout this paper, although the trauma, confusion, and potential for suffering rooted in the social constructs of race and racism are often obscured by a willful refusal to use our

communicative technologies toward just ends, we do have the rhetorical technology to build new and complex identifications. Stereotypical understandings of race, gender, and class have kept us in a place where white racism routinely galvanizes white people around acting against their best financial interests while the logic of white supremacy continues to neglect the needs of people of color.

White folks have been duped by calls to justice coming from a man who has used their tax dollars to build tall buildings and golf courses. I want to say to them, "You ignorant jackasses. You made the irrational decision to support this smarmy shyster and you think he has your back because he spoke to the only two emotions you've been taught to understand: fear and anger. Get with the program. Rich white guys don't give two poops about helping your redneck self. They just want to keep you angry and pointing your finger in the wrong direction at people of color, single-mothers, baby killers, welfare queens, Mexican "criminals", black "criminals", Muslim "criminals". How can you continue to be persuaded by all this fiction?" But my urge to call names and get angry is tempered by a more nuanced understanding afforded to me by the complex rationale and literary/rhetorical traditions of my people. Black feminists and women of color feminists have some ideas that America needs to hear right now.

It's important to remember that white working-class undereducated people were not the only ones who voted for Donald Trump. These folks were supported by many members of the rest of the Republican Party who appreciate the logic of conservatism (forget about the past, I want to keep all of my hard earned dollars, everyone else needs to work their way out of poverty even though my economic and social philosophy is designed to make it impossible for them to do so) so much that they were willing to overlook the moral failings of President

Elect Trump. This "educated" group of Trump supporters is as troubling as, if not more troubling than the masses of undereducated Trump supporters because they are less willing to admit to their adherence to white supremacy. While the working class Trump supporter is frothing at the mouth with excitement at the opportunity to finally feel heard and supported, the educated and "respectable" Trump supporter profits from their undereducated counterparts' support for policies that have repeatedly erased the needs of all working class people--people of color and white people alike.

In order to understand the dynamics that led to our current political and social situation in America, we need theories of difference that address different ways of being, seeing, and knowing. As I have advocated throughout this project, we need to include the complexity of emotion within the realm of difference, defined as all that lies outside of dominant norms in terms of non-normative embodiment, non-normative ways of thinking about space and time, and non-normative approaches to the ways our affective responses and emotional conditioning motivate us to adopt certain perspectives and arguments while standing in opposition to others. Difference within the realm of affect and emotion lies at the foundation of our ability to make decisions and to make meaning, and to understand and work with the meaning others have made. If we, as scholars and teachers are unfamiliar with the nuances of our affective responses and the plethora of possible emotions we may embody, we are limited in our ability to address the complexities of what drives our students and our society to believe what they/it believes. If we don't fully know the depths and breadths of our own anger, shame, rage, fear, we can't possibly recognize the ways these emotions are working through our students and our society and we certainly can't walk with them on their path to better understanding.

Critical embodied writing recognizes the complexities of the positions, identifications, and histories of oppressed people, be they oppressed for reasons of color, class, gender/gender identification, ability status, or sexual status. Folks doing critical composition work seek to heighten our facility with using difference as a resource to make visible the kinds of erasures that marginalize vulnerable populations. Lu and Horner, for example, offer an approach to the labor of writing and reading predicated on the idea that the translation of difference is and should be the norm of language, proposing that, "we can call on our and our students' everyday experiences of "friction" in reading and writing to posit and pursue an alternative—the normality of friction itself and the labor it entails, often derided and denigrated as confusion, difficult, misunderstanding, even opacity" (Horner and Lu, 2013). I situate myself in alliance with this perspective and agree with Lu and Horner's insistence that writing research, pedagogy, and practice that attempts to create uniformity and clarity is doing so primarily in the interest of the economic security of a minority of white people at the expense of inclusivity, complexity, and the potentially transformative potential of writing and language use. In the academic and professional domain, the practice of treating difference and complexity as the norm will certainly obstruct the potential for writing to blindly be used in the service of the economic self-interests of a relatively few economically secure people. And let me be clear, we can and must center difference as the norm while working together for goals that all humans share in common. In centering difference as the norm—an act that I argue with Lu and Horner is both necessary and long overdue—the needs and complexities of the "basic writer", the non-native speaker, the woman of color writer, and anyone else feeling diminished by the neglect of their humanity become more visible.

Conversely, the not-basic writer, the uncritical adherent to white property value who may also be the teacher of rhetoric and/or technical writing, and the native speaker take on a different space of visibility in the classroom and in the discipline. Complicity with economic and political oppression emerges as a site of injustice perpetuated through a particular kind of language use. What happens to the dominant-identified, teacher, student, or "normal" writer in a classroom where difference and complexity are central to pedagogy? Discomfort in this context is likely. Rather than shy away from that discomfort, we need tools to enable our students to feel discomfort and to turn it into something capable of resisting white supremacy. If critical composition studies is going to serve as a site of inspiration for the cultivation of meaningful social, political, and economic change, the field needs to encourage the creation of narratives perceived as "different" by recognizing translation, confusion, and discomfort as a normal part of doing the labor of engaging with student writing. Again, this should be done, not for the sake of disappearing difference, but with attention paid to how differences can transform meaning and how this has material consequences within the bodies of students, teachers, and scholars, and how attending to difference can better enable us to work together toward making meaning together in the presence of complexity.

As one of the primary gate-keeping mechanisms at the level of colleges and universities, the first year writing course has the power to open doors to students or close them. Arguably we also have a responsibility to figure out why students are leaving and how to engage them in ways that encourage them to not only stay at the University but also to thrive, that give them the opportunity to learn techniques to mend some of the broken aspects of the university, the rest of the world, and perhaps even their own sense of fractured identity. We might also think of this process as a kind of educational reparations.

Reparations--literally making amends and repairing--is a great way to think about the kinds of work our schools, from Kindergarten through PhD, can do on behalf of healing longstanding injustices in this country. I like to think in terms of repair because not only does the idea of reparations have a way of agitating some people at a deeply embodied level (a discomfort that could inspire deeper conversations), the term itself suggests a process of a kind of healing. Ideally, this kind of academic repair work prepares all students to do similar kinds of repair work outside of the university by giving them tools and skills and practice at creating alternative stories, identities, and geographical frameworks.

The process of working toward the above goals presents several challenges. Pervasive stories/histories, ways of identifying, and ways of existing in space are deeply entrenched both within the university and outside of it. Moreover, these same pervasive stories/histories, ways of identifying, and ways of existing in space often seem to occur in silence. They act upon us whether we are aware of them or not. In the words of Saidya Hartman, they are "benign scenes" and it is only in the process of "disassembling the "benign" scene [that] we confront the everyday practice of domination, the nonevent, as it were" (1997; 42). Hartman—and, of course, many others—challenge us to dig deeper into what seems harmless because so often, throughout history, that which has seemed harmless is not necessarily so. The fact that our Basic Writing courses are happening completely outside of our Technical Communication courses is a case in point.

Basic writing classes and technical communication classes are benign scenes. They may look neutral or even positive but they hide a more sinister reality. These courses are viewed in hierarchical fashion with one aiming to ensure that language impurity doesn't creep into the university and the other operating as a highly refined version of writing purity.

Courses in Basic Writing and courses in Technical Communication are viewed as distinct and are therefore segregated. Basic Writing is not the technique but rather the rudiments of the technique. The primary point of these rudiments is to master them and move on. And mastery, of course, is always about domination. There is little room in this framework to assign or find value in the Basic Writing course or in any kind of writing that doesn't conform to longstanding standards. Many students who find themselves in Basic Writing courses have learned that they are bad writers with little reason to think that they're capable of successfully performing any technique of writing. Even those students who see themselves as excellent writers are rarely encouraged to dig deeper into the normative assumptions of what makes writing acceptable to mainstream audiences and to work with other ways of writing.

The segregation and hierarchy of writing courses and language in general represents a challenge, in part because, as James Sledd has so aptly noted, "people who rarely talk together will talk differently and this creates differences in speech that tells what groups a man belongs to. [S]he uses them to claim and proclaim his identity, and society uses them to keep him under control" (1307; 1969). Similarly, within an academic discipline, speaking in certain circles—from undergraduate coursework to graduate and post-graduate level citation politics—one asserts a sense of place and academic allegiance. Basic writing is a space for academic others. It is a space of marginality to the central project of the university--creating new legitimate knowledge for the purpose of maintaining pre existing structures of power. Clearly and thankfully, not everyone is participating in the university for the purpose of upholding its central project, but it remains the essence of what universities across the country are doing. I have equated this central project and those who use writing to work

toward it, with the suburbs of white flight, and those who resist elements of the central project, including folks in writing studies who teach basic writing and critical literacy, with the ghetto.

In this project, I have steered around the question of how to teach basic writers how to do academic writing toward what historically and presently marginalized writers can offer the foundations of how we think about the work we are doing at the university. I am more concerned with how all writing courses--basic writing and technical writing included--can contribute to practices of facilitating identification with complexity for the purpose of enabling a shift away from the oppressive, limiting, and marginalizing power of normativity, than I am with how we will teach folks to write an academic research paper that follows the standards our field equates with respectable writing. Moving away from the ghettoization of basic writing is a crucial step in this process. Analogously, moving away from the negative connotations of marginality itself, is vital to efforts at creating institutional change on behalf of all people who are vulnerable in their marginalization. We can be nourished by that which we have marginalized in ourselves, and we have much to gain from that which we have made marginal in our society. I am not suggesting that we maintain segregated spaces, marginal and not marginal, but rather that we seek to attend to the violence of the practice of pushing that which makes us uncomfortable to the margins and leaving it there to rot.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I outlined the ways in which Andrea Lunsford takes basic writers to task for the egocentric rhetorical stance they take in their writing. Throughout this project, I have attempted to argue that an explicit focus on the self in writing as an indication of the intersection of history/memory, position, and affective, and emotioned, and embodied complexity is a far less egocentric and self-serving act than hiding

behind a facade of objectivity for the purpose of legitimizing standards that benefit

whiteness, white normativity, and the economic privilege of a relative minority of

Americans. More specifically, what is useful in focusing on the self as a reflection of

complicated intersecting historical, spatial, and social realities, is the way that self-focus can

bring the marginal to the forefront of our awareness. When I say "the marginal", I include

both people who have been marginalized as well as the unacceptable elements of

personhood, like shame, suffering, and vulnerability--all of which are coerced out of our

conscious awareness so that we can go about our days more able to feel good about our

consumptive habits and our achievements and the fact that our privilege and security exists at

the expense of others' suffering.

Progress has been broadly perceived in Western society as the marginalization of

suffering and discomfort. In the field of Writing Studies, it has been perceived as the

facilitation of clarity for an exclusive minority of privileged people at the expense of the

messy realities of bringing everyone along in a process of self-reflection and mutual

participation in decision and meaning making. Progress that brings everyone along in

attending to those who are hurting, those who have been excluded, and those uncomfortable

elements of all of us, access to which we have denied ourselves, it is this kind of progress

that we should strive for in our pedagogy. We can begin shifting our definitions of progress

by paying attention to the work made possible by techniques long employed by women of

color feminist writers. These writing/thinking techniques include but are not limited to: using

marginality as a site of potential for resistance and for creating alternative spaces of agency,

subverting dominant understandings of sites of marginality and making the invisible visible,

contextualizing the hypervisible through deconstruction of stereotypes, facilitating deeper understandings of uncertainty, silence, embodiment, truth, history, and language.

We can use the following questions to orient our efforts at bringing these techniques and theories into our classrooms: What spaces of identification are possible for students as they investigate and critique the norm? In what concrete ways can we encourage the creation of narratives perceived as "different" by recognizing and teaching about translation, confusion, and discomfort as a normal part of doing the labor of engaging with student writing? How does explicit reference to the body and to emotion help us to play a useful role in mediating students' experience with reading and writing in conditions of discomfort? How might understanding the historical marginality of others help students who identify with the dominant norm to understand that which has been marginalized within themselves and to complicate any oversimplified identifications they may be holding onto? How do we bring the past into the present in our classrooms in concrete ways by encouraging students to do embodied writing? I will organize the rest of this chapter around answering these questions.

That which seems normal can hide power dynamics that benefit some folks while harming others. Making this statement alone has not, in my experience, been a helpful place to begin teaching students about the interrelationship between language and power. Showing them, through their own processes of reading and writing, is far more effective. The violence on campus, for example, is apparently too subtle for many white people who comprise the vast majority of the folks on college campuses like the University of Minnesota to notice. Occasionally it bubbles to the surface in a way that's obvious even to the most obtuse privileged person, but for the rest of us, the violence is quite obvious and it can make campus feel like hostile territory much of the time.

Here at the University of Minnesota, we might look at the examples of the recent vandalism of the Muslim Student Association's panel on the Washington Avenue Bridge, or the ongoing challenge of UMN's Department of Public Safety's "timely warning" system. In both cases, the vehicle of violence is language. In the case of the Muslim Student Association's panel, which was graffitied with the word "ISIS", language was used to stereotype and reduce the complexity of all Muslims by equating them with terrorism. This perspective and the language used to espouse it have material and physical consequences for Muslim Americans. The language itself is both a kind of violence and a representation of violence. Both the representation and the violence of language are felt by victims in physical ways. I don't need to be a Muslim student to know the sense of physical and psychological threat as well as the emotional discomfort that a violent speech act can cause. In a similar way, each time the U's Department of Public Safety informs me that the entire campus should be on the lookout for yet another black male, as a queer identified person of color who is frequently read as a black/brown male, I am relieved to be across the country from the UMN campus, far from the suspicious eyes of white students clutching their bags more closely any time a black or brown person is within arms reach. These two examples are obvious. They don't include the many other micro and macro language-based aggressions that students who don't occupy bodies able to claim white identity are forced to confront on a regular basis.

It is important to investigate the ways that the writing used on campus is a benign scene. Many, though certainly not all, students of color and students occupying spaces of difference are quick to understand the concept of the benign scene. White-identified students find this a bit more challenging. How do we make the concept of the benign scene more

tangible for all of our students? Language and writing as a benign scene is often a bit too abstract for white-identified students to really grasp until they have more facility with understanding the concept of the benign scene. Investigating the ways that university culture in America is a benign scene has, in my experience, proven to be a more accessible starting point for the majority of my students at the University of Minnesota.

When I first started teaching, I felt obligated to change students' beliefs about the neutrality of language. If they felt that language was neutral, I wanted them to recognize the complexities of language--that it is not neutral, that using particular words, phrases, and tropes is closely associated with an ideological or political stance, whether we know it or not. Amy Winans helped me to shift my thinking on this. Her most significant contribution to my way of understanding my goals in the writing classroom can be summed up in the following statements: "when we conceptualize our pedagogy we do not have a specific goal of changing our students' actions or racial identities in a particular way. Rather we are trying to cultivate ongoing questions about the familiar, the comfortable, and the "acceptable" (480). What I seek to offer is not a singular way of being or a single perspective or way of seeing things, but a process of using the historically, spatially, and socially informed body to ask questions about experience, "rationality", and "reality" that enable us to intervene in logics sedemented in the body through subconscious affective attachments.

I found out about Eula Biss' *Notes from No Man's Land* from Amy Winans, who explained how she made effective use of Biss' essays for the purpose of engaging with students on the subject of race (2012). According to Winans, Biss' work "helps students develop challenging questions about emotions, questions that help them explore both [the] course readings and their own experiences of emotion, race, and identity" (2012, 157). This

is a fairly glowing report. I read Biss' book and was drawn to her habit of re-envisioning the benign scene as a site of trauma. Take the telephone pole, for example, which is a theoretically neutral object that Biss revisits to tell the story of the hundreds of lynchings that involved hanging a black man on a telephone pole. It is not the telephone pole itself that is at fault for the lynchings. Rather, Biss reveals the ways that telephone poles were at once a neutral tool of progress that facilitated a quality of communication never before possible in the history of humanity and simultaneously were used as a tool of barbarism.

In "Is This Kansas", Biss reveals the American college campus as another seemingly neutral space assigned a role in American race-relations that is anything but neutral. I naively assigned "Is This Kansas" early on in one of my classes without much preparation for the reading, thinking that the essay's sympathetic but complex analysis of white college student's status within the American imagination would resonate with my (mostly white) students in ways that would enable them to critique their positions and perspectives. Biss begins the essay by discussing the culture of hedonism that college campuses are expected and encouraged to represent by students and parents alike. She sympathizes with her students' lack of power within the structure of a major university and with their relative ignorance of history and race relations in America. She juxtaposes the media/student response to the looting that took place after hurricane Katrina and the media/student response to the looting of a local liquor store that took place after a tornado in her college town. Whereas the looting in New Orleans was most often perceived and described as criminal, the looting of a liquor store by white students after an Iowa tornado was perceived and described as students having fun. The reasons for this are many and the analysis of the complexities of using language (written in newspapers, spoken on television news, and spoken in the

classroom) to assign criminal status to people of color while assigning students-having-fun status to white people seemed like fertile ground for engaging my students in asking some interesting questions about language, argument, and power. Indeed, the discomfort inspired by the text served as a starting point for a tremendous amount of discomfort and discussion throughout two different semesters of First Year Writing Classes that I taught.

The first time I taught "Is This Kansas", there were 24 students in the class, 20 of whom identified themselves as white in an early and anonymous writing assignment, and the final four of whom were ambivalent about being asked to identify racially in their writing. I prepared them for the essay with a brief discussion of what it means to be a student in an American university. I asked them what they thought participation in college education meant to American society and American citizenship. Their responses during this discussion largely conformed to tropes of meritocracy. They talked about hard work, becoming a good citizen, and using education to become prepared for a career. The topic of party-culture never came up. I laid out the myth of meritocracy as one way of looking at the class discussion. No one argued against the idea that meritocracy was more mythological than real, but they didn't agree with that assertion either.

When my students returned to class to report back on their experiences with "Is This Kansas", they were up in arms about the essay. Several of them reported that the book was "garbage" and that they didn't know why anyone would want to read it. The implied message here was that, in many of their eyes, I had lost most of my legitimacy as a teacher by assigning this worthless material. They defended themselves against Biss' accusations of ignorance and expressed their lack of respect for her perspective. One of them informed the class that they wanted to throw the book in the trash before they even finished the essay. A

handful of others responded by saying that they didn't even finish it. Eye-rolls and crossed arms and huffs and puffs abounded.

On one hand, I was taken aback by the response of my students. To a certain extent, I felt negated at the front of the classroom. How was I going to turn this experience into something useful for the students? I also felt defeated in my first attempts to engage with a pedagogy of discomfort that I so strongly believed could help students to engage more deeply with texts, stories, and arguments, to ask more complex questions, to better understand the complexities of audiences, to critique their subject positions, etc., etc., etc. Was it really so hard for them to engage with ideas that contrasted with their way of identification that they refused to read the article entirely? I was simultaneously concerned about the impending revolt and what it might mean for me as a teacher and a student. If their grades depended on continuing to engage with these kinds of ideas, would they drop the class? Would they *all* drop the class? If they all dropped the class, how would I get paid? How many of them would have to drop the class in order for me to get in trouble? Would I ever be able to teach again?

In another way, I walked into the class that day prepared for my students' anger. I had a pit in my stomach in the moments before class started as I sat in the front of the room in fear of the intensity of students' response to the essay. I gave them the opportunity to express all of the anger and frustration they had to offer throughout the class. I listened to them and reflected my understanding of their feelings back to them. I gave them the space to question my credentials as a teacher, the stupidity of specific lines in the text, and the malevolence of its author. By the time they had exhausted themselves with their intense critique, it was nearly time to leave the class. The only thing I had time to do was explicitly alert them to the fact that the reading had inspired them to feel something. I asked them when the last time

was that they had felt so intensely after they had read something and I cancelled the next reading assignment so that I could rethink where we would go from this point of discord.

I went home to think about myself and what I would do next. I revisited the essay. I wondered whether my students would have been so open in their disgust for me and my stupid readings if I had been a 50 year old white professor. I felt a little wounded by the directness of their anger toward me, but I realized that although their anger was partially directed at me, in reality it was an anger that existed for them before the class and, in the absence of any manner of intervention, that would continue to inform their understanding of race and arguments about normativity in the future. I felt like the fact that these intense emotions had surfaced was an opportunity partially afforded by my position in front of the classroom as a person of color who by virtue of her color (and age, perhaps), needed to prove herself to her class. I decided that we would revisit the essay with the class. I would reassign it not as a reading, but as an experience. I created an assignment with the following prompt:

Most of you spoke to the anger you felt when reading "Is This Kansas" during our previous class meeting. You told me that you felt the writer "hated students". You asked me why she "hated students so much". We had one of the most heated classroom discussions I've ever had in my experience as either a teacher or a student. I left the classroom wondering how many of you would even show up for the next class. I want to understand more about your feelings about this essay. I ask that you read it again and pay attention to the physical feelings you experience at different points in the text. If you feel something as you're reading "Is This Kansas", or if you feel like you want to stop reading the essay, I ask that you make note of what Biss has said, what emotion you feel, and where you physically feel it in your body. Then, I want you to write three paragraphs.

1. In the first paragraph, I ask you to summarize Biss' main points about students, student culture, and the differences in the media's response to the looting that took place in New Orleans as compared to the media response to the looting of the liquor store. Remember, a summary does not include your perspective. It paraphrases the ideas of the writer.

2. In the second paragraph, I ask you to write about the feelings you felt as your read different parts of the essay. Please offer at least three examples of what you read, how you felt, and where you physically felt it. Be sure to discuss at least two emotions in this paragraph.

3. In the final paragraph, I want you to consider what Biss may have felt as she was writing the parts of the essay that caused you to feel the most intense emotions. Pick two or three of her sentences/ideas that had the strongest impact on you, and consider at least two possible emotions she may have felt as she was writing.

The students' response to this assignment was more generative and complex than their initial classroom discussion. Although they were still angered by Biss' words, and although a few of them expressed that the assignment was annoying, a more complex set of emotions emerged from some of the papers. One student wrote, "The way Biss described her students as ignorant made me angry because she would probably think of me as ignorant too. I believe that her opinion is reverse racism. She thinks it is okay for black people to loot but not for students to take a few beers. ...I also felt judged when she was talking about students having parties. Didn't she ever go to a party?" The section of the text described by this student, and the subject of students' "ignorance" triggered many of them to feel angry. Another student wrote, "Anyone would be upset if someone talked about them like Biss talks about her students. In America everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Calling someone ignorant is not a respectful way of addressing them."

I learned several things from my students' responses to "Is This Kansas". One of the biggest was that their ability to describe their feelings was limited to just a few emotions and that they lacked specific descriptors for those emotions and that feeling them seemed to make it difficult for them to understand either Biss' argument or any of the potential emotions she may have been feeling when she wrote the text. The vast majority of students spoke of their anger and of being upset about various aspects of the text. The word "upset" was used

frequently. It is a term that fails to describe a specific emotion and rather avoids digging into the complexities of what it might mean to be upset. Upset stood in for discomfort. Discomfort remained largely indescribable or outside of the realm of their linguistic repertoire. Additionally, in reading students' responses, I realized that they felt attacked by a writer who they could only perceive through the lens of the limited emotions they were able to describe in themselves. So, for example, because they felt angry when the writer was discussing her students' ignorance, they assumed that she too must feel angry. Such limitations made it difficult to continue reading an essay that felt like an attack on them personally, made it difficult for them to see that Biss was providing a complex account of systems of power and language and a complex account of the ways students and criminals come to be defined, and made it nearly impossible for them to develop an interpretation of what Biss was actually trying to say. Finally, very few students actually discussed their embodied experience of emotion in their writing. It was as if I had not asked them to address their embodied reaction at all. In part, this may have been a result of confusing wording in the assignment or of an assignment that included too many specific requirements. However, in a discussion about the assignment, it was brought to my attention that they really didn't know what I meant when I had asked them to explain where they felt their emotions. Future discussions and assignments that I gave later in the semester sought to address both their confusion about embodied emotion as well as their ability to discuss a variety of emotions.

The second question I pose as useful to teaching critical embodied writing is: How does explicit reference to the body and to emotion help us to play a useful role in mediating students' experience with reading and writing in conditions of discomfort? Critical embodied writing is really a multi-stage process. Part of the process involves simply recognizing that

our logic is mediated through emotions and that this process of mediation is physical and associated with actual physical feelings. Much like someone might physically touch a person if they were to punch them in the stomach, and much like that person would have a physical response to having been punched in the stomach, words can provoke a similar physical response. In some ways this seems rather obvious, but it is certainly not the way we have become habituated to discussing our motivation for interpretation of writing, or our motivation for conducting our own writing. Another part of critical embodied writing involves things that writers operating in and representing positions of historical oppression, exclusion and injustice can do to facilitate identification with their causes through language use. Neither the recognition of the embodied mediation of rationality and argumentation nor the enactment of writing from the body can be accomplished in the absence of awareness of the affective responses of the body in naming place/identity in space and creating and negotiating space. All of this must be taught.

In order to teach feeling as affective response, critical embodiment, and writing from an embodied position, students have to make their uncomfortable emotions explicit in their writing, to discuss discomfort, and to develop a more complicated vocabulary for discussing their feelings and where they feel them. Those positions of discomfort are as completely real for the teacher in front of the class as they are for the students. Women of color feminist writers provide plenty of excellent examples of how the explicit discussion of embodiment and emotion can be enacted through writing that critiques oversimplification of emotion and embodiment, but I was afraid to bring these writers--that meant so much to me--before the gaze of students who might very well tear them to shreds. In particular, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, much of the work of Gloria Anzaldua and Audre Lorde is helpful in thinking

through the ways that many emotions get subsumed under a dominant emotion like anger, or even something more vague like "upset". I used pieces of their work here and there throughout the first semester that I used *Notes From No Man's Land* to emphasize the role of the body in emotion and logic.

Admittedly, the first semester that I taught *Notes From No Man's Land*, I was timid about how best to bring women of color feminist writing into the classroom. I was unsatisfied with bringing this writing into the class solely by including quotes from Lorde and Anzaldua in my lessons here and there, but I was equally concerned that students of color in the group, none of whom were comfortable identifying as people of color (and only one of whom ever talked about her identity as a non-white woman from a Hmong background, and even this, only at the end of the semester), would be put in a disproportionately uncomfortable position if I continued to highlight issues of race in our class discussions about power and language. I saw students of color's silences during these conversations and I recalled being in a similar situation myself as an undergraduate, listening to the (presumably unconsciously) racist ideas of my peers and feeling unable to respond, lacking in the tools of critique for an effective response, and bullied into silence by classrooms full of angry white students. I recall in such situations that there would often be a person of color who would side with the white students, asserting things like, "well, I agree with Kyle, affirmative action shouldn't be allowed because it's unfair to white people and it makes black people wonder if they really deserve the things they're working to earn". 'Traitors', I'd silently think, but at least they were able to take a position in the room where I sat quietly imploding, confused and feeling like I didn't belong. Students of color who did things like espouse the detriments of affirmative action found a place to belong. Their place of belonging may have negated them, but they found a

space of authority and white people approved of them for it. Years later, as a teacher, I certainly didn't want to put my students of color in the position of having to choose between negating themselves and remaining silent.

The first semester I taught *Notes From No Man's Land,* my few students of color and a couple of white-identified students who were invested in the subject matter for various reasons started staying after class to discuss race and language more candidly. It wasn't an ideal scenario because the best conversations in the classroom weren't happening during class time, but the fact that these conversations continued throughout the semester convinced me that in spite of the potential for upset, I needed to continue to invite discomfort, to talk openly about uncomfortable things, to bring women of color feminist writers more fully into the curriculum, and that if need be, I would have to step into conversations and occasionally exercise my authority as the teacher to protect my students of color and possibly even to intervene from a position of critique of the dominant narrative. In order to effectively do this, I needed to set the class up differently.

On the first day of the next semester, I explained that some of the readings had inspired uncomfortable conversations for students in former classes. I opened a line of anonymous communication requesting that if anyone felt uncomfortable with anything that was happening throughout the semester, I wanted them to let me know anonymously. It wasn't a perfect system, but it served the purpose of inviting participation in decision-making about the ways conversations took place. On that first day of class, I talked about emotion and embodiment and I asked students to do an embodied exercise during which I said a series of words/phrases in class and asked students to write down any that made them uncomfortable and to write down where they physically experienced the discomfort. Words

included: "white people, black people, race, racism, and racist". In a conversation after that activity, students expressed having felt several emotions including: nervous, anxious, irritated, and they identified physical sensations like an increased heart rate and butterflies in their stomachs. Some of the students claimed to have felt nothing and seemed irritated that I was asking them to do this exercise. One student boldly asked me, "What does any of this have to do with writing?". I attempted to explain that because some of the subject matter would make some students uncomfortable, and that I was asking them to consider the ways that their ideas and arguments were informed by their emotions, I wanted them to practice feeling their emotions in complex ways.

I'm not going to lie right now and tell you that they were all on board. There were more than a few eyes rolling at the beginning of the semester. Most of them came around to working openly with the idea of embodied emotion by the end of the semester, though, and although I didn't keep extensive data (because that's neither my project nor my passion) or repeat the critical embodied writing experiment with more college students over a number of years (because I left the University), for what it's worth, my brief experience with using critical embodied writing to teach about power, writing, and language made far more possible in the two semesters that I used this approach.

During that second semester, again, I used *Notes From No Man's Land* as a point of access into the uncomfortable topics of race, education, and language. Again, many of my students were angry after they read "Is This Kansas" and for many of the same reasons, again, they questioned my credentials and the legitimacy of the book. After reading "Is This Kansas", I assigned Audre Lorde's "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger" in conjunction with a section of a video on the "angry black woman" stereotype. I set that

assignment up in a class discussion by asking students if they had ever been stereotyped and if so, what kinds of language was used to stereotype them. I didn't force anyone to participate and some students were completely silent throughout the beginning of the semester. When a single dominant perspective emerged among the students that may have been upsetting for students of color, if none of my students of color spoke up, I interjected with an alternative perspective. Most of the stereotypes identified in the classroom--of mostly white students-- dealt with the idea that white people were uptight, rich, and racist. None of the American students of color volunteered any racial stereotypes of students of color, but there were two non-native speaker students who talked about whether or not they were minorities and if they were, whether or not people saw them through the lens of the stereotypes of Asian Americans, and Latin Americans respectively. Though neither of them had been in the country for long, they were aware that Asian Americans were often assumed to be hardworking and Latin Americans were often assumed to be lazy. They asserted that they didn't feel that anyone in our class would think that about them.

During the conversation, I talked about how as a woman of color I felt that people often told me I was intimidating and that I was aware of several stereotypes about black women that might have contributed to their perception of me. I told them we were going to watch a video about the "angry black woman" stereotype, and that I was extremely sensitive about the video, that I felt nervous about showing it, and that I was little sick to my stomach because I was worried some students may see it and misconstrue my intentions for showing it, while other students (I didn't mention any names, but I was especially concerned about the only African American female student in the class) may feel embarrassed by the depictions of black women in the video. I explained to the class that the purpose of this video was not to

determine the reality of certain stereotypes but rather to investigate in a spirit of compassion and curiosity--for both our own perspective and the perspective of others--the ways in which arguments about entire groups of people come to be made, why those arguments exist, and how the process of their creation can be invisible. This deep level of preparation for this activity and for all of the classroom and writing activities that made me uncomfortable or might make students uncomfortable characterized the majority of my assignments. I was okay with discomfort, but I wanted to be sure it served a purpose, and that we would be able to talk about what that purpose might be at any given moment. I always asked students to take notes on specific words and phrases that stood out to them, how those words/phrases were being used in an argument, and to make note of how they felt when they heard the words and phrases so that they could revisit the feelings associated with the arguments.

After watching the video, students were very quiet. Their next assignment was to read "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger" and to write a three-page essay. Students were asked to begin the essay with a discussion of the specific ways Lorde used her experience and her words to describe anger as a complicated series of emotions. In the essay, students were also asked to compare Lorde's approach to anger with the media stereotype of the "angry black woman". Finally, in conclusion of the paper, I asked them to dissect an emotion of their choosing by following Lorde's example in using one short story to explain a deeper point about the complexity of a specific emotion. Some of the papers were clearly written by students who didn't seem keen to complete the assignment and/or raced to finish it at the last minute, but others generated a significant depth of insight. A student who discussed the ways that being white was assumed to be a privilege but wasn't necessarily much of a privilege if you happened to grow up poor. In her words, "I do not see myself like

some other people see me. Skin color does not make a person rich or have a lot of status. One example of this is when I went to my senior prom most students could afford to go to dinner before the prom but I did not have extra money. I went to dinner but I could not eat anything.... This is like when Audre Lorde was at the library. The librarian read Little Black Sambo and it hurt her feelings but no one else knew. This made her angry but it also might have made her upset". Here again, although we see "upset" standing in for a plethora of other emotions, this student is clearly moving toward a deeper insight into several points about reductionist arguments on race, privilege, and emotion.

The kinds of writing performed by Audre Lorde departs from writing many students are used to reading insofar as it takes seriously the role of position, feeling, and personal experience and treats these as sites of generative potential for both storytelling and argumentation. The next question that must be addressed in order to engage students in critical embodied writing is: In what concrete ways can we encourage the creation of narratives perceived as "different" by recognizing and teaching about translation, confusion, and discomfort as a normal part of doing the labor of engaging with students' writing? Gloria Anzaldua provides personal narratives that make space for complicated emotional processes, and for bringing the body out from its position of relative silence and allowing it to be seen on the page. This kind of writing doesn't enable its reader to be comfortable. Anzaldua's explicit reference to her own body purposefully inspires discomfort for the purpose of digging below the surface of rationality and grasping at the affective roots of logic and argument.

I asked students to read Anzaldua's "Creativity and Switching Modes of Consciousness", to pay special attention to the ways she uses reference to her physical body

and her experience of writing, and to pay attention to anything about the writing that inspired discomfort in them. In this essay, Anzaldua writes, "the body does not discern between different kinds of stimuli; the body doesn't distinguish between what happens in the imagination and what happens in the material world…The body mediates these two realities; it is in the body that they coexist. There's frustration in trying to separate the two and in making distinctions between them. We, the body, are the union, and that's part of the frustration in trying to mediate the two" (2006; 108). Rather than giving them a writing assignment directly after reading Anzaldua's essay, we discussed the essay in class and used it for an in-class writing activity. In my experience although some students really seem to enjoy abstract discussions, other students are highly averse to them because they don't make sense within the logic of using a university education to become prepared for a career. To bridge the gap between these two responses to abstraction, I started the class discussion by asking students to imagine themselves at their first job interview after college, to imagine what they might be wearing, how they might feel, and what the room might look like. In the essay, Anzaldua recommended this sort of exercise in imagining an embodied experience of winning an award. Following her lead, I encouraged students to be very specific in creating the specific elements of this job interview in their minds. Then, I asked them to do a five-minute free write in which they did two things: 1) listed three physical feelings they had while thinking about the interview and three thoughts they might think during the interview, and, 2) wrote about how, paraphrasing Anzaldua's words, the realities of our emotions and our thoughts coexist.

I would be lying if I said that this exercise felt tidy or that the vast majority of my students had major epiphanies while we were having our classroom discussion about minds,

bodies, and emotions. Nearly all of the students were able to list three feelings and three

thoughts from their imaginary interview, but only a few of them revealed a deeper reflection

on the relationship between thinking and feeling. One student brought up the fact that when

she got nervous she found it difficult to say smart things. Other students agreed with this

assessment. I asked them why this relationship between being nervous and not saying smart

things may be important. No one answered. I wasn't sure where to go from here so I

answered the question for them. In retrospect, it would have been better to continue to

engage them in inquiry on this question rather than simply offering them my own answer.

In retrospect, it would have been better to have done many things differently—to

have pushed more in some directions, to have been more direct in others. I walked a piece of

the way with my students, but as a teacher, I wasn't ready to go all the way there. I needed

time to walk away and reflect. Working as a queer-identified person of color with primarily

white students is an emotionally taxing task. I needed a break. This probably isn't a

perspective that will win me much respect, but it's honest and real. I would love to espouse

the virtues of some perfect kind of pedagogy that I discovered for engaging students in

feeling their emotions for the purpose of intervening into affective logic, but I simply haven't

gotten that far, to that perfect pedagogy, in my practice of teaching.

It has taken me years of reflection and experience in talking about writing, emotion,

embodiment, and activism *outside* of the setting of the university in order to really

conceptualize what I might want my First Year Writing syllabus to look like in 2016. One of

the questions left unanswered by my personal experience of teaching is hugely important:

How do we bring the past and the marginal into the present and central in our classrooms in

concrete ways by encouraging students to do embodied writing? An equally important

question: How are our affective responses to arguments/logics informed by our positions, identifications, and histories? It has only been in distancing myself from teaching that the work I can do in the future has been made apparent to me. I will continue to refine my approach to understanding embodiment, persuasion, identification, positionality and progress. For me, I will continue this work outside of academia. What I have to offer the field are a series of suggestions for ways to incorporate what I have learned into your pedagogy.

I ask that you make investigation of language and power a continued priority in your pedagogy regardless of what kind of writing you are teaching. I ask that you critique the function and purpose of standardized and normalized writing and the ways that this kind of writing is likely implicated in exclusionary logics of white supremacy. I ask that you analyze your affective response to the very words "white supremacy" and use a compassionate analysis of that affective response to consider what kinds of identifications need to be created to undo logics of supremacy. I ask that you contemplate the ways your history has created your understanding of what writing can and might be used for, and that you ask your students to investigate their histories and their affective responses in order to better understand how they have formed their ideas and how they may want to create new identifications and form new ideas in the future. I ask that you take the knowledge of women of color and women of color feminist writers seriously. They have rich theories of writing, embodiment, emotion, identification, and persuasion to share with rhetoric and writing studies. We need them and yet, as a field, we haven't been paying them enough attention. Finally, I ask you to invest more time in the realm of the marginal and the imaginary, to think about what is possible and what kinds of inclusive spaces we might still be able to create, to start writing those spaces into being, and to engage students in doing the same.

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