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Academic discourse: An ethnography of the public and private literacies of university students

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Academic discourse: An ethnography of the public and private literacies of university students

Chiseri-Strater, Elizabeth, Ph.D.

University of New Hampshire, 1988

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

**ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE LITERACIES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

BY

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B.A., New York University, 1964
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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Reading and Writing Instruction

December, 1988

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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Date

For my family: Alisha, Tosca and Minshall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Loneliness and Solidarity of the Long Distance Writer

In many ways I have been preparing all of my professional life to write this dissertation, through my twenty years of teaching, much of it spent working with college students and through my research interests, mainly on the development of college students' thinking. Forever it seems that I have either been in school or have been teaching so that I feel equally at home as instructor or student. In spite of my continuous involvement in education, my greatest fear in undertaking the research and the writing of this project has been that I would not complete it, that somehow I would get in sight of the finish line but not make it over for a variety of complex reasons.

This fear can best be compared, not to the many horror stories of students whose dissertations do go awry in the last stages, but to a film that has haunted me for many years: A realistic, new wave British film from the early sixties, "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner." In the film, the hero played by Tom Courtenay who, within sight of victory, before he's about to cross the finish line and win, gives up in the last seconds of his cross country race. Courtenay stops running as a kind of exercise in free will against the British

class system that has constrained him. When I saw this film years ago I had two opposing responses: I identified with Courtenay's rebellious hero but I was also horrified by his loss. How could someone give away an important race when he was so close to winning? On the other hand, I thought, of what value is the winning: does it belong to the runner/learner or to the prize-givers, in Courtney's case, the governor of his reform school? Like Tom Courtney in the film, I wanted the knowledge that I could win--could write a dissertation--to suffice, the freedom of thinking that I didn't need the actual medal, ribbon or degree: I could throw the race and still feel like a winner.

From experience, I knew that the writing of the three hundred paged paper that's initially read by only a few people, would be a lonely job. And it has been a lonely run, although I have tried my best not to make it so. I have surrounded myself with critics, with the best supportive readers that I could find. They have been my loyal crowd cheering me on, these women who have read endless draft after draft before I ever submitted them to my committee. One summer evening in the middle of a freakish hailstorm I drove to Cindy's Gannett's house with a bottle of wine and a draft of a ninety paged-case study, pouring drinks as I watched her read and respond. At the bitter end of my writing, less than

two weeks before my defense I carted my findings to Cindy's house where we drank tea and exchanged ideas. I have used Judy Fueyo as a constant ear for my whimpering, and Sherrie Gradin has served as a kind of younger sister, suggesting that if I can do it, she can too. Donna Qualley, whose classroom was the beginning of this study, has stood by for over a year now, communicating, by phone, through the mailboxes in our office, and in person over the many drafts of this dissertation. Donna has never kept a draft of mine for over two days: She has been tireless and enthusiastic in her support.

My family has also provided support. In the hottest summer that Durham, New Hampshire has ever seen, my family sent me to the cellar to write. My husband moved the computer, put together a makeshift desk, gave me a fan, and found me some comfortable chairs. I spent my mornings--adopting Graves' 5AM schedule--writing among the musty mops, the turned over dog food bags, the sandy footsteps and wet towels trailing in and out of our house. My children decorated the study with their art work--Tosca was into her calligraphy stage then, writing: "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," and I tried to believe it. Alisha gave me everything from her watercolor of a parrot to an untitled abstract painting, exhibited in a local gallery. The support was there and the message was clear: Get this done and let's get on with our lives, which

for four years have been shaped by my studies.

I found the process of writing the case studies a joyful one, an unexpected runner's high. I immersed myself in the work of the two students to the extent that I became Nick and Anna, really lived inside their minds, borrowed their words, inhabited their literacy experiences. One day after spending an long morning writing, I drove my kids to the local swimming pool and encountered Nick on the way: he felt like a ghost to me. So much did I believe that I was him; he had to be someone else. Both Anna and Nick have applauded my efforts through their generous responses and corrections to my drafts. When I return to the pages written about them I am pleased, proud to have worked with these students, happy to have captured a slice of their college lives.

My committee has left me unfettered. In many ways the freedom they allowed me was frightening: far better to write the standard dissertation than forge a new way. But everyone in my Ph.D program has broken new ground by finding yet one other form that a dissertation might take instead of the traditional one. Cindy Gannett, Ruth Hubbard, Brenda Miller and Lorri Neilsen all helped make standards for me to write against and to write with: for in the end, what has been best about writing from this particular location at the University of New Hampshire is that I have learned how to make a

community of writers when I needed it: I have learned how to create that circle of support that is necessary for women who enter the academic world. For we do not work well alone; it is not our style. And we are learning to run the race well, not giving up while not totally accepting "the system" that has been handed to us, but acknowledging whatever it is we need to accomplish this job we have set out to do of documenting how literacy affects the lives of those we study.

My thanks to for all who have made this possible. To Tom Newkirk for giving me the confidence to earn the doctorate ("Think about this, do you really want to teach freshman English all of your life?"); Donald Graves for his loyal respect and support : Don Murray for teaching me about teaching; Denny Taylor and Joe Maxwell for showing me the skills and ethics of doing ethnography; Sharon Oja for her acute advice on adult development; Jane Hansen for her intrinsic belief in students' abilities and Bob Connors for his thoughtful questions. A special thanks to the University of New Hampshire for supporting my research through a Dissertation Year Fellowship; and finally to my family for tolerating a wife and mother who was there for the dance and music lessons, for the doctors and dentist appointments, for school nights, soccer games and recitals but who was often times mentally somewhere else: I hope that it has been worth

it for us all.

For me the experience of running the race has been more exhilarating and, in the end, less lonely than I anticipated.

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ABSTRACT

ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LITERACIES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

by

Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater
University of New Hampshire, December, 1988

This study is about the various meanings that being literate holds for two students in an academic setting. The study begins in a description of a prose writing classroom where informants are located and then goes on to follow two students from prose writing into other settings across the curriculum to consider how talk, reading, and writing are used in these classrooms. The data was collected using a number of field methods such as participant observation and intensive interviews as well as non-interactive methods such as textual and transcript analysis. Two extensive case studies form the center of the study.

The results from this study suggest that academic literacy cannot be untied from a student's holistic literacy: that the package comes complete. Students approach academic reading and writing tasks from the lens of both gender and human development as well as from the unique lens of private literacies, all issues which often are neglected in college classrooms. Ideas are offered for how reading, writing and

talking may be used to undergird learning in all settings in higher education, not just in writing courses.

INTRODUCTION

What is Academic Literacy? The Bush and the Eagle

I have never been an advocate of the deficit model of education. When I first began teaching in Bedford Stuyvesant in my early twenties, such a model was posited for my junior high students who were then considered "culturally deprived." In that period of heightened political awareness ushered in during the sixties, I was witness to a group of community educators who, in a militant political movement, seized control of their failing schools, mine included, marching under the banner of "black power." This re-conceptualization of cultural background as a source of strength changed students' attitudes toward themselves and finally toward learning, shifting the image of privation to one of power. From that lesson, I gained an understanding that how we frame our issues makes all the difference in the kinds of solutions we achieve. Since then, educational critics have offered other deficit models attempting to tell the public why Johnny can't read, write, or think. Most recently, influential educational critics have claimed that our college students are culturally illiterate (Hirsch, 1987), revising the old argument to fit, not just a group of forgotten Americans, but to describe an entire generation of college students who are considered

close-minded and impoverished of soul (Bloom, 1987). This study is framed around what college students know. It is an ethnography of reading, writing, talking, and thinking in several different disciplines across the curriculum. The students you will meet in this research are literate: They will inform you, hearten and even entertain you with what they know, not only about particular subject matter or content but about literate ways of constructing their worlds, particularly in the protected and somewhat isolated setting of a university. You will also be impressed, I hope, with the educators themselves who are showcased here for they help erase the stereotype of the ignorant teaching the ignorant, another deprivation model which has led to wasting limited educational resources on competency testing of our teachers.

Not that our educational system is unflawed and that nothing can be gained by a closer look at educational settings. The lens for this study of literacy is steadily held close-in and concludes with some major revisions for higher education. Yet such suggestions have not been arrived at from a condemnation of either students or professors but rather from a re-consideration of some of our basic assumptions about what it means to be literate in particular contexts.

I spent a year of my doctoral course work in a seminar with Donald Graves where my colleagues and I weekly read, wrote, and talked about the meaning of literacy. We covered

a wide range of issues such as deaf education, visual learning, adult literacy programs, bi-lingual, and preschool literacy. We argued that literacy has become a code word, which, because it carries too many loaded political, historical, and cultural meanings, now means too little. This study attempts to slice off one aspect of literacy by examining what I call here, "academic literacy," focusing on what it means to be a reader, writer, speaker, and thinker in an academic context. Other aspects of literacy outside of the academy seep through the boundaries drawn around my research to inform me of the holistic nature of my topic.

The perspective taken on this topic is that of college students themselves. Starting with an extended description of a college writing classroom, I follow two students from their university writing course into classes in their majors and compare what literacy means to these students in two contrasting settings. I learn a great deal from my student-informants about how they see literacy, what it means to them and what they think it means to others, particularly those others in power within a university setting. Some of the questions explored in this study include whether being literate in an academic setting is like learning a second language, what linguists call a "secondary discourse" and/or whether academic literacy includes meta-knowledge of discipline-specific literacy conventions. Is academic literacy best considered as conscious learning or enculturation?

In the prose writing classroom examined here two students share their perspective on learning, another more global way of discussing literacy. They offered organic metaphors which I feel capture the two oppositional poles of the argument on literacy and learning, what I call here the bush and the eagle positions. In a class discussion of Freire's essay, "The Banking Concept of Education" Andy shared this analogy from his landscape class, saying; "You can trim a bush or you can let it grow wild. When you trim a bush back, its roots get deeper. The basic fundamentals in education need to be strong." Andy suggests that the "basics" of learning must grow on strong roots, or what Hirsch has called shared background knowledge. Andy also feels that in order to obtain these strong roots, students must submit to being "pruned" or, using Freire's metaphor, "banked."

Tom, in another class discussion on Eiseley's essay, "Brown Wasps" struggles to compare the symbol of the absent cottonwood tree in the essay with the value of learning in general. Tom also pulls on an organic image, his from a course in wildlife ecology. "I'm taking a wildlife ecology course," he says, "where one of the values of wildlife is the aesthetic value. How many people have seen a bald eagle? Very few, but the knowledge of its existence is why we pour millions of dollars into this conservation project. No matter that we ever see it. It's the idea of the bald eagle's existence that we fall back on that matters."

Interestingly, both students are concerned with preservation of knowledge in different ways. Andy's most invested in control so that our educational heritage will produce uniform students, shaping themselves as bushes to fit into the landscape of society, a position that is considered as literacy for "cultural reproduction." Tom values learning for its intangible potential, not for its standardized results. He feels that learning has an aesthetic worth apart from its practical use, a position of learning for the sake of learning. These polar views on literacy will hover over the academic settings we will visit in this study to help us answer the question that Graves raised in our graduate seminar, "What is literacy for?"

There is another perspective that informs this study as well and that is of the ethnographer herself for As Dell Hymes says, the ethnographer becomes the tool or instrument of the inquiry process (Hymes, 1982). It is no accident that this study begins in a composition classroom, a setting that I have inhabited in different institutions for almost twenty years. As a teacher-researcher, I wanted to know what college students learn to value about reading, writing talking and thinking in the context of a composition course that may or may not help them as they enter other college courses. I am an empathetic researcher in this composition setting because I am part of that community, that scholarship, that world view. When I enter other settings, I am less at home, more the

outsider looking in, placed in the traditional anthropologist's position of asking, "What's going on here?" You will feel this insider/outsider tension in the writing of this ethnography: I have tried my best to use it to my advantage but I want to acknowledge my bias as a writing teacher.

There are some currents running in the field Composition Studies that suggest our job as writing teachers is to "prepare" students for the reading/writing or "academic literacy" demands that will be made on them by other disciplines, to make students aware of the conventions and rituals for writing in other contexts. When you enter Donna's classroom in "Anatomy of a Classroom" keep that task definition in mind to see how it fits into her writing course and hold it with you as you read about Anna and Nick's other courses to help respond to another question wedded to that of Graves, "What are writing classes for?"

There are some other things you may want to consider as you read this study so here's my view of what's ahead. There's a detailed chapter on the background and methodology of the study, *The Handwork of the Field Investigator*, which you may opt to read either before or after reading the actual study, depending upon how curious you are about methodology. In this chapter, I include notes from my research journal, field notes, and explain my whole system of coding and analysis because I have personally felt that kind of information

missing from some ethnographic studies. The following chapter, *Anatomy of a Prose Writing Classroom*, describes and discusses a one semester writing course taught by Donna Qualley where my two major informants are introduced. The major focus of this chapter is really on the classroom as a community, how it is formed, how it operates, and what literacy practices it endorses. At the heart of my ethnography are the two long case studies of Anna and Nick who became my major informants: Both of these chapters include sections about what each student read and wrote in prose writing class as well as in their major fields--art history and political science. A short chapter, *Mastery and Ms.Tery* follows the case studies and includes some reflections on gender and human development specific to Anna and Nick. The final chapter is devoted to a discussion and comparison of the literacy practices of the three settings that this study includes. In this final chapter some generalizations are made about literacy and learning in higher education and some suggested research paths are considered. My hope is that you will be as involved and interested in reading my study as I was in conducting it.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY: THE HANDWORK OF THE FIELD INVESTIGATOR

Ethnography is, I think, potentially the strongest social science metaphor within which members of some group can display the complexity and variability of their lives..." Agar, The Professional Stranger, p. 204.

Conducting an ethnographic study is a great deal like doing handwork, like piecing together an intricate and carefully designed garment that's intended for practical use. Because the narrative power of an ethnography allows the reader to become engrossed and "at home" in the world being described, the findings and conclusions appear to emerge seamless from the study, causing some critics of educational ethnography to misunderstand its often invisible methodology. But. There is for every ethnographer a story behind the making of the story; how I come to know what I know is the most revealing part. In this chapter I want to share how I conducted this study by turning my garment inside out, showing how the original pattern was cut, the pinning and stitching was done, how the fitting was accomplished, making my seams visible so that another tailor might design an ethnography with her own cloth.

The Research Question: "Growing Your Own"

My basic research interest was to understand how students interpret the literacy demands made on them in college, what it meant from their vantage point to be literate in an academic setting. An ethnographic design seemed most appropriate, since it adopts the insiders' perspective. My hypothesis for this study was nothing more than a belief that college students have far greater literacy than has previously been documented, that Hirsch and Bloom are wrong about students' "culturally illiterate and closed minds." Others have written about college writing programs, usually called "Writing Across the Curriculum" (WAC) from a theoretical and administrative viewpoint (see P. Bizzell and B. Herzberg's bibliographic essay, 1986, on WAC theory and practices) but no one has really considered the student's viewpoint on college writing. The notable exception is Lucille McCarthy's recent study (1985) of college student, Dave in Stranger in a Strange Land, an ethnography of one freshman student writing in three different settings. Using this ethnography as a backdrop, I chose to research a very different kind of composition course than the one McCarthy presented because I felt her results were very much wedded to the structured course she researched. I chose to follow several students instead of only one, for a period of one year in contrasting

classrooms. These are the topic and context constraints that I held in my mind while I searched for an appropriate setting to begin my study.

As I lumbered along, I lived mainly in a state of ambiguity because as Michael Agar (1980) points out, ethnographers "grow their own questions" (p. 197) as they conduct their research. New concerns gradually replaced old ones; for example, I added the roles of both reading and talk in facilitating literacy to my original concern with only academic writing. Mid-way into my study, the research question became more focused so that I could articulate it as; "What are the literacy/ learning structures within a college classroom which contribute to the students' sense of an academic community?"

One of the primary ways that my research question became clearer to me was through the process of writing about it along the way, sometimes using the ethnographer's personal journal as a resource for working through my ideas. Most often I wrote more than I could ever use, as in the following pages on the background for this study which were originally intended as a forty-paged separate chapter, now whittled to a few pages of contextual details. For me, it was necessary to understand both the history of the university and its English department before I could locate those few seeds that would help generate my study.

Background of Setting: The University as Clinic

Composition scholar Stephen North (1987) has reasonably argued that case study research belongs to a methodology he calls "clinical," where the researcher is "concerned with what is unique and particular" within the population studied (p. 200); the landmark study cited is Emig's monograph on The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders (1971). My own research, which includes two large "ethnographic" case studies, pushes the setting implied by such a category to include the entire university as my clinic, taking place, in fact within a spiral of contexts and academic communities. The multiple contexts of the study can be seen as: the Composition Staff within the English Department; the small writing classroom; and the four other departments and classrooms that I visited in the Physical Education, Art, Foreign Language and Political Science Departments. The University of New Hampshire as a whole served as the largest clinic for the study.

The University Context: A Community of Scholars

The University of New Hampshire is situated in the small, New England town of Durham, a community which stored gunpowder and flint during the revolutionary war (History in an Oystershell, Durham Historic Society) and still retains a semi-rural quality with the population of the town being 6,500 without the student body and 11,416 when school is in session. The surrounding geography of ₁ UNH attracts students and

faculty alike who enjoy being within an hour of Cambridge, Mass., an hour from the White Mountains, and only minutes from the Seacoast area beaches.

The University of New Hampshire is the only public university in the state: 74% of the incoming freshman student body is drawn from New Hampshire residents (UNH Admissions Office). Both of my key informants are New Hampshire residents. Students who attended UNH in 1987-88 when this research was conducted, paid \$90 per credit hour or approximately \$6,000 for in-state tuition and room and board and \$10,500 for out-of-state fees (1987-88 Catalog). Both of my informants helped pay for their tuition or living expenses by holding part-time jobs.

The outstanding departments at UNH reflect its geography and technical college roots: Engineering, particularly Computer Sciences, Life and Marine sciences maintain quality programs of study. Although there continues to be at UNH, as in the nation as a whole, a steady interest in business as a major, the University is witnessing a shift in the applicant pool away from technical and professional training back to liberal arts. The Admissions offices reports that "...liberal arts applications at UNH have increased 31 percent in the past two years alone" (Admissions News, April 1987). In a university which is rated as competitive (Lovejoy, 1987) and this year (1988-89) accepted only 42% of its applicant pool, this trend toward the liberal arts represents a historical

pattern seen by the admissions office in other stable decades: "...when there is a strong economy as there is today, students are under less pressure to pursue technical training and are more free to consider the arts, sciences, and humanities" (Admissions News). My two key case study students are both liberal arts majors.

In 1988 the President of the University of New Hampshire addressed its institutional mission toward creating "a community of scholars." My study is very much related to this university's theme and devoted to showing exactly what is meant by an "academic community" from the point of view, not of the faculty or administration, but of the students who are part of such a setting.

The Composition Context: One Teacher-Scholar

A major part of the composition staff, which includes a core faculty of 12 and many teaching assistants, is located on Hamilton-Smith's third floor which can only be reached by using the back, not the central stairs in the building which is indicative of the marginal status of composition as a sub-discipline in this department. Other staff members are tucked away in small basement offices: I once held my student conferences in what now serves as the English Department's stationary closet. The student who works with one of the members of the third-floor composition staff is greeted on the landing by two tin buckets which catch dripping water from a

leak in the building's ceiling so old that rust has formed on the surrounding wall area. This situation has caused some university officials to pay attention to this indecorous condition through a flurry of administrative memos which end with the promise that when funds are found, the leak will be fixed. On this floor, unlike the others which house the "regular" faculty who each have their own phones (and computers), composition teachers share one hall phone which receives only incoming calls: it rings constantly with messages for the 20 or more instructors who have offices here.

In spite of low pay, high student contact hours, and crowded conditions where most of the staff share small, overheated offices, the atmosphere of the composition staff is enthusiastic and familial. Between the eight to sixteen hours of weekly student conferences held by staff members each week (depending on the number of sections taught), doors open and close as colleagues seek one another for advice, for feedback on student papers, and for relief from the intensity of conferencing. Students waiting to have writing conferences sit through out the English Department building in narrow hallways on metal chairs, or lounge on the floor with their backpacks, re-reading their papers or other materials.

In one corner of the third floor is the office of the focus instructor for the first part of this study--Donna Qualley. Donna is a thirty-five year old energetic woman who often wears wildly colorful clothes, perhaps in contrast to

the waitressing uniform she assumes on Saturday night to supplement her salary. Donna is known for her vigorous laugh and good humor, fairly valuable assets for this position. Students in the Australian high school where she taught for nine years (Morwell High School, Victoria) voted her at various times: " Best-Looking, Best-Dressed, Best Sense of Humor and Loudest Voiced Female" (Yearbook).

Donna's graduate education is not in literature or in creative writing, the more traditional training of the UNH composition staff, but rather in education. Donna loves teaching writing, has received excellent teaching evaluations in the three years she has been a core instructor, and keeps up with her field through reading, writing, and by attending and presenting papers at professional conferences. Previous to her graduate work at UNH, when Donna taught English in a high school in Australia, she was active in writing a language and learning policy for her school and in publishing the school newspaper. It was in Australia where she was first attracted to the process-approach to teaching writing through the work of Donald Graves (see Don Graves in Australia). Donna, who lived in a communal household in Australia, senses that Graves' emphasis on a community of learners appealed to her so that when she returned to America, studying with Graves became one of her main reasons for staying and furthering her education. Initially Graves and Murray had the major influences on Donna's thinking as a college level writing

teacher and she has studied with them both. Since then Donna has folded many other ideas into her writing classrooms.

Prose writing as a new course was originally designed by Donald Murray at the request of his departmental chair in 1966 to provide students with further experience in writing exposition (Personal Interview, 4/88). In its inception, the course included all the innovations that Murray's approach to teaching writing heralded: the use of frequent conferences, of student writing as the major text instead of professional rhetoric or readers, and of peer workshops, and extensive revision. The prose writing course that Donna Qualley constructs to teach in 1987 reflects the enormous freedom and creativity originally encouraged by Murray for his writing staff.

While prose writing is now a departmental prerequisite for all students planning further course work in writing, as well as for other departments at the university--outdoor education, wildlife management, business, and communications--just to name a few of the majors requiring this course, there are never enough sections of this sophomore level course offered to satisfy student need. And in spite of its demand across the curriculum, prose writing is a fairly undefined course, not really serving to enculturate students into writing for other disciplines since it most often comes at the end of their academic careers when they have already been writing in their fields. Taught mainly by the core writing

faculty, special sections of this course have been designed in technical, persuasive, research, and critical writing. Donna did not offer her course as a special section, but she did some rigorous re-thinking about how she would teach it.

In a graduate seminar paper, "A New Beginning Place: Examining theory with THEORY" (1987), Donna contrasts what she calls Bartholomae and Petrosky's "well-preened designer label THEORY" of teaching academic writing against her own "laid back, hang loose theory" shaped, in part, by the Murray/Graves process-approach to teaching writing (T/t,p. 3). Donna expresses in this paper a need for her prose writing course to challenge the assumption commonly held by UNH composition teachers that open paper topics automatically foster independence: "...we might just be shackling them with a different kind of manacle" (Theory/theory p. 6).

Donna decides to experiment with the student text edited by Bartholomae and Petrosky, Ways of Reading (1987) to move students from an overconcern with topic choice which she felt had plagued them in the past: "...if we construct our reading and writing courses to provide students with a 'place to begin' their discovery of meaning, a method to start them off and some structure to make their choices more manageable, we can actually free student up by allowing them the opportunity to concentrate on the important things--that is, what they have to say about something"(T/t, p. 11). While Donna retains an open topic choice for student papers, she anticipates that

many students will draw on the readings discussed in class to frame their weekly papers.

Donna's prose writing syllabus would answer all of Kitzhaber's (1963) complaints about the weaknesses he found in Freshman writing syllabi--lack of certainty over course aims and lack of progression within the course Kitzhaber, (p. 10) are clearly spelled out in Donna's "new designer model" prose writing course. Kitzhaber's criticism that textbooks for writing courses are less than rigorous could not apply to Bartholomae and Petrosky's text which includes many selections not often found in college readers: John Berger's "Ways of Seeing," Clifford Geertz's "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," Thomas Kuhn's, "The Historical Structure of Scientific Discovery," all challenging contemporary readings. Built into both the context and the structure of the prose writing course are Donna's own tacit assumptions about literacy and learning (see Appendix for ENGL 501 course syllabus.)

Negotiating Entry: Prose Writing

The actual study, then, starts in the setting of Donna Qualley's prose writing course which she volunteered to have me visit during the first week of classes (September 1987) to see if it would be suitable for my research. I came on the second day of her class and stayed for the entire semester

(the class met twice a week for one and a half hours for fourteen weeks). I was not surprised that Donna's classroom became my choice: my previous connection with her in graduate seminars brought us together in a natural teacher-researcher collaboration. Initial fieldnotes indicate my attraction to her class:

Love Donna's laugh and red shoes. Very high quality of discussion, lots of participation on only the third day. Reading an essay in class makes it possible to talk immediately afterward. Like the idea of the reading conference, want to tape it. Many possibilities of students who said they would work with me. Need to discuss time, commitment, interest. Feel very good about the class and about working with Donna. Good possibilities here. Notice that I pay more attention to the students than to Donna. Field Notes 9/10/87

Entering this setting was facilitated by my own background as a writing teacher, by Donna's ability to present me as a colleague, and by the students' receptivity to having a participant-observer in their classroom. As the semester went on, students make occasional references to me as "the researcher" or to "Elizabeth's research." Many students share their writing assignments from other courses throughout the semester, affirming for me the status they've accorded me within their classroom.

Selecting Informants: Getting at the Students' Perspective

Some readers of this study will insist that the students I describe here are not "typical" state university students: perhaps no completely "typical student" volunteers for a

project such as mine. I would argue along with Glenda Bissex and other teacher-researchers (Seeing for ourselves, 1988) that we have not looked closely enough at students' learning to fully understand the range of literacies they bring to our classrooms, probing beneath what on the exterior seems unassumingly ordinary. My process for selecting student-informants was simple: I asked for volunteers who were willing to talk with me weekly that were also enrolled in majors which required extensive writing.

All the students in prose writing class initially appeared interesting to me. But I knew that if I was to rely on extensive interviews I would need to establish a collaborative relationship with key informants who could provide me with different lenses for understanding student views on academic literacy. As many as ten students from the class of nineteen talked further with me about my project: Those who were unable to volunteer either because of time constraints or limited writing in their course work, contributed in the end to the many voices that inform my chapter, "Anatomy of a Classroom," which is a description of Donna's prose writing course.

My six original informants included only two women: Anna, who became one of my two main case studies, did a great deal of writing in her art history major and Bonnie, whose major of outdoor education itself attracted me. Nick became my other case study and was such an articulate student that I asked him

to volunteer. Anthony, enrolled in a Russian literature course, offered the perspective of the returning part-time student. Jim was learning disabled and felt that talking about his writing projects in other courses would help him. Andy, whose major was leisure, management and tourism was involved in campus politics, a fraternity, and a small Bible group. Together these students presented a wide range of potential perspectives on academic literacy: different majors, different genders, different skill abilities, different interests. My eventual selection process was then based on hunches, chemistry, and the search for diversity.

I paid each student a small university-funded stipend for their involvement with my project (CURF Grant). Once when Nick was so broke that he didn't have enough money to photo-copy some of his writing for me, I joked that he was probably involved in the project just for the pay. He reminded me that he had recently worked in a local factory where he made considerably more in hourly wages. Since none of my informants asked to drop out of the study, I felt that they were learning as much as I did by sharing their attitudes and opinions about what it means to be literate in a college setting.

These students led me to alternative ways of considering academic literacy. Bonnie, for instance, helped me see that the academic skills developed in college might be tied to more than a classroom or even a major: literacy could be

intertwined with a personal construct of the self. I learned this through her invitation to attend the Fireside Club meeting (Field Notes 12/87) where she was presenting the use of the journal in experiential education. The student-operated club provides leadership experiences in planning and taking small groups of students on wilderness or nature trips.

My field notes from that night indicate what I learned:

Bonnie gave group members a journal made especially for them and asked us all to find a quiet spot and write about something significant that happened in our day's activities. On the blue cover of the journal was written: 'We all climb the same mountain together but we each get something different out of it.' I was given a journal as well and knew that I would be expected to share my writing. We wrote for about 20 minutes and then reconvened and read parts of what we had written. There was a long discussion on the use of journals in adventure experiences, both individual and group journals. (Field Notes 12/12).

Bonnie showed me that I might need to look outside the college classroom to reflect on the literacy behaviors that I saw taking place inside the classroom. For Bonnie as well as for Nick, the use of the journal in academic situations was connected to a life-long personal literate habit of journal-keeping. Each student in my study was able to teach me something very individualized about his or her private literacy during the course of this study which informed and reflected on my understanding of these students' academic literacies.

Like most ethnographers, I collected more data than I would be able to use and found the process of eliminating

material rather painful. Second semester I followed only four students--Bonnie, Anna, Anthony and Nick--to courses in their majors. Jim had no writing in his second semester course work and Andy's major duplicated one of Bonnie's two majors (Leisure, Management and Tourism). I began with six students, worked down to four by second semester and finally wrote only about two, Anna and Nick. Such decisions were mainly guided by the quality of data I was collecting, my personal engagement with students and a sense of their own commitment to my project.

Family Member/Guest: The Design

According to Wilcox (1982), the overall aim of an ethnographer is to "combine the view of an insider with that of an outsider to describe a social setting (Wilcox, p. 462). In each of the several academic settings where I worked, I was able to achieve both the insider and outsider perspective, partially because of the design of the study. During the first phase of data collection, I had a rich supply of data sources from prose writing class; from Donna, the six target students, and from the whole class who treated me more as a family member in their prose writing class. My goal for this part of my field work experience was to make the familiar setting of a composition classroom strange, to see prose writing from the perspective of an outsider, using key students to inform me.

The second phase of my data collection took me into foreign territory, into disciplines that I had either never studied before or which now seemed alien to me. My goal for this part of the study was to make the unfamiliar setting familiar to me, drawing on the expertise of the student-informants who were declared majors in these disciplines. My sources of data are more limited during the second term because I am treated as more of a guest in these classrooms than an accepted member of the community as I was in prose writing.

As guest I began by gaining formal invitations to visit these classes. Here are my field notes from 1/26/88 when I was trying to gain entrance to Anthony's Russian course:

I slushed my way across campus to the Russian Department to see if I can join Anthony in his Dostoevsky course. I find Jim R., with his back to the door, immersed in reading and eating his lunch which includes onions and brie. Even sitting down beside him I can tell that he is a very short man. He wears a sweater vest, striped shirt and heavy glasses.

Quickly we begin to talk about the course. Jim shared that using journals in his classes helps him "keep in touch" with his students' thinking but that he had 45 students and fell behind in reading them. In the Dostoevsky course he plans to give 60% of the grade for class participation, hoping that the oral involvement will take the place of a journal. If writing is valued in the university he said, then classes must be smaller (Field Notes, 7/26/88, 1/26/88).

As a guest, I relied on good manners in acquiring writing samples or oral transcripts from students in these other disciplines who never fully understood my status in their classes. And like a polite house guest I tried to reciprocate

the hospitality of the instructor by giving them some ideas, when asked, about how their classrooms might become more effective learning contexts through the use of writing. In the two case studies you will meet two instructors who considered my suggestions and acted upon them.

Looking and Listening: The Ethnographer's Tools for Data Collection

The major techniques for acquiring ethnographic data are through participant observation by collecting "thick descriptions"(Geertz) in the form of field notes and by holding interviews with informants (Spradley, The Ethnographic Interview, 1979) although photographs, informants' writing, and personal artifacts are also used. Lofland and Lofland (1984) stress the "mutuality" of these two techniques for the naturalistic investigator (p.13). At the outset, field notes might include everything from the angle of the sun or the smell of a classroom to the verbatim talk that goes on there as well as clothes worn and gestures used by the speakers. When the question's still hazy, my notes are often prolific and less focused. Here's a snip of my September field notes, revealing an eclectic and unorganized mixture of recording that I do, jumping from my methodology to the class dynamics to the key students:

I should have taped this session but feel the use of a tape recorder would be too intrusive this early on. Tried to capture and summarize the conversation. Class began with Donna taping up a big poster that Holiday Inn ladies gave her when she graduated from college. The poster

shows the student in four years of college: in sequence two the head is severed and then in sequence four it is filled with sand. She asks why the poster seems appropriate to their discussion of Freire and then jokingly suggests; 'Everything I say today is just a bag of sand.'

Anna came in late. I noticed that Nick writes with a fountain pen, very unusual for a student. Anthony showed me a new appointment book he bought to organize his life. Jim held some exchanges with Rene about her boyfriend. Andy's perfunctory remarks about readings off put me off..."

These field notes go on for seven more pages with most of the space devoted to recording verbatim classroom conversation. In later notes from this class, I develop more concise note-taking skills, writing less, saying more, mainly because I have begun focusing: Such culling of field notes starts as soon as possible. At the base level, then, data analysis is just a way of sorting through different types of notes taken. In late September I began to code my notes, adapting a technique outlined in Schatzman and Strauss. Notes are coded as ON (observational note) or TN (theoretical note) and MN (methodological note) and PN (personal note). From early in the study, here's a page of my coded field notes:

ON: When I came into class Andy was talking with Donna about how he didn't have his paper ready due to computer problems. Andy said, "You can't rely on technology." After the class assembled, Donna announced that Angie was running for Miss New Hampshire and that the class could go together as a field trip if the fee wasn't \$25 a person. Students ask Angie questions about the contest.

A paper was due in class today and Donna asked them to write about what they felt was working best in their papers.

Question: Can we write about what is not working?

Donna: Yes, most writers look at the negative. Write about any concerns you have.

Tom: Where, at the end?

Donna: Anywhere. I'll read your self-evaluation of the paper as I read the paper. Make comments throughout if you want.

MN: While the class writes, I pass out three pages cartoons from Peanuts on writing. I am trying to establish some silent rapport with them as a group. I notice that when they stop writing (11:20), they pick up the cartoons and amuse themselves until the rest of the class is finished. Some students smile at me in acknowledgement of my gift.

ON: Donna: I'd like you to evaluate your papers each week when you hand them in: it guides my reading. Now I'd like you to look at what Hoagland says about the essay form to re-read your own essay. Look at your paper and on a separate sheet, respond. How do you see your paper through his eyes? (The essay is called, "What I think, What I Am by Edward Hoagland from On Essays: A Reader for Writers).

TN: This in-class reading of one text(student) against another (professional) creates a distancing effect. Some students write without re-reading their essays, others go back and forth. Everyone seems absorbed as they work between two texts, creating intertextuality.

PN: Donna seems relaxed, always gives enough time in class for students to either write or read. Anna looks tired and disheveled, Andy seems tense. I realize that I've seen them all in a kind of equal way that I will never see them again after I read these first papers. Reading Nick's slightly pretentious writing changed my attitude toward him although I realize that he's somewhat earnest in his pretense. Writing reveals so much, is so exposing. Do students themselves understand the power that writing has over any audience--Donna, their peers?

Field Notes 9/17/87

Months later, when I return to these coded field notes I highlight the ideas of "self-evaluation" and "intertextuality" to form one of my emerging data categories on how writing is used in this classroom. This initial coding makes the ensuing search for categories of analysis more systematic.

In all, I collect 114 pages of coded field notes on the prose writing classroom which I keep in a salmon-colored looseleaf binder. When I share these notes with Donna, we discover that my observations and interpretations about what is going on in her class can be different than her own, adding another perspective to my data through this collaborative process. Mainly donna and I do not disagree but as the following example shows, we extend each other's thinking. This exchange between Donna and I comes after a reading group where Anthony, Robin and Anna had been discussing a Saul Bellow short story. When I re-read the transcript, I wonder why so much of the students' discussion centers on differences in forms in writing, differences between, for example, the essay and story. I insert a theoretical note about this in the transcript:

Anna: when I read a short story, I feel dumb. Like last night, I read "Franny" by Salinger and I thought to myself, what am I supposed to take away from this?

Anthony: I like the novella form. That's halfway between the short story and the novel. You can do a lot with that form.

(T.N.: Is this an unnatural discussion of form that wouldn't be ongoing in this class if Donna hadn't set them up to think about form through readings such as Hoagland's "What is an Essay?")

When Donna reads the transcript and my note, she responds in the margin saying, "Probably, but we can't help the discussions that occur in our classes. A history is being created, a context is in process, a conversation unique to this class, and to any class" (Transcript 11/1/88).

Structured Conversations: Informant Interviews

While I am busy recording field notes on the classrooms, both in prose writing and later four other field sites, I also hold weekly interviews with each of my informants. These interviews turn my focus away from my descriptions of what is happening in particular settings to individual perceptions and interpretations of informants' literacy events and encounters within these classrooms. Mostly typically, students would share their instructors' responses to their papers, often handing them to me before they even read the comments.

First semester I spend an hour or more with them, either before or after their writing conferences, usually taping our interviews. Second semester when I attend another course with each student, our interviews are more informal and often take place before or after class. Both terms, we review reading and writing assignments and talk about what is happening in the courses I am observing. General interview guides were constructed (see Spradley, The Ethnographic Interview, 1979, for questioning techniques) so that over the course of two semesters I would get the same information from each student. But more than acquiring the same data for each student, these interviews become the major source for my understanding the students perspective on their own literacy.

My weekly interviews with students, then are informal conversations as I attempt to follow the thinking patterns of

each student. When Anna says that she has certain things that follow her around in all her course work, I try to probe for these elusive "things"; when Nick shares that the women students' responses in his writing group are pretty "gritty", I need an interpretation for this word; when Anthony says that he writes primarily for himself, I try to understand his concept of audience; and when Bonnie suggests she can't learn in one of her classes unless she understands how to "use" the information, I have to get at her meaning for "applied learning." In these interviews, I assume very little as I try to make explicit the literacies that empower or short circuit students' learning processes.

Here is a portion of an important interview with Bonnie where she explains why she's having trouble with her "foods and dudes" course, a large (300-student) lecture-style general elective course with a lab component. In this interview Bonnie talks about the papers written for the course, both her diet analysis and the most recent paper on a computer-simulated experiment about the diet of chickens.

Elizabeth: You say you've found Dr. Smith a very satisfying lecturer. And then you say that you wish you had a better way of connecting his lectures. Did this assignment (on the chickens) help?

Bonnie: I think the diet analysis could have connected it for me but you only had a week to do it. If we had looked at our diets over the whole semester, I think that would have been a lot better.
I don't think this chick study has anything to do with humans. Why do we want to know about diets of chickens? We're not chickens--this is a food and people course, not a foods and chicks class.

Elizabeth: They do offer a course in animal nutrition I know.

Bonnie: Maybe abstractly he's saying that these same nutrients are important to people but you already know that from class. It would have been better to show that these nutrients are important when looking at your own diet. I think the diet analysis could have been a project to help connect all the information for each person because each person has different dietary needs. I don't know what mine are. I know from the diet analysis that I'm lacking in iron. But I don't know why I'm lacking in iron.

Elizabeth: Are you saying that these assignments just scrape the surface?

Bonnie: Right. You can say all these things, and he's got, he's got so much information. You can give back all this information but it doesn't mean anything unless you can internalize it, unless you can use it yourself. And then you can begin to use it for other people as well...

Interview 12/15/87

These interviews probe students' own constructs for their literacy and learning patterns within the parameters of their classroom settings, in an attempt to discover which most help the learner as in Bonnie's suggestion that she needs to apply or "connect" her learning for it to be meaningful. My folders bulge with data as I record both general and specific information for each student about college literacy demands. I file and code these separate interviews as well (using different colored binders for each student), attaching notes on possible categories or themes that come out of our extended conversations, my classroom observations, and my analysis of their writing for prose writing and other course work. Each folder tells a different story of students literacy experiences in college. Each folder could be read as kind of a patchwork quilt.

Validating Patterns: The Analytic Memo

During the first semester, I draw on still another source of information to verify data that I gather in individual interviews; those are transcripts of Donna's writing conferences. With each informant's permission, I tape, listen to, but do not always transcribe these conferences. Anthony, for instance, has a dramatic conference with Donna on 9/29/87 after she has read a paper called Oblomov that Anthony's volunteers to share with the class to model writing group responses. Donna is baffled by Anthony's paper: Anthony is defensive. Here's the initial part of the ten-paged transcript which guides me in my subsequent interview with Anthony and becomes part of my first analytic memo:

Donna: Why did you want do this paper with the group?

Anthony: Why? Well because I've only done two for you. This is the second and I like it better than the first one.

Donna: I had a hard time with this.

Anthony: You had a hard time with it?

Donna: I don't know what "oblemov" is.

Anthony: That's Oblomov right there (points to his Penguin paperback)

Donna: Thanks. You assume that /

Anthony:/ Everybody knows who Oblomov is.

Donna: Yes. Help us out.

Anthony: Well..I've developed my own character here and he's spun right off of this guy's...that book right there...

Donna: "Penguin says..".

Anthony: It's a classic, trust me. The reason it's a classic is because the character's timeless. He could have existed anytime, he could have existed twenty thousand years ago/

Donna:/ Okay, well that makes all literature classic. For that very reason.

Anthony: Okay. I figured what would he be like in the twentieth century. But there's more than that. What this paper represented is me, what's happening with me and myself, (Conference Transcript, 9/29/87).

Using this conference transcript, my own interview with Anthony, a taped transcript of the class discussion of Anthony's Oblomov paper, I wrote an analytic memo to myself about Anthony's confusion over his two audiences of prose writing and Russian class. The analytic memo (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973, p. 104) serves to pull together a number of pieces of information around a theme or event and to force the ethnographer who is so busy collecting data, to also reflect on it. The analytic memo then becomes a kind of internal dialogue. Here's a clip of the memo I wrote to myself on Anthony's confusion of audience. What I am finally after is not just my perception of this event but Anthony's.

Analytic Memo 2

As I work with this student, I began to sense his confusion over a "sense of audience" in writing for these two different courses, Russian and prose writing. Instead of writing about the relatively unknown Russian novel, Oblomov for Russian class, Anthony wrote the paper for English 501. His submission of this paper for Donna's course, began an interesting thread of events which I will describe below.

When Anthony volunteered to let Donna use his Oblomov paper to demonstrate how writing groups should work, she never anticipated the full range of responses that would emerge. The paper ended up not providing an good model of writing group response because Anthony had misjudged his audience. Anthony

has written no papers yet for Russian, only journal entries, and did not intend this paper for Russian but for English 501. The question of Anthony's understanding of audience will be an interesting one of follow this semester since it has been firmly set in motion in this course.

The data that I am considering here include:

1. Anthony's paper which requires prior knowledge of an unfamiliar Russian novel, Oblomov.
2. The transcript of Anthony's workshop when the whole class read and responded to his paper.
3. Donna's conference with Anthony about the novel
4. My conference with Anthony about all these events.
5. A note from a student in Russian class who read Anthony's paper.
6. Journal entries from students who responded to the workshop on the novel.
7. Anthony's own journal entries which display his continued confusion over differing audiences.
8. Anthony's paper written for Russian class on an entirely different novel.

In this memo, after setting up my topic and listing the sources of data I considered, I then discuss what Anthony himself has said about audience in our interviews:

Anthony has used some very unusual words to talk about audience. At one point he said that his English papers in Freshman English were very 'popular'--particularly with women students. He also felt that 'Oblomov' would 'threaten' his readers. Yet when I ask him about who his imagined audience is for his writing, he says; 'I just write to please myself' which are contradictory to the idea of writing that is either 'popular' or 'threatening.'

When Anthony writes the next paper for prose writing he describes it as a very 'impersonal' topic, which it is, about buying American products over foreign imports, (Analytic Memo 11/11/87).

This memo sets me up to watch for connecting threads in my talks with Anthony as well as in classroom observations. In October (P/I, 10/11) Anthony shares that his Oblomov paper was a mistake; "It's like you're coming in on the middle of a moving merry-go round or something like that." Anthony goes

on to write well for both courses, never again confusing his audience, often talking explicitly about audience expectations. He also drops the guise that he writes only for himself.

Analytic memos, written on any topic or event that the ethnographer is concerned with, pull from multiple data sources to arrive at tentative interpretations. Later, when I am ready to write my narrative chapter, *Anatomy of Prose Writing*, I am able to draw from this memo to describe a significant classroom event.

Data Analysis: Model Building

The processes of reflecting on and writing about the growing data sources in an ethnography helps move the research from anecdotes and personal insights to the stage of analysis, to constructing interpretative models. What sounds suspiciously unscientific to the quantitative researcher--that the themes or categories arise from patterns in the data--actually describes a very rigorous comparative method which involves "joint coding and analysis" to generate theories for further testing (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Chapter 5).

For example. Since I am not a linguist, I never intended to enter the territory of discourse analysis: I never intended to count male, female turn-taking in transcripts of group work as I ended up doing. But my study drew me into considering the ways talk supported reading and writing in Donna's classroom.

As early as the first week of observation, I wrote in my fieldnotes: "It is the talk that is so exciting." Innocently enough I started to tape small reading and writing groups and to transcribe Donna's writing conferences as well as my own interviews with students. In re-reading these many transcripts, I began to see patterns related to both gender and power in the classroom context. I turned to the work of sociolinguists, feminists, and conversational analysts to inform me about these emerging patterns [Aries (1987); Thorne and Henley (1975); Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley (1983)]. I am still not a linguist but a teacher-researcher who is convinced that the way conversations take place classrooms plays an important part in how and what students' learn. Language use emerged as one of the key categories that I felt contributed to students' sense of community within the college classroom. I relate this not to confess that I'm a novice at discourse analysis but rather to show that ethnographers go where their findings point them, not where preconceived hypotheses suggest that data will be found. Ethnographic theory is not built from a priori categories but from the ground up as Paul Diesing describes:

The holist uses evidence to build up a many-sided, complex picture of his subject matter. He accomplished this by using several kinds of evidence, each providing a partial or limited description that supplements other partial descriptions, (Diesing, 1972, p. 147).

There was no stage more frustrating than the analysis of my massive data into workable analytic categories. For one

month I drafted and re-drafted versions of Donna's classroom, pure descriptions, without any ordering principle made explicit to the reader. Donna patiently read and re-read each draft but finally suggested that while the data was fascinating--after all it was her classroom--she didn't know what she was looking for as she read. My researcher journal reflects my reliance on Donna as a supportive reader:

I finally got the first fifteen pages of the Anatomy section right. I have, according to my file dates, been working on these pages for three weeks. One day I spent two hours drafting two sentences. I could actually hear my heart beating while I wrote, so anxious was I to get it right.

Donna has been my best reader so far. After reading four preliminary drafts of my narrative about her classroom, she wrote back that it would help her a great deal if she knew what she was looking for as she read the story. What a simple thing for her to say: how do I know what all this mess means?

There is some wonderful ecstatic satisfaction in having located my major themes, a feeling that I haven't had for a long time, (Researcher Journal).

Four categories in my massive data from two semesters were able to account for how the sense of an academic community grows within a college classroom. While those four categories are there, embedded in the data, supported and reconfirmed by many different sources, and while they explain how college classrooms may become literate communities, they remain my constructed and superimposed view of how these college students' literacy works. Another researcher, sifting through the same piles, would not come up with the same categories: another researcher would not have the same lived-through experiences with these informants or these settings.

Ethnographer, Andrea Fishman, warns against transplanting another researcher's organizing categories:

In fact, it is probably the ways these organizing categories work that make the results of this study seem at all polished or complete. And while I don't know how I would have finally written up my research without them, I would caution any reader against trying to transplant these categories to another setting or to assume that my findings may be found intact anywhere else, (Fishman, 1988, p. 211).

The most difficult test of my data in the end will have to be whether my accounts of these students literacies and the categories constructed to explain them prove useful to others who read this ethnography. As D. Hymes suggests, the ultimate test of any research belongs to your own community of researchers (Hymes, 1982, p. 296). If so, I have done my job.

The seams of this study are now visible, maybe even a bit ragged from this detailed discussion of doing ethnography in an academic setting. I'd like to add a note on observer bias in this kind of research.

An Embroidered Note

Every research method carries with it a world view. As researchers we choose our methods and topics because of our belief systems and our personalities. Ethnography per se is no better or worse than any other methodology: it simply offers a suitable method for studying people in context and

schools as cultures. Ethnographers draw upon a variety of methods in conducting field-based research: we draw upon the historians' perspective, examining key documents and events; we borrow from the quantitative researchers' facility with numbers to arrive at some measurements; and use the hermeneutic method of literary scholars for doing textual analysis, offering interpretations. At different places in this ethnography, you will see evidence of all these methodologies.

But, the main concern of ethnography is with the informants' context or world view. As Denny Taylor has recently suggested, researchers need not view context "as some analytic category" (Taylor, 1988, p. xix) but rather in the way Mishler (1979) and others have argued as a resource for understanding both the lives of our informants and ourselves as researchers. The power of conducting ethnographies in the field of education really comes from its appropriateness for understanding educational settings and students in them. As Paul Diesing says in Patterns of Discovery in the Social Science (1972), whatever else a methodology may be, "it should at least be adequate to the particular thing described and should not distort it" (p. 141).

And yet the act of writing about people and settings, as ethnographers finally do, must involve some degree of distortion, some manipulation of descriptions and interview data in order to present it. Clifford Geertz has recently

disclosed that in the end "all ethnographical descriptions are homemade, that they are the describer's descriptions, not those of the described" (1988, p.145). What then makes the ethnographic account feel authentic, realistic, believable, as if we have participated in the very texture of the informants' lives? I think it is because ethnography yields, like literature, a different kind of knowledge, a sense of the universality in life, of "being there." And at the same time ethnography provides instances of the particular, of instructive cases and situations, as in the work of Erikson, Freud and Piaget, that also inform us. We have available now in the field of education a growing body of ethnographic literacy studies, from Heath's research on two rural Piedmont communities to Fishman's study of Amish Literacy, from the case study of Glenda Bissex's young "gnys," to Denny Taylor's recent ethnography on black urban families. This field-based naturalistic research captures both the universal and the specific, granting us as researchers, a kind of double seam for our scholarship.

It is time now to enter the prose writing class and ask the ethnographer's perennial question, "What goes on there?"

CHAPTER 2

ANATOMY OF A DISCOURSE COMMUNITY: PROSE WRITING

Yet only through communication can human life hold meaning. The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students' thinking. The teacher cannot think for his students nor can he impose his thoughts on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication, (Paulo Freire, "The Banking Concept of Education.")

Prose writing class does not begin as a cohesive classroom community: with few exceptions students do not know one another before the course starts, nor do they share academic fields of interest. The students do share, however, as upper class members of a particular university, interactive language habits and classroom behaviors that distinguish them from many other discourse communities, from their non-collegiate high school classmates, for example. Within a few days, and within the fairly artificial context of a classroom, Donna Qualley, and these students construct a temporary community, an extended family unit (Taylor, 1983) which functions as a literate support system for students' exploration of their own personal and intellectual development.

How this particular community is formed by using the literacy structures available in all classrooms to support learning will be analyzed, leaving room for additions when we enter other settings where discipline-specific differences may

occur. My data suggests that the following literacy structures undergird students' success at understanding what it means to be a member of any given discourse community: 1) how talk is used in the course; 2) how texts are used in the course; 3) how writing is used in the course; 4) how thinking in the discipline is presented.

Academic discourse communities provide only a temporary setting for learning yet if the literacy structures are explicit and meaningful, when the community disbands those scaffolds will remain in the students' minds to inform them of the ways of talking, reading, writing and thinking that characterize any particular discipline. I would like to suggest that the more explicit these discourse structures are, the more conscious students will be not only of what, but how they are learning.

Donna's syllabus explicitly states that; "We will use reading and writing to find out what we have to say--what we think about a subject" (Two unexcused class absences lower the grade by a full letter). The syllabus reveals a very tightly constructed course with four major pedagogical strands: reading, writing, form, and collaboration to be accomplished within three feedback structures: group work, individual conferences, and journal writing. The model for engagement with reading and writing reflects a social view of these processes: Donna says that "...this class will work through interaction."

Such interactive social processes are woven into the course in the form of small reading and writing groups which meet eight times during the semester and into the final writing assignment of a collaborative group paper. A dialogue between teacher and student is built into the course through the short (10-15 minute bi-weekly conferences) and through student journal responses which are also read and returned on a bi-weekly schedule. From the one-on-one conference to peer group work, from informal handwritten journals to formal revised papers, from open paper topics to the assigned collaborative writing, from teacher evaluation to self-evaluation Donna invites many learning styles and literacy structures into this classroom.

Donna's Prose Writing class met in a rectangular room on the second floor of Hamilton-Smith Hall, a Greek revival building where the English department is housed. Students assemble around a series of square tables pulled together in the middle of the room to form a corral shape. The room is well set up in terms of ample space and moveable furniture for the group work that characterizes this course.

Using my field notes, student interviews, reading and writing group transcripts, and analysis of student writing, I am offering an episodic collage of what goes on in Donna's classroom on a typical day in order to ground the study in descriptions before considering how and why this prose writing course achieves the status of an academic discourse community.

Whenever possible, I include the voices of my major informants to make you familiar with them in this context: here they are however, only contributing members of the entire prose writing family.

Language Stories: Queen for A Day

Students who arrive early for class read newspapers, drink coffee or sodas at 11:00 but mostly just talk. The two major participants whose voices will inform my narrative account of writing across the curriculum are Nick, who enters wearing jeans torn at the knees, a red bandanna covering his head to reveal a single earring, portraying an image of a modern day pirate and Anna, who has on a greenish shirt which matches her eyes, a long unbelted skirt, sandals and a turquoise ribbon around her neck which makes her seem carelessly artsy. These students display distinctive dress styles which reflect their distinctive writing voices that you will later hear. Many students on this campus dress either in the traditional preppy uniform or in some version of the athlete, wearing sweat shirts and pants to classes.

A student who is reading horoscopes aloud from the Boston Globe asks Anthony, a Slavic studies major, if he knows what 'obsequious' means. Without missing a beat, Anthony replies, "submissive and willing to serve" and then turns to Anna to show her a portrait he has drawn. Anna who's an art history major coddles her hot coffee as she comments on the

drawing. Bonnie scurries around trying to sell raffle tickets to students in order to raise money for her trip to a professional conference for students majoring in outdoor education. Nick, a political science major, fiddles with the cartridge for his fountain pen, an instrument critical for his writing and drawing which are always executed with real care.

As students trickle into the classroom they talk about the possibility of war with Iran, a fairly removed political issue, eliciting some varied responses from these New England students: "Iran declared war against us." "Is there going to be a draft?" "The stock market crashed. If we have a war, that will help the economy." "How can you say that we need a war? That's sick." "There couldn't be a war with Iran. It would be over in a week. They're right on the Soviet border." "We wouldn't need troops, we'd use air power."

Donna enters the room, wearing loose red cotton pants, a colorful flowered shirt, high-topped red tennis shoes, an emblematic ceramic pig pin from her hog-raising days in Australia, and a friendly smile. She carries an armload of student journals and papers, plops them down and picks up a xerox of a paper left from a previous class and reads the title aloud to no one in particular, "'My Sister Survived the Rapids.' That sounds like your trip, Rene." Rene, our exchange student from San Diego, laughs in response, remembering her recent dunking on a New Hampshire canoe trip.

Donna shares that Angie is entered in the Miss New Hampshire beauty pageant and that if it didn't cost \$25 a head to go, she'd arrange a class trip to offer moral support. When students ask Angie about the contest, she tells them that this is her second try, that last year the judges asked her a sexist question about her "ideal man."

Sasha ends a side discussion of being carded by saying: "They asked if I was in the eighth grade!" Donna picks up on this thread by saying she loves to be carded since it makes her feel young. Jim, who works as a bouncer at Rick's, a local bar suggests; "Come to Rick's on Tuesday Night and I'll card you, Donna." Jodi shares with the rest of the class that she saw Donna on Saturday night at Newick's Seafood Restaurant in her red and blue waitressing uniform, balancing trays but that she didn't talk to her because she didn't want to break Donna's "waitress- concentration." For the many student in this class who have part-time jobs--both of my informants-- Donna's waitressing in order to support her "habit" of teaching composition, lends her real-world credibility not often afforded to academic-types. Nick once commented on a professor not included in this study: "The guy is brilliant but I think he has a hard time tying his shoes."

There is some juggling of paperwork and board work before the class "officially begins." Trish rushes in, out-of-breath, harassed and somewhat embarrassed. "I have a story," she

claims and the class gets ready for her "Queen for a Day" narrative.

Queen For A Day was a 1950's afternoon game show hosted by Bess Meyerson and Jack Bailey where housewives shared their hardluck stories. The most unfortunate, judged by meter applause, could win a mink stole and sit on a fake throne while the audience cheered. This language event entered Donna's Prose Writing class when she had waitlisted students tell their hardluck stories about trying to "add" prose writing to their schedules, thereby securing one of the few places available in her mostly filled section. Although there were some basic rules to her game--graduating seniors required to take prose writing had priority--the better the story was told, the better chance the student had for adding this course to his or her schedule. After the first class session, Donna found notes stuck to her door from students relating their desperate situations: "I have crew practice every morning and evening and can only fit in your section of prose writing," or: " The computer closed me out of all preregistered courses and I will lose my scholarship if I can't get into your section by tomorrow."

Queen for a Day stories surrounded the rituals of the course: When students had problems with submitting papers, being late to class, or showing up for conferences, they had better have a good story to share with Donna or the group. This informal language event became a metaphor which bound the

class together by inviting stories and personal narratives into this classroom because, as Joan Dideon suggests; " We tell stories in order to live." These language stories provide a literacy lesson singular to this discourse community with the term Queen for a Day being part of the insider language system, the origin of which is impenetrable to outsiders.

Trish ends her story with a rush of explanation: " And they were about to tow my car but Keith saved me and then I had to move it and I then couldn't find a new space, and then I was late." Students clap for Keith's heroism and make room for Trish as she organizes her overstuffed bags on the floor.

Donna says, "Your life is made up of Queen-For-A Day Stories."

Trish retorts, "You should live it."

The class agenda for the day centers around collaborative writing projects. Donna says that students will spend most of their time in writing groups, working on the collaborative papers. For this assignment each group of students was required to find its own trigger article for a paper topic from the library, negotiate a way of working together, and create a writing process for actually drafting the paper. Before students break into groups, Donna shares a story with the class. A professor at an ivy league school called his friend in industry, she says, just to check on how a recent graduate was getting on at work. The businessman said that the

graduate was well trained, knew his stuff and all that, but complained that the student had no idea how to work with others. Donna adds: "This is just to let you know that our collaborative writing project has value in the real world too."

Students have inquired about this project along the way: "Will we get to choose who we want to work with?" reveals their anxiety about being paired with someone they may not get along with well, an inevitable problem that Donna negotiated by having them submit several partner-choices and made sure that everyone gets at least one of their choices. Anthony's question: "Will I have to clean my apartment?" anticipates the intimacy that some of the collaborative groups will experience, particularly his own. "How will it be graded?" exposes the individualistic tradition of writing in a university setting where students allot time to projects according to their grade-potential. Donna's solution is to assign a group grade for the paper and an individual grade for the collaborative journal that accompanies it: Students hypothetically could earn a C on the paper and an A on the journal.

When Donna presents the format of the project (see Appendix for Collaborative Writing description), she says that it has two agendas: One she calls the "hidden curriculum" of getting students into the library, looking through selected newspapers, journals and literary magazines for an article to

"trigger" the group paper. The more explicit agenda of collaborative writing, she suggests, is an exercise in "working with people" and in "problem-solving." The image of the writer struggling in his/her garret immersed, lonely and alone for sake of "art" is not the only way people write Donna explains: "We're going to see what it's like to write together."

In a scraping of chairs, squeaking of tennis shoes, and shuffling of backpacks, students in this class find spaces to form groups to begin work. Jim's constant snuffle from his allergies carries across the room: everyone turns toward Donna whenever she lets forth her wild laugh. Nick straddles two chairs, settling his worn-out boots on one; Bonnie takes to the floor; Leslie, who's almost six feet tall, always looks like she's sitting in a kindergarten chair. Andy wears his baseball cap during the whole class; Keith his camouflage ROTC pants. Before the group work begins, Trish and Sherri, the glamour girls, get in a few slices of gossip. Tom comments on the latest music groups; and Rene reports on her California surfer boyfriend. Within this hum of activity and diversity of personalities, these students show amazing concentration for learning about reading and writing through group work.

I join Bonnie, Mark, and Anna's group where they're discussing a theme common to their articles: the dehumanization of man. Their plan's to write a short story where three people face a problem situation such as being

trapped in an elevator and show how the characters were unable to solve the problem of getting out (Is their plan, I wonder, a reflection of how they face the collaborative project as three strangers trying to work their way out of a problem?). Anna asks what kind of handicap one character should have to suggest a new perspective of intelligence, that describes a kind of caring that the others wouldn't share. Mark notes that the character of the robotics company executive will have to talk very technical language. When they try to decide what sex to make each character, Bonnie says, "Make them all genderless." The group's running so smoothly that I am not surprised when I learn that they write every word of their paper together in front of a computer. This lack of group tension later becomes an issue that Bonnie addresses in her journal:

Our group process was pretty smooth. There were no stressful moments that created anxiety, so there was nothing to exciting to reflect on and try to reframe. For some strange reason, I believe that people learn best when faced with stressful situations that create dissonance. By striving to adapt to disharmony, one learns, (12/3 Journal).

The only dissonance generated by this group was caused by me and this researcher interference was noted by both Anna and Bonnie in their journals. Bonnie wrote that "Unfortunately I don't think we got very much accomplished today. It seems like we spent most of the time going over everything so that Elizabeth could understand it all. I think it was good in one way..." (11/19 Journal).

When I wander over and sit in on another group, that of Jim, Rene, and Trish, I enter a wasp's nest of arguing, cranky students. While they have selected a topic--how to tell the terminally ill that they are dying--they seem sulky about it and can't get a grip on how to proceed from topic choice to the next stage (I wonder if this reflects on their own complex topic of the decision-making process). Trish wants them to do library research, writing in her journal "I mean how the hell can you form an opinion without knowing your subject?" Rene would prefer to go off and write the whole paper on her own "I've never experienced such a difficult process," she writes in her journal," writing a paper on my own is so much easier and a great deal more fun...when I write a paper by myself I just sit down and write what's on my mind and later organize...working in a group entails organizing ourselves before we write" (Journal, 12/3). Jim, who wanted to write about the candidates for the presidential primary, ends up valuing the experience more than his two partners because he sees in it an application to future situations: "I call this collaboration project hands-on training. This has been the best orientation to a business-like setting I have gone through so far in my education. Our education tends to be so individualized," (Journal, 12/3).

A fairly sour combination turns out to be Robin, Andy, and Keith, a group which can't agree on a triggering article from among the twelve they have read. They turn instead to

song lyrics to wrap the paper around, a consensual decision that is counter to the outline of the project since Donna explicitly stated that students must use a library article as the "triggering topic." Andy seems earnest about group work but according to the student journals, tried too hard to assume leadership. Robin writes that Andy "wanted to run the show, be the leader." Keith, a fine writer became a resistant collaborator who sees the major problem as one of time management: "As time is used up understanding how each person thinks, time for the project slips away. The result will usually be a product that is passed in, while still in transition, to meet the deadline...I really can't see how this paper will say anything," (Collaborative Journal).

I watch Nick, Sasha and Tom working intently on a computer diagram of male-female relationships which emerged from the ideas in an essay Tom read on Bullshit, Nick's article on the "L word" from New York Magazine and Sasha's overall interest in human relationships. Once the diagram's accomplished, the paper will explain the model, they tell me. Journal entries reveal that this system of working both stimulated and inhibited their paper. Nick writes;

Great. Now we've got a systematic model, incorporating the various aspects of the love 'orbit.' So... What's the paper actually about? Er...well... As Sasha asserted three or four times, correctly, we haven't figured out what, why or how to begin writing anything useful. She pointed out our distinct lack of theme: We've nothing of importance to say (Journal 11/22).

Tom, the inventor of the model feels that it symbolized the collaborative process: "...when I look at the diagram we constructed I realize why the most amazing discoveries are usually made by teams of people... the interaction between us is better than the sum of our individual ideas..."(Journal 12/3).

Angie and Sherrie approach me to see if they can borrow my tape recorder for the weekend. They've decided that it's their own talk about the articles that they want to capture on tape and then try to re-work the real dialogue into something like the fictionalized conversation in Raymond Carver's story, a piece they've shared in reading groups. Their problem later becomes somewhat like that of Bonnie's group: too much agreement, in their case over the topic of birth control. Angie writes that "the project was dying in it's birth" because of their total agreement with one another. Sherri suggested in hindsight that they could have "created a conflict right from the beginning instead of when we hit a dead end."

A duo which appears to be working well is that of Jodi and Anthony which I do not want to interrupt since I know Jodi was the only student in class who volunteered to work with Anthony, so intimidated are most of the students by Anthony's intensity. Their topic is that of mate expectations, triggered by a Huxley article and by Carver's story. Jodi's intent on trying to understand Anthony: "I've never met someone so

confident and yet so unsure of himself" where Anthony's started on the defensive: "I don't trust her, her me, and in this somehow we trust each other. No, nothing makes sense."

The final group of three women, Jill, Leslie, and Patty have agreed on a short story to trigger the idea of whether or not people are confined by their circumstances or if people trap themselves. This group, too, has been influenced by the format of Carver's short story and they've decided to write a three way fictionalized conversation among college roommates about being trapped.

Their journal entries indicate that each student wrote a complete draft separately and then came together to write together: This is where the problem of writing together surfaced: "As I was writing...I would put myself into each character and try to see who they were from what they were saying...but the problem was that it didn't fit in with Patty or Leslie's paper..." (Jill's Collaborative Journal).

These collaborative sessions usually took the majority of class time for the three week period students worked on their writing projects, both in and outside of class. Such small group meetings for reading, writing, and collaboration characterized the overall format of this prose writing class during that time. After working together, the class reconvened with Donna at the end, either to talk, to read, and usually to review assignments. Donna might talk, for example, about a recent visit to a local high school to model writing

process approaches for the teachers and students: "High school--the rushed schedule and teacher control all bothered me. While I was trying to get all the students to share their writing, the teacher would say to them, 'Do your own work.' While I was asking students to talk, the teachers kept going 'hush, hush.' Poor high schools," sighs Donna, the veteran of nine years of high school teaching. Then she hands out a short reading for the last 20 minutes of class time, "College Kids Say the Darrest Things" which connects to previous reading assignments on the banking concept of education by Freire and Hirsch's position on cultural literacy. The essay, written by a history professor, satirizes the confusions that students have made on their history exams over the years.

While the class reads, Donna puts her red tennis shoes on the table, rocks back in her seat and waits to see who will be the first person to laugh. In some classes where she has shared this article, students don't have enough background knowledge to understand its humor. Donna feels that student errors, as Margaret Donaldson's work on young children's mistakes suggests, have a real logic to them: "Can't you just see some professor lecturing on Voltaire and he says Candide and students mutter to each other, "Did he say candy?" and so they write "Voltaire wrote Candy" into their notes."

After laughing together at some of the funny mistakes in the article, students share their own malapropos from past experiences in test-taking:

Tom: I remembered that once after we had studied medieval history that I wrote the word "tassels" for "vassals" on the whole test.

Jill: I had a friend in biology class who took an oral test on paramecium and said that they walk on their testicles and the whole class broke up.

Before Donna's class ends, she reviews due dates for journals, new papers, peer writing responses, and reading group selections, saying: "I realize you have to orchestrate a lot of things here but I like to have a complex class."

Narrative Conversations: Speaking Your Mind

Much of the talk that goes on Donna's section of prose writing can be described as informal, collaborative, and narrative, as growing out of, and relating back to stories about students' lives. Narrative thought, Jerome Bruner suggests, is distinguished from logico-scientific or paradigmatic thought and constructs an entirely different world view (Bruner, 1986). The narrative discourse style of this class begins with the Queen for a Day stories that demonstrate how metaphors are appropriated by a particular group for its own use. Not all students desired the status of Queen for a Day. Jim, for example, wrote a note on one of his papers: "There is no Queen story--this is just late." And yet the narrative conversational style sets the tone of the course as a place where students can speak without inhibition about their personal lives. Jim puts it this way: "I don't think

anyone is scared to speak out in Donna's class," (Personal Interview, 10/19). Where a student like Nick takes the open discussion style rather for granted, characterizing the talk in prose writing as your basic "laid back, hang-loose, everybody say what they want, English department kind of talk", a learning disabled student like Jim--who needed a note taker in for his political science lecture courses--welcomed this chance both to talk, and to listen to talk as well.

This narrative conversational style is most easily contrasted with the interrogative model that dominates much of our schooling. Here's the only moment recorded in my fieldnotes where Donna uses what I call the "cheerleading chant." She asks: "What you decide to write about is called what?" Students reply: "The triggering subject." She asks, "What you actually write about is called what?" Students respond in a choral manner, "The real subject." For both of these queries, the students and Donna both know there is a single answer to the cheer.

Contrast this with the more cooperative, constructive yet still interrogative style used here:

Donna: What's the purpose of education in our society? Is it to ensure the dominant values?

Angie: Sure. It's connected with patriotism. I remember saluting the flag and writing an essay in eighth grade on what Memorial Day Means to me.

In the latter exchange, there's a question and answer model but with no one right response that Donna and her students

know she wants. Further, Angie feels free to embellish her answer with a personal anecdote.

In the following transcript based on Freire's banking concept of education, an essay in Bartholomew and Petrosky's reader, notice the narrative layering of this unplanned conversation in what is clearly a discussion and not a "lesson." Donna initiates some open ended questions but students have the most turns talking. Notice too how the affective response to the reading is welcomed, how students are encouraged to discuss what Louise Rosenblatt calls the "lived through experience of reading"¹ before talking about what they have learned, or what they take away in terms of concepts.

Donna: Was this (Freire) hard to read?

Andy: I thought it was redundant.

Sasha: I didn't have any problem at all.

Donna: Why was it easier for you?

Sasha: I could relate to it. It had a lot to say.

Anna: I got the main idea in the first two pages and then he repeated himself.

Tom: I identified with it.

Trish: I thought that in a sense Freire was making a mockery of students. He was criticizing students as much as teachers. "You're too stupid to see this," he says.

¹ Rosenblatt has adopted this phrase from a poem by Keats about the "burned through" experience of reading "King Lear." (See p. 26, 27, The Reader, The Text, The Poem.)

Angie: I was taken by Freire's categorizing everyone as a man. We're using his essay in another class. I'm not a feminist but I wondered why he kept addressing everyone as "man." Why is that?

Donna: It can put you off after awhile.

Anthony: It didn't bother me at all.

Angie: That's because you're a man.

Some students imply here that the repetitive, almost redundant and sexist quality of Freire's essay has bothered them: Others say they "identified" or "related" to it. Without siding with either type of response, Donna accepts both and like many (female) conversationalists, asks why that's so.²

As students further explore their feelings about Freire's essay, they move toward uncovering the essay's key ideas such as "problem-posing" and "banking" but the affective issue in reading the essay is never entirely left behind as revealed here by Mark:

Mark: I didn't like this reading the first time. I thought it was making fun of how I had been educated.

Donna: How did it make you feel?

Mark: It made me feel hostile as I read it.

Donna: Why?

² Aries (1987) and Cambridge (1987) both have written review articles synthesizing the research on gender and communication. While there is no consensus on findings because of differences in samples, contexts and purposes of the research, some studies suggest that women use questions to maintain conversations, while men regard them as informational requests.

Mark: I understood his position the second time I read it and I didn't feel so hostile. But I did understand why he was exiled for 16 years. These are radical ideas.

Tom: Remember that he criticized a method of education that made him what he became. He went through this system himself.

Mark: He called for a liberating education through acts of cognition. How do you get this education without a formal basis?

After Mark expresses his feelings about reading the essay, he tries to put his finger on just why he had those personal responses. Nick, not Donna, assumes the leadership role in answering Mark's question, responding with an illustrative narrative:

Nick: Little kids are always picking up things and thinking about it. My mom let me make associations by myself. I understand what he means by problem-posing. He doesn't describe it but characterizes it.

I learned to think through my mom. I understand that kind of one-on-one interplay. Maybe it's impossible to do this in school education. But it's two people together. It's a consciousness of consciousness, being aware of directing your own thinking. You can direct it yourself. You don't need a formal education.

Through a narrative discussion style, Donna continues to uncover the two extreme positions of education: the dialectical interplay vrs. Freire's banking concept. In the following excerpt, she encourages students to draw on their own educational experiences, to tell stories, like Nick has, about their own schooling experiences.

Donna: What do you all think of lecture classes in college?

Trish: I think you could be learning but not know it. For instance, if you choose to be an observer or a sponge, you can but I don't think that's learning.

This semester I'm taking entomology which is the study of bugs. I had to overcome my fear of touching them. I find now that I'm learning, I'm interested in it and the course is giving me some knowledge.

Donna: It's not just that information is deposited in us that Freire is arguing against then, it's that we don't do anything with it?

Nick: As a kid I was curious about everything. This guy (Freire) would say that our curiosity is stagnated. A lot of people don't get to go to college and get the change to feel curiosity again. This is the privilege of a college education.

Leslie: Yes, this class is more like problem-posing. In high school I had this chemistry teacher who intimidated me--he'd say, "This is the easiest question I will ever ask you." But then I had this vocabulary class called Words, words, words and we talked about words and meanings and it was open like this class.

Tom: I find courses in college a lot more interesting.

Robin: Is that because you're paying for them?

Tom: Yes but you're encouraged to think more. They could have done more with my biology course in high school. The teacher gave us 10 phylum to memorize and on the test were ten blanks to fill in. I can't remember any of it.

Donna's open, affective question about college courses causes Trish, Nick, Leslie, and Tom to contribute more narratives about their own schooling, stories which reflect on, and critique their learning experiences. Sasha offers the final story from this section of the transcript:

Sasha: I went to a private school and it was so different. I made so many connections. We were forced to think. Some of my high school classes make college look like nothing. He mentions in his essay that we don't teach teachers to learn from students.

I remember that I showed one of my high school teachers how to do a trig proof and he was really grateful. I taught him something.

The purpose of school is that you're not so much learning what they are teaching. Our teachers were there to teach us

the "process" not the banking concept but how to make connections.

This class could be described as engaging in what Michael Oakeshott has called "the conversation of mankind" which he says "goes on in public and within ourselves" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 199). Bruffee, working out of both Oakeshott's and Vygotsky's ideas, argues for the value of such conversations in developing our thinking: "To think well as individuals we must learn to think well collectively--that is, we must learn to converse well" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 640). Donna's classroom provides many occasions where students converse in both small and large groups about their reading and writing processes, often reinforced by journal writing. These layers of narrative talk and connective response help order students ways of thinking and eventually, shape the way they will write. To quote Bruffee: " Writing is at once two steps away from conversation and a return to conversation. We converse; we internalize conversation as thought; and then by writing, we re-immense conversation in its external, social medium" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 641).

Most students in this particular prose writing course attest that they have not had another college class (except for Freshman writing) where they were allowed to talk in an unstructured, conversational way. Jim, compares this course with his political science classes: "The banking concept is

so boring. Being able to speak your mind, and having something to speak your mind about makes this class so much more interesting" (Personal Interview, 10/19).

The large and small group discussions seem to provide the frame or the backdrop for students to "speak their minds" before writing. And when students do write weekly papers, they often draw from these multiple conversations. With paper topics mainly open, many students chose to write about education following the discussion of the Freire essay. For example, Sasha writes a paper titled "Paulo and Billy" which borrows from Freire (Paulo) to examine the educational failures of her friend (Billy). Mark writes an essay, "When Numbers Add Up to Nothing" about the university's admission's procedures for older, returning students, how they discount Mark's real educational experiences of work and travel in favor of grade point averages. Jim, whose part-time summer job required him to join the Teamster's Union, wrote a paper, "Crimes of the Uneducated" about his experiences with illiterate workers. Anna, Anthony, and Nick all write critiques of their own educational experiences, drawing on another essay in the reader by Rodriguez called, "The Achievement of Desire" which analyzes the writer's educational experiences.

Response Forums: Public, Peer, Private

Like most academic disciplines, then, this community is bound primarily through language, but unlike other course work, language serves as both the means and end, the subject of study and process through which learning takes place. Language is the center of this classroom, not just through reading and writing but through talk and writing as well. From the outset of this prose writing course, students use talk, along with writing to reflect, to describe and narrate, to explicate and analyze, to persuade and argue, and to construct meaning. Douglas Barnes has argued for the cooperative power of talk and writing within the curriculum: "Not only is talking and writing a major means by which people learn, but what they learn can often hardly be distinguished from the ability to communicate it. Learning to communicate is at the heart of education" (Barnes, 1976, p. 20).

One of the ways this community operates is through the conversational forums of the course, often reinforced through writing: these include whole group public talk; small peer group talk; and private conversations, either in one-on-one conferences with Donna or through the dialogue of journal writing.

The prose writing class often met together for some part of the time to engage in a more public conversation about the

assigned readings or specific aspects of writing. In this sample conversation, Donna poses a question to the class on the differences between "essaying and storytelling" based on a series of shared readings. "Stories, you suggest, help us make sense of our lives. Is this just true of fiction or does that fit essays too?" Donna asks. Students offer the following possible suggestions to explain the difference between the two forms:

Andy: There's more of an outer self in an essay. Essays are just a different way of telling the story.

Anna: Some things can be the same but stories are more an explanation of the soul. But in both stories and essays, ideas can be explored.

Trish: Stories give the whole picture and essays a selection of the picture.

Donna: Is an essay more organized then?

Anna: A story allows you to personalize more. There's more observations in fiction. When you read an essay you read what one person saw. But a reader can make a story your own more easily because it doesn't belong so much to one writer.

Andy: The essay is more like one mind to another. The story is more heart to heart.

Nick: You can't argue a story but you can argue in an essay.

Donna: The line is shaky then? (Class Transcript 9/10)

In this public, but collaborative conversation, Donna accepts all these responses as she pulls through the thread of student contributions to the discussion to show that the distinctions among forms are "shaky", what Clifford Geertz calls the "blurring of genres" (Geertz, 1983). Donna uses a layering,

additive style to weave as many voices as possible into this group discussion.

Peer group transcripts show that students continue to focus on the topic of form in writing, an influence carried over from whole group discussions. Here's a snippet of a peer conversation about Bellow's short story, "The Silver Dish," with Anna, Anthony and Robin in the group.

Robin: This is easier reading than an essay. It reads quicker.

Anthony: You get just as much out of them, don't you think?

Anna: Well, I like reading short stories but it's much harder for me to react and say just how I reacted and these are the connections I made. When I read short stories, I usually get images and stuff. I usually don't take that much out. Maybe because I don't study them.

Robin: I think with short stories, you don't need to study them because sometimes they are a lot lighter, you know?

Anna: I think they are much heavier.

Robin: Oh, you think so?

Anna: Because you have to search for things. Essays are like, "This what I think and this is the way I see it." And there's a point and you can take it or leave it. But with a short story, I mean I can guess at the meaning but I don't know. You know what I mean? (Reading Group transcript, 10/1)

In peer group discussions, students do not just agree with one another: clearly Anna disagrees with Robin about fiction being easier to read, and with Anthony about getting just as much out of a short story. All three students, however, use the model of an open question format much like Donna does, although Anna is more willing to defend her point of view in this small group.

And the Private Conversation. This dialogue--between student and teacher--happens either in the journal exchange or the bi-weekly conferences. Mark wrote about the purpose of the essay genre in a the more private conversational form of a journal entry. He had previously turned in two fiction pieces to Donna, a form unacceptable in prose writing class, so he had a personal reason for thinking through the differences in writing forms:

In one of your journal comments, you (Donna) stated that essayists write for an elite group of readers. This fact is becoming apparent in the selections from Bartholomae (Ways of Reading) that we are reading. . . You never completely get these essays because that's one of the things reflective bodies of writing do best. They suggest an area or topic and you the reader, log the information into your own mind, then filter an opinion that's pertinent to your understanding. My favorite line: 'What essayist do; they observe minutely and reflect deeply' (Mark, 9/88 Journal).

Through this spiral of whole class and small group conversations, often reinforced with reflective journal writing, students discuss literacy concepts together and then pull some of these threads into their peer and private responses. What seem to be agendaless conversations take on a particular content as students draw from the large group talks to shape the conversation of their small groups.

Literacy Demonstrations: Anthony's Oblomov

In addition to learning through collaborative conversations, students learn new literacy concepts through teacher-led demonstrations. These modeling sessions may cover

useful writing skills such as "Leads as a kind of windowshopping" (9/24), followed by some practice on lead-writing or, "Revision as re-seeing" (10/27) followed by examining multiple-drafts of student papers. In the following class episode, Donna demonstrates how to give "considered response" and how to "acknowledge feedback" in writing groups.

Donna says that: "The purpose of a writing group is feedback, not a critique. You give feedback to a work in-progress." First she calls for a student to volunteer his/her draft for the group to use in the next class session: Anthony comes forward with a paper Donna hasn't read yet, titled Oblomov. When Donna later reads the paper, she wonders why Anthony wants to share it and further wonders what the paper is really about, thinking perhaps Anthony has confused Obelmov with the word obelisk, so obscure is the reference of the title.

The paper's about a Russian novel called Oblomov: the only problem is that Anthony does not tell the reader who this Oblomov is but presents an interpretation of this Russian character's personality as if the reader already knows the novel. He writes:

...let's look at a twentieth century Oblomov: Perhaps you have found yourself in due need of some company because you don't like to go out alone. You're aware of how you look to the opposite sex alone: threatening. So you call up that one friend you know will look good next to you...

Before the class demonstration, Donna holds her regularly scheduled writing conference with Anthony, where she explains

her difficulty in reading his paper while, praising him for his effort: "I applaud what you are trying to do with this. I'm sitting here in this cheering section saying, "Go to it Anthony" but admits to him that she can only be an audience for his paper to a certain extent because, "I don't have this background knowledge. This is a good example of Hirsch. I don't have that particular knowledge, not having read this particular Russian novel."

In conference, Anthony agrees with Donna finally that the class will need some background information about the novel in order to understand his paper. But he badgers Donna by implying that she should be able to understand this somewhat confusing and highly personalized reinterpretation of the novel. Donna is very specific about where she's having trouble with his text:

Donna: But here in this part, I don't know what the narrator is remembering: "A wedding that never took place, a love affair that went askew..."

Anthony: Jesus Donna, you call yourself a woman and you can't put that together? Come on. I left a lot of things out purposefully.

Donna: What does this have to do with my womanhood, the fact that I can't put this together? (Writing Conference Transcript, 9/29)

Anthony defends his paper in the subsequent group discussion as well. The class wrestles, as Donna had, to provide a context for the paper even after Anthony summarizes the novel for them. Students read the whole paper in class,

some with quizzical looks. Bonnie is the first student to indicate to Anthony that she is stumped in some places:

Bonnie: I think I got out of it what I was supposed to. But in the last page, I got kind of lost there.

Anthony: That's me. That's where I turn my attention away from my friend and write about me and why I'm like him. And I purposely used that part there because that's the truth, that's my own experience and I related it to, if you'd read Oblomov, you'd know that.

Donna: Okay. So they haven't/

Bonnie: I kind of get that part--that you're turning it back but if you could expand on that part/

Anthony: Everybody goes through an experience..../

Donna: Whooh. You're justifying and I want you just to acknowledge.

Anthony: Oh. I just wanted to clear it up. She asked me a question.

Donna: She said, "Can you expand?" And as the writer you can take that away and think about it. I'm butting in here. If it turns into the writer saying. "What I'm trying to do here, no one will get feedback because you'll be explaining your paper. What the readers are saying is that whatever your intentions are for the paper, it's not working for me. Just take that comment and go back and do with it whatever you wish.

Here Donna's demonstrating how students are to respond in their small writing groups and she also models that to be a member of this writing community, you give "considered response" and that you "acknowledge" but don't "justify," peer feedback.

Students' journal responses to this class session indicate that they were confused by and felt shut out of Anthony's paper: "I have no idea what the lines about having

someone around to boost your ego mean..." (Trish's Journal). This original confusion is later turned into a friendly reference point for class members. Nick jokingly says to Anthony during a reading group later in the semester: "I read that Oblomov paper again this morning. It's like a romp through a Thesaurus really."

An interesting way of looking at this episode is through the terms "normal and abnormal discourse" explicated by Bruffee, who borrows these terms from Rorty (Bruffee, 1984, pp. 647-648). "Normal" discourse is the kind of talk that's used to maintain existing knowledge within a community whereas "abnormal" discourse generates new knowledge. Normal discourse can be taught; abnormal discourse cannot. Bruffee quotes from Rorty to explain that "abnormal discourse 'is what happens when someone joins in the discourse who is ignorant of the conventions governing the discourse or who sets them aside'" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 648). Anthony engages in abnormal discourse in his prose writing class by presenting his Oblomov paper without the conventions of an introduction or background information. When Anthony understands that what he saw as normal discourse is viewed by his classmates as "abnormal," he generates new knowledge for himself (and his classmates) about audience expectations.³

³ This interpretation of Anthony's behavior comes when Donna reads Bruffee's article, "Collaboration and the Conversation of Mankind," and reframes the experience with Anthony through the reading.

The Triggering Texts: Intertextuality

Donna introduces the concept of a triggering text through Richard Hugo's essay, "Writing Off the Subject" early in the semester (9/17). The essay's an invitation for writers to get off track, forget the original focus, and let new ideas trigger other ideas. After reading the essay, students begin to talk about and locate the "triggers" for their papers. When a writing group is discussing Anna's paper, for example, she realizes that her topic is really not "jazz" but her own interior experiences while listening to a specific jazz performance. When Mark says: "Jazz is the triggering subject" and Patty agrees, "Yes, jazz is your trigger," this helps all members of the group to see that Anna's real topic is not jazz and to give her more directed feedback.

In this way, the writing community also comes to adopt the idea of a "triggering text" that helps the writer locate his/her real subject. It would be almost impossible for an outsider to uncover the influences that various readings have on subsequent student-writing. When Bonnie writes a paper, "Blinking Lights," about celebrating Christmas without her brother who was killed on his high school graduation night, only Bonnie and those in her writing group might know that she was "triggered" to write this paper by reading Eisley's essay,

"Brown Wasps" since there is no explicit reference in her paper to Easley's piece (Donna learns about this connection by reading Bonnie's journal).

By working in reading and writing groups, students begin to see that their writing ideas are never generated totally in isolation, that other texts--oral and written--serve as sub-texts to help writers produce new meanings. Students come to a tacit understanding of intertextuality--the idea that all texts, all signs arise from what Vygotsky has called "the web of meaning." As James Porter has pointed out, the idea of intertextuality "shifts our attention away from the writer as individual and focuses more on the sources and social contexts from which the writer's discourses arises" (Porter, 1986, p.35).

The community exchange encourages students to see that borrowing from their readings and from one another does not constitute plagiarism, but characterizes the acknowledgement process of academic thinking. In the following essay, Angie describes the concept of intertextuality articulately and concretely in her final journal response called, "Monkey Read: Monkey Think" where she shows how this process has worked for her, drawing from the readings of both Rodriguez and Freire and also referring to my stated research concerns--the recurring writing themes of the class. Angie connects Rodriguez's published text, my dissertation-in-progress and her own ongoing text in this interesting essay.

Monkey Read, Monkey Think

"He lifts an opinion from Coleridge, takes something else from Frye or Empson or Leavis. He even repeats exactly his professor's earlier comment. All of his ideas are clearly borrowed. He seems to have no thought of his own (Rodriguez, The Achievement of Desire).

Indeed we do borrow ideas from other people, and we even form some of our opinions by reading the opinions of other people. We see the world through our past experiences. An example of this would be Elizabeth's thesis on the recurrence of words and ideas in a class. She found that the idea of "triggering" reoccurred throughout our class. The use of this concept was applied by many students after our workshop but not before. This is a representation of how we get ideas from our professors and other classmates, and express them as our own ideas when we are analyzing, for instance, our own writing.

After looking through my journal, I could see that I was much like the 'scholarship boy' as he is described. I, too, have developed many ideas from authors, and from previous classes. These ideas have shed their light on several essays that I read, thought about, and learned from this class. There were journal entries which clearly demonstrated my use of "borrowed ideas." These were responses to The Achievement of Desire and The Banking Concept of Education.

My reactions to the Achievement of Desire were related to ideas and concepts I had learned in a previous class about race and ethnicity. Because my mind was conditioned to respond to situations like Rodriguez as an ethnic situation, this is what I related to as a reader, and what I referred to as a thinker and writer in my journal.

My response to The Banking Concept of Education was colored by my experience as a student in a women's studies class. This class I was taking the same semester as my English course, so I was being conditioned to respond to the use of masculine language rather than a genderless form. It wasn't so much that Freire touched my nerve, but I knew he'd touched a nerve with my other professor, therefore, I responded in a defensive manner.

In this class, and in my journal, I brought with me many "borrowed ideas". I was able to relate concepts that I had previously learned with entirely new situations and examples. We are all carriers of different ideas and viewpoints which made the class as successful as it was. In fact, we have omitted some ideas, and developed others which makes

Rodriguez's statement about the scholarship boy having no ideas of his own questionable. We all do develop our own ideas, even if they are triggered by someone else's thoughts..." (Journal Response, 12/10).

By describing her own process of intertextuality, Angie also describes the process of becoming educated, of realizing, unlike Rodriguez, that borrowing from the ideas of others need not isolate students but rather draw them into a collaborative conversation with other academic minds.

By the end of the semester, as Angie suggests, the class was able to trace their weekly papers back to the published essays and class-published texts that triggered them. Students became aware of what Donald Murray has described as the "ghost text" or the intertext created by what the writer reads, and what the writer then writes. Murray invites teachers to encourage students "not only to understand the text they are reading, but to allow that text to spark other texts, ghost texts ... that are born because of the communication between the written text and the experience of the reader "(Murray, 1984, p. 244).

Students were consciously triggered more by what they read from published texts than from reading each other's weekly papers. Raymond Carver's short story, "What Do we Talk About When We Talk About Love," for example, triggered more papers than any other reading: two collaborative and three weekly papers. The second most influential readings were two

assigned essays by Rodriguez and Freire's in Ways of Reading, both which dealt with the topic of education.

Donna's goal (theory/Theory) is to use the class readings to trigger student writing was easily achieved. When Donna combines open topics with a series of triggering texts, what results is that many students "choose" to use the readings to help them frame and re-frame their own experiences. The students' life and his or her personal and/or intellectual experiences remain as the central window or view displayed in the writing: The new addition is the frame of readings which adds further support to that window.

Constructed Knowing: Collaboration

Donna's writing class was deliberately set up to present a way of knowing quite different from that of the mainstream of higher education, which in the past has favored the lecture format of impersonal, hierarchial, singular, competitive, self-centered learning--the kind of knowing that contributed to Richard Rodriguez's eventual feeling of loss and alienation from his family and childhood culture (Hunger of Memory, 1981).

Donna's class, her extended family unit, may be seen as a critique on the dominant collegiate learning style. Donna creates a supportive and concerned context which assumes that learning occurs among persons, not persons and things. For learners in this community, knowledge about literacy does not

reside "in" the subject matter but is arrived at by students themselves as they work within what Fish has called the "interpretive community". Such an epistemology shifts power from the teacher as outsider, to the teacher as inside member of the community.

The literacy/learning model of Donna's class favors what can be considered as a female way of knowing and understanding, shown through what has been described here as narrative conversations, teacher-demonstrations, peer group work, intertextuality and collaboration (Although Donna was a nurturing teacher, she was not motherly and often resented the equation between female understanding and mothering). It is the group writing project that most easily illustrates the theory and practice of this "woman's way of knowing." In this classroom, collaboration is not limited to a teaching technique such as peer writing groups but like much collaborative action research (Oja, 1988), it represents a way of working where theory is put to use, where collaboration serves as an agent of change.

Students face two practical problems as they write their collaborative projects: How to negotiate the group dynamics, and how to actually compose the paper. What students articulate about writing and learning together is mainly captured in their individual collaborative writing journals which are read and evaluated by Donna. "Frustration" is the key word that dominates students' journals as they talk about

the struggle of the collaborative process; "I'm not going to lie and say it was wonderful...it wasn't terrible but it was very frustrating..." (Robin's journal).

Excerpts of student journal responses indicate two kinds of learning that take place. One echoes Dewey's intentions for placing the individual in a group whereby the group processes heighten the members awareness of their own individual learning. Paradoxically, when students begin to relinquish some of their own individualism, they begin to gain in self knowledge or in Anna's words group work involves the "gain of the individual and the loss of individualism." The gains made to balance this loss of individualism involve the externalization of what had previously been an internal process. Angie describes how collaboration intensifies the thinking process that previously had been unconscious: "It takes collaboration to see how much actually goes into the writing process...it took this collaboration project to show me how much thinking I do in English class...we are immune to some of our thinking patterns because we take them for granted." Tom, a great advocate of collaboration, expresses well an idea that others shared about collaborative writing that this process externalizes implicit thought:

The same process which occurs inside my head on a paper that just I am doing occurred in the construction of the collaborative paper. Instead of asking myself questions and drawing on strands of thought found within my head, we had three heads to use...The only difference was that it occurred externally as opposed to internally... the process was slower because when the process was

externalized or transferred from inside the mind to the outside world.

In addition to making students conscious of their learning process, the context of the group writing situation also pulls on different sides of the self, that regardless of actual gender, takes on stereotypical gendered responses. What some students learn from collaboration is how to play what Peter Elbow has called "the believing game" or what Belenkey et. al. have termed "connected knowing," which is contrasted to the individual, product-oriented thinking required for success in academia. In collaborative writing, the conflict arises between the individual's need for mutuality, acceptance, and communion and their equal need for independence, autonomy, and power. Keith voices this "male" need for control in the group project, an issue that emerged in many students' journals:

I do not feel comfortable holding someone else to my standards of appropriate form and content...this results in a group paper I think I could have written better myself. I essentially detest group or committee decisions/productions. Groups have a useful purpose in suggesting solutions and theorizing but problems are solved by executive action that a group is unable to take. The necessity of compromise will dilute and medicotize the product.. I do not like the dilution a group cause in a strong idea..groups are more apt to avoid a tough decision...Group writing teaches certain skills but they tend to be diplomatic skills such as compromise, tact and courtesy more than actual writing skills..."

The power of solitary thinking and writing, of executive action, and of a superior product--all emphasized by Keith--are also the dominant males modes of thinking in the

university setting. While Keith recognizes that there are social skills that he can learn through writing with others, he values the product (or executive action) too much to sacrifice his individual voice for what he sees will be a necessarily mediocre group effort.

It is not just males however, for whom this group situation is problematic. Patty, for example, in the individualistic male manner, worries in her journal about depending upon others for her evaluation: "I've never had to rely on someone else doing their work for my grade." And conversely, some male journals reflected the "feminine" as shown by Mark who decides that control is no longer an important issue for him: "It's a struggle to keep personalities, persuasions, frames/windows and styles on an even keel. The question I find myself asking: Should we even try to govern the struggle?"

In general, however, female thinkers felt more comfortable with group work because it drew on their nurturing attitudes and "connected" ways of knowing, not often recognized in the college situation. Sasha, for example emphasizes the concept of "caring" that Noddings has written about and Anna discusses how the group efforts provided her with the support for writing in an entirely new form she wouldn't try on her own, fiction writing: "It seemed like it (the paper) just fell into fiction. So it was exploring a completely new medium for me. And it didn't feel odd. I was

comfortable in it. In that way, the group gave me a sort of strength."

In Anthony's case, the collaborative journal he kept provides a fascinating contrast to that of his partner, Jodi (See pages 75-77 for Jodi's and Anthony's separate collaborative journals). Read together, these journals expose the different styles of working that are often considered male and female. For example, at the outset of the journal, Jodi is concerned with understanding Anthony as a person, in making a "connection" with his thinking process, no matter how foreign it may seem to her: "My thoughts may not be too complicated to decipher, but Anthony's ideas are more clearly understood if one has background information... I really shouldn't try but I am able to follow his train of thought, thus I can communicate."

Anthony, on the other hand, suspicious of the whole process, starts by drawing boundaries on the project by making outlines and definitions: "To set up an outline in which our thoughts are to be kept bounded in. Our first meeting is essentially to define how we are going to let our triggering subject lead us; or better yet, define an area to lead us."

After writing a rough draft, Jodi wants to expand the audience beyond that of themselves so that it will communicate to others: "I want to create an essay that everyone can pick up and relate to." Anthony feels satisfied with the "coolness

and detachment" of their draft and does not care if others really understand it.

Both students begin to recognize the role that gender is playing in their collaborative effort. Jodi feels that their thoughts "repel" one another because "Anthony had come to the dreadful realization that I am a girl, and the opposite sexes can't always collaborate because our thoughts repel one another." But gradually, Anthony begins to see the advantages to working with another viewpoint and recognizes his possibility for reform and change through Jodi: "She's helped me a lot just by working with her. Men aren't usually so corrigible. Oh Christ, I'm turning into a woman. It's a conspiracy!"

When they evaluate their final effort, Jodi is proud of having learned to communicate with Anthony, lauding the process of collaboration over the final product: "I don't believe the product of the collaborative process is the primary goal striven for. Whether the product is a paper, ceramic vase, oldsmobile or building, the procedure taken to get there is the vitality of the creation in the end." Anthony, too, by the end of the project is able to understand that in addition to the paper, the value of collaboration was mainly in the relationship they formed together which allowed them a larger perspective on the topic than they would have had on their own.

Anthony's final entry reflects the thinking of sociologist Charles Horton Cooley that "The life of the mind is essentially a life of intercourse," Anthony writes, "Social intercourse, sexual intercourse, intellectual intercourse. This is why we collaborate. To feel better about our abilities by recognizing others."

Collaboration exposes a tension between process and product and between the parts of the self that some students have not seen before. Through collaborative writing, students gain a new set of understandings about writing and learning that most university writing projects do not afford. For Donna, who wants students to experience a problem-posing writing situation, the process is the product in collaborative writing. Karen Burke LeFevre assigns an even greater value to collaboration when she says that: Learning to invent in communities will do more than enable success in classrooms or careers. It is absolutely essential to achieving peace and indeed, maintaining life on this earth and beyond (LeFevre, 1987, p. 129). If we believe that what we learn is embedded in how we learn, collaborative projects in this classroom involve a new perspective on knowing.

* * *

What follows are extended case studies of Anna and Nick which both begin with a close analysis of each student's involvement in prose writing class and then trail with them into other classrooms. What you read about each of these

student may give you pause. You may want to consider what you feel are the goals of university classrooms and how you feel literacy is being defined in each of these places we will visit.

COLLABORATIVE PAPER JOURNALS

JODI'S JOURNAL

11/24 Winding along Route #1, Anthony's truck carries us beneath skeletal limbs of trees and by the most beautiful estates ever built. The coast tour serves as food for thought. Stopping at an occasional scenic spot, a lighthouse, civil war artillery ground or beach, we are inspired by the life and beauty that is somehow thriving despite the cold wind and frozen ground. I listen to Anthony's voice as it drops and lifts with emotion. I've never met anyone so confident and yet so unsure of himself.

Anyway-our ocean view (from the time-truck capsule was an ideal way for two people in the process of producing a masterpiece together to become familiar with one another's mind processes. My thoughts may not be too complicated to decipher, but Anthony's ideas are more clearly understood if one has background information. Actually, I shouldn't flatter myself by saying I understand-I couldn't possibly begin to figure him out, and I really shouldn't try but I am able to follow his train of thought, thus I can communicate. In turn, I will be able to assemble our two contrasting (yet

ANTHONY'S JOURNAL

11/22 So young to be a cynic! My partner and I cruised the coast road going to all those spots I used to go to with "old flames". How ironic: To set up an outline in which our thoughts are to be kept bounded in. Our first meeting is essentially to define how we are going to let our triggering subject lead us; or better yet define an area to lead us. We both agreed on [mate] expectations as our theme to focus on. Now what we will do is to take our outline, write within its bounds, compare, and then start a first draft.

We were both successful in determining that we are cynics. I don't trust her, her me, and in this somehow we trust each other. No, nothing makes sense.

similar) personality traits into a project of our combined insights.

AFTER A CONFERENCE WITH DONNA

I know what we want to present in "Mate Expectations" but I'm torn between presenting personal case histories and generalized hypotheses about people and love. Your insight helped us to see where ideas were too introspective and unclear. Heavy theory upon theory weighs the paper down-making the paper difficult to read. I know that I know there's nothing I hate more than an essay that preaches--I dread the thought of accidently creating one myself.

JODI BEGINS TO CONSIDER A LARGER AUDIENCE FOR THE PAPER
11/24

I don't think Anthony's too sure about the psycho-analytic frame we've put our words into. He has some alternate ideas but he keeps pumping back to a therapeutic type of paper. We can't escape it. Finally he said that if people can't relate to our depth of thought and experience of interpretation, then they can put the paper down. I want to create an essay that everyone can and want to pick up and relate to. The topic should be able to attract people of all types, sex and ages and hold them. Anthony and I are different

AFTER A CONFERENCE WITH DONNA

I read the first draft of "Mate Expectations" and I think I might be able to see where Donna was leading us. I think it reads too much like a Norman Vincent Peale self-help psychology book. If these ideas were taken and smoothed out, provided with some examples, a tad bit of humorous digressions, and the Tolstoyian forces are left out, it can float.

ANTHONY FEELS SATISFACTION WITH THIS MIDDLE DRAFT
11/30

This new draft is just like my life. Chekhov would be proud. This draft is the culmination of all my life's reasoning but I don't know how Jodi will receive and perceive it. It's so smooth, cool and detached, the way I've always known I could be. But Jodi? I think Jodi still has to spin her wheels first before she decides to switch to a snow tire. She needs a few more bad experience before reality can come back around to her.

in all categories, and we can relate. I believe that's proof enough to assume that others can/will too.

12/1

Our paper was struggling to find the balance between personal love-experiences, repercussions and results. I had believed that we had great communication ability but apparently Anthony had come to the dreadful realization that I am a girl, and the opposite sexes can't always collaborate because our thoughts repel one another....

FINAL ENTRIES

We review our combined efforts and I feel good. I laugh, I contemplate, I question, I look up words in the dictionary, and most importantly...I feel.

I will take Anthony's advice to the point of no return. We will create and recreate until we get it right. I know the final sculpture lies waiting beneath this mound of moldable words. We communicate again, not with words but smiles--the true sign of understanding. That's what it takes to collaborate successfully.

Formulating a product from two contrasting, often opposing forces is a difficult and frustrating job. It's as if you have been told to make north and south meet at the equator. I don't believe the product of the collaborative process is the primary goal striven

12/3

Jodi is extremely cooperative and corrigible. That doesn't mean I can get her to agree to what I think and believe; but I can get her to appreciate it. She's helped me to be that way a lot just by working with her. Men aren't usually so corrigible. Oh Christ, I'm turning into a woman, it's a conspiracy!

Our collaboration-Eureka--was like a relationship(Oh Christ that's all I need) We thought that we had something in common but found out we didn't, and reconciled to each's other's real identity. I wonder if everybody worked this way? This paper was more learning about ourselves as people than as writers.

I don't know if anyone of the general public(the class?) will realize all the pain we went through to make this work both in our personal life and as collaborators.

That's what our paper's about: Accepting each other for who we are. That's what collaboration means: accepting another writer for that they value. When writing alone you have only to accept your own way of thinking. You only develop

for. Whether the product is a paper, ceramic vase, oldsmobile or building the procedure taken to get there is the vitality of the creation in the end. Collaboration is a test of your character. Nothing can be duplicated that is formulated from group effort: everyone has add their own spice, if the recipe is ever minus that one ingredient (individual) then the product will never again occur. That which is unique should be treasured. This understanding provides a lifetime of experiencing new possibilities and creations. Such is the self-made magic of the collaborative project.

it through your own frame. Collaboration allows you to view your work on her work through different frames.

Social intercourse...sexual intercourse, intellectual intercourse. This is why we collaborate. To feel better about our abilities by recognizing others. It is a way to gauge ourselves other than the usual, "What did you get in Mrs. Faquar's class?" Other examples of intellectual intercourse: Student A: "I read so and so's paper and it sucked." or "Professor Despot stands up and expounds his view of esparacgus and doesn't let me stick in my two cents." These examples involve little interaction and reciprocity.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY OF ANNA

Life as A Dance: Academic Literacy As A Circle

The following journal entries represent the fabric of my mind weaving among the many threads I touch while constructing this study of Anna. Drawing from self-descriptions, from some of our informal encounters, from twists of materials I don't know quite how to tuck in, my research notebooks reveal my need to write about my relationship with her rather than Anna as informant, or about Anna's writing. My desire's to plait our strands into a cloth that includes us both, a narrative that recognizes the ethnographer's role in the making of meaning.

Words and images sift to the top and are not forgotten: The turquoise ribbon and the dripping ice cream cones; the modern dancer and the artist. Her aversion to piercing ears, her love of Latin. That she always had a single room in college yet at the end of her junior year moves into a commune of politically active feminist/lesbians. Her hesitant but powerful words float around me as I write: "I hate it when I judge people from my impressions."

Why include all this? Why not pick a point and begin? To establish the intersubjectivity between her life and mine, between prose writing and art history. Between writing now and observing then.

Researcher Journal Entries

...[On my identification with Anna] Anna as both me and not me. Anna as an idealized younger version of myself. I enter a world of subjectivity trying to say in words, what I cannot say in words. That a life happens all at once, that it is that way for her: even a slice of time for one student wearing one academic year, draped in papers that must be written, decorated with the background music of the personal, the social, the cerebral.

... [On the limitations of writing in general, its discursiveness] How to represent psychological time and space on a linear page. Where to begin and where to stop... How to break out of, or into formal writing. I wish this whole dissertation were a letter or a series of journal entries... To dissert from Latin, Anna would like that: 'to discourse on a subject, to set forth at length, to arrange in order.'
In writing, my words serve as boundaries for her events, her images that struggle to retain silence. This translation of Anna's silent meaning becomes my own issue as I write.

With my researcher journal entries in front of me, along with one hundred and sixty four pages of field notes on Anna, I try out different leads because, as Marie De France, the French woman writer (1160-1215) of the *lais* suggests, "Who ever wants to tell a variety of stories, /Ought to have a variety of leads" (Partnow, 1985).

The dance lead begin near the end of our relationship, on a Saturday evening in spring when I attend the university's dance concert where I know Anna will be performing. My

researcher image of Anna from her classes shreds as a new Anna appears on stage: She's a whirl of lime green in a Chinese worker costume, a fluid, flopsy modern dancer. Communicating through spatial configuration and body tensions, her torso's limp and pliant as it cooperates to convey the pull of emotional energy in the group dance called Progressions.

I remember what she's said about the power of dancing, of how unrestrained she feels as she works together with her dance partners: "there's so much communication without ever talking. One person dances and the partner accompanies her as an instrument" (3/13). How different Anna seems on stage, how freed from the controls of college life.

The illusion of dance, Susanne Langer suggests, is "virtual," not "actual"--a power which provides the illusion or the appearances of influence through the gestural: "...one sees the dance driving this way, drawn that way, gathering here, spreading there--fleeing, resting, rising, and so forth; and all the motion seems to spring from powers beyond the performers" (Langer, 1959, p. 175).

When Anna talks with me about the energy and communication of modern dance she says that "it's just another way of expressing yourself," but a way that you can't really share with anyone who hasn't had that kind of experience "without them thinking you're some kind of freak." It's an art form which is not easily turned into words, which cannot be readily translated from the non-verbal into the verbal.

I could begin with her words, her self-descriptions. At different times during our research, Anna offers me adjectives about herself as a knower and writer to hang onto, little clues which help me understand some of her own thinking patterns. For example, when trying to choose courses, she shared that she preferred "old stuff." I place this together with the four years of Latin she had taken, and a paper she'd written for her art history class on the importance of Roman baths, her desire to go on a "dig in greece" and come up with "classical" as one of her interests. Another time she said that she liked to think of herself as "somewhat intellectual" but later in a personal letter counters this by saying that one of her problems is that her interests aren't "focused enough to be any one thing."

When directly asked to describe herself, Anna hesitates, searches for comfortable words: "I don't know, I can't say. I don't know what kind of person I am..." She discusses her different names as "only labels" yet somehow representative of the multiple roles she plays: to those at work she's "A.L." --a bright, polite and helpful bookstore clerk; to old friends who know her from her hometown, she's "Annie"--the rebel, the oddball; to those in her modern dance class she's "Anna"--the empathic dance partner; and for acquaintances at the university she's Anna Lynn, art history major who in her junior year is elected to the University's Honors Program. She finally settles on "visual" and "political" as tentative self-

descriptors saying: "Artistic things matter to me" and "I think it's very important to be politically aware."

For Anna, visual understanding is immediate, like a window transmitting sunlight: it's an almost physical experience. Of artists and musicians she writes: "I let their works affect me directly" (12/9). Her concern for the visual pushes me to tinker with the verbal pictures she constructs of herself. In one of her papers, (Jazz) Anna describes herself as "easily read" because "light eyes can't hide anything." This portrait presents Anna as a text: open, vulnerable, easily interpreted.

But my early fieldnotes indicate otherwise. They include a jumble of impressions over mixed strains in Anna's interests: light/ dark; intuitive/ analytic; subjectivity/ objectivity; passion/ reason; masculine/ feminine. At first I miss this juggling act because I am looking for one monolithic clue, one breakthrough or key incident to wrap my study around as if that lost text, forgotten symbol, or submerged conversation would summarize or represent all sides of Anna.

Some notes are wildly off course: for instance, knowing her commitment to political awareness, I associate a turquoise ribbon that she frequently wears around her neck with possible political affiliations, only to later learn that the ribbon holds the key to her apartment.

Only once do I hear her political voice on fire, boiling in a pot of anger over a statement in the university newspaper about Blue Jeans Day at UNH when sympathetic students such as Anna wear jeans to support the rights of gay and lesbian students. One male, when asked by the campus reporter why he had not complied said: "If god had wanted faggots, he wouldn't have made women." Anna vents her anger toward herself as well: That she could be so unaware, so naive: "I despise that kind of attitude. It doesn't make any sense, he didn't even answer the question. He has no respect for women or any minority, at least not homosexuals" (Personal Interview 5/12).

Early in the study (9/14), I write to myself: "Figure out your feelings about her tentativeness by next time"--expressing my anxiety that Anna, as her complicated self-descriptions indicates, won't be able to adequately articulate her thinking so that I can turn it into words, putting my words over hers. In part, I am correct that Anna's strongest learning modes are not discursive but the more intuitive. Yet as Langer points out, intuition is "the basic process of all understanding, just as operative in discursive thought as in clear sense perception ..." (Langer, 1959, p. 29). The presentation of intuition as dichotomous with the analytic diminishes its power. Anna's imagistic, intuitive side represented by interests in studio art and dancing is girded by the analytic mode required in her art history major: in

this way Anna's doubly expressive. Yet she insists: "I'm not that gifted."

Anna's sense of herself as "not that gifted" comes in part from the ways she--and I--(culpable, culpable!) measure what she knows. Rather than binary opposites, polar terms where the intuitive (female intuition) is always posed as a negative powerless stance, I'd like to replace these phallic yardsticks with an overlapping, circular image of learning that many educators who are now looking at the epistemologies of women (Martin, Noddings, Franzosa, Gilligan, Belenky et al.) have adopted. To borrow from Anna's own writing where she discusses these issues: "The vertical view of reality is a lie, a construct created to justify patriarchal subordination and control. We live in a circle, not along a line" (Cheatham and Powell, 1986, p. 159).

In college, Anna's trying to make her own learning process more circular, less compartmentalized. She admits that in general, "the world is a messy place" but that she wants to try to make her education kind of complete, saying "I want to start seeing things as a whole." Anna drives herself toward this sense of completion during her junior year when I am witness to a kind of academic dance that propels her forward and provides her the energy to grow.

A final note about our relationship--Anna's and mine--which develops over time from that of researcher and student in an office setting, Anna eating an ice cream cone and me

drinking coffee, with the tape recorder whirring in the background, to friend-confidante in a variety of encounters: I order scads of books from her, many of them about art history or women's studies, at the local "alternative" bookstore where she works ; we have tea and muffins or coffee and bagels, depending on our mood after avant-garde art class; I write her letters of recommendations, first to go on a dig in Greece and then for a summer art internship in San Francisco; I drive her to her apartment in a spring thunderstorm where she dreads an impending conflict with an angry landlord over deposit money. With me, she shares her academic life, many parts of her personal life, understands my project, cooperates in handing over any scraps of literacy information that might make my task easier, from an exam paper to an art poster she's helped with. There are no stated boundaries, no unmentionable territories in my exploration of her thinking.

For example, one of my early informal interviews with Anna takes place in autumn on the leaf-covered lawn between the library, where I was returning some books, and the outdoor Bagelry cart, which serves food during lunch hours. Anna, eating bagels with her boyfriend Simon, invited me to join them. Fair-haired and young-looking for juniors, unpretentious and comfortable with adults, I sensed that the two of them had talked about my research together since Simon--a chemistry major--confessed almost apologetically that he didn't have

much time to write now but that as a Freshman he'd enjoyed English and even missed it in his heavily scheduled science curriculum. In our chat, I was impressed with the sincere, honest quality of their talk and their ability to easily include me in it. My meeting Simon was also interesting from a researcher's point of view since I found that Anna often compared herself against the image of the scientist, saying that art history was a good major for her because she was not very "scientific." Not only Simon, but Anna and Simon's fathers are scientists as well. Disregarding the question of aptitude, Anna once confessed "If I were a man, I'd be a scientist." How glad I am she's neither.

Anna in Class: As Member of the Troupe

Anna shared me that she felt prose writing class should be a year long course: "I wish this class were continuing into next semester because I think there's a lot in this class in terms of people... I put so much into it. And, I've been doing a lot of writing and now I'm going to have to stop." Her reason for favoring this class was that "it's so personal." Personalized knowledge is valued by Anna who contrasts this class with the many others where she's made to look at explicit knowledge rather than rely on what Polanyi has identified as "tacit knowing": Tacit knowing is more fundamental than explicit knowing: we can know more than we can tell: we can tell nothing without relying on our

awareness of things we may not be able to tell (Polyani quoted in Emig, 1977, p. 151)

In prose writing class, Anna's an active participant in what educators from Dewey through Rosenblatt have described as "transactional learning." And for Anna, this participation does not come without some effort on her part. One of my field notes refers to the tension that precedes Anna's talk in the whole group discussions: "A. always seems nervous before she talks: I can sense when she has something to say, just by watching her body, particularly her hands." When she speaks, she does so quickly. Anna comments herself on her quiet speech style as she contrasts it with Anthony's: "Anthony, I just wanted to hit! Because he talks so slowly, I think. Not that there's anything wrong with talking slowly. I speak so fast." (Anthony, in fact, likes to listen to himself talk so much that he tapes our interviews together and re-plays them). Anna's response is typical for her: questioning (why Anthony's talk bothers her); non-judgmental (nothing wrong with it) somewhat self-effacing (I speak too fast).

Anna's participation in her writing class was like being a member of a dance troupe: she was prompt and prepared: she participated regularly and practiced on her own. She was a part of this community in the way her dance company formed a tightly knit group. Along with others in prose writing, Anna engages in the many conversations that take place there. Had I never followed her into another setting, I would not have

understood that for her to be an active speaker was unusual, that her usual role was that of silence.

The authors of Women's Ways of Knowing have given the beginning stage of women's epistemology as that of "silence"-a metaphor that reflects the importance of "voice" in understanding women's growth as thinkers. And Vygotsky has helped explain that dialogue or outer speech is an important aspect of developing inner speech, of developing our ways of thinking about thinking.

Anna explains that she found it easier to speak up in her composition course because "I could back up what I said. It all came from inside of my head..." Composition courses work against the model of the student as blank text, as unfilled bottle, by valuing the experiences and feelings they have developed from inside of them to speak out, to read and write from the "inside out" (Atwell, 1985). Students are invited to play what Peter Elbow has called "the believing game," which makes composition studies so much different from other academic communities where the "doubting game" is dominant (Elbow, 1973).

In addition to talking, Anna also values listening: she describes three of her female professors, including Donna, as "really knowing how to listen" and of her dance teacher in particular, she says: "She's a really caring person." Nel Noddings suggests that caring involves receptivity and engrossment rather than projection and analysis (Noddings,

1984, p. 30). Listening is a positive skill for many women who find it a very active and demanding process (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 37) When I suggested to Anna that she didn't talk as much as Nick and Anthony in her reading group she said: "I felt I talked a lot," and then reflected, "maybe I just thought a lot."

But listening, without the support of talk, can eliminate women from full participation in the academic conversation, affording them the spectator and outsider role, as members of the audience, rather than member of the troupe. In the following excerpt from the more public forum of a whole class discussion, Anna earns her community membership by adding her point of view, drawing on her own feelings. The class is discussing the symbolic meaning of Eisley's childhood tree in his essay, "Brown Wasps":

Donna: Do things change or do we just change?

Angie and others: Both.

Donna: I mean Eisley's tree is obviously gone. There's a change there.

Andy: I think we change because things change.

Robin: Or vice-versa. Things change because we change.

Andy: I still think we change.

Leslie: Like you've grown up since you've been to high school and you go back and see it in a totally different way.

Donna: Your attitude toward the soccer team has changed.

Anna: I was just thinking that he has this tree in his memory and it was a comforting thing to think back to the tree when the present got harder. I found that when I'm really stressed

out I have memories to think back to or places that I think about where I want to /

Donna:/ To hold on to.

Anna: Or just to comfort me.

Sasha: You have a memory of a time and place when everything was all right and it wasn't so stressful...

Donna: Maybe that's what meditation is all about. They say you go back to a place in your mind.

While there's nothing remarkable about this discussion, it's a representative slice of Anna's talk in prose writing class. In her nervous and quick manner of speaking she engages in the ongoing class conversation, drawing on her own personal background knowledge and her feelings.

Anna's not intimidated in this course because she sees herself "expanding" on the talk. Her ability to talk in prose writing can be explained by the attitude that consensus is the aim of conversations, rather than debate: "There's sometimes in class when I really want to say something because I agree or I might find something that I feel is interesting to add. I get anxious to say it. ...If I say something, I want it to mean something." Anna's conversational model is additive and communal and she is sensitive as well to what might "offend" others.

In a class journal entry, Anna further articulates her need to be engaged in talk, writing of how conversation supports her thinking process and gives her confidence: " When I discover concerns of my own, they usually come from dialogue

with other people....I really value discussion and bouncing ideas off people and getting responses. Maybe I'm insecure about developing or accepting an opinion that is fresh to me without first conferring with a better informed friend..."(Journal 12/9).

Interesting that Anna feels there's something almost wrong with validating her ideas with someone since talking with colleagues is, in fact, how most academic ideas are generated. In our own conversations, Anna often berates herself for not knowing enough, for not having "expertise," comparing herself against her Northern Renaissance art history professor whose "mind is like some safe filled with all the myths of the world... She knows so many different theories..." The process of how a mind develops is lacking from Anna's image of the hermetically sealed mind which stores its valuables in a safe. Non-disclosure of how scholars acquire their knowledge inadvertently misrepresents the nature of collaboration and interaction in higher education; lack of modeling robs students of insights about the incubation process and denies them access to the messy rough-draft thinking involved in making meaning--from ideas, from texts, from colleagues.

Anna As Reader: Intimacy and Response

Anna's talk in small reading groups reveals a more intimate style than in the whole class discussions. For these small groups, narrative, cooperative talk dominates, a mode where the goal of cognitive development takes a back seat to personal knowing. In many of the transcripts of the reading groups, the text serves primarily as a stimulus for students to re-read their own lives. Anna evaluates her own development as a reader in this statement which was made during a class discussion: "When I read essays in Freshman English, I was in a different stage of development and read differently then" (Field Notes, p. 46).

The following reading group episode I call "The Banking Concept of Love" because the transcript reveals some of students' culturally acquired attitudes about love, particularly Nick's concept of love as an "investment." In her last journal entry for prose writing, Anna indicates that she is very much tuned into issue of love and the subtle verbal signals that are given out: "I think about love, I know I spend an incredible amount of time trying to figure out my love, his different channels, and where I can find my relation to these channels" (Journal 12/9).

In the transcript as a whole, Anna has a difficult time wrestling the conversational floor from Nick and Anthony who take over the talk at many points, leaving Anna and Robin as spectators in the friendly male wrangle. For women, gaining

access to the dominant discourse is often problematic, particularly in public settings. In the entire transcript from which this excerpt is taken, Nick has 95 conversational turns to Anna's 25 turns, so that she talks 76% less than he does. But these small reading groups offer females an opportunity to work within a communal circle that is familiar and appropriate for members who belong to what anthropologist Edwin Ardner and later, feminist Elaine Showalter (1981), call the "muted discourse group," the group which belongs to, but is not always allowed participation in the talk of the dominant group. Ardner develops this metaphor to describe claims he felt were being made about a particular culture or tribes based only on interviews with men. Women, he said, were left out of the generation of meaning within these groups. Showalter, picking up on this metaphor, applies it to women: "Thus muted groups must mediate their beliefs through the allowable forms of dominant structures. Another way of putting this would be to say that all language is the language of the dominant order, and women, if they speak at all, must speak through it." (Showalter, 1981, p. 200).

In the following frame we see that Anna manages to bring in some personal responses to their group talk about Carver's story, "What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Love." Nick is the designated leader of this group because he has selected the story. The four students include Robin, Anthony, Nick and Anna talking together.

Anna: That's a point in the essay too. People have a need for love.

Robin: Different kinds of love.

Nick: When you invest in a relationship, you invest a part of yourself so you necessarily are giving part of yourself up. You become half a person.

Anthony: Do you think people can have a relationship without giving themselves up?

Anna: I think you are fooling yourself if you're in a relationship and don't put anything in.

Nick: Yes. You're not committed.

Robin: You have to give up certain beliefs, certain prejudices. I know--my boyfriend--I've always been the type of person who says no drugs, no this no that. He smokes pot. I say, "You shouldn't be doing that, it's wrong." He says, "I know it's wrong."

Anna: If you can accept that, that's good.

Robin: You have to accept it--you give up a lot of your own moral values, not necessarily giving them up but accepting the ones that you know are wrong. Not that you are going to go out and do them but accepting the fact that you can't always change them.

Anna: Someone I know, someone who's married and his wife doesn't let him smoke in the house and when he's at work, he smokes like a madman. His wife, if she smells beer on his breath, makes him sleep on the couch. It's ridiculous stuff. She's not accepting him as a whole person.

Robin: If you love someone you have to accept them the way they are because you can't change them. You're not really loving them.

Nick: You also need their investment. You need to know that they're committed. You need to know that they have taken a piece of themselves and given it to you... (Reading Group Transcript 10/29)

While the women in this group explore the interpersonal aspects of forming a relationship--of accepting new values,

accepting the "whole person,"--the males (mainly Nick here) discuss commitment as an object--an emotional investment, as a piece of the self.

Anna later reflects on this group discussion in her journal which represents a private conversational forum since she knows that Donna will respond to her. When reading Anna's journal, Donna underlines the following parts of Anna's entry as being interesting:

Then he (Nick) went on to say that after he had broken up with his girlfriend, he was left with this re-found half and didn't know what to do with it. Instead of putting it into another relationship, he had to sort through it. But I'm finding that I gave or put one half more than half of myself into a relationship and I need some of it back for me to become complete. 11/1

Later, in a letter from Anna commenting on my research, she says that "women must learn to have independent identities."

In intimate relationships, the male draws boundaries: Half of me for you and half for me. The man wants his investment back. The female makes fewer boundaries in relationships: For women, relationships involve a higher interest rate, and a much larger capital investment.

Response Forums: Peer and Private

For Anna, the reading groups and journals turned out to be her most effective learning and feedback forums for prose writing (Personal Interview, 12/9). Her responses to members of her reading groups show her to be a generous reader, always offering extended comments. Anna writes that reading groups

felt more like casual conversation to her, the kind of discussions she describes holding with her friends:

Pad and I have intensely intellectual conversations in which we talk about things disturbing us in the order of the world. We sort through relationships and individual growth. Though we don't talk often, when we do, we pick up on themes and discuss how our feelings and opinions have changed...Neither of us record these conversations. We apply them to our lives (In-class essay).

Anna apparently learns to apply what she reads to her life as well. When asked how she improved as a reader in prose writing, Anna writes: "I have become a better connector. A better reader for coherent ideas. A better re-reader. I see things differently, pick up on ideas that I missed." One of the ways that Anna grew as a reader she said was through Donna's questions and responses to what was written in the journal, providing a connective tissue between teacher and student. Connected knowing, as explicated in Women's Ways of Knowing (1986) may begin with understanding people but end as a procedure for understanding paintings or texts as well: "Connected knowing involves feelings, because it is rooted in relationships: but it also involves thought... Connected knowing is just as procedural as separate knowing, although its procedures have not been as elaborately codified" (p. 121).

Reading groups and journal responses for this course both represent a way for students to connect personally to texts, providing means for making the private act of reading into a communal forum of sharing unlike so much college work that's

based on private readings without any modeling or feedback. For the female student who may not speak up in a large group discussion, these learning structures provide ways of keeping them involved in academic conversations.

The journal response in particular invites women students to draw on a whole heritage of diary and journal keeping that has historically included women. Cinthia Gannett, tracing the gendered differences in the journal tradition, suggests that for women writers the journal has afforded a voice when otherwise women might have been, indeed often were, denied voice. Gannett suggests that the journal tradition has kept women tied to a private discourse when her relationship to the arena of public discourse may have been muted: "Simply put, since women have always had fewer ways to act on, to inscribe themselves on the world at large, they found ways to inscribe themselves, to make their own unique imprint, in texts" (Gannett, 1987, p. 161). The use of the journal in higher education, Gannett asserts, helps women "work through their public voices and gain confidence as writers" (pp. 183-84) Anna, although not a private journal-keeper herself, liked the kind of comments Donna made on her journals, liked the dialogue that it afforded about her reading and thinking, liked being connected.

Anna as Writer : The Scholarship Girl Inside the Rebel

A series of early papers in prose writing describe Anna's intellectual autobiography, her change from high school rebel to college Rodriguez "scholarship" girl. A careful reading of these texts, written at first from her analytic side and revised in her expressive/imagistic style, provides a frame for understanding the learning pattern that follows Anna around. "I have these things that I carry around with me from class to class" she shares early in our work together, but is unable to articulate what they are. Anna's writing becomes the best narrator of her thinking process about academics.

Her first paper for prose writing, titled, "An Exploration of My Own Education," is triggered by the Rodriguez essay, "Achievement of Desire." The paper (Exploration) paints a version of her earlier self as negative: "I hated high school"; self-defeating: "If I didn't try I couldn't fail," and rebellious: "a kind of crazy artist with an awareness beyond society." Anna survived high school with a B average, course work in five foreign languages, including four years of Latin. The high school was in a university town--very focused on academics: "This is a snobby thing to say but there's a whole intellectual type of person who comes out of there." What her paper reveals is that in high school Anna was playing the role of rebellious, misunderstood intellectual, not really inhabiting that part.

Anna's paper (Exploration) describes her gradual transformation in college from that rebellious, pseudo-intellectual high school student to a mainstream achiever in her college educational experiences; she writes "Beginning in my sophomore year I began to do more than one typed draft of papers...and I received my first A on the college level. It was a paper of visual analysis and I was praised for both my observations and writing." This key course, taught by the art historian whose class we will consider, became the primary impetus for Anna to declare herself an art history major.

Anna also credits her changed attitude toward education to an anthropology course taken in her freshman year where she learned about an "evil side to government and capitalism," where she learned about "what was going on in Central America and who the Sandinista are..." Gradually Anna began to take her studies more seriously: "My classes made me look at the world around me and observe, think and wonder" so that at the end of her sophomore year at UNH she made dean's list. Anna describes herself turning into the type of student who likes to "be on top of the information introduced in class" or otherwise she begins to "feel nervous" about her academic standing: "That semester I did everything with precision, especially in my Art of the Ancient World course which fascinated me. I memorized every monument..." (from Exploration).

Yet. In spite of her growing success with academics, Anna's paper documents a constant doubt. She worries that, like Rodriguez, she'll become a scholarship girl who can't "think beyond the text" and who's without her own ideas:

As I sat in my American Art class the other day staring blankly at the slide in front on me while the other students responded with innovative ideas, I wondered if I too had become like a scholarship student. As they were trying to explain things primarily from their visual experiences I was trying to make sense of the names, historical facts and visual influences that I had read about in the text.

Anna's Exploration paper documents several epistemological moves in her learning process which are explained in Women's Ways of Knowing as intellectual developments particular to women in education. Coming to college as a subjective knower, dependent entirely on how she felt about things, Anna then moves into a phase of procedural knowing where she wants to "memorize" and be in charge of her learning process. This learning stage is characterized by "procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 95), requiring careful observation and analysis, both strong learning strategies needed for art history in particular (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 95).

Like any developmental stage theory this kind of analysis of Anna's growth in "self, voice and mind" is only partially useful since we all have several voices working within us at the same time. While Anna's busy learning the rituals and conventions of art history, while she's engaged in being the

scholarship girl, there's enough rebel left to warn her: "If I begin to depend too much on others for my learning, whatever it was that made me challenge and think as a young rebel will be lost." (Exploration) In high school, that rebel had no real cause except to be different from the other stereotypical students but in college Anna recognizes that loss of self-identity might translate into academic conformity.

Anna continues to re-draft papers on this educational theme with extensive feedback from Donna and some members of her writing group. Nick's comment anticipates what Anna will do next; eliminate Rodriguez from the essay and re-focus the paper on her own overall change in life perspective, not just her educational changes. The first paper (Exploration) serves as a finger exercise for another piece that she carries through the semester called Cliffs. Written in an entirely imagistic style, Anna's voice in this paper has switched from past tense to present tense narrative. In Cliffs, she's a tightrope walker, near the sea's edge where she's precariously balanced:

I feel like I'm walking on a tight rope between two cliffs four hundred feet above a beach with large pointy rocks and wet seaweed. I feel like I would topple off at any minutes, with the misplacement of a toenail. I'd fall to one side racing past the cliffs and find myself face down with a pointy rocks piercing my stomach... I'm groveling in the seaweed again.

The narrator doesn't fall but finds that her face is "ugly" with a big "scowl" and covered with the "dirty slime" from the seaweed. She's lost and has to find her way to the rope: "I'm

crawling around in misery trying to find the truth." When she locates the rope, she's free and feels "like something is too good to be true" as she hoists herself up and looks back down on herself "a few years ago." Picking up themes from the earlier paper, Anna describes herself in high school as "difficult" and "cynical."

So I'm treading here on this wire and way down below I see myself a few years ago. I was miserable, but it didn't really bother me. I kind of got off on being the one that everyone thought was off, the one with a more cynical sense of humor and difficult tendencies. The one whose anger never ceased--always brimming. Yeah, I wanted them to think that I had problems. I wandered around the halls in my high school with a glazed expression. I argued with my teachers in class while other students rolled their eyes. It didn't bother me. I knew I was seeing beyond them....

Later in the paper she acknowledges that her image of herself as a rebel was hard to let go of because her "depressing logic" had taken "years to mold" her. In place of this rebellious youth, Anna finds a friend (Simon) who helps her understand this self-defeatist attitude. Without an "automatic rebellion," Anna learns that: "I could think more clearly and develop rational ideas instead of ones founded with passion." She also sees this transformation as more challenging: "It is much harder to keep a positive attitude than to be angry. By focusing on the flaws of society, you can convince yourself that being a part of it is a waste of time."

Instead of documenting only her changed attitude toward education, Cliffs shows Anna's entire switch in life-perspective. In this section of the paper, she returns to her

sea imagery; having come down from the cliffs, she's enmeshed in seaweed:

The seaweed was cleansed from me and I moved toward an upright stance. I am challenged by a new way of thinking. Inner tranquility is the way to truly rational thinking. I'm leaving the group of conscious sufferers.

The change described in this paper, Anna tells me in our talks, represents the major learning experience of her life. What surprises her most in this transformation is "that I didn't have to give up my intellect. In fact, I've become more curious and a much better learner..."

But. In the end of Cliffs just as in the earlier paper, Anna introduces her tentativeness about this change ... "I'm nervous" "I don't know how long that will last." "...I never should have found this high wire..." "I'm clinging to the rope but I fear my past might pull me down."

Anna's ability to perform and get good grades in college does not afford her assurance and confidence: instead as she becomes aware of herself as a better learner, she becomes more hesitant about her knowing. She expresses this way: "It just seems as if everything I know is temporary. It just comes and goes." And later she comments on this comment by saying: "I just memorized for tests and forgot when the ideas were not in use."

Creativity and All That Jazz: Anna's Other Side

Anna's first two papers provide insight into her thinking process, into attitudes that prevented her from being a

successful learner in high school and partially explain her current insecurities about university work: "I have high expectations... High ideals, I think, are a bad thing to get involved with."

The other writing theme that Anna pursues in her English course more directly represents Anna's artistic side, both in subject matter and in style: Jazz is another major piece of writing that Anna revises throughout the term. In this instance, Anna relies on peer and instructor feedback more directly to rewrite the paper from embryonic music criticism into a personal essay, triggered by a particular jazz concert.

Since the membership of writing groups shifted each time they met to provide students with a larger audience, Anna found its feedback less satisfactory than that of reading groups where students stayed together all term. Writing groups she evaluated as being "both good and bad." The difficult part for Anna is facing the page again after a writing group: "When I go back to my papers, I feel like I'm alone again and I don't know why." Writing groups, she learns, only partially diminish the isolation of writing, they cannot eliminate it.

Her first draft of Jazz begins with sounds: "Boo dee boo da..boo dee boo da da da...boo dee ba do do do...Shelia Jordan sang improvised melodies in a wonderfully deep full voice." The paper tries to accomplish a number of different things: tell about Shelia Jordon's singing; discuss the nature

of jazz; and relate the feelings from the concert to Anna's own life. Here are some illustrative sections:

The parts about Shelia Jordon are mainly descriptive:

She held her head down with the microphone tight against her lips like a horn. ... Shelia Jordon looked striking wearing a short-sleeved black top and jet black hair cut in a flapper style with thick bangs and blunt sides making a rectangular frame for her face.

The more discursive section attempts to explicate the nature of jazz and in doing so, echoes the interaction of reading groups in her composition course:

Jazz has been described by some who have played it as a conversation; everyone staying pretty much around a subject but all adding ideas and feelings of their own.... When musicians work together and are feeling the same thing, great passion can be felt by both the players and observers. In this way, they extend their conversation to us.

There's a shift to personal images evoked by hearing the concert which includes Anna's responses to the music, of feeling "drained, and awed by their creativity." In this section Anna says she fades away, "feeling a world away from school." It's here she loses her audience as she drifts into memories:

Some songs I associate very strongly with my dad's playing (the piano) and they make me feel sentimental about time passing and human existence: its brevity and the inevitable pain of losing those you love.

I thought of a TV movie my boyfriend and I tuned into one night about a scientist who had a machine that could tap into other people's experience by measuring neuron transmitters or something like that.

I envisioned a day of end for everyone and me hanging onto my boyfriend's white shirt with red and black pinstripes ascending into eternity. I held on as tightly

as I could but we were separated and I slipped into nothingness without him.

The paper goes back to the concert and Shelia Jordan:

The tears brimming in my eyes spilled out because the song had evoked such intense feelings inside of me. I wanted to run up to the stage and hug her! She had made a connection with me.

It ends with a few lines from a childhood song,

'Inchworm': Inchworm, inchworm measuring the marigold/You and your arithmetic will get you very far/Inchworm/Inchworm measuring the marigold/It seems to me you'd stop and see/ How beautiful they are.

Because of the many writing styles in the paper, its bizzare mixture of images, and the intense personal emotions conveyed, the paper's a mass of unrealized potential. Students in her peer writing group help show Anna that her topic is not that one specific concert but just the triggering topic for an inner experience that's very personal. In the group Anna says:

Anna: I guess I was going for images. I wasn't going for focus. I wanted the readers to share some of those images with me. ...It didn't have a focus. It made me think about a lot of different things.

Patty: And is that what jazz is to you too?

Anna: That's what that performance was to me. When I listen to jazz..... It's not really about jazz. It's about my experiences.

Mark: Jazz is the triggering subject.

Patty: Yes. Jazz is the trigger.

Mark interprets the paper as a "kind of collage" but he and Patty both ask Anna what she wants the reader to get out

of the text, indicating that its dependence upon images is not totally effective:

Patty: I didn't know what you wanted me to think.

Mark: Did you want us to think that we should stop measuring our lives so that we could enjoy them?

Anna asks the group if they think the paper is "too crowded" and their responses show that they think the paper's unfocused:

Patty says: You could make a whole other paper on that movie and stuff." Mark suggests that he got lost: "There's a lot in there in that paragraph about losing your grip and separating and slipping into nothingness. You read and think, "What did I just read?" Andy's the most directive and says flat out: "I think you should stick to one thing and focus it."

While the paper presents the experiences of attending a jazz concert, it does so in a mixture of sound and visual images rather than verbal language, and its verbal language that her peers must content with.

Donna's supportive in conference to what Anna's trying out, even giving her an essay by William Zinsser on jazz:

Anna:...I had problems with/ I had questions with what belonged and what flowed. I kind of like the way I go from one thing to another.

Donna: I do too.

Anna: Because that was my thought pattern when I was watching the performance. I wanted to stick to that performance because that's what evoked all these feelings in me.

Donna: And that's an anchoring device that allows you to move back and forth. It's like the "triggering town. If you're nowhere at all, how can you go anyplace else? It anchors you, it gives the reader a base and then you can go where ever you want from it. It's a good technique to use.

Anna: People in the group had problems with it because I tied the paper to Shelia Jordan. Maybe I should start out with the atmosphere and then focus it on her and go to the jazz group and then into my own experiences. Something like that... (Conference Transcript).

In the intermediate draft, Anna follows her own advice and that of Donna by anchoring her paper at the Press Room listening to the jazz concert but drifting in and out of the concert, juxtaposing her personal responses to Shelia Jordan against her own inner experiences: "When Shelia Jordan sang it seemed she was opening to me through her music and I answered by intensely relating her experiences to my own." In this way she's able to retain much of the imagery of the first draft but makes it clear that the songs evoke these feelings and memories. She ends this draft:

I thought that because her performance had made me so introspective she would know somehow how she made me feel. I felt as if I had gotten closer to her in the hour performance. After the concert we passed her table on our way out and I wanted to tell her what a strong affect her music had on me. But she was with a group of people having a verbal conversation, one that I could not share. I didn't want to. I knew it was through her music that I knew her...

Anna's final folder includes a revision of Jazz, this version's much tighter structurally than her middle draft: it's been cut from six pages to three. She retains the movement back and forth between the jazz concert and her own responses but she also inserts much more analysis about the medium of jazz itself, partially borrowed from draft one. In this polished version, Anna's conceptualized the images that drove her first draft; she's also tackled the focus problem:

now the paper is about her, not Shelia Jordan, the jazz singer. And she's analyzed jazz as a form as well the particular concert she's listening to: the paper combines images and analysis.

Jazz

I'm not in Portsmouth anymore. I leave my physical location behind while the jazz of Shelia Jordan and the Joy Spring Quartet manipulates my moods and thoughts with each piece they play. Their music is so intense that it stuffs the room, cottoning my thoughts and movements.

Jazz has been described by some who play it as a conversation. Each piece is gradually developed as each musician adds his own ideas and follows it till its conclusion. Jazz gathers energy from the spontaneity and imagination of those playing and through the communications between the musicians. The more comfortable the musicians fell with each other the freer they are to experiment both during their solos and as a group. When musicians are moving together and "feeling" the same energy, excitement lifts both players and observers.

I love the building energy in a piece that gets louder and more complex as different instruments contribute. First the solo bass player creates anticipation by laying down the Latin rhythm that the others are expect to join. In jazz the number of measures that he will play is improvised, not set. He will play until the impulse that creates those opening phrases has passed and he is ready to be joined. I am thrilled both by his creativity then by the addition of the drummer's slight tapping to accentuate the beat. Then by the piano player who first plays chords matching the accents of the rhythm, then gradually comes into her own. Together they are building something. They are working through their impulses while sharing the foundation of a set chord pattern. The music is so exciting because all the musicians are audibly fused.

Over the top of this foundation comes the high voice of Shelia Jordan. She is a whistle, a flute, not singing words but sounds which tell me her feelings without telling me a story. I can understand her better this way. She uses her voice as a noise instead of a means to communication so she directly translates her feelings. I relate to her instead of words that might have different meanings for me. I am excited.

This bossanova rhythm, like others, has an exotic feel to it and I picture Spanish dancers with castanets in full red

skirts with small yellow and green stripes. Their dark hair is pulled away from their faces and their mysterious eyes lead them back off. I lack the Spanish mystery that has always attracted me. I could never feel at home in a bossanova rhythm because of my blonde hair and English background. It makes me insecure and I feel easily read. Light eyes can't hide anything. I am envious. The music leaves me breathless but my place is unfulfilled.

Anna reported that she enjoyed doing this revision, enjoyed working with the words and images. Donna found this Anna's most successful piece of writing for the semester and copied it for her files of outstanding student writing.

The Loss of Individualism and the Gain of the Individual

Anna as Collaborator

Anna likes group work. She compares collaborative writing to creating a modern dance, equating free wheeling conversation with the improvisational aspect of dance: Communication being the primary focus of both. When Bonnie, Mark and she are in the process of talking about their project, Anna feels the collaboration most exciting. All three of them report in their separate collaborative journals about how easily they worked together; "Being sensitive to everyone's ideas, that's what collaboration is all about " writes Anna and later, "Collaboration means cooperation." She also finds that to make the collaboration work, the individual members must sometimes compromise for the group: "Sometimes I felt like I was trying to make every one of my ideas happen. And I didn't like that. I'm conscious of making this a group effort." One of the ways they accomplish the group effort is

to borrow ideas from each member's individual readings to find a thread for weaving the paper together. Again, they comment in their journals on how effortlessly they eventually come to agreement, how they are able to include all their interests. Mark reports that the initial two hour collaborative meeting broke into two parts, with the first focused on making personal connections between the readings and their own lives: "We discussed the various windows that were presented by different authors and how we linked experiences in our lives to their proposed windows" (Mark's Journal). Anna lists the themes that the group talks about as "dehumanization, loss in the world, how we have to try to break down barriers--society won't do this for us." There are extensive responses in all three journals which show their real involvement with each other's readings, all which were quite different. Bonnie writes "It was interesting to see how each of us presented our reasons for choosing the articles we did. Even though they were all distinctly different, we found something similar in all of them" (Bonnie's journal).

After an initial agreement on a general theme, the group also decides early on about the form that the paper will take. Anna reports that it was her idea to do "character studies" but she then worries over whether it's a group consensus or not: "I hope I didn't push the idea too far," indicates her fear of being "pushy." Mark suggests in his journal that this idea was, in fact, a group decision, that they "tentatively

decided to write a short story... about three characters trapped or placed in a new environment in which they were presented with a problem." Mark's anxious over whose ideas will dominate: "Should one of my ideas be discounted for one of Anna's or Bonnie's? It's a struggle to keep personalities, persuasions, frames/windows and styles on an even keel. The question I find myself asking: should we even try?" The struggle of this group, consistently documented in all three journals, is to create a context where all members participate equally. Mark shares that by working together they developed a "delicate understanding of our responsibilities as writers" (Mark's Journal).

Once the group decides on its theme and genre, they have to stick with these ideas. It's at this stage Anna feels the group becomes "stunted," that the progress is no longer "organic": "It was like we can't grow anymore because if we did, the project would go off in different ways." Since the impetus is to produce a paper, the group loses the initial surge of energy, or what Anna describes as "the intense creative spark" of their earlier conversations. The necessity of getting this paper done short changes what Anna feels might have been a more intense and creative incubation period.

The compensation for this loss of creativity is that Anna experiences a new way of writing as she works on fiction with Mark and Bonnie: "It was interesting for me to write fiction with the framework of Mark and Bonnie." Anna's enthusiastic

about narrative writing, where she says, "our paper grew as a story, not a thinking process." She welcomes learning a new form: " And it didn't feel odd. I was comfortable with it. In that way the group gave me a sort of strength. We supported each other without being conscious of it." The gain, then for her individually turns out to be this journey into form or what Anna calls "an adventure in language."

During this adventure Anna learns that Bonnie and she have different ideas about how to develop the individual characters. Where Anna pictures the "androgenous young man" as being intelligent but unaware, Bonnie saw him as "trendy." Anna had even visualized this character as wearing "a grey down jacket" and having brown hair and eyes, being "efficient," with no time to care about others. What emerges in their collaborative effort is an entirely different description:

...his appearance is a new androgenous fashion. He wears a long black overcoat covered with pockets and buttons. His black leather boots, mid-calf length, hide the bottom of his tattered jeans, making them seem like knickers. His dark hair is gelled straight up above his head, exposing a gold hoop earring in his left ear. Wires hanging from his headphones connect him to his trendy world of pop music.

Mark, who's written fiction on his own, reflects in his journal that Mr. Androgenous was overdeveloped as a character with "his walkman and his hair" compared to the other two key characters. Anna is dissatisfied with the final depiction of this male: "The androgenous character becomes somewhat

problematic as I reflect." In fact, all three of the characters seem stereotypical rather than developed personalities. Anna comments that this static representation happened because "we stopped growing with them. In fact, we created characters so distant from us and each other, they had no room to grow."

Against the others in her group, Anna discovers that her own power in writing is not so much in "technique" but in her ideas. The group work externalize for Anna what she unconsciously knew about her strength as an essay writer. She concludes that the forms of fiction and non-fiction are quite different in their demands: "Fiction is dependent upon descriptions. Essays are dependent upon ideas."

The collaborative process also provides Anna with a chance to see how other writers work: " Their group picked the "slowest method imaginable" for actually writing the paper: they wrote each word together in front of a word processor. While the writing process was tedious, it was filled with camaraderie. Anna reports that they "giggled" at their mistakes, "clapped" when something clicked and pushed together to make "clear writing that will say what we want it to say." Anna says that the use of a computer has an advantage in this kind of project because it makes the process "visible"; it also "involves" everyone and does not "leave anybody out." This laborious writing process showed Annie that Bonnie, the outdoor education major, was a problem-solver and that Mark,

the only English major in the class, liked to fiddle with words. "It brought out different ideas and strengths to form one project."

In spite of all the positive feelings she has about collaboration process, Anna's not entirely satisfied with the end results. She describes the characters as "symbols for the increased lack of the human in this cold world, "and worries about this kind of detachment, comparing it with the writing of Camus: "I can't imagine how Camus was able to stay so detached from his characters." This separation of writer and character feels foreign to Anna so that in this collaborative experience, what she dislikes most is the sense that the characters become "fixed" and do not evolve: "We were afraid to change them." Mark comments too that after writing the paper together, the group lost its ability to be objective: "...our group became such a solidified mass of writers that we were only seeing the story through a single set of eyes."

Here is an excerpt from their three-page short story called "The Elevator":

'Let's be patient and stay calm. I'm sure someone will help us soon.' The young woman assures. 'By the way, my name is Ophry.'

'If the elevator is delinquent I'm sure the maintenance people are too.' The professional woman interjects. This is followed by a long silence metered by the impatient tapping of the professional woman's foot. She looks to the back of the elevator at the figure standing there. She assumes he is male by the tone of his voice, however his appearance is a new androgenous fashion. He wears a long black overcoat covered with pockets and buttons. His black leather boots, mid-calf length, hide the bottom of his tattered jeans making them

seem like knickers. His dark hair is gelled straight up above his head exposing a gold hoop earring in his left ear. Wires hanging from his headphones connect him to his trendy world of pop music. He focuses his glance on the professional woman. She turns away not caring enough to acknowledge him.

Ophry produces a white collapseable walking stick from her coat pocket. She opens it and begins a tapping search for the perimeter of the elevator and a railing to hold on to. Accidently she bumps the young man's boot.

'Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see you there,' Ophry apologizes.

'I didn't know you were blind,' he shouts over his walkman assuming that she can't hear him very well.

'I'm not blind, I just have a different way of seeing things. My hearing is excellent so you don't need to speak up.' Ophry finds the rail then steadys herself. She is able to relax, having found a secure space.

What Anna initially identifies as the theme of the paper-
- "the gain of the individual and the loss of individualism"-
-becomes a metaphor for her collaborative writing process. In
an final evaluation of the effort Anna says "You gain and
lose from any method." What is given up in an
individualistic effort, usually accomplished in universities
in a competitive situation, is "the chance to work out a
problem with a group," which Anna decides is "valuable to me
if only for that." The gain of group work as helping students
feel less isolated, less lonely in their intellectual growth
is echoed in Anna's reflection on a story she read for her
collaborative journal where she comments on the loss of
individualistic thinking: "Everyone's had millions of ideas
and connections that start in a mind and stay there."

Collaboration helps make these singular ideas emerge and connect, and ultimately, if even imperfectly, communicate with others.

Anna ends English 501 with positive feelings about the course, which she says, "opens you up to being more personal in your other courses" and overall "makes you more active in your education." One very specific skill that Anna gains from prose writing that she attributes to Donna's help in conferences is that she learns to edit the tentativeness and qualification out of her prose. Donna tells Anna that she doesn't have to say "'I think,' because it's obvious that you're the one who's doing the writing, just come right out and say what you have to say" (12/9 Personal Interview).

At the end of the term Anna writes an essay in class evaluating her progress in prose writing by comparing it with her art history course work. When I read her final essay, I recalled an earlier interview where she shared some of her misgivings about art history with me. In this interview we're talking about an essay written by Adrienne Rich when Anna begins to talk about her art history courses:

Anna: It just seemed that the whole discussion [on Rich's essay] was futile. Sometimes I get that way.

Elizabeth: Futile in the sense that we'll never have resolution on women's issues?

Anna: Exactly. And it made me think about.....in the middle of the semester, I became really confused about why I am doing art history. Why should I tear apart this person's painting just so I can get some meaning out of it? It's just there. Why can't I just look at it and get something from it. Why do I have to prove something?

In this final essay for prose writing, Anna critiques the methodology and thinking process of art history, discussing the tension in her academic life between fields which require distance, detachment, and objectivity and those which welcome intimacy, engagement, and subjectivity:

I've learned that my learning in 501 is very unrelated to the learning in my other classes... In 501 I develop theories. I think more about life. My life. I write about my life. I think about my place in the universe. In other classes, I learn about other people's lives, that aren't even in this time period. They're mostly dead. And I'm interpreting their lives and beliefs and influences. Trying to make sense of them. They don't even care. If they're up there looking down at me and scholars, they'd probably die three times over laughing at this folly. Midway through this semester, I realized I wasn't sure about the principles of Art History. How dare we study people who are dead? Where is their proof, their treatment of line? I thought I'd love to write essays for the rest of my life: they involve me directly. And what a better subject to study.

Let's say that I become a famous artist. And my works are flashed up on a screen in a college auditorium. Five major ones in a half an hour. All reduced. Simplified to the rawest, most basic terms. "See this influence, and that.... See the changes in her treatment of color...compare the palettes... She did this after her brother tried to kill himself, that's why its so dark. This was when she studied with a sculptor, see the differences? This month is her centennial and there is a major debate going on about the meaning in her works. She claimed to her death that this wasn't about suicide, but how can anyone deny that? Next slide please..."

In her major field of study--art history--there's an undercurrent of resistance, the rebel is fighting the scholarship accomodater in an academic dance of virtual energies. As we go into avant garde art in America the following semester, we will remember this rebellious voice

that is warning Anna of the dangers of the distanced stance toward art. Next frame please.

Being A Student: Avant Garde Art in America

I'm early for art history class which begins at four in the afternoon in Paul Arts, the building that houses the Music, Theatre and Art Departments. Waiting by the wooden weaving looms outside the lecture room, I observe the students mill around before class, some of them drinking coffee and tea purchased down the hall in the convenient art supply store. Eventually I join them with a cup of hot chocolate. Several students cluster together chatting softly, and while I cannot hear them I see by their dress that they look different: one bearded man in his twenties has a scarf of a rough South American fabric tied around his neck, a style that's seldom imitated on campus, another woman's wearing heavy work boots, splattered with paint and all-olive clothing which seems like a kind of uniform. I glance down at someone's hands to see two inch fingernails painted jet black, accompanied with an armful of lovely clanging silver bracelets: and when I look up I find hair that's partially dyed pink which is gelled straight up from her head.

When the door opens to let out the flood from the previous class, I follow students into the room and, insecurely noting that Anna's not there yet, I select a seat near Professor's Hall's lectern, organize my new art history

notebook and overhear a lively conversation:

"My sculpture's finally coming together. I worked on it all afternoon."

"Great. Aren't you doing something with sand painting and cheesecloth?"

"Yes, and I'm using thorns and have marks all over my hand from them."

"What is your impetus? Is it religious?"

"No, it's not, in spite of the thorns."

Professor Hall enters wearing a lavender checked top over loose slacks. Her grey hair's clipped back from her neck and she's carrying a stack of notes and art books. Early in the semester I know little about her: she received her Ph.D. in 1974; she gives frequent lectures in the university's Humanities Series; and is now serving on the library search committee for a new head librarian. Briefly she consults with the projectionist who's sitting behind a stand in the center of the room with trays of slides. Hall makes several announcements before Anna slips in and takes a seat on the other side of the room. Most of the announcements refer to cultural events: "There's a well known violin quartet that will be playing for free tomorrow evening if the snows lets up. The student art show opens this week and we need volunteers to help with posters--see Abbey if you have time. There will be a "Happening" at the MUB and for those of you

who haven't seen this kind of art statement, this will be your opportunity to do so."

After a few wry comments either on her announcements, the weather, or the course material--"There are lots of dear old ladies with goulashes and umbrellas who hate Pollock but we won't listen to them"--Hall begins her lecture which goes for an hour and a half. She seldom looks down at her notes, although she sometimes reads from books, either art criticism, letters and biographies, or accounts by artists themselves. She doesn't waste a beat of time as she presents the day's materials, illustrated with slides. The projectionist keeps so perfectly attuned to her lecture that she speaks to him infrequently, only occasionally asking for a re-focusing.

Adopting the perspective of a student, uninitiated in art history, I wildly write my field notes in the semi-darkness. The noise of the slide machine weighs on the afternoon air, not enough to interfere with Hall's voice but obvious enough to indicate there's a mechanical accompaniment to her talk. Sometimes Professor Hall moves from her lectern to the projected images, pointing out visual details of importance related to the artists we're considering: space, line, shape, color, light, shade, arrangement, brush strokes, even the framing is sometimes discussed. Early in the semester we're on Pollock, an abstract expressionist of enormous influence whose work I've always been attracted to but don't know why. Anna later admits that she'd never heard of him.

Professor Hall explains that she'll do a developmental overview of Pollock's work. At the same time she intersperses comments about his life: his fragile personality, his battles with substance abuse, his various attempts at psychoanalysis, his complicated personal relationships with other contemporary artists. Usually she presents two pictures, side by side, illustrating, for example, that Pollock's been influenced by American Indian art such as sand paintings and Navaho masks. From such comparisons, Hall draws generalized statements about modern art, about the principles that a particular modern artist advances. Pollock's return to the art of native Americans, she suggests, shows the artist questioning the manufactured production of art against the natural artistic statements of the Indians. This kind of artistic stance over what constitutes a work of art, is a thread that's woven through all of modern art, Hall points out.

At junctures in her lecture, Professor Hall may stop to explicate a term. She asks, "Does everyone understand what the word discursive means?" and then goes on to offer both a definition and illustrative example. The discursive mind, she says, takes material like she's presenting and orders it. It's that verbal part of your mind that goes on talking to you and may even prevent you from seeing other things in a piece of art. Unfortunately for us all, she says, art history is a very discursive field of study. Meditation, she offers, sometimes helps us stop all that jabber inside of us. And

Pollock learned in his way to quiet this discursiveness through his painting.

When Hall shows the famous Pollock "poured works," she shares that they were executed like a dance, the unstretched canvas on the floor, Pollock moving in and out of the paintings with the rhythm of the dancer. This creative process, produced she says, great skeins of color woven over one another, a network of lines and splatters, suggesting a new way of representing pictorial space. This scattered effect of Pollock's drip painting is not to be confused with randomness, not to be consider haphazard, she warns because Pollock did not always accept his results. However, the element of the accidental becomes a deliberate statement, a principle of abstract expressionists. Hall reads from Pollock's own writing: "When I am in my painting, I am not aware of what I'm doing. The painting has a life of its own."

Professor Hall often displays dissatisfaction with the slides which cannot begin, she says, to do justice to the size or texture of the originals: "Oh nuts. This is a huge painting," she comments on Pollock's famous Autumn Rhythm, "Try to imagine this as filling up an entire wall of this room." The large scale of these works, she suggests, marks the final break of painting as being detached from the painter. In modern art, painting requires the viewer to be absorbed in pictorial space, the environment of the work encloses the spectator on all sides. As she moves closer to the slide, she

suggests to students that they need to see the originals so that they can feel "the texture of the paint and allow themselves to float around in the painting." This kind of abstract art, Hall says "requires you to enter into a dialogue with the painting itself." Again, generalizing from Pollack to an important concept of modernist work, she says that the abstract expressionist painters were engaged in an argument between the literal surface and virtual space in painting: They were forging a new vocabulary for modern artists.

The class continues in this way for ninety minutes. Only one student raises her hand to ask the name of a painting which Hall identifies as Number #11 and suggests that students' don't bother with titles like these, but be aware of more general dates and periods. After class, Professor Hall lingers for awhile to answer questions. Anna and I head downtown for tea and muffins and to talk about the course.

Anna as Art History Guide

Anna explains that part of the class is made up of studio people who were sitting on the side where I was and the other half where she was sitting includes the art history majors. Studio people hang around together, she says based on her own experiences of taking some studio courses. And studio people, Anna suggests, "loathe" courses in art history because "it's too detached" and usually they can't "apply it to their own work." Anna feels the conflict between these two fields: "It

puts me in a weird position because I'm on both sides. Sometimes I'm getting more into the art history theories and other times I'm thinking it's more pure to actually do it and then develop a theory about it." The analytic side wins this war but Anna's also experienced in creating art herself; has taken studio courses in both high school and college and has done some "ink washes and charcoal and was really spent hours on her ceramics course." This split between studio artists and art historians reminds me of the literature/composition split in my own English department.

Anna does know the names of a few of the art history majors, but doesn't have much contact with them outside of her classes. "I don't talk to anyone much about art," she shared with me. When I ask her how affiliated she feels with being an art history major she says, "not that much." I inquire about who her audience is when writing for these courses and, unsurprisingly, she says, "my professors." Interestingly all three of her art history professors have been women, and according to Anna, they are very serious scholars. But I later learn that Mary Hall doesn't even realize that Anna's an art history major, although she does remember from an introductory Visual Studies class that she's a good student.

Since there are multiple layers of information to absorb in this course, I probe to find out how Anna prepares and studies for modern art. First, there's the actual painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, found object or collage that

she has to know and identify: these serve as the primary text of the course, requiring a special language to interpret. Then, there's Mary Hall's commentary about this art that needs to be overlaid and connected to the works. Finally, there are five textbooks books, as well as numerous chapters and articles on reserve that students are required to read that deal with social, political, and economic implications of the works. For example, in the two week period covering the topic of "abstract expressionism," the required reading includes eleven whole chapters from books and shorter readings from ten other books. In addition, there's a list of recommended readings for this topic, some whole book chapters and other, shorter articles.

Reading the Twin Texts of Art History

Anna says she doesn't have much of a method for reading art history texts, that she just goes through and underlines what she thinks is important and tries to keep up with the material, not an easy task I soon learn. Last semester when she was "required" to do a journal entry from a textbook for her prose writing class, Anna found it difficult to make any personal connections to the text books. Selecting an article on Bosch's "images of poverty" from her Northern Renaissance course, she began her journal entry by saying: " I have tried before to write reactions to some of my art history readings and barely filled half a page. It seems I read for facts and

when I tried to make connections, I couldn't because it was so cut and dry. Facty, facty facty. It's hard to have other insights, except into the works themselves." Yet when Anna goes on in her journal to force herself to make a response, she's able to relate Bosch's images of the peasant to the greed of modern society and ends her journal response saying; "More and more we think only in terms of ourselves... This Ship of Fools is going straight to hell" (journal entry, prose writing). At another point, Anna shared an aborted attempt to do journal entries on her art texts on her own, saying that just getting the material down is difficult enough without trying to make any personal connections.

When I suggest that journal entries or some type of note taking device for this course might be helpful because the material seems pretty abstract Anna says that she doesn't think about it as much as I do.: "We just learn it. I mean, we see a painting and she'll describe it and it'll make sense and you'll remember some of the things she says and some of what you read." Anna says that she allows both art and music affect her "directly. Bestowed with a kind of visual learning, she describes it like remembering a "song or a particular view": When you look at a painting, she says, you get certain feelings and when you see that work again, "you return to those feelings." Anna quotes Professor Hall as saying that "you have to understand the language before the paintings will speak to you." This language is imagistic, ineffable and non-

discursive. Vera John-Steiner defines the power of visual thinking as the "ability to conceptualize our experiences as structures in motion, as relationships" (Steiner, 1985, p. 106).

The paradox of the art history major seems to be that this visual response finally must be translated into the verbal. An art history student cannot survive without solid writing abilities. As the course syllabus states, avant-garde art demands that students "observe keenly, take comprehensive notes, and organize a large amount of material coherently. Verbal and analytic skills are important" (Course Syllabus).

And for Mary Hall, there is a definite way to read art history. At the beginning of one class meeting (2/18) she reviews the syllabus and suggests to students that the arrangement of the course material is deliberate: "I had hoped that the order of the materials would be apparent" and then explains just how the reading should be accomplished. The first set of readings under Abstract Expressionism, she says, provide a global overview of this problematic period, followed by materials which support the New York art world view--written by critics such as Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg, and finally there are statements and writings by individual artists. "You need a medium-sized box, a construct, in which to put some very individualistic painters in order to understand what the New York School is all about." Hall instructs.

I find as the semester goes on that the paintings do begin to speak to me but without any feedback through class or peer discussion or written responses, I wonder just how this material is being organized in my mind. I rely on Anna to share her analysis of paintings with me, to show me how she reads a work of art. I compare my notes on Motherwell with hers and find that I have written more but Anna's notes mean more. In one of our meetings Anna explains her notes on Motherwell as she points to the painting:

This is what she [Hall] means by playing with virtual space on a flat canvas. Motherwell wants these paintings read as both open and closed. There are many different ways you can look at this painting: the inside becomes enclosed but then you are drawn to the outside because the lines form a U shape. The painting moves. When you step back, you realize that it's just a blue canvas with black lines. Finally you relate this to the artist's philosophy and all the stuff from the readings and it all makes sense.

The class spends a great amount of time on abstract expressionism but covers as well: post-painterly abstraction, constructions, pop and op art, happenings, minimalist works, super-realism, gestural and photo art, idea art, performance and postmodernism. Professor Hall shows us how to view junk assemblages and sculptures, found objects, collages and large installations which cover entire rooms of museums, we learn how to analyze everything from Oldenburg's vinyl toilet to the Independence Mall in Philadelphia. Hall is an expert as well at reading the political sub-text in art: she can bring to the surface much of what seems hidden--an artist's statements

about the Vietnam war, for example. And she offers new ways of reading familiar images, suggesting that Warhol's silk screens of Marilyn Monroe--his saturated images--are both "formal" and "haunting." She draws extensively from the artists' personal lives and often recommends books, The Legacy of Mark Rothko, by Sedes, is described as a "shrill muck-raking biography that describes the scandalous behavior of his gallery after his death." She can even critique the official museum catalogs as being slanted: she reads from Rothko's Guggenheim catalog and comments: "This idea of Rothko's obtaining a harmonious transcendence is garbage. Rothko was a deeply troubled man who went to several different shrinks at the same time and got enough medication for him to commit suicide."

The complexity of reading, connecting, and interpreting the various modern art movements dazzles me; there are artistic responses, reactions, and statements against the establishment, against other artists, and sometimes statements against an artist's earlier work. There's autobiographic information, visual information and socio/political information which is woven into a rather rough texture of modern art in my mind. As I struggle with this sorting process, I wonder how Anna's doing. She's the expert and I'm the novice but I have no tangible things to work with, no learning structures have been provided to guide me through this journey.

Anna claims that the intertwining of the biographical with the paintings makes the canvas easier to interpret: "It's easy for me to remember his paintings because I remember his life...I thought it was interesting, Rothko's gradual losing of sanity and how that was shown in his works, all that social consciousness and torment about his social position and all that...." To see the canvas as life and the artist's life as a kind of canvas further glues the connection for her.

Talk in Art History: Anna as Listener

The discourse in this class is a one-way communication system: Hall lectures brilliantly and we listen in fascinated silence. Here's a short snip of her lecture on Womanhouse and performance art so that you can see how packed her talk is with the visual, the autobiographical, and the political:

What we are looking at is a work called Womanhouse which was organized in Los Angeles in 1971-72 by Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro and a group of their students and other women artists in the area. It was a work that was intended, as Miriam Shapiro said, to convert psychological rage into artistic energy. And what they were converting was the rage of exclusion; that is, women artists in the 60's and 70's were not part of the whole educational cycle. And at that point Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro were teaching at California Institute of the Arts and had come through the regular art school thing and one of the things they had felt about this was that they were more or less always being treated as peripheral to the main functions of the art school. I have heard male instructors in this school say of women artists, "Oh don't give them a fellowship--they'll just go out and get married. It would be a waste of money." It's that kind of thing that fueled the rage that led to Womanhouse. Womanhouse was, in a sense, a performance place. It was an old house that had been abandoned, and it was taken over by Chicago and Shapiro and women artists. It was repainted, jacked up, rewired and it became the first all female aesthetic environment. So the

whole house became environmental art work and there were spaces in which a performances would go on. You're looking, now, at two of the performances... (Lecture Transcript).

As interesting as her lectures were, I found myself longing to hear what other students in the course have to say, what's going on in their minds. On March 3, six weeks into the course, it happens. We're learning about Louise Nevelson's work, the first major woman artist we've discussed, when five minutes before the class ends, someone asks a personal question. The speaker, a professor who's also auditing the course, says that he's "deeply troubled" by Nevelson's sculpture ending up on Wall Street in New York and asks Professor Hall how she feels about it. Hall responds that it bothers her too but that no matter what artists feel or do, their work ends up being "owned, transformed into artifact. The private individualistic artistic statement in this way becomes public and political. Wall Street buys the art to display how broad minded they are, Hall says.

The class has "officially" ended but students linger to talk about the political implications of art, of what happens when the artistic opposition is finally folded into the establishment. This is the first time in the semester that I've heard any of these students' voices: They sound intense, concerned. One student says that artists have the choice to either "oppose the system and live on air and peanut butter" or actively seek commissions and sell their art but that,

"It's a matter of how you conduct yourself in the system." Another student disagrees, saying that art is not owned by any artist: " A piece of art acquires a life of its own once it becomes public. Art doesn't belong to one person but takes on the world around it."

Hall ends the fifteen minute overtime discussion by reaching consensus with all these points of view, saying that "A work of art means different things to different people in different contexts. You never can tell what will happen on the art scene, who or what movements will re-emerge. There is in this field, a large element of chance."

Anna later shares with me that this class discussion was an anomaly, that in most art history courses, students don't talk much. When I asked why she didn't enter the discussion, Anna said: "I haven't tried to talk about it yet because I haven't gotten a grip on it yet." Since mid-terms were coming up, I wondered when she would begin to get that grasp of these many artists and their movements. She seemed to well understand her task for art history as "learning how to think about modern art in a certain way, developing theories about modern art." Anna welcomed the test in certain ways because, she says, "if you're a good writer and have read a certain amount of stuff you can get by with just going to class and knowing a selected amount of the material." The system for doing well in art history Anna said is "to remember what the

teacher says about the paintings and make those connections on your test."

Response in Art History: "We Will Write Some Essays"

For Anna these connections didn't happen. She reviewed all the slides for modern art and even sought out some clarification from Professor Hall about the difference between "gestural" and "color-field" painters. Yet her mid-term exam earned her only a C, a very low grade for Anna who was used to getting A's on essay exams. When I looked at the exam, I realized that it wasn't "tricky," but what Hall had characterized as very "mainline." Each question was a compare/contrast between two artists and two artistic movements, exactly what my class notes before the exam suggested: "I will show a slide comparison and ask you to locate the issues within the tangled skein of art history. I'm interested in philosophical issues rather than a visual or aesthetic approach. If you begin with the colorfield artists and the abstract expressionists and think what happened next, you will probably come up with the format of the exam."

The first question is, in fact, a comparison between a gestural painter, De Kooning and a colorfield painter, Mark Rothko. After identifying and placing their work between 1950-1955, Anna writes:

Here we have a comparison between the two main divisions of the Abstract Expressionist movement, the Gestural abstractionist (de Kooning) and Colorfield abstractionist (Rothko). Both of these artist were involved in the New York School at its beginnings, and were involved with the

social economic issues concerning members of that school. They were involved with the WPA (De Kooning was kicked out and had to support himself as a house painter) and both worked in the hard financial struggle that was uniting the group, and achieved recognition as the public grew to appreciate the modern movement. Rothko had a particularly hard time adjusting to fame and financial security. When he found that he had earned money and was elevated to a higher financial status, he had difficulty knowing how to be of the class that he and his friends had resented for so long. He had been a dishwasher at Yale while the rich cruised in their flagrant wealth. This work was done at a point in his career when his palate was beginning to darken. It would eventually become black and grey as he literally could not cope with this earth and society and his place in it...."

In the margin of Anna's opening paragraph Professor Hall indicates that Anna has let the personal life of the artist overwhelm the historical focus that's needed for her answer: "This is all good information but do you want it to take over an essay that should focus on the historic significance of the larger group?"

In the last essay, where students are asked to contrast two sculptures, Anna goes into great detail about the materials used and the overall affect of the constructions as she describes Nevelson's Sky Cathedral:

In this work she has used materials found in abandoned buildings, a wide variety, not simply constructed. It is collage-like, tying in old pieces from banisters and perhaps a fence, making them part of the same world--her world. The images come to me of the showing of the Sky Cathedral in Lower Manhattan in an old space, dimly lit with the sculptures appearing in midnight blue, like a moon glow, and later in Mrs. Nevelson's Palace, her house existing in the 4th dimension. These are two worlds, experiences that we walk into. They seem like alters.

Professor Hall's response to this paragraph indicates that here Anna had gone into too much visual detail and not

formed a generalization from it: "Instead of all this detail, which you don't have time to write down, you need to discuss the development of the sculptured environment."

In her exam, Anna leaned on two previously reliable learning strategies --connecting the artist's work with his/her life and extensive visual analysis. Neither response was appropriate for an exam which demanded that students take the visual analysis of the paintings and personal details about the artists' life to form generalizations about these painters' contributions to the movement of abstract expressionism (see Hatch, 1988). The many critical, visual, and autobiographical details needed to be synthesized into a particular "theory" about artistic innovations.

But, it wasn't only Anna who did poorly and it wasn't only me who was confused about how one learned all this material other than the old fashioned method of pouring it into the brain. For even when all the detail is memorized, it must be stirred together so that it can be articulated in a very specific way. Professor Hall herself was disappointed in the kind of exam papers that were written, although there was one forceful essay that she read aloud to the class to serve as a model. She prefaced her reading of this exam by saying that "it's a very general little essay" but in fact, the essay was extremely well written and "generalized" from an enormous amount of material. In two long introductory paragraphs, the student explicates the paradox of the abstract expressionist

movement and then with real authority seldom shown in students, goes on to disagree with the opinion of well-known art critics writing that: "In fact, I would disagree to some extent with Ashton's depiction of the cohesiveness of the New York School. Indeed many of the strong founders of Abstract Expressionism developed schools of second generation followers, whose stylistic borrowing in many cases bogged down into academicism." There were 2 other A exams but overall the results were not satisfactory to Professor Hall who characterized the mid-range papers as representing a kind of "cuisinart" writing with no main focus but a forced jumble of facts and ideas.

My analysis of the student exam papers Hall shared with me concurred with the problems she had already identified: An inability to name the general trends and abstract concepts of modern art, offering instead a list of very specific but sometimes unrelated details. Anna's comments about the exam indicated that she felt a lack of "control" over the material; that she hadn't "organized" her writing well, and that the subject matter seemed "all grey" to her: "My essays were all bad in their own ways," she admitted.

Switching Roles: Dialogue Across the Curriculum

Mary Hall and I began a dialogue about how students might learn and write for art history more easily shortly after mid-terms. At first I found Professor Hall resistant to

introducing new learning structures into her classroom. She was "put off," she said, by having to teach writing: her job was to teach her subject: "My major concern is art, not students." And while she agreed that the reading was very dense and demanding, many students, she felt, weren't really "up to it" intellectually: "There's such a range of students in this course--studio art majors and art history majors--who are very different types. Finally, there was just so much material to cover, and so little time that Hall regretted there was no time left for class discussion. Just when these kinds of statements made me skeptical of the possible changes that might offer to improve the students' writing, Hall suggested before class one day that while her main concern was with art, with her subject, she also wanted to make this subject accessible to her students.

I began by prodding Professor Hall to think about her own writing, about how she had learned to write for art history. She shared that she wasn't "conscious" of how she'd learned to become a writer in her field, she just did it. I then read some of the articles she had written--from the more informal critiques of local art exhibits to the formal journal articles--and it was clear to me that she was an accomplished and successful writer of art history. When we discussed these articles, Professor Hall was eager to point out that she disliked her earlier writing because it's written in what she now characterized as a very "male Panofsky" style.

While Professor Hall had no conscious plan or method for showing students how to write exams or term papers, she pointed out that on her syllabus she'd suggested a paperback on writing, Sylvan Barnett's A Short Guide to Writing about Art and that the assigned reading included many fine examples and models of good writing. The major learning strategy being offered for writing in this course was imitation. Paradoxically for someone who felt that students learn to write through models, Professor Hall said she disliked putting sample exam papers (or term papers) on file for students because they parodied them in "the most grotesque ways."

My position was that Hall didn't need to teach writing, but to disclose a way of thinking about art history that many students weren't understanding, to share with her students her own eyes and mind for analyzing and synthesizing the materials in her course. Poor writing for the novice in the field, I suggested, is often not the result of deficient skills but rather the result of the new context and language of the field that students are working within. Since Anna wasn't a poor writer in her prose writing class or in other art courses for that matter, I couldn't accept that she hadn't studied or wrestled sufficiently with the material for Hall's course.

Together Professor Hall and I addressed two problem areas that I felt influenced the poor quality of writing in her classrooms: lack of class discussions and lack of models for reading. In order to show students how to write their final

papers on contemporary artists, students needed to be engaged in the thinking process that the paper would require. To improve the quality of the final exam papers, I felt it would be useful for Hall to explicate an art history text so that students would understand how she read. Professor Hall herself realized that we were talking about making explicit, the kinds of things that she intrinsically knew, what Polyani whose work she had read, has called the "tacit" traditions of her field.

Within days Professor Hall moved from resistance to enthusiasm about trying out new ideas in her course. She reflected on her own development as a writer and shared with me that when she re-considered articles she had written much earlier with more recent work she was doing on the same artist, she saw some real changes in her own style. If professional writers of art history share a period of apprenticeship, then surely students need practice in how to write and think about the discipline as well.

The plan for providing practice for her students was entirely Professor Hall's own idea and anticipates the final paper students would write. She first locates four original works in different media (collage, print collage, silkscreen and oil on textured cardboard) and hangs them around room for students to view. When students came to class one afternoon, she asks them to take time to look at the works and make some mental notes about them, based on some of the questions she had jotted on the board to focus their thoughts: "What have

you seen that is like these works? What are some questions you might ask these artists?"

Students spent about twenty minutes studying the works and talking about them, an entirely new structure for this class which they readily accepted. Some students took notes on the art, others talked, some just looked. At first, when the class was re-seated, they were reluctant to begin a discussion. After all, they were used to having Hall lecture but she displayed an amazing capacity to be playful, to invite students to be inquisitive and child-like in approaching the works and ask the most basic questions about them.

First, she suggests that they will have to "locate" the work of the artist within the modern art context. Starting with the first picture, students suggest that it seems Neo-Dadaist, echoing the experimentation with mechanical objects found in the work of Duchamp. Having named the style, they proceed to talk about what's actually in the Jim Dine collage: the print is of ordinary hardware store objects depicting a kind of pulley system with a bright red collage signature stuck onto the surface, giving an overall an effect that feels very difficult to read at first. Students quickly enter into the conversation, sometimes with encouragement from Hall and sometimes not. The classroom feels more intimate when Professor Hall is no longer positioned at the lectern but moving around the room by the pictures. There's also an

intimacy achieved by viewing works directly instead of through slides.

In the following portion of a taped transcript, Professor Hall's trying to get students to talk about the concept of internal scale, of how the artist makes the viewer feel with respect to the size of the picture. One of the speakers, Abbey is a studio art major and Rob's an art history major who wrote the A mid-term exam. What interests me in this snippet, is that Anna unexpectedly enters the conversation as well. Hall proves herself to be extraordinarily adept at leading this kind of discussion, pulling the best parts from students' contributions, building a working paradigm for the class to use in critiquing an art work.

MH: Okay, tell me about that big space up there because that was an interesting remark, Abbey.

Abbey: He obviously chose not to fill it. We don't have any visual clues as to whether this is suspended by a crane in a junkyard.

MH: We don't see anything holding this up do we? What do we associate a big space up in the air with?

(Long Pause)

Students: Heaven. (Students laugh)

MH: Okay, that's a neat idea and I'll tell you why. What kind of comparisons was Rosenblatt making in his article, between colorfield painters like Rothko and German romantics like Freidrick?

Rob: Comparisons about the whole death and birth idea about the sublime. The sublime was on this vast scale and was this transcendent response, the feeling of awe that you get looking at something larger, more powerful. The idea of deity, the feeling of vastness and power.

MH: Do you know how big you are in relation to this picture? Supposing this were a slide and we projected it on the screen. Would we know?

Rob: You do, you have a reverential object. You have the handle of the crank to grasp onto literally and say, "This is how big I am. I am no longer than this thing."

MH: Supposing this thing were projected so that it was about six feet high. Would the handle of the crank tell us our scale in relation to it?

Rob: I think then we would read the crank in quite a different manner. Then it's consciously overblown and we would be responding to why the artist blew this image up well beyond life sized and what kind of responses he wants to elicit by taking that action. Lichtenstein would blow up images way beyond life sized.

MH: What I'm trying to get people to see is that we can't tell the scale of this object internally.

Abbey: Especially since it's been, if it was an object that we can grab, since it's been reduced, therefore we can view it. It could be a size expansion.

Rob: I would disagree with that. I think obviously the thing is being presented irrationally so that you could form a contention that related to the length of the handle or the size of the crank isn't important because it has been taken out of the field of rationality. But I still don't see this taking on scale factors. I find myself prevented by the size of that handle from imagining it as a huge overblown thing.

Abbey: I think the whole fact of the whole picture is a kind of study in irrationality. And that he's obviously, purposely left out many objects that could be supporting his actual object that he's chosen to depict. I think it is a good point that since he's chosen to shrink the object, that it's irrelevant whether you can grab onto that handle or not. That's not his purpose in this work is so that you walk up and say, Oh that could be my size so I could grab onto the handle. I think that that's totally irrelevant. If it were on the screen, it would look like something you were looking up at. Especially with that red popping out with his name. He's just elevating it to be a huge monumental crank.

MH: Okay. That's interesting. Tell me about the space. I'm interested in your considering both sides.

Rob: If you consider this as a study for something larger, I could see you making those extrapolations but as it is, why

would you even want to imagine it projected on the screen. Why would you as a viewer sit there and say, I wonder what the effect would be if it were five times larger because it's not.

Abbey: I didn't say that.

MH: I did. I'll tell you why I said that. I want you to see that there is no internal scaling in this work.

Anna: Because if it were big on the screen it would be, the crank would be more to life sized and so I'd think that I would be able to grab onto it. But here, it gives me a completely...I was thinking when I looked at it that the crank should pull the black part up into space and reveal something underneath. It gives the impression of wanting to move up in space but it can't because it's the whole-I don't know--mechanics of it is too much.

MH: No, but that's interesting. You're going in a direction where you would find some very interesting things out about the implications of this work.

When students end this segment of discussion, Mary Hall enters in to draw a generalization just as she does in her lectures but in her summary remarks on Dine's work, Hall uses Rob and Abbey's argument to frame her observations and conclusions. By drawing on the actual remarks of students and engaging them actively in the issues, the position that Hall takes becomes one of consensus with both sides:

I think that one of the things that's going on here in this argument between Rob and Abbey is that they are both telling us important things to understand about the work. The artist has quite deliberately situated the work in this huge expanse of space and then he has also deliberately not allowed us to read this space as transcendent. Would you buy that?

The feeling that comes from this discussion is that students themselves have helped "construct" the reading of this painting, that they have not "received" this understanding from or through Mary Hall but with her and the

peers that support the dialogue. The entire transcript's a testimony to how Hall is able to achieve the same kind of understanding of modern art from her students using the discussion style.

In our subsequent meeting, Anna's pleased but somewhat surprised by the change in Hall's course. She said she found it "different" and that if Professor Hall continued to have class discussions, Anna would be "open to it." Anna doesn't like to speak out in art classes because she'd rather listen to what others say: "I'm not that analytical and I wouldn't want to be." Anna suggested that some of talk by the art history students sounded "dry and memorized."

Explication of Text

Professor Hall shares that she finds the discussion style of teaching totally exhausting and while she was not unhappy with the results, she returns to the lecture-style for the rest of the course. She says that she will build more discussions into her courses earlier in the year. Another strategy that Hall experiments with is interpretation of art history texts, devoting part of two class periods to analyzing an essay by Hal Foster on "Postmodernism." Hall first elicits from the class the canons of high modernism in art which she writes on the board: together they fiddle with the wording and order of these terms such as "appropriation, critical intervention, and deconstruction."

She says, "You have to have words to think about something new," and relates a story about how she went to the computer center to learn about word processing and they introduced the word "menu" and she said "What the hell do you mean by menu?" Her demonstration affords students a kind of review of the terminology that has been used all semester before they consider the break of artists away from modernism. Professor Hall chooses many slides which illustrate the principles that Foster discusses in his introductory essay. This is the first time in the course where she's merged the text of the readings with that of the slides, a technique which reinforces the art concepts. Postmodernist artists, for example, comment on the ambiguity of language by combining words and other media to produce a work that must be read like a text: " With this textual model, art is read as a kind of discourse rather than an aesthetic experience."

Professor Hall tells me that she's not been well trained in "explication of texts" but that's no reason for her not to try to share how she reads: "I go at a text with a real vengeance," she says and after listening to her analysis of an essay, I believe her.

Writing The Final Paper: Eco-Feminism

Anna, along with other students in the course, is not only struggling with "mastery" of the course material, she's concerned with her research for the term project. The final

project involves a ten-paged paper which requires students to investigate a contemporary but comparatively unknown artist who has a developed body of work but is considered "local, regional, or emergent" and to then link the artist to some aspect of modern art. A statement of intent is required from each student after mid-terms and they are encouraged to hold conferences with Hall. The final paper demands, Professor Hall shares, that students "place a contemporary artist's work within the context of the avant garde movements".

From the beginning Anna views the assignment as a good one because "it requires original thinking." Enthusiastically, she locates a local woman artist--Keita Metz--near her hometown and plans an interview with her during spring break. When I try to get Anna to talk about what she's discovering about the artist's works, she's somewhat reluctant and says it's too "frustrating" to discuss. This incubation phase, or silent preparation period of Anna's writing process I remember from last term when she was working on two art history projects and didn't want to talk about them until they were finished. Noddings describes the phase as "receptive-intuitive" or as an "unconscious openness" (Noddings, 1984, p. 168) which often accompanies some intense topic of investigation and precedes the final step when all the parts fall into place.

When I suggest that I'm more intrigued with the process of writing her paper than the product, Anna begins to share

a few snips of information that she feels might possibly be woven into the fabric of her final project. Her major job, she says, is to "locate" and fit her artist into some aspect of the contemporary art movement: "For every artist it will be different, each one will relate to a different thesis," she says. Through talking with the artist, a woman who paints landscapes and animals, Anna senses that the artist is making a statement about nature, about preservation of the landscape and wildlife. Metz tells Anna that she's donated a percentage of the proceeds from her exhibits to the Greenpeace organization. "She's very conscious" Anna says of Metz, "of getting people to look at things in a way that they ordinarily wouldn't." Anna claims she doesn't have a thesis about the artist yet from much of our discussions, it's clear that she's following a fertile lead.

In our talks Anna discusses with real concern the idea of "caring for the earth," something that she says has been on her mind a lot lately, suggesting that she's always been concerned with ecological issues: "it worried me as a child," she adds. Her family moved away from California when she was young, she says, because the suburban community where her family lived in grew from 7,000 to over 36,000 in a 20 year span when builders and inhabitants showed a "total unconcern for the land." More recently she and Simon stopped to look at the stars on a drive home from Portsmouth, partly because she's taking an astronomy course. It was then she thought

again about "how finely tuned the earth is and that because of man's abuse we will not be able to support it some day."

There are two books related to her emerging topic that Anna reads before holding a conference with Professor Hall: one by Lucy Lippard looks at female images in the art of different societies (Overlay) and Wendall Berry's The Unsettling of America. Mary Hall, putting these two threads together, suggests that Anna pursue the heading of "ecofeminism" to look for further materials and directs her specifically to a recent article in Nation on the topic. Anna's amazed at how quickly Hall could "locate" this artist. Ecofeminism is defined as a hybrid sub-discipline which combines political interests from both feminism and political ecology (Sale, Nation, 1987). Watching Anna work on her paper helps me understand one seemingly unimportant fragment about her personal life which wouldn't fall into place for me.

While Anna's interest in ecology doesn't surprise me, it re-frames the issue of ear piercing around a respect for the body in relation to a respect for the land, although Anna later claims that her main rejection of piercing ears is mainly aesthetic. Eco-feminism is also a political movement which fits well into Anna's personal need to be politically aware of current issues. In writing under the rubric of "eco-feminism," Anna unconsciously allies herself with a group of art historians who've begun to adjust or correct some issues in art history that are related to women. Two art historians,

introducing the concept of feminism in the field of writing: "Recognition of the ways in which peculiarly masculine interests have often been mistaken in our culture for universal concerns has prompted us as art historians to re-examine some of the basic premises of our discipline... (Broude and Garrard, 1982, p. 15). The feminist part is the one that nags at me.

In prose writing, Anna showed ambivalent feelings about "feminism. "When sharing her responses to Adrienne Rich's essay, for example, she felt everyone in the class should just think what they want to think because the discussion was "futile." But Anna also said she related to Rich's idea of "having a woman's identity" and that she wanted to respond to Nick when he asked "What's this new female way of thinking?" but that she couldn't articulate it : "I thought about what he said and I thought, well, I know what it is but I couldn't explain it, so I didn't say anything."

Anna shared some thoughts she had about women's roles that were partially derived from a women's studies course taken the previous year where she had grown tired of the women either "whining" about not being able to have everything or "shouting" about feminist issues: "You can't have it all, and I think you have to make choices. If you want to have a really good family you have to give up a lot of things, you have to weigh things out..." When asked point-blank if she's a feminist, Anna says that in the sense of equal pay and rights,

that yes she is but that "I don't feel strongly enough about these other issues to consider myself a feminist...I haven't thought about other women's issues. Maybe I will some day."

Tying her paper to eco-feminism represents a comfortable position for Anna however, because it's a continuum of issues that have bothered her for a long time. "Eco-feminism" she explains, "is a different thing. It's taking this sensitivity and applying it to the land. And it's not exclusive to women. It's a way men are thinking about ecology as well." For students who've heard only strident feminist voices, this weaving in of feminist issues with other concerns may excite them to reconsider some of the movement's intellectual, rather than only its political ideas.

Anna shares an early draft of her paper with me and as we talk it through with her extensively developed outline. I can sense that her commitment and excitement with the issues of eco-feminism in art has spread to many other areas. In particular, I sense some intrusions from Anna's anthropology course in a long section about the beginning of the earth and man's initial respect for the land, a section that we decide to eliminate from her draft. I feel that Anna is not just writing a paper, in some ways, she's connecting a part of her personal/political beliefs to a topic in art history. Women who take on intensive writing projects, such as a senior thesis, often become so connected to a project that, as Mary

Cayton, director of a university honors program puts it "they were their projects" (Cayton, 1988).

When I inquire about what problems Anna faced in writing the paper, she says it was "sticking to one side of the issues." For example, in her paper she makes references to animals being abused in laboratory experiments but acknowledges that she's "torn" over the anti-vivisection stance because Simon's father does medical research on diseases such as cancer and Alzheimers using rats which, for example, he feels is necessary in some research situations. She says that she won't show her paper to Simon because she knows it will make him mad. Anna recognizes that the use of animals in laboratory research, that their contribution over that of computer simulations, presents a complicated issue but she still maintains a pro-animal rights position in the paper. Some research on gender and discourse suggests that women often suffer from having to make such arguments in writing because their expressive mode of thinking reflects a perception of the world that sees "ambiguities, pluralities, processes, continuities" rather than the thought patterns of "categories, dichotomies, roles, stasis and causation," (Penelope and Wolfe in Thorne and Barrie, 1983, p. 126.)

Anna's paper includes a fascinating mixture of ecological and political issues that emerge "behind the canvases" of this artist. The paper begins with an introductory paragraph which is somewhat distanced and academic; "Her detailed descriptions

of the natural world make viewers look more closely at the intricacies of nature and reassesses the current economic and political relationships to the Earth through ecology, feminism, and activism, and examine our roles as individuals." For the remainder of the paper, Anna personalizes the topic, switching from "the viewer" to include the reader as the "we" who share the concerns of the "I" narrator:

Her paintings invoke feelings of being in an unfamiliar but intriguing places. Nature is a wondrous place from Metz's perspective and as an artist she asks that we share this curiosity with her.

The attraction to her work is that it offers an Eden that we subconsciously want to return to. Once captured we want to preserve the landscape. By bringing out the beauty in the natural world Metz makes us want to examine it more closely and subsequently see differently visually and with greater respect for the environment.

Metz wants to get away from the notion of human supremacy that has been developed over the years, and have viewers look onto her animals and landscapes with respect. The monkey perched on a tree branch in one of her animal portraits stares directly out of the canvas at the viewer. When I saw this piece I was forced to look back timidly. This is the response Metz wanted.

There are feminist themes in Anna's paper that she doesn't label but are easily identified: she speaks of an attitude of "caring" towards both animals and the landscape which should replace our current "separateness" which has developed, says Anna, "between humans and animals, landscape, and each other." Noddings suggests that children caring for pets in cooperation with a caring adult serves as an ethical ideal and that our obligation to both plants and animals is mainly to understand how others feel about them and listen to

their concerns (Noddings, 1984). Anna asks just that of her reader in this paper: Listen:

Metz addresses the selfish attitude humans have towards nature by making us see a personality behind the animals she portrays which are most wild animals in their territory. She instills a caring attitude which must replace the separateness which has developed between humans and animals, landscapes and each other.

Anna says in her paper that "women's way of thinking" about the world have been quieted but that this artist's work "bonds viewers to her landscapes" with a "connective" approach. The approach of "eco-feminism," Anna writes, "examines women's connections to the Earth historically and the similarities between oppression of women and the oppression of nature. The strongest parts of her eight-page-paper are her political and theoretical ties to a contemporary feminist movement. She writes:

Once we are aware of the natural world we see the 'tremendous beauty of ecological thought is that it shows us an understanding of and an appreciation for, life itself--an understanding and appreciation that is imperative to the continuance of life' (Greenpeace). Once this is realized, the next step is action. she addresses these concerns through her painting and through donations to Greenpeace, a 'direct action' environmental group. Metz has an annual show at her home to benefit Greenpeace. She gives them the percentage of the proceeds that a gallery would take. Greenpeace is her choice over other environmental groups because the money will go directly into doing things...It is young and full of enthusiasm whereas Sierra Club she suggests has become too government connected.

Professor Hall identifies, however, the major weakness in this paper as a lack of visual analysis and gives it only a B plus grade. She writes Anna a two-paged response, starting

with the paper's strengths and then commenting:

However, I am puzzled by the lack of connection between her views and her style. That an artist with a "message" would use recognizable subject matter is one thing, but the way that subject matter is translated into paint on a surface is something else. How is paint handled? Does the artist paint outdoors, directly from the motifs, or indoors from sketches or from photographs? What group of contemporary figurative painters have styles that resemble the style of this artist?

Anna had eliminated a long personalized beginning to the paper and avoided any extended visual analysis because she felt from the mid-term exam that Hall wasn't interested in this kind of analysis. In this paper where such material would strengthen her thesis, Anna has shied away. But she's able to create and retain a voice in this paper that's more related to Anna than to the art history texts that she reads from, a paper which personalizes and invites the reader in, not always an easy task in academic writing. Here's a short section where Anna discusses more closely the context of eco-feminism:

Many artists are trying to re-establish lost ties with the earth through 'primitivism.' These are being examined by women who are finding a long history of myths connecting them to the Earth, and by men suggesting a need to 'reevaluate the socio-esthetic structures and values of the society in which we live' (Lippard, p. 45). This has manifest itself in performances, making physical contact with the earth, large scale sculpture called Earthworks, as well as in sculpture and two dimensional work. Metz is established in her connections to the Earth. Her work is trying to make connections to the viewers and the Earth begin with a curiosity.

And in her ending, Anna evokes a strong political statement:

Protection of the environment Metz believes should be an important consideration of people. She addresses this through her art. Metz' work implies a return to nature, increased awareness of political/environmental issues, and calls viewers to action by presenting a conscious of

the harmed. Through her paintings we realize how deeply connected to the Earth we are and our choice becomes to understand our relationship to the Earth as individuals and learn what we can do to prevent its widespread destruction.

Anna commented that she felt good about her paper, that it was one writing project in college that she had done mainly for herself.

* * *

Anna goes off to San Francisco for the summer to work in an art gallery: she's anxious to get away from New Hampshire, from academics, from all that's become so familiar. She evaluates Professor Hall's course as being one of the best she's ever taken because she learned about the art world and how political it is, not just how to analyze paintings, and because she can apply what she's learning to future work: "...I've been able to apply things in modern art to other issues instead of just keeping them in art history. And I was having problems with just keeping things in art history. Just analyzing someone's work seemed so silly..."

* * *

My relationship with Mary Hall ends on a collegial note. I'm on my way out the door to visit the Ramses Art exhibit in Boston with my family when Mary calls. It's hot; I'm rushed but her words invite me to listen: "Thank you for letting me see that the students' problems were not conceptual. It was all a matter of language," she concludes.

From San Francisco Anna writes that what she misses most about UNH is her dance company because "freedom of expression through dance is very important and unique compared with other college work."

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY OF NICK

Life as a Sketchbook: Academic Literacy as a Role

My researcher journal entries indicate my hesitations, perhaps even resistance to working with a man as complicated as Nick: They show a fear of being snarled and knotted in words that will overlay a perspective his, yet not his, portraying an imitation of Nick. For as stereotypical as Nick's words make him seem--almost braggodocian--I do not want him to paint him as a flat character, playing to the groundlings. Beneath the mask of the angry, bored student is the smile of the young man who loves words and sees the world through an artist's eyes.

Researcher Journal Entries

...[On his representativeness] My worries about using Nick as a case study are endless: adopted, multiple divorces in his family, a mother who's a minister. What Nick says about all this I think is true: that scrape the surface and we all have these "harsh" things in our background. And as a researcher I have to own up that no student who agrees to talk with me once a week about their reading and writing processes could be considered "representative," could be entirely "normal." And what kinds of people do we learn from anyway?

...[My feelings about working with Nick, how different it is from Anna] I realized Nick baits me in our talks and plays with me verbally as he tries to get me to see things from his perspective. For that's his style, not mine. But I need to understand this discourse style to understand him.

....[On writing about Nick] Each morning in the summer, I get up early and creep down into in my basement office by 5:30 AM

before the heat and the noise of the day. Mostly my family does not intrude until 10 or so. I feel as if I'm in a tomb, sealed away with all these secret notes to decipher. How silly it all seems on the one hand. "Who cares?" I ask myself and hear Nick's voice reverberate. On the other hand I feel it's absolutely critical to feel as if I've understood the texture of another person's literacy, what it means to them to be a reader, a writer, and a thinker.

Nick brings me news from another place: Of the struggle that an intelligent, articulate but non-mainstream student faces over money. Once he couldn't afford his textbooks for weeks after the semester began and it was hard not to notice the tape wrapped around his winter boots or ignore that his papers were written on a typewriter missing the letter "L." Over his self identity. He's an adopted son of a twice divorced mother who recently became an ordained minister. Over being a student without any real direction and yet he's both a writer and an artist.

My journal notes show an awareness over our differences in conversational style: and while with Nick it's mainly his words I remember, his endless articulate stream of engaging talk, I'm also aware that he dominates, interrupts me; forces me to listen, to be fascinated.

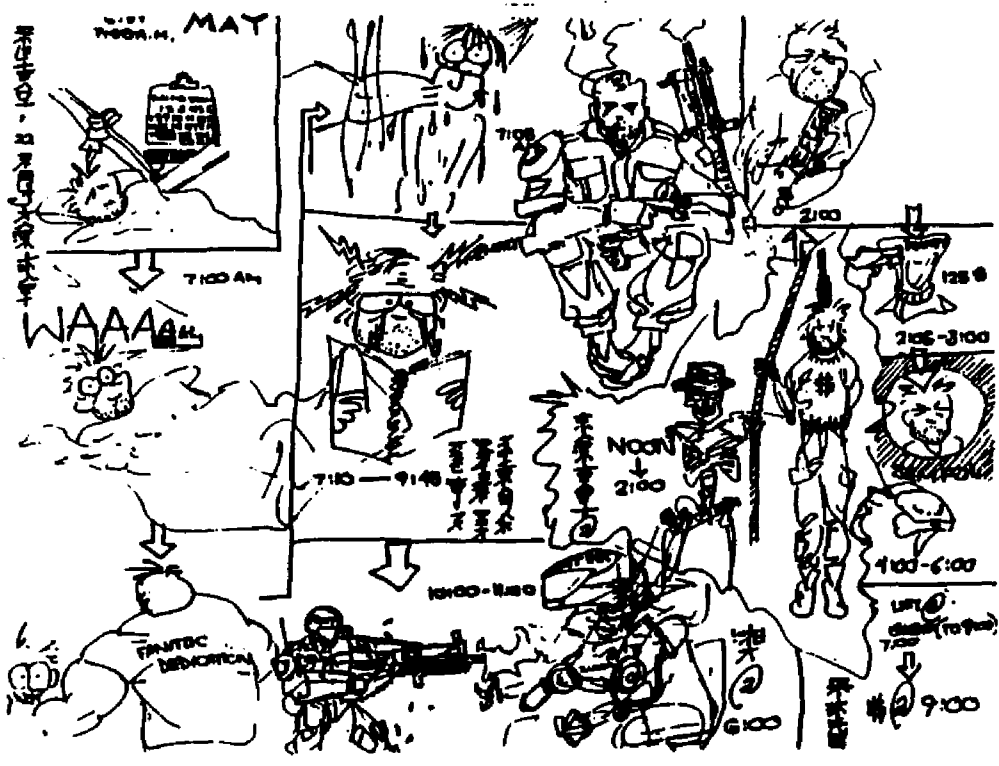
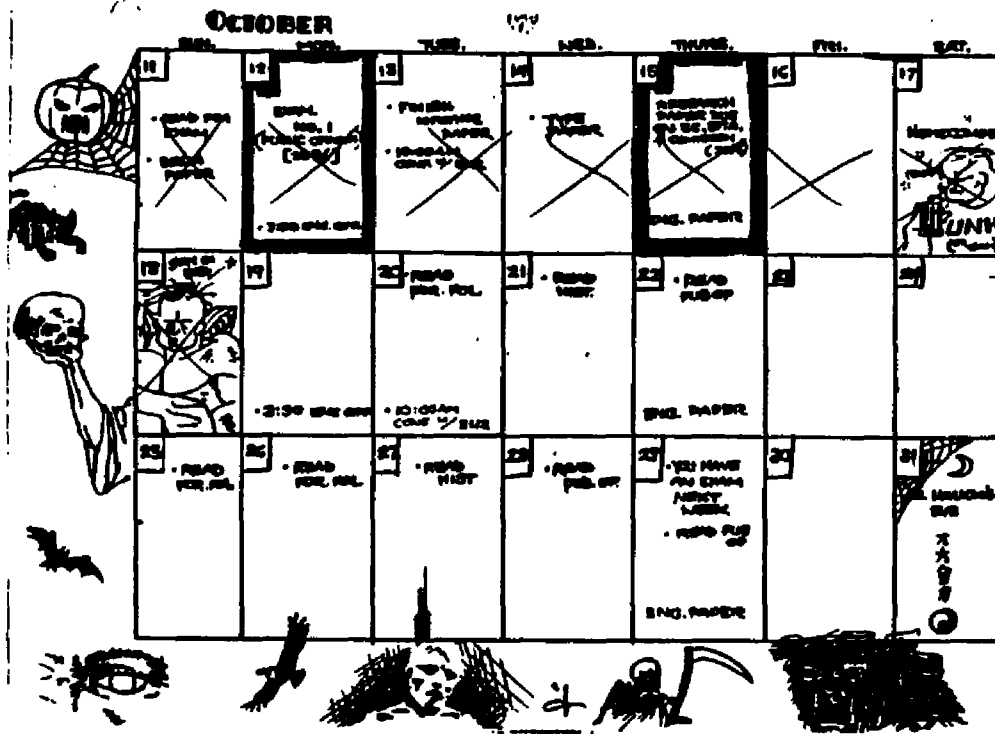
In our working relationship, there's my sense of boundaries, territory and distance that is set between us. In the same way that I became very connected to Anna, I feel intensely involved, but very removed from Nick. Okay, so he's

a male and you're not, so what else is new? It cannot be this simple. Why the single earring and the bandanna? Are these affectations from the 1960's? Why the real fountain pen and the devotion to his daily journal? Is Nick fascinated with the textuality of life?

These issues tug at me as I write today about then.

Descriptive Lead: I'm not saying that Nick remains a stranger, in fact, he reveals far more intimate things about his life than Anna does--but that he seems at times: foreign, unfamiliar: dark. Physically Nick is dark with brown hair, steel blue-grey eyes, chiseled fine features--very handsome, well built and thin. His small gold earring adds a bit of mystery and his red and blue bandannas, often wrapped around his head become his dress signature. Of Nick's earring, I learn that he had it pierced on a "dare" from a woman friend and that it bears no particular significance except that when he returned home from college in his freshman year his sister remarked: "Nick went away to college and learned how to smoke cigarettes and wear an earring."

When I ask Nick to describe himself he chooses from the darker, almost Byronic side, saying that other people sometimes think of him as "mean, arrogant, somber, brooding, not very friendly, cold." When I ask for an example to hook to all these adjectives, he talks about his part-time job as a cook where he says, he sometimes gets a little "self-



righteous" and in this example, hungry for power:

Like at work sometimes I get arrogant. I start telling people what to do. The waitresses will come up and ask me to do an order and I'll say, 'Don't talk to me, get away. Get out of my kitchen.' Generally I don't mean to be serious about it. But there's that little flash of cathartic relief in being able to snap at someone. Maybe watch them scamper away...

Managers come in and say 'Do this, do this, can I have this?' Waitresses coming in and saying 'Do this, do this. Can I have this?' The food is saying 'Cook me, cook me.'....

In spite of the pressures of his job, Nick finds pleasure in cooking, and speaks of the almost artistic delight of making a Chinese stir-fry or of preparing fettucini alfredo.

Art Lead: The two consistent literacy activities that continue provide Nick satisfaction outside of school are sketching and writing: sometimes, but not often he's able to pull these into his academic life as well. Since childhood, he's kept a personal journal and he's always loved to draw. Sometimes he combines these two activities as in the calenders which organize his college life. (See facing page for comparison of two calenders, one from October which shows his tidy life, and the other from April when he's "wigin out," to borrow his own expression.)

Nick, in fact, entered college as a studio art major and stuck with this for about a semester. The obstacle to being a studio major as he saw it was that he didn't have a prepared portfolio from his high school. Yet perhaps an even larger problem was that of competition. Nick had always been good at

art: "I used to be the best artist--always. As long as I've lived, I've always been the best artist of everyone who has known me and now I can't do it anymore." Both time and energy account for Nick's leaving art as a major: "I'd try to do other things, and I'd let art slip and then I'd try to do art and everything else would slip." And failure to be the best, failure to complete art projects such as a huge sculpture that he attempted, contribute to his giving up art: "Failing at art, or doing badly at art, really upsets me." Failure in art is intensely personal for Nick because "with art, the problem is if I fail, I fail myself."

Nick described his hours in the art studio chipping away at a big slab of plaster that he couldn't master, couldn't shape into anything meaningful for himself. Finally he managed to create a very abstracted head, a project that took him so long that he didn't finish enough other portfolio work to pass the course. Nick's relationship to art was so intense that it was abandoned for fields where he might achieve more control, where he did not need to be quite so involved.

The daily journal and his sketchbook, however, because they can be flipped over and the previous page left unfinished, represent far less threat for Nick who uses both for release: "...if the page is a failure, I go on to the next day, fresh start. No revising." He compares real artistic involvement to the dedication of writing a novel:

An art object is something you labor over. Something you go back to time and time again to question your ideas for

doing things. It's like writing a novel. And it's such a big project that if I fail, I really fail. Really fail. I get a feeling of total defeat.

A declared political science major when I met Nick in prose writing class, he's toying with journalism as a minor and this course serves as a prerequisite for the journalism sequence. Nick feels that the writing course would allow him to pick up on a latent talent: "...I was always a good writer, always... I had a certain fascination with words." Nick's focus on words, in part, we will see, contribute to the studied and intense quality of his prose.

About our relationship. Working with Nick meant setting up a specific kind of relationship, one quite different from Anna's and mine. On the one hand Nick was articulate, interested, and responsible about his end of our association. For example. One day in political science seminar, he comes in a half an hour late, looks wiped out, tired and terribly thin. He gets up once and leaves the room briefly, a rare occurrence in this two hour seminar. A few minutes later he returns and passes me a note, written on a scrap envelope:

Eliz,

I'm not making it. Got a raging fever. Chills. Hot flashes. Nausea; the works. Gotta go. I'll get you my schedule this week.

Nick

Nicely punctuated and thoughtful under the circumstances, Nick feels obligated to explain why he's abandoning me there in his

seminar. And both semesters we worked together, Nick maintains a constant and committed participant to my research and study, although he has little faith that it will matter or make any difference. He shows up for our appointments, saves his papers, and always has a great deal to share about the classes we attend together.

On the other hand, there are clear boundaries drawn. Most of our conversations either take place in my office or outside his classes, standing in a public doorway or a college pathway. After political science class, we stand around for a half hour or so talking, yet it's always on the way to the dining hall, with Nick smoking his non-filter cigarettes and me following along in the cold spring wind. When I invite him for a beer or offer to lend him one of my old typewriters, he declines.

Narrative Lead: One dramatic example of how Nick defines his personal relationships and constructs boundaries in his everyday life comes in our final interview. It is the end of May when classes are over and I haven't seen Nick for two weeks or so, and want to know how his semester ended, want to talk about his finals and term projects. A dramatic thunderstorm is taking place outside my office and I hear spring hail hitting against the roof of the third floor building. Anticipating Nick, I position the largest of the three chairs in the office--clearly the teacher's chair--for him to sit in.

He arrives wearing a brown plastic garbage bag for protection against the rain, and sits in the swivel chair which I learn squeaks loudly, particularly because he's agitated. He's angry that Brandy, an old friend, has moved into his room for the summer and he's reluctant to share it with him even though all the members of his house have agreed. Nick tells me that he got out a yardstick and "measured the room" so that he and Brandy would have exactly the same amount of space. Brandy ignores the division and shoves some of Nick's belongings out of the way. Anticipating an eventual confrontation, Nick says: "The only way I'm going to remove Brandy from that room is if I fight him and beat him. Beat him real bad." Brandy is hardly the real topic of our meeting but what Nick says that day in casual conversation rings in my ears when I later run into his roommate, Mike: "I can't be held responsible for what might happen between us this summer."

Nick compared Brandy's violation of his privacy and territory with similar disputes he'd had with his older sister, Karen, who took Nick's favorite towel away to college with her: "She snuck in and took that towel, which is just the sort of thing that Brandy's doing right now and why my rage began."

Strong words and unfamiliar strains of violence stir in Nick that push me away, shove me away from understanding. Nick

explains that he uses his anger to accomplish just that: "My anger keeps me comfortable and safe somehow," he adds.

Academic lead: Nick's academic career has been anything but comfortable or safe. He's changed majors three times: first from studio art to psychology, and finally to political science. Try as I may, I can't make these disciplines connect and probably shouldn't since Nick believes that the real purpose of a liberal arts education is for "poking around," for "flirting with" different disciplines. He's concerned more with exploring academic territories than connecting them to one another. When I ask him about how he goes about relating the information from one class to another, he says that there is "no exchange," that in his career, "there's only been a couple of times that one class has related to another class." Nick's advice to students who have problems declaring a major is not to get too "nervous" and to "take your time and experiment" because if you find a major that doesn't fit you, "you will hate it and you will fail. You might even flunk out of school." Nick speaks from experience.

Second semester of his freshman year, Nick failed his sculpture course and barely squeaked by in Japanese. He finished the sequence of language courses and repeated Sculpture 1, so he never left school entirely but his academic career has been enough of a sea-saw to extend his education for another semester to make up credits: his present grade point average is 2.4 but it has been as high as 2.8. Many of

Nick's friends graduated in May and because he wishes himself out of college life as well, this was a difficult time. Nick had worked out most of this conflict in his mind previous to graduation but when it came down to serving as a cook in a restaurant where many of his friends were celebrating, he knew he hadn't resolved the issue.

Things I think I have worked out in my head but I'll find that when I get into the situation, my heart says something else, and I can't convince it otherwise.... In fact, I worked graduation night and I got depressed because that was my class--all my friends. People I had seen and known for four years were all out in the dining room drinking with their friends and seeing each other for the last time and it was all very cathartic for them. And I had this immense feeling of being left out. Here I am cooking their food for them....

Yet, Nick's in no rush to graduate because of particular career aspirations: he has no professional or personal goals as he jokingly indicates: "I don't want the \$30,000 a year job; the red car; the dog named Spot; wife named Mary, whatever. I don't want these things... And that's what really horrifies people, when I say I don't want this."

When I ask the inevitable question about what he does want, Nick who is truly appalled by consumerism, responds by saying that he doesn't want to be a "professional" who he claims are "narrow thinking, confined, orderly and subjugated people," mainly characterized by "jargon" which indicates how things are "slotted and arranged so that the professional becomes the authority and has to take on that role regardless of whether he's prepared for it." Nick suggests that his goal

is to remain "woven into the fabric of ordinary, regular people, into humanity." An interesting goal for Nick who's consumed with anger and concerned with territory: The conflict between head and heart?

In July, I am in the university dairy bar, an ice cream parlor where students and faculty eat lunch and snacks. Nick's house mate, Mike, is having ice cream with his red-haired girlfriend, Amy. They tell me that Nick and Brandy had gotten into a scuffle over mowing the lawn. That Brandy shoved Nick onto the glass of large framed picture that stood against a wall in their house. Nick had required several stitches in his leg, was on crutches, and wouldn't be able to work for awhile. Mike suggests that the fight between Nick and Brandy was inevitable. "He just seems to make things hard for himself," Mike said of Nick, intimating that sometimes he found Nick difficult too.

Education has become a difficult experience for Nick, as he is hurled toward the last semester of his senior year: "It's emotional pain. Trauma. Learning eats up my time and makes my neurons knot. Learning is busy work. Not fun anymore."

Let's rewind by one semester to see if Nick's educational malaise can be unknotted by understanding his academic literacy demands, by looking at the strands of literacy that are woven into prose writing and his political science course work. I end these multiple leads with Nick's words:

First his yin words which show flux and process:

...all I know about myself in any given moment is a handful out of the sea. That's all that I can grasp about myself at any one point. And then ten minutes later, the handful has changed and it's a different one, and I try to go with that.

And then his yang words which reveal solidity and mastery:

...all information is important. I think that's what gives college-educated people their advantage over the masses is that they know that all information is important.

Nick in Prose Writing: Top Billing

Nick found his prose writing class somewhat of a "relief" from his other course work where he characterizes himself as "struggling through all these assignments." His writing course offers him "a little creativity" and allows him "to relax and carry some thoughts through, instead of abbreviating my thoughts like I do in every other sector" of academic life. Initially Nick was among the most talented writers and articulate class members and is not reluctant to say so: "They were good classes. A release, amusing. I was also one of the better ones in there so it was an ego trip." But, Nick's skills were not so much better that the course wasn't challenging to him: in one of his early peer group responses, Nick compares the course to Drawing II, a studio art course:

There are shades here of Drawing Two: another place in which I found a challenging multitude. I suspect I am among many talented others where (arrogantly perhaps) expected only a few. ..Now again I find myself among peers, rather than inferiors as far as this medium will take us. It is a tantalizing situation: the potential

returns for me to be alternately challenged and inspired. They have the ability to untangle my creative inertia.

For Nick--confident and assured of his talent--his peers in prose writing offer the stimulation of the competitive context that Nick once met in studio art, minus fear of failure. Anna had often compared prose writing class with studio art courses and both Nick and Anna describe prose writing as "very personalized" against most of their other course work which emphasized segmented learning.

Nick as Speaker: The Lead

Nick saw prose writing as a place where talk was always encouraged: "The English Department, I've found is always more open and relaxed (Nick will change his mind about this statement). He goes on to reiterate: "Donna's class was very relaxed, if somebody had something to say, they'd just go ahead and say it. Everybody just sat around and talked all the time." Certainly Nick had no problem contributing to the ongoing conversations in prose writing class: His speech style was expressive, polished, and assured. He reflected, at the end of second semester, that he felt he "was an almost better speaker than writer" which seemed "weird" to him. It is this oral ability, I later discover, that will serve him well in political science.

In the more public forum of whole class discussions, Nick was an active participant, sometimes serving as a leader. We have already considered Nick's leadership role in the class

discussion on Rodriguez (see Anatomy of a Classroom). This was not an isolated example of his taking over the conversational floor: there are many instances in the smaller groups as well. Yet Nick displays a variety of different discourse styles in prose writing: he's a leader and a follower, he raises questions and answers them. In the class discussion comparing Friere and Hirsch's ideas, for instance, Nick gets so excited over the idea of cultural literacy, that he both asks a question and then answers it: "How can you define cultural literacy? How can there be one culture in America? We don't share the same culture."

In the following classroom exchange, Nick, along with others, follow the receptive discussion mode that has been modelled for peer response groups when Donna offers her own writing for the scrutiny of the class. First she gives a little history of the paper--A Rock By Any Other Name--which tells about her exploring the New Hampshire woods and stumbling upon a boulder of granite, an experience, she shares, that takes her back to her Australia where the aborigines have rocks called narguns:

Rock is rock and stone is stone.

Or is it?

This rock triggered memory. I was not the only stranger to this place. Here was a rock from the legends of a land 10,000 miles away. Here was rock out of place, out of time. Here was Nargun.

Donna gives the class some specific questions to guide their reading of her four-paged draft and she then opens the discussion:

Donna: When I'm working on a draft of what I want to say, I let everything else go to hell. I purposely gave you a draft. I started this paper with myth-making and added the idea of the "story telling animal" when I read the article last year, and then come back to the idea of leaving home. Should I just work on one of these ideas?

Angie: One thing I like is on the third page, the line: "Why does anything have to leave its home?" Maybe you could relate this to why you come to New Hampshire. I liked how you put yourself into your environment at the beginning. Maybe you should connect your Australian experience earlier in the piece.

Nick: For me, Australia popped out of nowhere. I think we need to be more involved in the part where you come across the rock.

Anthony: I liked the elements of mythology on the second page and the whole paragraph on the Nargun worked for me. Maybe I'm more receptive because of right now I'm reading about mythology.

Anna: The part that worked best for me was how you didn't have to come out and make a connection but do it through descriptions.

Jill: I'd like to know more about your experiences in Australia.

Donna: Where should I put that?

Jill: Before you get to the rock.

Nick: First you are in the woods and then you're in front of a rock. Why is this rock such a strong power for you?

This frame is a model of effective peer response, what Donna had intended for Anthony's Oblomov paper, since students show Donna how they received the paper, using phrases like the ones underlined above: "What worked best for me, what I liked."

From her students, Donna gets supportive feedback and genuine questions, not negative criticism. And Nick's an exemplary critic: in fact he became so engrossed with Donna's paper that he writes a long formal response to it.

Sometimes Nick's public responses reflect his interest in the political. In particular, when the class discusses Adrienne Rich's essay, "Writing as Revision," Nick takes on the instructor's role by defending Rich's militant language, reminding the class that the piece was originally written as an address; that it's been tailored for a specific audience: "Remember," he says, "that this was a speech given to get women to accept political positions." Nick understands the political implications of rhetoric.

In the large and small group discussions Nick shows an ability to work within two discourse styles and shift in and out of them: one is aggressive and dominant, saying "this is how to see it," the other is receptive and cooperative, saying, "this holds true for me." So flexible is Nick's ability to switch or shift styles that I suspect that he isn't conscious of these differences. It is Nick who, for example, after carefully explicating the political context of Rich's speech, poses this question at the end of the class discussion: "What is this new women's way of knowing?" (See Anna's private response to Nick's question.) And later in conversation Nick asks me: "Why is it that I can't figure out what the difference is? I have no idea what you guys (Donna

and me) are talking about between separate thinking and connected thinking. What the hell does that mean? Separate from what? Connected to what?" Nick, because he has his footing in the dominant discourse, because he's permitted to move freely within modes of connection and autonomy, can't hear the muted connected discourse style of the female students. And in fact, when he does hear it, he often dismisses it as we will see. Nick has a choice of styles to adopt and such choice affords him a kind of verbal power.

Nick in Reading Groups: Dominance and Difference

Nick liked Donna's idea of holding an individual "reading conference" with each student at the beginning of the semester: "Usually reading is something you do yourself," he reported, "but without feedback, reading by yourself is only so helpful." Feedback comes for Nick through the forum of the reading groups where he's an active and sometimes dominant influence. Here's another frame of the Raymond Carver discussion with Nick, Anna, Robin and Anthony as participants. Notice in this discussion how much Nick talks, how often he interrupts speakers--who these speakers are, how and when he changes topics and whose topics he supports.

1 Anna: Laura didn't say anything, she was like//

2 Nick://Yel, it was funny how they covered, they did cover
3 everything you'd think of if you think about love. If you
4 were just sitting there thinking well what do I think
5 about love? You'd think about specific things, you
6 wouldn't think in broad abstract terms. I think they hit
7 on that really well.

8 Anthony: I liked his style of writing. What I thought was
9 weird was what I had written for this week, this is the
10 second time it's happened, I wrote what I had to write,
11 the first draft and I go back and read this, it's exactly
12 what I want to do with my writing. And I went back and
13 read mine, and it's overbearing. This has profanity but
14 mine's really got profanity.

15 Nick: If you're doing dialogue that's sometimes
16 necessarily the case. It's got to be realistic language/

17 Anthony:/ Right

18 Nick:// or you're not going to believe these people are
19 talking to each other. You're not going to perceive how
20 they are towards each other. Or get the characterization
21 at all.

22 Anthony: Well I liked it. The thing I was talking to Jodi
23 about I picked up on this but didn't take the time to
24 think of it but all through the story, they kept
25 referring back to the light coming through the kitchen.

26 Nick: The setting, yes.

27 Anthony: There's some significance to that and I've got
28 try to figure out why. The author didn't just put that
29 in there for mystery.

30 Robin: It's just there to let you know that they were
31 talking for a long time//

32 Nick//It symbolized the passage of time, I'm sure but also
33 it also sits them still. Like I read the intro and they
34 were saying//

35 Robin//I didn't like the ending/

36 Nick/I think that works really well.

37 Robin: The ending?

38 Nick: Yes because Carver is--the remark about him is that
39 he sets his characters up and then limits them, he
40 constricts them so that they don't do much. They say what
41 they have to say, do what they have to do but they are
42 realistic in that they don't try to break out of
43 boundaries. These people are sitting in this kitchen over
44 this table drinking gin and that's all they're doing.
45 They keep talking about going out but they don't go out,
46 they stay in this room. The light fades and it gets
47 dark and they're still sitting there and they're not

48 going to move, not for awhile anyway. I think that
49 carries really well. I was impressed by it.

50 Anthony: Yes. I liked the style of writing. I just like
51 this kind of writing, with dialogue.

52 Nick: It came out really well. Were you bothered at all,
53 he didn't seem to come up with any concrete theories.
54 He didn't slide any theories in their dialogue about
55 what love actually is.

56 Anna I think that was off the subject//

57 Robin// Open to the reader//

58 Anna// Because I don't know the definition, well
59 what do we, what is love//

60 Nick/ I think that's the point. I think that's the whole
61 point of the dialogue. You don't know. He's pointing
62 out what you think of, not what you actually think
63 of it and do you make any conclusions. He's just saying
64 this is what you think of.

Just as in the frame I call the "banking concept of love" Nick is the dominant speaker throughout this entire transcript. He interrupts Anna and Robin twice each, disagreeing with Robin (line 36) at one point, and at another, expanding her point "yes but" (lines-32-34). Nick also interrupts Anna at the opening of the frame, switching the topic away from talking about Laura (line 1) and at the end (lines 58-59) when Anna's using talk to work something out, Nick takes the conversational floor and draws a conclusion--"that's the whole point." Interesting too that Nick only intervenes in Anthony's talk once and in that instance (line 17) Anthony has interrupted Nick. Nick just continues on after the break. Nick supports all of Anthony's topics (Line 26, "the setting, yes) and does not switch them to his own agenda as he does with Anna and Robin.

In agreement with what linguists have found about gendered aspects of mixed-sex conversations, Nick mainly agrees with the males (read Anthony), feels freer to interrupt women (both Robin and Anna), and in general as a male, dominates the talk. Women are more silent, suggest Thorne, Kramarae, and Henley, (1983) not because they are passive but because of "the mechanisms, such as interruption, inattention to the topics women raise, which men use to control women's silence in mixed sex talk" (p. 17). This reading group transcript corroborates many of these gendered discourse findings but the most interesting finding of all is that none

of this verbal behavior is conscious or intentional on Nick's part.

And. Nick's ability at controlling the conversation does not, for example, make his talk within the group less personal. Like the other group members, Nick discloses a great deal about himself in the reading groups. Here Nick talks about divorce, a topic where he's an expert:

Nick: I don't think that's right. I think it's tough for kids to go through a divorce, yes, I went through two, but I think at the time/

Robin: You're an expert/

Nick:/it was much wiser. Once you get to a point in a marriage where divorce is imminent, you can't have the semblance of a happy home while you're not happy. The kids will read that. It's worse for kids to wait. If you don't they'll be disillusioned, if you do, they'll be disillusioned. It's better to shoot it right in their face, "This is what we have to deal with here." I think that's much better to go through it. I've known people who've done that too, waited until their kids are in college--freshman year. As a matter of fact a lot of kids find that their parents are in trouble.

Robin: Doesn't that get you though? What ever happened to forever, to commitment?

Nick: People grew up. People decided that if it didn't work forever, it wasn't going to work forever and you didn't have to suffer. It used to be that you had to suffer. Divorce was a dirty word, nasty, you didn't do that. Now people get sick of a marriage, they try it. I can't really put down divorce because I've seen people who really, really try to make it work. And have it just fail anyway. Because they just grew apart, they grew into two different people. There's a lot of room for it in a marriage--no one's willing to be half a person. Even if they start as unified whole, eventually they could possibly grow apart.

Robin: Especially if they get married young/

Nick:/ Yes, it's just a reality.

Robin: Because I think about my parents. My parents have been married for 22 years and they've both changed so much since I was a little kid. But they're still happily married/

Nick:/ Not many people can do that/

Robin:/ They can change and change with each other. They're changing differently, doing new things but they still include new things but they still include each other.

Nick: That's good.

In this second conversational frame, where the turn-taking is even, Robin and Nick interrupt one another almost equally and while Nick's amount of talk still dominates, he's also supportive of Robin's statements--"it's just a reality" and "that's good" which help indicate the collaborative nature of the discussion. There's a real difference between an overlapping conversation where all members are building on each other's contributions and an interrupted conversation where one or several speakers are intent on controlling the conversational floor. Nick is good at both.

Speech Style as Dialectical

It is not until well into the first semester, when after transcribing many hours of conversations with Nick in reading and writing groups, in conferences with Donna and interviews with me, that I realize that something about Nick's

interruptive, argumentative speech style nags at me. Because I'm not a linguist, because I am really more concerned with content of our conversations than the form, I do not "get it" at first. But gradually I begin to realize how often Nick interrupts me and how I then, begin to work hard at claiming the conversational floor back from him at times. Finally (12/10) we talk about the discourse issue in connection to the question that Nick raises about women's ways of knowing:

Elizabeth:...The thing I'm interested in is that women's way of knowing, and women's looking is very different than yours. When I listen to you on tape, you're very antagonistic. As friendly as we might be, if you think I'm wrong, you say, "No, that's not the way it is, it's like this." Over and over again.

If I listen to Anna on tape, she never contradicts me. What she tries to do is take something from what I said and pull it through. Now, I'm not saying one way is better--I'm saying they're different. If you're going to look at women's ways of knowing, they have this tremendous desire to be conciliators, to make everything smooth over and to be really likes/

Nick: Why? Why? You describe that as a sex difference--I submit that it's not a sex difference, it's a social difference.

Elizabeth: Oh, it is.

Nick: I think it begins with genetics, begins with women being mothers biologically, and there's a carryover/

Elizabeth: All that nurturing behavior that is valued/

Nick: Sure, there's a behavioral part of it that's relevant. I think society has an exaggeration of that, and I think/

Elizabeth: But in academics Nick?/

Nick: When women are conciliatory, try to smooth things over, try to make everything nice, it drives me crazy. Because everything isn't nice; everything doesn't work that way, and you don't sometimes get the most out of anything if you try and smooth everything over and make it nice. And see/

This is typical of our overlapping but competitive conversations where we are each intent on presenting our view. While I want to see how Nick explains his speech style, it becomes revealing to me that Nick finds women's placating style as offensive as I find his agonistic behavior. Finally in this long transcript Nick identifies his own speech style as dialectic, saying:

When you're talking about this frame that I use, and what you describe sounds accurate to me, but what you describe is a dialectic, especially say, even a Marxian dialectic, which I hesitate to add an ideology to that, but you know, maybe I state a thesis or an antithesis, and work for a synthesis.

When we try to work out together whether or not the dialectic style is male or female Nick, conscious now of his behavior says:

Excuse me for interrupting, but it occurred to me that people don't think about this because they don't know what the dialectic is... I think it's true for all--maybe not all, but most--males, and a significant amount of females. I think they do it but they don't realize it.

Although Nick and I are not fully able to disentangle the complex issue of gendered discourse styles, we're on surer ground with respect to our own preferences. We've come to a consciousness of the "differences" at play in our discourse and without that awareness, "dominance" will prevail as this quote suggests: "Difference, however is only part of the picture; the fact of male dominance--built into the economic, family, political and legal structures--of society--is also central to language and speech" (Thorne and Henley, 1975, p.

15.) When Nick reads this section of my dissertation concerning his speech style, he jotted in the margin: "Yes, I can be a real prick about it" making me wonder still if he's fully conscious of the "differences" at play.

Response Forums: The Dual Journals

Not only does Nick switch styles when he talks about the classroom readings, he also adopts two different voices in his journal reading responses which again reveal his flexibility in discourse strategies as reader and writer as well. One voice, characterized by a distanced and formalized prose, is found in his first reading response for Donna's course. He's been asked to respond to Rodriguez' essay in writing after he's held a reading conference with Donna. Nick writes an extensive two-paged journal entry, titled, "Let's Think About This" but only three paragraphs of his essay relate to the reading:

Mr. Rodriguez has felt the draw of life's motion. He has been sucked into the unsteady currents since an especially young age (owing to his particular history). Too young, in fact, too small to navigate the enormous ebb and flow, the huge, swirling undercurrents of time. Too young to understand his peril, but old enough to sense it.

Rodriguez watched his past sweep away from him, just as all of us have snatched ours, similarly. This past has fallen in an orderly progression (one of his choosing). Is it the "education" he has endured which has made it so?

In his own final analysis, could he see that his schooling served only as the tunnel through which his past raced by? It gave him one other thing: when it is all done, education can act for the tragic vice of

hindsight. With it, he may now see clearly where the shreds have fallen.

Nick asks Donna for a written response to his journal and she complies with an equally long reaction that reflects my own feelings at times about Nick, that in writing, he shuts people out:

Nick, You wanted a response. My feelings as a reader are that you are trying to keep me out, keep me at a distance with bravado and flash--my terms for the "abstract" that lacks said substance to stuff buoyant. You are making the readers job overly difficult by now allowing us to see the path of your thinking... Had I not talked with you previously [the reading conference] I would have had a difficult time connecting to Rodriguez until the second page. On Purpose?....

The other voice that Nick uses in his classroom reading journal is more immediate. When he reads Donna's draft of "A Rock By Any Other Name, he writes her a long response, titled, "A Sliver of Journalizing." Here Nick comes in so close that we feel him breathing on top of Donna's prose, following each word, responding to how he feels as a reader. There is less of the mannered prose style that characterizes Nick's Rodriguez response.

I'm drawn into the cool hush, watching you penetrate the dappled sunspots, several yards distant. I note the cypress and watch for "sleepy stone" (which I fail to see because of the sudden alliteration--it disrupts my descent with you into the woods)

Perhaps "these dense woods" wouldn't have to be were the phrases not in such proximity (editor to editor: don't shovel in too much info about granite, it could tend to bog us [the collective reader] down and, perhaps, it is more important that you wonder than know.

I am able to approach, I draw nearer and can make out more clearly the details of what you see in the disrupted

effort of the ruined wall. I am very close behind you now, as you follow it deeper into the foliage....

Here, there's no question that Nick's reading of Donna's piece is an empathic one, nor is there any sense that Nick has any other agenda except to be helpful. Nick writes from first persons "I," rather than the more detached third person of the Rodriguez response. He could have written: "don't use alliterations, don't be so expository, show, don't tell" but he chose engagement rather than distance, placing his directive suggestions for changes in parentheses (editor-to-editor) which protects the flow of the paper. He ends his response with one line, "If you know what I mean" suggesting that hopes his responses have been helpful.

The first journal entry may reflect Nick's insecurity about what style (stance, pose, voice) to adopt for the course and it most likely reflects the kind of writing he has been rewarded for in the past. Nick is equally "at home" in many voices and uses a full range within his classroom journal. Nick's adept at formal rhetorical strategies as well as more personal literary approaches. His classroom journal by the end of the semester becomes increasingly informal as the following entry on the Carver reading group illustrates. Here Nick writes directly to Donna as his audience, particularly in his parenthetical asides (Please, oh please don't put a question mark and an arrow pointing to "fluffy," just let it go by this time). Nick as a reader connects personally with Carver as

an author, with the setting and characters in the story, drawing it toward him, echoing the immediacy of Carver's writing in his own response. And yet there's a touch of arrogance in his response: "Well put, Mr. Carver," as well as the sense of performance that dominates even his most informal prose.

Truth value in huge, fluffy abundance (please oh please don't put a question mark and an arrow pointing to fluffy, just let it go by this time). And eloquently put, Mr. Carver, with your excellent use of dialogue.

What strikes one the most is the immediacy of the setting and the situation. The shreds of descriptive prose complement the character's interplay, almost perfectly (nothing is perfect by definition) I am right there in the kitchen with the two familiar couples.

I am witness to their growing inebriation. And the fading light. They connect so closely as to be those whom I've known for years. And when they talk about love, they don't converge on a prevailing ideas: they, instead meander through their personal thoughts (some more in common with mine than others) concerning their own personal experiences.

This is not about what love is, as you might tend to believe if you're trying to be clever. This is what love does. 'What we Think About When We Think About Love....'

The Personal Journalizer

When Nick offers to let me read his personal journal, I am curious to hear the tone, the voice, the style: Will it be any different from what he's writing for Donna's course? Will the posturing and distancing dissolve. What literary boundaries will he establish in his journal, if any?

Nick's personal journal is written in dark ink, the entries always dated, the time recorded both at the beginning and the end of the entry. Every entry carries a title:

Time is Gonna Come Sunday;
Good God: Girls. Companionship;
Whiskey is Water Thursday;
Running Boy Friday;
High Impact Switcheroo Saturday.

Each entry ends with a yin/yang sign (☯) and when the yang is on top, Nick explains, the day's been a bummer.

The audience for the journal is not just Nick but an implied reader as well, sometimes addressed as "Brother." These randomly selected lines indicate the implied (you) audience within this journal:

"You will recall my dissertation on irony burns; two pages ago? Ha. That's a funny one, you betcha"; "Pardon this elaborate metaphoric divergence. The appeal was compelling"; or, " Oh yeah. Got rather a lot sidetracked there. The storm, you see was the intended conclusion. That is: it's snowing hereabout."

At the same time the audience is Nick as well as this expressive entry on the loss of his bandanna indicates:

7:16 PM

Aagh. Woe of woes. I've lost my blue bandanna somewhere along my meandering day's course. My trademark said Jen. Or if not so much that, then an object of warm endearment for me; the rag did, after all accompany me in the bizarre trip to the July Fourth Dead and Dylan show. A sizeable task.

It is gone. I am thus additionally despondent.

Or this short but telling entry about his desire for female companionship:

8:08 AM

So where is MS. almost right?

Or this partial entry which mentions prose writing within the context of his other subjects:

...Intended to study before sleep but looks doubtful. I still owe many hours to the academic leviathan of UNH. The monolith has trapped me in its elaborate web (bureaucracy) and lunges at me with four curbed fangs. English is the most persistent assault; but weak and defensible, easily (although I owe a make-up paper in addition to this week's five pages) For Pol [foreign policy] strikes more blows. They are less constant yet more threatening...

The journal style ranges from the formal:

Lue (Lucifer) unleashed only blustery arctic winds, thus far. He doth me slight injury, this day so far.

To the abstract dissertation on the soul which shows his very writerly, self-conscious, and literary style:

The soul actually is a pretty neat idea. Especially with all the complex trappings that are draped over it through all the theorizing humans are apt to do when they'd like to cling onto a belief that makes no sense. So does the soul.

Still, I'd like to think that I've got one lurking in my rubbery life. The essence of me. Arrogantly enough, I am drawn toward the hollow promise of some life eternal. Eager to think that the most of what I am precedes me and will persevere afterward...

Am I so pleased with the essential me? Admitted so. With the sanguine teen-years now three years past, and adolescence on the waning end of its tortuous circle, I have assembled a ramshackle identity, that fits just right (and right before momentous change, ironically enough) It doesn't seem to forge much of an impression on my peers (ha), but I'm relaxed with it: it is me.

Within the "rubbery" quality of Nick's life, he has built a "ramshackle" identity partially through the medium of this journal itself: writing in Nick's personal life, and for him has become a way of knowing. Prose writing class has tapped

into the same challenge of constructing personal knowledge and is thereby valued by Nick over the kind of role playing that he's asked to do elsewhere in his academic life. As Nick says, "School is what I do, not what I am" which echoes what Pirsig claims in Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance that the university is a state of mind."

Nick as Writer: The Ticker Tape Process

We have considered Nick as speaker; Nick as reader and journal keeper: what is Nick like as writer in this writing class? He enters prose writing with a positive image of himself as a writer: "Somehow, I'm a good writer. That is, I haven't a clue how it came to be or from where I learned it; yet it persists" (Reading Journal). In fact, he is a fecund and versatile personal journal-keeper who's in control in writing, just as he was orally, of a wide range of styles: from a mannered, almost baroque tone to the inviting voice of his response to Donna's paper or his personal commiseration on the loss of his bandanna or revelations about his soul and identity. But Donna does not read Nick's personal journal: what she responds to are his formal papers and his reading/writing journal responses, both requirements for her course. Having privy to Nick's journal made me alert to whether or not Donna's course would allow him the same range of disclosure and self-understanding that his personal journal affords.

Nick's first formal paper for prose writing leans on an assigned essay by Edward Hoagland, "What I Think, What I Am" where Hoagland defends the flexibility of the essay form-- hybridized as it has become--as imitating the "mind's natural flow" and sounding like "the human voice talking" (Hoagland). Nick's quite conscious that Hoagland's essay encouraged him to combine narrative and essaying techniques in his own paper as this class journal response indicates: "Were you to take this first paper I've written and use it as the representative sample among essays, you would all but prove Mr. Hoagland's theory and establish it as law." The understanding that an essay captures both the mind and the autobiographical helps Nick forge a technique for drafting, "A September Evening Trip", which, according to Nick's evaluation in his class journal, represents his own "human voice talking." Nick's entire journal entry is reproduced here because of its brevity and to display the meticulous handwriting that characterizes both of his journals. Shades of studio art?

Several times early in the semester Nick admits that he's almost more interested in the form of his writing than its content and his first paper is a wonderful example of this. Written while Nick was madly researching a paper on NATO for his poly sci course, here's the beginning of "September's Evening Trip":

There are swarms of locusts hiding somewhere in this library. No. I suppose that it is only the dull buzz of these stark, florescent lights on the morbid quiet on would find in libraries everywhere.

Papers are rustling to either side. A sniff. And now a cough. And low voices hum from an indeterminant point among the stately rows of unused books. Another cough and a vague tapping noise.

My vestigial will power is crumbling; my eyes look away from this page. There are shallow steady breaths and slouched bodies surrounding me. Some are corpse like: silent and limp in their plastic and aluminum chairs. Others work feverishly, bend low over a high stack of books and papers, eyes scanning crazily through the pages. Their pens are clutched fiercely between their fingers: the blunt end twitches and wiggles mere centimeters from their pursed lips.

I was one of the latter type, the mad researcher. Until a few moments ago, that is. Now I'm an observer. And this is what I see.

Libraries are places of fortitude, of diligence. They are places of absolutes. I find myself oddly compelled. I am consumed by the Puritan work ethic: I'm super-responsible. "Can" lapses into and out of "must."

The paper follows this format of alternating between what Hoagland's essay describes--"what I think" and "what I am"--for five plus pages, first presenting descriptions of what Nick is seeing:

These books and papers and pencils and plastic chairs and humming lights...it's made us all mad. Look at the little maniac struggling to capture all the information every written on the combined field theory. Look at the brunette in her cubicle who has suffered over the same paragraph of Hobbes' Leviathan for twenty five minutes.

And what Nick is doing:

Thoughts are running together into a white noise in my head. There is no room for more thoughts, great or small. I'm banging against the steel door that locks off the unused majority of my brain. Words are pinning me to its cold surface"

And his dissertation on libraries:

Libraries are places of worry. It condenses on the brain when the effort begins to fade (condense like a neutron

star): the most cruel aspect. There are clocks in all the corners, they tick loudly. Milling people become enough of an event to sap the last of your concentration. Murmured conversations leak into the text. Words begin to tremble in their neat columns. They start lurching and heaving across the page, colliding and overlapping one another.

In his self-evaluation of the essay, Nick reports that even though he had to "Become Queen for A Day" by handing in his paper late, that he's "delighted" with what he wrote. What he feels works best in his essay is the "flow into and out of storying and essaying, alternatively: that, and the overall rhythm thereby established." Nick's more interested in the textuality of his paper, of its movement and fabric, than in the message it conveys. He hopes the reader will follow these "changes in momentum" but concedes, parenthetically, that: (I am the primary reader). Nick is clearly pleased with this paper and is disappointed in Donna's response. She applauds its writerly quality and careful structure but wants Nick to push on to more substance, suspecting that the paper has not challenged him as a thinker: she wants him to avoid the "bravado and flash" that she called him on in the first class journal entry.

The paper is well-written and reads wonderfully aloud, but seems more of a performance, a spectacle, than an act of discovery or thinking. For some students, this paper could be ground-breaking but for Nick it's almost effortless, written in spurts between his intensive library research. Students who

come into writing courses with fairly sophisticated skills can be difficult to work with since they have long been rewarded in college for their first draft efforts. Such students often resist challenging subject matter and the process of revision, adhering to the forms and topics that historically they have been able to handle well (see, *The Case of the Reluctant Reviser*, Chiseri-Strater, 1984). Donna confronts Nick directly about his attitude toward revision in a conference (10/15) on another paper:

Donna: Do you ever revise?

Nick: Uhh, not yet.

Donna: Do you ever feel the need to?

Nick: Not really. You see, I don't, I don't know what it is, I don't seem to write things that spark an interest in me the second time to the point that I'm going to write them again.

Donna: Or see them in a different way that would make you want to approach it/

Nick: Yes/

Donna:/Differently? Or is writing a kind of catharsis for you?

Nick: Sometimes, yes. I think-- mostly, in fact it's a cathartic thing. But I don't know, I haven't done too much creative writing besides my journal.

Donna: What's "creative writing"? I thought all writing was creative.

When Nick and I talk about his writing process, I confirm his resistance to approaching difficult topics: good paper subjects for him are limited by his sense of "investment," of how much time a particular topic might take: "...we're talking serious time here. I'd prefer to get these English papers

down and write 'em out, something, 'hey' that's a good thing to write about--bam! Five pages right there." Although he is willing to think about a topic, let his mind "wander" over an idea while: "walking to class, walking home. I do a lot of walking so I think a lot," when it comes time to "do" the paper, it's something to get done, accomplished: bam!

Before he drafts a paper, Nick writes a short, one paragraph to one page "blurb" of all the mental notes he's gathered which, he says, sometimes "eclipse" the original topic and "trigger" further ideas. Sitting time for writing an English paper was 3-10 hours, on and off, depending upon the subject of course. When I asked about the recursive nature of writing for him, Nick said that he didn't go back or re-read his text when the paper was flowing, only if he felt a "block" would he re-draft. He compared the linear, discursive quality of his writing process to watching a ticker tape:

Because when you write it the first time, it's like looking at a ticker tape as it comes through the machine. You look at one section of the ticker tape at a time. You don't follow where the ticker tape is going, you just assume that it's landing.....

And while Nick's writing process works well enough for initial drafting, it cannot tolerate re-drafting, chiseling out the little parts to make the image in the stone or plaster clearer for the reader. Because Nick is the primary reader.

"Living Through": Nick's Furies

Nick lands on his next topic fairly easily and admits that "Living Through" is a "rush job" written on familiar

issues that have been "consistent" throughout his college years. The paper explores at least three potentially turbulent themes: first, career-oriented students; second, Nick's mother as role model; and third, Nick's future, Nick's fate. Unlike the last paper, Nick's negative about this paper, claiming that all three themes are "underdeveloped"; the writing is not "coherent" and he sounds as if he's "whining and bitching, making excuses and justifying" himself for "not having a handle on it all." In terms of form, Nick thinks that he should be writing "essays" and not "story-ing," and fears that the paper falls into "just a narrative." In considering parts of Nick's paper, I am struck by the economy of adjectives used, by the rawness of the thinking and honest presentation of personal conflicts in it. At the same time, the issues he explores are masked by abstractions and lack of resolve in the actual writing, not just thematically. He begins "Living Through" with a description of careerists, centering the reader (you) firmly at UNH, pitting you against (them):

Were you to stand almost anywhere on the UNH campus long enough, you would find yourself engulfed by mobs of career-minded students. This is particularly the case with certain strategic areas: the engineering building, the Whittemore School of Business. They will not notice you however; they are consumed with their relentless climb toward riches and "success."

The careerists indulge in greedy fantasies of reaching "the top." They are lost without the hierarchy, through which they will run, walk, or crawl toward hopeful financial security. Some will attain this economic greatness, most will not: a hierarchy is a steep pyramid which narrows abruptly near the pinnacle: there is room for only a few. Still they will aspire to it.

And then folds in the wonderful theme of his "durable" mother which wanders off into abstractions before we have any concrete details:

My mother is durable. She has lived a true life. The truth is in experience and in the courage to face it. Adversity will come in a true life, and happiness too. Neither will be an enduring sensation. The true-liver will not expect it to be so, but will maintain a semblance of themselves in the uncertain face of change.

Her story is not an epic. It is not especially outstanding. One might easily overlook her. The significance lies in her method, not in her history, because her history is hardly unique.

My mother has just become a Baptist minister. A career, yes but not for "success." A career for happiness (transient though it may be). Mom awoke one night and decided on pursuing theology, not to regain the thread of her prior education, but to move on to the next stage of living. At the age of 52, she returned to a student's life (while preserving the elemental self).

And finally the theme of Nick, the most abstracted sections of all which describes the real position he has taken about a kind of moratorium on career choice:

I am not a career-minded student. I do not seek the confines of 'the top.' I will carve my horizontal path through life, climbing here and dipping there. My success will not be measurable by economic scales. And it will be dynamic; my security will be temporary, coming and going in the face of new circumstances.

Experience is most useful when it is lived through; it is not a by-product of living. It is a lens with which one may discover much about oneself. Experience allows us to see ourselves as we remain after the trials of pain and joy, and as we are in them.

In this paper, Nick uses some personal examples from his mother's life to begin to explore his thinking about an issue that concerns him: his lack of career choice. It is a

wonderful "discovery draft" for further thinking and writing. And in spite of his equivocal feelings about the paper, Nick decides to share it in his first writing group although he has some reservations at first about writing groups: "Writing groups are productive but on a primitive level. I mean you can still plow a field with a stone plow." In what he calls the "pre-response, responses" Nick describes the reception of the group (which includes Anna) as positive which "surprises" him because "I thought it lacked cohesiveness and substance enough that it was rendered unintelligible." What interests the writing group is Nick's "role within the paper," suggesting that as the draft stands, Nick serves only as a reflection in the descriptions of his mother. Students ask Nick to "distinguish" between his mother and himself and "show the relations" more clearly. And while everyone identified with the theme of the career monger, students agreed he should "tone it down" a bit.

In his class journal entry, Nick describes each students' oral response, and adds that "Anna didn't have much to say in the group, actually. She agreed with Sasha and Tom's points. But she didn't have much in the way of fresh insight" (the conciliatory woman that Nick says he hates). But when Nick receives students' written responses to his paper, however, he has a different perspective on Anna: "Anna's conclusions were more profound than the others on the whole. She poses questions which incline me toward an (elusive) adequate

central idea." Nick goes on for several paragraphs to talk about Anna's astute response and ends with a rhapsody that masks his fears about writing on this topic:

Anna dearest, you have hit the nail exactly on its puny head. This theme leaps into the spotlight of obviousness to dance a jig and taunt the audience. 'Where are you going?' What a question.... This paper is a rationalization of my insecurity (about the future). A cover-up for the dissonance of being (apparently) unprepared. Good spotting, Anna.

The supportive feedback that Nick receives on this paper, from his writing group and from Donna does not push him toward revision; rather, he backs away from this topic, and thereby from these issues: "there's no potential for the paper" he says, "it doesn't strike me as anything relevant."

In fact, the topic is so relevant that it strikes dissonance and fear in him as this statement from our interview resonates: "Will I ever have a car? Or a house? Will I ever get a job, or a career? Will I ever make anything out of my life? As soon as you say the one thing, there's the echo behind it." The echo can be heard to reverberate with Nick's current life issues. "Living Through" takes on two of these issues: it addresses Nick's quandary over career decisions and his lack of a mentor to help direct his academic life. In an interview with me Nick asks: "To what extent am I justifying that I'm not seeking a career?" He realizes at the same time that all those "careerists" as he calls them, cannot possibly achieve the success that they dream of because .."there isn't a piece of the pie for everybody... They don't

understand that they have to fight tooth and nail to do it." Nick, on the other hand, will lay back and "abstain" from wearing the straight-jacket, from putting on the professional mask and playing at spouting "professional jargon." The paper reveals Nick's ambivalence about his commitment to non-commitment.

"Living Through's" also about the role of mentoring that his mother has played in his life, but he challenges even that: "To what extent is my mother an excuse rather than an example?" In mulling over a possible revision, Nick says that when he started to think about his mother and "why I respect her and why I have a certain feeling about my life," he decided that his mother wasn't the real theme of the paper either. In fact, he says that the part about his mother is kind of "corny." For Nick, the dream that helps shape a life is a diffuse dream: "My rainbow doesn't just arc in one direction. It sort of spreads out."

Nick's example of his inability to revise this particular paper may be explained by the fact that the issues may be too close, too weighted, too discordant to approach any closer. Male students, in particular, seem to prefer to write about topics that are circumscribed rather than the messy circular subject matter that women students often approach (Chiseri-Strater, 1987).

But when approaching this messy draft, Nick retreats. Unlike women writers who often see life as a text to be

written and who read into texts, parts of their own lives (Gannett, 1987), Nick separates the textuality of his life from himself. Nick's issues are separate from him, he explains to me: "This is probably a minor point but it makes a difference to me. My life isn't my text--what I saw around me, what was happening was." For Nick there is a "self" or "series of selves" that exists autonomously from life, not within its multiple facets and complex connections.

Nick's Muses: Erica, Nina, Mary Jo

The next series of topics that Nick writes on show an intense interest in forming relationships with women, if not an equally intense dread of these relationships. Two of his papers focus on encounters with women, one of which represents his only attempt at revision in the course. "Sudden Attachment to Her" (written 9/30) is framed as a letter beginning "Brother," an opening often used in his personal journal. Nick continues this six-paged epistle on an encounter with a woman called Nina, beginning with this opening:

Brother,

I have written to you before concerning this delicate matter and shall again, now. It is Nina. It is my sudden realization about here. And about myself; in some ways, more the latter.

Nick goes on to describe his sexual conquest in fair detail:

Together we have had nearly flawless sex. But there has been an undercurrent I did not understand. Her lips against my stomach or chest are meaningful; her hand coursing gently through my hair are expressions of genuine fondness...

When he next writes about conflicted feelings over the relationship, at first it seems to the reader that this is the usual sort of poor timing and inconducive circumstances that happen at college:

And as I have remarked a mere 40,382 times today alone: I don't need them (girls). I can enjoy life to its minuscule fullest without the torment of small-talk, lines, the scope scene, games, tricks ploys, pretense, facade, and the dreaded day-after awkwardness...

But by the end of the paper, Nick makes a more explicit reference to his apprehension over beginning a new relationships, harking back to a previous one that ended in disaster:

I'm sure you recall, Brother, Erica, the Usurper, my ex-would-have-been wife. Thoughts of her still invoke a subdued panic in me. Our two years of committed bliss are easily overpowered by the five months of doom and catastrophe that followed. Although that small taste of hell occurred nearly a year ago, I still flinch at the phrases "commitment" and "love."

Although the paper does not detail this further, Erica, I learn, was Nick's "ex" girlfriend with whom he had an intense and extended two year relationships that ended in personal anguish for him: She threatened to commit suicide when Nick broke up with her. While Nick later realized that he was not the cause for her depression, that a breakdown was inevitable for his girlfriend, he blames himself for not understanding her vulnerability. He shared in one of our interviews that:

I'd been such a complete pillow for her for so long. I had been such a complete guardian, such a complete caretaker, that when I pulled all that away, she had nothing.

Nothing. No reason to live. I had to lie to her and say, yeah, you have this to live for and that...

Eventually Nick steered Erica into counseling (meshing with his own interest in psychology) and stayed with the relationship until she was healthier, explaining that: "I wouldn't have been able to live with the fact that the woman that I loved for two years, that I loved better than anyone else, that I was the reason that she killed herself."

Donna does not probe these personal issues: she "receives" or accepts Nick's paper but does not push him to work further on the draft. In fact, they have a verbal tug of war as Donna reads the paper in conference and comments on it aloud:

Donna: This makes me question everything in relationships in general. How much when things get started, is it a factor of need, who you are and what you are going through at the time?

Nick: These questions are kind of steering you toward a paper on my ex-girlfriend.

Donna: I'm not steering you toward anything. I'm giving you basically my reader-response. I'm showing you how I respond as a reader, not so much telling you what to do//

Nick:/And I'm telling you how I respond to your comments.

Donna: Okay/

Nick: The need factor was very much prevalent in that relationship....

When writing teachers invite students to choose their own topics, they often submit papers about autobiographical situations that are disturbing: issues like rape, child abuse, suicide attempts, broken homes, and death cannot be

kept outside of a writing classroom, dropped at the door. They need not become the only topics that students pursue but often offer the strongest path to strengthening their writing skills because of the commitment invested in a personal topic. Nick lays out many possibilities for such papers but he's so easily satisfied with his first draft efforts, that he does not pursue them. Nor does Donna allow Nick to make her the cause for his writing a paper on his past relationship. The commitment must come from Nick.

Interestingly enough, Nick chooses "Sudden Attachment" to share in an all-female writing group. In an interview previous to the peer group meeting, Nick told me he thought the paper might "shock" the women in his group because the paper was pretty "gritty," translate "realistic." In his journal response he admits he'd been wrong about their reactions, about them:

I must admit here my surprise. My group consisted of Jodi, Angie, and myself. I became convinced that one or possibly both would display themselves as foo-foos. In that regard I was mistaken.

It is not a disappointment, however. My companions proved themselves (unknowingly) to be thoughtful and more hearty than I had envisioned. Both, it turns out, have real talent, or at least substantial skill.

Donna cannot resist the marginal comment on Nick's journal: "Ooh how we make assumptions!" Nick's judgmental stance toward other students' reception of his work is consistent in this course: he is sure that students (particularly women)

will be unable to understand his writing, but he is thankfully proven wrong!

So. Nick goes on to draft still another paper about a relationship which he first titles, "Blindness for the Madonna" and revises to, "Third Time Under," about a woman named Mary Jo. Both drafts share an identical lead where Nick paints a romantic portrait:

She was always more beautiful in the pale light of the autumn moon. This night, that moon was full. Its halo diffused through the thin ripples of clouds in a circular rainbow: with no ends and no pot of gold. What does it mean, I asked aloud.

Both versions chronicle the same story, with the only minor changes in the revision being a refinement of the wording and tightening of the structure. "Third Time Under" plays with the pun of meeting this same woman in autumn (fall) and falling under her spell, coupled with the theme of drowning--three times under and you don't come up:

I wanted her, two falls ago, although I could not. She fills my ideal of woman, more closely than other. But I was deeply in love with another, not nearly so close. I could not admit that I want to love Mary-Jo, too, not even to myself.

She in turn, did not admit her draw to me. I was her "Artman" so long ago, but I refused to see. She would smile at me and we would laugh, together. We talked openly and with sweet words; we even dared to flirt. We rarely touched, but I reached out, anyway.

It was my first time under.

In the revision, Donna applauds Nick's ability to manipulate time, his movement between two falls ago, the

previous falls and the current one. In this paper Nick chronicles the familiar discord between heart and mind:

It was a hard fall, my second time under.

The night is crisp and cold. The moon shines on us still, but the halo has gone. Have I missed its meaning? I do not know yet.

I look at the Mary-Jo through the steady fog of my breath. I am remembering my last two falls, but without the pain. It has dwindled in a year's time. I think of my past desires for her. How similar they seem to my present ones.

"Third Time Under," tightly woven, filled with intensity and intrigue, is a personal narrative about Nick's tangled encounters with a woman: she's the seductress and he's the victim, merely put under her spell. Nick does not attempt to reflect on the complexities of this relationship, he just narrates the story for us. In the final scene it is the power of words that seduces him: "I am happy, tonight. More so than I've been in months. Just because of her words. As I stroll through the dark, I wonder if I can be her friend, her lover, or both. his fall, I am, once again, under her spell."

In the same writing conference as above (10/15) Nick asks Donna, not timorously, for an evaluation of his paper:

Nick: I was actually wondering if you think this was a well-written paper.

Donna: I think so. There's a lot of things working here. Writing about these things, you have such a capacity to be trite.

Nick: I was really impressed by this paper myself because of the content.

Nick reports to me that he wrote the paper in a kind of "explosive fit" and then worried about whether or not it was any good because he hadn't paid much attention to the form:

Like I said before, I concentrate a lot on form, about as much as substance. But in this particular paper, the substance kind of removed me from paying attention too much to the form. So I was glad I carried it off.

Nick's sense of "carrying off" a piece of writing again reflects the performance aspect of his prose style where he "masters" the text; in the powerful act of writing he achieves the control that he cannot achieve in his real life issues.

Nick's Political Conscience: "Boom"

Even though Donna hints at further revisions for "Third Time Under," Nick chooses not to revise but to draft yet another new paper, this time with political themes, "And the World Said Boom." Here Nick's essay voice is woven together with some narrative parts, of all the papers considered so far in prose writing, this was Nick's only attempt to deal with issues outside his personal life. The paper begins from the distance of the entire universe:

From out in the swirling currents of invisible particles that drift among the giant planets (a mere four billion kilometers from the sun), the view of our world is vague: a tiny bluish splotch amidst two other similar splotches. Each whirls in a distinct eclipse about the star that obscures its image....

Three paragraphs later, we have arrived at earth:

Even from barely forty-million kilometers, the Earth's secret is unexposed. Among its companions, it is the largest, yet not by enough to see, in any way, remarkable. It is still some three and a half times

smaller than the smallest outer-system giant. Our world has but one claim: it holds life.

And in the next section we are with Nick:

From a yard or two, the obscure planet Earth is teeming with living matter. Which is where you would find me, were you at the appropriate point.

At 7:00 this morning my clock-radio stirs me from a shallow sleep, offering me no hints about our world, or about life. My awareness discerns my own life and that of my roommate and little more. The routine evidences of life around us make no impression on me. I lumber for the shower...

In the dormitory bathroom Nick discovers a pamphlet called "Beyond War." Nick relates the pamphlet's warnings about war to his personal thoughts:

The pamphlet is another group's attempt to sober our view—to provoke us to glance away, even momentarily, away from the microcosmic dilemmas of our personal world to the world at large. Reluctantly, I submit that the horror of consciousness will keep man's stubborn mind asleep. Like the accident victim who cannot recall the crash, we will seek to delete the untidy fact from our discriminating recollections. We have forgotten the peril into which the Earth has been propelled.

We have forgotten about the earth Nick suggests, because we trust our leaders to be in charge but they are Nick warns, self-invested:

Security issues. Power-people; our leaders, despite their common jeopardy with us, are consumed with being overrun by someone. Man's war-like countenance is easily exposed and lined to innate territorialism, perhaps as much as our death-wish and predacious instincts.

The essay ends with Nick's guilt over his lack of responsibility, his lack of commitment toward issues of nuclear war and preservation of the earth:

Profound helplessness. I am suspended between my neglected duties as a living being and my conclusions about the failings of our system, at the hand of power-people. An irreconcilable contradiction is burning my skin with the shower's hot water. Perhaps the steam is obscuring a conclusion.

I have a frail human psyche. I will have to abandon this line of thought or risk sinking into an irretrievable depression.

Again, there is no resolve or commitment at the end of the paper: Nick goes one giant step forward but is held back by his existential despair, his sense of "profound helplessness."

The Fly On The Wall

Nick did not re-work any of his papers for his final folder: he submitted his first paper, "September's Evening Trip" and the original draft of "Third Time Under" for re-evaluation. By his own criteria, "September" is a good paper because it "flows" and shows "creativity in action." "Third Time Under," Nick submits, not on the basis of the form that Donna praised him for, but for its content. Nick says that during prose writing he changed from an initial concern with form, to having perfectly balanced papers such as his first, to an interest in content, to conveying meaning: "I started working on a lot more on content than form," he shares with me. When he does this he finds that, "my form went all to hell." The strain of concentrating on content can cause a temporary loss of writing skills that is regained over time as development catches up with learning (Vygotsky, 1978). The visible content of "Third Time Under" is a narrative account

with the hidden content being Nick's ambivalence toward forming intimate relationships.

Each paper for Nick stands as a separate assignment, a completed product, finished and abandoned. Because he does not invest in the process of revision, Nick cannot use writing as a way of learning, as a way of achieving resolve about any of his persistent and nagging problems. What Adrienne Rich suggests about revision for women could be true for Nick as well: "Re-vision--the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction--is for women more than a chapter in cultural history--it is an act of survival (Rich, 1978, p. 35)

Thematically Nick explored a number of issues in his writing: his place in college and his family (*Living Through*), his intimate relationships with women (*Madonna*, *Third Time Under*, *Sudden Attachment*) and his political awareness (*The World Said Boom*). But churning beneath these papers are his current conflicts: outrage at the professional educations he sees his peers seeking; his dance with intimacy and isolation; his consciousness and fear of the fragility of our earth. But he does not (cannot?) resolve these issues through writing.

Nick's situated in a precarious position on Perry's charted journey of intellectual and ethical development: he's in a stage of "temporizing" which Perry views as a "deflection from growth." Nick's postponing commitments or choices to a career: he says that when it bothers him to think he's "missed

the boat" he just remembers "what boat it is that I'm missing." While he writes about intimacy with women, he claims that when he's through with a phase of his life such as college, he's done with all the people associated with that period: "I'm the kind of person who will avoid getting back together... My best friend from high school I don't call or write to her. I don't want to see her again. As for his many college male friend who graduated in May, Nick has demarcated boundaries for them as well, seeing them like a "rock-and roll band--we hung out together, got really famous, then just break up."

So. What does Nick learn as a writer in this course? He came in prose writing with fairly substantial writing skills and leaves the course unscathed, intact with those same skills. It's tempting to say that the course did little for him but provide him with additional practice in writing. And if there was not a journal in this course, which required regular self-monitoring and evaluation, there would be no way to disagree with this assessment. Nick's reading and writing response journal allows Donna to understand that despite his resistance to revision in her course, Nick did change a great deal with respect to attitudes toward writing.

Nick 's journal responses record two major realizations that contribute to what he calls his "renaissance" in creativity: one he calls social and the other personal:

My realization is two-fold then: a view back to the personal realm and a view to the social. On the personal

level, I have come to see myself as I think in my essaying; a fresher look at my writing method. Socially, I have reluctantly recognized the relevance of the reader, whereas my previous disposition rendered me adamantly opposed to assisting the reader's understanding (that's his/her problem), was my previous self; writing is for the writers' understanding.

When Nick and I discuss his changed concept of audience, he says that the classroom reading assignments helped him better understand audience expectations:

When we started doing the readings, I realized, 'all right, I'm reading these pieces as other people are going to read my pieces.' And because of that, I felt maybe, I should be concentrating on what the reader wants to hear, or what the reader is going to be most interested in.

Formerly, Nick saw the reader as the "person interceding in the communication between the writer and writer as primary reader" Nick's concept of audience was as "secondary" and "objective," what he calls "the fly on the wall."

Nick's learning to read like a writer, calling on what Donald Murray has called the writer's "other self" to assist in exploring the meaning intended and the meaning realized (Murray, 1982, p. 166) Nick's notion of an implied audience has been expanded through the professional readings as well as through the reality of a peer audience. And while Nick does not change that much in actual writing skills, he changes his attitudes toward writing.

Donna's comment on Nick's final folder shows her disappointment in his refusal to refine his work but acknowledges that Nick's learning in this course came through

reading and group interaction:

Nick--I can't help but wonder what would have happened this semester had you chosen to push, to extend yourself. Nonetheless, I liked seeing the revelation you mention in your journals--the development of a social consciousness...You are a good writer and now that you are aware of the reader, I expect good things have been set in motion--we can expect much in the future.

Nick as Collaborator: Collage Or Portraiture?

Nick credits the collaborative project for uncovering his real strengths as a writer: "Oddly enough, the collaborative effort showed me something new about my writing: I have a greater propensity for rendering narrative than for explaining my thoughts in an essay." And while Nick ends the collaborative project positively, he begins with skepticism, with "bafflement" as he calls it. His initial collaborative journal entry indicates his quandary over how several hands in the pot will not spoil the brew. Drawing on art metaphors, Nick fears that a collaborative paper which should emerge as a cohesive whole, as a portrait, may in fact end as a collage, or even pastiche:

You know. It entirely eludes me how it is that one enters into a collaborative assignment of this genre. My failing I know. Perhaps I read too much of a baroque portrait into a written work. One hand may grace the page with complexity and intricate insights. A uniformity of detail; visual course--an even flow at gradual velocities, consistent and consuming.

Many hands may not render the cohesive whole. Instead, simplicity must prevail; the insights, each emerging from a separate origin, will not adhere. They must be reduced to a common denominator and forced together....A collage has assumed the position where a portrait would have been.

But he's game. As he reads articles to prepare for the first collaborative meeting with Tom and Sasha, Nick's conscious that he's writing along with others, not alone and isolated in the usual writing situation. As he makes notes in his collaborative journal about how group members might respond to his particular reading choices, this strong awareness of his collaborative team shapes the critiques of each reading he selects. When he reads a short story by Robert Herrick, for example, he first connects it (somewhat arrogantly) with his own style: "it reminded me of my own prose, sort of, on my best day" but he remarks condescendingly that "the style of Herrick...may not have such a fervent reaction from my fellow collaborators." After his extended and political response to the Herrick character who he compares with portions of Rousseau, Nick warns himself not to expect others in his group to read the story in the same way: "Obviously Sasha and Tom are doubtfully going to share my enthusiasm or familiarity with dreary Renaissance psychology/ sociology/ political science/philosophy. But perhaps my connections will inspire a suitable topic for us, if the text will not." Does Nick feel that his reading of these texts is so much deeper and more complex than Sasha and Tom will not understand or is he truly concerned with their reactions? A bit of both perhaps, hidden thickly behind his abstract prose style.

When Nick locates a short piece from New York Magazine called "Love: The Fervid Quest for the "L" Word," he recognizes its potential appeal for his group: "Thus it came to me that this piece was a sure thing to submit to the group. In fact, it's such a sure thing that it threatens to dissolve itself into mediocrity as the most vile specter: the cliché. Egad." And Nick is right, not about the mediocrity, but that his group likes the piece and plan to combine it with another article submitted by Tom on "bullshit" to produce a topic. Nick describes the genesis achieved at their second collaborative meeting:

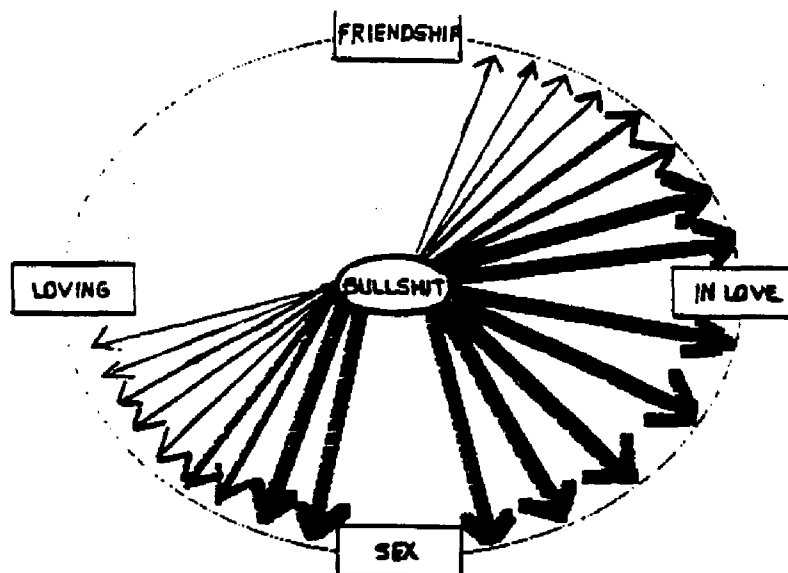
This is it!" proclaimed Tom after an hour or so of deliberation on the matter. He was referring to the vestigial diagram we had assembled in our theorizing. The thing had been born of my confederates attempts to explain the difference between "loving" and "in love" (I had got it backwards which could well explain my frequently disastrous relationships).

...Tom has pledged to unravel the intricacies of our meager diagram. One would think he'd read a message from god in it.

The topic has been arrived at in the group by totally ignoring Sasha's contribution: "Well, mine was the first to get eliminated--we all seemed to enjoy it but with two much more intriguing essays to write about, we concentrated talking about those" (Sasha's journal). And while Tom produced the diagram, it was Sasha's (conciliatory?) idea to combine Nick and Tom's essay into writing about love and bullshit.

Nick, excited by the idea of working with a visual aid, records in his journal how the group continued to refine the

diagram before they began to write: "we were able to hammer out the niceties of our 'solar-system model': we defined the elliptical cycle as intrinsic to all two-party, loving situations. Here is their model.



With this elaborate visual model, however, the group is not necessarily propelled forward as Nick had hoped: "We now have an elaborate understanding of our model. Still, we've no way to use it. So far, the apparent importance of the thing has overshadowed a relevant application."

In this collaborative context Nick reflects sensitivity to the group dynamics and records them in his journal. Tom, creator of the diagram, exudes, according to Nick, "a strange fervor" over his invention, and a stance that Nick is well-equipped to detect: "Tom's tone, though, rings oddly (for someone like him) of arrogance: his insistence, for example, that he guide the development of the model and be the

responsible member regarding the written definitions..." Nick recognizes Tom's influence and contribution but is puzzled in this situation by his communicative channels: "Through the lens of his fervor; he fails to receive while consumed in his sending." Nick again shows his judgmental side with Tom as he did over the group's ability to read particular articles in the way he did.

Nick's group holds its collaborative conference with Donna, having only the one-paged diagram and many stunning ideas. Nick reports that the group was in a "rut" before the conference and that Donna, "our starboard bow" has helped save the drowning writers. She simply puts them back on course by reminding them that they'd intended to incorporate the article on "bullshit" with the "mating game" where so far they'd only dealt with the love problem. As Tom notes in his collaborative journal, the conference also helped them with a form for the paper: "The conference brought forth some options that we had never thought of. We could do some of it in the form of a narrative In fact, we could use any form we wanted, except poetry." The conference ends Nick says, with "a brief brain shower and the floor was littered with ideas and examples." Sasha notes in her journal that Nick was resistant during the collaborative conference to the idea of using a narrative introduction.

But at the next in-class meeting, no one had produced a lead. The group could look around at other collaborative

efforts being drafted and worry that they were trailing behind. Nick's analysis is that his group has "not done enough groundwork (set enough rules) through which we may each write coherently with one another." They use class time to establish the "tone" for their paper, outline and break-up the sections of the paper, assigning Nick the lead even though he insists that his talents do not lie in this area: "I am apprehensive, though, about my negligible capacity for rendering a narrative which would be agreeable with two other authors to such a degree that they could pick up the threads and progress onward." This is a fairly "studied" response to being given free rein to begin the paper, a position which allows Nick to establish the tone.

Collaboration is where Nick's challenged to work in a new form; rather than strictly personal narrative, Nick must create a fictional character and situation that will provide the context for discussing their diagram. As Nick writes in his journal: "In effect, I set the tone myself, with the lead-in and definition (discussion) of bullshit. Nick recognizes that what he drafts will be subject to change: "Of course, my two pieces will not stand immutable." Here is the finished lead in to the paper, a narrative written in his posturing (but amusing) style:

Sampson departed for home still dizzy from the dull euphoria of his affections for Madame X, to whom he'd just paid an unexpected but well-received visit. She'd so enchanted him that it was not until his first thoughts of Delila did he feel the sharp cold of the damp autumn night.

What if she finds out? He asked himself and faltered in his pace, nearly tripping over the curb. The truth?" He puzzled for a moment. What was so terrible about a friendly visit. Sampson caught himself on this thought and stopped dead, the October winds whirling around his ears. Friendly? But not especially platonic, was it? No. The terrible offense against his long-time girlfriend Delila was simply his mood before he'd thought of her; his consequently obvious feelings for Madame X: the other woman (potentially, at least).

This lead mirrors the Mary Jo/Erica conflict of "Third Time Under," characters who in this context have become Delila and Madame X. But instead of being a personal narrative, this paper moves into "essaying" as this explication of the term "in love" suggests:

Sampson was Delila's undisputed boyfriend, as she was equally his girlfriend: they were in love. That is to say, each gained warmth and security in the presence of the other. And enjoyed it, immensely. Their love was reciprocal: in love with one another rather than loving for each other (which is actually a more altruistic affair) it was a good thing Sampson believed that. Thus it was particularly important to smooth over potentially harmful situations which might and had occurred--he didn't want to bruise his relationship with Delila: he needed her affection.

According to Nick's journal, his collaborative group worked nine hours straight on the night before the project was due, which included wasted time when Tom tripped over the computer plug. Titled "Emancipation Thursday," Nick begins his entry again with "Brother," and compares his state to that of a brook trout:

"...after last night's nine hours, I am left to expire in my own thoughts, like a brook trout cast onto the dry bank, to flutter and wriggle myself to death in the wake of my

completed journey upstream." The collaborative paper from Nick's group was twelve pages long, the most extensive project from the class, and in many ways, one of the most creative. The text alternates between narrative and essay, 'just as Nick's opening paper for the course did, but in this instance, the purpose and intent is to explain the different terms that define the orbit of love relationships shown in the diagram. One of the expository sections that Nick wrote is about bullshit, a subject that he sounds expert on:

Bullshit can, therefore, protect us. Which is a fair guess why we use it so often, even in intimate settings (Sampson was, after all, still quite in love with Delila). It provides us with room to maneuver; a certain freedom from particular consequences. Bullshit can also assure us of the actions or attitudes of others; acting as either inspirations or awe-evoking propaganda. Bullshit gives us a controlled way to win friends, and influence others.

And more on bullshit from Nick who writes not only about society but himself, his disclosure, his sense of autonomy:

Our society is rampant with bullshit. It is slung between every two people and among all conglomerations. It prevails because it is intrinsic to our external selves; the facade we display to the world and to everybody in it. We are, to each others eyes, a baffling patchwork of sincerity and bullshit. Our core self is remote, private. Even the most open among us cannot truthfully claim to present the same self externally as internally.

In this group of two men (very articulate men) and one woman, the main character of the paper is male. And somehow the bullshit section, which aptly describes the remote and private side of Nick, does not ring true for female

experiences. What does Sasha add to this group? According to Nick, her contribution was to "typing" the paper: "I am grateful to Sasha, by the way, for her volunteer effort behind the typewriter. Certainly, this is by far the most dreary responsibility involved in the whole process" (Journal). Sasha's journal suggests that the two men are aware of their dominance: "There were times when they[Tom/Nick] asked for input or said I wasn't speaking enough-but when I thought something should be changed or added, I did; I spoke when I had something to say. Why speak when you don't?" Sasha, like Nick, writes of the "personal interaction" of the group and reflects that it was not "superficial." In terms of the actual writing of the paper, it's impossible to untangle Sasha's bits and pieces since she wasn't "assigned" to particular sections as Nick and Tom were.

For Nick the most important part of collaboration becomes communication. Nick writes in his collaborative journal: "Verbal interaction precedes all else because it is the surest facility for fusing the ideas and insights of many writers." He ends his collaborative journal entry, addressed to "brother" discussing the importance of talk in a very abstract way:

Speak, my boy, or you will not see to think (not in the appropriate direction, anyway). A given insight is an elaborate logic-pattern, progressing from unique schemes of association within each author's mind. Words in exchange are the only feasible means of viewing another's thought, however obscurely. Without our eager larynxes, we'd have been lost--rendering a collage where a portrait should have been.

In his final evaluation essay in prose writing, Nick suggests that communal support with other skilled writers has inspired him to excel, to write well, to unleash his withered creative forces, to find the Nick behind the words and posturing:

With a soft 'whoosh,' I've come to this renaissance: a stirring of slumbering curiosity and creativity. I have come to it, guided by the influence of my classmates. I was no longer alone in the labyrinth of solitary thought a process (read: writing), but among others whose insights drew me through the labyrinth. Alone I was the undisputed superior, cast against the background of barely-literate masses: supreme and stagnated with the lack of inspiration. With the return of the challenging multitude, my creative inertia has become untangled.

Nick attributes this unraveling of creativity to the community of students in prose writing class, who, like him are dedicated and engaged writers, interested in discovery through writing. Nick's peers help him grow as a reader and writer who has been used to remaining within the lonely labyrinth of his own mind rather than sharing his insights and thinking (with the uncreative multitude). William Perry points to the intellectual community as a source of solace for the student venturing his lonely way through the relativistic world, poised on the edge of making an affirmative decision: Our mentors, if they are wise and humble can welcome us into a community paradoxically welded by this shared realization of aloneness. Among our peers we can be nourished with the strength and joy of intimacy, through the perilous sharing of vulnerability (Perry, 1981, p. 97).

As Novice in Political Science: Seminar in Political Thought

Nick's crazy, radical, socialist, Swedish high school history teacher stimulated his first interest in politics, in being "informed." Nick visited the Soviet Union for nine days with his high school class and developed a sustained interest in Soviet foreign policy. Nick admits that not everyone's concerned with politics but he feels those that aren't, most often are "woefully misinformed or uninformed or both." People who watch the news and think they understand what's going on, Nick suggests, "have no clue to what's going on because they don't understand the news within a political context." Nick's attracted to political science because it helps him understand the "big pattern" or "series of patterns" that govern our world and makes him privy to who's in control:

Politics is crap and political society ultimately is crap too, I think. But at the same time that is, de facto, what is going on and who is in control. What they do affect all of us whether we know it or not. Tax laws, for example, have affected us greatly. Every time a president takes office, that affects our lives. The way people conduct their lives very often depends upon who their leader is....

I'd learned the previous semester from Nick's personal journal that a political science class could be a fairly dreary place. He wrote this entry during his foreign policy class:

Dien Bien Phu Tuesday, 27 October, 1987, 2:19 P.M.

Am sitting rigidly in Foreign Policies of Europe in an afternoon delirium. Has begun not quite as baffling as yesterday's Public Opinion Class in which despondence

arrived riding the back of a mysterious computer assignment (which weighs heavily, naturally enough)

X. babbles ardently on about various common errors on our papers. Most of us are left unmoved in the aftermath of our tenacious effort. I, for one, was left a battered heap of fact filled schizophrenia-dazed and unfocused in the early morning dark. I am thus unattentive to his sullen tones (as if he were Marvin, the paranoid android).

Now he mumbles vague outlines of Norwegian foreign policy.

What about the T.V. in the middle of the room, X. 106 new states in the world (U.N.) since '45. You don't say. But what about the tube? Clips from the French Massacre at Dien Bien Phu. Hello?

He's not paying any attention.

So I'm relieved second semester when Nick tells me that he's taking an advanced seminar for seniors and graduate students where they will be using literature to explore political issues. Shakespeare and Plato lure me toward auditing this class over another foreign policy course. Nick had also talked with me previously about this professor, how "brilliant" he was, and how Adams had helped him become a closer reader of political texts: "...I had read all the books already and I read them again. And I was surprised and impressed with my professor because he got me to think about those things in ways that never really occurred to me before." With Adams's permission and his relative amazement at my project of following student-writers into their major disciplines, I began to attend the late-afternoon seminar.

I go early to the Horton Social Science Building where the political scientists have their offices, climb the three sets of stairs to locate the seminar room. There are barely enough chairs for the 18 students who will be seated around the large square seminar table in the small square room. I select a neutral spot behind one of the wicker-backed chairs, wait and listen.

One pair of students is debating whether it's better to read Plato all the way through once; then go back and read each section more carefully, or whether it's better just to go through slowly and think about each part, without worrying about the overall picture.

Another conversation is taking place about jobs. A dark-haired female student--Miss Mann--who is perusing the want ads, talks about getting a job in Japan. She says that the Wall Street Journal has an ad about training you to speak Japanese in a month. Mr. Sweet asks in a nonplused tone of voice: "Why would you want to live on an island with those creeps."

Miss Mann, taken aback, replies: "I take offense to what you have just said, Mr. Sweet."

Mr. Gerald, the graduate assistant, saves the day by interjecting: "Mr. Sweet have you ever known anyone from the Far East, I mean actually known them?"

Mr. Sweet backs down and apologizes and immediately afterward asks how to spell a word. When Mr. Reed suggests

that he look it up in the department's dictionary, Mr. Sweet declines. Then Mr. Reed, picking up on the conversation, asks Mr. Sweet what he wants to do after graduation. Sweet replies that he wants to be a senator from the Granite State. Eyes roll to the ceiling. Other students begin to trickle into class. One man I recognize from outdoor education class announces that he's heard that law schools and other professional schools are accepting video-taped applications instead of written ones. "Far out" is the consensus.

Professor Adams enters, places his tea at the head of the table and leaves. All I originally know of Professor Adams comes from the University catalog: that he graduated from our university in 1962, went on to earn his Master's degree in the midwest, and finally took his Ph.D. at a California university in 1969. What I come to learn about Adams is that he's trained in a very specific school of political philosophy, known as Straussian interpretation of classical works: Allan Bloom is one of Strauss' newly famous followers. The Straussian approach to old texts embodies a kind of "reverence for its author" and an attempt to "suspend modern thought", to "suspend one's own judgement" so that the reader can "understand the author as he understood himself." (Burnyeat, 1985, p. 30). Strauss' textual interpretations heavily influence those who studied with him or with one of his students: "A Straussian...is someone who reads secular books religiously..." (Dannhauser quoted in Burnyeat, 1985, p. 33).

When Professor Adams re-enters I note that he's meticulously dressed in a navy blue blazer, yellow and blue tie and red suspenders, fairly formal attire for UNH. I begin to realize that other students are also more "dressed up" than in art history or prose writing class. Some female students have on skirts and wear jewelry. None of the men have on jackets or ties but some wear button down shirts and slacks instead of the more casual attire. Nick and his friend, Mike, both appear in tattered jeans.

Had I not traveled with Nick into this new territory, I would not have really understood this side of Nick, one quite different from his engaging, collaborative, if sometimes dominant behavior in prose writing. Political science class helps me reframe Nick's speech style and his abstracted formal writing style as well.

"Dish of Blood" Dialectic

Adams starts class with: "Pretend that I am Moses and you are the red sea," he indicates with his hands as students scrape their chairs back from the table. Adams discourages note-taking in his class because he wants full participation in the discussion. He then returns the weekly papers, and in a formal manner, calls each student by his/her last name. Adams makes comments as he's passing back the papers: "You will get back from me, more than you give," he says. His grading policy is made up of a complex system of stars and

checks: "To get an A in this course, you will need 68 stars or \$68,000." A student jokingly inquires if he's accepting foreign currency this week. Adams likens his grading system to double jeopardy: "I might go beyond two stars for a weekly paper. If the light goes on, you can give the question a try. Because the world is not necessarily rational, you have to earn your stars."

Adams first talks about the misspellings on the weekly papers, saying that students are only allowed two per paper and then points are deducted. The major problem with the papers that week, he said is that students "soared": "I want you to taxi with sufficient speed before you take off in the air. Don't talk as though Aristotle alone could understand you."

He says that in this course "I will teach you how to read a book. I am of the opinion that if it takes a writer a year to complete a book, perhaps it should take us a year to read it. There are not many books that have lasted as long as The Republic. We are like grasshoppers looking at an elephant. I want you to make connections. And I'm not opposed to speculations." Then he hands out the questions for the following week, which are in descending order in terms of possible points to accumulate.

Professor Adams explains the duties of the discussion leaders each week: "You are responsible for my job," he says, "You may ask questions. You can make points. I reserve the

right to bring it back into the ball park and I define what the ball park is. Don't get too anxious about your presentations," he adds. Adams also explains that the role of the graduate students in the course is "to facilitate talk," and to "assure that the conversation doesn't flag." Mr. Sweet asks if the graduate students get course credit for this role. "Credit?" Adams feigns astonishment. "We're paying them."

When Nick suggests to me later that Adams likes his "guidelines," this is confirmed as the rules and regulations for behavior are spelled out, as power and hierarchies are carefully mapped out. All this banter occurs in a humorous, fatherly but authoritative manner. It is clear who is in charge in this course. But still, co-leaders are assigned to lead one of two weekly class discussions: the total credit for these presentations is listed on the syllabus as 20% of the final grade.

Nick and Mike lead off on 2/15 as co-leaders of the first student-led discussion, focused on education and the building of the polis in The Republic (375A to 398B). Nick, who didn't have money enough to buy the book borrows mine, which is one of at least four different translations of the text being used in this class, including Bloom's. Nick and Mike, seated next to one another, have consulted with the graduate student, Mr. Reed, for several hours in preparation for their discussion and have made a wad of notes. Mike begins the presentation by reminding students that in The Republic, Socrates is talking

about building a polis from scratch. Nick joins him, explicating Socrates' discussion on education, on how the guardians have to begin with a particular basis of philosophy.

Within five minutes, however, Adams interrupts them: "Did it strike you as strange that Socrates and Glaucon agree that we have to build a city? If you guys were building a city what would you do?" From my field notes, the conversation goes:

Student: Get together and rebel.

Adams: Rebellion is successful.

Student: We would go through a purge. We'd promise to fight for the cause.

Adams: Would you state the principles of rebellion?

Nick: It has to be a stable kind of government.

Adams: Let's assume we are successful.

Student: We'd have to get them to work.

Student: We'd have to write the rules.

Adams: The constitution, what does that establish? What does "we the people " mean?

Student: Equality.

Adams: What does a government establish?

Student: Offices of the executive, judicial and legislative bodies.

Adams: And do you anticipate what they would say about education. Can you find any discussion of education in the constitution?

Student: It's up to the states.

Adams: Yes, it's left to the states. What strikes me is that in The Republic, they don't set up a government.

Nick: They become the rulers by virtue of being the founders.

Adams: Yes. What you say about the government is absolutely right. But it doesn't tell us about their society, not that they create a government but that they worry about education.

Nick: They are concerned with longevity, that the revolution they pull off will succeed so education is important.

Adams: Perpetuity. You are right in a way Mr. Williams but did you see something beyond that?

Not only does Adams interrupt them before they have really "taxied" off the ground, he has an obvious agenda for how each point should be covered and is the implied leader for the entire discussion. Nick, undaunted by being interrupted, poses questions to Adams in the ensuing discussion: "Could we have a modern example please?" To which Adams replies: "Alexander North, the Red Guard, The Soviet Youth Organization." And Nick feels confident enough to disagree with Adams: "Impossible. You can't assume that the guardians won't grow up and figure it all out. There's a difference between what you believe and what you think." (An echo of the mind and heart conflict.) As Nick shares with me later, "I love to start sentences in that class with, "Not necessarily." Gone is the "narrative conversation" of prose writing class: enter the pugnacious, interruptive style of politics, of the debate.

At one moment in the discussion Professor Adams encourages Nick to engage in a verbal dual: "I glean that Socratic censorship doesn't sit well with you, Mr. Williams," but Nick having abdicated his role as leader, is busy drawing

sketches of Adams and only swings in and out of the discussion with other students. Adams' final point in this discussion is that censorship of literature is important in the polis because poets write about fear of death and if the polis is to be defended, the guardians must not fear death. Their identity must be wedded to the state.

Most all the students (with some notable exceptions--a couple of women and men remain silent) bravely enter the discussion arena at various points during the two hours, courageously toss in their ideas and then back away and listen. Few exchanges are sustained beyond several turns and few exchanges attempt to build on what has gone before; yet students do not entirely dismiss or argue another student's point. Everyone's in the debate for her/himself to display what they know to the professor. Adams, polished as a performer, leads and the students attempt to follow him. When they get off course, as Mr. Sweet frequently does, their answers are sometimes not recognized as in this exchange: "Rest your arm for a minute, Mr. Sweet." By the end of the discussion there is some sense that the class has "covered" a particular territory in the text, but there's no summary notes or wrap-up. What students take away from this discussion depends entirely on how deeply they processed and understood the verbal exchanges. Nick says that "you have to really think, and plug in" during the class or you'll be lost.

When Nick and Mike linger after class on their presentation day, Adams admits that he talked too much during their discussion, that he had hired Reed and Gerald to make him silent. When Adams unexpectedly asks for my opinion I suggest that students submit an outline of points they intend to cover so that they'll have an opportunity to present them before Adams chimes in. He acknowledges that it's difficult for him to resist dominating the discussions.

After class, I expect Nick to feel frustrated--thwarted, foiled--over his presentation but instead he's relieved that he was spared as this personal journal entry indicates:

Dish of Blood Tuesday, 16 February, 1988 4:something P.M.

...Yesterday's encounter with seminar in politics left me somehow unscathed. He just wasn't into the assault. He battered me a bit and clutched my throat. And while he could have brought me to my knees, his grip slackened and I struck and ducked away.

Not as though Mike and I didn't talk our meager insights into the ground; but Adams and his grad-student hunchmen, weary editor of our clumsy analysis, swarmed the discussion and usurped it. We sat, stumped and silent. Appreciating the cool air out of the spotlight.

Nick's words do better than mine at showing the combative, "bloody" style of this class discussion which humiliates the uninitiated into silence.

Nick as Guardian: Educating Elisabeth

Nick describes political science class, not as a farce or an act but more like a dramatic presentation; Nick says it

could be "a Shakespeare drama, with one dominating role. The various other roles are important or not, depending upon screen time." When I ask him how he feels about playing this role, Nick says that for him, "my roles are real" and they are sustaining because "they are even real when I'm not in them. They're still there."

When Nick and I talk about this course, about his presentation, I probe him to describe the discourse style of the classroom. He calls it a "dialectic between him and us," with "us" being all the members of the class: "It's sort of a chance event. Seems to happen with one person on one day when suddenly Adams says something that blossoms the room with light...and then we start forging along." Nick suggests that the discourse doesn't have any particular "direction"; that there's "no order" and "no system" for the discussion because it's a seminar class. Students just try to "say something that matters." And if that doesn't work, "try again later." Gone is the rough-draft thinking of prose writing class: No dress rehearsals allowed, performances only. Overall the ongoing discussion style is to "catch enough pieces of something, of people's arguments so that you realized that you've realized something." Of his own presentation, Nick suggests that he was "just poking around" and Adams sensed it: "So that when I said something that really wasn't leading me anywhere, except into confusion, he would slap one on the wrist and say, 'You can

think of it that way, but think of it this way.' "It's a very yangy class," he shared.

When I inquire as to how one boards this risky dialectical merry-go-round, Nick says that "it's not a support thing. You open your mouth and your neck is on the chopping block...But you don't take it personally if no one will believe or take as credible what you say." And later in our conversation Nick reflects further on the discourse style in what he admits as a very sexist way: "You have to have some balls to stand up in that class and say something. You have to have some guts to say something." Some students, Nick suggests, aren't prepared for this in their academic careers:

Some people are not ready to go into this little room, sit down with this professor, who is obviously a very smart man, has a great background in the material we're discussing, they're afraid to sit down and shoot the shit with him. But that's what you have to do.

When I suggest that this classroom style may be privileging toward men, Nick points out that there are men who don't speak up in class either, or who when they do talk "their voices are kind of hoarse or speak very fast or their hands shake." Nick remembers his own "terror" when he first spoke in one of Adams' classes. Now he's accepted that your responsibility as a student in a seminar is to "make a showing" because the class is "very competitive."

Nick concedes that the class may not be all that welcoming to women students and shares that one evening when I wasn't there, a woman burst into tears in the hallway after

class. She was walking with Mike and Nick, crying and berating Mr. Gerald, the graduate student: "I can't believe him, I can't believe he's such a jerk." When Nick and Mike tried to calm her down, they were amazed that she was "seriously crying her eyes out." Apparently Mr. Gerald had cut down one of her arguments in the discussion and the student held off until after class to show her feelings about that exchange.

I pointed out as well that Adams frequently uses sports metaphors and violent movie characters to explain things, that references to football and figures like Rambo are very exclusionary. Nick is dismayed by this information: "Really. Does that really exclude you? I think that most people follow that, the women included." Later he reflects on the similarities between sports and politics:

... last time I was talking about Socrates ...about how our guardians can't be afraid of death or lament or cry, I was thinking that is so much like the football mentality...I think, for some people anyway, that it's a very apropos sort of analogy. It works so well because nothing is like sports, sports makes it easier to display because, nothing natural is like sports. Sports is totally bizzare behavior.

While Nick showed some sympathy toward the female student in his seminar, he was merciless toward Mr. Sweet. When I first joined the class, I sympathized with Mr. Sweet because, as an outsider to this class and to the discipline of political science, I identified with him. Even when he raised his hand, using the appropriate oral petitions: "Excuse me sir, but could you please show me where you see that?" his

sir, but could you please show me where you see that?" his inquires often went unrecognized.

Or, the responses to him might take on a more sarcastic note as in this exchange:

Professor A: Repression, neurosis are examples of man's being at war with himself. Do you ever repress anything Mr. S?

Mr. S: Once.

Professor A: I practice every week from 4-6. Freud would say that I'm at war with myself.

Nick tried to explain to me that Mr. Sweet didn't go by the "rules" for the class, that he "wastes class time on irrelevant remarks." Nick explained that the class opinion is that "we've all seen and heard the same thing out of Mr. Sweet and none of us has any sympathy for him. He tied his own noose, he held it above his own head and hung himself with it." Nick accused me of being mistaken about Mr. Sweet and then finally broke down and disclosed that Mr. Sweet had been part of the class presentation with himself and Mike. I utter amazement at this information: "But Nick, I didn't the foggiest idea" and madly check my field notes to find that Mr. Sweet, who was sitting on the opposite side of the table, had fumbled over one point during the entire session and was shut down by Adams. Nick reveals that Mr. Sweet didn't come to any of the preparatory meetings: "And you had sympathy for him. That guy was supposed to do the presentation with Mike and me and he didn't even attempt it. He never even talked with us--nothing."

I lost my sympathy further for Mr. Sweet on the day he made an outrageous sexist remark. Nick shares later that he was "horrified and amazed, even disappointed that not one of the women in the room reacted" (nor the men). The question before the class was whether or not a political society can treat the sexes as equal. From my field notes, here is the exchange:

Professor A.: Do you think women or men are more important to the polis?

Mr. S.: If women are more important, then tell me why at the aquarium male fish sell for three dollars more than females?

Professor A.: We are talking about humans, not fish, Mr. Sweet. Are women as tough as men? Yes. You can't explain that men fight wars by saying they are stronger.

Student: Couldn't you just cull from the women, a few to fight?

Professor A.: If you could afford to risk some of your women. It only takes one bull but a lot of cows to perpetuate cows. If you can afford these women in terms of your population. This is a practical matter, though, not a matter of principle.

Mike: I'd like to take the conversation away from war. Are we creating a patriarchal society where women must stay at home?

Mr S.: I'd just like to point out that it's fun to domesticate women though.

Instead of helping a student like Mr. Sweet along in learning the rules and rituals of the course, as happened with Anthony in prose writing, Mr. Sweet becomes the class scapegoat.

Reading The Texts: "To Be or Not To Be"

Nick told me that he felt Professor Adams' interpretations of the texts were "pretty solid and immutable." When thinking about the readings, Nick said that he sticks "close to Adams' ideas" because "he has obviously the most informed ideas" and his thoughts will "guide you where you are going." Adams announced early on in class: "I am trying to get you to see what I see" and Nick intends to do just that.

When I ask Nick how he feels about this model of reading to discover the teacher's interpretation, Nick says he thinks it's "an intelligent thing to do" because it allows Adams to do what he does best: "I take Adams in a very classical sense. The classical idea is of the teacher teaching the art he is best at. Adams knows what he knows, and he knows even more than he's telling."

Nick described his own reading process for this course as one that centered heavily on the questions handed out each week: "You keep the questions in mind, and you carefully go through the text piece by piece and try to look for details, try to look for things that are omitted, for pauses, for shifts in the conversation, for things that strike you as peculiar." Nick suggests that Adams is "trying to teach us how to go about finding that stuff by a procedure so that we can bring it to another work, or class, whatever."

I inquired about what Nick's able to get from the text on his own. In his reading, Nick finds that he's able to find many "mirror images" in The Republic to other material he has read--Marxism, Freud and commentaries on classics. He sometimes copies quotations from the reading into his private journal. I inquired what would happen if he responded to those other ideas that he's uncovering in his readings: "Then it wouldn't be an analysis of The Republic. It would just be my reaction to it. We are doing an analysis."

All of this close reading must relate carefully to the political outline that Adams has provided them with on the syllabus: the readings are grouped under two headings; "Socratic Politics" and "Shakespearean Politics. Under the Shakespearean politics the readings are arranged from the Pagan prince--Coriolanus--to the tyrannical prince--Macbeth--to Hamlet, the model Christian prince and so forth. The literary aspects of the text, Nick says, "don't mean doggie doo, don't mean squat" unless they relate in some way to the political slant. And the political explication used is ahistorical, is decontextualized. When I comment favorably on one of Nick's class remarks, he disregards it as unimportant:

The problem with that kind of analysis and exchange in class is that you're taking your modern interpretation and applying it to a classical work. You can't bring your own context into this. You're not a classical thinker, you're not from Athens, Rome or Greece. You don't think like they do. So when I come up with something about the arbitrary nature of society, that it depends upon the culture, well, that's a nice fine point but it doesn't relate to the text. Socrates wasn't saying that.

When I ask Nick for an example of how the class discussion does help him better understand the text, he used the example of the "the noble lie" passage, talking at length about his misreading:

I missed that case entirely because I was thinking of it as a brand or kind of lie. I thought it was characterized by noble because it had a certain intent. And surely that's the case but the noble lie is a specific thing. And he (Socrates) states it and I missed it entirely. The lie is, that on one hand, mother is the whole earth and hence everyone is brothers; and on the other hand, the state is the mother. It seems so obvious now. It's a complete conflict in two sentences and I read right over it.

I wonder if Nick will ever face any tension between his own readings of the text and that of Adams. Nick's assigned to lead the discussion of Hamlet, under the syllabus heading of the Christian prince. Having never considered Hamlet in any political paradigm, I am curious how the class will go and ask to tape the discussion. The questions that frame the discussion are: 1) Would Hamlet have made a good king? Use the definition of king extracted from The Republic. 2) Analyze the "To Be or Not To Be Speech." Discuss why Hamlet neglects the ghost as a sign.

At the beginning of the discussion, Nick keeps up a good match with Adams who earlier on has interrupted the presentation and turned it into a dialogue with Nick over the issue of Hamlet as the Christian prince. From the transcript:

Adams: You've asserted a tension between reason and passion. Is that the tension, do you think, the tension between a passionate, unreasonable, erotic son and a calculating side, or a more theoretical side? The view of Hamlet, the normal view of Hamlet, is that Hamlet is rent with indecision because

of the war within his soul. Is the war in Hamlet's soul the war of reason and passion?

Nick: The passion, eros, isn't a game. It seems to be for honor, his sense of loyalty. That seems to be what he's motivated about. In terms of Christianity, I don't think that's necessarily the case. Vengeance is not a purely Christian virtue.

Adams: What's the Christian response? If we were good, god-fearing Christians and someone spoke to us of vengeance, how would we respond. What's the example of say, Jesus? Christian vengeance seems to be a cheap thing/

Nick/ That was one of the things that actually indicated to us that Hamlet was not the ultimate Christian. Because on the one hand he seemed to believe the Christian story his father told, his actual behavior was not guided by Christianity at all.

But later in the discussion when Nick is being led by Adams to see Hamlet within a political frame, he ultimately resists:

Adams: ...Think in political terms. The Norwegians and the Danes are not friends. Hamlet's dad seems to have taken the wind out of the Norwegian sails, who then go beat up on the Poles instead of the Danes by killing Fortinbras' father. Yet Fortinbras has what you folks mention Hamlet doesn't: he's decisive. But his goals would not be similar to Danish goals. Think of Hamlet's choice of Fortinbras. What does this tell you about Hamlet?

Nick: His nationality, he's much more attuned with honor, someone who'd respect/

Adams: Could you afford a president as cosmopolitan as Hamlet? Would you guys want a president as cosmopolitan as Hamlet? What's the problem with a political leader who's cosmopolitan?

Nick: Loyalty.

Adams: What's the key, the key to political life?

Students: Stability/

Adams: Stability in part but the key distinction to everyone in politics must make/

Nick: /Us and them.

Adams: We Americans, those Chinese. We Soviets, those Afghans. And Hamlet is seemingly indifferent to those distinctions.

Nick:/ That make the noble lie.

Adams: You guys, I didn't want to direct this though. I'm getting at the cosmopolitan. I would say that Hamlet is a citizen literally speaking of the cosmos. That by the way might be the key to unraveling him. What does he think of Denmark?

Students: It's a prison.

Adams: Twice he says it's a prison. By the way, that's a nice thing to have a prince say, isn't it? (He reads from the text ending with "there is nothing good nor bad, but thinking makes it so...")

Not only does he give the kingdom over to the avowed enemy of Denmark, but his view of Denmark--think of the scenes from Shakespeare's history plays , "...this England, this sepulchered isle.."

Nick: You can contrast that with Corilanus pretty well with Rome being such a prominent theme all through. Hamlet is by itself--Corilanus tries to be a solitary character but Rome is always there--but with Hamlet, you don't really get a feeling that the country is really important. The whole play is about Hamlet, from his point of view, his internal turmoil, what he's going through and he's very focused on him alone. And that indicates that he's removed from that political environment.

After class Nick smokes his cigarette and admits that Adams had just pushed him too far away from his personal interpretation of the play: "It's about suicide, that's what that play means to me."

Nick as Writer: Bilateral Exchange

First semester Nick often talked about the discourse strategies for political science with both Donna and me. In one of his conferences, Nick explained to Donna that in writing for poly sci classes, his concern is to "display information" because the professor's not interested in personal "opinion" and that the writing is mainly "analytical, not interpretive." By the end of first semester, Nick concedes that he has "lost his tolerance for the formality of political science class."

Much of the writing he did for other political science courses involved a researched term paper but in the Political Thought seminar, regular writing was built into the course: 12 weekly papers (35%) and a final term project (35%). Would Nick perform as well in writing as he did orally in this course, I wondered? Each week Adams talks a great deal about evaluation of writing when he hands back the papers, even though the intention of the star/check system he shares with me later, is to take the focus off of grades. Yet it doesn't come across this way to me: "No three star papers this week," he comments, "Nothing knocked my socks off" which sets up a competitive situation, grades, stars, whatever. A little before mid-term (3/7) Adams, hands out little slips of papers with numbers on them and then explains that the highest

possible score is 20: Adams says there are 54 possible stars left for the course and that "it's conceivable that someone could get 74 stars, but no one will." Out of the 12 papers listed on the syllabus, only six are completed by the class.

Nick comments on his 14 accumulated points in his personal journal:

"...I long for civilian life, with all its aninimity. 17 bloody years of school. Come on; enough is too much. Let me fade into mediocrity, already. Critical Analysis may slaughter me, in the end. It has smote me furiously already.

And. I've got 14 out of 20 stars in Seminar. Yip- f--k Yah. My enthusiasm had slithered thither."

When Adams makes comments about the actual writing of the papers, he often makes comparisons to expectations for their future professions: "The next thing you'll be writing will be law briefs. How many of you are going to law school?" He suggests that students spend more time on their introductions: "Well begun, is half done" said Aristotle, "the trick is in the beginning." "Support your interpretations," he asserts, "Don't just re-state facts" and "get your facts straight." Don't just "assert" your point: "argue it, defend it." Each week he complains about the grammatical abuse in their papers, spelling and syntax errors. He often refers to the overly "abstract" quality of their writing. Once he even jokingly asks: "Do you have brain parasites?"

Nick described the writing for political science as a bi-lateral process, "It's just you and Adams, that's it." "Writing is more telling" says Nick comparing the papers with

the class discussions. Adams wants "a very clean procedure" in the papers and "no fiddling around before you get to your point." Nick finds the questions valuable, both for focusing his reading and his written responses. When he receives his first paper back, I meet with Nick who says that his first paper "is not a satisfactory piece of work at all. I was reaching. It was a total reach." I read the comment on his paper which warn him to "Be more careful in your writing" and ask Nick how he interprets that: "I never read his comments," Nick says, supporting most of the research that says students do not read teacher evaluations of their work.

Nick submits five two-paged papers for evaluation to Adams in response to the questions that are handed out for each section of the text. All Nick's papers share similar features: they all have terse introductions, sometimes as short as one sentence; they are all written in formal and abstract language; they have no personal, and very few concrete examples to back up the statements; most of the papers reach an insight or make a point only in the last two lines. The middle of the paper could be characterized as a kind of verbal thrashing around, what Nick calls "a reach." Nick's papers remind me of what Anna said about her mid-term exam essays: "They are all bad in their own ways."

Of the five, I have picked my personal favorite as well as one that received the most points (three checks and one star) from Adams. In this essay, Nick is more concrete than

any of his others and shows some creativity as well as a strain of his sarcasm. Titled, "You've Got Your Democracy in My Oligarchy; You've Got Your Drones in My Democracy: Introducing Tyranny," it is written in response to this question: "Discuss the oligarchic vrs. the democratic regimes. What is their essential character?" The paper begins in the mannered, distanced style that Donna (and I) dislike:

Tyrannical society is the most imperfect of Socrates' four societies because it the most thorough embodiment of unrestrained eros. It is the most erotically inclined, and thus the one in which reason is most rarely employed.

The nature of tyranny follows from the nature of the tyrant as he has, in effect, been given a mandate by the masses (supreme when assembled) that his nature is best to lead. His rise to power was in response to the inevitable conflicts that democracy creates. Fundamental among these errors of democracy are the thirst for no master, the decay of traditional and natural hierarchies, and the unswerving insistence that he be allowed complete freedom.

A few paragraphs on, Nick offers a concrete example, based on his own political interests:

Without naming names, Socrates has profiled one Joseph Stalin, former tyrant of the USSR. His support came from the party members he placed in positions of authority, rather than the masses at the outset. It was still internal conflict, however, an ideological squaring-off in the face of the succession after Lenin.

Stalin, though, was quite the popular leader, nonetheless much as Socrates describes. His leadership shone most brightly in the time of war. And like him (the Socratic tyrant), Stalin was consumed by his fear and ruthlessness in restraining his power. Stalin originally formed a triumvirate to curtail Leon Trotsky, the apparent successor to Lenin. Just as a democracy may not act in time, neither did Trotsky. He was defeated, and were each of the other triumvirate members in turn.

Nick ends the paper two paragraphs later, saying:

Therefore, he must eradicate the intellectuals, and with them goes intellect and reason. Jealousy and suspicion, coupled with the craving for power are these tyrants' purest expressions of eros in control of his nature and, thus, of the polis. Reason has been finally subjected.

Adams circles four spelling errors in Nick's paper, some which are the result of his typewriter's missing "L," others of careless typing and negligent proofreading (fo/of). Adams writes on Nick's paper, substituting "between" for "among" and suggests "forecast" over Nick's word, "profiled." His final comments ask him to "Connect war and tyranny. What relationship does Socrates see?" He also suggests that Nick's "writing lapses hurt a bit" and that he "leaps too far, too fast."

Nick shares with me that he knows the papers aren't good but he has "no clue" how to make his papers better.

The Final Paper: Combining the Personal and the Political

When Professor Adams suggests that I might like to look at the work of one of the better writer's in the course, Mr. Hemple allows me to read and copy his three star paper. What I find is: more tension and argument set up at the beginning of Mr. Hemple's paper, more textual citation which is appropriately underlined and explicated: and a more developed ending than in Nick's papers. Where Mr. Hemple's paper's conclude, Nick's build to an crescendo and fade out. Overall, there would be much to be learned in this course by exchanging papers, by modeling more concretely what kinds of examples are

appropriately used instead of the continual admonishment for students not to be so "abstract."

When Professor Adams and I finally sit down to talk, it is almost the end of the term and I am mainly thanking him for allowing me to attend his course. When he asks me for suggestions about the course, I have many but offer only two. One, I felt that Adams was doing too much correcting and editing of student writing. Rather than waste his time hunting and circling errors, I suggested that he just make a note to a student that he or she had overstepped the allotted number and force them to find their writing errors and revise. It was, after all, an upper level seminar. Such a policy would more likely eliminate the carelessness that pervaded the papers I had seen (even in Mr. Hemple's paper) and would probably fit in well with Professor Adams' "star" system.

Secondly, I shared my feeling that the two page form itself might be re-considered and encouraged him to experiment with another form to see if students could tap into other resources in their writing. Adams was amenable to altering the final term paper since he suspected (and he was correct) that few students had actually started it. Toward the end of the course (mid-April) Adams asked for student input on two issues: 1) he polled students to see if they wanted him to continue interrupt them during their final presentations or to let them first present what they had to say: Students voted to be interrupted; 2) He anonymously polled students about how

many hours they had already spent on their final projects. Mr. Hemple was the only student who had invested any time on it beyond a perusal of possible sources in the library. Students voted in favor of Adams' final writing assignment which they, in part, helped design.

He asked these political science majors, who were mainly graduating seniors to "think of this paper as the capstone of your careers." He called for legibly written (not typed), grammatically correct, coherent and thoughtful essays, drafted within a two hour time limit on "The Value of Political Science as a Career." He gave many suggestions about the form that the paper might take: It might be in response to the favorite old question. You meet a derelict standing around after graduation and he asks, "What do you have in your hand." You answer, "A diploma." "What's that?" he asks you. You will write an essay responding to it means to go to college. Or, you may decide to write a letter to a brother, undergraduate, or offspring about what you learned as a political science major. Dartmouth, he shared, has a whole course devoted to just the question: What is political science? Adams says that he wants students to "make sense of your education, and account for yourself because taking four years out of your life to study is a rare opportunity." Or in keeping with the content of the course, you may decide to write a dialogue or play. Certainly many options. I thought I heard a sigh of relief from the around the seminar room and then Mr. Hemple

inquired as to whether he could still write a traditional term paper.

Students respond well to Professor Adams' invitation to write from personal experiences. Mike, Nick's house mate, drafts a play in the form of the dialogue between himself and Nick which begins, "Well, Nick, what is political science?" Interestingly enough Mike writes stage directions such as (with a smirk) and he also writes in at one point (interrupting). The play ends with "Reader: take care." Overall the frame of the paper is better than its content but what the reader knows from the paper is that Mike has understood the literary conventions of the material he's been reading. Another woman student who aspires to be a teacher herself reviews all her mentors at the university, including Adams as one of them and compliments him on his "patience" in dealing with Mr. Sweet. She notes that she has "had painfully few women professors at UNH," that all her best professors were males.

Nick's paper was hastily drafted during a battle with ear infections and the crunch of his other final work. He felt that if Adams wanted a quality end product, he should have provided more time for it like Donna had. Students had three weeks to turn in their papers. Not surprisingly Nick adopts the journal form for his final paper in this course. In the first paragraph, he speaks of the freedom of being released from a rigid format:

Expiration Date Wednesday, 18 May, 1988, 1:40 P.M.

Brother,

This that I now write to you is the last gesture my expiring political science career may manage. This paper, that is the capstone of my educated pillar, I have labored over these last 17 years or so, has a merciful format. It has been (at last) freed from the suit and tie analysis regime and left to our anarchistic pleasure. And I now brother, have got the home court advantage.

Mixing an informal tone with reverberations from Shakespeare now and then, Nick speaks of this paper as a "salvation from the manicured clutches of political seminar"--a fairly bold statement given his audience--and then reflects on how this came to be: "Luck you say? Perchance to dream? Aye, there's the rub." The major section of this very short, three paged-paper reveals to Adams that Nick's had a bad semester and is in doubt over his future:

The reflection requires a mirror: To know who and what we've been is to gaze back in time through the lens of who I am now. A tricky question. Who's there.

'Tis me: The student, pausing on my way down the short-lived lines of the dead. As I am still the student, so am I also worse at it than ever. Things that smell of academia have, this year, made me wince and grit my teeth in the doing of them (I've been doing them poorly too)

My recent problem is that I've been unable to leap back into ponderous study. Blindly and nimbly opaque to the light of the obvious. That being that the pillar I've built is all but done and yet does naught for me but engulf me with its cold shadow: I am already beyond my poor contribution to this academic monolith.

School is of very little consequence to me now. My major is done, my gen-eds done; I am now merely playing out my time left, awaiting inglorious civilianhood.

That being as it is (the gospel), I've had to ignore it utterly. I've tried to convince myself that the ferocious

assignments racing past me down the lines of the dead were of the sincerest emergency. To bolster myself against the screeching truth proved just barely too formidable. I tried in earnest to scale the towering pile of post-midnight hours and mine the riches of intellect, but only reached it halfway.

And now, brother, at the end of this year (But woefully not the entirety of my academic career), I'm convinced of two things. School and school work are contrived and, overall inconsequential.

Adams reads Nick's paper as a case of "senioritis" which he says usually occurs two semesters before graduation. This may be the case but there's more trouble rumbling beneath this paper than Nick reveals. He hints at it in this passage of the essay: "This is where I find my brain now, in this cynical garb. The minor (school, finance, health etc.) has distracted me from the whole picture."

Nick's having a very bad semester: while he's doing just enough work to make a showing in Adams' course (he gets a grade of B-) and is sailing smoothly in foreign policy class (his only A), he's completely drowning in two courses in the English department. Because, he failed to meet his deadlines in his journalism class, he was dropped from the course. When we talk about this, Nick rationalizes that "more than anything, journalism contributes to the amount of bullshit that's floating around the world, contributes to deluding people and biasing opinions." He finally drops out with a failing grade, refusing to join "that wad of crap" because he realizes that in the course he had been "writing nothing for no reason."

Nick is also bored in his other English course and speaks scathingly of the paper requirements for critical analysis class which he seldom attends. "Busy work" he calls the writing, "suck it up and spit it back out." But his spitting back only earns him a C- and a D on his papers. Finally he solves his problem by following verbatim a paper suggestion on the syllabus and writes a paper on "bird imagery in Macbeth" in which he actually counts all the birds in the play and explicates the meaning of each: "In all there are seventeen bird allusions throughout Macbeth. Most of these are metaphorical, drawing parallels between bird characters and their behavior and characters' and plot." This paper earns him a B. Clearly Nick has changed his mind about declaring an English minor: "I hate even coming into this building" he tells me when we meet.

And he's been sick several times, the last flu came during exam week when everything is due for everybody. And he's tried to work thirty hours a week to pay for his apartment, his accumulated bills. But there's no place for any of this personal turmoil in his academic course work, no place to write about the fading student; except in this final paper for Political Thought. Nick outlines his "abandoned" art career for Adams and then his flight from psychology as a major where "theory after plausible theory, all of which contradicted each other" pushed him away. He writes:

Finally I came to political science.

And stayed.

Political science is the guts of all social interaction, and will be as long as man understands "power" in this world. As best as I can make it out to be (Descartes has forever thrown doubt into my apparent head), political power acts as gravity-not always the strongest of forces, but everywhere present. At last I found a body of interrelated information that I could use to devine the truth (if only that of the evening news).

Nick writes of "education" as limiting, rather than expanding his growth; "Education serves to set the individual to a pattern the higher the level of education, the more specific the pattern. Education will channel one's aptitudes into neatly trimmed categories and enforce particular definitions upon them." And he is sure that money is the evil force for it is money which Nick hears fellow students talk about: "As I gaze around at my fellow seniors, all cheerily desperate to leave, I hear talk of money. Do you have a job yet, is the urgent and trembling question. How will you get to the top? How close to it are you starting out?"

Nick ends his essay for Political Thought by saying that he wants not even a "taste" of this monied life because, idealist that he is: "What I want lies within me, not without."

Adams is pleased by the results which he says "Beat the hell out of reading term papers." He felt that by and large what he got from the class were "intellectual biographies" and "reflections on their own educations." He said he learned some things from reading these papers, "things I wish I didn't

know necessarily." These things came in papers which discussed student's personal tragedies such as giving up an artistic career (not Nick's), experiencing the death of a parent, living in an apartment house where someone was recently murdered. Overall Adams also learned that these students were "very young" and that "they don't have enough conversations with other students outside their classes." Adams liked the assignment enough to re-design it for future classes, requiring a rough draft. He said one student, a senior, wrote that this was the first paper in her entire college career for which she had ever written more than one draft.

The woman who has helped transcribe Nick's tapes becomes so involved with listening to his voice, and his problems that she asks if she can add her voice to his and mine and all the others. In a long essay which I give to Nick, Sue shares with him how much she's identified with his stream of issues about money and professionals that she, too, once felt the same way about:

In transcribing the interviews on Nick, more than once I have heard echoes...some thunderous repetitions of words I vividly remember saying (I won't become one of Them in their suits and ties and empty, futile lives--I won't I won't), wincing at the proclamations that I too thought were absolute truths to an honorable life (possession of money equals loss of integrity, self respect only comes from going it alone), that I am sure will be brought quietly to rubble by the passage of years in Nick's life as they were in mine.

Nick and I compare the two courses that I attended with him: political science and prose writing, two small snips of

his seventeen year academic career, but courses which present very different vignettes of Nick. Of these two styles of learning--combative, competitive and argumentative against cooperative, collaborative and consensual, Nick prefers the latter: "I'm a happier person, I'm a nicer person, and I'm someone I can respect more when I don't have to fight tooth and nail for everything."

I look at Nick, his hair grown long for the summer, I see the jeans jacket plastered with IBM buttons and a silver cross for effect. Then I close my eyes for a second and listen to his voice and Professor Adams takes its place: which discourse community will shape Nick's life after college: that of his personal journal and his sketch book or the discourse of gamesmanship?

CHAPTER 5

MASTERY AND MS. TERY: REFLECTIONS ON GENDER AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

"It is also an art to be a student. I wonder sometimes if we think enough about that. Learning is such a very painful business. It requires humility from people at an age where the natural habitat is arrogance." May Sarton, The Small Room

What do these portraits of the confident, angry male and the quiet, caring woman reveal? There is a sense in which I want to apologize for the stereotypical frame that borders my rendering of Anna and Nick, so completely do they fit our gendered images of the young male and female college student. The adversarial debate style does not belong to men, nor do women own consensus and conciliation. But there is enough in the literature on the social-psychological-epistemological development of late adolescence to point to differences in life issues between women and men college students (Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Erikson, 1968, 1980; Levinson, 1978; Perry, 1970, 1981; Belenky et al., 1986) and enough differences here between Anna and Nick to make us pause. To what extent, we ask, are Anna and Nick's issues cognitive, developmental, academic, gender-related, or uniquely their own?

While the contrast between these two students may be explained away by the theories which I will call upon, Anna

and Nick's narratives must finally stand alone as singular stories of the intellectual journeys of two college students, poised at the end of their undergraduate careers. I hope that their narratives will serve to resonate with thunderings and rumblings of other students that we as teachers have met along the way to render them valuable as case studies and to suggest something about education and about academic literacy. But more than that I want their narratives to serve to show how one male and one female student have forged their "rubbery/ramshackle and open/ tentative identities for themselves, partially within the university setting. Finally I want to raise some questions about the singular model of higher education that we've endorsed for both the men and women who temporarily make camp here in our university fortress.

Anna and Nick share many strains of the same tangle of young adult issues and feelings: about their educations and career choices; about the need for creativity and intimacy in their lives. And to call upon the work of adult developmental theory to provide us with some further understanding does not mean that we need to read this theory as hierarchial, as stages that we march through sequentially "pausing," as Nick suggests "down the short-lived lines of the dead." For we may also be reminded of what Anna quotes in her paper, that "the vertical view of reality is a lie...we live in a circle, not along a line." It might be more useful, in fact, to follow

what Tom Newkirk advised to a group of elementary school teachers; "Let's turn developmental models on their sides," he suggested (New Hampshire Writing Program). To tip these models over means to read them, not like an ascending ladder but more like a map for a journey that may be taken using many different routes--along major highways or smaller arteries, whatever path, because of circumstances or preference, we take. Human development, William Perry reminds us, is "recursive": "Perhaps the best model for growth is neither a straight line nor the circle, but a helix...to show that when we face the 'same ' old issues we do so from a different and broader perspective" (Perry, 1981, p. 97).

Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, working out of Freud's theories of the ego, focuses on the problems of "identity formation" for late adolescence. Erikson considers the issue of intimacy to be the primary concern of this time period which coincides with the traditional college years of ages 18-22. Where in Erikson's schemata, "identity" issues precede those of intimacy, Jean Baker Miller, revising this position for women's development which has traditionally been defined by male models, suggests that women's growth depends upon "connection" and "relationships," through what Miller calls "ties to others" (Miller, 1976). While the male is busy with issues of autonomy, and individuation of his separate identity, for women the tasks of identity and intimacy, suggest Gilligan, are "fused" (Gilligan, 1982, p.12)

Where Lawrence Kohlberg, using a male population, considers the key life issue for young men as those of "rights and justice" Carol Gilligan, working on a revision of moral development for women says that women craft their place in "men's life cycle" through relationships, intimacy, caring: issues primarily of connection (Gilligan, 1982, p. 12). In other words, women researchers have suggested that female students face very different developmental and moral issues than do males.

How does this translate to Anna and Nick, or does it? Nick's writing, his personal journal entries in particular, are filled with concern about his identity and his autonomy: "Will I ever make it on my own?" is one of his themes with another close contender that of self-identity, about which Nick vacillates between accepting his rubbery self and berating himself: "I am who I am. Mean spirit and all. Forever, the vindictive derelict, flipping off justice and love. Uncaring and scarily hopeless" (Journal entry). Nick's need to achieve autonomy, at no sacrifice to his principles, and to work out his identity through various roles and postures is strong.

Equally strong are his issues of intimacy and anger. He claims that his anger keeps him "safe" but it may also push others away from him. Many times in his personal journal Nick writes about an aborted relationship with a woman--themes from his prose writing papers--and makes comments such as this one:

"Alone at last. Nina was driving me stark raving mad. Her incessant chattering and giggling had me stone cold annoyed...She is gone. Now and, in a minute, forever." Yet. In his one clear moral dilemma when his girlfriend tried to commit suicide, Nick does not display anger but understanding and empathy. Nick's response in his very real situation is partially explained by Kohlberg's work on morality (1984) when Nick says that suicide is your "right" but the actual enactment of his response is better explicated by Gilligan's work where she says that women are guided by "care and responsibility" rather than the "formal logic of fairness" that is found in men's judicial approach (Gilligan, 1982, p. 73).

Anna's issues, like Anna herself are more subtle ones. In her admiration of the "scientist"--analytical and consumed by a discipline like her ex-boyfriend Simon, she disregards her own very special abilities. Women's "fear of success" has been identified by Matina Horner (1972) and others as a primary force in the development of young women which leads to the stance of silence documented in Women's Ways of Knowing and to the "different voices" found in Gilligan's research and that of others. Anna finally comes to an understanding of acceptance of herself rather than continually measuring herself against others. She writes from San Francisco; "One thing I've come to realize is that there are things about my personality that I have to accept, not change.

Things that I thought I wanted to change but now realize that I enjoy for one reason or another. I haven't figured out what this means yet" (Personal Communication 10/88).

We do not sense in Anna that fear of intimacy that we find in Nick's writing. When Anna comments on her relationships, she talks about being "tuned in" to her boyfriend's different "channels" and she comments on Nick's "banking concept of love," saying that she gives more than one half of herself to a relationship. In an early draft of her Jazz paper, in a section that was edited out, Anna includes an image of herself and her boyfriend that reflects a fear of separation rather than of connection: "I envisioned a day of end for everyone happening and me hanging onto my boyfriend's white shirt with red and black pinstripes ascending into eternity. I held on as tightly as I could but we were separated and I slipped into nothingness without him." But when the actual separation from Simon came, Anna worked it through, painful though it was, writing to me; "The fear of not throwing away a stable relationship that would lead to a stable future kept me with Simon longer than I should have stayed" (Personal communication).

In an extension of her work on psychological theory for women, Gillian and her colleague Pollak (1982) have analyzed images of violence in what are called thematic apperception stories. The researchers found significant differences in

their undergraduate sample (M 88, F 50) with respect to affiliations with others and discuss this finding:

We speculate that women, seeing relationships as safe, seek them out to protect against the danger of isolation. On the other hand, the men tend to regard affiliation situations as dangerous, and their stories of intimacy mirror this fear and are filled with images of disaster and violence (Gilligan, Pollak, 1982, p. 165).

Men, they suggest, feel more at home with "rule-bound competitive achievement" which allows them to "establish boundaries" between people where women see relationships as "protective" from isolation (p. 166).

Gilligan's research is not without critics, even among feminists (see Signs, Winter, 1986), some calling for greater quantification and methodological controls in her work (Z. Luria). These critics caution the stereotypes that her findings suggest: "Do we gain by the assertion that women think or reason in one voice and men in another?" Still others criticize her findings as overly "romantic" and filled with "feminist self-righteousness" in its implication that women are not only different but "better" than men (Kerber). And Anna herself had no interest in feminist thinking until she could "connect" it to her field of art history. When I asked about whether gender had in any way affected her education, she replied: "I don't know. I've never been a man."

Interestingly enough, in the course of my working with both students, they talk about one another and their own views of each another are stereotypes. Nick sees Anna as

"vulnerable" and compares her with his ex-girl friend: "There's that vulnerability about her that's appealing-not naive, but vulnerable and open." And Anna associates Nick with males who are "nice to women when they want to be, and then to their friends, they're all macho." Nick, she says is "an example of that double role." Are Anna and Nick really doubles? The dark and the light; the vulnerable and the guarded; the open and closed; stasis and change; individualism and plurality--each searching for that part of themselves that is missing?

It is not that simple. For as Jean Baker Miller points out, "Jung's 'woman hidden inside the man' is not the same in reverse" (Miller, 1976, p. 79). Where we do sense Nick's female need to "connect" and achieve intimacy, we do not feel Anna's need to dominate or control. Dualistic formulations can be patriarchal in origin and can ignore the imbalance in the power structure that has placed Anna and Nick within an academic institution, a system that favors one learning style--the dominant literacy of the academy: of "mastery." As Jane Roland Martin reminds us: "The subject matter of the liberal curriculum is drawn from disciplines of knowledge--history, literature, science--that give pride of place to male experience and achievements and to the societal processes associated with men" (Martin, 1985, p. 197).

Nick's assured of his talents, his mastery over words, over information, sometimes over people. Anna's literacy

implies what we might call "ms.tery," an approach to learning that affirms the skills of connection, of construction, of collaboration, of caring as explicated in Women's Ways of Knowing and Nel Noddings' Caring. While Nick temporarily welcomes these feminine interactive pedagogies into his prose writing class, he sees this as yet one more style or voice to add to his repertoire of academic roles, of academic discourses. Anna's more at home with personal style pedagogies and transfers this mode to writing for her major. But. The university system that these students live within is mainly set up for segmented knowledge, what Nick calls "abbreviated" learning, not to accommodate connected knowing.

Anna and Nick are both "culturally literate students"; they are thinkers, somewhat loners: budding intellectuals. They are both politically aware students. Anna's political sense pushes her towards developing personal connections to environmental issues that center on "caring" for the earth (Eco-Feminism paper) and other issues of social justice. Nick's a political science major whose interest lies primarily in knowing who's "in control" in the world-wide sense (his specialty is foreign policy) and a student who has been unable to commit himself to any particular political movements or issues (Boom paper). In fact, Nick is not even registered to vote. Unlike Anna--"the scholarship girl"-- schooling has become an agony for Nick, who seeks what Pirsig has called "the university of the mind": "... The real University... has

no specific location. It owns no property, pays no salaries and receives no material dues. The real University is a state of mind."

Both students are engrossed in constructing for themselves what Polyani has called, personal knowledge "...into every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known..." (quoted in Emig, 1977, p. 151). Anna's more visibly engaged with academic understanding; Nick with individual insights. It is not clear that the university has nurtured either of these students: it has merely held them while they fed themselves on their own. College, Anna says, is somewhat of an extension of high school, albeit more intellectually stimulating. For Nick, college life separates him from the rest of humanity but at the same time Nick, who spent some time working at a local cable factory, understands education as a privilege: "I know a lot of people who don't have the option of college, and they don't like people who are in college. They don't like the Ivory Tower...And the reason they resent it so much, I suspect is because that they know that college is a way for a group of people to further isolate themselves from the original people, the blue collar person."

Both students are tentative and nervous about making academic commitments: Anna discusses in her Cliffs paper that she developed a deliberate optimism to replace her previous cynicism toward education, a transformation that's allowed her

to become a good college student. But recent changes for Anna have been less forced, such as her decision to work in an art gallery in San Francisco and leave UNH for a semester (this is also girded by a security about money). Anna's moving toward a position of what the author's of Women's Way of Knowing would call "constructed knowing" where she's trying to weave together all the voices and parts of her learning to build an integrated whole. This way of knowing is summarized in their book as a position where "All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known" (Belenkey et al., 1986, p. 137). For such a learner, knowledge is highly contextual and temporary. Anna's learning style is consonant with her personality but in its tentative presentation it's more difficult to read; such a quiet learner could easily get lost in the shuffle of the university. Subtle, exploratory and muted, Anna thrives on an interactive pedagogy that provides support systems for her to talk, to respond, to have dress rehearsals for her rough draft thinking before the polished flair of the final performance. When that finished paper comes, it will be achieved over time, on a topic connected to her personally, as her reflective writing has shown us (Jazz, Eco-Feminism). The main thing Anna reports to miss about not being at UNH is her dance troupe who gave her a sense of community and support.

Nick's situated in a precarious position using William Perry's charted journey of intellectual and ethical

development for men: he's in a stage of "temporizing" which Perry views as a "deflection from growth." Or, Erik Erikson might explain Nick's circumstance as that of being caught in an extended moratoria--that period time between childhood and adulthood which alternates between extremes of "subjective experiences" and "ideological choices" before making any kind of "realistic commitment" (Erikson, 1980, p. 175). Hamlet, with whom Nick identified and defended, is considered by Erikson to be an exaggerated example of both "identity confusion" and extreme "delay" (Erikson, 1968, pp. 236-240). Part of Nick's deliberation, his withholding of career commitment, may be that he's simply not ready to make this choice; and like Hamlet's wavering this may reflect thoughtfulness about consequences, rather than febrile indecision.

Whatever label we might put on this particular conflicted time in his life, Nick's not thriving in the academic setting where parts of his intellect are withering and even becoming twisted with anger. That anger we heard earlier from Anna which characterized her high school rebellion now echoes in Nick's words as he butts against the constraints of college classrooms: they are both rebels, but with cause? This anger is aimed at an educational system that does not make use of the passions of students like Anna and Nick, which does not encourage immersion and intergration of

learning, which allows such students to become literate in spite of, not because of the academy.

But it's Anna, not Nick, who succeeds within the male dominated university setting--succeeds in spite of her fear of success, both in the traditional sense of earning good grades, and in the personal satisfaction she derives from her learning, making her literacy work for her. My hunch about gender and pedagogy at the outset of this study--that men fare better in college settings--was not born out by watching these two students at work. Nick's learning experience remains unsatisfactory, partially because he's been rewarded for approaching each course and assignment as separate, as subject matter to be controlled, dominated, mastered. The engagement and surrender to knowledge that is attributed to women's way of knowing helps Anna construct and connect her education in a meaningful and caring way. Nick, the separate knower, remains adversarial, distanced, impersonal and possibly alienated from his learning. A feminist pedagogy is needed in higher education, not just for women so that their learning style can be reaffirmed but for male students as well whose educations will be shortchanged if they are channeled through without being asked to revise, re-think, reflect, connect and personally construct what they are learning in one course to another, and then to themselves. Again to draw from Martin's work, which suggests that bringing women into the mainstream of the academic conversation favors both men and women: "The

changed vision resulting from acquaintance with the conversation reclaimed here makes our own journey of transforming the education of our sons and daughters possible" (Martin, 1985, p. 199).

Anna and Nick's academic literacies are complex to unravel because they are not defined solely by their public selves. It's their private literacies that keep them attuned to what they value personally. The more public sides reveal students who are capable of working out of a wide range of styles/ voices (particularly Nick), but who are most often asked to display only one style: the traditional discourse of their academic disciplines. Anna tries hard, however, to integrate her private self into an academic writing voice as shown in her final paper where she formulates a new way of writing about art history. Nick invests his flexible writing style in the academic game of performing, posing behind many disguises: the Renaissance man? He's so adept at writing "cow" which William Perry distinguishes from academic "bull" that he never pushes himself (nor does his professor) to make the commitment to develop a personalized style for writing within political science, even though he's often rewarded for display of knowledge (Nick shared a Western Civ exam that he received an 87 on without attending more than half the classes or ever doing the reading).

These students have developed as writers drawing on very different writing processes. Anna likes to experiment and to

revise: Nick gets pleasure from the tightly woven first draft; no revisions please. Anna's ability to revise allows her to create a style that fits her topic: Jazz and her paper on Eco-Feminism are unique papers where the form emerges from the content. Nick's a talented first draft writer who never fiddles or re-thinks his papers: each one represents another task to complete, a problem to be solved. His writing voice is varied but it is not forged from the subject matter; Nick has not found writing as a way of learning academic material. In political science he struggles to control the material but there's only a tiny trace from his interesting voices drawn into the formal writing.

In their more informal academic writing (the response journal in Donna's course) Nick unmask a different voice than is found his academic style: (please, oh please don't put a question mark and arrow pointing to "fluffy"--just let it pass this time). Anna's response journal is more straight-forward: her most postured writing is the critique on art history where she adopts the style of the discipline and mocks it at the same time: "See this influence and that...See the changes in her treatment of color...compare the palates...She did this after her brother committed suicide.." Instead of the many masks that characterize even Nick's informal writing, Anna is most often direct and to the point. Both Anna and Nick point to the response journal as one of the most effective parts of the prose writing course.

Both students enjoyed the communal feeling behind the collaboration project, a kind of writing and learning neither had experienced previously. In their evaluations of the project Anna and Nick say in different ways that the most important part of collaboration is "communication." When Professor Adams suggests that students have too few academic conversations with their peers, he is right: prose writing afforded multiple kinds of academic conversations, with collaboration providing for a kind of learning about other people as well as about subject matter.

Anna and Nick are astute readers we know from their journal responses and from listening to their conversations in reading groups. Outside of prose writing Anna received little guidance about how to read art history: Nick, I feel, received too much guidance about how to read in his political science seminar. Without some sort of response forum (journals, short response papers), conference method or extensive discussion, it's hard for a teacher to determine just how well his/her students are reading until it may be too late.

One of the major differences between Anna and Nick is in their approach to conversation. Anna is a contributor, what I have characterized as "a member of the troupe" where Nick is dominant as "the lead." Nick's unaware of the subtle differences in his own oral style: Anna thinks she talks more than she does. Both students assume very different discourse

modes when they are part of their majors. Anna becomes a listener where Nick takes on the more combative style of political debate. The presentation style of subject matter in their majors affects them as learners.

Both Anna and Nick greatly admire Professors Adams and Hall and place them "among the best" they have had at the university. And both professors present as powerful figures. Anna says that she wants to be like her art history professor whose "mind is like a safe filled with all the myths of the world" (this was her Northern Renaissance art professor). Mary Hall, Anna notes, was "quite a contrast from Donna." For Nick, we sense that Adams presents a kind of father figure, an authority on classical texts. Both students have been shaped by the disciplines they belong to but neither has found a community of others within that field of study. While there are departmental role models available for each student--and women art historians for Anna--neither has found a mentor. There's no sense for either Anna or Nick that they are fledglings of a particular club that they will earn full membership within after graduation. Anna's internship with an art gallery will provide her with some practical experience in the art world: Nick will leave college with no such training. The field or disciplines of political science and art history have powerfully affected these students' literacy and way of seeing the world, without much recognition or support from those disciplines.

Opposed to this impersonality, Anna and Nick both thrived within the community of prose writing class and recognized it as singularly different from most other course work they had taken, "more personalized," they say. The social constructivist view of knowledge invites students to bring their personal knowledge into the classroom to forage together for intellectual nourishment of the group. Maxine Green (1988) discusses the freedom to be found in this approach in her stunning new book, The Dialect of Freedom:

To recognize the role of perspective and vantage point, to recognize at the same time that there are always multiple perspectives and multiple vantage points, is to recognize that no accounting, disciplinary or otherwise, can ever be finished or complete. There is always more. There is always possibility. And this is where the space opens for the pursuit of freedom.

She continues in this same quote to suggest that the "arts" and here she specifies "music, painting, and dance" in addition to literary texts, as having the ability "to enable persons to hear and to see what they would not ordinarily hear and see, to offer visions of consonance and dissonance that are unfamiliar and indeed abnormal, to disclose the incomplete profiles of the world" (Greene, 1988, pp. 128-29). This quote reminds me that Anna and Nick both have access to private literacies that are not totally recognized or utilized by the university.

Anna and Nick have developed personal literacies for survival, "ways of being" in the world which are crucial to retaining some personalization within the impersonal

university setting. They are both highly visual students, a learning style, often encouraged in elementary school, that is clearly severed in higher education. If Nick cannot be an artist, one wishes at least for him to be able make some use of that talent in his course work. Anna's taken her artistic strength and developed it into the visual analysis required by art history but is not quite sure to what extent she's allowed to lean on it. Neither student claims talent enough to be called an "artist"--whatever that means--but so much of their creativity remain latent and untouched in the university. What Ruth Hubbard suggests about the visual learning of elementary school children holds true for older students as well: "Pictures as well as words are important to human beings in their communication; we need to expand our narrow definition of literacy to include visual dimensions, answering the call of researchers for the recognition of 'multi-literacies' and ways these literacies can work to complement each other" (Hubbard, 1988, pp. 183-84).

Anna's dancing and Nick's personal journal represent their private literacies, seldom pulled into their academic lives. For Anna, dance offers a different language that allows her to express herself without the words that dominate academic literacy. "Dance," says choreographer, Merce Cunningham "is like water": " I compare ideas on dance, and dance itself to water...Everyone knows what water is or what

dance is, but this very fluidity makes them intangible" (Cunningham, 1985, p. 27).

Nick uses language in his personal journal to act out a whole range of roles and parts in search for his ramshackle identity, achieving writing that feels more authentic than the papers done for his major because it draws on so many sides of his selves. Nick's journal might be compared any number of male writers' journals from Boswell to Thoreau, because as part of the male journal tradition, his personal journal implies a public audience (remember that he offered it to me, I didn't ask him to read his personal journal) or series of audiences. But his diary serves another purpose, more often associated with women's private journals and diaries and it the second use that fascinates. Like women's early American frontier diaries (and many other women's diaries), Nick uses his journal simply to survive in the alien culture of the university. Gayle Davis (1987), in her analysis of the journals of frontierswomen, notes that they were most often not written to be read but served as a kind of "coping mechanism" or "mediator" between the familiar world these women had left behind and the new ones they were settling. Davis suggests that such diaries which include sketches, recipes and knitting directions acquired a kind of "material significance" which in turn make the authors feel "significant" (Davis, 1987, pp. 5-13). Nick's struggle in his journal, which also includes sketches and calenders, is to be

someone who matters within what he sees as the meaningless content of his academic life. Private literacies empower and liberate these students but remain untapped as a source of understanding during most of their academic lives. How restricted is our view of academic literacy!

Vera John Steiner in her interesting analysis of the creative languages of noted artists, writers, scientists, musicians and dancers, Notebooks of the Mind (1985), speaks to the diversity of inner thought that goes beyond just verbal thinking: "The dichotomy between verbal and visual thinking, which is so prevalent in the popular literature at present, tends to oversimplify this diversity" (Steiner, 1985, p. 212). Steiner includes movement, sound, vision and language all as means and patterns for learning which contribute to the inner thinking of the individual, to the development of the "dominant inner language of the mind" (Steiner, 1985, p. 213).

The curriculum that dominates higher education, forged by and for males, needs re-thinking. As we have seen, many researchers have begun inquiries into the distinctive modes of thinking that women in the university have to offer. Maxine Greene and other progressive revisionist educators urge that we revise the curriculum to add not only the voices of women, but those of different races and color:

Rather than posing dilemmas to students or presenting models of expertise, the caring teacher tries to look through students' eyes, to struggle with them as subjects in search of their own projects, their own ways of making sense of the world. Reflectiveness, even logical thinking remain important; but the point of cognitive development

is not to gain an increasingly complete grasp of abstract principles. It is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world (120).

Having looked closely at these two students, their developmental and literacy issues, I would like to turn to a discussion of the three different settings where Anna and Nick spent time.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The Discourse of Discourse Communities

"Looking through one eye never did provide much depth of field." Elliot Eisner

This has been a study of particular academic discourse settings within a university, of "what went on" in three liberal arts classrooms, and finally a study of students' literacies, inside and outside a course in their majors. Standing back to reflect on what I have learned, I recall Donna's prose writing class and the two other courses that I attended--political science and art history-- and I hear the voices of Anna and Nick in these different social contexts, and alone talking with me as well. With all this around me, I try to make sense of the data that I have collected.

There are a series of polyphonic themes that resonate from this study that in many ways resound together but for the purpose of discussion must be played separately: the theme of academic discourse communities and what they are; the theme of the academic conversation and how it's currently being voiced; the theme of written literacy and how students understand its classroom uses. These are the major chords I will use to orchestrate a discussion of this study, keeping

in mind that these conclusions very much belong to the complex, real world described this ethnography.

I set out to look at "academic literacy" through students' eyes, to get at their perspective on the reading and writing demands made of them within different discourse communities in a university. Like Lucille McCarthy (1986) in her study of college student Dave, I found no "monolithic" academic skills or competency level that guided these students in their course work, no one set of rhetorical rules, comprehension guides, oratorical strategies or list of what every "literate" American knows.

What I saw instead are the wide range of literacies that each student chooses from in different academic situations (contexts), for different assignments (tasks). The Nick who writes the collaborative paper in prose writing draws from an entirely different set of literacies than the Nick who writes about The Republic: The Anna who composes a satire on the style of art history lectures does not employ the same strategies in her paper on eco-feminism. That personal motivation for reading, writing, and talking interacts with task definition is no surprise; the investment that students give to the public forum of the classroom depends greatly on how much they value, or have been socialized to value, the literacy task at hand. And while my original focus never deliberately included students' lives outside of college classrooms, aspects of their private literacies leaked into

my study to inform me of how students approach academic reading and writing tasks through personal literacy constructs, through the unique lens of the self. The literacy of college students might best be gauged in a measurement unit of "one" because academic literacy cannot be untied from a student's holistic literacy: the package comes complete.

While I identified no common subset of academic literacies for my informants in these humanities classrooms, I did find that each setting itself communicated a particular discourse style, a way of talking, acting and thinking that was unique. Discourse, says linguist James Gee, can be thought of as a kind of "identity kit" which comes "complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act and talk so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize" (Gee, 1987, p. 1). The discourse style of each setting, then, is as singular as each student's literacy within that setting.

Having considered the individual literacies of both Anna and Nick in earlier chapters, I now want to revisit the three very particular settings where I was a participant-observer and share some speculations about the general differences I found in the ways that reading, writing, and talk are used in these liberal arts classrooms. Most recently, discussions of higher education have focused on the deficiencies in background knowledge of and of the closed minds of college students (Hirsch, Bloom). I would like to explore the gaps in the literacy/ learning contexts which might be attributed, not

to students but to our system of higher education itself, taking into account that as educators we might be contributors to some of these problems that we so easily locate.

On Community and Academic Discourse

I will begin by leaning on the seemingly neutral theoretical construct of the university as a series of "discourse communities," a concept which composition scholars have currently adopted to describe college classrooms. I will try to see if such a concept helps us build a discussion of the settings in this study or whether this idea tumbles over and deconstructs as we try to use it, particularly when evoking the students' perspective on these overlapping circles of discourses.

The perspectives of a number of different disciplines inform our understanding of a "discourse community." The idea of a "speech community" is borrowed from sociolinguistics where the emphasis is placed on the linguistic norms and routines people share to achieve competency in speech interactions. Similarly Stanley Fish, the literary scholar, has provided the idea of the "interpretive community" to explain the kinds of meanings constructed by groups of readers working with texts who may come to share world views through the process of reading. When conflicting interpretations in the community arise, these may be due to our multiple membership in many different interpretive communities (My

informant, Andy, who belonged to a Bible study group that believed the Bible should not be interpreted but taken literally, often met a clash of opinions with his prose writing classmates over his very literal interpretation of texts).

Anthropologist Paul Diesing defines an academic community, not as a language or interpretive group but, as the behaviors and standards that are shared by its members about their patterns of work:

A community is located by finding people who interact regularly with one another and in their work. They read and use each other's ideas, discuss each other's work and sometimes collaborate. They have common friends, acquaintances, intellectual ancestors, and opponents, and thus locate themselves as roughly the same point in sociometric space. Their interaction is facilitated by shared beliefs and values--goals, myths, terminology, self-concepts--which make their work intelligible and valuable. Although they do not all use exactly the same procedures in their work, there is a great deal of similarity, and the differences are accepted as variant realizations of the same values (Diesing, 1972, pp. 17-18).

These descriptions represent different perspectives on how a discourse community operates through shared language norms (sociolinguistics) epistemic functions (literary criticism) and methodological habits (anthropology). A most common thread in most discussions of discourse communities is that notion of language as the primary glue in such settings. Most scholarship agrees with composition theorist Patricia Bizzell's statement that "The academic community is a community united almost entirely by its language" (1986, 296).

Unlike glue however, language is not a translucent substance but is colored with culture, ethnicity, gender, and in this study, with literacy values of the discipline.

In this study I found that language use within a particular discipline provided the major clue to the "habits of mind" encouraged within that classroom, and more generally, within the field of study itself. There was a significant contrast in oral discourse conventions within the three settings I examined--the combative interruptive style rewarded in political science, for example; the distanced, controlled analysis encouraged by art history; the consensual and collaborative thought practiced in prose writing class. I think these styles are representative of some differences in presentation in university course work, at least among the humanities.

In art history, we have highlighted for us the "brilliant lecturer" style where students remain mute for most of the class time, listening to the professor while scribbling notes in the dark. The word "lecture," originally from Latin meaning "to read," interestingly now carries the double meaning of "to scold or rebuke" as well as "an informative talk given before an audience or class and usually prepared beforehand." To be informed and to be scolded can feel to students like the same thing: it can render them voiceless by turning them into what Belenky (1986) and her colleagues have called "receivers of knowledge."

This lecture/recitation format, suggests Walter Ong (1978), is derived from the man-made university system without contributions from the discursive, epistemic, and intellectual traditions of women. Lecturing involves the student in a passive style of learning and encourages what Gilligan (1982) and her colleague Nona Lyons (1983) have called "separate knowing," an epistemology which rests upon impersonal authority and rule systems for establishing truth--Perry's "dualistic" stage of thinking. What seems potentially abusive about the lecture format is its denial of how the knowledge within the discipline has come to be made. Listening to the mega-scholars mind at work is like being part of an appreciative but non-participatory audience.

Certainly the lecture format has some value and important uses in higher education. But when Mary Hall turned her classroom over to her students, engaging them as novice art-critics, they joined her as exploratory, involved learners, constructing understandings of works of art together, even taking risks in their oral responses. After this class discussion, one student in the class shared with me, "Getting through all this material, is her agenda, not ours." Rather, the student's agenda is to learn how to "do" this mental activity called critiquing art. If we accept learning as "process" and not mere transmission, a class discussion, besides involving students as learners, prepares them for the intellectual activity of writing they will later be asked to

do. To be entirely realistic about the art history course considered here; the class size was too large to have ever been entirely transformed into a discussion-style seminar but easily one third of class time could have been devoted to having students' talk about the works of art, using Dr. Hall as their dry-witted, and highly articulate guide. I agree with Dr. Hall's assessment that such a style of teaching is highly exhausting but it is also potentially empowering for the learner.

We encounter another variant male presentation style in Nick's political science course. Billed as a seminar, such a description implies that student discussion should be a dynamic part of the course. And, in fact, students did talk. But as we have seen, these discussions were really thinly disguised attempts to "guess what's in the professor's head," or what Nick has characterized as a "dialectic between him and us." What is missing I think from Nick's reference to the Marxian model is the synthesis stage following the thesis and antithesis, a stage necessary to complete the kind of dialectical thinking which has exerted so much influence on various fields of contemporary thought.¹

In this situation what I saw was a rigidly hierarchial and unbalanced power system wherein the professor and his

¹ See Basseches, Chapter 1, Dialectical Thinking and Adult Development for a discussion of how Kuhn and Marx have contributed to modern dialectical thought in philosophy and economics.

graduate students control (and interrupt) the discussion to the extent that learners cannot generate new understandings: everyone is too worried about following the professor's agenda and keeping their own heads "off the chopping block" to engage in a discussion. Students in this seminar never seize the power inherent in building upon each other's contributions but rather they engage in separate, "bilateral exchanges" with the professor. So while they learned to be verbally aggressive, they did not learn to be intellectually aggressive. This seminar model may, in fact, be more deceptive than the lecture style because it masquerades as an egalitarian forum where each voice counts. But as we have seen, some voices went unrecognized, many were interrupted, others pushed to tears. Nick's voice finally becomes one of rebellion when he refuses to interpret Hamlet as a political text.

On Language and Thinking

If we see our job as writing teachers as that of preparing students for entry into a variety of academic discourse communities (Bartholomae, 1985, Bizzell, 1986) and if talk reinforces discipline-specific epistemologies for student-scholars, then why encourage such a very different oral communication style in prose writing? In the composition class considered here, it was not just the structure of the small discussion groups, individual conferences, and collaborative projects that acknowledge a range of learning

styles but the purpose of the talk itself that makes the classroom so different. The interactive, narrative, reflective discussions represents entirely different goals than the teacher-directed, competitive, and separate learning fostered in the other college classrooms considered. To recall Anna's phrase; "the loss of individualism and the gain of the individual," collaborative learning reflects a shift away from grade-oriented academic pursuits. The advantage this different speech and learning mode offers is the opportunity for a kind of heightened contrast which may allow students to understand and critique their major fields, borrowing the lens of another. Nick came to appreciate that the laid-back "everybodysaywhatyouthink" of prose writing class promoted a different side of himself than did political science where he was equally competent but uneasy with the agonism it encouraged. Anna's satire, written in prose writing on the distant and controlled lecture style of art history, allowed her to critique the thinking style of her discipline from the context of another.

The more collaborative oral style of prose writing encouraged listening to others, a way of knowing often attributed to and valued by women. This discourse style needs to play to a larger audience in our college classrooms, beginning with professors listening to the wide range of voices of our students, rather than only to themselves talking. Male students need to listen and hear what their

female classmates have to say (Anna said once that Nick loved the sound of his own voice) rather than interrupt and dominate discussions. Women students need to hear their own voices raising questions and issues, rather than merely remaining silent. More time needs to be spent in active, not passive listening in our university classrooms which have so long been dominated by what Dale Spender calls "man-made language."

Considerable feminist scholarship suggests that it is through language and discourse conventions that patriarchal institutions such as the university have sustained their powers. It has clearly seemed easier for educators to understand and accept the language differences found among other cultures, such as native American Indians (S. Philips, 1972); Hawaiians (K. Au, 1980); urban (J. Baugh, 1983) and rural blacks (S.B. Heath, 1983), than to acknowledge the differences between how men and women use speech in our own culture, and within that microcosm of society we call academic life.

The growing number of scholarly articles and books devoted to gender differences in language use (see the one hundred and fifty-paged annotated bibliography in Language, Gender, and Society) point to one critical issue: that we need to provide opportunities for students, male and female, in our classrooms to have experiences shaping ideas through talk, rather than being shaped by being "talked at." As a researcher, I discovered the importance of gender-related

discourse issues through the eyes of my informants, by watching the subtle power of language to control behaviors like Nick's dominating and Anna's muted speech patterns.

Educators need to become what Jane Martin Roland has called "gender-sensitive" to the practices that infuse our classrooms. In Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman, Martin (1985) reviews the way educational philosophers (such as Plato, Wollstonecraft) have prescribed women's schooling and suggests that:

In a society in which traits are genderized and socialization according to sex is commonplace, an educational philosophy that tries to ignore gender in the name of equality is self-defeating. Implicitly reinforcing the very stereotypes and unequal practices it claims to abhor, it makes invisible the very problems it should be addressing. So long as sex and gender are fundamental aspects our personal experience, so long as they are deeply rooted features of our society, educational theory--and educational practice, too--must be gender sensitive. (p. 195)

The continued exploration of the ways classroom discourse encourages, or in the case of gender-issues, perhaps discourages learning offers one of the most exciting research areas available; one that has been better mined at the early childhood and elementary level (Barnes, 1976; Wells, 1986; Cazden, 1988; Bruner, 1983) but needs further research in higher education.

On the Idea of Community

If there are kinds of "discourse" in classrooms which help students learn, there are also types of "communities"

which provide support for learning. The word community, from Latin meaning common, is defined as a social group held together either by rules (ecclesiastic groups), by shared history, culture or government (towns) or by a distinctive difference (the business community/a community of scholars). Neither Anna nor Nick saw themselves as potential members of either the community of art historians or political scientists, nor did they feel much "in common" with the other students in their majors as members of a "supportive" community, although both students had friends who shared the same majors.

Yet both Anna and Nick felt they were members of the temporary community created in the prose writing class. The idea of the classroom as a community served as the center of the course, both in the sense that Dewey first proposed, and its recent interpretation in the research of Donald Graves (1983) who suggests that at the elementary level, students need time, response, choice, and a sense of community to develop their writing. The prose writing classroom provided a context, an interpretive community, the collaborative support system, the dynamic peer group, the collective of members against which and with whom individuals read, wrote and thought together. As John Dewey explained over fifty years ago, the individual is not lost or absorbed by the community but rather uses it as the place to refine his or her own thinking: "Individuals still do the thinking, desiring, and

purposing, but what they think of it is the consequence of their behavior on that of others and that of others upon themselves" (Dewey, 1927, p. 24).

Particularly within the collaborative writing project, students considered how their ideas, writing styles, and even work habits might affect the others in the group. And it was against the context of the group, that many students better understood their own individual strengths and weaknesses. The wide range of research on collaboration, from specific teaching techniques such as peer response groups and tutoring dyads to the more philosophical writing of Bruffee and Trimbur, implies that we all join hands as collaborators, intentionally or not: "We work together," says, Bruffee paraphrasing from Robert Frost, "whether we work together or apart" (Bruffee, 1982, p. 102).

Donna's collaborative project was designed as a problem-posing and problem-solving situation where communication among the group members affects the overall success of the results. Not all students reported enthusiasm over this work method: "I know that our English teacher gave us this project for a reason. I know that it wasn't just to write a paper but that there was a lesson involved. She wanted us to see what it was like to work with others and organize our thoughts and time. She got the lesson across!" writes Rene of her tangled group experience. Andy writes about the collaborative process as being like a "business ordeal" and Keith of the "dilution" of

thought that collaborative writing brings in its consensual style. But most students felt like Anna and Nick, that the overall gain from the collaborative process outweighed most of the disadvantages. When students began to relinquish some of their individualism, they gained in self-knowledge. Nick, for example, could spot Tom's arrogance about his ideas and the diagram because Nick identified with this aspect of himself. Anna, too, struggled with not forcing her theories on her group, wishing the project to reflect a true collaborative voice. Such writing contexts are rare in academic settings although they are often encouraged in real-world, on-the-job writing situations, particularly in scientific and technical positions. Karen Burke LeFevre (1987) suggests that the espoused belief in higher education of collaborative group efforts does not correspond to the actual practice in most of our academic disciplines, which perhaps explains why collaboration has not been turned into common classroom practice:

Widely espoused ideals of collegiality and interdisciplinary research are in fact constantly undermined by individualistic assumptions built into the structure of academia in general and the English department in particular. The typical English department faculty member is supposed to be a one-person show who must be able to teach-write-serve-research alone, compete for limited resources, and manage all the while to appear cooperative (p. 124).

But Donna did see her role as one of encouraging cooperation in her classroom. She felt her role in the prose writing community was to encourage all students to contribute,

to assume responsibility for learning and to improve as readers, writers, and thinkers. Again, to evoke Dewey: "Community life does not organize itself in an enduring way purely spontaneously. It requires thought and planning ahead. The educator is responsible for knowledge of individuals and for knowledge of subject matter... (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). While the term "academic discourse community" has come to be loosely applied to any group of learners within a particular discipline, it should be clear from this study that not all settings create communities for the students who reside there temporarily, or even as majors. Professors in a field, of course, are linked to the collegial community of a discipline, albeit sometimes entirely through journal articles and professional conferences. And learning can certainly take place in classes where no sense of community has been established.

But I see a paradox in positing college classrooms as a spiral or nest of discourse communities when we consider the students' point of view. From the students' point of view, the pattern of literacy within a discipline--the reading, writing, talk and thinking patterns of a field--remain almost invisible, even among the skilled and sophisticated like Anna and Nick. At the same time, this invisible discourse plays upon the students' minds, and affects their "habits of seeing" to the extent that they become part of a particular way of knowing, without being conscious of it. The result of this

situation is that students' may become "academically" literate in a field, able to read articles, write papers and pass exams but have no clue to the kind of thinking that goes on, nor to how knowledge in the field is made. The message then becomes for students to parrot the exterior conventions, "to do as I do and say I say," mainly through the oral and written discourse style of a discipline, without internalizing or vocalizing what thinking patterns are being endorsed. In some respects this kind of unarticulated "knowing" seems potentially dangerous as well as extraordinarily powerful in terms of unconsciously shaping a world view.

Clifford Geertz in his essay, "The Way We Think Now: Toward an Ethnography of Modern Thought" suggests that professionals in academics are so greatly influenced by their fields of study that "everyone else who is not immediately one of us is an exotic." He calls for an ethnographic analysis of scholarly fields to help us understand the multiplicity, diversity, and pluralism of modern thought:

...the various disciplines (or disciplinary matrices), humanistic, natural scientific, social scientific alike, that make up the scattered discourse of modern scholarship are more than just intellectual coigns of vantage but are ways of being in the world, to evoke a Hildeggerian formula, forms of life, to use a Wittgensteinian, or varieties of noetic experience, to adapt a Jamesian. In the same way that Papuans or Amazonians inhabit the world they imagine, so do high energy physicists or historians of the Mediterranean in the age of Phillip II--or so, at least an anthropologist imagines. It is when we begin to see this that to deconstruct Yeats' imagery, absorb oneself in black holes, or measure the effect of schooling on economic achievement is not to take up a technical task but to take on a cultural frame that defines a great part of

one's life, that an ethnography of modern thought begins to seem an imperative project. Those roles we think to occupy turn out to be minds we find ourselves to have (Geertz, 1983, p. 155).

Bruffee (1982) argues forcefully for a new way of understanding what it means to "know" something. Drawing on the work of Rorty, Bruffee proposes a definition of knowledge as "socially justified beliefs." One of the curricular implications of a liberal education based on such a definition would be that "to become liberally educated is to join the community of liberally educated people" (p. 108). As educators one of our responsibilities should be to show our students "how we ourselves became members of the community" (p. 108) or what I propose as showing students how to interpret the discourse mode of our particular academic disciplines.

Does composition studies, we might ask, work in any specific ways toward making the tacit knowledge of its own community or that of others explicit for its students? As a discipline, what contribution does composition make toward developing students' understanding of the power that academic discourse communities have in shaping their thinking?

Composition studies as a field has been created from a multi-disciplinary matrix (North, 1987), informed and reformed by the thinking from such diverse fields as literary studies, social science, education and philosophy, cognitive psychology, women studies, rhetoric, adult development and linguistics. Composition then encourages an educational

context like the prose writing classroom in this study, a classroom which reflects a pedagogy forged from a variety of rich intellectual resources (It also encourages a whole range of other kinds of writing courses such as the one described in McCarthy's ethnography). As Patricia Bizzell has recently suggested, "pedagogy" may be one of the strengths of our own discourse community: "Composition studies may indeed be distinguished among academic disciplines for our serious interest in pedagogy" (Bizezell, 1988, p. 20). In a prose writing course, such as the one described in this study, where the main content of the course work is the life and thought of the self, students can explore their own "way of being in the world," can consider both the "roles" they have adopted through their own fields of study and well as begin a critique of the "minds" they are in the process of forming.

The class agenda for a writing class can become, as in the case of Donna's course, how to operate within such a discourse community: how to use the classroom as a place to read and interpret texts; how to share and construct meanings orally and through reading and writing; as well as how to collaborate, revise, and reflect. The course, then, enjoys the luxury of having students as the center of the content as well as showing students how to become a contributing and supportive member of a community. It was in the context of prose writing remember, that Nick subdued his agonism and that Anna developed her growing critical eye.

Art history and political science classes are not writing courses, nor should they aim to be. I would like to suggest, however, that there are a number of literacy/ learning practices specific to prose writing that I will explore as responses as to how we can enable students to earn what Dewey calls "participatory membership" in academic communities. To the extent that professors are interested in making their disciplines accessible to students by encouraging a communal attitude and through disclosure of the discipline's literacy/ learning patterns, these suggestions will be useful.

Reading and Literacy

Extensive and demanding reading was at the heart of all the liberal arts courses I audited with these students. While I found the close reading of texts to be an "assumed" literacy skill for college students, very little guidance was offered by these college instructors for how to read other than through modeling. Professor Adams announced; "I will show you how to read a book," and towards the end of the course, Professor Hall offered several lectures on how she "deconstructed" an art history essay. Such explicit demonstrations certainly illustrate for students that there are specific ways of reading linked to disciplines, an instructive beginning for most students, but I felt that even more detailed guidance through the process of reading (not interpretation) was needed.

The design for reading in both political science and art history was an Assign/Evaluate model where students were given a well developed list of readings, on which they were subsequently evaluated, either through response to weekly questions (political science), or through a mid-term exam (art history). The assumption behind such a model is that of reading as a purely cognitive, meaning-based activity rather than the affective and social processes that it can involve.

Professor Adams did monitor his students' understanding of assigned readings in two ways; from their in-class responses to his discussion, and from the weekly papers on assigned questions. But some students never or seldom talked in class. And due to the intricate point system for grading, students were able to skip several weeks without handing in papers. What this classroom structure mainly eliminated was any kind of personal reader-response that Adams did not anticipate from his students. The structure of the weekly questions and the strict political interpretations of the texts prevented students from offering a wide range of possible responses to the readings. And student might slide by a chunk of the course assignments, never writing, never speaking, perhaps never really learning.

Students in art history class, we noted, asked questions even about how to read the syllabus. There was no formal monitoring of students' understanding of reading in Dr. Hall's course until she gradually came to some personal insights

about what she had mistakenly assumed about her students' interpretive abilities with respect to very dense art history texts. It was toward the end of the course that she shared her own reading process in a series of lectures with her students. Since no weekly writing was assigned in art history, students might not get to the enormous amount of reading until just before the exams, a situation which seems highly probable.

Both of these classroom situations contrast with the guided instruction offered throughout prose writing class. In prose writing students held "reading conferences" with their instructor, kept ongoing reading journals on course materials, met with peers in reading groups, to exchange ideas on assigned readings, engaged in whole class discussions on common readings, and turned in written responses to outside readings for their end of the term projects. These are all ways of supporting and monitoring how much students actually understand reading assignments. Although most of the texts read in Donna's course were expository, she did not limit students' oral or written reactions to what Louise Rosenblatt (1978) has called "efferent" responses (meaning "to take away") but encouraged an "aesthetic" stance toward non-fiction texts as well. Rosenblatt suggests that a reader must learn to "handle his multiple responses to text in a variety of complex ways, moving the center of attention toward the efferent or aesthetic ends of the spectrum" (p.37). Students in prose writing were encouraged to make both meaning-based

and personal connections to the essays they read as well as share such responses in reading groups, a practice which emphasizes the social nature of reading, of how interpretations often are forged in a context with others (see Newkirk, 1984, for a discussion of "unmasking our readings").

The use of a reading journal represents the most easily instituted change for a college course, even a large lecture class. While professors may be unable to respond to large numbers of student journals on a regular basis like Donna did, there are ways to require their use as learning tools, as reading logs, as "seedbeds of thought" without extensive feedback on the part of the instructor (see Fulwiler, 1987, The Journal Book for a range of ideas about using journals in classrooms). Aside from engaging students more fully in their reading experiences, the journal draws on an informal expressive tradition of writing that favors the learning style of women students whose reading writing heritage is often ignored in higher education (see Gannett, 1987, 1988, for gendered differences in student journals). The journal, a form born outside the mainstream of the dominant academic discourse, when brought inside the academy may provide all students with that missing dialogue between teacher and student which is not often feasible because of large class numbers.

I offered a specific use of the journal for art history class when, after the mid-terms, Dr. Hall approached me to

help tutor one student who had failed the exam because, Hall said, her writing was so "atrocious." I agreed to the tutoring, mainly because I wanted to reciprocate Dr. Hall's receptivity toward having me in her classroom. I met with the student for two hours and suggested that we set up a double draft-entry notebook (see Berthoff, 1983, Forming, Thinking, Writing) combining the materials from the texts and the lecture notes and matching them up in terms of major art movements. We spent a few hours devising this system for her note taking, met again before the final exams to review her notes, and on the final she received an A. This particular student's problem had not been "poor writing" but lack of guidance in organizing, synthesizing, and finally digesting the enormous amount of material that the course covered.

There are other fairly simple ways that professors can guide students' reading rather than just assigning it. While professors outside of English departments may complain that using journals, double-entry drafts, short paper responses to texts, or even providing reading demonstrations represent a form of "hand-holding" for college students, they may also come to understand what Dr. Hall finally articulated, that the particularized language of her field got in her students' ways in terms of learning and understanding the course content. Students can strength their engagement with what they read by calling upon one verbal system to reinforce another, either through talking about class readings or through writing about

them, creating what Vygotsky has called "a web of meanings." As many language systems that can be connected within the classroom curriculum and within assignments themselves, the more practice and reinforcement that's given to the learner.

Most college course work ignores both the social and personal aspects of reading, assuming that understandings and interpretations of texts take place alone, without any connection to students' personal knowledge, without any attempt to allow students to work together to construct meanings for texts. In Nick's political science seminar, a response to a reading didn't mean "doggy do" unless the student could make a political tie which not everyone could. And instead of arriving at collaborative meanings for the assigned readings in political science, students felt that most answers or responses to the questions raised, resided in the head of most experienced reader among them--the teacher--and were not within the grasp of students themselves.

In art history where one might expect a wide range of aesthetic responses to be welcomed, the course work rested on translating a rich intuitive and perceptual response back into the discursive analytic form, losing a great deal in the translation. What might the art exams have looked like if students were allowed to draw in response to a question, showing that they visually understood the elements of modern art? It was confusing for Anna to estimate how much she was allowed to rely on her visual understanding because she was

discouraged by Hall's comment on her mid-term exam. So in the final paper where Anna eliminated an extended consideration of the artist's painting style, her professor found her paper lacking in visual analysis. Students become confused trying to choose how to respond, which side of their brain to favor, when in fact they should be using it all. Students should be encouraged to respond to written texts within a wide range of options: writing letters, drawing or painting, keeping journals, making videos and films, holding debates or other presentations, writing plays or creating mime, all efforts to learn from written text. Finally, this learning should be shared in the classroom to show the diversity of response as well as provide greater understanding within the community of learners.

Writing and Literacy

The use of writing in the three settings considered here provides a sharp contrast both in the function writing serves, particularly with respect to learning, as well as the amount of practice it provides. My final discussion here is concerned with how writing is used for many purposes other than learning in the university setting. The following charts outline the kinds of writing assigned, the purpose and amount of writing accomplished over the semester in three different settings, with art history having the least amount of writing and prose writing the most.

Types, Purposes, Amounts of Writing in Three Liberal Arts Courses

PROSE WRITING

Type Amount	Purpose	
Reading Journals	Informal, expressive Response to readings	Bi-weekly
Collaborative Journals	Reflective process oriented response to collaboration	3 weeks
	Response to readings	1 week
Weekly papers	Discovery Practice Thinking	8 weeks
Collaborative project	Problem-solving Group writing experience	3 weeks
In-Class Writing	Skills--editing, leads	4 classes
	Evaluation	1 class
Peer Response	Critical responses	4 classes
Self-Critique	Evaluation Diagnosis of weaknesses and strengths	4-8 times

ART HISTORY

Type	Purpose	Amount
Class notes	Memory aid	Not required
Mid-Term exam	Evaluation of Understanding Integration of lecture and text	One class
Final exam	Evaluation of Understanding Integration of lecture and text	One exam period
Paper proposal	Topic approval	Once
Final Project	Integration of theory with artist	10-20 pages

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Type	Purpose	Amount
Class Notes	Memory Aid	Not required
Weekly papers weekly in response to questions posed	Understanding and integration	2 pages
Final paper	Personal response and integration of course material	Open format

In comparing these charts, we need to be reminded that prose writing, with the greatest amount of writing, is after all a composition course. Political science follows in providing steady weekly practice in writing, albeit within the very limited parameters of two-paged papers in response to pre-assigned questions. This format is followed religiously until the end of the course when Adams changed his research assignment to a more personalized, open-ended paper. Art history follows the most traditional format for writing assignments, a bottom heavy design with most of the work coming at the end of the course (final exam and a big project).

In terms of purposes for writing, prose writing offers the widest range: from informal journal responses to formal weekly papers; from collaborative group work to critical and self response. But again, the purpose of the course is to improve thinking through writing. The purposes for weekly writing in political science are dual; to provide a way of monitoring students' understanding of text and to allow a way of initiating class discussions, a hybrid writing form which stands between prose writing's weekly papers and the journal responses. In art history both essay exams clearly function as evaluative measures of how much the student has learned and how well he/she is able to integrate that learning under a timed-test situation. However, the final paper on a contemporary artist offers the student a rich learning and

literacy experience, combining an interview situation with integration of that artist's work within the frame of the textbook and lecture content. The research project in art history and the revised final assignment for political science could both serve as meaningful learning experiences for students because both professors encouraged interesting topics and structures for these papers, inviting students to be inventive.

What is radically different among these three courses is the amount of feedback and time line for response to the students' writing. The multiple drafting, conferencing, revising and peer workshops that provide so much response throughout prose writing could easily have been adapted in some ways for both other courses so that students could have shared and evaluated their work-in-progress. The political science course with its weekly pre-assigned questions provided a natural situation for an exchange of weekly papers before they were handed in. As it stood, Adams returned the papers each week with his comments on them and spent from five to ten minutes talking about what was wrong with each batch of papers. Students like Nick seldom read these comments or benefited from them as they approached the next paper. Each assignment was very much seen as separate. The culminating assignment in political science, potentially a very interesting paper, was not shared in any way and some students even failed to pick them up after the term was over.

In art history, a much larger class than either of the other two, writing could have been used as a way of learning in several ways. Students might have been asked to share one written question from the previous lecture at the beginning of each day's course. Students might have read each other's paper proposals, commenting on them, perhaps even grouped together by topic choices or artistic mediums researched. A multiple drafting procedure in art history would have allowed students to turn in a draft and get comments on it before the final paper was due. Self-critiques of these papers could have been attached to final drafts and students might have shared what they learned about their artists with the rest of the group. There are many other possible ways of using writing in this course but within the structure outlined, there still are many ways of using writing as a way of learning.

Finally, most of the suggestions I might have for changing the way writing is used in higher education would imply shifts in the whole process of teaching. Stephen Tchudi points out in his article, "Hidden Agendas in Writing Across the Curriculum" that "When we invite colleagues in other disciplines and fields to teach writing, we are in fact calling for nothing less than a revolution in most of education" (Tchudi, 1986, p. 22). Along with Karen Burke LeFevre, I would like to see the creation of a university-wide writing portfolio as be part of any degree requirement. Such a plan would involve instituting the use of writing in a

variety of settings which would eventually turn classrooms at various points into studios where students work together. The formation of a community of writers within disciplines across the curriculum need not be the goal of all courses as it was in prose writing but serve as a means for students to experience writing and knowing as a social rather than solitary activities. Karen Bruke LeFevre (1987) describes how a classroom would be arranged which takes into account the "communicative nature of knowledge" and gives "support for a variety of pedagogical changes," one of which would be "opportunities for collaborative learning" as well as changes in evaluation to allow "the grading of groups as well as individuals" and changes in how students work "in pairs and groups" (LeFevre, p. 136). This image very much fits the composition course described in this study.

In this study I've raised some questions about the way academic discourse communities might re-think the literacy structures they hold in common across the curriculum--reading, writing, talking and thinking patterns--so that classrooms may become the kinds of places where students are allowed to be as literate and creative as they can be. Like many studies, I will offer suggestions and directions for further research. Given a grant or fellowship tomorrow, here's what I would undertake:

- 1) More ethnographies of college students' literacies. I would look at the literacies of students of various ethnic backgrounds in a range of college settings and

across the academic disciplines, particularly in the sciences and arts.

2) Research on gender and discourse. I would select one topic of interest, such as a case study of gendered interactions in a reading or writing group and follow this for a semester,

3) An ethnography of one college student, following him or her all four years of his/her education and consider every reading and writing assignment they are given.

4) A survey of the use of portfolios in tutorial and other settings, such as studio art, to suggest a college wide writing portfolio requirement.

5) Further study of the learning patterns revealed in students' written responses to various types of assigned readings. What is the development of students' reading response throughout any given semester.

6) Case studies of college teachers as a result of using extended writing in their classrooms, an interdisciplinary focus.

7) Research on feminist teaching pedagogies with respect to their impact on composition studies.

8) Collaborative research to design a teaching course open to all faculty in a university. Such a course would consider integrating reading, writing, group work and gender-related issues in the university curriculum.

Conclusion

From the point of view of composition studies, using the prose writing class considered here as an example, I think we need not worry so much about preparing our students for reading and writing in other discourse communities. Instead we might ask how other disciplines are preparing their classrooms to get the most out of literate students like Anna and Nick. How are they creating contexts for such students to

read, write, and talk in creative and critical ways? Maxine Greene in her fine book, The Dialectic of Freedom which appropriately began as a John Dewey Lecture, suggests that education must create "new spaces" for our schools and invite fresh ideas into them so that intellectual freedom can again flower.

Academic discourse communities cannot flourish without talk, without engaged reading, without committed writing, without the an extension of the private literacies that are inherently part of those students who inhabit our classrooms. We must allow ourselves to integrate into our classrooms those explicit, discipline-specific literacy/learning practices which will enable and empower students to belong to and participate in many discourse communities during their university careers and finally in their lifetimes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Collaborative Project
Fall 1987/English 501

Most people still conceive writing as an individual act. Oh, sure, writers will bounce their ideas off of other people--they will use readers--but the final act is till the writer doing his or her soliloquy on that blank page. Indeed, most of your won experience with writing (usually in school) has been just this: "your own work." you have been warned against cheating, "looking on someone else's paper"; or plagiarism, "stealing somebody else's ideas." However, your experience in this class with discussion, reading and writing groups, conferences may begin to suggest something different. We do not write in a vacuum. Our ideas are shaped by others. Even the ideas we think are all ours, are in may cases, a synthesis of all the bits and pieces we have picked up along the way from our encounters with other people. A good part of the writing done outside of school, especially in an organizational setting is collaborative. Members work together to jointly produce reports, recommendations, policy statements, business plans, rules and other documents. Over the next month or so, we will engage in some collaboration of our own. This is how it will work:

BASICALLY--Individually you will look at writing from four different areas and make journal entries on each one. You will then select one piece of writing you think your partners and you could use to spark an idea for a paper. You and your collaborators will switch articles, read each other's choices and then come to an agreement about which of these articles you will use. Then you must decide how you will collaborate on writing a paper triggered by some idea in the piece you have chosen. The logistics of the collaboration will be up to you; the important thing is that each member contribute to the actual writing of the paper. You will keep a journal on the whole process (selecting the article to writing the paper).

The Readings:

1. Go to the library and look through the following magazines for an essay (and you know what an essay is by now) that you

else is available, until you are sure you have a good one. During the initial search, you will not need to read everything word by word; you will probably read the first few paragraphs for the possibilities and scan the rest. But once you have decided on an essay, read it thoroughly. Don't just soak up the information like a passive sponge--actively question. Wonder. Criticize. Argue. Applaud. I suggest xeroxing the piece if it is not too long so that you can read pen in hand. This will make the journal entry easier later. Include quotes and ideas from the text that have triggered your reaction in your journal entry. Be sure to include all bibliographic data in your journal entry: Author, title (of magazine and article), pages, date.

I have particularly selected these periodicals for their meaty articles. If you check with me, I may allow you to choose another publication, but certainly no PEOPLE, GLAMOUR, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, READERS DIGEST, etc.:

HARPERS	NATION REVIEW
NEW YORKER	COMMENTARY
NEW REPUBLIC	MS.
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN	DISCOVERY

2. Select a "feature" or editorial from an issue of the NEW YORK TIMES, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR or WASHINGTON POST. Take your time in finding something that strikes you as "interesting" and follow up with a journal article. Again, include all bibliographic data. Current copies of Newspapers are located on the first floor of the library and back issues are on the second floor in the microfilm room. The NEW YORK TIMES dates back to the 1800's--you may want to look for something historical.

3. In the periodical room on the second floor, look through the current displays for some of the literary review magazines that carry short stories (Aegis, Southwest Review, etc. They are easily identifiable on sight). You want to find a complete short story--not an excerpt from a novel, nor a poem. This may take some time because you will need to read the story to see if it provokes a strong reaction from you. Respond in a journal. Note your reactions to content, language, style or fiction in general--anything that strikes you, makes you think or connect. Not bibliographic data.

4. Choose a handout, chapter or section from a text of one of your other classes that has sparked you thinking, extended it in some way. You will have probably read this once already. Read it again. What does it make you think about? What ideas or questions does it raise? Obviously the piece you select will need to be something you can take issue with. If you choose a section entitled "Rules and Procedures for

it in some way. You will have probably read this once already. Read it again. What does it make you think about? What ideas or questions does it raise? Obviously the piece you select will need to be something you can take issue with. If you choose a section entitled "Rules and Procedures for dissecting Grasshoppers" it should be because you want to comment on the procedures or ethics of all this. In other words I'm interested in your thinking about these things, not what they say necessarily. Of course your journal entry will need to refer to the text. Include all bibliographic data.

5. Now that you have four journal entries in response to four readings, you should select one of these you feel might provide a good trigger for a paper. In your journal, discuss why you chose this particular reading and not the others--I am interested in your reasons for your choice. Bring copies of the article for each member of your group. After you each exchange and read each other's articles, as a group you will need to select which one you will actually collaborate on. In the journal, each person should discuss their reasons for why they chose the article they did and how the group arrived at a consensus.

The Writing:

6. As a group, you must now decide what you will write and how you will write it. In what way will each person contribute? Will you jointly make a list of ideas for the paper, have someone rough out a draft and have the group revise it? Will you each write sections of the paper and then try and unify them? How you write these papers may depend on how you have reacted to the reading. Some papers may be argumentative, debating some issue you have identified. Maybe the collaborators take opposite sides and the paper turns out to be a discussion of why this happened. (You can use your imagination--in fact I am looking for innovative approaches. I am thinking of Siskel and Ebert, the movie critics who rarely agree...) Papers may depend on the strengths and interests of the writers--humor or dialogue, perhaps. You will not have a great deal of time and this will probably involve several meetings but it should prove "interesting." In your journal, note everything you can about the process of collaboration you are going through. What are your thoughts and feelings about this--how does it differ from writing on your own (may make socialists out of you....)

7. After you have a draft, you will meet with me for a group conference and then meet back with each other to decide on revisions and editing. Although the paper will have been written jointly, it still must appear unified and coherent...

8. After finishing the paper, you will need to do a final journal entry. What have you learned or noted about collaboration? What worked and what didn't? What might you do differently? How does it compare to other kinds of writing you have done?

Your individual journals and the group paper will all be turned in. Each person will receive the same grade for the paper, but will be graded individual on their journals, thus each group member could end up with a different grade.

Time table:

- 11/3 Library--to work on articles.
- 11/5 Writing group.
- 11/10 Library (you will need more than two classes for this probably).
- 11/12 Reading group (last)--Collaborative groups meet and exchange articles for each to read.
- 11/17 No class, but collaborative groups should meet (either at this time or at a pre-arranged time, to decide which article to trigger a paper).
- 11/19 Collaborative groups meet to work on writing.
- 11/23, 11/24, 11/25 Sign up for a group conference. First draft should be completed before Thanksgiving (Choose one of these days).
- 12/3 Collaborative paper (final for grading) plus journals due.
- 12/10 Two papers and journal selection (last class).

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH 501/sec. 09
Fall 1987
Donna Qualley

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or 862-1311
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TEXT: David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, WAYS OF READING
"Lab Ticket" \$5.25 to cover the cost of duplicating papers

English 501 is an advanced writing and reading course, and a pre-requisite to all other writing courses in this university. In this section we will explore the essay as a way for helping us construct new understandings about issues we find important. We will use reading and writing to help us find out what we have to say--what we think--about a subject.

The class consists of a series of rituals: papers, journals, reading groups, writing groups. Toward the end of the semester, we will adapt these activities to a new task--a longer project on a collaborative paper.

PAPERS: On Thursdays (see schedule) you will hand in a 4-5 page (typed, double-spaced) draft of a paper you have been working on. You will need two copies of this paper: One for me and one for you to continue working on, to use in conference the following week (so we both have a copy) and to use for editing purposes in class. I will not accept poetry or fiction. On the copy of the paper you hand to me, you should note any questions or concerns you have. This is your paper prior to talking about it. What do you see that is working? What areas do you think need work? I would like to know what help you need from me. AND I want to know that you have thought about what's happening with your paper prior to conference.

WRITING GROUPS: Writing groups allow you to receive feedback about your work in progress from a larger audience than just me. They serve the dual role of providing you with experience in reading-writing process (rather than just finished products--this is but another "way of reading"). This in turn allows you to look at your own developing drafts more critically. When you present a paper to writing group, you, the writer, will determine just what kind of help you need

from members of the group. After each writing group session, the readers will take the papers home and do a further written response to the writer and give it to them the following class. The writer will then talk in her journal about the kinds of help she received and what she planned to do next with the paper.

READING GROUPS: Four times during the semester you will meet in a reading group. Each time, one person from the group will choose a selection from WAYS OF READING to have other group members read. Before the reading group meets, everyone will read the piece and write a journal response--thus, everyone will have thought about the essay prior to the group. The person leading the discussion will bring up issues that caught her/his eye--issues that surprised, perplexed, intrigued her. The idea of the reading groups is to have everyone enhance their first reading of the piece by hearing other reactions. Following the group, everyone will go back to the piece and write a second journal response--about how their reading changed as a result of the group. These group meets will last about 20-25 minutes each time.

JOURNALS: The Tuesday following reading groups (and once prior to reading groups) you will hand in a journal to me. The journal should contain your responses to the selections in Bartholomae (reading group selections and selections that I ask you to read), your writers response to writing groups, and your written reaction following every conference you have with me. This reaction will basically contain the following:

What help you wanted from conference.

What help you received.

What you plan to do next as a result.

These journals may be handwritten informally (but with pen please so I can read them). I will collect them and talk with you in them; that is, respond to what you have to say. Basically we will be carrying on a conversation about reading and writing. I imagine these journals will be fairly substantial--7-10 (or more) pages. The journals represent the guts of your thinking; they are the playground for you to monkey-bar around with what you think. I am looking for active, engaged, insightful responses.

You will also do a specific journal for the collaborative paper project.

COLLABORATIVE PAPER: This will be explained in class, but briefly this project allows you to work with a couple of other people on a paper. This is a complex undertaking and will consist of you finding material (essays, short stories, news articles) in the library, doing journal responses and then

deciding as a group which of your articles will be used to trigger a paper. The group will have to decide how to write it. They will keep a journal of their reactions to the whole collaborative process. The group will meet for a conference with me and then the final paper is due Dec. 3rd along with each of your journals (thus, each member could receive a different grade, since your journal will be counted as about 40% of this grade), but more in class....

ATTENDANCE: IS MANDATORY. The class works through interaction. There is no way to make up things:

Miss more than two classes, the grade drops by a full letter.

Miss more than four classes, you fail the course (this applies to sickness, any reason).

Miss a conference (without rescheduling), your grade drops by a letter.

Miss two conferences, you fail.

EVALUATION: You are evaluated on the basis of your serious, sustained work--that means active involvement in what you are doing. I look for curious, questioning minds. Risk takers, people who will challenge themselves so they can grow as readers and writers. Grades usually boil down to a decision between what is adequate work (a "C") and what is excellent work (an "A"). If you do all the work (on time), attend all classes, this is adequate. You must show evidence of growth to earn a higher grade. YOUR GRADE will be based on the following:

Collaborative paper + journal

Two papers

Journals (includes reading responses, Writing Group stuff, conference reactions)

Exact percentages to be decided later.

TIME: This course is intense. There is always something that needs working on. Spread your reading and writing out. Time away from a paper, or in-between readings of an essay is one of the most helpful things you can do for yourself. But you can't do it if you just go for the last minute cram, or try and write a paper (from genesis of idea to final copy) in one setting. For novice as well as professional, writing and reading are slow plodding work. Making meaning does not occur quickly.

SAVE EVERYTHING: ALL NOTES, JOTTINGS, SCRIBBLES, DRAFTS, PAPERS--ALL OF IT.