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Issues of engendered entitlement: Who owns the classroom? Who owns knowledge?

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**ISSUES OF ENGENDERED ENTITLEMENT:
WHO OWNS THE CLASSROOM? WHO OWNS KNOWLEDGE?**

BY

**DOROTHY RADIUS KASIK
B.A., St. Olaf College, 1969
M.A., University of New Hampshire, 1989**

DISSERTATION

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

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in

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Ph. D. DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

For Agnes and Clara,
For Ari, Stina, and Beth,
and
For Kurt

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ABSTRACT

ISSUES OF ENGENDERED ENTITLEMENT: WHO OWNS THE CLASSROOM? WHO OWNS KNOWLEDGE?

by

Dorothy Radius Kasik
University of New Hampshire, May, 1988

This dissertation examines the ways in which first year female college students have been prepared by educational systems in our culture to handle knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge during the first year of college experience. It is the contention of the author that women are not actively encouraged in our culture to take ownership of educational concepts in the same way as men. This happens for two reasons, first that because women's methods of interaction in the classroom might differ from men's those methods might not be perceived as acceptable or taken seriously; and second that a woman's discomfort with her gender identity inhibits her ability to learn. These two problems work together in that each one builds on the other.

In order to study the problems and determine the relationships between them, this dissertation uses a participant observer approach and autobiographical narrative. Three sites of observation are studied, two of which are secondary institutions, one being a traditional co-educational high school and the other being a small residential minimum-security facility for female sexual offenders. The third site is a first-year university English composition classroom. At each site, interviews were conducted with both students and faculty. In addition, written course work was collected and studied.

In order to honor feminist techniques of scholarship, autobiographical narrative has been used to collate and report findings as well as for the purpose of the author's use of her own experience as a means to demonstrate both differences in the learning patterns between genders and to offer such narrative as a serious learning technique.

Conclusions of the study include ways in which gender either interferes or coordinates with traditional classroom pedagogy. When gender and pedagogy are ill-matched, learning is impeded. The study concludes with suggestions as to how an understanding of engendered learning patterns can facilitate learning and how college composition pedagogy can be appropriately matched to women's needs.

INTRODUCTION

Aims and Questions

Many recent educational studies of adolescent girls acknowledge that in our culture something catastrophic happens to the self-esteem of girls as they approach sexual maturity. Mary Pipher writes in *Reviving Ophelia* that despite advances of feminism, escalating levels of sexism and violence cause girls to stifle their creative spirit and natural impulses, which ultimately destroys their self-esteem. Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan's study, *Meeting at the Crossroads*, finds girls showing a fear of exhibiting strong personality. Peggy Orenstein records in *Schoolgirls* that in spite of women's changing roles in society, girls are still adopting traditional patterns of self-doubt and self-censorship that stifle their classroom potential. Such patterns of low self-image are not easily overcome, and many young women bring them along into the college classroom, where self-doubt continues to hamper their ability to learn.

Women students entering university classrooms today come having been raised in an ambivalent, if not schizophrenic, social and political atmosphere. On the one hand they recognize that powerful cultural forces designate differing modes of behavior for women and men, and on the other they recognize their entitlement to equality. Their awareness of equivocal expectations develops sometime during the years they approach adolescence. At this time they experience a dramatic shift in self-perception, and the result is what psychologists call dissociation, a splitting "between psyche and body, voice and desire,

thought and feelings, self and relationship" (Brown, Gilligan, 7). In patriarchal societies and male-voiced cultures, whereas boys are pressured to dissociate themselves from women early in childhood, girls are pressed into removing themselves from women as they reach adolescence. A girl's disconnection from women thus takes her out of relationship with *herself*. Girls enact this disconnection through various forms of dissociation:

"separating themselves or their psyches from their bodies so as not to know what they [are] feeling, dissociating their voice from their feelings and thought so that others would not know what they [are] experiencing, taking themselves out of relationship so that they [can] better approximate what others want and desire" (Brown, Gilligan 219).

Dissociation includes denial of gender identity, denial of the presence and needs of body, and denial of voice.

This study examines how a woman's ability to absorb and use knowledge effectively is linked to recognition and acceptance of her gender identity and explores how a process-oriented composition classroom can become a center for encouraging a young woman's acceptance of gender identity when she finds appropriate support for exploring gender issues. It will explore the ways in which gender identity facilitates or inhibits learning. It will suggest that the concept of ownership can explain ways women can claim gender identity and gain authority over their own educational processes.

Methods

My study is qualitative and multi-modal and incorporates teacher-research, field research, textual analysis and autobiographics. The study is carried out in four sites.

What follows is an explanation of each site and a description of the research methods used for each.

My research begins in the spring of 1995 in a first year college composition classroom composed exclusively of women. I use participant observation as I am both teacher and observer. The course lasted for one three-month semester during which I collected and collated the students' written responses to specific writing prompts about the topics of gender, authority, and ownership. These included short-answer essays, longer personal narrative essays on topics of their discretion, and library research essays. Some class discussions were taped, particularly discussions in which I knew the topics of conversation would include their thoughts on gender and how female gender affects authority and ownership. I also taped a number of student-teacher conferences where one or two students discussed issues of writing with me. Transcripts of these taped discussions and conversations, along with writing they produced, form the basis for my observations and conclusions.

In order to check my perceptions about what I was observing in college women about their ability to claim authority or ownership, the second site I chose is a local high school. I visited a total of three schools where I interviewed principles, teachers and students explaining my research objectives. Although all three schools were interested in and supportive of my objectives, I chose to conduct my actual research at one, a four-year institution with a student population of twelve hundred. It is located in an economically middle-class community of twenty-five thousand, and draws students from three neighboring communities without facilities for secondary education. Although its

student population is predominantly Caucasian, this particular high school enjoys more racial and religious diversity than the others I visited, and that diversity reflects the community itself.

After my initial visits to explain my objectives to school officials, I visited one day a week throughout the fall semester of 1996. I attended three separate classes on my visits, an advanced placement English class for seniors, an art class, and a social studies class that drew participants from all four years, freshman through senior. In addition, I held a once-a-week noontime discussion group for a month, advertised by word-of-mouth, which a varying number of students attended. Attendance ranged between four and ten students, and over the month a total of twelve different students were present, nine girls and three boys. I recorded each of these settings with written notes.

My third site is Pathway, a girls' penal institutional high school in Bowler, Wisconsin, which is operated under the auspices of Lutheran Social Services. This site, a minimum-security milieu for teenage perpetrators of sexual abuse, gave me a unique opportunity to examine my hypothesis about the connections between gender, authority, and ownership. I visited Pathway a total of three times with visits lasting two, three, and two days. While there, I observed girls in their classroom and other communal settings at the facility. I talked with them both in groups and individually, taking copious notes. I collected two groups of their written responses to writing prompts. Pathway's two full-time clinical psychologists, Doug Dobberfuhr and Lorre Anderson, gave generously of their time and their knowledge as did Carrie Stockbridge, the head teacher, as I

interviewed them and consulted with them about the girls' psychological development and educational progress.

Besides my three mid-week visits to Pathway, I accompanied Dobberfuhl, Anderson, and Stockbridge to Germaine Lawrence School for Girls in Arlington, Massachusetts, which has a program similar to that of Pathway. This was a chance to listen to other teachers, psychologists, and administrators in similar settings as Pathway discuss alternative methods for dealing with dysfunctional development and gender issues.

The fourth site of exploration and research is my own memory. Here I both explore and employ the techniques of autobiographics, a method by which marginalized subjects assert themselves as agents of language and experience. Using personal narrative I demonstrate an attempt to reclaim memory in a positive way, thereby coming to a position of ownership and authority for myself in the classroom as a gendered, feminist scholar.

"Autbiographics" is a term coined by Leigh Gilmore that encompasses the technologies employed in autobiography, particularly feminist autobiography, to reconstruct memory. By using autobiographics throughout my text, I allow the story of my self-development to literally become the structure of the text.

Because I engage in autobiographics throughout, I need to explain the need for story. We understand our world by telling stories. We understand theory and how theory plays itself out in real life by writing about ourselves and about the subjects entrusted to us in the classroom, our students. The art is something I come by naturally. I was raised in a

storytelling culture where family stories were the means to shape identity and explain the reasons behind our actions. They were also a way for us to understand the other.

In my teaching I have come to understand the importance of storytelling, in the forms of personal narrative and journaling, to my scholarship. When I need to know, I write. When I'm confused, I tell myself stories in which I can unravel the confusion.

There is a richness in the simplicity of story. A story, especially an autobiographical one, contains the subject in such a way as to deem it manageable. As a story emerges on the page, a situation is shaped and meaning shows itself. The story gives limits, sets boundaries, makes the subject concrete. If the subject of my story is an idea I've been exploring, I can now wrap myself around it and begin to own it.

But there's a danger here for us too, especially as it pertains to teaching, for if a story contains, it also constrains. If we write about ourselves we have the authority to choose what and how we wish to draw the boundaries that contain our ideas. When we write about our students, we risk imposing limits on them over which they would disagree. We must constantly be aware of the tensions between what we mold and what we impose. With that in mind, I am aware of the ways I have constructed my students in this document, and moreover, the ways I construct them in my classrooms.

Nevertheless, storytelling becomes a particularly rich vehicle for us and for our students in both the examination of and the linguistic construction of gender. It can be of invaluable help in gender explorations. "Women autobiographers have found the body to provide rich grounds for thinking through the relationship between identity and representation" (Leigh Gilmore, *Autobiographics*, 84). When we tell stories, our

historical selves become the subject over which we have agency. The stories of our self-development become the framework of our text, "distributed across the historical self and the textual self, both of which are versions of the self who writes" (85). In the process of autobiography, we textually establish a self, and in the self on paper we recognize opportunity; we have ownership and choice.

Ownership and choice are key, and contested, terms in feminist theory. When I call myself a feminist scholar or say that I embrace feminist pedagogy I am aware that I speak from a particular embodied location—that of a female, middle-age, heterosexual, white woman. My perspective of feminism carries all the peculiar marks of those positionings. Pedagogically I work against the patriarchy when the institutional forces put into play interfere with equitable learning for all, male as well as female. In a paraphrase of Anna Julia Cooper's philosophy, I maintain that the status of our women students is the only true measure of collective educational progress because they are the less likely to achieve eminence and yet, through the feminization of education, are the most responsible for the continuing of educational process.

Feminism is about embracing and celebrating all personality constructs, especially those which defy definition within the institution, i.e., intuition. I espouse a feminism that gives us opportunity to see how language constructs us and our cultural environment, recognizing a balance of masculine and feminine in everyone, and encouraging inclusive thinking. In this particular research project my objective is to ply the gap between the identity positions of liberal feminism (as exemplified by such researchers as Mary Pipher,

Carol Gilligan and Myra and David Sadker) and the body-centered politics of the radical (i.e., Judith Butler or Diana Fuss).

I need to say a word here about the reason my study focuses on the inadequacies of female experience. My intention is not to assign or impose essentialist qualities on girls and boys or women and men. The wide latitude among individuals precludes the naming of specific experience as exclusively "female" or "male." However, we cannot deny the prolific studies that point out the connections between specific traits and gender identity. As a woman who interprets data through her own female experience, I am interested in certain behaviors which I identify more frequently in my female students than in male. At the same time, to study girls and women is also to study boys and men; I don't intend to absent men from this study but only that they be present in a different way.

Organization

The study is organized into five chapters which travel in a literal sense among four research sites. I begin with the site closest in, myself. In Chapter One, I introduce questions of gender as they play out in education. The chapter lays out some of the problems of coming to a feminist definition of ownership in a patriarchal structure. It closes with a positioning of myself within the fields of composition and gender studies, exploring the key texts bringing me to my positioning.

In Chapter Two, using my own experience as a gendered student, weaving my story, I demonstrate the techniques of autobiographics as defined by Leigh Gilmore. In so doing, the learning theory of M. M. Bakhtin from "Discourse in the Novel" helps to bring

me closer to a definition of feminist ownership. Next, I explore theoretical sources of gender tension for women as they experience the developmental split of dissociation from themselves and attempt to find relationships with other women. In laying my own gender theory, Judith Butler and Diana Fuss help me "think gender" through exploring the gaps between social constructionism and essentialism. Finally, Madelaine Grumet's concept of symbiosis in mother-daughter relationships and Kim Chernin's locating of adolescent gender dissociation in mother-daughter tensions aid me in the consideration of some of the stress my feminist presence in a classroom as an instructor might cause for students.

Chapter Three is centered in college freshman experience. Through the techniques of participant observation I examine my all-female semester in the case studies of three individual students. Observations of how patriarchal definitions of ownership play out in a process-oriented composition classroom bring me still closer to a feminist definition. I close out this chapter with examples of how student writing demonstrates expanding gender identity and developing definitions of authority and ownership.

For Chapter Four begins with detailing some of the gender and identity tension college women exhibit in writing. I find reason to explore the origin of these struggles and travel back to high school for a look at how women are prepared in our culture for higher education. As mentioned earlier, two sites were chosen to report on, one a traditional high school and the other a girls' prison school. In both schools I conducted interviews with the students and observed classes. In the prison setting I also interviewed administrators and psychologists and collected writing samples from the students. Here I talk about two necessary components of therapy, first a girl's need to face the

responsibility of her actions, and then to replace deviant actions with constructive methods.

In the final chapter I return to the college classroom and reclaim my own experiences developed through autobiographics. I discuss factors of identity—gender, race, and deviance— that are hidden from view by our cultural perspectives and suggest ways students might be encouraged to illuminate their own hidden prejudices which inhibit full ownership. Finally I suggest ways of fostering a classroom climate that might encourage growth toward gender acceptance and the ownership of knowledge.

CHAPTER I

WHO IS THIS PERSON CALLED TEACHER?

In telling the story of the self, the writer imposes order where there is chaos, structural coherence where there is memory and chronology, voice where there is silence.
-Leigh Gilmore, *Autobiographics*, 85.

Is There a Teacher in This Room?

It is May, the end of the college year, and I have just said final good-byes to my twenty-two English composition students, all women. It has been an extraordinary semester, I think, a semester where I've been forced to ask questions of myself and of my teaching in ways I hadn't before. I sit here reading through my students final portfolios, collections of their best writing and self-evaluations of their time with me, and I hear the same questions between the lines of every woman's writing. In one student's work I read, "This semester has forced me to think about many different topics that I've never really dealt with before or talked about before, such as feminism." I wonder why she feels that no one offered her the chance to explore feminism before now. "It was important for me that I found my voice," she continues, "and if I hadn't been encouraged to write about the things that happened to me in high school, that wouldn't have happened. I don't think that my voice was 'made' this semester, but just 'found.' It had got 'lost' sometime during high school." I wonder what it was that made her feel she lost something of her identity.

"Words that I have assembled and become so familiar with are suddenly transforming," writes another. "I recognize that my words that talk about my experience are important enough to be read. They teach me to be self-confident." I read, and I wonder about the power of personal narrative to transform the way a student thinks about herself.

The class I had been teaching was an all-female section of first-year composition. created by the random accident of a computerized system that places students by factors other than gender. I'd been teaching freshman composition at the university for seven years, but never in that time had a class bumped up so intimately with questions of gender and identity. Furthermore, it seemed this particular class had used every opportunity possible to lay bare experiences of sexual abuse, harassment, and inequality, sometimes hearsay but often personal. I could only conclude that the absence of men had changed not only the social configuration but the subject matter as well. Questions of gender difference in learning styles became impossible for me to avoid.

It also became obvious to me as the semester unfolded that our relationships, students to students and students to teacher, were different. That caused me to want to examine myself as teacher in new ways.

When I walked into that single-sex classroom two years ago as their teacher, what my students saw in me embodied all my experience as a student. My gestalt as a teacher has been formed by the sum of my life experiences both inside and outside the classroom. In Cheryl L. Johnson's words in "Participatory Rhetoric and the Teacher As Racial/Gendered Subject," I am "the body as text."

Race and gender conspire in the construction of my role as teacher and my students' interpretation of ...text. This conspiracy results not only from the

social, cultural, and political contexts in which I continue to come of age, but also from the students' gaze, which is informed by their own socially constructed readings of race and gender and the relationship of these to literature (410).

If I read myself as text, my rootedness in that text because of my femaleness and my feminism (as well as my whiteness) causes a participatory relationship between me and my students. When I enter a classroom, the whole me comes along, including the sexual me. It matters that I am the daughter and granddaughter in a strongly matriarchal family from Nordic traditions. It matters that I am the mother of three grown daughters and the wife of the same husband for twenty-seven years.

In some ways I write these things with reluctance in that I would like you to see me as totally equitable, always innately politically correct, fair, and broadminded. Instead, the embodied text I present to a reader is the sum of my enculturated gestalt. "You write like a straight, white woman," comments a reader. I suppose I do. That doesn't mean I always want to—I'd like to be able to look over my own shoulder, police myself, locate my prejudices and blind spots. I'd like to be able to step outside myself. I'd also like to be able to step outside my culture and locate its blind spots. But I am who I am, an emerging, developing personality working towards becoming whom I wish I could be. All the things that I am, controlling and controlled by my race, ethnicity, age, family status and sexual identity, shape me, shape my teaching, shape the way I read subject matter and shape the way I treat my students. They shape the ways in which I receive knowledge. To that end, it profits me to examine what I am—an educational product of the 1950s and '60s. I must continually hold in mind that as I shape my history through autobiography, I remember it, interpret it, and report it from my individual position of cultural limitation.

Sorting the Personal Photographs

My siblings and I sit with my seventy-five-year-old mother, sorting photographs, weeding out collections, passing on the evidence of milestones in our lives. I don't think she's *that* old--she plans to live a quarter century more as did her mother and grandmother before her--but she's decided now when the oldest of us is turning fifty and the youngest thirty that it's an appropriate time to divvy out family history; underscore our legacies, so to speak. She hands me an eight-by-ten black-and-white: "I suppose you'll find this one interesting now that you've embarked on sex education. Really. At your age!" She smirks.

I groan. "*Gender*, Mom. I'm doing research on the effects of gender in education."

She chortles. "Whatever." The teasing hides neither the fact that she approves my course of study (our family's strongly matriarchal Nordic history has sometimes chafed at American gender codes) nor that she innately understands what it's all about (it's been her experience to distrust the academic researcher; what is touted as news might be simply putting new clothes on traditional knowledge). But tonight her teasing is family shorthand signaling approval and pride. "Take a look. It'll mean something to you, not to me anymore." I am to understand that she's passing the proverbial torch.

In my hands I hold a visual record of my first experience in formal education. It's a picture of my kindergarten class in Santa Margarita, California, 1954. Sixteen five- and six-year-olds lined up, seated, scrubbed, disheveled, wriggling, grinning for the camera. In the center, the smiling Miss McKenzie.

I study the photo. Eight girls sit on a line of metal folding chairs, legs dangling midair, knees winking out from ruffled hems of dirndl skirts. Eight little boys stand across the back row, four on either side of their teacher, pant cuffs rolled up and waists gathered beneath leather belts. We're a mixed-race class of Anglos, Hispanics, and Native Americans. White boys flank the smiling Miss McKenzie; four white girls sit directly in front. I'm positioned in the center front beside my best friend, Barbara. Barbara stares into the camera with her whole body, shoulders hunched slightly forward in a giggling posture, eager, appealing, posing, performing. I sit straight, staring at Barbara.

Although the evidence is right here in front of me, I don't remember it very well. After all these years, it's that hiding-a-joke, about-to-erupt smile of Miss McKenzie's that I remember most. Only in her early twenties, it was her last year to teach. She was engaged to be married in the summer. My mother engineered our class gift to her: sixteen pillowcases with our original crayon drawings. Miss McKenzie's new husband would be reminded nightly of his wife's abandoned teaching career. Affianced teachers were okay, particularly for those who taught the very young, but our school board frowned on married teachers. Married *female* teachers. I remember I'd felt lucky that I'd gotten Miss McKenzie's last year. In my mind, she was perfect. She knew it all. Even at age five, I was sure some hidden knowledge privileged engaged-to-be-married adult women, and that that knowledge must be the source of the constant, enigmatic smile.¹

I thank Mom for the photo and slip it into a folder for later consideration. The memories it evokes are good. My first educational experience was a success. I liked kindergarten. Didn't I?

Over the following days I return again and again to the photo. I read details about me I'd ignored on first glance. I notice that my face is etched in seriousness. There's a furrow in my brow, not the sort born of anger and defiance, but rather more of confusion. Why am I not mugging for the camera, I wonder, like Barbara? I am the smartest one in the class; Miss McKenzie tells me so. But I feel dumb. I'm white, I'm the same sex as the teacher, I'm good, I know how to behave. Why do I feel like an outsider? Already I know how to read, having figured that out for myself a year earlier in a home full of books, games, music, and all sorts of interesting pursuits. Miss McKenzie knows my reading ability, but I hide my it from my classmates. I somehow sense that a fluency in reading would separate me from them, and I feel separated enough.

Can it be that already at age five I feel a sort of (pre-) feminist danger at being "smart"? "Don't be smart with me," could be heard in classrooms, scout meetings, Sunday School, every place where conversations between adults and children go on; I know that's not the same "smart" I fear being accused of in kindergarten, but are there other kinds of "smart" I sense forbidden even then?

Kindergarten. At six years of age, I was already on the cusp of a time when girls in our society are forced into questioning who they are, what they are, and what they will be encouraged by our culture and our educational system to become in order to fit. Between the ages of six (the onset of formal schooling) and adolescence, girls are being prepped for modes of female studentdom prescribed and prescribed for them, so that by the time they reach college age and womanhood, they'll know instinctively just how smart to be, in all the ways that "smart" means.

Who Owns the Classroom?

While I readily admit that my questions about ownership and the feelings of inadequacy I'm attempting to capture are not the sole domain of womanhood, nor are they monopolized by women (some of my male friends have confessed to harboring their own feelings of inadequacy in educational settings), I do claim that in my experience and in the evidence I've collected from students and colleagues, most women seem to score lower on the confidence scale than their male counterparts. Gender identity is not a fixed positioning, each human possessing varying degrees of those qualities we might be tempted to label as definitively male or female. I admit also that in our predominantly Euro-centered educational history, individuals of all gender from other ethnic groups are disadvantaged. I'm drawn again to my kindergarten photo where *white* boys are placed in central position.

Many of us, in examining the education of girls in our culture, are reliving our own educational experiences and rewriting them for ourselves in light of what we're learning. We identify the reasons, and we have names now--theories even--for some of the things that happened to us, some of the indignities we suffered, some of the omissions we've perceived, some of the unfair practices that shaped us as the "flawed" educational products we recognize in both ourselves and in our female students. In so doing, we sometimes tend toward an accusational stance, a poor-me, look-what-was-done-to-us, finger-pointing that ultimately subverts our abilities to see constructive ways of change and compensation from our own theories. I offer an embarrassing moment from my personal epiphanal gender journey as an example.

A couple of years ago, in a graduate seminar class in composition at the University of New Hampshire taught by Tom Newkirk, I launched into an oral litany of educational offenses against girls. In five minutes I managed to telescope twelve years of educational abuse into the resultant perceptions/blindnesses of twenty-odd eighteen-year-olds in a freshman class I was teaching. "Girls just aren't given a fair chance to succeed in education," I concluded. To understand the effect of his response, you need to know that Tom's teaching style is to ask something deceptively simplistic which later rolls around in your head until it forces you to recognize its complexity. This particular timed-release educational explosion: "Hmm. Why is it then that so many more girls than boys are represented in the ranks of high school honor students? And why are our college freshman classes at here at UNH disproportionately female?"

Why indeed. I couldn't argue. His questions were provocative. Two of my daughters had graduated from high school recently; in both classes, the Top Ten consisted of eight girls and two boys. In the eight years I'd been teaching at UNH, with only one exception, my freshman classes had been disproportionately female. In the greater UNH community, the first year class of 1995 was 65% female and in 1996, 56%.²

A year ago, thinking about these things, I chatted with a group of my daughter's high school friends to get their perspective. In response to some of my suggestions about the unfairness of the educational experience for girls, Todd, a high school junior at the time, told me, "But girls *own* the classroom. Boys might get the attention, like you say, but girls still get all the good grades."

But if girls own the classroom, why aren't the young women in my college freshman composition classes acting like it? Even in the face of the statistics, I can't ignore it: in my classroom, girls don't act as if they're in the majority, don't act as if they have the full right to be there. And if they act it, it feels a bit false, a bit like role-playing, play-acting. They seem to not believe their right. Why are they frequently reluctant to speak freely, to propose new ideas, to argue, to complain, to claim the same sphere of attention as the young men?

A while ago I was told by the father of one of my daughter's friends that while he was glad his daughter was going off to college, he wouldn't push his son to follow because, after all, boys could make good livings without educations since there are so many jobs women can't handle. Well, I countered, his son was certainly more likely to get and keep a good position in business if he had a college degree, and while he might indeed be employable without it, in the long run, his earning power increased proportionally with his level of education. The father stubbornly maintained that clever, healthy, ambitious young men didn't need education.

Are the implications of his argument that "real" men don't need educations? That college is for sissies? That girls, because of their limited capacities, need more education to compensate for not being male? The natural conclusions of his line of thought are pretty troubling, as are additional implications, one of the most disturbing being that maleness, as defined by this father, is put in jeopardy with exposure to traditional education. And if there are forces inherent in educational practice that weaken men, that virtually sap their manliness, wouldn't those same forces when applied to women even

further debilitate femaleness, a condition already deficient in his eyes? However I might disagree, I have to admit that the man's reasoning IS one way to answer the question that if women *own* the classroom, as Todd maintains they do, why aren't they reaping the practical, economic results of a good education that projections claim they should?

Perhaps closer to the truth: Moll Flanders' summation of enculturated gender inequities , that "Men had such Choice every where, that the Case of the Women was very unhappy; for they seem'd to plie at every Door, and if the Man was by great Chance refus'd at one House, he was sure to be receiv'd at the next" (Defoe, 46). In our culture, guys have more chances: more possibilities for employment, more doors opened to them, more sports opportunities, etc. etc. If they don't own the classroom, they still own the wider culture, or as my students say, the real world.

Ownership of the classroom. Just who owns the classroom? Can a classroom--or the educational process--be owned? Like Pollyanna saying "nobody owns a church," we egalitarian educators would like to think that in a democratic system, classrooms and processes can't be owned--only held in common. As I think about the reasons why women may not claim ownership of the things of knowledge, I recognize simultaneously two things: first, that the women's movement has managed over the last decade to make teaching methods more inclusive by increasing awareness of women's ways of knowing; and second, obtained from countless witness of female students and colleagues, borne out by my own experience, that we women rarely feel as if we have full rights in the classroom. On the one hand, exposure of educational inequities has produced an awareness of how we are--or have been--shortchanged. On the other, while today's

statistics seem to indicate that the errors of the past have been rectified, my female students don't exhibit that certainty. The phenomenon plays itself out in the classroom by female students being both attracted and repulsed from calling themselves by the "f" word: "I'm not a feminist, but. . ." In struggling to connect these dichotomies I'm postulating it's not biology that hangs us up but rather cultural forces at play that seek to prevent women from taking ownership as we presently define it. Statistics are admittedly a tool to help us expose truth, but ultimately, what statistics prove or disprove about the numbers and successes of female students needs to be deferred while we examine individual learning processes and how those processes might be effected by gender. The statistics themselves need to be looked at as cultural artifacts worth studying rather than definitive proofs of anything in particular; in other words, kept in perspective.

Who Owns Knowledge?

I think about myself as a student—a *female* student—both now in adulthood and throughout my childhood, and ask whether or not I felt ownership. It's a sobering question. Certainly if anyone should feel ownership, it would be the student like the one I was, a student consistently at the top of the class, garnering the top grades, writing the best papers, earning the best test scores, pushing, challenging, and volunteering to do the extra projects. I was the predictable student, the good girl. I played by the educational rules. Students like me go on to earn additional degrees. As good student, I exuded competence, capability, and confidence. And underneath it all, living a double life, I almost never felt either competence or capability. And rarely confidence.

So did I claim ownership? Certainly there were ways in which I owned the classroom in the manner that Todd implied, even owned the educational process. At least I knew how to manipulate it well enough to get the grades; or perhaps it would be more accurate to admit that the process manipulated me so that as long as I remained compliant with the system, I received the grade. Still, I haven't answered the central question: Can I claim ownership? I close my eyes, and in my memory I fit myself into the various desks I occupied through the years. I sit once again, nervous and fidgeting among two dozen or so classmates lined up in rows facing the teacher, chewing nervously on a pigtail at age six, chewing the pencil eraser at age twelve; later—much older—defiantly chewing gum at age sixteen, and finally age nineteen, in college, chewing ideas. What did I own? I glance around me, still in memory, and through my little girl eyes, I read the boys as confident and me as something else. I see Teddy ordering me away from the sand table because it's his turn to play. I see John remove the bundled "counting straws" from my desk to his when he wants to do math play. I see Cheryl paralyzed from embarrassment when a red stain appears on her skirt, so devastated that she can't come back to school the following day. I hear the boys tease JoAnne again at recess, and I see her cry; later she fails the spelling test. I cringe as I feel Zeke's hand grab my bottom from underneath my skirt, and I know that if I report him, I'll get ridiculed. When I'm called to recite in English class, I feel my face flush when Mr. D. corrects me for making the same mistake Donald just got away with. What I can't see, of course, are the ways the boys might be interpreting girls' conduct, the ways they may be feeling unfairly singled out for rowdy behavior in the

classroom, the ways in which they may be feeling educational situations don't cater to them, either.

As I get older, the feelings of insecurity and inability I've managed to collect along the educational journey come along with me to college where I stay up most of one night, working in the "art barn," to finish a sculpture project which ultimately earns me an A, but I feel as though I cheated, even though I didn't. I realize that I usually get an A, and that I often have this nagging feeling that I've gotten it dishonestly. That I've cheated. But I haven't.

I have to finally admit: Whether or not I owned the classroom system, I never felt ownership of the *stuff* of that system, whatever it was I was learning. I never felt like I owned what I was being taught. In other words, I never felt encouraged toward a genuine right to knowledge.

It is these troubling thoughts that push me forward into my study. What I intend to do in the next pages is explore the connections between gender and educational ownership and specifically to investigate how the developing sexual identity of young women of traditional college entrance age effects their ability or desire to assume ownership of the discourse material they're encountering. Psychologists differentiate between assumed knowledge (accepting a stance or an idea at face value without direct experience of it) and felt knowledge (direct knowledge of an idea resulting from experience). I'm wondering how wide the gulf is for first year college women between assumed knowledge and felt knowledge. According to Mary Pipher in *Reviving Ophelia*,

this dichotomy leads adolescent girls to split into two selves, the personal and the political, which split in turn denies girls the possibility of ownership of experience.

With puberty, girls face enormous cultural pressure to split into false selves. The pressure comes from school, magazines, music, television, advertisements and movies. It comes from peers. Girls can be true to themselves and risk abandonment by their peers, or they can reject their true selves and be socially acceptable. Most girls choose to be socially accepted and split into two selves, one that is authentic and one that is culturally scripted. In public they become who they are supposed to be. Authenticity is an "owning" of all experience, including emotions and thoughts that are not socially acceptable. Because self-esteem is based on the acceptance of all thoughts and feelings as one's own, girls lose confidence as they "disown" themselves (38).

Towards a Definition of Ownership

A reader asks, What does she mean by ownership, for God's sake? Yes indeed, for God's sake, because that's where my definition begins. It is from Judeo-Christian religious thought that we derive most of even our modern concepts about ownership and property. H. H. Halley, scholar on Biblical interpretation, states in the introduction to his *Bible Handbook*, under the heading "Three Basic Thoughts of Old Testament," that Judeo-Christianity is founded on: 1) God's promise to Abraham--in which God promises that all nations will belong to Judaism; 2) God's covenant with the Hebrew nation--the nation will rule over, have dominion or ownership over--all other nations; and 3) King David's family, in the person of Jesus Christ, his principle heir, will own not only earth but eternity.³ This is an exclusively patriarchal ownership: God the Father owns the Hebrew nation; Hebrew males possess the property rights in all of society. Under such a system, women are possessions, chattel. Biblical women had no property rights apart from their

husbands and sons. The weakest and lowest positions of humanity were occupied by widows without sons and fatherless unmarried women.

But, the reader argues, we no longer carry that baggage around today. Or maybe we do. "The new rules do not displace the old," write Nadya Aisenberg and Mona Harrington in *Women of Academe: Outsiders in the Sacred Grove*.

Deep-set beliefs linger and the old norms have even found reinforcement in modern thought, notably from the enormous influence of Freudian psychology... Thus, we now have a situation in which two sets of norms coexist. On the one hand, we have new social and political commitments to individual equality, openness of opportunity, and equal responsibility for men and women, and, on the other, old beliefs in the fact and rightness of inequality, in the fact and rightness of a distinction between men and women in their capacities and proper roles" (5).

This is the impetus behind much of Harvard theologian Mary Daly's work, which translates itself into her concept of re-Naming, and of the work of the African American feminist volume, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought* (Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed.) The ongoing need to heal the language from phallogentrism is also the core of Dennis Barons' *Gender and Grammar*, as well as many others [Richard Rodriguez, Robin Lakoff, Dale Spender, Baumkin and Baumkin, Rae Rosenthal, Carol Gilligan, etc.].

Private ownership and property rights were central concerns of this nation from its beginnings—for white males. In Colonial America, a wife was entitled to only one third of her deceased husband's inheritance, a condition known as "rights of the third."⁴ In our Constitution, property rights are protected under Article Five of the Bill of Rights, but "all men" translated into "white males," ignoring women and racial minorities. Social

acceptance of female ownership is quite recent. When a woman was able to attain a degree of wealth, her character was questioned, as in the case of Hetty Green (1835-1916), Massachusetts financier who through shrewd business acumen parlayed a modest inheritance into a \$100,000,000, making her the wealthiest woman in the world, but at the same time suffered personal libel as a "wicked and notorious miser."⁵ It wasn't until 1920 and the guarantee of women's suffrage that we incorporated the *idea* of protecting women's rights. Reality was yet to come.

Perhaps most of our personal histories include stories of the difficulties of female ownership. My own mother, widowed at age 31, needed my uncle to cosign a loan to trade in our family car for a newer model, even though she was the sole inheritor of my father's estate, which included a small ranch with acreage, animals, outbuildings and new house. A year later, after selling the estate, she required the signature of my grandfather to purchase another home, this one of lesser value. Female ownership just wasn't an easy concept. Matthew's "Ye shall inherit the earth," definitely wasn't addressed to his sister.

Besides waiting for legal guarantorship, there are various ways to ownership. Heredity, for instance; or squatters' rights, whereby assuming ownership can be done simply by waiting it out; or application of feudal rights, proving your worth in physical combat for the king. We get possession by various means: acquisition, procurement, earning, collecting, gleaning, accumulating, amassing, taking.

Of course one can own more than just real estate. Possession might be nine-tenths of the law, property rights equal legal rights, and possession means having title to. In *Lectures of Jurisprudence* of 1832, John Austin says, "Ownership or property may be

described accurately enough in the following manner: 'the right to use or deal with some given subject or manner...' Allowing for the double meanings, here's where the idea of ownership links itself to knowledge, in dealing with given subjects. It's just a short leap to apply the concept of ownership to what we do in an academic setting with the information we're given. The ultimate proof of ownership in academia is tenure, the right of scholasticism, whereby the prize is earned through time and scholarship.

What you do with what you own often decides your worthiness. You can turn profit, invest, multiply, deposit, store, repay, coin, or capitalize. What you own is capital in the monetary sense; and you increase it by capitalizing on it—I like the double meaning implied here, which is tripled by considering that in writing we capitalize by adding upper case.

Add to all of this the idea that ownership is recognition, acknowledgment, and acceptance, assent and agreement. Each implies a necessary responsibility toward what one owns. It includes the idea of culpability: I own up to ideas, I own up to deeds. I admit, I acknowledge, I confess, I concede. Here, at this specific point in ownership's definition, is where the business of a composition classroom comes clearly into focus—in the assumption that personal writing, when done honestly, attentively, and responsibly, both necessitates and develops ownership of the material it generates.

A Textual Contextualizing

Two years ago, from an airplane window, on final descent into St. Louis, I witnessed the convergence of three major rivers—the Missouri, the Illinois, and the

Mississippi—into one huge sea of water on the St. Louis flood plain. As far as the eye stretched, and very nearly as far as imagination stretched, there was nothing but water inundating homes, obliterating flora and displacing fauna. Human reason saw the configuration of the land as newly configured, but in reality, the flood plain has always been there. What we might interpret as destruction and dramatic life change, nature sees only as a reclamation from civilization's encroachment; the land never forgets.

I like this image—watching the convergence of three great rivers—as it applies to composition studies. Changes incorporate nativity, rebirth, and reclamation, and certainly forward growth. From its beginnings in the 1950s, composition has been a discipline that both borrows from and contributes to other discourses, notably education, cultural studies, feminism, psychology, and gender studies. And so it stands metaphorically as both flood plain and inundating river, incorporating destruction and renewal. I'd like to think of this composition-based dissertation as honoring those same qualities, allowing gender studies, education theory or developmental psychology to inform my observations of first-year college women struggling to write.

In her recent review of *Women Writing Culture*,⁶ Elizabeth Flynn observes that composition studies are situated between theoretical frames of feminism and psychoanalysis—the assumptions and practices of each informing the other (and that's where I position myself) but that unless we purposely enter the feminist conversation, "we are a field talking mostly to ourselves" (114). I don't want to talk to myself; I want to enter the conversation. To get to it historically, and to put my own study into historical

perspective, I'll trace the textual development of my thinking as it parallels my discovery of certain seminal written works. What I list here represents texts that are foundational to my emerging theory, profoundly changing the grounds of my personal flood plain and rerouting my rivers of thought.

I must begin with an early but still useful book, *The Second Sex* by Simone deBeauvoir. When it appeared in 1952 it set in motion a complex set of events which provided words for many women's intuitions, but went far beyond the world of academe to speak to the average woman. I didn't read it at publication (I was four years old when it first appeared), but I start with it because the thoughts it put forward were the impetus for much of what followed in feminist cultural studies, and because when I finally *did* read it in my mid-30s, it blew me away. *The Second Sex* dared to present the idea that womanhood was a question, not an answer, and by posing the question began a process in the public forum of defining sexuality as separate from gender identity. Ongoing gender arguments of essentialism versus constructivism (Lacan, the French feminists, Fuss come to mind here as well as others) can trace themselves through deBeauvoir.

If her functioning as a female is not enough to define woman, if we decline also to explain her through 'the eternal feminine,' and if nevertheless we admit, provisionally, that women do exist, then we must face the question: what is a woman?...A man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: 'I am a woman.' (xxi)

At publication deBeauvoir's text shocked and infuriated people of both sexes, but it also prodded both popular and academic communities into revising the way women thought and talked about themselves.

That deBeauvoir still continues to shift my flood plains is illustrated to me with each year I teach; it inevitably finds its way into first year students' reading when I ask women to choose their own assignments.

In the plain of psychology, Gisela Konopka has shown me evidence that something different goes on with girls than with boys, that somehow Freud as generally understood isn't enough. *The Adolescent Girl in Conflict* (1966) brings me understanding or grounding; it also encouraged me to re-read Freud, this time through a feminist lens. I have found it both supportive and expositional of current psychological conversation in the field of gender psychology.

I mentioned the theologian Mary Daly earlier. *Beyond God the Father*, though working outside any of the three fields I've mentioned and seemingly unrelated to either writing or pedagogy, gives permission to both think and voice ideas in terms beyond the patriarchal. Understanding something about how Judeo-Christian traditions influence language has been important to my seeing impediments a patriarchal religion places on any area of thought outside of or beyond a patriarchal system. That such impediments yet hamper us is illustrated by the fact that our culture still has difficulty in addressing a godhead as female. (A banning this spring by the Southern Baptist Convention of gender-inclusive translations of the *New English Bible* testifies to this.) The public inability to see traditional American Christianity as a "phallocracy," a largely patriarchal mythology which denies and dehumanizes the feminine, cripples our ability as a society to espouse alternate ways of looking at the world, even in what we might think of as purely academic settings. To expose all such traditional definitions as myth, and the specific

violence the Christian myth perpetrates against women, is Daly's project. Central to her exposure of Christianity's violence against women is her concept of Naming, which seems to me to have import to composition study: "Bombarded by the constant babble of the media and of ordinary conversation in a verbicidal, gynocidal, biocidal environment, women forget the deep Background of words and of our own Selves" (xiv). Women's religious task, in Daly's estimation, is to re-member herself, to reclaim from the "man-made master-minded media" womanhood's "Deep Memory" and in that reclamation produce a woman-identified hope which can "de-reify 'God,' that is, of changing the conception/perception of god from 'the supreme being' to Be-ing. The Naming of Be-ing as Verb—as intransitive Verb that does not require an 'object'—expresses an Other way of understanding ultimate/intimate reality" (xvii). It seems to me that Daly's language coexists but challenges the language of identity construction in much of the current argument within both expressivist and constructionist theory.

Alongside Daly I have been reading Leigh Gilmore's *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*. Daly attacks the traditional cultural language of identity construction and proposes a more inclusive way; Gilmore suggests that women approach the project of autobiography differently than men. Examining the technologies of autobiography (the autobiographics) of women in a composition classroom may show me ways to help them use autobiography more constructively. Is it possible, for instance, to literally construct gender identity as we write? Is the "dis/organization" characteristic of women's autobiographical writing (textual moves that women use to keep themselves from being lost or excluded in cultural representation by over reliance on

tradition/patriarchal theories of interpretation) an attempt at re/organization of gender?

These are ways I'll be attempting to make Daly and Gilmore speak to each other in my study.

Like silt deposited in a delta, Jane Flax's article, "The Conflict between Nurturance and Autonomy in Mother-Daughter Relationships and within Feminism," prepared me to layer the themes of parenting and teaching. My layering continues with Nancy Chodorow's *Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* and Madeleine R. Grumet's *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (both 1978). Chodorow's work begins with the assumption of the family as a central agent of women's oppression as well as the major institution in women's lives, but pushes beyond an assumption of parenting as biologically self-explanatory of a universal social structure and toward a deconstructionist study of why women mother. *The Reproduction of Mothering* is feminist Freudianism examining the psychodynamics of the family. For me, Grumet's *Bitter Milk* takes on where Chodorow leaves off, into the realm of the classroom. As an educator, I find sententiousness in theory as it circles back to pedagogy. Grumet's theory centers in what she calls "body knowledge," a term and an idea borrowed from French feminism which attempts a cultural explanation of why women (and anyone who espouses what we identify as specifically female attributes) have been charged and entrusted with the teaching of each generation, and the consequences of that charge. In American educational systems, "The intentions, assumptions, emotions, and achievements of educational practice and theory are infused with motives that come from our own reproductive histories and commitments," she writes (7). "Metaphor matters" in such a

way that to understand how society reproduces itself through education rests on understanding the physical and emotional process of biological reproduction.

If our understanding of education rests on our understanding of the reproduction of society, then the reproduction of society itself rests on our understanding of reproduction, a project that shapes our lives, dominating our sexual, familial, economic, political, and finally, educational experience...[W]hat is most fundamental to our lives as men and women sharing a moment on this planet is the process and experience of reproducing ourselves (4).

The decade of the '80s was commensurate with my entry into composition, just at the time when feminist theory began moving beyond academic borders to a wider popular readership. A cursory look through the Women's Studies section of the bookstore reflects a wide demand for reading about the ways society allows female "smartness." Susan Griffin's *Pornography and Silence: Cultures' Revenge against Nature*, which exposes cultural violence done to women, particularly through the means of commercial advertising and pop culture, gives me a language of reprisal to take into the composition classroom where the age of most students insures them of being primary mass media targets. Griffin shows the logical progression pornographic iconography takes to racism, explicating how bigotry in any form is an expression of what is most hated and feared in oneself. "[T]he woman in pornography, like 'the Jew' in anti-Semitism and 'the black' in racism, is simply a lost part of the soul, that region of being the pornographic or the racist mind would forget and deny. And finally, we shall see that to have knowledge of this forbidden part of the soul is to have eros" (2).

As teachers, whether through trial and error, through some long-forgotten teaching lesson, or through a mysterious process of academic absorption, there are certain

things we know intuitively about what works and doesn't work in the classroom. Like land reclaimed from receding flood waters, Nel Noddings contributes ethical confirmation to pedagogy rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness. Her *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* aligns composition pedagogy with feminist technique. Noddings taught me to value my honestly-earned feminine intuition in the classroom. Adding theoretical language to intuition and enumerating the possibilities of feminism both inside the classroom and with the larger administrative climate beyond are *Gendered Subjects: The Dynamics of Feminist Teaching* (Culley and Portuges), *Making Connection's* (Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer), and *Gender and Discourse* (Deborah Tannen).

And then there's *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Mary Belenky et al), the book that made me simultaneously say Of course and Why didn't I notice that earlier? The way it parcels out women's personalities in increments forced me into doing the same, articulating ideas I'd carried around all my life. In other words, it gave me language, language that now will enable me to quantify differences here between passive acceptance of ideas and true ownership. The ways the authors assign importance and give dignity to female thought processes helps me read new importance in my student's work. I stop being quite so dismissive both about the ways my female students approach their essays and the subjects about which they write.

We do not think of the ordinary person as preoccupied with such difficult and profound questions as: What is truth? What is authority? To whom do I listen? What counts for me as evidence? How do I know what I know? Yet to ask ourselves these questions and to reflect on our answers is more than an intellectual exercise, for our basic assumptions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge shape the way we see the world and

ourselves as participants in it. They affect our definitions of ourselves, the way we interact with others, our public and private personae, our sense of control over life events, our views of teaching and learning, and our conceptions of morality (3).

Belenky's knowers in the positions of silence and received knowledge (women who listen to the voices of others because they are not yet ready to hear and credit their own) parallel students I see who have yet to assume ownership of their scholarship; subjective and procedural knowers are working towards ownership by beginning to value self and appreciate their own powers of reason; knowers of constructed knowledge who recognize their ability to manipulate reality with words to create knowledge are women who have moved into ownership. I see this text being of considerable use to me as I later move into the implications of my study.

Cutting deeper swathes through feminist floodplains are *Gender Trouble* (Judith Butler) and *Essentially Speaking* (Diana Fuss). Questions about essentialism and the notion of fixed gender identities complicate my study in interesting ways. If I claim that self-esteem is dependent upon awareness and acceptance of gender identity, the ways in which that identity is formed and the forces surrounding its formation must also be proportionally responsible for a young woman's ability to negotiate—make the healthiest and most self-affirming use of—her identity. I'll also be looking at several collections of feminist theory as I write: *Feminism/Postmodernism* (Linda J. Nickelson, ed.), *Feminist Contentions* (Benhabib, Butler, Corness, and Fraser), and *Women, Knowledge and Reality* (Garry and Pearsall), and *Feminisms and Pedagogies of Everyday Life* (Carmen Luke). I need to begin to understand how gender shapes political possibilities.

It would appear as one looks through the popular offerings in gender studies in any mall-variety bookstore that there's little left to research and write about the subject. The nineties has decidedly moved gender/pedagogy conversation onto the popular bookshelf. An article in our local paper on the op-ed page listed favorite reads by various town personalities, and among the usual romance and mystery novels were items from my bibliography. The mayor was reading *Prisoner's of Men's Dreams: Striking Out for a New Feminist Future* (Suzanne Gordon), a fireman was making his way through *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (Mary Pipher), and a store-clerk was in the middle of *No More Nice Girl* (Rosemary Agonito).

But I think such proliferation is also dangerously deceptive in that it shuts down the possibility for certain conversation that still needs to happen.⁷ Sometimes talk in the classroom about feminist concerns gets shunted aside when one of two of the louder voices declares that they've heard it all before, we've already been over that territory, and since it's not the way it used to be, all the problems have been solved.⁸ In the same ways that the token female in a political or business position block the path of possibility for more gender-equitable promotions for the rest of the group, the popular text which offers a solution is touted as *the* solution.⁹

That said, I still approach each of these texts as potentially useful in this study. Looked at individually, each allows a specific surface treatment of a problem, but neither shallow nor unnavigatable. I'll be plumbing each for what it offers to the field of education. An examination of the adolescent perspective is Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (the fireman's choice) which zeroes in on

the dangers of the middle school years from which my own students have so recently emerged. Pipher offers me a specific theory of developmental psychology as she locates mother-daughter conflict as a complement to masculine Freudian tradition; the part of my identity as mother of daughters confirms some of what she argues and augments my comprehension of eighteen-year-old female students. Studies like the Sadkers' (see below) and Pipher's have spawned a grouping of early- to mid-teenage explorations on how gender identity awareness is linked to educational development. Notable here are Susannah Sheffer's *A Sense of Self: Listening to Homeschooled Adolescent Girls* and Carol Gilligan et al's *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School* (and other texts coming out of the experiences of students and teachers at Emma Willard), and Brown and Gilligan's *Meeting at the Crossroads*, as well as dozens of journal, magazine, and news articles reporting experiments and findings from studies the larger texts inspire. I've found two other genre texts useful: Peggy Orenstein's *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap* (an AAUW-sponsored work) centers itself in middle school classrooms which cut across economic, racial, and class lines; Susan J. Douglas's *Where the Girls Are* offers the middle-twentieth-century feminist cultural history of our developmental years that traditional history books, pop-music charts, and movie lists largely ignore.¹⁰

Although it's difficult to weigh consequences of an individual text or an individual theorist, there is a study that has and will continue to reshape educational practice, and that's the thirty-year AAUW-sponsored *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls* by Myra and David Sadker (1994). The impact of this research lies in the

exposure of subtle and seemingly innocuous classroom practices that favor boys over girls. Until I read this book, I thought my teaching was gender-equitable, but the Sadkers' impartial lens revealed both the ways in which traditional education had prejudicially shaped my students' abilities and perceptions before reaching the college classroom, and the ways in which I was unwittingly perpetrating and inseminating the bias.

As Elizabeth Flynn points out, composition studies currently document the ideological convergence of psychoanalysis and feminism, or, in the categorical listing I've given, specifically learning theory and gender studies. My intent is to embed myself similarly, then to bring my positioning in the field of composition to triangulate my research.

I align myself primarily with social constructionism both in gender study and in composition study, although I say this with qualifications; Diana Fuss' arguments against putting construct and essence in opposition and allowing each to inform the other intrigue me as does a similar conversation going on in composition (see Lad Tobin, Don Jones). After all, if I don't call myself an expressivist, then what am I if I believe in the power of writing to shape thought? "It is more honest and accurate, I believe," writes Wendy Bishop, "to admit to our creations, combinations, adaptations, and inventions since this is how we actually make knowledge" in an ethnographic process she calls "being-invented-as-culture" (*Taking Stock*, 266, 7).

Chapter Notes

1. Miss McKenzie was indeed in good company in being dismissed for conjugal reasons. In 1916 in rural Minnesota, my own grandmother was asked to resign her teaching position when she married my grandfather, a memory that caused her to comment years later on her 100th birthday, "I didn't understand it then, and I don't understand it now!" At least she went peaceably, if with some confusion; Don Murray recalls that in his elementary years, a female teacher had to be forcibly taken by police from her classroom when the school board learned of her engagement!

2. Information obtained telephone interview with the Office of the Registrar at the University of New Hampshire.

3. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Twenty-fourth Edition. Henry H. Halley. Zondervon Publishing House; Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965.

4. *Foundations of Colonial America, Vol. I.* ed. W. Keith Kavenagh; Chelsea House Publishers, N.Y., 1973.

5. *The Timetables of History: A Horizontal Linkage of People and Events*, Third Revised Edition. Bernard Grun. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1991. Based on Werner Stein's *Kulturfahrplan*.

6. "Constructivist and Postmodern Feminisms," Elizabeth Flynn. *Journal of Composition Theory*; Volume 17, Number 1, 1997. Review of *Women Writing Culture*, ed. Gary A. Olson and Elizabeth Hirsh (Albany: SUNY P, 1995, 204 pages). Pages 109-114.

7. Later in my dissertation, I will want to include some of the criticism and backlash that studies written by the Sadkers, Pipher, Orenstein, Sheffer, Gilligan and others have spawned. A frequent criticism leveled is that all are essentially "soft" analysis. An example comes from a recent Forbes Magazine article claiming that the AAUW study both manipulates statistics to prove gender bias and downplays women's academic achievement, concluding that "The AAUW's charge that girls are 'discouraged' from taking math and science courses by schools is flatly contradicted by the facts." It seems to me that in the face of such criticism, it becomes necessary to commit ourselves more deeply to psychological explanations and connections and also attend to more responsible documentation in research in issues of gender without losing the freshness and validity of our own story-telling. However, in the end analysis, statistics-- themselves cultural artifacts--must never be interpreted as definitive proof but only as one tool in a collection of tools for describing cultural phenomena.

8. In our own yards, *President's Commission on the Status of Women: Report on the Status of Women, 1993-1994* (University of New Hampshire, Durham, 1996) reveals the current disparity here. While the report states that "Academically, women do very

well" with 72.5% of the university honors going to women graduates. At the same time, women occupy only 28.5% tenure-track faculty positions and median salaries for women faculty are at least \$1000 less than men's.

9. I may wish to explore some of the implications of the National Center for Education Statistics *Digest of Education Statistics 1994* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept of Education, 1994) as cited by Robert J. Connors' argument in February 1996's CE. Connors argues that while feminism has provided educators ways to reconsider women's ways of knowing and teaching, it has largely ignored men's issues and feminized the field of composition. "This is wonderful, of course. But the shift from a male-dominated rhetoric to a feminized and feminist composition studies has illuminated women's issues in writing while leaving many male teachers uncertain of how or whether they fit in. Few men I know are certain about whether they can be feminists, and the decline of older agonistic teaching methods has not produced any model that defines male roles as clearly as those old contestive pedagogies did" (143).

While such criticism of feminism in composition is not seemingly my primary concern in this study, my sense is that an educational climate that supports feminist backlash eventually influences what happens in my classroom as it influences my students' thinking and my educational practice.

10. The length and breadth of both the AAUW study and the Sadkers' work—stretching over three decades and including the experience of hundreds of educators teaching thousands of students—bears out the contention that despite significant cataloguing of educational disparity between the treatment of boys and girls, female adolescent experience is much the same and educational practice is still despairingly unequal as when their study was launched. As they contend, "Despite proclamations that equity had been achieved, the cover-up was transparent: Bias persisted from the elementary grades through medical and law school" [Sadker x]. My personal experience as the mother of three daughters just emerging from their teens combined with memories of education in the fifties and sixties convinces me that, changes in national economy and technologies notwithstanding, this is indeed true.

CHAPTER TWO

SELF-EXAMINATION: WHAT DO I OWN?

"In telling the story of the self, the writer imposes order where there is chaos, structural coherence where there is memory and chronology, voice where there is silence."

-Autobiographics, Leigh Gilmore, 85

Ownership: A Definition

The definition of ownership I continue herein is both particular, especially in the way I will be using it to describe specific activities women find useful to find their way around educational settings, and replete. Part of what I want to do is separate myself from the word entitlement, which, because of recent legislation has become the cache for what needs to be done for both women and minorities in places of work, education, or social activity. (The much publicized Title 9, for instance, grants that girls and women are entitled to the same opportunities in school athletic programs as are boys and men.) Entitlement is related to the idea of ownership, to be sure, but it isn't the same. While important—I don't wish here to belittle the principles of entitlement—it doesn't suit my purposes because it doesn't rely on interactivity on the part of the entitled person. Like an insurance benefit or a product guarantee, entitlement is something someone else has decreed you "deserve," and in that sense, it's something given to you. You qualify for it, and you're allowed to have it. You can be entitled to something but, for varied reasons,

not apply the rights of ownership. If the rights are fairly new, you may feel social censorship against exercising them. Or if you haven't been taught, you may not know how to apply them.

On the other hand, ownership, while it might be deserved, precludes the passive. It carries with it the idea that the onus is on you to go out and procure the thing in question. You have to engage, become an active participant. Once you recognize that you have ownership over something, you have the power to control it, influence it, or alter it to suit your needs. Ownership versus entitlement translates directly into the composition classroom as the difference between active and passive voice. My usage of the term voice here goes beyond the grammatical sense to encompass the metaphorical active voice in the matter of agency. To speak of agency in discourse means to designate the differences between who is doing the construction of a subject and who or what, in a Foucaultian sense, is being constructed. While admitting a structuralist suggestion that the student author (or any author) is but a socially constructed product, and the essentialist position that engenders a natural and therefore static subjectivity, I cannot bring myself to give up a belief in individualism. In matters of writing, albeit in a metaphorical sense, I have agency, I have voice, and I encourage my students thusly. It is at the nexus of agency and voice where students find ownership.

The Lockean idea that property mixed with labor equals ownership is where I'm heading. I'd like to illustrate this with personal experience. The art form of quilting has helped me symbolically understand and piece together disparate parts of my life. It's a place where artistic drive, family history, gender study, and writing all come together.

Like feminist theory, patchwork quilting is a celebration of diverse components put together to create something new.

Over the course of several years, I've come to ownership of my craft. Several things had to happen before I could come to ownership. First, I had to learn my subject; actually, in this case several subjects, namely basic elements of design, sewing, and the techniques of quilting. Through practice—manipulation of the components—I have come to an understanding of what my raw materials can and can't do. Through a combination of rote learning and practice, I made a decision for ownership, took the design of quilting out of someone else's hands and into my own, manipulated it, changed it, adapted it until it's become something new.

Another way to talk about this is to say that no one taught me how to do it; I taught myself. I thereby own the idea and the process. That's not to say that I came upon it alone. As in the myth of the independent scholar,¹ to believe that I am responsible for the process without being able to understand how many people contributed to it is a canard. Collaboration and the admitting of collaboration is not just an idea; it's a necessity. But none of that takes away from the fact that it is my ownership of both the idea (the seeds of which were planted in collaboration, or in Bakhtin's word, heteroglossia) and the process (conditions for which were set in motion by others long before I entered quilting).

The idea of owning a topic or a body of knowledge, or even simply fragments of the body, is what I understand M.M. Bakhtin to mean in a passage from "Discourse in the Novel." This passage has become my way of understanding what happens intellectually

when we learn because it details step by step the act of assuming ownership of a piece of knowledge. I quote it here with my own understanding of the process interspersed in bracketed type as it applies to my quilting experience.

When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way [*I need to devise a border that will coordinate with all the fabrics I've already used. It has to have a degree of movement and design of its own beyond a single pattern. Lacking a ready solution— not enough fabric, no written instructions—my lack forces me to consider ways other than I've been taught*], what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse [*my new idea*] and authoritarian enforced discourse [*The voice of my first quilting teacher: "Always follow the pattern religiously." My mother's voice: "You don't always come up with the best color combinations."*] along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us [*The fact that Amish quilt designers eschew patterned fabrics doesn't matter here, but pioneer women's crumb-piecing might*].

Internally persuasive discourse—as opposed to one that is externally authoritative—is, as it is affirmed through assimilation tightly interwoven with "one's own word." [*I have a set of artistic conventions learned from formal art study. I have past experience in devising successful design solutions. These are discourses I already own.*]

In the everyday round of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours [*self-designed solutions*] and half-someone else's [*learned artistic conventions*]. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words [*utilizing small pieces of used fabric = dirty turpentine cleaned from a brush*], that it organizes masses of our words from within [*"crumb-piecing," hidden in my memory banks, suddenly occurs to me*], and does not remain in an isolated and static condition [*I feel compelled to give this a try*]. It is not so much interpreted by us as it is further, that is freely, developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. More than that, it enters into an intense interaction, a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses. Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values. The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean ("Discourse" 345,6).

In Bakhtin's terms, what happens when we encounter "internally persuasive discourse" (a new idea) that argues for hegemony with "authoritarian enforced

discourse" (old ideas of Truth) is a leveling of images into "the internally persuasive word" (some sort of a compromise between old and new with which I can live). In a craft such as quilting, this is achieved by combining learned technique with the new and experimental. In developing pedagogical theory, it's done by exposing past experience to the light of current theory, thereby allowing some new understandings about those experiences to shape where we go from here. Bakhtin's struggle for hegemony among ideas is the struggle for ownership, for which of those ideas the thinker will come to own and how the ownership comes about. In a moment of discovery a student thinker realizes there's no Truth and that Truth is no longer what she's looking for, but rather one way in a dozen possible ways to look at the world, to ply the evidence (evidence, not "fact") and make the evidence point a certain direction.

In a composition classroom, the problems of ownership of knowledge and creation of new knowledge are compounded by poststructuralist denials of personal identity and experience. I ask the same question that Diana Fuss poses in "Essentialism in the Classroom": "How are we to handle our student's (and perhaps our own) daily appeals to experiential knowledge when, with the advent of poststructuralist thought, experience has been placed so convincingly under erasure?" (113). (I'm tempted to put *so convincingly* in quotation marks: I'm not sure Fuss quite believes the Postmodern dictum; I know I have problems with it.) It often seems that in process writing theory we accept *a priori* the ownership of ourselves as subjects, attainable through autobiography. As a teacher, I work by examining my own memory towards an autobiographical, experiential "knowing" of what happens to young women, always

conscious of and cautioned by the knowledge that in poststructuralist thought, what we think of as the personal identity of a speaker is in question, and therefore her experiential knowledge is suspect. When experiential knowledge is called upon to authorize speech, as in composition--or any field that embraces feminist theory--"The appeal to experience, as the ultimate test of all knowledge, merely subtends the subject in its fantasy of autonomy and control" (Fuss 114). At the same time, precisely *because* autobiography is shaped by culture, it gives the chance to reconstitute a history by claiming and reclaiming what is remembered. Hence, writing allows me to shape my past into a narrative with the ability to inform my present. Cautioned by the poststructuralist analysis of identity erasure, acknowledging as clearly as possible the role culture plays in "creating" (manipulating?) my identity, and hopefully consciously using those forces to my advantage, I plow ahead into autobiography, not so much to establish authority as a speaker as to pose the right of this speaker to question and eventually own her experience. I ask the questions: what does experience show about who I am, what I have become, what special circumstances might have shaped my teaching identity, and what can I learn from my experience that might help my practices in pedagogy? I find myself echoing the words of Carmen Luke's introduction to *Feminisms and Pedagogies of Everyday Life*: "My own life-long experiences of having been object and agent of pedagogical practices have led me to conceptualize pedagogy in very different ways than those commonly forwarded by educational theory. . . Yet they have profoundly influenced how [I] teach. . ." (4). Within the ideology I explore, writing in the present, I use autobiographical writing to organize personal experience in such a way as to produce

and shape the past, thereby creating for myself a usable knowledge of that past. The past "has already occurred and yet is still to be produced—an indispensable point of reference, yet never simply there," says Jonathan Culler.² Taking both politics and ideologies into consideration, I would hope that my students would be able to do the same sort of exploration for self knowledge in the university classroom, "where identities can often seem more rigidified, politics more personalized, and past histories more intensified" (Fuss, 115). Although Bakhtin is not often interpreted as feminist, the structuralist nature of his learning theory allows both women and minorities room to explore identity formulations in a way Poststructuralist erasure prevents. Each time I apply Bakhtin, I turn the erasure argument back on itself: if culture, exclusively, forms identity, so be it—use the culture of autobiography to re-form identity. I struggle to find the words to describe myself, and the words that appear on the page shape me, create me, reveal myself to me as would a mirror.

Owning My Experience: The Teacher-Student Dyad

Other photographic records of my educational development fail to capture the essence of the experience quite so clearly for me as my kindergarten photo. Through the years of elementary school, middle, and senior high school, Kodak faithfully recorded the physical me and that of my friends, but I learned from Barbara's example and became increasingly savvy about how to present myself to the camera. By first grade I'd learned to face forward and smile. The frown was gone, safely tucked away from the public eye.

Not that those photos don't tell stories in their own way, because they do. Note, for instance, as you look cumulatively through eight years of group pictures that the girls unfailingly occupy the front rows and the boys the back, regardless of relative height. The teacher, whether centered or off to the side, stands with the boys. Some years girls sit on chairs, whereas boys almost never do. When standing, the taller children occupy the middle positions; short people get the ends, sometimes in the threatening position of near-cropping. Yes, you can tell a lot about my engendered elementary society by looking at the pictures.

I study the pictures to position myself as a teacher of first year college composition students. My positioning involves four perspectives, four angles. The first and most obvious—the persona my students immediately meet—is of teacher. But teacher is really a dyad, a janus configuration made up of past (student) and present (teacher) experience. Like every other teacher in our culture, I carry the memory of student experience within my pedagogy. To complicate the positioning even further, because I'm a woman with a family, my roles as both daughter and mother become embedded within a heavily-gendered professional persona. School photos can't reveal the familial roles, so I'll explore their connections to the professional later. For now I'll examine the obvious, my public persona. I return to the school photos conscientiously preserved and arranged year by year in my mother's collections.

Grade by grade, row by row, we march to the gymnasium to perch bare-legged on metal chairs or line precariously across slivery wooden bleachers. What the camera doesn't show is the tension some of us felt behind our rote smiles. First grade: You can't see the

"tail" of braided yarn that was safety-pinned to the back of my skirt when I tattled on Teddy Yost for copying my arithmetic answers. Second grade: You can't see me sitting outside the classroom on a chair in the hall, banished from my peers by own beloved Miss Hall for complaining aloud that the spelling words are too easy. The incident is dramatic enough for me to remember the list itself forty years later--*he, she, they, it*--as well as Miss Hall's damning words: "There's no need to act like a little know-it-all." Third and fourth grade: I maintained for years that these were my favorite; what I find interesting now is the fact that I remember very few actual incidents from these years, only that they felt secure. (Is it coincidence when I place myself in this period that one very special item of clothing comes to mind? Mom sewed me a pretty blue print dress that made me feel good. I remember thinking, "Let the boys see me now!" as I walked down the hall the first day I wore it.)

Things changed in fifth and sixth grade. Memory explodes for me during that two-year period of upper elementary. These were my Charles Dickens years: It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. I entered them at age ten years, five months, and exited at twelve years, two months. At their beginning I stood four foot six inches, almost the shortest of the group; by their end I was an adult height, five foot three, third from the tallest. I'd grown breasts and experienced my first period. During the two years, my mother, widowed five years before, began dating and announced her engagement to the man who became my stepfather the summer following.

I see these years as a whole, not separate increments, perhaps largely because I spent them in the same classroom with the same teacher, not by repeating a year, but

because our building was small. My rural school partially combined classes to compensate. In fact, after kindergarten in California, in my southern Minnesota school, first grade was the only year I spent in a single, self-contained unit. In second grade, the top eight students (and already I knew the way to valedictorian at graduation was blocked only by Nancy Schoneman, a girl who should have been in the class ahead of me save for the fact that her parents "kept her back" from first grade) were placed with the third grade. Third grade I spent with the fourth and fourth with the top from the third. Fifth flip-flopped so that I again found myself with the class above, and vice versa for sixth.

It's my memories of fifth and sixth grade that haunt me. In many ways, these two years overpower everything that came before. Specifically, one individual--alternately mentor and tormentor--holds sway. As I position myself in Emmons Public School, room 5, the second door down from the new girls' bathroom, no matter which way I turn, I feel the gaze of Mrs. Thekla Leonhardi.

The massive Mrs. Leonhardi was a Nordic powerhouse of pride, and it showed in her carriage, her demeanor, and her dress. She was--and I have to say what I'm about to say because if I'm not totally honest, this document will be false--fat (cringe!) and brutal (gasp!), but even now when she's been dead for a dozen years, I report those facts with trepidation, more than a little afraid she'll catch me. If she does, she'll know immediately that I wasn't who she thought I was, who she wanted me to be. I wasn't the student who admired her; I was the student who manipulated her. I wasn't sweet and docile; I was "smart."

In the beginning I loved Mrs. Leonhardi. Her reputation was fearful. She demanded a lot of her students, but she was fair too. My older brother, who had a learning disability, had struggled for her, but once she figured out that his problems were perceptual, not attitudinal, she became his ally. I expected she'd be my ally too.

And she was until the day I asked a "dumb" question. One day we had a particularly exciting science session about light waves. Science always intrigued me. I think I came by this love naturally: my father had been a research chemist, my mother was a nurse, and there were various science professors and technicians in the wider family. Our text and Mrs. Leonhardi had already covered sound waves, after which lesson I marveled around for days about such invisible wonders, even attempting a few secret experiments to see if I could catch a glimpse of sound. And now, light waves! Fracturing and refracting, acting like substances that had critical mass but far more powerful and mysterious. Talk about a revelation! I was in such a state of agitation that my heart was pounding, my breathing felt ragged, and I was unable to keep quiet. My thoughts began escaping from my mouth by themselves, forming into a thousand questions; I couldn't stop them, couldn't wait for hand-raising. "If it travels, it's like a real *thing*, but invisible, like air, like gas, but you can feel it because it gets hot..." I was disturbing the class. Mrs. Leonhardi tried to shush me, tried to remind me to wait my turn, stop interrupting, but I couldn't contain myself. "If it's real, if it's a thing, why can't you "catch" it? Fill a container with a whole lot of it and then clamp it shut! If it's a real thing, why does it disappear? Huh?"

Silence. Then, "Don't ask stupid questions like a stupid girl. Light is a reflection. You want to talk? I'll talk to you during recess." Staying in for recess was pretty severe. And what did we talk about during that hiatus? "Learn to control yourself," and "don't be smart with me."

And so I learned not to ask stupid questions. I learned not to ask. I learned that the stuff of knowledge—concepts, experiments, scientific findings—were not mine to manipulate or tinker with or get my hands dirty on, only to accept.

I'm not being entirely fair to Mrs. Leonhardi. In many ways, she was a gifted teacher; in retrospect I have to believe that her limitations, specifically those practices that caused gender limitations, were produced and condoned by the culture of the times. In spite of those first rocky lessons, I did respect and appreciate her teaching, partly because I was a clever girl, resourceful enough about personal relations to develop ways to get what I needed from Mrs. Leonhardi and in return give her some satisfaction from having me as a student. My method? Utilize her sense of pride: compliment her on her clothes, her shoes, her hair, her makeup. I did it well, not excessively, never too often to be obvious, just regularly enough to keep her convinced that I sat in awe.

I don't think it was coincidence that I felt it necessary to develop these skills for myself during the time when I was physically changing from girlhood to adolescence. "The consciousness of the narrowing of life that can happen as girls' bodies start to change is common among girls [of this age]," writes Susannah Sheffer in *A Sense of Self*, "And it's not just a loss of control that girls can experience, but a feeling of constriction, of having to curtail their activities" (148). It was in Mrs. Leonhardi's classroom where I witnessed

Cheryl's blood-on-the-skirt humiliation, and it promptly became an appalling personal likelihood.

There were plenty more times between sixth grade and my graduation from high school when I would use the lessons I learned so well from Mrs. Leonhardi. In seventh grade I fell in love with my algebra teacher, a handsome blonde first-year professional who coached football on the side. I liked math, and it came easily for me. I did the homework promptly and handily, made mostly A's on quizzes and tests, and kept quiet in class except to compliment Mr. Christiansen on his taste in ties.

In eighth-grade science I quiescently accepted a C on a sloppily-put together crystal radio and chalked it up to a fluke. It had come about in this way. Each of us was to choose a project from Mr. Nichol's list. I was absent the day the selections were chosen and had to take what was leftover. Since I was a "good girl" student, though disappointed, I would have applied the same work ethic towards building the crystal radio as any other assignment had it not been for Mr. Nichol's comment about it. "Too bad. It's boy's project, so I won't expect much from you." And he didn't get much.

I can read numerous other snapshots—even formal portraits—of how I might have handled assignments differently had I been more inclined to take serious ownership of the topic or if I'd been considered a full citizen in the classroom or if I'd been encouraged to assert myself as a contributing member of the academic community, and I can wish that I might have posed differently. I'll develop here only two of them, chosen first because they were more than everyday incidents but, rather, truly life-changing and secondly because

with the advantage of perspective I see how complexly the two are interwoven with a burgeoning sexual identity.

Like an old romance, my first story has a hero, the unassuming, somewhat nerdy Mr. Hove. It was his first year, he wasn't married, and he was that rare gifted teacher from whom every student merits respect and attention. He taught English. It was my sophomore year, and though I was somewhat indifferent to Mr. Hove, I loved his class because I loved the content. Half way through that spring he asked me one day to make an appointment to stop in after school and talk. Quite sure of my outstanding performance, I expected to be asked to take on a special project, maybe help with tutoring a difficult student or make a presentation to the class. Possibly he wanted to use one of my essays as an example or even send it off to a journal for publication.

I must tell you here who I was trying to be at fifteen years of age. As I've indicated, there was the good student-good girl side of me that succeeded in the classroom, but high school didn't end at the classroom door, and the person I was constructing to mediate the hallways, the football games, and the dances had to be something altogether different. I was negotiating that territory between Pipher's subjects' conflicting political and personal selves. Susan Griffin (*Pornography and Silence*) is far less gentle. She says women in our culture are seen as the site of "denied knowledge" or as blank screens, and are forced to choose between being virgin and whore. To that end, I'd begun to dress the part of the whore (as fully as my strict Lutheran family would allow) and adopt matching mannerisms. In other words, I was learning to walk the walk and talk

the talk. As of yet I had not managed to cross the line into "fast" or "loose," but I was definitely pushing a few toes over the boundaries.

Mr. Hove knew me both inside and outside his classroom. What he wanted to talk about that afternoon was how those two personalities were in competition with each other and how that endangered my potential as a scholar. I don't remember his actual words, but I remember he told me among other things that because of my creative mind I was his favorite student. I remember that he pointed out how that mind couldn't fully develop as long as its owner was an object rather than a subject, as long as I consented to adopting the persona of traditional female subservience, seeing myself as a commodity rather than a person— perhaps he didn't use those words at all, but that was the gist of it. At the time I hadn't the vocabulary to articulate such. Nevertheless I understood his intent, that my present attitudes were thwarting my development as a complete thinking human.

Whereas a few years earlier I might have daydreamed about the smooth Mr. Christiansen saying such things to me, and I would have willingly interpreted them with sexual innuendoes, I couldn't misconstrue Mr. Hove's comments that way. Nothing was veiled. He respected my intelligence, he had a vision for my future, and he determined that I was endangering my potential in accepting certain culturally-imposed limitations. All was appropriate, but he had challenged me in a way in which I didn't know how to respond. Ironically, I had been somewhat more equipped culturally to handle the inappropriate! He was asking me to be something more—to *believe* I could be something more—than I'd ever been openly encouraged to be by another teacher.

My response was an anti-response. Lamentably, for the remainder of that semester I hid from Mr. Hove. In class I became mostly silent, performing assignments perfunctorily. Outside of class I avoided him. I temporarily dropped my membership in his extracurricular forensics group. His vision of what I could be contrasted too sharply with my construction of high school cache, so while in the long run I couldn't ignore his challenges, until the end of sophomore year I effectively dodged him and them. By the fall he'd gone on to teach at a larger school.³

I take the second picture from my junior year. Chemistry class was taught by another kind of first-year teacher. For two semesters, four quarters, we endured Mr. Hunter's simmering violence as we struggled through his tantrums. I'll say this for him: he was egalitarian in the sense that he abused girls and boys alike with his ranting. On most days we were lucky that he relied on words as weapons; on the worst days other things flew—pencils, test tubes, once even a slide rule. Behind his back we called him Old Chalky in honor of the boxes of the stuff his tantrums shattered against the wall behind us, for the most part slightly over our heads. I think I hated him.

Half way through the year I had occasion to arrange a private after-school make-up lab for a day I'd been absent. Already the afternoon was dark; dusk and cold descend early in January. When I arrived at his room, Mr. Hunter insisted the lights stay off. The building was quite nearly empty, maybe a janitor in another wing, or a sports team practicing out back, but here it was quiet.

The picture of that late afternoon in my memory doesn't include the nature of the experiment I was supposed to be doing, only Mr. Hunter's explorations. While my hands

were fumbling to light a Bunsen burner, his began fondling me. I don't remember my specific words or efforts, only that I fought blindly and fiercely and that several minutes into the struggle I caused him some degree of physical pain which afforded me the avenue to escape, leaving my winter coat, books, bookbag and whatever behind. I ran down the hall, down the stairs, out the front door and into the cold with the intention of waiting in the dark for my mother to arrive.

All this I'd done by some instinct of self-preservation. There in the cold, I came to my "senses," which was of course to realize that my experience must remain secret. He was a teacher, he was male, he had power. I'd already learned what weight those things held. In accusing him, I reasoned, it would be my behavior that was questioned, not his. In the end, I crept quietly back upstairs, and when I'd ascertained that he'd gone, retrieved my things, crept downstairs, and told no one.

I have thousands of memories and photos from the years between early childhood and high school graduation, good memories, positive messages, instructive snapshots, but these few I've divulged stand out particularly dramatically as sticking points for me in my formal education. These were points where I paid heavily, both with poor grades and attitudinal changes. Mr. Hunter gave me an F on the individual lab and a C for my final semester grade, the lowest grades on my high school transcripts. As I discovered when my three daughters studied the subject in high school and asked for help, my negative feelings about chemistry still linger.

I don't think it's coincidence that the events remembered above are linked with sexual feelings; each occurred during times of sexual identity insecurity. The link between

my failure in chemistry and sexual identity is obvious, but the link between educational crisis and ambivalent feelings about my sexuality appears in too many other instances for me to dismiss it. Constant fears about my popularity with the opposite sex, fights with boyfriends, and being exploited or abused by teachers because of my gender—like the day I was sent to the principal's office and ordered home to change when the dreaded blood-on-the-back-of-the-skirt appeared, then penalized for missed classtime—hover around the edges of almost all my traumatic school memories. After high school, in my first year of college, which began the summer after a rather serious two-year romance ended because, in my boyfriend's opinion, I was "too immature for a serious relationship," I made the decision that I was too dumb to pursue a degree in mathematics, even though my lowest grade to date in the subject was an A and math was my highest score on both the SATs and the ACT. Still young, I had nevertheless learned my cultural lessons well. I had become a split self, one part wanting to take educational ownership, another part accepting the cultural mandates from my generation.

Owning My Experience: The Mother-Daughter Dyad

Maybe my mother was right. This dissertation *is* about sex. My contention is that a woman's ability to take control of her education by owning knowledge is directly related to an understanding and acceptance with her gender identity, but how that differs from sexual identity is discomfiting. Before I can go any further, I need to again define some terms. This isn't easy. Generally speaking, contemporary theory designates sex as the observable biological condition of the human body (usually) allocated to the categories of

male and female, and gender as the social expectations of each. However, in *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler argues that both gender and sex are constructed, and that the dichotomous sexual pigeonholing of male/female and gender of masculine/feminine are structures designed to regulate the reproduction of society. Likewise, Michel Foucault (*History of Sexuality*) argues that sex is social technology which serves to regulate and, in some cases, oppress. The polar view, essentialism, propounds that both sex and gender are essential, biological truths expressing physical and emotional qualities that proscribe male and female. This is the position from which Diana Fuss argues in *Essentially Speaking*, although her work is a much broader attempt in that she addresses the idea that "essentialism is *essential* to social constructionism" which she says "powerfully throws into question the stability and impermeability of the essentialist/ constructionist binarism" (2), a split she argues is both detrimental to feminist positions and false. If essence is irreducible, argues Fuss, it's only because it has been *constructed* to be so. Borrowing the linguistic distinctions of John Locke, Fuss finds it useful to separate out two forms of essentialisms, nominal essence and real essence:

[N]ominal essence signifies for Locke a view of essence as merely a linguistic convenience, a classificatory fiction we need to categorize and to label. Real essences are discovered by close empirical observation: nominal essences are not "discovered" so much as assigned or produced—produced specifically by language (4,5)

Next, Fuss applies another linguistic movement, this time to equate "real" essences with what we have come to know as essentialism and "nominal" essences with constructionism. This allows a resultant both/and configuration which serves to make the two distinctions reliant on each other for completion. "My point . . . is that social constructionists do not

definitively escape the pull of essentialism, that indeed essentialism subtends the very idea of constructionism" (5). While the essentialist position is to see the body as occupying pre-social, pre-discursive space, and the constructionist that the body is a linguistically created category,

To say that the body is always already deeply embedded in the social is not by any sure means to preclude essentialism. Essentialism is embedded in the idea of the social and lodged in the problem of social determination . . . Too often, constructionists presume that the category of the social automatically escapes essentialism, in contradistinction to the way the category of the natural is presupposed to be inevitably entrapped within it. But there is no compelling reason to assume that the natural is, in essence, essentialist and that the social is, in essence, constructionist. If we are to intervene effectively in the impasse created by the essentialist/constructionist divide, it might be necessary to begin questioning the constructionist assumption that nature and fixity go together (naturally) just as sociality and change do together (naturally). In other words, it may be time to ask whether essences can change and whether constructions can be normative (6).

For the purposes of this project, I now call myself a socially normative essentialist and an essential constructionist. Under these designations, sex becomes a category whose essential nature is both described by and understood through linguistic structure (I stop just short of assigning formation), and gender the outward physical and behavioral manifestation of that nature. My intention between the two is that my inner, personal identity is sexual and my outer social identity is gender. Inside, I locate myself somewhere on a continuum of attributes stretching from and including all possible increments and combinations of masculine and feminine; no value is assigned to these attributes, no moral worth; I am what I am; sexual identity IS. My gender, on the other hand, is a construct—partly conscious, partly subconscious—erected to interact with culture. It becomes the face I show to the world. Judgment comes from forces outside me, from the

culture I live in; value or moral worth is placed upon my gender by the society I face. The barriers between inner and outer are somewhat permeable so that how comfortable I am with my sexual identity, how well I'm able to accept my positioning and allow it to become public, depends both on the mirror culture holds up to me and how I choose to position that mirror. If my inner positioning is not clear to me, the outer will be foggy too.

It follows then that my ability to own and produce a written representation of my identity, both sexual and gendered, hinges on the clarity of my inner positioning, and that makes whatever I write autobiographically in this dissertation directly proportional to acceptance levels of myself as female.

I can't talk about gender unless I've first talked at length to myself about sex, because my sexual identity undergirds any picture/mask I project of gender. This isn't a constant; where I locate myself on a sexual continuum changes with maturation, with hormonal levels, with everything that grows or changes through time about my physical body. The little girl scowling in her kindergarten photo isn't identical to the young woman facing the camera in her senior photos.

That seventeen-year-old had read an article in the magazine of the same name that successful models imagined themselves making love to the camera during their photo shoots. All my senior yearbook photos reveal my complicity; I wanted success. I didn't yet understand cultural seduction, but those photos reveal my burgeoning awareness of acceptable presentations of gender to the world in a sense that earlier photos didn't.

As a woman and a teacher several years beyond that seventeen-year-old, my sexual identity now includes conditions of femaleness which reflect an accumulation of identities

collected and collated through lived experience. Central to this, and closely relating itself to my teaching career, is a twenty-six-year intimacy with biological mothering. If, as Madelaine Grumet writes in *Bitter Milk*, women educators find that, "[t]he intentions, assumptions, emotions, and achievements of educational practice and theory are infused with motives that come from our own reproductive histories and commitments," then I need to examine my mothering history as well as my student identity to recognize the woman who walks into my classroom to teach (7). According to Carmen Lukes, acknowledgment of these issues precedes any work we do : "For feminist academic educators across the disciplines, these are issues of considerable theoretical and practical significance in relation to the still important feminist agenda of a politics of transformation" (7)

Even in my role as teacher I am a mother of three grown daughters, a woman who's battled local school systems, cheered her daughters at athletic events and concerts, sat on PTA boards, chaperoned field trips, and juggled her own work schedule (sometimes at the expense of other mothers' children) to be available when my daughters needed me. Those things inform my teaching, both of men and women. When a college student tells me he or she has to miss class because the baby is ill, I remember the tug of conscience when a younger me negotiated the ambivalent territories connecting the sometimes disparate worlds of parenting and professional life.

A mother has difficulty totally separating child and self, child's needs from own needs; this is especially so when her children are infants, but it continues in varying degrees throughout her mothering years. "So long as it is women and not test tubes who

bear children, conception, pregnancy, parturition, and lactation constitute an initial relation of women to their children that is symbiotic, one in which subject and object are mutually constituting" (Grumet, 10). "Mutually constituting" means that my child makes me who I am as much as I form her. Grumet's term for the relationship/glue that shapes mother/infant interactions from birth is *symbiosis*, which she defines as "the word that signals the intimate and contingent relations of mother and child that link them through time and space into a sticky, viscous undifferentiation" (101). Webster says it's "the living together in more or less intimate association or even close union of two dissimilar organisms," and differentiates symbiosis from parasitism, adding mutualism and commensalism as synonyms. I like the healthy, helpful sound of mutualism and the supportive sound of commensalism (literally, "eating at the same table").

Grumet's symbiosis principle is also true of other people's children of similar age who are placed in the mother-teacher's care, and for me, that includes my college students. I've thought it a particular blessing to teach people of a similar age as my daughters; it gives me a window into their lives that they themselves may be unable or unwilling to give me. But it also creates boundary problems for me—I am not the mother of this roomful of nineteen-year-olds I face, though at times they might want me to be. I don't need to shape their personal lives, and in some cases, I don't even want to, shouldn't even know about the details in those lives. However, my experience of mothering prevents me from being totally objective to their needs and wants.

At times I find myself on both sides of the fence: my student history meets my mother history meets my teacher history at frequent times when experience coincides. For

example, the year one of my daughters was sexually harassed, accosted, and abused by a high school teacher, I relived my experience with my chemistry teacher and simultaneously, vicariously, *symbiotically* took on the pain of students who showed or shared similar experiences. This summer as I help one of my daughters plan for a wedding and listen to her alternately enthuse and agonize about compromising her independence and privacy, I can ignore neither the memories of my own inner battles about marriage nor the guarded counsel I received from me from students who bring their romantic lives into the writing classroom.

"This child is mine, this child is me," says Grumet (11). My womanhood is mirrored in my daughters and in my students. "If the other to whom the biological individual is most closely related is the child, then the definition of subjectivity as that which is identical with myself and of objectivity as that which is other than myself originates in an experience of reproduction that differs for men and women" (10).

According to the key French feminist thinkers Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Monique Wittig, and Helene Cixous, the problem of female subjectivity is located in traditional Western usages of language. Consequently, their projects have been to use language to reread, reenvision, and rewrite the female body as text. Working against linguistic binaries that divide male/female into One/Other, they deconstruct patriarchal thought. Irigaray, for instance, takes traditionally accepted Western philosophical thought that attempts to pin woman down as Other and turns it upon itself in a feminist rereading: in Plato's famous allegory, the cave becomes a metaphor for *enceinte*, an enclosure or a pregnant womb.⁴ Similarly, Helene Cixous' *écriture féminine* turns Western repression of

the feminine back on itself in a deconstructive move, producing a literal re-writing of the female body. Instead of femaleness being a lack of maleness, it is posited as a state of "becoming," fluid and changing, and turning much of psychology against itself.

Appropriating the French feminists' body theories into a pedagogy, Grumet suggests that symbiosis might actually be used as a healthy experience. By reading our students, we can read ourselves, vice versa. "[T]he method of this discourse invites us to read the work of women in classrooms as a text of our repressions and compromises. It invites us to read the texts of educational experience and practice as semiotic as well as symbolic systems" (20).

There is an area in my life where I can locate a weaving together of many of the threads I've been talking about (remembering Grumet's term here: symbiosis), and that's in the act of writing. Some memory snapshots emerge that I can share. In the first I'm perhaps four years old. I have just learned to print my first name in capital letters.

In the picture, I am sitting at my mother's black-enameled Singer sewing machine, wishing she was home, wanting her. I pick a straight pin from the cushion. Even now the picture is vivid enough for me to feel the enamel peeling away under the pinpoint as bare, silver metal gleams D-O-R-O-T-H-Y. It isn't an unpleasant experience; on the contrary, I feel good. I've marked territory belonging to my mother, and the act makes me feel I'm sharing something of her. Later, when she discovers the inscription and accuses me, I deny it. "I suppose the elves did it then," she says, and add, "although they should have known better." While I hear tension in her voice, I'm surprised and relieved to know she's not terribly angry.

In the second picture, I'm an adult and have been so for many years. I've mailed Mom one of my magazine articles, a story about families and family reunions, in which I've used a little of my own family history. Waiting for her response, I recognize the same feeling of marking territory belonging to my mother as in the sewing machine project. Over the telephone she says, "I enjoyed it. It was good. You got some of the family facts confused though." Again, the familiar tension, and my relief that she's not terribly angry.

My third picture is more like a tape recording. I overhear a conversation between my mother and a friend; it's one of those conversations I'm supposed to overhear, because in the intense relationships between mothers and daughters it's sometimes easier to express things through the presence of a third party. "Writing. She just loves it. She didn't get that from me. Some people need to share their inside selves with the world. Not me. When I die, my thoughts will go with me."

Now while I know that it's not within the popular pedagogical vogue to talk about nineteen-year-olds and their relationship with their mothers, I'm going to do it anyway. In the college classroom we like to think of our female students as adult women, sexed and gendered certainly, but in social terms rather than familial; emerging autonomous personalities struggling with their responsible, professional places in a politicized, adult world—but *not* as daughters. Especially not daughters who might still be struggling with personal terms and issues of daughterhood and motherhood. To encourage them to explore such issues in the serious business of a composition classroom, their writing—or (even worse) in their personal relationships with us teachers during conferences and other after-class hours—is to mollycoddle. Such an activity is often seen as worse than useless.

It's dead wood, nonproductive, and even harmful. Let them, encourage them to write about close-to-the-bone stuff, their beliefs and dreams and inner struggles, but keep this topic out of the classroom. This is a professional relationship between teacher and student. Never mind that the teacher, being a similar age as the student's mother and being in a place of authority, nurturance and instructorship in similar ways as her parent, triggers emotional reactions that feel remarkably similar to what she supposedly just left; never mind that the student might be very recently severed by society from the close bonds of home and family and thrown into an artificial, four-year-limbo-from-the-"real-world" we call college (who says we don't have rites of passage anymore; this rite is longer, more protracted, more severe than any two-week sojourn into a hogan or the forest or the "mother's tents" of foreign societies--we just can't bring ourselves to call it by its name); never mind that the student might be feeling positively starved for mother-love, and knows that to admit it would be a social taboo.

But as I said, I'm going to have to talk about this relationship anyway, so I may as well use myself as example. I can't deny that the heart and core of female personhood--i.e., a woman's sexual identity--involves the relationship she's had with her mother. (While composition instructors are not psychologists, we don't have to be in denial either about what factors go into making up the teaching relationship between female instructors and their female students.) The three memory pictures of my writing experience with my mother show me the differences between hers and my own thoughts about the act of writing, especially personal narrative, the same kind of thoughtful writing that I ask of my students because, in the words of Leigh Gilmore which begin this chapter,

"In telling the story of the self, the writer imposes order where there is chaos, structural coherence where there is memory and chronology, voice where there is silence." Her words coincide with the meaning of autobiographical writing in my life; the patterns of events and emotion emerge as clear and meaningful patterns only through my process of recording them, and here the process is as important as its product, as words in my drafts circle round, interweaving disparate events and emotions, constantly probing for meaning. Why my mother has rejected the process for herself I can only guess at. I know intellectually that her inability to embrace it for herself does not constitute rejection of something important for me; nevertheless, our symbiosis with each other causes considerable tension around the issue. We reach impasse, and we agree to disagree.

What is there in this elemental, first human relationship of female infant with mother that causes the tensions of symbiosis? At the end of the last century, Freud gave us a serious theory for what happens as boys separate from their mothers and grow into personhood. He called it the Oedipus complex. He suggested that it might have bearing for girls too, but he wasn't sure how, and his solution was to dump all their unexplainable feelings into boxes which he labeled "penis envy" and "female neurosis." But somehow, neither label, taking their meaning from the position of lack in regards to a male opinion of what women might be missing, has ever felt quite comfortable or satisfactory to the ensuing hundred-years worth of female history. I think it's quite possible for a woman to think of herself in terms of what she possesses—breasts, vagina, clitoris—over and above what she may be lacking—a penis. About at the middle of this century, psychologists began offering serious arguments to Freud and to probe for alternate explanations. One of

the these is Jacques Lacan whose work is a theoretical basis for Fuss. Lacan re-envisioned rather than replaces Freud not by negating the existence and importance of the Oedipus but by removing it from essential status and placing it in "the Symbolic." The Symbolic "represents the order of language which permits the child entry into subjectivity, into the realm of speech, law, and sociality. The Imaginary signifies the mother-child dyad which the Symbolic interrupts through the agency of the paternal function--the 'Name-of-the-Father,' rather than the biological father *per se*" (Fuss, 7) This movement away from the essential and into the Symbolic creates a greater distinction between the penis (the actual anatomical organ) and the phallus (its representation). Now the phallus, in the realm of the Symbolic, becomes "a priori to the penis; it is the privileged mark through which both sexes accede to sexual identity by a recognition and acceptance of castration" (Fuss, 8). If the Oedipal complex and its representational symbol, the phallus, are relegated to a place where their existence is dependent upon signs, it follows that the production of the sexual subject also falls under the Symbolic: discourse produces the subjects.

Now we are in a position to reexamine the dynamics of the mother-daughter dyad, this time mindful that the phallus and the Oedipal complex find their production and meaning through language instead of essentialism. As long as I can remember that the phallus is semiotic, I can begin speaking of identifying female sexual features--breast, vagina, clitoris--as positive assets instead of in terms of lack. The absence of a penis does not put woman into a state of defalcation. Saying so is tantamount to the claims Madison Avenue places on us: a manufacturing of need for expensive clothes, cosmetics, and cars.

Furthermore, if she doesn't *need* a penis, a woman has no need to envy the state of having one. She may indeed still feel an urge towards the phallus when the cultural milieu elevates that symbol above female representations, and in our culture, it's difficult to imagine the existence of a female symbol which could take the place of the phallus, or even occupy the same hierarchical level. But if we can admit the possibility that such a symbol could be created by discourse, we could then replace or at least augment the story of Oedipus. For this I turn to the work of Kim Chernin.

As does Freud, Chernin goes back into the pre-linguistic state of early infancy to search for her formative psychological story. In the pre-linguistic state the infant wallows in oral aggression, focusing all energy and emotion on the object that satisfies its primal desire (hunger)— the mother, and more specifically, her breast.

But our most fruitful understanding of female psychology will come from the exploration of the dual-unity, mother and child, mouth-to-breast dyad of earliest childhood, which implies that for a woman to develop into her full womanhood she must surmount the guilt that arises from her fantasy of having damaged the mother through the force of her oral aggression and rage (120).

Mixed with the rage and aggression is the infant's awareness of the mother as a symbolic repository for power. The infant's very life depends on this larger being. In these first earliest stages of life outside the womb, the maternal equates with the magical. Mother is all-powerful, the source of life and sustenance, the one who calms, brings comfort, dissipates hunger.

The child grows; it gradually realizes itself to be a separate being from the mother; it responds to and develops language, until

...soon there comes before the child, in place of the omnipotent magical mother of infancy, the mother in reality--a woman who is, let us say, in conflict about maternity, longing for a self-development that she has not achieved and that the birth of a child will make even more elusive, a woman frequently harassed, sometimes depressed, often distraught. Where once she was able to bring magical relief ...she increasingly appears to us as a person who has difficulty taking care of us and maybe even problems caring for herself (121).

Chernin suggests that as the growing child perceives the mother diminishing in power and stature, the child concludes that it was in fact she who caused this to happen, that the child's progress and expansion embrace the disparagement of the mother. That realization evolves into guilt and uncertainty about a child's culpability in the mother's loss of power as well as guilt about the child's own maturation. In short, the child "establish[es] a predisposition to guilt about one's own growth and development, which is seen against a background of another's diminishment and depletion" (122). I'm reminded here of my eight-year-old self laughing at a much younger cousin's taunt to her mother, "When I grow up you'll be little and I'll punish you!"

Chernin claims that it is the infantile memory of assault against the maternal, coupled with the emerging fear that a child's own flowering drains the mother, which erupts in ambivalence, and sometimes violence, during the teenage years and early womanhood.

In this respect, the daughter faces a far more complex developmental problem than the son. If she, in the fullness of her possibilities, cannot adopt this idea of woman's necessary sacrifice, if she challenges it or protests against it, she will be left with a restless sense of personal responsibility and severe guilt for what she did to the mother. But if, on the other hand, she attempts to offset her guilt by ascribing to this ideology of maternity, she embraces a fateful destiny for herself. Seen through the distorting lens of the infantile fantasy of eating up the mother, the idea of sacrifice ceases to be either ideological or abstract. In the imagination of the growing girl it becomes the horrifying image of the mother as literal food sacrifice. Since the daughter is a woman, too, she must fear that when she grows

older she will become the mother drained and exhausted by her infants, she who is served up at the primal feast. As a woman she is caught between this dreaded sacrificial possibility and the equally dreadful sense of daughter-guilt. (127)

Chernin's theory centers around the mother-daughter dyad. Certainly there's room to argue that female psychological development is a triangular arrangement with a father (or even in his absence), but it's not an equilateral triangle in that the mother-daughter side is disproportionately longer. Mothers, as the primary care-givers, nurture us; mothers are the same sex as we are, so our separation is markedly different as we struggle with issues of identification; and, in the current decade, we face unprecedented issues of changing women's roles without many reliable models for us to emulate.

Chapter Notes

1. The "myth of the independent scholar" is a term attributed to Patricia A. Sullivan.

2. *On Deconstruction; Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, Ithaca: Cornell University, 1982. Page 63.

3. A post script. I didn't see David Hove again until years later after I'd launched my own teaching career and given thought to feminist issues. A man ahead of his time, he'd found even less acceptance at the larger school than we'd given him. He continued teaching and eventually accepted a post overseas in Germany at a private boys' school where he's remained. We met by chance a few years back at the home of mutual friends, and I at last got the chance to thank him for his efforts and to apologize for myself.)

4. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE: FROM BODY KNOWLEDGE TO GENDER OWNERSHIP

"Metaphor matters."

-*Bitter Milk*, Madeleine R. Grumet, 4.

The Semester Begins

I stand inside my office in the last five minutes before the semester commences. I'm reading my first snapshot of this semester's students, the roster sent from the university registrar. Twenty-two names without faces. I note that the class seems heavy on girls; mostly women, in fact. Unusual but not unheard of, our freshman class has a slightly higher percentage of females, and it stands to reason that some sections will be gendered more one way than the other. But here's Shane, Jesse, Tracy, Michael . . . From their last names I surmise a typical New England mix of nationalities represented—English, Italian and French coming out ahead; one, two, maybe three German extraction; one or two Polish. Eighteen are freshmen, one a sophomore, three "special" students (nontraditional, usually older students who have yet to be admitted as fully matriculated). I scan the listing of majors: five science-based, the rest liberal arts and undeclared. Pretty typical.

Time to enter reality, take the next step. Walking into the classroom constitutes

the onset of the semester for me, for them; and who they see when that happens begins to shape our experience together.

I walk in, front and center. I ask these twenty-two new students to form a circle with their chairs, a simple enough request that immediately sets the stage for open communication. In a circle, it's harder to hide. I begin to read through their names, making notations in my book to help me learn them quickly. Holly--long, blond hair. Kerin--dark, dark eyes. Shane--multiple earrings, "f" not "m." Mindy--older, maybe forty. Jesse--long brown hair, again, "f" not "m." Tracy--"f" not "m." Michaela (Michael's a misprint). I pause, look up and around the group and register what the snapshot had failed to reveal. "There are no men in this classroom," I comment. A low murmur encircles the group. Immediately I hear evidence of two camps forming in response to my observation: "Wow. Cool. Power to the women!" and "Huh? Is that legal? Oh shit."

While my first reaction at discovering myself teaching an all-female section was pure exhilaration, my students were not entirely gratified. Some expected freshman English, because of its reputation within our department for fostering community, to be yet another way to meet men. In the weeks to come, our reactions would flip-flop several times. They would discover a safe place to explore new ideas about gender and power. I would find that the sudden absence of males revealed ways I had relied on them pedagogically. Gone were the frat boys with their off-stage banter, gone the football players to coax out of literary reluctance, gone the proverbial class clown to make an example of. Gone were the prep-school scholars and the ardent young men bound for the

traditional profession, medicine, law, politics. In their absence I would be forced into asking new questions about expertise, entitlement, authority, and ownership.

Ownership and Authorship as Romantic (Male) Constructs

Composition has always relied upon the concept of Romantic authorship, the "creation by a stable and individual consciousness of an original idea or literary work."¹ Women students entering university classrooms today come having been raised in an ambivalent, if not schizophrenic, social and political atmosphere where the notions of authorship and authority—creation, stability, individuality—are specifically "male" qualities defined in contradistinction to the "female" qualities of reception, association, emotion, and self-effacement. Whether we name the dichotomy in Mary Pipher's terms as the distinction between personal and political lives or in Susan Griffin's as the split between virgin and whore, the ambivalence continues within the university, even in so-called "student-centered" classrooms like those in composition departments, where women students are encouraged to take autonomy or develop authority when the definitions of those actions are traditionally male. Suddenly facing a semester without males, my students and I had an intriguing dilemma: what does it mean to be female, autonomous, and maintain possession of your educational process if ownership is a "male" concept? What indeed fills the space of the phallus?

Both my female students and I had some idea of what entitlement means in a classroom setting. Hadn't feminist theorists and educators spent most of the last fifty years convincing us that we deserve equal opportunity, equal educations? Wasn't the

battle for equality, at least in educational settings, one that had been fought and won? Weren't the polemics already explicit, expressed, and unequivocal? It's not like it was a generation ago, my students and I would tell each other. In my mother's day . . .

Even in the face of the ambivalence, it's my observation that women come to college today with fairly sophisticated ideas of what it means to be a female in our culture, and those ideas are more developed, more liberal, more politically-empowered than their mothers or their grandmothers. They come knowing their gender has made significant inroads. They come saying they believe in equality of the sexes. They come knowing on some level that they can compete with their male counterparts. And yet. And yet they still fear the "f" word. They still want the guys to pay their way on a date. They still know they have to devote a certain amount of time to pleasing the male of the species. Guys can roll out of bed at 7:45 and come to class at 8:00 a.m. without showering, without combing their hair, without shaving. Girls can't. If they do, they pay for it. Guys can sleep with casual dates and not pay for it in guilt and repercussions the next day. Girls can't. The double standard lives. And so with one half of their belief, girls feel equal, and with the other, they know all too well which lines can't be crossed.

Ambivalence. The freshman woman doesn't care so much how gender is constituted as she does about what to do with that gender in the face of a classroom of available, dateable, ultimately marriageable males. I watch each one struggle, on the one hand trying to placate male egos, on the other claiming and securing her burgeoning independence.

I must admit that there have been times my past classroom reminded me of cave-people cartoons where early androids, armed with clubs, drag off the spoils of battle.

Here the "spoils" were scraps of knowledge and the rights to an authoritative voice. In the sometimes mad scramble to claim their rights I'd witnessed lively, even vociferous, exchanges between women and men students as they metaphorically bonked each other on the head, took the information at hand, and ran with it. Like some sort of commodity to be apportioned out, students would grab the goods handed out and amass competing piles of knowledge.

In those conflicts, it was easy for women to identify what commodities they wanted—they wanted what the men had. I was soon to observe that these young women would have an entirely new challenge, even greater than the dispute to the rights of knowledge. In the absence of men, they'd have to figure out for themselves which ideas to value; they'd have to learn to identify and name, quantify and qualify this thing we call knowledge, the material of discourse. For the next fourteen weeks of the semester, there would be no male lodestar.

Two Pedagogical Components

First year composition as taught at UNH values process over product. This places the personal essay as a central component of our coursework. While there's considerable debate today in the composition field over the merits and speciousness of personal narrative, I accept the worth of personal and autobiographical writing for my students, a subject I'll talk more about in my final chapter. It's my position that the personal essay provides a unique opportunity to gain perspective over our lives. The writer records events from memory; each recording provokes a new dialogue with herself about herself.

She compares who she is both with who she was and whom she hopes to be. She recognizes herself while at the same time articulating a new self. In that sense, personal narrative is improvisation. It is this idea of improvisation, combining the known territory of memory with the new territories of experimentalization, that Mary Catherine Bateson develops in her book, *Composing a Life*, the real life stories of five women in the process of shaping themselves through the practice of artistic endeavor. Writers use autobiography to ". . . combine familiar and unfamiliar components in response to new situations, following an underlying grammar and an evolving aesthetic" (3).

Secondly, I teach my class by not teaching. I teach by collaboration with my students. My philosophy in teaching composition has long been to encourage students to take responsibility for their education, to take it into their own hands, to *own* the instruction. I tell them on the first day that my goal is to convince them to become scholars, not merely students. Students are individuals who can get away with being taught; they can be passive, and they can write in the passive voice. They let things happen to them. They believe in the banking concept of education whereby they invest money (Some are particularly all-encompassing in listing their investments: tuition, books, health insurance, "Xerox" fees) and they get a product (The degree that guarantees a high-paying job) in return. While being a student might be the first step towards a college education, it shouldn't be the last. The trouble is, there are certain advantages to studentdom. It's traditional in that both instructor and student can adopt conventional stances in an understood relationship; the teacher is the dominant, the student subordinate. It's comfortable because it's safe; there are no unknown territories to negotiate. It's often

easy for both parties as well, and in many situations, it's the only way to good grades.

"When most students are given a writing assignment, the first thing they ask is, 'What does the teacher want?'" says Don Murray.² That's evidence of a clear understanding of studentdom on both parts.

Scholars aren't satisfied with simply being handed the goods. They devise their own assignments. They go the library and research their chosen topics not because they have to but because they want to. They take what they're learning back to their dorm rooms to discuss it with peers; they go out into the surrounding community to test new theories; they push the boundaries in every way they can think of. They goad fellow classmates into continuing projects. They resist easy answers. They argue. They come back to you, the teacher, and demand that you take as much interest in their newfound excitement as they. Once you've got a scholar facing you, your work becomes more complex as her ideas bump up against your own, intermingling, increasing, stretching both of you.

The key to scholarship is in getting students to fall in love with what they're doing. In a composition class, that can only happen if they have a voice in choosing both what to read and how to write about it. And so this semester began like others with an assignment schedule that covered only the assignments of the first four weeks, eight class sessions and four individual conferences per student. In four increments, my students would be expected to carry out four reading assignments and write four rough-draft papers. Their essays would each have two requirements to be met: to be personal narratives and to find a connection with the appropriate reading. Between class meetings, in conference, each

student and I would discuss her writing. Through the four weeks I would be enigmatically modeling my miscellaneous assortment of exercises, teaching strategies and tactics--pulling out all the stops, so to speak--to provide them with a range of ideas to work from for the next phase of the semester when they would be choosing their own assignments and presenting their choices to each other.

These first weeks went rather smoothly. Discussion was lively and enthusiasm ran high. We enjoyed an easygoing banter from the very beginning. They spoke, they shared, they opined, without exception, even the shiest in the group. It went so well that I began to wonder when the bubble would burst. Never before had I observed a class of all women. I had reservations, and some of these I began noting in my daily teaching journal:

A whole room full of young women, all eighteen to nineteen except for three (twenty-five, thirty-five, and forty) and they're into alternate life styles (as much as the UNH community allows socially. . .). But their expertise in living belies a depth to conversation that wouldn't ordinarily be present. Questions:

- 1) How does the absence of men free or change conversation?
- 2) Does the absence preclude competition or just change it?
- 3) Does the competition produce better writing or does it hamper writing?
- 4) What energies would they have directed towards the men in a class as potential dating material?

(These women are definitely louder and freer than other classes I've had; is that overt behavior useful? Can they make connections between freer conversation and freer thinking? In other words, is their thinking heightened in here or not? What would be the difference if they had each chosen this configuration as in a women's college?)

- 5) Without male students around to choose beliefs/ideas/political positions for them to replicate, support, work against, what issues will they choose to research?

Not all of my questions would find answers within the fourteen allotted weeks. I realized the sorts of research I could accomplish in here would necessarily be "soft" (case studies, ethnographies, etc. always are with their human variables); moreover, I'd been

thrown into this milieu as unprepared as my students, so much so that I hardly knew what questions to ask. I would alternate between feeling exhilarated and overwhelmed. Answers that came my way would for the most part find me rather than the other way around, and whatever did surface would be laden with surprise. Although initially all twenty-four willingly signed a research waiver I'd had the foresight to draw up, some would change their minds repeatedly in the heat of discussion. They would alternate between working with me and working against me; some of the women would delight in the amazing things we were learning, but other students would feel ambushed, want to ignore the answers and even deny the original questions. Through it all, few ever lost sight of what became our central question: How does the absence of men effect the educational choices we make? and its variation: Who owns the classroom? (See Appendix B: "Semester's End: Individual Section Course Evaluations," and Appendix C: "Class Reflections about Absence of Men.")

The opening four weeks flew by. It became time to write our combined syllabus and get on with the research choices that would allow us to fall in love with the acquisition of knowledge, fuel our pedagogical energies, and hopefully develop a few scholars along the way. The parameters were outlined. Students would arrange themselves into six research groups of four each according to their interest levels. Each group would choose from the topics included in their common text a current issue concerning college students to present to the class. Groups chose and assigned readings to prepare the rest of the class for discussion, and then developed a presentation for the day they would lead class, one group each week for six weeks. The goal was to provide enough material and

argument around the issue to spur the rest of us to reflective, semi- researched writing by getting us excited about the topic. Finally, at the culmination of the six weeks, students would declare their choices for individual research projects to close out the semester.

In the meantime, I had written permission from my students to tape the weekly group presentations and to record private interviews with students about their impressions, and together as co-researchers we had reserved the final fifteen minutes of each class meeting to discuss the question, "What would have been different today if guys had been here?"

Although twenty-two separate stories emerged from the semester (twenty-three; I have to count mine too), I'd like to narrate part of what happened through snapshots of three of the students, Kristi, Shane, and Felicia. I don't tap these three because they are exceptional cases. In fact, part of their applicability here is that they were not exceptional but actually quite representative of many first year students. I single them out because each taught me extraordinary things about female students in general and about my pedagogy.

Once our discussion/research groups had been formed, each of these women were in different groups as follows:

Kristi: The treatment of feminists on the UNH campus (At this time in the semester, at least half of the women in the class still refused to allow themselves to be labeled feminist. Statements about inequity or mistreatment were qualified with "I'm not feminist, but . . .")

Shane: The cult personality (in which they would examine differences between such disparate groups as UNH fraternities, religious cults on campus, the Marine Corps, and the Ku Klux Klan).

Felicia: Ways in which women are physically/bodily constrained (Their discussions would range from the high heels and undergarments of Western culture to female circumcision in other cultures.)

By the time the group presentations were completed, each of the three women would veer into different directions for her final research topic, each project mirroring individual concerns. Kristi, whose older sister Melody had gone through drug rehab, used the opportunity to question the effectiveness of drug treatment centers. Shane, who by this point in the semester had successfully "come out" with the class, turned towards Hollywood for her subject, examining the ways lesbians are presented in popular film. Felicia, an athlete who'd attended a private high school for Olympic hopefuls, wrote a paper entitled "The Weighting Game," and it was a personal narrative telling the story of her bout with anorexia.

Freshman English is not a course in women's studies; my course syllabus was *not* organized around women's issues. However, when given the chance to select their own readings without male input or dominance, across the board my students chose texts focused toward women's concerns. Besides their choice of subjects for the group presentations, perhaps the best barometer of what mattered to these young women was evidenced by topic choices in the personal research projects. Sixteen of the projects revolved around decidedly female issues, covering health, politics, and education. (See Appendix D: "Research Topics.") Twelve of the women testified that their research and writing would have been adversely affected by the presence of males in the class. Nikki wrote about her fear of breast cancer in light of her mother's double mastectomy. Dawn wrote about being eighteen and female and fearful of rape. Cathy wrote about the special dangers for women at fraternity parties. Kerin wrote about how getting a political science degree at UNH is more difficult for women. And on and on. In the all-female setting, the

women saw themselves as part of a supportive social network of writers and researchers sympathetic to each other's development.

"Invention may first of all be seen as social in that the self that it invents is, according to many modern theorists, not merely socially influenced but even socially constituted," says Karen Burke LeFevre in *Invention as a Social Act* (2). My students had discovered that learning and writing were indeed social acts and that the supportive audience around them allowed them a newer, wider latitude for exploration. If women's silence is loudest at college, as the Sadkers' study claims, then the all-female social context allowed them more voice. For various reasons, male students dominate classroom conversation, often even dictating the discourse subject. In this setting, the subjects at the very center of a young woman's identity—issues of sexuality and feminism and questions of gender—are either ignored or belittled. While outside the classroom women are encouraged (and even expected) to give a certain amount of attention to physical exploration of sexual subjects, inside the classroom engendered issues are heavily biased toward the masculine with little chance for textual or conversational attention to women's issues. Feminism is at the heart of every woman's education in a male-dominated educational system. To eliminate the immediate masculine presence from the classroom was to highlight this phenomenon for me.

Here then are the stories of Kristi, Shane and Felicia as they dealt with the concept of ownership in our classroom, one choosing the traditional route of the good girl, much as I had during my first college experience; one balking at cultural definitions of the

feminine, few of which applied to her, and one who fought against the necessity to answer questions, even denying the need for the questions themselves.

Kristi

When I requested my students to freewrite on the first day of class using the theme "Why I write," Kristi responded: "I write when I have questions. When I write I learn about things. I discover new ideas which bring me closer to understanding." Either she'd enjoyed a process-oriented writing program somewhere along the way or she cared enough about writing to have figured out things about its benefits for herself. Or both. She was the sort of student who would have taken advantage of her learning situations. She knew instinctually what responses to offer to questions, how to best fulfill assignments, how many times to raise her hand per class session to get points for class participation. In short, she knew the role of the good student. I looked at her and saw myself at the same age.

But if Kristi appeared on the surface to be what Belenky et al term a practitioner of "separate knowing," (Belenky et al, 103), there was another dimension to her as well.³ Her family history, about which she was eager to write--their story found its way into most of her essays--included years of intensive family counseling with her sister's drug rehabilitation. She came from a close-knit clan who loved, supported, and respected each other. Through their work, the sister had found her way back to sobriety, and the resulting admiration Kristi felt was pleasant to see. These experiences served her well; she had opened herself up to new ideas and new possibilities in a way that she might not have

otherwise. She's become an analytic thinker to whom there were admittedly more gray areas than black and white. She had definitely come a long way toward becoming one of Belenky's "connected knowers," learner[s] who "build on ...the conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncement of authorities" (112).

At least that's the way I saw Kristi during the first weeks I knew her. She was predictably a high achiever, I could count on her to take responsibility for her work, and I could relax in the fact that she didn't/wouldn't need much attention from me.

My complacency was shaken the day it came time for Kristi's group to present their chosen issue to the class. As I mentioned above, the group was exploring treatment of declared feminists here on campus. In preparation for the discussion, we, the class, had been assigned to read Marilyn French's essay "Gender Roles." This was the first group to lead a presentation. The four women were, by their own admission, psyched, a combination of nervousness and eager anticipation. They'd prepared well. Conversation was lively. The group had chosen four key quotations from the essay. They divided the class up into teams and held a mock debate. It went well. At the end of the period, I asked that the four presenters write a critique. Listen to Kristi's responses to my prompts.

D: Describe your feelings about your presentation.

K: I am very pleased about our presentation....almost everyone participated in discussion. People had a lot of great, insightful things to say. That is what made giving the presentation so fun. It was hearing what they had to say about it....During the debate I became worried that our chosen quotes were not going to stir up some controversy like we had hoped they would. But, after a while they had plenty to say about them...

D: Tell me about how the group worked together.

K: Our group worked together very well! I think that everyone participated equally. Everyone gave their opinions and ideas....It was fun for all when we were together...I was surprised that the time went by so fast!

This kind of critique is exactly what I expected from a student like Kristi—oozing with enthusiasm and success. No tensions. No weaknesses. No problems.

Unfortunately, no risk, either. I was ready to dismiss her whole response as uninteresting until I came to the next set of questions.

D: How would your session have changed if men were present?

K: We were enthusiastic because we knew that there would be discussion because we are all women and feelings are strong. We can all relate. I know that we would have done something entirely different [if men were here] because men would have intimidated us. I would like men to respond to what we think about the issues because I need to know what their opinions are before I form mine.

The word "intimidate" stopped me. Was I reading something into this or was Kristi saying what I thought she was saying, that she would indeed be intimidated by male opinion, even to the point of changing her own? If I had any doubts as to her seriousness, I couldn't miss importance of her next line: "I need to know their opinions *before I form mine.*"

The next day Kristi came to my office for a conference and we talked about the group presentation. As I surmised from her critique, she had enjoyed the experience. She'd felt both confident in and rewarded by being given a leadership position in the classroom. She had one more surprise left over for me, something extra the four women hadn't been able to fit into the time frame of the presentation. She handed me a hand-written page entitled "Collection of Male Responses—My Boyfriend's Answers." The four women had all had their boyfriends read the French essay and comment on it by

answering a list of twenty-three questions the women had drawn up because—in Kristi's own words—they wanted a "realistic picture" of the way things are, not just some female author's opinion.

A couple of things were going on for me simultaneously here, and I have to discuss them separately before I can bring them into perspective with each other. First of all, interestingly, over the years I had come to regard students like Kristi as the "norm." She had an acutely developed sense of what responses would please teachers, which is usually a sure way to good grades. Why, when in reality students who have developed such high intuition about what teachers want are somewhat rare, did I think of her as the norm? Was it because I saw myself so powerfully reproduced in her? Was it that because such students are the most pleasant, the easiest to deal with, that I (and other teachers) had assimilated their personae as the norm because I *wanted* it to be the norm? Was it a combination of these two ideas?

It was this realization—that Kristi was an exception and that very few female students "had it together" to the degree she did in the classroom milieu—which helped me begin to look at all my students differently. I think of Nikki's struggles to face her mother's breast cancer as she wrote her research paper, "Breast Cancer, A Real-Life Experience." During the course of that essay Nikki told about not only her mother's death, but the deaths of her grandmother and aunt as well and began asking herself if she should take the advice of a physician who told her her only protection was to have her own breasts removed. I also think of Dawn who used class writing as a way to recover from being raped. And Karen who was writing about her anorexia. It was difficult to

characterize any of them; all were individualized to the degree that no one truly fit the "norm." Indeed, there was no "norm." Rather, each was an emerging individual who had found ways to use this class and her writing to grapple with gendered hurts.

That each person is an individual and that there are no 'norms' may seem prosaic, and maybe I'm slower than the average teacher in coming to this realization, but in my defense, let me just explain that there are moments in teaching when one reaches a pure epiphany, and that moment provides a screen to look through which changes the way she's looked at everything that's gone before, and this was one of those moments. The importance of it for me is that a) I'd been treating the truly exceptional student with a modicum of indifference because I didn't think she needed any extra attention unless she demanded it, and rarely did she demand it because she'd learned her lessons well about not being too much of a pain, not being intrusive, not claiming her rights, and b) I'd treated all the rest as something substandard--and given them the sort of attention remedials would solicit, not averages or norms--when in reality they were on even planes, just different planes, as the exception, as all the rest.

Having once recognized this, I could begin to observe all my students in a very different way, as the individuals they are, with an attempt to avoid labeling or categorizing them too quickly. What I could see most immediately was that neither group, the norms (who I now recognized as exceptions) nor the exceptions (whom I saw as norms), had any more of a handle on ownership of discourse material than I'd had a generation before, no matter how much engendered water had gone over the dams of feminist theory and practice.

The second issue--my second epiphany, and this one, to continue in the language of the religious, proved to be a true theophany--was a confirmation of the theory that women often don't feel as confident in their own decisions about knowledge-making as they do about men's. Young women like Kristi who had become fluent with the language of the classroom and could appear self-confident about their education did so at least partly because they saw themselves as being able to mimic the males around them. Why did Kristi and her partners feel the need to quiz their boyfriends on the validities of the issue? Would Kristi have needed to contact him if the essay in question had been written by a man? Why, in the face of feminist issues being about women, was there a felt need to verify things through a man's opinion?

I returned to Kristi's critique and studied it for more clues. What was I looking for? "I would like a man to respond to all of the quotes that were discussed in class today. We chose those quotes because we thought that they were important," I read. The deference to male opinion was upsetting. Was all lost? Hopeless? Was there no way Kristi--a shining student--could stand on her own two educational feet? I skipped to the last paragraph which on my prior reading had seemed a traditional five-paragraph-leave-them-feeling-good summation:

I learned a lot from the other students. I didn't think that I was going to learn so much. I realize that women are always going to have to work harder to try and become equal to men. I like what Kerin [a classmate] said about women making their own goals and achievements. How women must try to make the best for themselves, because no one can change the whole society and the roles of women. I agree that when a woman tries her hardest to work her way up and believes strongly in what she's doing that is a big achievement.

This was what I'd been looking for. Yes, Kristi might still be looking for male approval of her opinions. The cultural lodestar was powerful. But something else was going on here too. I liked what I was hearing. I read glimmers of hope. I thought I saw the beginnings of a breakthrough in her thinking. Kristi had differentiated between the idea that women have the same rights as men and that women need to choose their own goals and achievements. She was on her way to understanding that women's personal ownership in whatever project or agenda faced her was more important than having the benefit of a society that treated men and women equally.

Shane

Shane centered herself in my open office door moments after the close of that first class meeting. She heralded her many unannounced office visits of that semester. "So, Professor. That surprised you, huh? All girls." I always ask my students to use my first name, and the slightly sarcastic spin Shane put on the epithet clued me that here was a student who'd be pushing the limits all semester. Already she'd caught my attention in class, not because of what she said—I don't recall that she contributed to classroom conversation until later in the semester—but because of her looks. There was a pleasant "edge" to Shane from the slightly retro clothing to the multiple ear piercings to the extra chiseling in her face indicating a few more years than the traditional first year college student.

"Thought I should stop in and introduce myself to you. You might as well know right off the bat that I'm a bad writer. In fact, I'm a pretty bad student." She'd come

because she wanted me to know she was a "non-trad," and in every sense of the word. Shane didn't want me forming opinions of her; she wanted me to hear who she was from her own lips. Through the fourteen weeks she and I came to understand that who she was someone vulnerable and gentle and very scared hiding inside a brashness contrived toward toughness. The bad student Shane thought she was had attempted college in a liberal arts setting immediately after high school graduation, but she'd hated it, hated dorm life, hated the expectation of being what she called "a farty co-ed type." Furthermore, struggling to come to an acceptance of herself as a newly outed lesbian, she found the conservative setting unfriendly and even dangerous. So she'd dropped out before the first semester ended, and then, she said, dropping out felt so good she just kept dropping out of one thing after another until a downward spiral into drugs and a brush with the law scared her enough into wanting to give college another try. She arrived that fall at UNH as a conditional student, needing a B or better in my class to be considered for general admission.

Early on it became clear that Shane was neither a bad writer nor a bad student but rather a young woman to whom excepting herself through apology had become a habitual way of negotiation in a society where she felt separated from the normal. Shane had undergone a counseling program through drug rehab where she'd recognized herself as someone whose personal credo was to "do onto herself before others could do it to her." Furthermore, she was a young woman who had come to depend on herself rather than friends or family. Her parents had divorced while she was in high school, and although she still kept in touch with her mother, her father had severed relations with her because,

as Shane quoted him, he didn't "want a dyke for a daughter." Likewise her only sibling, an older brother in the Marines. It is to her credit that in her fair-mindedness she refused to waste time berating her situation or blaming her family; her agenda instead was positive. She was ready to get on with her life. She wanted to be constructive, not destructive.

An early personal essay about a childhood experience became the centerpiece of the semester for her. Prior to writing it she'd attempted pieces about high school and about her first college experience--perhaps because those were the kinds of topics she thought she should be writing about--both of which she felt put her back into painful but wasted years and served to disconnect her with the types of experience she'd come to regard as important and constructive. She turned her attention instead to something which had happened to her at five years of age, getting separated from her family on a trip to the zoo. This piece occupied the greater part of the semester for her as she drafted version after version, experimenting with the tensions between childhood voice and adult voice, childhood memory and adult memory, and--most importantly for her--childhood perception (honest and real) and adult perception (contrived and adult-erated). In remembering and writing about the experience of separation, she discovered that it was the adults in her life who were lost, not the little girl. Making that discovery allowed her to understand that her own positioning in the world, albeit different from her family's, was right for her, and that from her perspective, it was they who were lost. The opening lines capture the ambivalence and danger of her position:

It's hard to remember when this world felt safe. When I trusted without question and loved without reservation, the kind of naive openness that only a child can obtain. When I see children still so bold and sure I want to warn them, tell them not to be so trusting, so open. Then I remember the absolute bliss of feeling so

safe; I just smile and walk away. Life will take it from them soon enough, I need not intervene.

The end of the piece is equally nostalgic as she captures her loss, but there are other feelings too, both reservation and resignation, and a wonderful sense of how each of us have split personalities within our integral selves, both as watcher and the one watched:

The simple joy of being. At times I convince myself that I don't miss it. Then I see a baby take her first steps or a puppy venture away from his mother and I know that I do. Like a voyeur I watch, trying to rekindle my flame with their fire. I learn to be content with feelings pilfered from others and the shadows of memory.

That day marked the end of a precious time, when all that was new was good and the world seemed golden. It was also a beginning. The first tentative steps towards adult understanding. It may be easier to mourn the end of this time, but I prefer to celebrate its last precious moments.

But Shane wasn't spending all her 401 moments working on this piece. During other times, she was by turns arguing, defending herself, suffering in silent anger. In fact, there was a lot of anger in this young woman, and it often surfaced during discussions probing issues of gender. Here's part of a quickly written piece in response to one of those discussions. She handed it to me after class one day when following me to my office, an act that had become her usual pattern. It's spontaneity makes her ire immediate, and it captures both of her divergent selves, one self recognizing a moral issue (that in her experience women aren't always treated equally) and one offering the solution she's found for herself (suck it up; work harder).

Many of the women in the class were downright aggravating (at least to me) in their need to toe that middle ground. Yeah, women aren't equal, no I don't like feminists. Yeah, men get more with less work, but women shouldn't gripe but just be willing to work harder to prove they are more than women.

An intriguing idea here is her suggestion that women should be "more than women."

Does she mean to imply that women need to surpass themselves? That there's more to a human being than gender? Or that she saw in her lesbian identity something other than simply woman?

Leigh Gilmore writes in *Autobiographics* that introductory writing "presumes the existence of a subject, and turns upon that existence necessarily, for in turning to introduce the subject, one expects to find it properly named and placed within an interpretive framework that makes it recognizable, makes it, finally, either symbolically or semantically identical to its name"(1). Shane's problem was that in her classroom experiences to date, both oral and written, what she consistently heard and read didn't include her—in traditional settings, her gendered experience of lesbianism wasn't named. In this setting, if her experience wasn't named, the effect on her personhood was the same as if she hadn't been named, didn't exist. Drawing on the work of such theorists as Michel Foucault (18, 19) and Jacques Derrida (184) and Paul de Man (see page 69: and de-facement) Gilmore explains how the author-ity of traditional autobiographical writing is a "male construct": women as "Other" and "hurt bodies" (Genesis story) preclude women from the genre of self-representation. Working within these theories, we could say that all female students find themselves once removed from literary experience; if so, a lesbian woman is twice removed. In my class, where personal narrative is valued as the starting point for all student writing, Shane found herself without a model.

Women's autobiography, then, becomes an act of "re-membering" rather than simply remembering, writes Gilmore. In the traditions of the French feminists and

escritoire, the act of literary self-representation must become an "embodying" of experience, an act that validates and celebrates a woman's physicality (and sexuality) through both memory and invention. Shane's insistence on writing from her earliest childhood memory, then, was an attempt to create a classroom text in which she *named* herself, re-membering her six-year-old literary body as a whole and healthy lesbian person; she wrote herself into existence *literatim*.

*(So here was the thing . . . If Kristi taught me that some young women, even outwardly competent and self-confident ones, looked to men to verify ideas, Shane was hinting that there was a way to circumvent reliance on either gender for verification, that one could be more than women, more than one's gender . . .)**

(But I've got a problem here. I want to explore how comfortableness, acceptance, knowledge of one's gendered identity leads to the ability to learn . . . Instead I've told about how each of these young women were learning. In Shane's case, she verbalized to me at various times that coming to grips with and accepting who she was led her directly into "getting it together" and that before she came out with her family, regardless of how they struggled to love/not her, she had learning difficulty. She knew it was her acceptance of herself, not theirs, that now made it possible for her to learn. Kristi? If

***Note.** Here and at other places in this chapter I have included parenthetical information that exposes the actual development of my thinking. I designate them with italics. My original intention was that these places would be edited out or reworked, at least rewritten as my thinking developed. Over time I realize their value simply for the rawness and processes they exhibit.

my hypothesis is true, Shane's perhaps farther along in wisdom about learning abilities than is Kristi as Kristi is still struggling to find acceptance for her ideas in a male audience.)

Nevertheless, I can look back and with a reasonable surety count both Kristi and Shane's experiences as overall successes.

I can't do that with Felicia.

Felicia

It seems every class group holds at least one "difficult" student, the student who fights the teacher's efforts at every turn. Much has been written about transference, the psychological phenomenon by which counselors, caregivers, healers, or in this case the teacher, projects her own identity on a student who for various reasons resonates with the teacher's experience so to trigger nervousness, insecurity, even self-hatred. In other words, we see ourselves, especially our faults, in this student. For me it was Felicia.

(I don't want to write about Felicia. I'm fearing that writing about Felicia might be writing about me. I'm fearful of what I'll discover. Felicia hated me . . . yes hated me. She also loved me., but that might just have been an extension of the fact that she hated me . . . I don't want to explore that. You see, it's my intuition that Felicia's problems centered in, lay in sexual abuse. There's been no sex abuse in my life. Notwithstanding the simple events I described in my intro. But those aren't real abuse, just the norm that every girl in our culture has to go through . . . maybe not good, but sort of an initiation rite, I guess. Not all that harmful, really. Things we can recover from; if they weren't

things we could recover from, the whole subject of what happens to girls in classrooms in culture, in families would be too painful to look at. We have to recover. It has to be minor. Besides, when I refer to sexual abuse, I mean perhaps incest, perhaps rape or at least harassment from teachers...the demarcations between these levels [abuse and harassment] are fuzzy . . . does it matter? Is one level something you can recover from and another not? If we can't draw the lines between harassment and abuse, how can we determine what's treatable? Who to salvage? What hurt to heal from and what's too big to overcome? And where does the composition teacher find her boundaries between what she can reasonably treat in a writing classroom and what belongs in the psychologist's office?)

I've done it before, this writing about Felicia. I wrote a paper for a seminar class. It told her story, as much as I know about her. There were great gray areas in Felicia's classroom life, in her relationship with me. She alluded to much through her actions (or did I simply read much because of my own needs, hurts, fears?). She studiously hid much. The times she and I clashed most violently (and the violence was always on her side, wasn't it?) were times when she felt the need to cut the conversation short and end a discussion with an angry "I hate this. I don't want to talk about this. I'm afraid of what I'll say, where this will lead . . ."

(I fear I'm wasting time with all this speculation...but I really feel reluctant to get to Felicia's story. At the time I met her, her mother was a graduate student in our same department, but I never met her. Felicia claimed that she and her mother often talked

about me and my class because she wanted her mother to be as "cool" a teacher as I, and then in the same breath she'd berate me.)

As I said, I've done it before, written about Felicia. I wrote in a detached way. I wrote about her foibles, her inabilities to get along in the class both with me and with other students. In *The Bluest Eye* Toni Morrison's child narrator says about Pecola, the poor incest victim who comes to stay with the family as a foster child, "we cleaned ourselves on her." I wonder if the way in which we often write about our students isn't in fact a way to clean ourselves. Now, with trepidation, I tell her story again, acknowledging that in order not to "clean myself" on her, I might have to locate my own personal tensions.

At eighteen, Felicia isn't sure she wants to be in college and wonders whether or not she'll stay. Though very quiet in class, she told me a lot during the first private writing conference in my office. She's been a competitive figure skater since age six, training for the Olympic team at an alternative sports high school here in the States where she'd graduated as one of only three females in a class of fifty athletes. Age is critical for figure skaters, and Felicia wonders if college is wasting the best of her professional years. She's pretty, almost painfully pretty in a fragile, vulnerable way, studiously careful (contrived?). I'm struck immediately that the outer appearance doesn't match my expectations from her essays—wandering and unfocused, full of contradictions—for the inner. When she talks to me, I feel tension and denial in every utterance.

In the classroom, the semester seems tedious for Felicia. She rarely contributes to class discussion, and when she does it's to make snide, sarcastic remarks. She sits alone at

the side of the room. Soon a consistent pattern of "forgetting" to come to conference with her partner emerges; makeup conferences are scheduled privately. After one of these meetings, I write in my journal that I suspect she's suffered sexual abuse. I stare at what I've just written because it confuses me, first because I can't articulate why I suspect such, and second because I'm not a psychologist and I know it isn't my territory to diagnose. I wonder, is it fair of me to conjecture Felicia's private past in this manner? I resolve to evaluate only what I observe or am specifically told and attempt to keep intuition in check.

For Felicia the semester bumps along. Until it comes time for her group presentation. Felicia appoints herself chair of her group, a move that surprises us all. She chooses the topic for research and assigns tasks. The topic: female circumcision. In one woman's written evaluation by individual group members, it was reported that "Felicia dictated our topic and railroaded our research." This is evident during the presentation itself when Felicia insists on reading two short articles to us even after time is called, articles that explain the physical procedures of clitorrectomy in brutal, graphic detail. When one of her classmates interrupts with "Could we please stop now? This is making me sick to my stomach," Felicia answers, "No. You *have* to hear all of this."

At the close of the presentation, while I take care of class announcements and hand back graded essays, Felicia demands aloud that I explain to the class why they are being subjected to a whole semester of "feminist crap." "You're a writing teacher, this is a writing class, and we should be learning the rules of writing. Nothing else." After class she follows me silently and unbidden three floors up to my office where she insists that she

doesn't want to talk. Nevertheless, I invite her in. She sits down, sullenly, staring at her feet.

I begin. "Felicia, I know you're really angry right now. Would it help to talk about it?"

"I don't want to talk."

I plow ahead. "Could I put the tape recorder on?" My students this semester are used to being taped, but I always ask permission, ignoring the obvious fact that for many reasons—all of which have to do with issues of power—they might not feel able to refuse.

"You can tape whatever you want. I don't care. I don't want to talk. I'll just say things that will get me into trouble. My words always get me into trouble." But talk she does, and the talk is rambling, confused, double-sided. She vents a whole semester, and undoubtedly longer, of anger and tension. She is tired of being used as a guinea pig for the university. She is tired of the university. Feminist issues bore her. She wants me to take more leadership in the class; she wants her mother to be more like me; she doesn't think women should be in charge of anything. She wants me to fix her writing and give her the rules. Above all, she does not want to discuss feminist issues. The last portion of our discussion:

D: I'm wondering since you say you're tired of the feminist stuff why you picked female circumcision.

F: Well, I'm interested. But I don't want to talk about women's issues. I like men. Geez, I wish we had men in our class. I keep telling my boyfriend like you should be in this class 'cause it's so cool...I like men. I mean, I don't want to be angry at anyone. I'm tired of male-bashing.

D: Do you think the class is about male-bashing?

F: I like men. Now my boyfriend, he thinks, I mean I showed him all the stuff I was doing for class today on circumcision and he just made fun of it and said like what a good idea. But he lets me decide and be myself and all but just not too far

'cause I don't think that's necessary, you know? I mean, I believe in equality and all but I'm not a feminist. Anyway, I don't want to talk because I don't want you to be mad at me. Turn off the damned tape.

And so I switch of the recorder. We talk longer, and it's a good talk, but in respect for Felicia I won't divulge its nature.

Tension and denial. Ambivalence. Confusion. *I don't want to talk, but I need to talk. I especially don't want to talk about women's issues, but I can't get off the subject. I don't want to be angry at anybody, but I'm angry at you.* A battle seemed to be going on inside, a fight to the death between accepting empowering information or continuing to occupy a subservient position under some perceived authority? If so, a triumph in the first arena would end in self-confidence and independence; but the fear of losing whatever security the old position afforded (and possible punishment?) kept her back. In M. M. Bakhtin's words, "Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values" ("Discourse" 347). Felicia is in a tough spot.

After our conversation, after Felicia leaves my office, I turn to written transcriptions of taped class discussion for clues. A definite pattern emerges: Felicia throwing barbs, Felicia being caustic, Felicia saying two different things in the same sentence. Things I wouldn't have caught without the tapes, without a chance to examine the evidence. I make a list of the inconsistencies:

- *Says she wants my leadership, input, and critique--argues every point with me
- *Wants me to take leadership in the class--is uncomfortable when I do.
- *Denies a desire to discuss feminism, women's issues--continually brings them up herself.

***Says she puts more time into this class than her others--re-writes nothing, consistently hands me unorganized stream-of-consciousness essays which she says are "easy to write"**

***Says English is her favorite class--says she hates everything about it**

***Says she's tired of "male-bashing" in our discussions--many of her verbal responses are complaints about men.**

***Says she wants her mother to be more like me--wants me to be more like her mother**

The struggle is conspicuous, but the reasons ulterior. That last bit about her mother is surprising. It's not unusual for the topic of mothers to come up in a writing class, but I've noticed an insistence on Felicia's part to compare me with hers. I can't remember another student ever being quite so persistent about the comparison; it emerges in almost all our private conversations and in a format so consistent it seems a mantra: I wish you were more like my mother/I wish my mother were more like you. I don't know what to make of it. Is it fair for me to say I feel betrayed by her insistence that I represent her mother? I don't want to be her mother.

Time and again I'd turn back to her writing to search for the real Felicia. The degree of her ambivalence really stymied me. Even today, two years later, I can't quantify what was going on with this young woman. I can't feel comfortable about her. I see fits and starts, both in her writing and her analytical thinking. Ambivalence. Gaps. On the one hand there was an evaluation about our class that seemed to indicate approval:

This class seems to work pretty well together, people seem to speak their mind openly and do not have any fear that someone will make fun of them. It seems in an integrated class the men do most of the talking, the girls seem intimidated to speak up. It does not seem fair that they should feel that way, anyone can sound really stupid or really smart regardless of whether [sic] they are male or female. Intelligence knows no gender. I am not a feminist by any twisted form of the notion, I am simply making an observation that women seem to be more comfortable in single sex situations.

Felicia had spent her high school years in two separate private boarding schools, the first an exclusive all-girls academy and the second a sports' academy where the population was 75% male. Of her English class in the all-girls' school she wrote:

I thought it was kind of interesting that it should only contain the thoughts of women. In a way I think it was kind of sheltering. The school seemed diehard feminist which is one of the reasons why I chose to leave. They were constantly trying to force down your throat the good virtues of women and the evils in man. It was [a] good school academically because you did not have to be shy and ask a question when you felt like it. You were allowed to explore different avenues if you so desired.

Discomfort about "diehard" feminism, a dichotomous view about virtuous women and the evil in men, an atmosphere both sheltering and encouraging of exploration . . . from all directions it seemed she was experiencing confusion about her educational memories. I read on. Was I imagining a degree of fear here about gender?

The girls were a little too friendly toward each other for my taste. They would hold hands in the hall and become all too emotionally attached to one another. It made me and my couple of close friends very uncomfortable, not because we were not secure with our own sexuality but because they were all too outward with theirs. That is only one example.

Of the predominantly male sports academy she wrote,

The situation was conflict in itself...just having to wear normal skating attire that consists of spandex pants and a leotard often got to be sticky. We would get comments like "put some clothes on" or just the jaws dropped to floor look. One could not walk down the arena halls without getting a stare. It was annoying. I know personally I did not speak up because I was dreadfully shy.

I mentioned earlier that Felicia's research project was about a personal battle with anorexia. Although she claimed to have "cured" herself of anorexia she wrote, "I cannot even remember to a time that weight and exercise have not been on my mind at least 80%

of my day. I chose an exercise science major so I can get paid for exercising. It is all I have ever wanted to do and hopefully it is all I will ever be doing." Here too I read gaps in Felicia's personal view of reality.

This is turning into a chapter about gaps. For girls, education is an experience of being caught (like Kristi and Shane)—and sometimes lost (like Felicia)— in the gaps. Most immediately is the social gap they find themselves negotiating between madonna and whore, the gap my revered Mr. Hove located for me in high school. Eventually most girls learn to recognize this gap as they mature; it's the conscious battle faced by the women in my composition classroom, adumbrated by Felicia's equivocal struggle. And what better place to identify gaps than in the discipline of composition, itself located in the lacunae between traditional English departments, psychology, philosophy, and cultural studies, between bona fide academic discipline and service course?

On a more macro-theoretical level, perhaps not as visible or personally recognizable, is another gap, the one theorists are attempting to reconcile between feminism and postmodernism. While the primary thrust of postmodern theory is to question and subvert accepted notions of reality, including a notion of the unified personal identity of an author, feminism wishes to bring validity and verification to historically ignored female identity. At the heart of the matter is the postmodern deconstruction of author-ity. For feminists, the possible denial of identity—especially on the metatheoretical "playing with the big boys" level—at a time that coincides with its historical emergence, is a painful threat. Again, disappointingly, it appears that matters of theory must revert to power struggles. Linda J. Nicholson, from *Feminism/Postmodernism*:

The relation of feminist theorizing to the postmodern project of deconstruction is necessarily ambivalent. Enlightenment philosophers, such as Kant, did not intend to include women within the population of those capable of attaining freedom from traditional forms of authority. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable for persons who have been defined as incapable of self-emancipation to insist that concepts such as the autonomy of reason, objective truth, and beneficial progress through scientific discovery ought to include and be applicable to the capacities and experiences of women as well as men. It is also appealing, for those who have been excluded, to believe that reason will triumph—that those who proclaim such ideas as objectivity will respond to rational arguments. If there is no objective basis for distinguishing between true and false beliefs, then it seems that power alone will determine the outcome of competing truth claims. This is a frightening prospect to those who lack (or are oppressed by) the power of others (42).

The students in my composition classes may not have a broad grasp of postmodern theory nor of the issues at stake in the struggle Nicholson outlines, but they feel the effects nevertheless on all levels of society from the national as they become witness to political battles for women's issues (the problems of women in the military, for instance) to the interdisciplinary struggles between academic departments fighting for validity (usually in the form of monetary recognition) to my own politically-directed choices of the literature I assign. In fact, their own striving for meaning parallels activities of the theorists as they deconstruct their individual histories in personal narrative, finding that sometimes meaning lies hidden in the gaps of newly recognized misunderstandings about what they'd relied on as reality. Nicholson could easily be understood to be talking about Kristi's, Shane's, and Felicia's disparate experiences, rooted in and formed by emerging recognition of individual gender identity:

Feminist theorists enter into and echo postmodernist discourses as we have begun to deconstruct notions of reason, knowledge, or the self and to reveal the effects of the gender arrangements that lay beneath their neutral and universalizing facades. Some feminist theorists, for example, have begun to sense that the motto of the Enlightenment, "*sapere aude*—"have courage to use

you own reason,' rests in part upon a deeply gender-rooted sense of self and self-deception....In fact, feminists, like other postmodernists, have begun to suspect that all such transcendental claims reflect and reify the experience of a few persons--mostly white, Western males. These transhistoric claims seem plausible to us in part because they reflect important aspects of the experience of those who dominate our social world (42, 43).

Kristi was about the business of deconstructing "notions of reason and knowledge" as she struggled to locate truth without a male lodestar in the classroom. Shane began recognizing the "universalizing facades" of gender arrangements. Felicia? I choose to see in her confusion the beginnings of a healthy suspicion about those who dominated her social world. Looking in the face of some of those "transcendental claims," peeling the mask off the "transhistoric" plausibilities of our "mostly white, Western" culture, they echo another young woman from the semester: "Who would have thought women would have to much to say!"

As the semester unfolded it became increasingly clear to me that these women were about the simplistic matter of accepting and owning their gender identities. Yes, I'd prompted them early on by suggesting they address specific gender questions on a day to day basis, but it soon became apparent to me that once our intentions were declared, in this exclusive setting, there was no stopping the direction they'd take. As one woman wrote in an evaluation of the course, "Everything we discussed would have been discussed even with men present. Reading assignments were taken from a text which was chosen before it was known there were no men here. The difference is that we didn't have to deal with interruptions. But women are hungry for knowledge that means something to them, and we would have found a way to get to it." Each woman was hard at work taking ownership of her individual gender identity. The proof was all around me, in their choice

of writing topics, the subjects for their research papers, their self-assigned readings, the daily discussions, and their constant evaluations about the course work.

Ownership is a matter of recognizing and claiming. Claiming ownership of one's gender is to recognize "body knowledge," to borrow the term Madeleine R. Grumet coins for *Bitter Milk*.

This is a secret everybody knows. It is body knowledge, like the knowledge that drives the car, plays the piano, navigates around the apartment without having to sketch a floor plan and chart a route in order to get from the bedroom to the bathroom. Maurice Merleau-Ponty called it the knowledge of the body-subject, reminding us that it is through our bodies that we live in the world. He called it knowledge in the hands and knowledge in the feet. It is also knowledge in the womb. Eve knew it, but she let on and was exiled from Eden, the world of divine law, for her indiscretion. We, her daughters, have kept silent for so long that now we have forgotten that knowledge from and about the body is also knowledge about the world (3).

My students were engaged in reclaiming their body knowledge, their awareness of gender as each interpreted it for herself. During this five-month span of self-investigation they made observations about what the world around them wanted them to be and how it wanted them to behave and then they reconfigured their prior knowledge about gender so that they could find ways to use gender to maneuver around and negotiate through their world. In ownership, gender becomes a useful tool instead of a mere nuisance.

The reclamation of body knowledge must be carried on in what we call the "real world." Grumet's autobiographical discourse explains how her search for meaningful, useful curriculum for her female students (and not just female students; all students benefit from her embodiment of a body-centered, reproductive curriculum) was necessarily conducted while she gave birth to and mothered her own children, and how through those

earthy reproductive activities she produced educational theory. In her words, the purest knowledge, and therefore, the most useful, finds meaningful connections with life: "Metaphor matters"(4). It literally grows out of life. "I am suggesting that there is a dialectical relation between our domestic experience...and our public project...It is important to maintain our sense of this dialectic wherein each milieu, the academic and the domestic, influences the character of the other and not to permit the relation to slide into a simplistic one-sided causality"(5). Epistemology is always intersubjective, developed through social relations and negotiations. My students had engaged themselves in a parallel activity to Grumet's mothering, exchanging suburban house for a college dormitory, using their very physical and very social places in the world as female college students. Grumet makes knowledge through writing about diaper-changing, ear infections and lactation. My students wrote about sexual harassment, dating, and PMS. Body knowledge.

Two Student Research Essays

As I mention above, students spent the final weeks of the semester working on individual research projects. Student research is an area where the degrees of individual ownership and authority students have attained become evident in their essays, especially in the ways they choose to write about their findings. In this particular semester, the research essays also became a place where evidence of their definitions of gender, particularly in their definitions of womanhood, began to emerge. The contrast between Kristi's and Felicia's research papers demonstrates varying degrees of their concepts of

ownership of knowledge, authority over the subjects of their essays, and awareness of personal gender identity. In studying signposts such as pronoun usage, rhetorical distancing techniques, and contradictions within their own arguments I could begin to assess degrees of ownership of their subject matter. By looking for textual constructions of women and womanhood (what it means to be a woman) or how the writers textually construct themselves as females, in some cases even writing about the body, I could sense gender acceptance, body acceptance, or body comfort. What follows is my interpretation of these two essays. (The full essays can be found in Appendix H.)

Felicia's essay, entitled "The Weighting Game," is partly the personal story of her battle with anorexia and partly a report on the social causes of the disease. As I read, I notice immediately that the two topics remain separate throughout her paper, so separate that the removal of approximately one and a half pages from the twelve page text would produce what might be read as a simple encyclopedic report on the ways the fashion industry contributes to anorexia. The essay is an invective against what she perceives as forces beyond a women's control, and yet she can't include herself with those women. What results is conflict—a textual illustration of the conflict Felicia exhibited in other ways all semester.

Even though anorexia is a condition Felicia personally suffered from, there is no integration, no attempt at using her own experience to illustrate or prove what she's telling her reader. At the same time, the reader gets the sense throughout the essay that Felicia's absence from the subject of anorexia is denial, and so her presence hides behind every claim she makes. She keeps the disease at a distance. "I have seen many people," she

reports, who suffer from anorexia, "a lot of them my friends." "People are questioning their self-worth," she writes, and uses the lack of self-worth as a reason for the condition, but never puts herself into the same category. The phrases "these women" and "some people" appear frequently, whereas "I" or other personal markers appear very rarely. It isn't until page four, where she attempts to tell her personal story, that she appears in the essay at all, and then she qualifies and separates her own experience from "these women" she's reporting on: "I have experienced this to a small extent. But for the most part it is built into my personality." Felicia's exhibits for the reader that she doesn't own a concept of self. The "other" defines her, and this other is the sexualized male gaze. She uses the word "bombshell" multiple places to define what women should look like. Her "I" is a constructed, even co-opted "I," a paradigm of fashion culture. Although there's an awareness of culture, her "I" has no authority to criticize culture. She can only react to and be utterly complicit. Although other women who suffer from anorexia are led into the disease by the media and the fashion industry, Felicia sees herself as unaffected by culture. She had an eating disorder because it was endemic, "built into my personality."

She continues her account by describing herself as being a "picky" eater, not anorexic: "I was not picky for the fear of being thin but just that I did not like to eat anything. I did not even know what anorexia was. I started aerobics when I was seven years old and started weight lifting when I was ten. I don't know why, it just happened." There's a disconnection between her experience and what she reports to be the cause of the disease. There's also a sense of unreality, disbelief, or dismissal: "I don't know why, it just happened." A paragraph later she tells about going away to boarding school and

being forced to eat cafeteria food, which caused a weight gain. She makes this observation about the weight gain: "To say the least, I was horrified even though my parents said I looked healthy. So then I became obsessive about food and exercise, even more so than before." But she has still not admitted or defined herself as anorexic. "I managed to drop 18 pounds and I was finally sort of satisfied." "I go into periods of obsession," she admits, but "I cannot say it is because I want to look like a supermodel, but it is more for personal satisfaction." This is classic false consciousness. Here's the way she closes out this personal section of the paper:

I cannot even remember to a time that weight and exercise have not been on my mind at least 80% of my day. I chose an exercise science major so I can get paid for exercising. It is all I have ever wanted to do and hopefully it is all I will ever be doing. I want to be able to teach people how to lose weight the right way as I know first hand how to lose weight the wrong way. I would love to be a model but I put enough pressure on myself to be thin, I cannot even imagine what I would do to my body if I were being paid to lose weight

As had become characteristic with much of Felicia's work over the semester, there's internal contradiction. The lack of ownership or authority over her complicity comes from personal denial, and so she refutes her own truth statements. I'm not like other people even though I exhibit the same tendencies they do. I'm not anorexic, but I've experienced the problem "to a small extent." She is not the subject of her essay, but neither does she allow herself to be subjugated. She attempts through denial to slip through the gaps, but it's increasingly obvious as the reader progresses through the essay that she betrays her anonymity through the "other women." It still remains unclear whether the fashion industry is responsible for "other women's" problems with self-image or if the women themselves are to blame. As I said, the bulk of the essay centers on the ways the fashion

industry corrupts women's self-image. Or it talks about the women themselves as part of the problem. Again, the conflict. "They" own women's bodies, although she's not always sure who are the "they." They're so invisible that they're not even the subject of most of the invectives: "These women are the products of diets they are forced to be in to get the contracts." The industry makes women into "machines" and "monsters," creatures that are not only no longer female but neither are they human. As Felicia excuses herself from responsibility, she likewise removes any sense of agency from "other women." "If they didn't constantly bombard us. . . the public might not try to be something that they are not." No agency, ownership, no authority.

At various places in her essay she offers insight into a definition of what it means to be a woman. The adjectives she uses to qualify women fall into the categories of good and bad. It's good to be "thin" and "beautiful" and "size six." It's bad to have a "blemished face," be a "size eight" or be a "greasy person." It's also bad to be "fat," "the girl next door," or "older women."

She talks at length about fashion models, something she admits to want to be, and females who define womanhood. On the other hand, she calls them "monsters," "mutants," and "products of someone else's twisted reality." In order to be a model you have to be "genetically gifted," "tan, thin and size six," and a "96-pound bombshell," but models are "not real, air-brushed, touched-up."

As I read Felicia's essay I find a young woman whom I have to respect for tackling a difficult subject, especially difficult because of the effort she takes to maintain her denial in the face of painful personal experience. But I also find a woman who is unable to take

control and come to ownership of her subject. I find a woman who is unable to accept her body as it is, and with no clear idea of what it should be. There is no demonstrated awareness of the writer's gendered psychology to the textual conditions she develops.

The lack of agency in Felicia's writing is the opposite from what I find in Kristi's research essay. Kristi has chosen to write about what it's like to have an older sibling go through a drug rehabilitation program. It's a subject about which she's already familiar, and when I question the wisdom in researching a question for which she already knows the answer, she counters with the fact that although she's lived through it, she's never written about it, and that she's confident she can make new and useful discoveries as she writes. It's a subject she says she *has* to write about.

In "Drug Rehab: Does It Solve the Problem?" I read a clear and compound definition of womanhood. Kristi describes her mother, a single parent, in terms of the sacrifices made for the older sister, Melissa, and although her mother is clearly the person who illustrates womanhood to her, there's also the sense running throughout Kristi's writing that she herself has adopted the qualities she so admires. In the essay, the mother "works hard" and "makes sacrifices." "My mother had to remortgage the house to pay for most of my sister's treatment expense," she writes. This sort of mother will do anything for her children, even lie when necessary. "She tricked Melissa [to get her to the rehab site]. She lied to her and told her that they were going to a factory outlet. This was very hard for her to do and she felt a tremendous amount of guilt, which took a long time to get over. But, she kept on saying that it was for Melissa's own good."

"Mother" exemplifies strength for Kristi, and in a continual move throughout the essay, she shows her mother as a person making and using relationship by finding her strength in others. The essay includes information about her mother conferring with professionals—carefully identified as women—to decide on Melissa's treatment, and it mentions the importance of friends for her mother. Even so, the most striking feature is the bonding Kristi feels between the two of them. She moves seamlessly between the use of the personal "I" and the relational "we" to demonstrate how the mother involves the whole family. She routinely identifies "the whole family" as the entity of agency in solving their problem, but the family is small: Kristi, her mother, and her sister Melissa. They struggle together, and the struggle leads to "strong family bonding." At one point, Kristi forms a partnership with her mother as they host the sister and other rehab patients during a home visit:

In preparation for the girls' coming home on the weekend, my mother and I were required to put alarms on all windows and doors in our house. . . . We had to remove any sharp objects, such as knives, razors, pins, etc., and lock them up. My mother and I spent a whole afternoon taking down pictures that had been stapled only my sister's bedroom walls. We had to remove and throw away every single staple, and there were tons! . . . Whatever work that had to be done was worth it as long as my sister was coming home.

The resulting identification that Kristi feels with her mother is important to her, important enough to get her through unpleasant times: "Sometimes I get angry and resentful because I was forced to grow up so quickly at a young age, . . .but I realize how important the experience was." She identifies the experience and the things she learned as responsible for a life change: "I can honestly say that I was a selfish person before."

I glean several things from reading Kristi's essay. First I see a woman who distinguishes relationship as central to her identity. From a very specialized relationship with a woman she admires, she learns that the "womanly" qualities of strength, sacrifice, hard work, and compassion are vital to a healthy gendered acceptance of herself. Together, pooling their assets, she and her mother are able to own a very difficult situation, seeking out and following through on treatment for the older sister. Unlike Felicia, Kristi is clearly the agent throughout her text. Granted, her sister's drug problem is not her fault, but there's no attempt to blame anyone or anything, not even culture; she and her family shoulder the responsibility. She associates herself with the initial decision for Melissa's treatment as she writes, "Many families, like mine, have to make a big decision . . ." Neither is she complicit with what life has handed her as she willingly assists her mother in "whatever work had to be done." As she closes the essay she hints that the specific drug rehab program they chose for Melissa might have had some internal problems when she reports that Melissa "still has nightmares about her experience," and that "There was a lot of mental and sometimes physical abuse that went on." She's even willing to admit to her own anger in, "I sometimes get angry and resentful." Even so, she avoids the temptation to shift the responsibility of ownership to anyone other than herself and her family. "I felt grateful for the situation our family had," she concludes. "The biggest gift of all is that each of us share a special bond from our experience that no one will ever be able to break." While she's ready to identify outside forces that have played a part in constructing her "I," no one has co-opted this young woman.

Chapter Notes

1. *Companion to Women's Writing in the United States*, Oxford, 1995. 83.)

2. Donald Murray; *Write To Learn*, First Edition. Page 47.

3. I refer here to the designations Mary Field Belenky et al makes in *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* and how they apply to the varying ways in which women approach knowledge according to their relative abilities and maturities. These designations range from women who are silenced to women experiencing received knowledge, then subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge and finally constructed knowledge, the final category being the most desirable.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE: PRODUCING MARKETABLE COMMODITIES

"The economic metaphor is, of course, a calculated one;
in the classroom identities are nothing if not commodities."
-Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism,
Nature, and Difference*, 115

Assessing Where We've Been

By the end of the semester I knew I'd been on a very special trip with these twenty-two women, and I'd begun to wonder what conditions they'd packed to take along. In other words, what training and expectations had accompanied them from high school to college. Although three of the women in the class--Mindy, Barbara, and Shane--had taken detours before entering the university as freshmen, all the others had gone directly on from high school as scripted.

The mission statement from a local high school states that their purpose is to "educate all students by challenging them to become thinking, responsible, contributing citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives. Each student is entitled to an education that fosters the development of his/her full potential. Our endeavor is to train students to become operators of techniques that allow them to become owners of knowledge." The trouble is, at the end of a high school career, students, particularly women, often feel more like high tech machines with the ability to process knowledge than

like owners. Maybe all students, men and women, feel this way, but I'm examining the women because our semester together proved so interesting, and I'm reporting things from their point of view, which they articulated to me time and again. The fact is that they *feel* society singles them out from the boys, that they *feel* their experience has been different in some way, and they often feel they need to categorize themselves somehow outside the norm. Again I turn to the Sadker report:

Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbook, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different educations. From grade school through graduate school female students are more likely to be invisible members of classrooms. Teachers interact with males more frequently, ask them better questions, and give them more precise and helpful feedback. Over the course of years the uneven distribution of teacher time, energy, attention, and talent, with boys getting the lion's share, takes its toll on girls. Since gender bias is not a noisy problem, most people are unaware of the secret sexist lessons and the quiet losses they engender (1).

In her essay "The Pedagogy of Shame," Sandra Lee Bartky says that women are educationally prepared for the "lesser life" of the Other: "[O]ur subjectivities are formed within an interlocking grid of social ensembles—school, family, church, workplace, media—that teach us our destiny, which is to serve and to please"(225)¹ As I reviewed some of the writing produced by the women during our semester together in Freshman English, this was borne out. The evaluative writing my students had provided for me both at the beginning of the semester and at the end showed them making attitudinal judgments about what they'd been taught before coming to college and, more specifically, about how they'd been taught to approach the educational experience. I turned now to these writings for clues, combing and coding them for statements of purpose and for emotions experienced about educational tasks, particularly writing.

Each student and her editing partner came to see me weekly for a twenty-minute writing conference. She brought along two copies of a five-page essay and a reflective paragraph in which she was to evaluate the writing experience and ask questions of me and her editing partner about the essay. As I read these paragraphs I see a progression towards self-confidence and sureness as the semester develops. Some excerpts from early paragraphs:

Sarah: What an impossible task, I thought. I feel very nervous and intimidated at the thought of writing.

Julie: Frustration showed itself more than once in my dorm room when I faced a blank computer screen.

Karen: I was absolutely dreading it [writing]. Writing papers has never been my strong point, so I don't think I do well. I'm not talented in writing.

Nikki: In high school, I had trouble picking up on the meanings of what I was supposed to be writing.

Amy: I'm scared...this is going to be tough. I was told [in the last conference] to "go out on a limb, experiment" and I was terrified. I am critical of my own voice and writing technique.

Fear, insecurity, a feeling of impossibility, confusion. Underlying many of the women's comments were statements about failed writing projects in high school, problems deciphering what was expected of them in former writing situations, and a recurring theme of not possessing the proper "talents" for writing. I contrast these statements with some written almost three months later by the same girls:

Sarah: To my surprise (a pleasant one) this essay had a refreshing twist because it forced me to integrate my critical thinking, reading skills, and writing skills. I have come to see writing in a new light—a tool rather than a chore.

Julie: Writing gives me the opportunity to expand my creativity. Actually, it gives me creativity by developing a strong voice and an opportunity to experiment. Never before had I been given a chance to write my feelings as researched facts.

Karen: I have thought about many different topics that I never dealt with before or talked about before during our discussion of feminism. I have thought a lot deeper about my writing. I can write about me and the things that I want to think about and that helps me find my voice. I don't think my voice was "made" this semester, but just found and then it was able to be used as a tool. I think it was important to let myself into my writing. I created myself on the page.

Nikki: My thoughts and feelings came out as I was writing and that makes me feel like I accomplished something.

Amy: When I'm writing, I have a strong feeling about who I am. I now write in my head twenty-four hours a day. I love words, and I like to use them. I write for the beauty of the words, yet I also write because of this overbearing ego which I now bear. If I think it's brilliant, I want to share it.

These were strong voices, voices of confidence, the voices of women making discoveries about shaping and creating personality on the page. I liked what I was reading, and they seemed to like who they were becoming. There seemed a strong shared pattern indicating they each felt they'd been changed by journeys into far territories.

I felt it was time now to go back to high school to find out where they'd come from. (For a tabulation of these paragraphs, see Appendix G: "Students Evaluate the Writing Process.")

An Expected? Average? Normal? High School Experience

Photographs from my days spent in high school reveal a population made up of the grandchildren of northern European immigrants with predominantly German and Scandinavian heritage. "Race" would have been a word we applied to people other than

us. My high school days were mostly completed before the unisex fashion movement or even the more casual modes of dress of the late 60s hit our small community, so the photos would also delineate a clear demarcation between the sexes. Strict dress codes governed the way we looked. Girls wore dresses or skirts and boys wore "wash pants" and collared shirts. No one wore jeans for classes. Boys' hair was cut to a regulation length; girls' skirts lengths were dictated. I don't remember that we spent much time questioning those regulations of appearance forced upon us, although an occasional student would push the limits and be sent home to correct the situation. I would have been both surprised and confused, I think, if someone had highlighted our lack of diversity.

I look back now and wonder at the things we chose to question and the things that we took for granted and how we decided between the two. For instance, as a junior I helped lead the drive to organize the first girls' track team to participate in district competition but I didn't question the fact that we were funded at only a fraction of what the boys' teams got. My babysitting money paid for my uniforms. Nor did I question the absence of our team photo in the yearbook.

Beginning when I was fourteen years old, one hundred eighty days each year, more or less, depending on occasional colds and flu, I passed under twin stone lintels proclaiming . . .

"I will study and prepare myself and some day my chance will come. "
 —Abraham Lincoln

and

"For wisdom shall enter thy heart and knowledge shall be pleasant onto thy soul."
 -Proverbs 2:10

Over the years the granite messages chiseled themselves into my subconscious until I could no sooner forget them than my birthdate or my middle name. They came from men representing the two most prevalent institutions of our land, the government and the Judeo-Christian faith.

Our physical plant belied this stately facade. It was a conglomeration of architectural styles. In the middle stood the oldest section, built when the Century was new, a modest Victorian brick block, more serviceable than stylish. A newer section, the front with its Greek revival columns bearing the memorized script, reminded us that the architects of our Constitution saw the nation as a reincarnation of one of the world's greatest eras. Finally came the post-WWII additions, built over a stretch in the 50s and 60s when public schools were designed to look more like factories than institutions of learning. From the need to accommodate large numbers of Baby Boomers a new philosophy emerged, and it was a knockoff of the industrial philosophy so necessary to winning the war: shove raw goods (students) in one end and get marketable products (employable high school grads) out the other. As S. Bowles and H. Gintis write in *Schooling in Capitalist America*, "The major characteristics of the educational system in the United States today flow directly from its role in producing a work force willing and able to staff occupational positions in the capitalist system" (265).²

Inside the building, ignoring the occasional oaken newel post or beveled glass transit window, a factory motif dominated. Modern renovations connected disparate sections with tunnels, then replumbed, rewired, and resurfaced walls until one found it hard to tell demarcations between periods. Here, surrounded by cinder blocks, aluminum framing, and composition ceiling tiles, we lined ourselves up in plastic desks, gray linoleum floors under our feet and the buzzing, ubiquitous fluorescent lights above.

I walk into a local high school today and find it remarkably similar to the industrial edifice of my adolescence.³ The linoleum is still gray; cinder block walls are striped in blue and gold. In the foyer, teenage girls in jeans and boys in football jerseys of the same blue and gold mill around. One of the girls has blond hair with blue streaks. The smell of stale cigarettes lingers. A group parts to let me pass. I've been here several times recently, and some of the kids recognize me. "Sup, Teach." "Hey." "You here to watch us again?" I wave. They grin. One salutes. It's noon hour; no where to go; nothing to do. All the time in the world.

Then a bell rings, and like workers punching time clocks, kids move off down the various hallways, singly, in pairs and larger groups, scurrying towards the third ninety-minute block of the day. I head for my scheduled visitation in Mr. Robinson's social studies class.⁴

I've come to this class very specifically because Robinson is teaching about power and leadership. It occurs to me that this might be a practical place to witness firsthand

how girls might acquire skills for dealing with systems of hierarchy. Such skills would be applicable to assuming ownership in a college setting if each classroom of students is viewed as a capitalistic community with knowledge as the commodity of trade (as Robinson had articulated to me). Another thought: the classroom might be viewed as a grid of power which "always reflects the distribution of power present in the larger society in which it functions."⁵ Thinking of it that way, Robinson's classroom becomes a microcosm of the larger secondary educational community but with the added attraction that both teacher and students are tasked with awareness of their positioning.

In his syllabus Robinson states that the course will concentrate on two aspects of leadership, power itself and "how [power] relates to the student starting with the home as the beginning stage of leadership, to the school, community, state, national, and ultimately the international scene." Mr. Robinson tells me that he's built this course on the philosophy that high school students who are exposed to various political power structures throughout world history will be better prepared to understand the inner workings of our own government and more ready to assume leadership positions in their respective communities when they reach adulthood. To that end, students study leadership patterns first from a religious overview in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, attempting a comparison with Hinduism, Atheism, and Humanism. Next he leads his students through the development of contemporary secular governing patterns, basically beginning with the Middle Ages and romping through to the "crown of man's achievement, " American democracy. If this seems like a lot to tackle in one short semester, it is, but, in Robinson's words, the multiple times he's taught the course now enable him to "pick

through history and find the important parts that students need to hear." So while at week one Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt, and during week two Galileo bows to the Pope and Machiavelli writes *The Prince*, by the third week of class students are ready to discuss the structure of Clinton's cabinet!

On this day, students are handing in their "pyramid of power" posters. In this assignment, students have been instructed to depict their interpretations of the fifteen most influential people in the United States. Fifteen blocks are to be arranged in a pyramid, the top block containing the name of the most powerful person. "No right or wrong answers," Robinson says. "Only suggestions for discussion." The posters are pinned onto a bulletin board.

All of the students have placed President Clinton in the top block. Not much discussion here. The second tier with three blocks is more varied. Among the candidates are the usual conjectures like the vice president, the secretary of state, and the speaker of the house. Discussion reveals that these positions are arguably more titular than based on personality or charisma. More interesting names creep up in this tier as well—Bill Gates, Michael Eisley, and Rush Limbaugh, for instance. Even a few of the highest-paid sports figures get a nod here; some in the class chose Michael Jordan, Shaq, and Dennis Rodman. All these personalities are discussed, digested, or dismissed as interesting possibilities. No wrong answers.

Robinson now focuses on a poster brought in by sixteen-year-old Shelly, a trendy, pretty, and very thin junior with honor roll grades. Shelly has included super-model Kate Moss as a contender for power. Robinson's immediate reaction is to laugh; his second is

to suggest she hadn't taken the assignment seriously; his third is to remove the poster from the grouping and place it on his desk. In an assignment in which there are no wrong answers, Shelly didn't get it right.

It occurs to me, as it had occurred to Shelly, that from the viewpoint of a sixteen-year-old female, Kate Moss, representative of a multi-billion-dollar fashion industry which claims our country's monetary attention, let alone dictates an entire cultural image for young women, might just appear more influential than our vice president! I think it's commendable that Shelly was able to look through the seemingly invincible shield of subliminality that surrounds the advertising industry and recognize their attempt to manipulate her. She needs to be congratulated; instead she suffers ridicule and censure. (To make matters worse, the following week he shows the poster to a group of parents at an open house as an example of absurdity. He tells the parents that the student in question now understands her mistake and has given him permission to use the poster. I can just imagine how that conversation went.)

During the rest of the hour Shelly retreats into herself. In a private interview with her later that day she tells me, "Well, I guess I was stupid. I was thinking of things from a girl's perspective and *he didn't want me to do that*" (italics mine).

Another day, another visit, I talk to Amanda. She tells me about her male English teacher who routinely diminishes her burgeoning feminism. Amanda's mother is a psychologist; her father teaches psychology at a nearby university. Amanda herself has a vocabulary and a manner of analytical thinking that makes her sound knowledgeable beyond her years and often separates her from her peers. Throughout high school she's

sought out teachers who have supported her intellectual drive. Now a senior, she feels she has no choice but to take the AP English course even though it's taught by a man who is known to students as resistant to either theory or pedagogy outside the very traditional. On earlier visits, we've talked about her problems with this teacher, and I ask her now what she's decided to do about it.

Well, I decided I had to like take control so last week I went to see him during free period. I took Crissy and Meg [two close friends] along with me, but they didn't talk or anything; they just were like there for me. So he listened and all and he was like "sure, I understand" and "you've got a right to your opinions too" and the bottom line was he said he'd be more sensitive. I mean, he actually apologized, and Meg and Crissy heard him too. But then the next day in class when I raised my hand over a point some guy had made about the story and his point badmouthed African American women and I tried to explain an idea I'd read from bell hooks, then first Mr. P listened. But when the guy tried to argue for his side, Mr. P. just said, "Hey, Jason, let it lie. You know that Amanda's going to disagree. You know Amanda's like that." *Like that*—just like I had a disease or something because I'm a feminist!

I had been visiting the high school once a week for about a month. Each day I'd visit a class session or two of social studies, English, or art, and then meet with interested students during an impromptu luncheon discussion. Each time I'd been here, Melody, whom I'd observed both in social studies and English classes, came to lunch. She rarely spoke, and she almost never spoke without punctuating her utterances with high-pitched, distinctly "girly" giggles. After our fourth session she lingered a few minutes as if she wanted a moment alone with me. "I've got something I want you to hear," she finally said.

The story began with "See, I've got this friend," but I suspected immediately she was her own friend, and when I challenged her, it was confirmed. Melody is a gifted

musician. Besides the high school band she's played in various community music groups. She is, by her own description, someone who "lets emotions out through music."

Last year, her junior year, a curious turnaround happened in Melody's life, one that I'd heard about from other students. In September, even though she'd been chosen to serve as drum major, Melody gave up the high school band, quit playing her trumpet, and instead joined an area orchestra, taking up the violin she'd studied as a young child. She's decided today to tell me about it.

As both a freshman and sophomore, Melody had been hired by the junior high band director--I'll call him Mr. Stevens--to teach several of his students brass instruments and theory. Stevens was new to this school system, young, talented, lively, exciting, funny, stylish-- everything that appealed to Melody. She loved spending time with him and quickly regarded him as a trusted friend. He began dropping in on Melody and her family after school hours; her parents seemed to like him too. Then occasionally he began treating her to restaurant dinners, compensation, he said, for her low pay. He asked her to go along as a chaperone with some of his students to an out-of-town competition, after which he took everyone to a Chinese restaurant. There were a dozen junior high students and two sets of parents, and none of them knew that during the meal, Stevens fondled Melody's leg under the table. A week later she accompanied him again, this time to a theme park, again with a group of students and parents. On the bus ride home, in the dark, his hands found her again, this time more than just a leg.

Sometime later when he called her mother to ask if Melody could help him chaperone students on an overnight trip to a music conference, her mother became

suspicious. "God, was she mad. I'd never seen her that mad, not at me, she was great to me, just at Mr. Stevens." It was now a full year later, and Melody wasn't sure what her mother had done, whether or not the matter had been reported to the principal or school board. Conversation about it had been dropped in Melody's home.

I asked her if she knew she'd been sexually harassed and that such treatment was illegal. She told me she doesn't want anyone to know because it's too embarrassing, "and I'll be the victim again." I asked about counseling, and I got the same answer, plus, "No, no I'm fine." I asked how Mr. Steven's attention had made her feel. "Well, that's the funny thing. At first--and I don't *know* what I was smokin'!--it made me feel good. I was like, this is pretty cool, you're just a freak, and he picks *you*, he likes *you*." She paused, and at this point I heard a real change in the tone of her voice. What she said next sounded flippant, automatic, dramatic, as carefully rehearsed as a trumpet solo: "But then I got a hold of myself, I got real, and now the whole thing just makes me mortified, just mortified."

Teachers behaving badly. From my research at this and similar high schools, I have no way of knowing what percentage of girls have been made to feel discriminated against in ways like I'm reporting above. Teenaged girls don't always know how to locate or articulate harassment, and if they do, they still may not report it because of the fear of social repercussions. I remember my own inability to report my chemistry teacher's attack. I admit also that my findings might be disproportionate because in inviting girls' conversations, I was asking not for success stories but for exactly the opposite. Nor did

my open invitation to talk about girls' authority issues in the classroom bring many boys for discussion; only three boys responded to my invitation. I would be interested in the future in pursuing corresponding boys' issues, and I'm ready to admit that the majority of girls probably don't experience what Shelly, Amanda and Melody report. Are they anomalies in the high school community? Is the particular high school I chose to visit an anomaly? The evidence in published reports indicates that neither is the case and that what I witnessed was not out of the ordinary. The Sadker study, published in 1994, found across its examination of hundreds of schools from Maine to California that, among other things:

- 81% of girls in middle and high school report being subjected to some form of unwanted sexual behavior (112).
- In text books in all subjects men are represented overwhelmingly over women both as authors and subjects (130-131).
- As many as 76% of high school girls report being treated differently by their teachers than boys (107).
- Girls are acculturated to feel it's more important to be popular than to be bright (102).

"As these girls, the bright women of tomorrow, are taught to devalue themselves, they also begin to doubt the validity of their senses, the very reality of their own experience" (134). The result is that:

- A report from the American Anorexia and Bulimia Association states that while it's impossible to estimate how many girls suffer from eating disorders, 150,000 females a year die from them, most of whom began their suffering during adolescence (104).
- High school girls are two to three more times more likely to suffer depression than boys of the same age (105).

"Denied their history, discouraged from taking crucial courses that lead to key careers, concluding that the appearance of their bodies may be worth more than the quality of their minds, realizing they are not the gender of choice, and doubting their intelligence and ability, high school girls make the journey from adolescence to womanhood. They pay a steep price for their passage" (135). Again the metaphor of commodity.

Way back in 1979 Adrienne Rich observed, "Women and men do not receive an equal education because outside the classroom women are perceived not as sovereign beings but as prey" and that "The undermining of self, of a woman's sense of her right to occupy space and walk freely in the world, is deeply relevant to education. The capacity to think independently, to take intellectual risks, to assert ourselves mentally, is inseparable from our physical way of being in the world, our feeling of personal integrity" (*Gendered Subjects*, 25). Thinking about the high school girls who share their experiences with me twenty years later, I wonder how much has changed, how feminist pedagogy has intervened, and how much still needs to be done.

An Alternate Secondary Experience

There is nothing about this building that belies the fact that it's a school. I've driven through the Wisconsin countryside north of Milwaukee for two and a half hours, and I haven't been through a town, a village, or settlement of any sort for the last ten miles. My destination is Pathway School for Girls, and the building of the parking lot I now pull into fits the description I've been given, but it looks nothing like a school.⁶ I slosh through spring-thaw puddles toward the lower half of what looks like a modern

Midwestern farm house. Head teacher Carrie Stockbridge greets me with a wave of her key ring, unlocks the sliding glass doors and ushers me into the basement classroom.

There are no cinder block walls here. There are also no football uniforms, no cheerleading outfits, no stale cigarette odors, and no blue hair.

Inside double-locked doors, thirteen student desks have been carefully grouped around the front and side of a large metal teacher's desk. Along one wall a blackboard has been installed; on the adjacent, a bulletin board is covered with inspirational posters and student artwork. A long communal work table spills over with yarn, fabric, empty oatmeal boxes and the sort of general junk that looks like castoffs from a church basement. Pressed-board shelves for books have been shoved in willy-nilly wherever there's room. Thirteen girls of various size and color look up from their work.

Stockbridge introduces me. On this day, this first visit, I am greeted not with slang but with silence. I will have to earn their trust.

Pathway is a minimum-security girls prison offering treatment, psychological counseling, and general high school education for victims-turned-perpetrators of sexual abuse. They range in age from 10 to 18, and each arrives at Pathway through the court system, referred by a judge in lieu of jail time. Pathway

...has gained a growing reputation as a pioneer program and leader in the treatment of sexual dysfunction in adolescent girls. Using our many years of experience in the treatment of sexual offense, we offer a program that allows the process of positive change to occur through the combined use of individual, group, and family therapy. Pathway offers a nurturing and safe environment where positive growth and sharing can occur. In a milieu facility, the girls deal with the difficult issues surrounding their sexual behavior including shame/guilt, their own victimization, male/female relationships, as well as other related problems such as eating disorders and drug abuse (Pathway brochure).

The girls come from throughout the Midwest, from the inner cities of Chicago and Detroit and Minneapolis, from the Great Plains of the Dakotas, and from Iowa farms. These are girls whose childhoods have been stolen from them through sexual violence; all have been abused in a variety of physical and psychological ways, and all are trapped in behavioral patterns of dysfunction. At the same time, all are fighters and survivors. Most of them are above average in intelligence though their dysfunction causes them to perform far below grade level. These are girls who, when abused by figures more powerful than they, figured out a way to wield that power for themselves. As Meredith, one of the girls, explained to me, "Everyone stuck it to me, everyone. And the big people who should know better were the worst. They had all the power. I figured the only way I could win was to stick it to someone littler than me. Look. I figured out who had the power, and I got zapped for it."

The first week I visited at Pathway there was the usual full complement of thirteen girls housed in their facility and a waiting list twice that long. As a rule, girls stay at Pathway for a year, which is their scheduled treatment cycle, but extenuating circumstances often change the duration. A Pathway assignment is deemed a privilege as it is normally made by a judge in lieu of being sentenced to a more routine correctional facility; infraction of the rules can cause a girl to be removed before her treatment time is up. At the end of a year, a determination is made of an individual girl's progress, and it's not atypical for a girl to be recommended for further treatment.⁷

At this point I want to emphasize my commitment in regards to my using the Pathway setting as part of my research. Admittedly I am not a psychologist, and this

dissertation is not being written under the auspices of a university psychology department, and for those reasons—and certainly because the circumstances which caused these girls to be detained at this alternative school are so dramatic—there are valid arguments for steering clear of the whole experience. After all, it's difficult to put the topic of sexual deviance into a secondary position with how girls find ownership of knowledge. But I feel committed to follow through on this exciting venue for research precisely because it *is* so dramatic. It was in talking to these girls that I formed clearer ideas about what it means in our culture for girls to be "normal." Perhaps it is because in a setting where the gendered self is more vulnerable, more hurt, and less clearly understood by the subjects themselves, technologies and processes become more transparent.⁸

Every girl has a story, but it's neither prudent nor useful to cover more than a few here. From the group I worked with over a year's period (of which there were sixteen in all, accounted for by the staggered arrival and dismissal of individuals) I have chosen three to help me illustrate what these girls can teach us about the relationship between developing cognitive skills and gender maturity. At thirteen, Meredith is the youngest, though Pathway accepts children as early as age ten. Crystal is the elder of the trio, seventeen, and Myesha is fifteen.

I meet Meredith first in the classroom. Her screaming red hair catches me immediately, but her aggressiveness at wanting attention from the teacher demands serious consideration. Not all of the answers she is shouting out in the math exercise are correct,

but she is intensely engaged in the activity and each right answer brings a grin. Meredith is small and covered with freckles and has a smile that makes her a perfect model for Crest toothpaste. You'd peg her as an adored youngest child. Meredith had been recommended to me by staff as a youngster well on the road to recovery. I made arrangements to meet with her for a private interview during recess.

I lead the way to a sitting area adjacent to the classroom and motion for her to sit on the sofa with me. She cringes, squeaks out a painful no and requests that we go upstairs to her bedroom instead. Later I would learn from the psychologists that only days before Meredith has experienced a panic attack while sitting on that sofa, a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder triggered by the emergence during counseling sessions of painful memories. The place is now off limits as far as she is concerned. Moments later I curl myself opposite her in the bottom bunk in the tiny, spare bedroom she shares with three other inmates. The only decoration here is a collection of three stuffed animals propped on her pillow. She introduces me to each one in turn, interspersing the introductions with a very matter-of-fact account of the events that led her to Pathway.

From her earliest memories Meredith, indeed the youngest child in the family, was being used sexually by every relative in her extended household including her father, her mother, two older sisters, a male cousin, an uncle and a grandfather. The only person living in the house who didn't use her was her grandmother. They were a middle-class family; she attended public school, went on family vacations, dressed in nice clothes, and did all the outwardly normal things that middle-class children do. One of her older sisters had a son who also lived with them, a boy only two years younger than Meredith.

Although Meredith was victimized sexually by at least seven family members older than she, she was never aware that her nephew was treated in similar manner, so she chose him as her own special victim. The first incidence of perpetration against him occurred when she was ten, and irregularly after that until the boy reported the abuse to a teacher at school. Meredith readily admitted her culpability in actions against the younger boy and was placed in psychiatric care, but it was only after months of treatment that she divulged the full range of abuse. Through court proceedings she'd been placed in foster care, and when she perpetrated again, was removed and recommended to Pathway.

Meredith's abuse includes a full range of sexual deviations from rape to oral sex to sodomy. The litany she delivered to me of the events, though horrendous, was almost devoid of emotion. She was willing in some detail to explain to me how she planned and executed the perpetration on her nephew. When I asked how she could talk so easily about what had happened, she informed me in a surprised way that besides her psychologists, the welfare people and the legal people, she hadn't told anyone, not even her teacher. Later the psychologist would corroborate that and explain that Meredith saw what she thought of as her "secret knowledge" as power and as a commodity of exchange for good treatment from the people she regarded as more powerful than she.

When she leaves Pathway, she'll go into foster care. The grandmother has been her sole emotional support, but health problems preclude the possibility of her taking custody of her granddaughter.

Next I meet Crystal. She looks like her name, ready to shine or shatter, depending on which way she's handled. She, like Meredith, eagerly invites me into her bedroom. As one of the oldest girls, and longest in residence, Crystal has a double room instead of a quad, so I don't have to watch my head as I perch on the edge of her immaculately made bed. She starts our conversation by informing me that we probably have lots in common because once for a summer she lived out east in Connecticut with an aunt, not far from my home in New Hampshire. She says she likes what she calls "the Eastern way of life."

Before talking, I'd been told Crystal's basic history: an only child, raised in wealth, her father the owner and operator of a large farm which employs dozens of employees, mostly young men. I knew her legal history: when Crystal's father brought rape charges against one of the hired hands, an investigation led to accusations of rape by Crystal against her father, against other employees, and even of employees against Crystal. A judge deemed her incorrigible and sent her to Pathway.

Like Meredith, Crystal easily shares the bare facts of what brought her to Pathway. But there's a difference in her manner. I had the sense in listening to Meredith that she was telling me the facts because it was necessary medicine; as I listen to Crystal I can't ignore the obvious pleasure she's finding in the drama. It's as if she's shaping the story to what she thinks will impress me the most. And there's something teacherly about her...maybe she's right to assume we have something in common.

"Here's my cycle of abuse," she announces, and she flips open a notebook to a diagram she's drawn of her perpetration of abuse onto a victim. "First there's the scene. I think I want attention and so I choose a victim I think will respond to me." She leads me

through the cycle: distorted thinking caused by hurt and anger leads to violence and feelings of power and control, and finally the aftermath, a letdown of shame and guilt. She tells me carefully how she's different from any of the other girls here. "In my case, it's all promiscuous behavior," she explains. She snaps the notebook shut. I ask her to tell me more about how that makes her feel.

"I feel powerful. It's a natural high; I'm all woman—who could resist me," she says. "When I act sexy—oops, I'm not supposed to say that!" and she giggles, "I'm above everything. When they desire me, I tear them down. To tear them down after building them up is a real high." Then she sobers. "But I'm learning to go beyond all that, you know? It's all about power. I have to give up power to go into treatment. You get the power back by feeling good about yourself, by having good self-esteem. Wanna hear a poem I really love?"

Later Stockbridge tells me that already Crystal has been at Pathway for a year and a half and that during that time she's been "busted" back to the beginning of her treatment twice, one because her psychologists deemed it necessary to begin anew when they determined a basic proclivity toward dishonesty in her behavior and again by Crystal herself as she approached the completion of treatment. "She asked to stay, and we knew she was playing a game," says Stockbridge, but since it was clearly unsafe to send her back home, her county of residence petitioned for her to stay at Pathway.

At Pathway Crystal's learned to be articulate but not yet truthful. She tells me she wants to be a lawyer because she's learned that "words are a powerful way to change things." She takes out a journal she keeps and asks if I'd like to hear some of the things

she's written. She reads to me about her hopes to spend Christmas at home and anticipation about the gifts she's asked for. At the very end of an entry about going home to stay she reads, "...but I don't think that mom wants to deal with me."

And finally Myesha. At fifteen she's already five foot ten, slim, very dark, and quite stunning. She's pulled her bushy black hair back into a knot behind her head, and there's no makeup on the scrubbed face (Pathway allows no makeup, no hair color, only simple clothing), but it's easy to imagine her on a model's runway. In lieu of her bedroom, we meet in the common room where there's a piano because Myesha wants to play for me. She sits down and I prepare to listen, expecting some pretty little rendition of a pop song, maybe a rap. Instead, I get an aria I don't recognize, sung in impeccable Italian by a sonorous, rich contralto which should belong to a much older, professionally trained woman, not this youngster in trouble.

"I used to be a doormat," she tells me when she finishes. I ask what changed her. "Oh, Macbeth!" she says. "He tricked himself, you know, with blind faith and ego."

It turns out that Stockbridge is just now leading Myesha through her first experience with Macbeth, and he's made a serious impression on this serious girl who wants to be a professional singer and actress. In fact she's been performing since she was twelve years old--much of the time illegally--in night clubs and lounges downtown Chicago. She was arrested ("Huh, rescued's more like it!") from one of those night clubs, and a judge sent her to Pathway. ("Cause they didn't know what else to do with me, you

know? I was into some pretty bad shit, I tell ya!" and she shows me tracks down her arm. It's difficult for me to believe in her fifteen years.) Her heroes are Lady Macbeth, Whitney Houston, and Tina Turner, "in that order," she says. Why Lady Macbeth? "Oh, she's treacherous, you know?"

As I listen to Myesha I agree with her own contention that I wouldn't want to meet up with her in some dark alley, but on the other hand if I had to walk through that alley alone, I might want her for a companion. She tells me she's not quite sure whether she's a freshman or a sophomore any more because there are so many "holes" in her formal education. Knowing I teach writing, she's already warned me that she won't show me anything she's written because it's so bad. Despite that admission, she is wonderfully verbal, articulate and smart. I learn much. I ask her to talk about power.

There's good kind and there's bad. The unmeasured kind is bad. That's like perps [sexual perpetrators]. That's what I was. The good kind is like the power I have when I do good in school, good grades, new accomplishments. When I'm using the bad, I'm inappropriate—you know, non-verbal threats, glares and gestures and stuff. I give it and then I get it, verbal and emotional abuse, cut-downs. Playing peers against each other. Isolating a lot. Then I shut myself down and don't talk. What's appropriate is to do confronts when I got a problem. Bring it up to staff, don't just ignore it. I don't like, but I got to do it. I tell myself "just stay appropriate, just stay appropriate."

I hear strength, but I can sense the anger Myesha struggles to control bubbling just below the surface. (At one point I see tears, real tears, and I can't help but contrast her to Crystal who told me I'd never see her "real" tears. Those she saved for private, but she turns on the fake ones to control any situation.) When Myesha leaves Pathway she hopes to go to foster care. "If they send me back home, I'll end up in the same destructive behaviors," she says.

Therapy, Part I: Facing the Responsibility of Abuse

It's time now to talk with the psychologists who work with Meredith, Crystal and Myesha, Doug Dobberfuhl and Lorre Anderson. From them I learn that until the spring of 1997 Pathway, like other similar institutions, relied on a models of treatment protocol developed for male perpetrators of abuse. Only a handful of milieu facilities for treating female perpetrators even exist in the United States. Through my Pathway association I was to learn about Germaine Lawrence School for Girls in Massachusetts, a larger institution which has a separate unit for teenage female perpetrators, and my visit to that facility confirmed much of what I was already learning, that these girls are mostly ignored and invisible, and that when treated at all, psychologists rely on protocols developed for males. Dobberfuhl and Anderson are attempting to fill the gap with *From Hopelessness to healing: The Journey of Sexually Reactive Female Adolescent Sex Offenders*, a collection of theory and case studies which is currently in submission for publication. It would not be pertinent to this project to describe all the differences between male and female modes of behavior in regards to perpetration, nor am I qualified to do so. For my purposes it was important for me to know this one main difference: that whereas boys perpetrate abuse as retaliation to being abused, girls tend to commit abuse to forge a relationship and (following from the hoped for relationship) to get love. Girls don't become perpetrators without having first been victims of sexual abuse. The move to perpetrate might be seen as an attempt to break through, to feel, and certainly to master the situation. Recall how well Meredith articulated this: "I figured the only way I could win was to stick it to someone littler than me." But it backfires: "I figured out who had the power, and I got

zapped for it." Consequently, girls don't want, or need, to identify themselves as perpetrators, don't want to admit to the act, and don't want their victims to identify them. They tend to see the act as an anomaly in their lives, as an isolated occurrence. Some perpetrate only once, and repeaters usually only at great intervals. And they go to great lengths to keep their victims quiet.

All of this adds up to denial. The educational key here is that emotional denial causes what psychologists call "blockage," a point at which learning actually becomes impossible. Emotional maturation stops at the moment of victimization. Therapy must therefore be directed toward breaking down the blockage, and that happens only when the perpetrator has been given the means to face her perpetration. It's applicable to my study that the moment there's a breakthrough in therapy, learning resumes. The moment is a moment of honesty, says Dobberfuhr, wherein a girl goes from "I can't go there; if I open that door, I'll die" to "I'm looking at the horror realistically." They get hungry, like Meredith, insisting that she answer every question, blurring out her answers uncontrollably as if she's just been unleashed. And in truth she has.

This facing of reality involves two things: facing the abuse done to them, and facing their own perpetration or passing on of the abuse. And they have to do it in that order, first the abuse, then the perpetration. Girls who can't face the perpetration remain in a self-absorbed state, crippled emotionally, and unable to connect either to other people or to ideas. The specific protocol Dobberfuhr and Anderson have developed encourages the inmate/patient/perpetrator to recognize her "cycle of abuse," a behavioral cycle derived

from common patterns observed from working with hundreds of these girls over a period of five years. Here is the model they're developing.

Anderson-Dobberfuhr Female Cycle of Sexual Abuse Perpetration

A. Scenes.

Life experience and situations are assessed. At any given point in her life when it becomes no longer possible to remain in the status quo of abuse, a girl may begin to evaluate her abuse history. She needs to be able to recognize actions done to her as unpleasant or painful, but not necessarily morally wrong, and she needs to recognize that there might be another possibility, another way to live. She recognizes herself and her situation as needing to change and as being changeable.

B. Patterns.

Recognizing what the situation "does/did to me." A beginning connection is made between cause and effect as regards her treatment by the abuser. She begins to recognize that she has agency. Connections are found; she is creating a puzzle between the pieces.

C. Plan.

Recognizing herself as a victim of someone more powerful, she identifies with her abuser and sees it to her advantage to *become* the abuser. A victim is chosen, fantasy begins, and "grooming" commences. Within the Plan is the justification, a breaking down of societal walls of taboo, especially incest. Justification both acknowledges wrongness and identifies with the aggressor. The girl becomes aware of the power she felt used against her when she was victimized. She then redefines "normal" to include the abusive activity.

D. Perpetration.

Trying on the identity of the former abuser. A transference of personality is expected in the reenactment of the abuse: the girl will become her abuser. With that hoped-for becoming, there's an expected passing of the pain and power, a taking on of a feeling of empowerment over the aggressor. In overcoming the victim, the girl also believes she will take on adulthood, particularly sexual adulthood. In so doing, she aims for both separation from her mother and attention from the abuser: "I wanted to force my mother to notice me, involve my father in my life, become important, have power..." These feelings are particularly powerful when the abuser has been the girl's mother.

E. Reality.

Guilt and shame. What female perpetrators get is exactly the opposite of what they want. The fantasy breaks down in the actual perpetration: the girl doesn't *get* anything tangible from the experience except the one thing that she didn't expect, a heightening of the pain she already felt. She also discovers she gives nothing. Girls who have perpetrated often say they felt sadness or hopelessness in that they had no sperm to *give* during the experience. Since the mechanical sexual experience is internal for females, they feel powerless instead of empowered, or more accurately, overpowered. They experience submission when they expected control. (Dobberfuhl interviews)

So to recap, female perpetration of abuse is different from male in significant ways, notably in the impetus for perpetration (to foster or obtain a relationship rather than as retaliation of violence), and in result (shame in the place of expectations of power). Girls who work through and face their perpetration most often articulate surprise at their sense of shame after perpetration. It was not what they anticipated. Dobberfuhl and Anderson, who work with male sex offenders at a separate high school facility under the same management, find a distinct difference between the levels of shame experienced by male and female offenders. Boys who perpetrate, they report, are apt to talk about experiencing a "rush" of masculine strength both during and after overpowering their victims. Girls rarely report this. And while boys may feel a sense of shame, it doesn't seem to be the same as the all-encompassing emotion reported to be felt by the girls. I can draw on Sandra Bartky's discussion of shame here to illustrate the difference in degree.

Since I have no doubt that men and women have the same fundamental emotional capacities, to say that some pattern of feeling in women, say shame, is gender-related is not to claim that it is gender-specific, that is, that men are never ashamed; it is only to claim that women are more prone to experience the emotion in question and that the feeling itself has a different meaning in relation to our total psychic situation and general social location than a similar emotion has when experienced by men (226).

According to Bartky, in sexist societies, girls and women are differently positioned by their cultural environment so that women are more "prone" to shame. Arguably, Bartky identifies all of American society as sexist, but it seems without exception safe to say that the Pathway girls' former homelives exemplify the worst of sexist society, therefore perhaps positioning them as more prone to shame.

Therapy, Part II: Replacing Deviance with Constructive Methods

Once deviance is admitted by an individual girl, she must begin the painful process of examining both external factors (i.e., the family situation) leading up to her perpetration of abuse and internal factors (i.e., her unfulfilled emotional needs) which can now be re-programmed to appropriate, healthy desires. I need to examine what happens during this recovery process. Ideally, girls leave Pathway with the ability to begin a healthier way of self empowerment than abuse. Therapy is designed first to heal and second to teach new skills.

According to Dobberfuhl and Anderson, the key to Pathway girls developing these skills is helping them accept the responsibility for perpetration. They have to *own* the situation. This is accomplished by honest and mostly painful scrutiny of their "cycle." Over the course of the year's treatment, they are encouraged to recount as completely as possible the individual steps which led to the perpetration, the planning and implementation of the act(s), and the emotions which accompanied each step. Once they have done this, an explosion or "breaking through" (Dobberfuhl's term) occurs which unblocks the capacity for learning. It is as if the act of exposition releases power. When

they come to the place in their therapy when they can face both the abuse they suffered and their perpetration (ownership), there's a commensurate explosion of learning hunger and learning ability. (Note: Facing the abuse is separate from facing their abusers. Except in cases where the abusers are deemed rehabilitated, the girls are not encouraged to face their abusers.)

I called upon a passage from Bakhtin's "Discourse and the Novel" to help me in my earlier definition of ownership and to connect the idea of ownership to the learning process. I would like to recall that passage here, this time to illustrate Pathway therapy.

When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way [*something so big occurs that the learner cannot ignore it (facing the perpetration act), the apparatus is exposed and the girl sees what the act failed to do and why*], what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse [*for the first time she understands the difference between the lying voice that told her to perpetrate (learned from her abuser) and her own voice of reason*] along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, [*she needs to reject and put into perspective the guilt and shame, determine that it's counterproductive, therefore useless*] that do not touch us.

Internally persuasive discourse--as opposed to one that is externally authoritative--is, as it is affirmed through assimilation tightly interwoven with "one's own word." [*The new language she's learning through counseling, the freedom from blame she now feels permission to accept*] In the everyday round of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's. [*She must take responsibility and own the new discourse by integrating it into her action*]. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. [*Here's where the release of energy, which is really permission to ownership, acts to produce what looks like an explosion of energy as she is freed to tackle new subjects: math, spelling, science, etc.*] It is not so much interpreted by us as it is further, that freely, developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. [*ibid.*] More than that, it enters into an intense interaction, a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses. [*Here's the language of violence that simply explains what happens.*] Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and

ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values. The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean ("Discourse" 345,6).

While these girls' behaviors certainly make them deviants, outside the bounds of cultural normalcy, the thoughts and reasoning that bring them to perpetration are the same mental processes that "normal" girls employ to find self empowerment. They exemplify that gender blindness is at the heart of blockage, which state makes learning an impossibility. Pathway girls are counseled to face what happened during the precise moment at which they attempted to take ownership, then to re-dialogize (see Bakhtin, "Discourse") their thinking into means of appropriate ownership. Gender violence leads to deviant behavior (the claiming of ownership in wrong ways). Exposing deviant behavior shows them why it backfired and opens the path of possibility toward appropriate ownership: witness Myesha's self-directed litany, "Stay appropriate, stay appropriate." Once the reason for gender blindness is exposed, gender healing can begin, and learning is again possible, indeed inevitable, inescapable: witness Meredith's insatiable hunger for knowledge in the classroom. Crystal's failure to face the moment leads only to self betrayal and destructive behavior.

I could now go back into the lives and stories of the girls at the "normal" high school and draw parallels. The greatest violence we can do to a young woman, the easiest way to prevent learning from happening for her, is gender violence. Witness my own student Felicia's struggle in particular--unless she can come to the place where the specific violence can be located and faced, she is blocked.

I'm not totally comfortable with my metaphors here of violence: I'd be happier if I knew how to talk about the extraordinary release of power without "bombs bursting in air." On the other hand, as Dobberfuhl says, "The scariest thing you can do is to ask someone to avoid all the things that they 'know' will keep them safe. It's all about vulnerability. It's an act of violence to look at the abuser; it's an act of violence to own the perpetration, fully as violent as the decision to perpetrate. In that case, the attempt to own backfired. Why risk such an act again?" (Why, asks Robinson's student, risk another attempt at owning my education when the tentative step I took to do so met with ridicule?)

Violence and education: Education *is* violence, to the soul, to the psyche, to the self who used to be—death constantly being wielded to the old, comfortable self. The violence is compounded when sexual identity is up for grabs. It's unsettling. "As these girls are forced to face the moment, they're forced to face the death of the person they used to be, and as bad and desperate as the situation the person they used to be lived in, it's even scarier to face becoming someone new," says Dobberfuhl. I'm reminded of Jim W. Corder's words about death: "One reason we grieve for ourselves upon the death of someone we love is that as we construct our version of the other, it becomes a complete version of ourselves, and in the death of the beloved we lose not just fragments of ourselves, but ourselves. (Jim. W. Corder, "Tribes and Displaced Persons")."

The evidence is in their writing. In response to a suggested writing topic from me, Stockbridge asked the girls to write personal essays from the prompt, "What Does It

Mean To Be a Woman?" (See Appendices D and C where these essays are reprinted in full.) Using the girls' official records I was able to determine how long each of the girls had been in treatment, and I was struck by the differences these young women showed in their definitions of womanhood depending on their respective degrees of psychological healing. Several factors in their writing decided this for me. First I saw that simply the amount of material each girl was able to produce matched the length of her treatment: the further along the girl was, the easier it became to produce words. Secondly, as girls progressed in treatment, remarkable growth in the ways each was able to articulate her definition became apparent. There was more confusion about who women were supposed to be and more anger about being female from the newcomers. Thirdly, girls showed an increasing ability to organize their thoughts as they progressed in treatment.

A girl who had been in treatment less than three months, for instance, was apt to produce an essay of two hundred words or less with little organization, as evidenced by Sandy's essay:

What does it mean to be a women. I grow up with guys all my life, so I don't really no what it's like to be a women. I can only say what I think. I think that women have it hard to this world. Men, boy, young mans, or watever like to use girls, yound laddies, women for whatever they want money, sex, cars a place to live I dont really understand gitls maybe to be a women is to have kids take care of yourself to have a job get married that all I really no. I think strongley think that I would never had been sexual abused if I was a boy. (Sandy, age 14; 3 three months into treatment)

And by Christina, whose essay and definition centers on her relationship with her mother and on physical maturation:

To be a woman it means to be crabby, crabs is were you are grumpy and not shareing like my mom. My mom is craby all the time and she is not careing or

supportive. So I think she is not a woman yet. My mom is not a woman when it comes to her children. That is why I don't love my mom...When you are a woman that is the hardest part of life because you get cramps, and you get your period. Being a woman is when you are thirteen or older...My mom is a brat because she was probably not raised like a child but like a beating doll... (Christina, age 13; 3 months of treatment)

Shirley had been at Pathway for six months when she wrote her essay. I see here an increase in her ability to think through important events in her life. Specifically I see how her history of pregnancy informs her definition of womanhood. Shirley also shows signs of being able to understand that as a child she wasn't ready for motherhood. Her lapse at the end into a rhapsodic description of the perfect boyfriend and her concern with physical practicalities show that she's still struggling to form meanings:

I think becoming a woman means to start your period and also to develop your body and becoming pregnant also I was four months pregnant when I fell down a flight of 25 stairs and it hurt a lot I bled for a long time I was really hurt emotionally and physically I wasn't glad I was pregnant but I didn't want what happened to me to actually happen...I didn't really want to bring a baby to this world yet because I am just a baby myself I couldn't take care of it by myself anyway I still depend on my parents so it would be even harder for me and my parents I would have to get up in the middle of the night at like 2 3 or 4 in the morning so actually I am kind glad I didn't have the baby but it is still painful in so many ways...I also think it's when you start dating guys and get to stay out late with them also going through puberty when you start wearing bras pads tampons tampons when you know the guy you meet is the right one for you like for instance my boy friend Chris is sweet, charming, handsome, caring, loving, sharing, gentle, sensitive, honest, romantic, special, one of a kind. That's what I think becoming a woman is like to me in my point of view women also use douches. (Shirley, 14; 6 months of treatment)

Girls who had been at Pathway the longest, whose treatments were further along, and who had gone through a considerable amount of healing began progressively to talk more definitively about the responsibilities of womanhood and about the ways women are treated in society. I noticed some repeated themes in these essays. First, many began

talking about social issues as in seventeen-year-old Arlene's assertions, "I think that men and women should be treated the same way" and "I think women should work" but that "I think that men get better jobs. I think that women get discriminated more than men do."

Secondly, I found frequent instances of taking on personal responsibility for maturity. Sometimes these included confessional statements. Seventeen-year-old Marie wrote, "I have played a lot of people in my life and I understand that it hurts a lot of people." Roberta, age sixteen, wrote that to be a woman "should mean to be honest and respectful...It's not always easy but a woman should try her best."

Thirdly, I found a theme of self-preservation in the essays of girls in advanced treatment. Eighteen-year-old Bobbie Jo wrote, "I think the Word women means, more like sticking up for yourself...Men usually don't know right from wrong unless you tell them." On this subject Roberta wrote, "If a woman doesn't like what a man is doing to her, she should speak up and say NO!" The strongest statement came from a young woman who declined to sign her essay but gave her age as sixteen: "Being a woman means not letting a man control your life and not to let them push you around. It means not to sacrifice your child for someone who is not going to marry you ...A woman has to love and care for their children be there for them through really rough times in their lives."

Stockbridge, Dobberfuhl, and Anderson often speak about the contrast in the girls placed in their treatment before and after "breakthrough," referring to the moment during therapy when honesty in facing their perpetration allows a dismantling of the blockage which forestalls learning. This too I can trace in their essays. As with the stilted writing of girls early in treatment, the essays written by girls before breakthrough tend to be

shortened. They're linear in construction with few attempts at theorizing about cause and effect in the educational events in their lives or at contextualizing. I cite sixteen-year-old Elaya who writes early in her treatment career. Elaya demonstrates that she has trouble remembering educational growth: "I really don't remember how I learned to read & write & do math problems." It's little more than a list. The essay gives evidence of gaps in learning and experience, and Elaya writes it without apparent emotion about the gaps. Contrast hers with Carmen. One can almost hear pain in her discomfort about being asked to produce a piece of written experience as she dismisses both Stockbridge and the assignment with, "25 minutes left. Now 20. 15 more. Carrie, I have nothing else important to tell you."

Essays written after breakthrough begin exhibiting evidence of contextualization. Consider the difference between the above examples and Janeke, aged sixteen, who writes, "I love school" and "thank you Carrie." Perhaps the student's awareness of pleasing her teacher-audience is partly at work here, but there seems to be genuine enthusiasm too, even wistfulness about former educational experiences as she writes, "I wish I could still be in Frist grade." She continues in some length, "So I wish it was good in School so I can do good and help Carrie work in school so I can help other to understand they work so Carrie I am here For you..." Bobbie Jo, age eighteen, may struggle with grammar, but, like Janeke, she's contextualizing experience by dealing in a healthy way with cause and effect in her life: "I love Math no matter what." There's an optimism here in her sheer determination. Also notable is the length of her essay (440 words), more than twice as long as those of Elaya (100 words) or Carmen (200 words).

Jenny shows contextualizing in her discussion of a favorite teacher, Mr. Thorpe. She gives her reader considerable detail about this man who helped her as she reports on the bargain he struck with her.

When we had our long talk about what will happen if I do so and so. I told what would. Then he had said to me if I don't get a referral or kicked out of class within a two day period then he will give me something. Then it went up to a 5 days and up to a week and just kept on going until it hit 7 months then is when I found out that I was doing so good in school but I wasn't doing that at home That is the reason why I like Mr. Thorpe. He is so nice to me and taking time for me, and giving me the attention that I wasn't from my mother and Allen at the time.

When Meredith writes her literacy essay, also post-breakthrough, she's finally confident enough to take responsibility for her behavior: "When I got caught cheating in a math book Carrie helped me she gave me consequences and I dealt with them." We respect her responsibility, but a reader has to smile at the humor she manages to inject: "I also like these teachers a lot because when I was in the bathroom once I was inhaling white out the strong kind they both came in and stopped me." (See Appendices E and F: Pathway Essays, One and Two for full transcripts.)

What I discovered was that as these women found psychological healing in the issues of sexuality and gender in their lives, they became increasingly able to control other areas of their lives, particularly in the classroom. Dobberfuhl and Anderson had told me there was direct correlation between engendered healing and academic success; this was what I was witnessing. I read it in their essays. I heard it from them personally when they spoke in interview situations. I observed it in their behaviors as I watched them struggle

through academic work, interact with each other as they carried out various household chores at the facility, or mentor each other progressively through their respective treatments.

One afternoon in late October I drove onto the grounds for a meeting with the school director. The girls were scattered across the front lawn rolling in fallen leaves, stuffing the leaves down each other's shirts, and generally acting like not-quite-adults on a beautiful autumn day. Adolescent screams, laughter, and beguilingly appropriate hilarity.

As I approached, a couple of the girls turned their attention on me, each one taking an arm to drag me toward the front stoop. "Come see my pumpkin!" "No, no, no, it's a jack-o-lantern now that it's decorated!" Lined up in a straight row across the top step was the familiar homage to Halloween. Three of them--the ones produced by the girls closest to completing their treatment--were hollowed and carved in a traditional style, but the others featured magic-marker faces. Most of the girls aren't allowed, knives, not even at mealtimes.

When the director appeared to take me away to her office for our interview, I had to touch and comment on each of the thirteen pumpkins before the girls were satisfied. For some the creations represented their first experiences ever with fall ritual. I had grown to affection for these girls; I appreciated both the great distances they had come in maturity and the extensive work ahead of them. I wondered how many would be fortunate enough to go on to experience college. I was anxious to take what they had taught me back to my own classrooms.

While there's a distinct contrast here between the missions of two separate high schools, there are similarities as well. It's not the individual facilities that turn out commodities and teach our young women that ownership isn't necessarily for them; it's rather the larger philosophy, the subtle insinuations often too hidden to detect. The facilities themselves echo what culture expects of them: "normal" schools looking like factories and "remedial" or "correctional" facilities taking on different garb, cast-off garb. If Pathway had the money, it too would build the edifice that looks more like a factory, less like a home. "Home" means a cheapened, less respected atmosphere in which to educate. Don't tell Stockbridge that. She'd fiercely fight the idea, telling you about the healing that goes on simply because of the home-like atmosphere, the mothering that the staff manages to accomplish. And she's right. This culture both deprecates and venerates mothers and mothering when it comes to education, exactly as Grumet says (25).

Chapter Notes

1. *Feminisms and Pedagogies of Everyday Life*, Carmen Luke, ed. State University of New York Press, Albany. 1996.

2. S. Bowles and H. Gintis; *Schooling in America*. Routledge, London. 1976.

3. As I have throughout this project, in regards to the local high school, I have changed all names to protect privacy. In addition, some of the identifying features of the school and its courses have been altered. I visited more than one facility—what appears here is a composite.

It might be helpful to the reader to know a little about the schools I visited. There are three in all, and they each serve as the only high school serving town of approximately 25,000. One of the school draws as many as a third of its students from three surrounding towns too small to support their own high school facilities. As the main school in a community with the second-highest minority population in the state, families from all financial brackets, and with a diversity in religion, the high school population here lends itself to a representational study. The other two schools are more homogenous.

4. Research materials collected from these settings for this project include transcripts and prolific personal notes from student and teacher interviews. I also observed classes during which I recorded seating charts, types of gendered examples used to illustrate lessons, responses of students by gender and the length of each response, numbers of times specific teachers called on boys and girls, etc. In addition I observed organized extracurricular activities which included both boys and girls.

Lastly, I taped group interviews which I believe allow for triangulation of data. During these interviews, small groups of students of both sexes responded orally to questions I had written out beforehand and place in the hands of a student moderator. Students were aware they were being taped and that I would listen to the tapes, but I absented myself from the room where they conducted the interviews.

5. Patricia Bizzell on Paulo Freire, *Journal of Composition Theory*, 17.3, 1997, p. 321.

6. In regards to Pathway, only the names of the three students have been changed. Pathway is co-administered by Lutheran Social Services and the state of Wisconsin. It incorporates three sites in Wisconsin, two for teenage girls, each housing thirteen students, and one for boys housing fifty-two. One of the two girls' sites exclusively serves victims turned perpetrators of sexual abuse. Approximately half of the boys at Pathway are perpetrators of sexual abuse. The children served by Pathway are assigned by the court; all have traversed juvenile court systems and some have already spent time in prison. They come from a five-state region: Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Minnesota.

7. My research was carried out at Pathway's first milieu site in Caroline, Wisconsin. Girls' average stay at Pathway is a year during which time they attend class eight hours each day with a traditional in-house teacher, work intensely with two psychologists, experience behavioral retraining, and learn practical life skills.

Research materials collected here include extensive interviews with on-site psychologists Lorre Anderson and Doug Dobberfuhl, interviews with on-site teacher Carrie Stockbridge, and interviews with the girls themselves. Anderson, Dobberfuhl and Stockbridge provided me with overviews of the protocols used in treatment, personality profiles of the typical Pathway student, and biographies of specific students without jeopardizing their privacy. In addition, I have written work collected from the girls.

While I believe the girls' personal writing is invaluable, it was in triangulating my findings from their writing with information about their personal backgrounds, educational growth, and overall psychological performance which enabled me to locate the correlations between educational ownership and prescribed ideas of gender.

8. I discovered that although there are similar institutions to Pathway for boys located in all states of the union, there are very few for girls. One of them is Germaine Lawrence School for Girls in Massachusetts which I also visited. A school similar in student composition to Pathway, GL is located near Boston. To adopt the venue as a research site was tempting: the girls were winsome, the staff was attentive and supportive to my needs, and the location—fifty miles from my home versus fifteen hundred—was enticing. But the philosophy of the school itself was in opposition with process pedagogy, operating rather in a punitive mode.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

In telling the story of the self, the writer imposes order where there is chaos, structural coherence where there is memory and chronology, voice where there is silence
-Leigh Gilmore, *Autobiographics*, 85.

I need to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create. Begin, though, not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the geography closest in—the body.

-Adrienne Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1986), 212.

Seeing the Other: Seeing Myself through the Other

The journey through my own educational memory started with a photograph. I can trace at least some of each year of my education through successive photos, mostly taken by professional photographers called in to journal our progress. They're posed . . . no candid here. Group shots of play casts. Teams in sports regalia. Choir members lined up in choral robes. In high school, year books show individual shots, at least for graduating seniors. My photo collection isn't all that different from the yearbooks produced for graduating classes today, and I can't help but wonder if there's any correlation at all between what's on the page and the real lives of students. Pictures might

reveal blue hair and tattoos, but they don't capture volunteering the right answer in class or being caught in the bathroom for smoking. They also don't reveal having your answer ignored because it didn't fit the teacher's key, finding your feminist ideas ridiculed, or wondering how you're going to tell on your male teacher for making unwanted advances. And if you're a student at Pathway, you're not even allowed school photos due to privacy laws. No, the yearbook photos can't tell the whole story.

The inability for photographs to reveal is symbolic of the problems we have in getting past stereotypes and cultural "truths" in order to see reality. Once I looked at my kindergarten photo and was amazed at how much of my educational story it seemed to be telling; I look now at this photo and at the accumulation of school pictures my mother collected and begin to see all the things they can't tell, all the things they make invisible. The story of race, for instance. While it seems clear by our positioning as I study five-year-olds posing around Miss McKenzie that the white children are being privileged by sitting near the teacher ("We're a mixed-race class of Anglos, Hispanics, and Native Americans. White boys flank the smiling Miss McKenzie; four white girls sit directly in front"), I can't see how the books we read didn't usually include minority children, and that when they did, it was with an agenda to study them as "other." I can't see what the difference in our standardized test scores might have been, how our behaviors might have differed on the playground, how we might have been encouraged to choose specific modes of study to fit our specific culturally-scripted futures.

Once I leave racially diverse California to attend small community schools in the Midwest where I posed exclusively among white children of European heritage, race

becomes so invisible that I learn to believe that "white" is not a racial label; "white" equals "personhood," and "race" becomes something I'm not.

Here in predominantly white New Hampshire it's easy to slip into that same mode, reading the students in my classes at the university as devoid of race when I have no minorities on the roster or when physical characteristics fail to reveal "otherness." Similarly, at the high schools where I conducted visitations for my research, minority students were indeed minority. Out of all my sites for research, Pathway alone forced my whiteness to come out of its comfortable, accepted, and inevitable invisibility.

Audre Lorde, in her essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," says, "It is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistakes." In other words, it takes a view from the other to show us our racism.¹ In her essay "Racism--A White Issue" Ellen Pence tells how, in working for the civil rights movement in the 1960s she was forced to acknowledge her racism only when a black friend confronted her.² The friend accused her of not wanting to go past her "white" behaviors in recognizing her racism.

Knowing that we grew up in a society permeated with the belief that white values, culture, and lifestyle are superior, we can assume that regardless of our rejection of the concept we still act out of that socialization . . . We must acknowledge what we think we have to lose by this understanding and find what have to gain by eliminating our racism. We must believe that racism causes us to be less human and work toward humanizing ourselves. (45,6).

Pence's essay appears in a volume whose title, for me, captures the blindness I see myself guilty of when I assume whiteness is not race: *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave*.

I have argued that sometimes individual schools look like factories and that school systems are sometimes guilty of treating students more like marketable products who can further our capitalistic economy. I have felt this way because facilities and systems often forget to treat students as human beings. In reality, schools are not factories *per se*; they're individual units of the huge bureaucratic system called education. Bureaucracies operate in such a way as to encourage inequalities and hierarchies by chiefly benefiting those with and in positions of power. In "Black Feminist Pedagogy and Schooling in Capitalist White America" Gloria Joseph argues that such systems inherently are unjust and prejudicial toward minority groups.³

Schools and schooling in capitalist America...operate from a well-programmed blueprint, which is designed to serve the people in an unequal and hierarchical manner...The educational system orchestrates an internecine relationship between teachers and students. This relationship, which results in miseducated, misguided, misinformed youth, and adults (leaders) who use "disinformation" tactics and chicanery, operates today with maximum success in keeping the inequalities and hierarchies that characterize capitalist America" (462).

The purpose of this project cannot include a thorough critique of educational bureaucracy--the subject is too broad--but I think it's helpful to understand in a rudimentary way something about how disenfranchising our systems can be, how even a study like this which attempts egalitarianism is limited by prejudices, and how impossibly complex it is to look beyond cultural bias. I have to return to Audre Lorde's words and hope that as I read and look sensitively at racial issues I can accept that blackness will help me "see" my whiteness.

When I talk about racism, I'm talking about invisible power structures that fail to show up on photographs. In principle, those in power--the group or groups who have the most investment in retaining the status quo--have little incentive to address inequities.

Furthermore, in Marxist theory, the group in power is unable to see itself as taking advantage of another, weaker group. It becomes the domain of the less powerful group, then, to illuminate inequalities. The terrain of race is one area where the disadvantaged are left with the responsibility of pointing out disparity.

Another one of these provinces is gender. Again, I study my kindergarten photo. "Eight girls sit on a line of metal folding chairs . . . Eight little boys stand across the back row, four on either side of their teacher . . ." But who are these little boys and girls, and what are they to become as they emerge through adolescence, through childhood into maturity? What about the girl who might wish to stand in the back row or the boy who might envision himself in a different position? I think I can remember a time when I questioned neither my own sexual identity nor anyone else's and when I was willing to accept a binary position in which each of us supposedly knew essentially who we were and the places of power we occupied. Or can I? Who is that skeptical girl-child in the photo avoiding the lens of the camera, looking sideways, scowling, doubting?

And what was it that she was doubting? I'd like to suggest that she was realizing even that early in her life that her view of the world was limited by the enclosed circle of her own sexuality, but reality reminds me that kindergartners probably aren't that sophisticated! I was more than likely wishing for freckles as wonderful as Barbara's.

In the essay "Intellectuals in the Post-colonial World," Edward Said says. "[I]nside the circle stand the blameless, the just, the omniscient, those who know the truth about themselves as well as the others; outside the circle stand a miscellaneous bunch of querulous whining complainers" (50).⁴ The view from the inside is most often to our own advantage and with neither compassion nor understanding of the Other. Diana Fuss draws attention to the circle of insiders as creating an artificial boundary between insider and outsider, which boundary contains rather than disseminates knowledge (115). Just as identifying and locating my "whiteness" helps me to begin to understand race, examining female sexuality helps me understand all sexuality.

There's a third domain of disparity, and this doesn't readily show up in photos either. This is the domain of deviance. Sometimes during a semester of teaching freshman composition I'll bring in my Polaroid instant camera and make a record of class activities in a collage on my office wall. "Seeing" ourselves as we learn multiplies our perspective. Seeing our images emerge on photographic paper also normalizes us, equalizes us, neutralizes us. Unless we're missing limbs or have obvious facial disfigurements, our deviance is invisible, which in a way is unfortunate since it's the ways in which individuals deviate from the norm that first prescribes, then edifies normalcy. Three and a half decades ago Erving Goffman explored the phenomenon of deviance in what he termed "stigma management," the discursive practices by which a society critiques itself by regulating its marginalized members.⁵ His claim is that people stigmatized because of physical handicap, racial or religious prejudice, or criminal acts have "marginalized

subjectivities" which contain the potential to define us. Marginalized subjectivities refers first to how society assigns traits and labels to its deviants and second to the manners and systems it devises to manage them. I think Goffman's ideas are useful in understanding gendered relationships as they might play themselves out in a traditional classroom setting where young women find it difficult to assume ownership. Censorship in varying degrees is still a common response when women attempt to take ownership of knowledge for themselves, whether it be a teacher's refusal to recognize a young woman's nontraditional approach to an assignment (Shelly's suggestion that Kate Moss appear on her pyramid of power, for instance) or ridicule of a student's burgeoning but still awkward attempts at alternate philosophies (Amanda's use of feminism in English class). And while I do not want to make a case for perpetration of sexual abuse, Goffman forces me to acknowledge that the experiences of female adolescent sexual offenders help illuminate both the processes and technologies at work in our society that inhibit girls. Imposing Goffman's language of stigma over all these disparate instances explains how deviant behaviors characterize individuals in our society as not quite human in our minds. That's pretty tough language. It's a language of coercion that exposes the violence being done thoughtlessly, even benignly, in our classrooms.

The Journey to a Gendered Identity

A few years ago there was a popular song on the charts about a young woman who'd been in various places all around the world except the place that really mattered, the place which represented a core of meaning in her life. The woman who sang it had a

lyrical but somewhat breathy voice (a real "girly" voice) that captured a female version of youthful angst. "Well, I've been to France and around the world, but I've never been to Me." My then-teenaged daughter and I were riding around in the car one day and listening when she said to me, almost confessionally, "I know this song is sappy, and I know I'm not supposed to like it, but I sort of do anyway."

I feel I've hit the same place here in my writing. For four chapters I've been all around, physically and theoretically, and I'm looking for the little map with the green "You are here" circle. I've gone down the side lanes of seemingly disparate psychoanalytical metatheories, to areas as far flung as post-modern theory, essentialism and liberal feminism, as I attempted to draw pedagogical observations from my own classroom and beyond, but in all this time, I've not yet been to the place that matters the most, the place where all the side trips can find meaning. I need to come back to me and to the territory I've staked out as my own, the composition classroom, present and future.⁶

As I do that, I need to list all the territories that I now have to part company with. The first parting, albeit it a fond one, is from the Sadkers from whom I have learned to locate reasons for my students' dissatisfactions with educational experience and injustices they perceive to have incurred. *Failing at Fairness* has provided language for all of that. It's also provided direction toward what educators can do to improve conditions for girls and equalize the treatment in the classroom for all students at all levels, boys and girls, men and women alike. But these are in effect remedial approaches, not prevention. What it doesn't provide is a clear sense of the direction pedagogy needs to take to forestall a need for remediation. In terms of feminism, all

vulnerary approaches fall under the label of liberal feminism which argues for women's right to participate as fully in society as men, but doesn't demand a basic change in that society. As Suzanne Gordon argues, adaptations to predominantly male behavior structures endangers the dream of a more compassionate solution. A more transformative answer is called for.

If women waiting in the wings for their moment on stage have been trained in the male method, if they behave like men, abide by the rules of the male marketplace, and merely join men in administering the status quo rather than taking risks to change it, then only the names and shapes of the players will have altered. The substance of our live will stay the same. Indeed, things may be even worse. If women abandon caring for competition, rather than working to encourage all of us to share in the real work of the human community, then who will care? What kind of liberation will we have purchased? (14)

Although I'd be the first to admit that there's a wide gulf separating the position liberal feminists take and the position taken by the Mr. Robinsons of the world, there is a relationship. Both operate from essentially the same position: that the real world is ultimately and necessarily one that operates in traditional, patriarchal ways and that women need to be prepared to operate in that world and, if need be, to compensate by sublimating inherent needs that might be in contradiction.

As I venture beyond the Sadkers, I take with me what I've learned from the group of educational theorists who have done so much to locate and describe psychological and developmental explanations behind dissatisfactions girls experience as they grow through the formal educational years. These include Belenky et al (*Women's Ways of Knowing*), Pipher (*Reviving Ophelia*), Sheffer (*A Sense of Self*), Gilligan and Brown (*Meeting at the Crossroads*), Gilligan, Lyons and Hamner (*Making Connections*), Orenstein (*School*

Girls) and the like. I have no quarrel with them; I have witnessed first- and secondhand the phenomena they recognize. Their valuable contribution is to have identified the symptom and even its endemic cause. But there must be more I can offer to my students than a wish and a desire to transcend the limitations arbitrarily imposed on them because of their bodies. Am I just whistling in the dark here, or is it possible to hope for making the composition classroom a site for radical change in the way young men and women fit themselves into social structure? Or to help them see possibilities for changing the structure itself? Might it be possible to go beyond symptoms and causes and heal the system?

One of the possibilities for change often offered is the single-sex classroom. However, I want to come out boldly here in favor of co-educational classroom. I remember that my own single-sex college classroom was so by accident, not by design, and that for the most part, while the women embraced the possibilities that their situation afforded them, it was not because they were in favor of eliminating men from their venue. More often than not they voiced the desire to include men, even going to far as to artificially import them, as in Kristi's desire to include her boyfriend's opinion of her assignments. What they wanted, and what they embraced, was more autonomy in choosing topics of conversation and reading assignments, more conversational space for working out issues of gender, and more supportive feedback in their autobiographical explorations of engendered memory.

Single-sex classrooms are artificial in the sense that life itself—even in a convent—is not single-sexed. I am drawn to the question, What was it my female students thought they were missing in our single-sex classroom?

Perhaps clues to the answer lie in the ambivalence voiced by the women in the split between theory and the practice of feminism in their practical lives.

Nowhere are the related issues of essence, identity, and experience so highly charged and so deeply politicized as they are in the classroom. Personal consciousness, individual oppressions, lived experience—in short, identity politics—operate in the classroom both to authorize and de-authorize speech. "Experience" emerges as the essential truth of the individual subject, and personal "identity" metamorphoses into knowledge. Who we are becomes what we know; ontology shades into epistemology (Fuss, 113).

I look back at these women's essays and I see evidence of what Fuss is claiming:

"experience" in the form of life stories was the thing most often used to prove the truth of a situation, even in essays which were not assigned as personal narrative, and the personal identity that the women were announcing they'd found in these experiences "metamorphosed" into knowledge (some version of "truth"). Of course male students also draw on personal experience in order to develop their truths, but I think there's a difference in the way that happens, something I'll say more about later. What seems to be noticeably different is that the women often hinted there was something more, something missing.

Once more I comb their writing, this time looking for what they think is missing. In preparation for writing their research papers, I had asked the women to write about their own educations, focusing on why learning was important to them. They responded first anonymously to a questionnaire I handed out, then wrote more complete essays. (See

Appendix B: Section Questionnaire" for questionnaire responses.) What I was hoping was that they would define themselves as scholars, and for the most part, I was heartened with what they said. Nevertheless, as I examine their writing again now, I see things I missed before. The most surprising thing of all to me is that out of twenty-two writers, fifteen brought men into their discussions in some way or another, even though the essay was to have been an exploration of their own personal expectations about scholarship. Their writing prompt, my handout describing the assignment, didn't elicit this necessity. I include it here.

Students of Writing vs. Scholars Who Write

The wording of the title in this handout is intentional. At first glance, a good editor would notice that the two things talked about are not in parallel construction, and, of course, good style dictates that parallel construction should happen. Parallel construction would change this title to read either "Students of Writing vs. Scholars of Writing" or "Students Who Write vs. Scholars Who Write." But I very deliberately didn't use parallel construction' I mean to underscore the thought that students and scholars aren't necessarily parallel terms. As I began to explain in class last week, I regard studentdom as something that we learn to do, perhaps in high school, that actually prepares us for scholarship, and that scholarship requires a great deal more effort. The position of studentdom has something to do with being able to follow directions and complete assignments, whereas scholarship requires that we apply both creativity and analytical thinking to whatever we tackle in the college classroom.

I also mean to differentiate a matter of what I call *ownership over discourse* between how students and scholars approach bodies of knowledge. In the phrase "student of writing," there's an implied ownership of the discourse of writing over the student. Writing owns us. We are at its mercy; we can learn a few rules and follow them rigidly, but we can't stop outside those rules yet. "Scholars who write," on the other hand, implies that the scholar has control or ownership of the body of knowledge, the craft, the discipline, or the discourse of writing. We own it; we direct it where we want it to go, we make it say what we want it to say, we use it, we manipulate it.

That isn't to say that we don't follow the rules. In fact, we can't come to ownership until we have mastered the rules...and that's one reason why no one can be a scholar until she's already been a student. The difference is that scholars

know the rules so that rules can serve their purposes rather than direct their purposes.

So how does one become a scholar? I'll be honest with you. It's hard, and it takes effort. I'm not in the position of telling you that you have to become a scholar of writing. If you're an individual who really writes only to satisfy a course requirement and to fulfill assignments, and that's all you really want writing to do for you, then fine. That's OK. Being serious about writing isn't for everyone. But if you really care about writing and want to be able to use it powerfully, then you'll be interested in becoming a scholar. As I said, it's not easy; you'll have to dedicate yourself to effort, and you'll have to be willing to do some work on your own outside of classtime activity and outside or required assignments. If you think you might want to do that, I offer the following suggestions:

1. Scholars realize that the work done in the classroom is only the beginning and that they have to apply effort of their own, devise their own assignments, and do outside research if they want to really grow.
2. Scholars take individual writing exercises they've done in class and experiment with them later.
3. Scholars take writing techniques and critiques we've used on specific writing examples in class and apply them in a parallel fashion to other assignments, other essays.
4. Scholars write critiques for themselves on whatever they write after the "Reading My Own Text" [another handout] fashion, even when they're not assigned.
5. Scholars willingly go to other sources outside the classroom parameters to find information about their topics.
6. Scholars ask for peer editing; they find others who also care about writing and they take advantage of each other's readership.
7. Scholars devise ways for themselves to use the information they glean in class; they write their own writing checklists, for instance, and they share their own emerging theories about writing with other scholars.

In preparation for writing the research essay, your assignment for next five-page Tuesday's essay is to adopt the attitude of the scholar--try it on for size--and write an essay that explores your reasons for being in college. Think about what you expect out of your education. You may want to include your own personal definition of education.

Again, no where did I ask for consideration of the question of gender. Nevertheless, some of the essays honestly stated the author's felt need for a man's opinion:

Kristi: I wanted a man to say if he felt that there was a difference and if it was a negative one, in the gender roles in society, what they feel need to be changed, if

anything, and why. Then I could make up my mind better on the issue. Cathy: I would like to hear men take on a feminist point of view.

Sarah: It would be interesting to have men on the feminist side to see how they respond. I want to know if they mock us the way we mock them.

A few were downright attacks:

April: I want to ask: why do you feel superior to women? What could you do to eliminate the harsh feelings some women have when they're treated inferiorly?

Felicia: I want men to respond to the kind of satisfaction they get from putting down a women and knowing they get paid more.

Kristin: Feminist issues cannot be discussed honestly with men.

Some were conciliatory:

Mindy: I'd lie to hear from a man about what it feels like to be accused as a group. I would like to know if they see times changing.

Karin: Young men today seem more willing to assume parental roles and stay at home. My father would never have done this.

And some clearly displayed ambivalence:

Jess: I feel uncomfortable in discussing what kind of roles women hold in the work place or what you need to do to earn respect from the men themselves. They need to be the ones to tell us that.

Shane: In my research, I would have chosen a different topic [if men were to read my essay] because it would be too controversial with men present, though I would have ignored their presence.

Tracy: Will my husband want me to stay at home or get a job? I know I want to work and he should want that too if he values my personhood, but I think it would be problematic if I made more money than my husband. Is that going a bit too far?

Part of what's being articulated in their writing is that the women see themselves as different from men. They recognize themselves as female-gendered, and they look for validation from the male gaze and opinion. They use personal experience--a la Fuss--to make, develop, and then explore knowledge claims. In an earlier study I did on a semester's-worth of essays collected from a coeducational freshman composition class, I looked for the ways authors used personal experience stories to make claims for truth, and

what I found was that although both males and females employed personal narrative to make their claims equally frequently, more often than not the men recounted personal adventures as evidence, thereby taking ownership of the subject at hand, while the women relied on *relationship* stories (stories that relied on the women's relationships to friends, family members, or teachers as a central element). A reliance on relationship is what might also be at the core of the essays written ostensibly about the meaning of scholarship, but if so, it's only half the story. I'm still left with the question of what my students felt they were missing by not having a male contingent to listen to, to advise, or to direct their perspectives.

Constant ambivalence. A split between what students perceive as the theory of feminism and real life experience. I'd heard it again and again this semester: "I believe in equality and all but I'm not a feminist." In Jess's scholarship essay I read, "I know I want a career, but I also want to get married. I want to be independent, but I still want to be taken care of." Kerin wrote, "On the subject of children, I believe that husbands and wives today should play equal roles in child-rearing. But only a mother can nurture and teach in that special way my siblings and I were cared for, and the man who I choose as the father of my children will have to understand that in child-rearing, I'm in charge." Nicole pinpointed the male gaze: "I don't want to have to be ruled or judged by men by the way I look, but I want to look good."

Another way to ask the question might be, what does masculinity look like from the female gaze? I let my students respond, again anonymously, this time to a writing prompt of what would have been different if men had been present. (See Appendix C:

"Class Reflections about the Absence of Men" for full responses.) The following responses are representative:

Student 1: I think almost everything that was discussed would not have been discussed if there were men in the class. I don't think we would have been able to discuss as much as we did because the men would be on the defensive about everything that was mentioned.

Student 2: The whole issue of feminism would not go well if men were present, although it would be nice to hear what reactions they would have. Personally, I would feel uncomfortable in discussing what kind of roles women hold in the work place and what you need to do to earn respect from the men themselves.

Student 6: Everything would still have been said, but the tone and reactions would have been different. Our topics might have gotten glazed over, not given importance.

Student 7: Men intimidate me and I am nervous that they will make fun of me. Not all men are horrible, ugly, anti-feminists, but they're grouped as though they are. I wonder if men are intimidated by women...

Student 12: I already knew that men had no sympathy for us.

Student 15: Both males and females would be afraid to speak.

At least on the surface, it seemed my students felt that it was more difficult to form relationships with males. What they were telling me and themselves was that they sometimes perceived male peers as gatekeepers who might not allow them free rein of opinion, they were concerned with how men regarded them, and at the same time, they wondered if men felt some of the same tensions they did.

In the previous assignment where I'd asked the class to define themselves as scholars, several of the young women discussed what it was like having male professors.

Some excerpts:

I feel less intimidated by female professors than male.

I feel more comfortable interacting on a personal level with a female professor.

In many cases I have found males to be more lenient.

Male professors demand that you be able to answer "why."

And my personal favorite because the student draws my own authority into the paper in an interesting way:

Sometimes it seems as though the first impression of a male teacher is one of being strict although to me, you seemed to be strict at first also (not that you aren't).

It's a student's job to impress her professors, but if I read these statements seriously I find a heightened necessity for performance as female students interact with male professors.

As in the statements about dealing with their male peers, I note an expectation of judgment.

Possessing the expectation (fear?) of being judged, but harboring a desire to be seen as intelligent and competent puts women in a double bind.

(See Appendices B: "Semester's End: Section Course Evaluations" and C: "Class Reflections about the Absence of Men".)

What Might Work

The double bind of the female gendered body: trying to identify/construct who the real "me" is while and the same time recognizing I'm being constructed by traditional society. No wonder young women related to the pop singer who crooned that she'd "never been to Me." Part of what both the traditional high school experience and the Pathway girls' experience exposes are the forces in our culture that cause college aged women to have reservations towards assumptions of knowledge in the classroom. Their experiences have shown them that assuming too much--being "smart"--has consequences, not all of which are socially pleasant or rewarding. They know that being publicly feminist

is dangerous and they sense that it's more because of recrimination from society than from the fallacies of feminist thinking itself. They also know that in our culture, to a certain extent, whether or not they assume knowledge in the same levels as males, thereby attaining superior scholarship status, matters little to them when they leave the institution--women are still paid less, women are still saddled with the primary responsibility of childcare in an economic and political society which has yet to find workable childcare solutions, and women still incur discrimination in matters ranging as widely as buying a car to purchasing real estate to getting proper medical care. They know that in many fields a successful woman is still the exception rather than the rule. They know that men don't have to choose between a family and a career, whereas women often do. As Mandy, one of my advanced composition students in another class and a graduating senior preparing for law school, who also happened to be in love and engaged to be married, wrote in her final course evaluation, "I just completed four years of intensive training preparing me for law school, and now I wonder if that's what I really want. My biological clock is ticking. I want to get married and have babies. How can I do that and still practice law?"

So yes, I understand at least some of the powerful cultural limitations that women face, limitations in our traditional, mostly patriarchal, hierarchically-arranged society in which members of the dominant group who perceive their positions as threatened, realistically or not, resort to abusing the subdominant group⁷ On the other hand, I feel at a loss to say anything practical to Mandy and other young women in my classroom about

the connections I might locate between healthy ("normal"?) gender identity and the ability to learn.

But that's the sort of discussion to which this study ultimately leads. In issues of gender, composition departments are most often the exception, not the rule, and the university is often a patriarchal, male-centered world where young women find themselves at a distinct disadvantage. As the Sadker study points out,

At the highest educational level, where the instructors are the most credentialed and the students the most capable, teaching is the most biased...When we analyzed the data, we discovered how hidden lessons, rooted in elementary school and exacerbated in high school, emerged full-blown in the college classroom...it shows how earlier subtle sexism has evolved and intensified (169).

Furthermore, the nucleus of much of the sexism that young women (and men) experience in academia is found in classroom conversation:

While 80 percent of pupils in elementary and secondary classes contribute at least one comment in each of their classes, approximately half of the college class says nothing at all. One in two sits through an entire class without ever answering a question, asking one, or making a comment. Women's silence is loudest at college, with twice as many females voiceless. Considering the rising cost of college tuition, the female rule of speech seems to be: the more you pay, the less you say (170).

So the American classroom is not a site of gender equity. Sandra Lee Bartky writes in "The Pedagogy of Shame" that an "interlocking grid of social ensembles--school, family, church, workplace, media--" all work together to teach women that we are Other and that as such we're destined for a "lesser life" (225).⁸ Moreover, of all the components of that interlocking grid, school--the classroom--is "perhaps the most egalitarian public space that any woman in our society will ever inhabit" (232). The last paragraph of her

chapter is a call to educators to commit themselves and their research to uncovering covert sexist practices: "In spite of the possibility of risks and discomfitures to everyone, ourselves included—we must never forget what we are about—a pedagogy . . . to voice and to value girls' and women's writing, reading, and knowledges" (238).

Such is the double bind of the female college freshman. It parallels the difficulty the theoretical world has in locating the female self between a position of essentialism and socially-constructed gender. In fact, I think a case could be made that they're one and the same; differences really between theory and the practicalities of real life. In the end, it makes little difference in a student's day to day living whether the ways she responds in the classroom are caused by nature's random assigning of genetic characteristics or by how culture has shaped her responses. If she feels constrained to see it one way or the other, we've accomplished nothing but to limit her ways of understanding gender. What she's worried about is how to negotiate this sometimes unfriendly, perhaps even hostile, educational climate. Could we not instead encourage her to entertain the possibility of a multiplicity of factors in gender formation? I would like to suggest that it's a complex view of gender construction as containing the possibilities of both essentialism and social construction, allowing those positions to exist on a continuum rather in binary opposition to each other, that Diana Fuss advocates in *Essentially Speaking*. It is the exclusion of one interpretation over the other that she names the risk of essence. "[B]iological determinism and social determinism are simply two sides of the same coin: both posit an utterly passive subject subordinated to the shaping influence of either nature or culture, and both disregard the unsettling effects of the psyche" (6). I want the women in my

classroom to be able to recognize either kind of determinism, biological or social, and then make informed decisions for themselves about what amounts of each they're willing to accept. I don't want them to feel utterly passive, subordinated to either nature or culture.

This multiplicity of considerations is also suggested by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble*: "[T]he insistence upon the coherence and unity of the category of women has effectively refused the multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the concrete array of 'women' are constructed" (14).

I am intrigued by what Butler suggests is the current work of feminism.

The critical task for feminism is not to establish a point of view outside of constructed identities; that conceit is the construction of an epistemological model that would disavow its own cultural location and, hence, promote itself as a global subject, a position that deploys precisely the imperialist strategies that feminism ought to criticize. The critical task is, rather, to locate strategies of subversive repetition enabled by those constructions, to affirm the local possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of repetition that constitute identity and, therefore, present the immanent possibility of contesting them" (147).

If this is the current work of feminism, it might also be the work of the composition classroom. Butler writes that construction is not opposed to agency. It is instead the scene of agency and it is up to feminist pedagogy to find the contradictions within each woman's narrative and experience, and help her to use those contradictions to show how she has been socially constructed to "think" there are essentials.

Women in a writing classroom write about themselves, and if they're lucky, they also take an inward journey leading to the construction of a self that begins to satisfy the double bind. "Many women autobiographers . . . have found the body to provide rich grounds for thinking through the relationship between identity and representation"

(Gilmore, 84). Gender might be thought of as the site of sexual identity, the place in our psyche where we recognize ourselves to be sexed beings with specific physical needs, needs which are manifested in a set of characteristics we then present to the world as masculine or feminine, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual.

. . . [A]utobiographical identity is always constructed through the changing and contradictory exigencies of the specific . . . [T]he autobiographer's reinscription of and resistance to a model of selfhood is a dialectic that shapes self-representation. The identity an autobiography inscribes is something more like a process that variously synthesizes or is fragmented by these discourses. The contradictory and fragmented, though resilient subject of autobiography structures narrative and its effects and is a fictive and textual construct (Gilmore, 84).

When women write about themselves, they use self-representation to create agency. But it's a fearful and dangerous thing to recognize yourself as the created subjectivity of your own narrative. Once created, the agency you own is responsible for the way you operate in the world. Both Diana Fuss and Leigh Gilmore point to the female body as a rich site for exploration of identity. In female autobiography, we literally "write the body." Gilmore's use of language as both traditional meaning maker and creator of identity suggests that in a writing classroom, when given the freedom to explore topics of choice with their own unique strategies, women find a way to re-create, re-structure, and heal former voices. I think of Shane's recapture of a "child" voice to own a once painful memory, enabling her to move forward toward agency and acceptance of gender identity. In Bakhtinian terms, she reinscribed recaptured memory from the crippling, authoritative discourse of her childhood.

What about a student like Felicia whose inner voices have been co-opted until it feels like part of her has died? While Felicia might well be headed toward unreparable damage—as are some of the Pathway girls, and certainly I can't substitute the writing classroom's atmosphere for clinical intervention when warranted—intervention at a point where her internal voice of presentation is actually seeking recognition might bring the possibility of healing. Her struggles, so painfully visible in both her writing and conversation, indicate a hopefulness to me.

'Being' in the text thus requires the ontological differentiation that would break the tautological hold of referentiality, for the autobiographical I 'becomes' a self, spins out the poetics of its identity, in a way that may thematize the chronology of birth, life, and death, but which enacts it textually. Autobiography provides a stage where women writers, born again in the act of writing, may experiment with reconstructing the various discourses—of representation, of ideology—in which their subjectivity has been formed... While the historical self may be the autobiographer's explicit subject—the story of her life with self-development as the structure of the text—this subject is distributed across the historical self and the textual self, both of which are versions of the self who write" (Gilmore, 85).

My responsibility as a writing teacher goes beyond being able to recognize that a women's narrative choices and methods might display themselves differently than "traditional" classroom behaviors. It goes beyond disparaging over their frequent inability to claim as much conversational or discursive space as their male counterparts. In the same way that I've used personal narrative in this dissertation to authorize my experience as knowledge, I can offer my students an atmosphere which provides encouragement for them to begin to value their interior spaces, their sites of lived experience. That is an atmosphere which, to summarize Helene Keyssar's suggestions in "Staging the Feminist Classroom: A Theatrical Model," articulates alternatives to hierarchical, authoritarian,

competitive ways of organizing work, encourages female students to make choices, and exposes the instructor's own authority when appropriate.⁹

Epilogue

In the end, there are no satisfactory photographs to tell the story. Our deviances are too complex to shoot the angles needed. Our yearbook poses are too contrived, too fake. The Pathway girls can't have their pictures taken, and the rest of us are too unruly, too skittish, too camera shy.

In the end, I am left with more questions than answers and more limitations than I saw before, but I am not bereft of possibilities. On my journey I've found not so many dead ends as cul de sacs which circle me around and put me back out on the main road.

In the end, I'm reminded that a sense of fragmentation is appropriate both to feminism and to post Post-modernism and that being able to embrace multiple theories and multiple approaches and eschew meta-theories is appropriate as well. Though I may not find my intellect truly integrated, surprisingly, I find myself not so much splintered as in harmony with multiple voices.

Once upon a time very many years ago I may have recognized a perfect self. Or did I? If I did, I can't recapture her. Sometimes I think I see a fleeting glimpse of her, but she never stays long. Before I reached the end of this dissertation, one of the biggest fragmentations of a woman's life happened to me: my mother died. I felt at least partially betrayed; I thought she'd promised to live forever. But she hadn't, of course. The only thing she'd ever promised is that one day I'd be on my own.

On my *own*--what does that mean in regards to ownership? It means that, like my students, I have the freedom to invent and reinvent my past in a way that fits my needs without being shaped and corrected by the generation before. My mother was a woman noted for her stories. She saw stories in everything; they were her means to understanding the world. She took them from true life, then molded them--stretching, cutting, embellishing--until they became parables, little lessons to live by. They were rich, and she told them with style.

Though my mother was not a writer, she composed me. As often as not, she edited my stories to fit her memories, not mine. It is my job now in her final absence to find the places where I can reclaim my story for myself.

We know our pasts not so much by remembering the actual event but rather by recollections of the act of remembering. One of my earliest memories stems from when I was four years old. My parents were expecting evening visitors, and I planned that when the company arrived I'd sit upside down on a chair in the living room and pretend to read a book. I could read some books already, books like the primers my older brother brought home from school. Mother didn't believe in my actual reading; she corrected me whenever I made the claim. "You've just got that particular book memorized," she'd say. I knew otherwise; I could read. But the book I'd chosen to "read" on this particular evening was an adult book. I wanted my parents' friends to think I was precocious. I was conscious that my parents might reprimand me for showing off. I think that's why I added the upside-down bit, my quirkiness offsetting the intellectual display.

My memory carefully positions me on that night, a very small child, balanced on an armless occasional chair upholstered in gray tweed, perched on the edge of the deep red oriental carpet. I lie on my back, my head heavy at the chair's front edge as I strain to focus on unknown words. My feet swing back and forth through empty space; I feel the weight of my red buckle-shoes. I think to myself, how lucky that I'm still small enough to lie on a chair because I really want my inverted position to be part of the message.

I've read that memory and retold myself that story enough times throughout my life to keep it fresh, and I still haven't uncovered all the contradictions of the moment--a pretend reading episode in which I compose myself as a physical text to be read by adults. I only know that such moments tell me about how I came to be me, this specifically-gendered carrier of multiple identities. This me will always be struggling, alternately working against being composed by others--even by my mother--and letting others add to my text when their compositions fit.

In the end, the most satisfying thing is that there is no end.

Chapter Notes

1. Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." *Words of Fire: Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed. The New York Press, NY. 1995. Page 284.

2. Ellen Pence, "Racism--A White Issue." *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, Barbara Smith, ed. The Feminist Press, Old Westbury, NY. 1982. Page 45.

3. Gloria Joseph, "Black Feminist Pedagogy and Schooling in Capitalist White America." *Words of Fire: Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed. New York Press, NY. 1995. Page 461.

4. Edward Said, as quoted by Diana Fuss in *Essentially Speaking*, page 50.

5. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Doubleday Books, NY. 1959.

6. "Oh, come on," I could argue. "Haven't I talked on and on about myself here long enough?" And there's a sense that of course I have talked **about** myself, about the educational memories that follow my teaching self into every classroom situation. But I've also talked **around** me, using the autobiographical narrative to avoid the core issue. The narrative satisfies the linear construction, but a person is so much more than the linear.

7. Carrie Stockbridge at Pathway is fond of saying that if American society were to accept feminist ideals across the board, she'd be out of a job, highlighting her belief that sexual abuse is an outgrowth of traditional power structures.

8. Sandra Bartky, "The Pedagogy of Shame." *Feminisms and Pedagogies of Everyday Life*. Carmen Luke, ed. State University of New York, Albany. 1996. Page 225.

9. Helene Keyssar, "Staging the Feminist Classroom." *Gendered Subjects: The Dynamics of Feminist Teaching*. Margo Culley and Catherine Portuges, ed. Routledge and Kegan, Boston. 1985. Page 108.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SEMESTER'S END: DEPARTMENTAL COURSE EVALUATIONS (Anonymous) (Twenty-one students responding)

Question: What have you learned by taking this course?

Student #1 (Major: Biology). I have learned a great deal from taking this course. I have learned how to improve my writing skills, and this is the first English course that I have been able to express my feelings freely by using my voice. I have not only grown intellectually but also personally because of this course. I have learned a lot about myself and other people. Many times I discovered new things about myself through writing. To me that is a gift. I am very grateful for this class because it has...
(the rest is indecipherable)

Student #2 (Major: Undeclared business school). I learned alot about how to write better and the important things a reader looks for in a paper. I understand better what makes a paper interesting

Student #3 (Major: L.A. undeclared). To be honest, I have learned to be more critical on myself, since I've work so hard in this class and my grades for some reason aren't reflecting my efforts! It has been an extreme disappointment to me

Student #4 (Major: L.A. undeclared). I have learned the major components that go into a research paper.

Student #5 (Major: L.A. undeclared). I learned to better my writing skills. I learned how to be more descriptive and precise. I also learned that I hate writing papers. I learned a lot about feminist issues and I'm more aware of what's going on in the world.

Student #6 (Major: Nursing). I have learned a lot about my writing skills and my capabilities. I have been exposed to many great writing and ideas. Also, I have learned to work in a group setting on short notice and have been able to turn out successful products. My writing has changed tremendously and I believe it is for the better. I have more fully developed my voice.

Student #7 (Major: L.A. undeclared). I have learned to trust my own instincts and not be afraid to explore various ways of writing. I was encouraged to continually try harder. I also learned how to write different types of papers, such as issue papers and personal narratives.

Student #8 (Major: Business admin.). I have learned to become a better writer. Through class discussions I have been open to everyone's opinions.

Student #9 (Major: Business admin.). I have learned how to write more effectively; how to express my feelings on paper; and I learned how to participate in a discussion type of class.

Student #10 (Major: Business admin.). I have learned to become a better writer through conferences, and re-writing. I have learned to "get along" with my fellow (female) peers. We have discussed many different topics in class--ranging between hunger (poverty) to female circumcision. Each topic that was discussed were of great interest and I found myself learning something new everyday.

Student #11 (Major: indecipherable). I have learned new ways of writing--such as writing reading responses. First is not always best either. I am tempted to think that my first final copy is fine-great-and that it needs no improvement. There is always room for improvement, however. The easiest way to write is to write something personal, something close to you. If one can possibly do that, writing the essay or response becomes a little easier and brings the subject close to you.

Student #12 (Major: L.A. undeclared). I have learned how to put my thought on paper in a way that is interesting to the reader. I have learned to write whatever comes to mind and then to go back and rewrite until it has perfect grammar, structure, flow and is interesting to the reader. The research project helped me to learn how to use the library and of resources that are available.

Student #13 (Major: L.A. undeclared). I have learned to develop my voice more strongly. I have learned to be more creative in my writing style. I have learned to broaden my horizon and be more open-minded on controversial issues when we were working our issue papers (listening to opposing views). I definitely feel more confident in my writing skill now.

Student #14 (Major: indecipherable). I have learned basic skills about writing. For instance, what tools or elements are necessary to write a personal narrative or issue essay. I have also learned to feel comfortable with my own writing style. My memory was refreshed in the grammar area and I even learned about some new grammar. My horizons were broadened as a result of the many classroom discussions.

Student #15 (Major: Music education). 1. Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite. I usually just throw a piece out of the window if I don't like it, but now I will at least put it aside to reconstruct later. 2. "Women's issues" are really "people issues" and "feminism" is not a horrid word. 3. If you think that any two items cannot be related to each other, you are not thinking enough.

Student #16 (Major: Exercise science). I've learned to freewrite, take research and teach class in groups, teach class about grammar. I guess better writing skills, how to correct my own papers, how to work in groups because we worked in groups almost every day we met and more than you can imagine about feminism and male bashing and (...can't read...) women's studies since it was the (...can't read...) of every class.

Student #17 (Major: Environmental affairs). I learned how to rewrite, how to conference successfully and also how to put something down on paper with thought rather than blind words. Most importantly this course gave me the self-confidence I needed to enter college. I never feel as if I had gained an adequate English education in high school.

Student #18 (Major: indecipherable). I learned how to accept criticism and improve my writing. I learned to declare my voice, through my writing and discussion.

Student #19 (Nontraditional, non-degreed). I've learned a lot about my abilities. I've also learned that I can and should attempt new styles of writing. I've learned to look at and connect with a book that I may not care for.

Student #20 (Major: Hotel admin.). That I enjoy writing more than I thought I did. To express myself more in my papers. That you can and should rewrite. To work better with other people.

Student #21 (Major: L.A. undeclared). I think I've learned a lot about my writing in this course. I've learned what I am capable of and my writing ability has been positively changed in this past semester. I've learned that I can write in a way that I like and other like too.

Question: Which features of this course, or of this particular section of the course, do you think are effective? What changes might be made to improve it?

Student #1: undecipherable

Student #2. I thought because there were all girls in the class that everyone was real comfortable and participated more. Because of this the class probably learned more. Even though there were a lot of papers to write I think it was good because it just made you get better and better.

Student #3. The thing that I found effective was the rewriting of our five-page papers.

Student #4. I like the conferences. They help give shape and focus to my writing.

Student #5. Conferences are very effective. Talking one on one helped me in writing my papers. The changes made are the once a week 5 page papers. These are so hard to do. And when it came down to research paper so much writing work was piled on. English

401 isn't the only class. Also those 5-page papers, but everyone is not a writer or an English major.

Student #6. I feel that the size of the class is very effective. Here at UNH the classes are ordinarily so big that it is good to have a small setting in which we can learn and also make friends. I also feel that the conferences are very helpful and are essential for 401

Student #7. I think the fact that rewrites can occur is a very strong feature. I like the fact that I am given another opportunity to work on a piece. Conferences were also good because I could talk one on one with the teacher, as well as receive input from my conference partner. By hearing their reaction to what I wrote, I was able to really see how people saw my writing and how I can improve.

Student #8. Conferences are very effective. It always helps me to talk to the professor one on one. Another feature is the class size. Having a smaller class means that there is more of a relationship with the teacher. The environment of the classroom is effective also. This class is relaxed but I am not saying that there isn't any work. We have a lot to get accomplished but it is easier to do so in a good environment.

Student #9. Conferences are a good part of this class because it helps us get a feel for how we are writing. By getting a professors opinion as well as fellow peers we can evaluate if our writing is effecting our audience the way we intended it to. A few less papers to write a week might improve this course. 6 pages a week plus our other classes in an extremely heavy work load.

Student #10. Features that were effective: having group discussion, group conferences with peers on the papers we wrote, group presentations about the topic of choice, conferences (mandatory) with my teacher and a fellow peer. Changes to improve: I like how everything was "run" in the class and I feel that nothing should be changed.

Student #11. I like the conferences and the working in groups. I think I must have worked with everyone in this class at one point or another. Knowing one's classmates also makes it easier to write, especially when it comes to the personal narratives. Working in groups was a definite strength in this course.

Student #12. Freewriting and reader responses are effective in developing a voice. Grammar lessons - learned what I thought I already knew.

Student #13. I believe that having conferences and editing partners makes all the difference in the world.. Working collaboratively to get more than one opinion or suggestion on a piece of writing was also very effective. To improve this course, each day of class we should have formed a circle for our group discussions. Maybe more formal instructions on writing style.

Student #14. A) I think the assigned reading during the first few weeks of Song of Solomon was effective in that it allowed us to discuss something that we were all familiar with. B) Writing assignments being assigned in the beginning and middle of the semester, instead of the end when our interest was waning.

Student #15. I think that the group discussions where we pull our chairs into a circle are wonderful. Since our class is all female, I really enjoyed the discussions we had about the class and the possible differences between ours and a "normal" English 401 class. The conferences also are a wonderful help in my writing.

Student #16. Effective writing and rewriting. I've never rewritten before in my life. I think our working with each other in groups had its advantages but also we (...can't read...) working in groups it took away our individuality. Changes--keep it English 401, it's not a woman's studies course. Do research for another project on the teacher's own time, not on ours. Not effective--the grading--it wasn't fair!

Student #17. Conferences can be a nuisance, but they are very necessary. I like the way the course is designed to give the student comments to walk away from. It hands the student food for thought and so when it comes time to sit down and compose a five page paper I was never without a topic. The only change I would make would be to spread the work out a little more. I feel I could have been more effective in my writing if everything for the class wasn't due all at the middle...

Student #18. I think the small classrooms are effective yet I think the time per class should be shortened. The writing must be done on your own time anyway.

Student #19. Wish I could have had someone else in my conferences, but oh well. Not the fault of the teacher but my schedule. Sometimes the groups don't work well because of extremes in differences of schedules.

Student #20. Open discussions. Group work. I liked that we had one partner who read all of our work so they became familiar with our writing style and so could take that into account when they gave suggestions and responded to our papers.

Student #21. I think the term paper was effective in that you could choose your own topic and go about it in any which way. Also I think the conferences were very helpful in that they gave us some direction.

Question #3: What are the particular strengths and weaknesses of this instructor's teaching. Please elaborate.

Student #1. (indecipherable)

Student #2. Teaches how to develop a paper real well. I like how she respects both the quiet and outspoken people in the class. Sometimes she loads the work on as if this is the only class all the students had to worry about.

Student #3. Strengths: tries to make class interesting, likes when people get involved, listens when someone is talking to her, knowledgeable. Weaknesses: I have been really disappointed with my grade this semester. I've worked very hard and I feel that Prof. Kasik grades too harshly! I'm not a famous writer, but I give everything I do a tremendous amount of effort! I feel my grades should have reflected all of my effort. I don't dislike Prof. Kasik as a person, but I'm very confused with her grading process as a teacher.

Student #4. She is very personable and dedicated to her work. She makes time for each student. Her one weakness was spending too much time on her own research project. She pushed discussion towards women's rights almost every class. Discussion should have been more free flowing and not forced in one direction.

Student #5. Mrs. Kasik is always there to help. She will change her ways to accommodate your needs. She's willing to help you during or after class and she makes class interesting [...can't read...] speakers or in depth discussions. She also makes you feel comfortable speaking in class. Sometimes she loads on the work and it becomes stressful.

Student #6. Dot is a great instructor as far as I am concerned. She has wonderful ideas that are very new to me so they are also exciting. She helped me find my voice this year and she is very understanding and helpful. Her strengths are exercises to support her theme. She always can find fun exercises to implement the topic of lecture. She is also good at getting discussions started in the classroom. I think she is a wonderful lady and an instructor.

Student #7. She is very enthusiastic and gives the impression that writing is the most wonderful thing in the world. I still don't really like writing, but I have come to appreciate it more. The only thing I don't like is that I do not know where I stand gradewise because I only got a mid-semester evaluation, but I don't know what should take place, because I like not getting a grade on everything I do precisely because I'm not [...can't read...].

Student #8. Dot is a very good professor. She is fair to all of the students and cares about them. She has helped me a great deal with English. I have never done a good job in English before. We had a few weeks during the semester when there was a lot of work to do and Dot pushed us to get through it. I felt like I accomplished something because she pushed us. Dot is the best teacher I have had in a long time. I'm not used to someone who cares about her students as much as she does.

Student #9. I particularly like the exercises we do to help us think about our writing. Such as getting a random picture and writing whatever comes to mind about the picture. I

didn't really like the way we had to learn grammar but that was a small part of the course so I learned to live with it.

Student #10. Instructor's teaching strengths: has an open mind about topics, she listens to each one of the students without interrupting, she doesn't push her opinion on anyone, she makes lectures in class exciting, tries to break things up with different activities, she stays after class if you ever need help, she asks you for your opinion. Weaknesses: Dot is a very caring person. Her personality shows it to both her students and peers. I enjoyed her class very much. I looked forward to every Tuesday and Thursdays. Too short. I find that she has no weaknesses. Her teaching style is one with all strengths. There are no holes. Thank you.

Student #11. When I first came into the classroom--or actually when I went to my first conference, it seemed that Dot wanted to know everything she could about me. At first I was kind of put off by this. Looking back now it seems essential that she knows some of our background--for if she does--she can then help us all the more with our writing and the development of our voice. I enjoyed having Dot as a teacher--and if I was to take another English course I would try to take one of her classes. I would tell any of my friends to sign up for one of her classes as well.

Student #12. I did not see any weaknesses of this instructor's teaching. She was always prepared for class and initiated some great discussion.

Student #13. I believe that this professor had a tremendous amount of strengths. She was well balanced on both a professional level --guiding/leading the way to help me improve my writing and consistently suggesting new ideas and new ways to approach an essay and also on a personal level she seemed very committed and concerned with each student's personal progression. I personally [...can't read....] that because she had such a well balance professionally and personally that it was much easier to progress to a higher level of writing. To be perfectly honest, I cannot think of any particular weaknesses--not to say anyone is perfect, but if she has any, she hides them very well.

Student #14. One strength is the way that she truly make an enormous effort to make everyone feel comfortable about writing and speaking in class. She encourages everyone to talk and say their opinions. She knows how to pull everyone into the conversation. She is also very understanding. I had a particularly rough semester and I felt that she really understood the problems that I had. I really am going to miss her.

Student #15. I think Dot is a very fair teacher. From the beginning, she advised us what this course was all about and exactly what she expected from us. She gave us a syllabus so we could plan in advance what papers and projects would be due. Dot forced us to have discussions amongst ourselves thereby making us interact with one another. A lot of group work was done which added variety to the classes and helped us to get to know one another. I am very pleased with how Dot encouraged each of us to find our own voice and not to be afraid to write. She was very positive!

Student #16. Strengths—she wanted us to talk openly, say what we wanted. I did so much writing that I had to improve. Weaknesses—we have to have a better grading system. I felt I [...cant' read...] good comments on my papers that made it seem like [...can't read...] (especially my research paper) than I would get [...can't read...] all ups like my hopes were getting up and then she hands you get a bad grade I was only kidding when I said this was good before. Not enough teacher input. She had us proofreading each others. She should be telling us what she likes. We want grades and we're not an advanced English class. No more women's' studies!! It's English 401. No more us being guinea pigs for a research project. Other than that, everything's fine.

Student #17. She is a wonderful professor. Professor Kasik is always there for honest criticism. She is fair in her dealings with students as she is in understanding different writing styles exist. The only weakness I would say would be that too much stress is placed on only a few types of writing samples. I wish that it could have been more of an even flux of assignments varied in their...

Student #18. A strength of this instructor is her ability to keep you trying, even if you know it's a lousy paper. She is easy to talk to and is there if you need her. Unfortunately, her weakness is the inability of discussing grades. You think you're writing fairly well. She does make any comments telling you something else, but then the paper is returned with an average grade.

Student #19. I enjoyed her teaching style. Although intense at times it was always challenging which helped me keep focused.

Student #20. Encouraged me to write—gave me positive feedback and asked good questions about my writing to make me probe deeper when I rewrote a paper.

Student #21. Strengths: able to find the writer's own strengths and weaknesses and able to help her develop as a writer. Also she had a very personal style of teaching.
Weaknesses: I don't really feel that the class was in any way weak.

APPENDIX B

SECTION QUESTIONNAIRE (Anonymous) (Fifteen students responding)

Question: How often did you speak out loud in this class this semester?

Student #1. Often enough. I didn't want to always say something, but if it was really important I made sure it was said.

Student #2. Daily.

Student #3. I'm not really sure. Maybe 5-10 times.

Student #4. Not much at all.

Student #5. Quite often--whenever I had something to say.

Student #6. I spoke out only once. Only when we did presentations in front of the class.

Student #7. Maybe just about every class.

Student #8. Couple times a week.

Student #9. More often than not--there were only a couple classes that I did not speak out in.

Student #10. About one time per class.

Student #11. Very frequently, at least once every class.

Student #12. If I had opinions, I spoke them out loud. I'd say, in general, every class period I did.

Student #13. Not as often as I should have.

Student #14. Every class.

Student #15. Almost every class. I am very opinionated and I like my thoughts to be heard.

Question: Under what circumstances do you feel comfortable speaking out loud?

Student #1. When it's a topic I know a lot about and am prepared for.

Student #2. Under circumstances which I feel I know the material.

Student #3. The only times I feel uncomfortable are when we speak of topics that hit close to home with me. Other than that, I feel I can speak out quite comfortably.

Student #4. Really not any. I do not like to speak out in class. It just makes me uncomfortable. Once in a while, I will, though, and in here because there weren't any males. For our group presentations it was alright.

Student #5. Just about any circumstances.

Student #6. I never feel completely comfortable speaking out loud. When I speak, it's because I have to. But it's easier when only girls are here.

Student #7. When everyone else does also; during marked discussion periods.

Student #8. I felt most comfortable speaking out loud in smaller groups and when doing our group presentation for class.

Student #9. When I have something important to say or if I have general thought on my mind I'll speak out.

Student #10. When I have a clear idea and I know how to go about articulating it--and when the group atmosphere was open and accepting, like in this class.

Student #11. I feel comfortable speaking out loud under almost any circumstances. If I have something to contribute, or if I have a question I will speak up, regardless of who else is in the class.

Student #12. I felt comfortable speaking out loud because it is such a small group and all female and we have all gotten to know each other in this class.

Student #13. If I have something intelligent to add to the conversation.

Student #14. I most often feel comfortable especially when many people are contributing to the conversation.

Student #15. I feel comfortable speaking out loud in any circumstance. I am not intimidated by anything...well, you get my point. If I have something to say I will say it--I don't even care if my belief is the "popular" one.

Question: When do you feel uncomfortable speaking out loud?

Student #1. When it was a tense, sided topic because I didn't want to offend people.

Student #2. When I did not feel prepared for class.

Student #3. As I said before, I think I got ahead of myself. Topics that either were emotional for me because of past circumstances or those that were liable to make people argue, I don't like arguing in a discussion.

Student #4. Mostly if I had something I wanted to say, I would not if there was dead silence in the room.

Student #5. Only when I wasn't sure what I was saying was correct.

Student #6. I always felt uncomfortable because of the way my personality is. I felt comfortable with my reading partner and with conferences. I feel more comfortable in a all-girls class.

Student #7. When everyone else was chiming in at sometime--I'm not good at being heard like that.

Student #8. In the large group, especially when the subject matter was "heavy", I was afraid that what I say might offend someone in the class.

Student #9. Touchy subjects--something too personal for me to share.

Student #10. When others were quiet or if we were talking about an issue I knew very little about.

Student #11. I never felt uncomfortable speaking out in this class although I am sometimes uncomfortable about speaking out in large lecture type classes or in classes with a lot of fraternity-types.

Student #12. When I say something and then people argue about what I said. It doesn't bother me too much.

Student #13. When someone has a strong conflicting viewpoint.

Student #14. I feel uncomfortable rarely once I'm acquainted with everyone.

Student #15. The only time I would refrain from speaking out is if I might think that my opinion would seriously offend somebody. That didn't happen in here though.

How might a different gender ratio have changed the way you felt about speaking, responding, answering questions, or sharing?

Student #1. If there were males I don't think I would have felt any differently. I actually can converse better sometimes with guys.

Student #2. Well at the beginning of the semester I would have said Not at all. But now I think differently. I think you have to experience not having them here before you know.

Student #3. I think because it's all female, we all feel comfortable speaking out loud. If it were half and half, it might not be bad, however, if there were more males than females, I would have felt very self-conscious and most likely would only have spoken if spoken to first.

Student #4. I don't think it would have mattered, if there was any gender ratio changes.

Student #5. In junior high or high school I wouldn't have talked, but I've gotten over that.

Student #6. Because of my personality, I am uncomfortable in almost every situation of this size class. But I listen better when there are no men. Maybe I'm afraid that people can hear my thoughts!

Student #7. If there was a reverse ratio, I might not have spoken much at all!

Student #8. I don't really feel a different gender ratio would change the way I feel about speaking out. It's the idea of speaking out not the gender of people that I'm speaking to that scares me.

Student #9. On some topics I believe we would have had more debates if we had males. Now that I've had this experience, I think it's changed the way I felt about speaking.

Student #10. I would probably feel intimidated if I were in the minority--it would depend on the personalities of the students in the room.

Student #11. In a class such as this I don't feel that a different gender ratio would affect the way I feel. But our subjects would have been different. In a science class the ratio does make a slight difference because the men tend to get called on more often.

Student #12. I might not have spoken out as much if there were guys, but I usually don't have a problem with it.

Student #13. I don't feel that the gender ratio has any impact on whether I spoke out loud or not.

Student #14. I think I might feel a bit uncomfortable at first, but I would probably speak out more once I got to know everyone. I suppose this would be true in any case, actually.

Student #15. It really wouldn't--except if say Chris O'Donnell was in this class because then I would be so taken by his looks that I probably wouldn't be able to speak.

What are your feelings towards male and female professors? Is there a difference in what you expect from each? Would it matter what sort of class the professor is teaching (humanities, science, math, agriculture, nursing, etc.)?

Student #1. It appears as though women professors are more caring (mother figures) whereas males still seem to teach the large math and science seminars that require less 1-to-1 attention.

Student #2. Male professors demand that you be able to answer "why?"

Student #3. I don't hold one in higher regard than the other, I feel they are equals. I do find that my languages are taught by mostly females and math and sciences are taught by men.

Student #4. I have had many male and female professors. I have never shown a bias towards one, with respect to what I expect from them. But sometimes it seems as though the first impression of a male teacher is one of being strict although to me, you seemed to be "strict" at first also (not that you aren't).

Student #5. I don't really feel differently. My favorite classes have been taught by female professors, but that's because they were good professors. I don't expect anything different going by gender.

Student #6. I feel more comfortable talking with female professors. I don't think that there is a difference in what I expect from each. I grew plain (sic) from male and female so I believe that I should expect that I will learn from them no matter what they teach.

Student #7. They're the same--I tend to get along better with males in the past (high school).

Student #8. I have both male and female professors this semester. I expect both genders to teach us to the best of their ability. I do not think it matters what class is being taught--subjects know no genders.

Student #9. Male and female professors are pretty equal no matter what they teach--though in many cases I have found men to be more lenient and easygoing and women to be kind of stern.

Student #10. This semester I have had all female professors, therefore I can't compare the two. I have enjoyed both male and female teachers in the past. I haven't noticed a particular style of teaching to match with male or female teachers. Each teacher differs from another regardless of gender. Therefore, I don't expect a difference.

Student #11. I don't feel that there is any difference between male and female teachers at the college level. I usually don't expect any difference now that I'm in college. In high school the female teachers were more likely to be better about extra help and other such things. This is not the case in college. It does not matter what class they are teaching.

Student #12. No, I think this day and age, it really doesn't matter if professors are male or female as long as they are qualified.

Student #13. I feel that I, personally, do better in classes with female professors, but I am not sure why. I don't really feel that there is a difference.

Student #14. I do not really have a preference of gender for profs, but I think I feel more comfortable with a female professor. I expect the same from both genders, however.

Student #15. I have 2F professors and 2M professors. I have had unreal experiences with all of them. Each of my profs is extremely intelligent and has positive contributions to the classroom. I do not think that it matters what subject a prof teaches as long as he/she introduces the material in an interesting, intelligent way.

How do you act differently with male or female professors?

Student #1. I don't act differently except that my classes with female professors are smaller and more interaction takes place.

Student #2. I put more effort into classes taught by male professors because they demand more and expect fact, not feeling. Some female professors ask that their students complete rigorous course studies, but I think this is more prevalent in males.

Student #3. Personally with male professors I am quite quiet in class until I get to know them. Even then I don't often speak aloud. Women teachers I feel a little more at ease. I speak a little more often and tend to feel more comfortable.

Student #4. I believe that male or female professors could both get equal actions from me. What I feel really matters, though, is not so much their gender but their approachableness.

Student #5. I don't act differently depending on whether the professor is male or female, but more by age or intelligence.

Student #6. I am shy and more nervous with a male professor. I can talk more openly with female professors.

Student #7. I don't think I do.

Student #8. I think I am more likely to speak out in a class with a female professor than with a male professor. I feel more comfortable with a female professor, although I have been in situations where a female professor or teacher is intimidating. It all depends on the personality of the professor.

Student #9. I generally get along better with male professors. It is just a personality issue. I have always had male friends and I find it hard to relate to women. But in college it doesn't really matter what gender the professor is—I have mostly lectures and I learn just as much from a male as a female—as long as they are good at what they teach.

Student #10. I would probably feel more comfortable interacting on a personal level with a female professor.

Student #11. I don't feel I act any differently between the two genders.

Student #12. It really doesn't matter unless they are jerks and then I feel awkward talking to them especially if they are males. I have one professor (a male religion professor) who doesn't take the time to explain things well if we are unclear. It is hard for us because the material is difficult.

Student #13. I think I tend to respond better to female professors and feel less intimidated by them.

Student #14. I do not necessarily act differently, but with a male prof I might not speak out as readily about issues that concern women. This applies only to discussion-based classes. There is not much of a difference in lecture-based classes.

Student #15. I don't because it really doesn't matter to me. I am very vocal in English discussion and I am also vocal in private and in society.

APPENDIX C

CLASS REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF MEN FOLLOWING DISCUSSION ABOUT EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL JOBS.

(Anonymous)

(Eighteen Students Responding)

Question: What would be the difference if men were here?

Student #1. I think almost everything that was discussed would not have been discussed if there were men in the class. I don't think we would have been able to discuss as much as we did because the men would be on the defensive about everything that was mentioned.

Student #2. The whole issue of feminism would not go well if men were present, although it would be nice to hear what reactions they would have. Personally, I would feel uncomfortable in discussing what kind of roles women hold in the work place and what you need to do to earn respect from the men themselves.

Student #3. The same topics would be discussed but opinions may not have been so strong. I'm not sure the women in this class are all true feminists.

Student #4. Feminist issues could be presented much more forcefully since no men were present. It is easier to present one's views if there will be no controversy from the audience. Discussion wouldn't have been that strong if men were present. Women would have thought twice about everything they said.

Student #5. I would have chosen a different research topic because I think it would be too controversial with men present, though I would have ignored their presence.

Student #6. I think everything would have still been said, but the tone and reactions would have been different. Our topics might have gotten glazed over, not given importance. Strong, opinionated women need to speak out.

Student #7. Open conversation about feminism would have been limited. In fact, for one session we tried to get a man to come in and speak, but we couldn't find one. I personally would not voice my opinions as strongly and as often as I do now in an all women's class. Men intimidate me sometimes and I am nervous that they will make fun of me.

Student #8. Men would have added to the discussion and made it interesting. A class of all females will not portray a male point of view very well.

Student #9. We could not have talked about bias in the workplace or about women getting less help when they buy cars.

Student #10. Discussions would have been more heated.

Student #11. We couldn't have talked about PMS so openly.

Student #12. The entire semester would not have been the same because if men were present, they would have refused to listen and most of the women more than likely wouldn't have commented because of the intimidation given off by men.

Student #13. We would have been more cautious. I know that we as a group of women would not have been so candid (mom stories, periods, car salesmen, etc...)

Student #14. Reading assignments are in current texts which are available to men, and assigned before we knew there'd be no men in this class, so it wouldn't have been different.

Student #15. Both males and females would be afraid to speak. I myself would have held back my feelings because I'd be afraid that the males would jump down my throat. It would add lots of tension to the air.

Student #16. Women wouldn't have spoken so freely about the equal rights they feel they should have.

Student #17. We fear that men will make fun of us.

Student #18. Opinions would have been the same, but more timidly aired.

Question: What questions would you like a man to respond to?

Student #1. I would have wanted a man to say if he felt that there was a difference and if it was a negative one, in the gender roles in society, what they feel need to be changed, if anything, and why.

Student #2. I would like to hear men take a feminist point of view during group talk.

Student #3. I would like to know if men agree with equal rights, equal pay, and equal responsibilities in the home.

Student #4. It would be interesting to have men on the feminist sides of debates to see how they respond. Some of us were mocking men, so it would be interesting to see the comparison of how they mock us.

Student #5. I want to ask. why do you feel superior to women? Do you think times are changing? What could you males do to eliminate the harsh feelings some women have when they're treated inferiorly?

Student #6. I want men to respond to the kind of satisfaction they get from putting down a women and knowing they get paid more. How can that make them feel more manly? They haven't done anything a woman couldn't have done.

Student #7. I'd like to hear from a man about what it feels like to be accused as a group. Not all men are horrible, ugly, anti-feminists, but they're grouped as though they are. I would also like to know why some men are not emotional. I would like to know if they see times changing. And I would like to ask if men are intimidated by women.

Student #8. It would have been great to hear in general what men have to say. We all know the female side of the story, but now much do we really know of the males' side?

Student #9. I'd like to know if they see the prejudice against women or the stereotypes against them.

Student #10. I want to know if men today want women to stay home or get a job. I want to know what they think about the idea of women making more money than men.

Student #11. What do they look for in a relationship? What's the ideal mate going to be like?

Student #12. Should women stay in the home?

Student #13. How do you expect your future wife to act as compared to your mother, your grandmother? What would you say to women trying to talk to you about feminism, dismiss her, tell her to shut up???

Student #14. All the questions.

Student #15. How would they feel if the roles were switched? Why do they do this?

Student #16. I would like a man to respond the essay called "I Want a Wife." I personally think the title should have been "I Want a Slave."

Student #17. I would like to hear the men respond about the idea that younger men are more ready to assume parental roles and stay at home.

Student #18. All of the questions.

Was your mind changed in any way?

Student #1. My views really haven't changed. I still think women have to work hard to gain the rights they deserve in society.

Student #2. My point of view on feminism or the reaction of women with men in the workplace didn't change at all. You want respect, you have to earn it, even if you have to work twice as much.

Student #3. I have always been a feminist, and this reinforced it.

Student #4. It made me learn more about the issues and the information backing it up.

Student #5. A lot more has to be done before women reach equality.

Student #6. I used to be sick of hearing about women's rights all of the time, but after this I got to thinking that if nobody keeps complaining, nothing will ever get accomplished.

Student #7. Some of the discussion opened my eyes to different aspects of feminism. I enjoyed hearing others' experiences and views.

Student #8. I agree that women are not equal to men, but I don't think we are so bad off as some people make it seem. We have come a long way in the past few years. Talk to your mothers--then we may realize that we have many more opportunities now. I do things today that my mother never dreamed of. We are moving ahead. Rome wasn't built in a day.

Student #9. My view on feminism and gender roles in society has opened and gotten broader.

Student #10. I liked listening to everyone's points of view, but I basically kept my own.

Student #11. I feel strongly that women need to stand up for their rights and demand that they be treated as equals.

Student #12. I already knew that men had no sympathy for us.

Student #13. My mind was strengthened with new ideas on how to change my role as a woman to change the roles of men.

Student #14. I know the truth about sexism. All I can do now is stop complaining and work hard to change the circumstances.

Student #15. I always knew that men are pig-headed and they always will be.

Student #16. I still believe the same way, that women should be treated more fairly and equally.

Student #17. I still feel the same way as I always have.

Student #18. No, my mind was not changed in any way.

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH TOPICS (AND PAGE LENGTHS)

Holly	"Divorce and Its Effects on Children" 12 pages
Amy	"Mommy Is Sixteen" (teenaged mothers) 14 pages
Kerin	"Advice from the Naive: How To Become a Female Lawyer" 16 pages
Karen	"The Art of Anorexia" 13 pages
Laurie	"Homeless: Lending a Helping Hand" 10 pages
Dawn	"Rape at UNH: What You Need to Know" 11 pages
Nikki	"Breast Cancer: A Real-Life Experience" 12 pages
Joy and Tracy (collaborative)	"Changing Generations" 8 pages
Shane	"The Representation of Lesbians in Hollywood" 23 pages
Mindy and Barbara (collaborative)	"Service Animals" 11 pages
Cathy	"Are Female College Students Pressured To Drink?" 9 pages
Kerry	"Marijuana at UNH" 14 pages
Michelle N.	"My Aunt, the Astrologist" 9 pages

Michelle R.	"Violence and the Family" 17 pages
Felicia	"The Weighting Game" (media effect on young women) 14 pages
Jessica	"Used Car Sales: Do Women Get a Good Deal?" 11 pages
Sarah	"Women's Rights" 11 pages
April	"Endangered Animals" 10 pages
Kristi	"Drug Addiction: Does Rehab Solve the Problem?" 15 pages
Cathleen	"Against All Odds" (teenaged marriages that work) 11 pages

APPENDIX E

PATHWAY ESSAYS, NUMBER 1 LITERACY NARRATIVE August, 1996

Writing Prompt: Write an essay that tells about your experiences with school and learning.

Note: Essays have not been changed or edited either by me or their teachers. Original spelling and grammatical constructions are untouched.

Bobbie Jane, 17 (pre-breakthrough)

I learned how to read when I was five years old. My grandma taught me how to read and write, but I didn't go to school until I was 6 1/2 years old. My teacher taught me how to do math problems I started 1st grade at the age of 6 1/2 years old. I have no worst teachers because I don't hate any of the teachers I went to Jefferson School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. I also went to Washington High School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. I also went to Mishicot, in Two Rivers, Wisc. I also went to Bolwer, Wisconsin. I also went to Wrightown, Wisconsin. I also went to WaterWood High School in Wisconsin. My favorite teachers are every one of them, because I didn't have a favorite teacher. Oh before I forget I got held back in second grade because Mom thought I wasn't doing my work in school. I love School.

Jameke, 16 (post breakthrough)

About School.

When I was six years old I was in first grade. My teachers taught me how to do things when I had a problem they taught me better ways to deal with it. When I was in third grade my teacher I don't remember her name but she used to read to me I would listen to her read and soon taught myself how to read when I moved and I went to Tidy. A. Phillips I had a teacher name Mrs. Salamars She taught me how to sound words out break them down and that way I could learn how to read them faster I used to get in fights at my school I did not want to learn and in fifth grade my teachers Mrs. Dikes influenced me and told me you are a smart girl and I know you can do good. My teacher Mrs. Dikes help me with math she wanted me to understand it better my father would help me with my math I could learn some of the problems by her showing me I had to show myself that I could do them. When I went to sixth grade I had a very nice teacher that taught me to believe in myself and that I could do whatever I set my mind to do. I love Cottage Grove that was one of my favorite schools. My teacher Mrs. Washington knew that a girl like me with so many opens and dreams could make it. I knew that this teacher could make things happen. She always

told me that you could make a best out of a bad thing and I could say I loved this teacher and I love her to this day because she taught me most of the things I need to know. I did not want to leave that school because I was so attach to this teacher. when I moved from my foster mom's house and went to Merrvill at had a teacher how always told me he know I could do It if I tired I started acting bad and Merrville and I had to leave the school then I came hear and had a teacher name Carry who took me over some of the things I have gone over be fore.

Yvonne, 16 (post breakthrough)

I started school when I was 5 years old I went to kindg. I learn how to write my name and spell. In Frist grade I learn How to do math. In Second Grade I learn how to do everything. In third grade I don't Know what I did. In Fruth grade I learn how to read. In Fifth grade I learn how to do art. In sixth grade I learn how to do everything. In seventh grade I learn how to do math. In nineth grade I learn how to do Fractions In tenth grade I learn hwo to do Fractions burgers. I learn how to read and write when I was at school it was diFct for me to do but I didn't give up like the other kids in my school. My best teacher is carrie, Dibbie, Paul, Mr. Walker, Mr Jackson. My best school is Jack London, BLC. My worst teacher is Mss. Johnson, Mr. James. My worst School is I don't have any worst School I olny have good school. I like school so because I want to get out of here and get a job at home or cop so I can go to colleg and when I get of here I can be on my own and then I will come and see pathway and see what they doing but I don't Know what they doing So I hope pathway be ok. I wish I was still little so I can be in Frist grade. So I wish it was good in School so I can do good and help Carrie work in school so I can help other to understand they work so Carrie I am here For you so do you want my help on work Carrie look when I get catch up I will help you on work if you want me to I Love School So much Math is good you teach me lots of things about Fractions and how to redue them you Know what I thank you For that you are my Favort teacher that I ever had you treat me nice and respectful. I will respect you ok. You know what I like writing these paper because they help me out thanks Carrie do you keep this will help me look. I think it is cool for me to do this it Fun.

Bobbie Jo, 18 (post-breakthrough)

My school experience was ok I always got along with my teachers When I learned to read and write When I was in elemechy shool. I had this piece of paper that had letters on it that really helped me. I wish I Could still do that Because I Want to learn how to write Better then I am right now. I learned Math problems By start low to the eaiser part then it started getting harder for me By I love math no matter what. My Best teachers are Mrs. Dabel and Mrs. Franzene. My Best school is Milton Hight School. Because I always wanted to Be in Hight School and now I am. My Worst teachers were Mrs. Waller. Mrs. Gramme. My Wrost School. Was Wilson elemechy. Because I Would always get in trouble and sent to the office. When i Was getting older I found out

that I fald 3rd grade Because the teachers said that I was to slow for them to teach me. But I am learning fast mow. And I am proud of myself for making it this far. I liked going to school Because I Wanted to learn alot of things about the earth and the United States. When I was little I Wanted to Be a (A) stuent in my Classes But I was a slow learner and never got (A's) Before. I Would only get (D's) (B's) (C's) and (F's) When my dad would see those he would get realy get mad at me and slap me My mom Wouldn't care she Would just tell me to try Better next time I Wanted to here that then yelling. When I went to elemchy I went to school with my brother and sister. We would Walk together and Work on some Math problems. they both asked me since I happen to like math. And what they asked was very eaisy. One time I was so happy to do to school So I could do some math. I just love doing math. When I Was little Boys Would always tease me Because of the Way I look and how tall I am. But some Boys Would ask to go out with me. But I said No, Because it was the Boys who were teasing me. And I was not very happy about that earher. So the next day I would get them Back By saying stuff about their Mother and father about there whole family they were mad But months later We got along I Went out with the Boys just untill I left and went to a different school. Wall it was same what like a school. It was a house also and a school down stairs people there were hard to get along with at first But I get along with them now. I Went two shool there for almost most 7 or 8 months. This place was Called PathWay. I kind of injoy that place But it is not my favorite place I went to summer school to that was pretty cool. Sometimes I would help others with there school work and the teachers to I hope I can get along and help them more often. But I can't seem to get along with anybody. And I am planing on keeping that Way Because I don't want to get to close to them. And I feel that eveybody hates me But Merdith Because Merdith Cares about me. And she knows alot about me then anybody here plus lorre. And I Want it to stay that Way Because I don't Want everybody to know everything about me. I hope I can keep myself cougth up in school and so I can get of table time Because I don't like Being on table time Because it Sucks everyday I have to Be on table time I feel that people are going way to fast for me Because it feels like I only get 10 mins to work on my school work that is not a long time. I want to go the a school that gos slower then here. Because people are faster learners then me. Because I seen them Answer things way before I Do I need more time to think.

Aimee, 13

First of all I went to head start and I had alot of friends. I played alot and would paint pictures for the teachers. I would also make messes and then I would clean them up and I would get complimented on my cleanness. I would also treat my firends with respect. In Kindergarten I was helpful and I would Follow directions right away when I was told them. I would not go where I wasn't supposed to go. I would help out by making my mat and putting it away after nap. In first grade I was nice to be around my friends were nice to be around and we all got along I went to class when I was supposed to, I would do thing I was supposed to do. and I had fun I learned how to add and subtract. My favorite teachers were: in 1st grade I like Mrs. Philipiea and in second grade I liked Mr.s Anderson and in third I liked Ms. dupri. In third grade I learned how to multiply and I had learned

how to write my letters and I used my skills and they were Following Instructions and reading my letters without screwing up and I would also read books. In fourth grade I learned how to play hockey and my mom said I couldn't play but I said I would anyways I was a brat back then. My mom didn't want me to play hockey and I would anyway but I stopped because I was grounded mom didn't actually know I was playing hockey but I was Mom never knew I was playing she still doesn't. In fifth grade I was learning my penmanship but then I would try to write in my best handwriting but I couldn't so I kept trying. In sixth grade I was rude to my teachers and skipped days of school and I would try to kill my teachers with my rude remarks and I would try to do drugs but didn't succeed I never did drugs and I was just plain rude. In 7th grade I was weird and humorus and I would be kind and cool.

Have fun.

My School history

Believe me I was weirde.

Elaya, 16 (pre-breakthrough)

This is about my school experience.

I really don't remember how I learned to read & write & do math problems. My best teachers were my kindergardner teacher, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, & my middle school teachers, & my High School teachers. Their names were, (in order) Ms. Wiener, Mrs. Coleman, Mrs Jenkins, Mrs. Foyer, Mrs. Kiehm, Mrs. Eyre, Ms. Hollaway, Ms. Dillion.

My best schools were Hopkins Street School Clare Barton Elementry, Webster Middle School Custer high School, & Washington High School.

My best teachers were Mrs. Coleman Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Eyre, & Ms. Hollaway. My worst teacher wer my fourth grade teacher Mrs Bond, because she yelled at me alot.

Jenny, 15 (post breakthrough)

I started to learn how to read when I was in first grade. I learned how to read when I was in a group of kids my age. I learned how to write that same year. I don't like going back to my past because of my abuse. I learned how to math problem's in 1 and 2nd grade. My best teachers were Mr Thorpe, and Mr. Neimoth. My best schools are, Wilson, and Horce Mann Middle School. My worst teachers were when I was in kidergarten, first, second, third, forth, from there I had good teachers and they were nice to me. The school I hated the most was Grant school I didn't like that school because I got picked on a lot by little kids and other people in older grades then me. The things that worked for me before I got here was to talk to Mr. Thorpe about problem's I had with different teachers and I ask them to talk when I was there so after that I would say I got along with my teachers that way. What also was neat was he was always there when I needed him more then anything. He was always putting time out for he could talk to me and other students that were getting into trouble when I was in 6th grade. When we had our long talk about what will happen if I do so and so. I told what would. The he had said to me if I don't get a

referral or kicked out of class within a two day period then he will give me something. Then it went up to a 5 days and up to a week and just kept on going until it hit 7 months then is when I found out that I was doing so good in school but I wasn't doing that at home That is the reason why I like Mr. Thorpe. He is so nice to me and taking time for me, and giving me the attention that I wasn't from my mother and Allen at the time. When I got to pathway I hated school never wanted to be in school. I never like it because I was not changing class like I did when I went to public school. I never liked doing the work that I first got because I was in something higher before that. I think that since I started ninth grade I feel that I am doing fine and everything is fine and cool. I think that I like the things that I am doing now then what I was doing in the past.

One time when I was in the Hospital, I went to school for 2 1/2 hours and I thought it was cool but it wasn't it was worst because I had fallen behind in my subjects that I am to be in now. I think if I try I can get there in no time. Thanks Carrie.

Bobbi, 15 (pre-breakthrough)

Autobiography for life skills

I don't even remember when I first learned how to read or write. I do remember reading my assignments in first grade. Then my mom had to sign my slip of paper.

I remember using counters and number lines in third grade. My 3rd grade teacher wasn't much help in teaching me how to do math. If there was any one to thank it would be my mom. Her being a teacher really came in handy sometimes.

My favorite teachers were Mr. Benguy my Industrial arts teacher, Ms. Boutney my 5th grade teacher, Ms. Chrisnegel my volunteer teacher, Mr. Mouser my 6th grade English teacher, Mr. Martens my 9th grade Math teacher. My favorite schools were Menominee Middle school, Tot lot, Minominee Alternative, Mosinee Middle school, Monaukaunee elementary school, West DePeu Middle, Wrightstour high school.

My worst teachers were Mr.s Huebner my third grade teacher, Mrs. Turner my second grade teacher, Ms. Schroeder my 6th grade social studies teacher.

My worst schools were Meremon elementary.

Carmen, 17 (pre-breakthrough)

When I first started to learn to read I was four years old. I would watch my mother read me books and look at the words then I started reading easy small words then I got the hang of it and I started reading harder words. And writing came along but I never cared about spelling. I learned math problems when I was in kindergarden. the easy $1 + 1$ or $1 + 3$ simple stuff.

My favorite school was well I never really had a good school. Pathways the best so far. My favorite teacher is Mrs. DeLong. My worst school was Oshkosh Nort High School. My worst teacher was Mrs. Murphy--she tormented me for skiping her class. She drove me crazy. I really don't have much else to say but we have 25 minutes left. Now 20 minutes. 15 mins. Carrie, I have nothing else important to tell you.

In all my schools Boys and girls were treated the same. Boys were more bossy and mean to the teachers.

Meredith, 13 (post breakthrough)

When I was in my elementary School Called Bullah and my teachers in kindergarden Mrs. Hollinghead. I had trouble writing, speaking, and very bad difficulty reading. I did not learn how to read until I was in third grade, My Speech problem did not go away or learn how to speak right, when I was in fourth or fifth.

My best teachers were Mrs. Hollingshead, Miss Tillman, Mrs. Bishop, Mrs. Woodcester, Mrs. Pollacks, Mr. Wood, Miss Stockbridge.

All my teachers help me out and tried to get me away from my old behaviors.

My best school truthfully is Vision, Pathyway/Homme. and Lincoln. All the schools before that I never stayed in the classes all day. I would bring cigarettes to school get suspended.

And Lincoln High School I got good grades and learned a lot but I was still getting into trouble a lot.

My worst teachers were Mrs. Hanty, Math teacher I just could not and would not stand her. And Mrs. Martian she was so hard to understand I did not like her either.

My worst school are Bullen, Mickenly, Southern [...unreadable...] Jane Vernon, In all of them but SOGS I got into so much trouble.

In 6th grade in Mrs. Pollacks class was the first time I skipped school for the whole day. And then after me and my mom moved out of Bricliff I started to get into a hell hole.

My best teachers were Miss Tillman and Mrs. Bishop. I loved these teachers with everything. They were always there to talk to and they showed that they cared a lot about me. They were the teachers I told them about My aunt Physically abusing me. I almost told them about Dee/my daddy and my cousin Jimmy but something just stopped me from telling them for some reason.

I also like these teachers a lot because when I was in the bathroom once I was inhaling white out the strong kind they both came in and stopped me.

Experience at visions. With Carrie Stockbridge.

When I got caught cheating in a math book Carrie helped me she gave me consequences and I dealt with them.

Boys and girls were treated the same in my school. The only people who were treated differently were the mentally impaired. and handicapped people.

We would tell them things like. you were dropped by the garbage dump for a while when you were born.

We would put our hand by our heart and move it saying dart dun dah.

My school colors were for

Bullah - Brown and white

Lincoln - Gold and white

Bullen - Gold and green

Southern Oaks Girls School (SOGS) - Blue and white skirts

Mikcenly - White and red.
 I had to walk to Bullah
 Walk to Jane Vernon
 ride the bus to Licoln
 Bus to Bullen

Maryann, 16 (pre-breakthrough)

head start I was a big past by kicking the teacher and trowing a pencil to hit the boys I like my princible. Kinddgrading I was a good kid I learn math by doing it at home and school My teacher was a good learning teacher she all way know when I try my hardiest and when I just did care about any thing I learn how foread because will always spend her free time with me. Second grade was a little big harder and I learn to spell and learn how to add and subtracting and I was alway suspended from school alot and I was at the precible office Thrid grade was very hard because move alot and got in troble so I didn't go to school that much. I was to busy moving back in forth that I gave up Forth grade was very boring because I did nothing but sleeping and I was in the office most of the time. #5 grade I sleep the hole time and I was in the time

Crystal, 17

School autobiography

I learned to read when I was four years old. My sister, Sharon, taught me. We started with "In a people's house." I think it was a Doctor Suez book. Before then, my cousin and I (Mack--we grew up together) would sit in the back seat of the car and I had no idea how to read. I just took the book and made up a story and told him. He always interupted me though; he'd tell me what it really said.

I learned how to write around 4 years old too. My sister taught me that too. The most difficult thing, I found, to write was the number "2". It took me lots of practice. But I can do it really easily now...2222222222...see?

Now, math for me was strange. My sister taught me how old I was and how to count before I could read or write it down. My brother taught me some of the times tables when I was in first grade. I thought I was "so cool" because around that time, multiplication was something only "big kids" could do.

I have a favorite teacher that will always be a favoriate. Her name is Mrs. Grover and she taught the second grade. Now she teaches the sixth grade at the same school! I still try to keep in contact with her as much as I can. And she tried to stay in contact with me, too.

My family has told me that I never went to "Pre-School" or "Head Start." They tell me that I went but got kicked out for knowing too much. They told my parent and others in my family that I didn't need it. And I beleave my family...Because I don't ever remember going to pre-school or headstart that long.

My favorite school would have to be Howe Elementary School in Wisconsin Rapids. I was never made fun of or anything there. But that's probably because when you're that little--Noone cares what you look like.

The meanest teacher I ever had was for summer school at Howe. This was between first and second grades. Her name was Mrs. Shultz. She used to yell at us, tell us how stupid we were and hit us with pens, pencils and rulers. She got fired after summer school ended, as far as I've heard.

My worst school was Rudolph Elementary School. I was judged by who I hung around with and what I looked like. I hated it. I have never been in so many fights (physical and verbal) in my whole life! It was horrible. I even left school ground and started waling home--that's 1 3/4 miles! The vice principal (and my teacher--she was both) came and got me in her car. She seemed real mean. But she's really nice now-a-days. Mrs. Bubol was her name. She still teaches there.

My favorite principal would have to be Mr. Shimidit. He was the principal at Rudolph Elementary. He was so nice. He always beleaved in me. He was cool. I see him from time to time at the mall, or jogging down the street. And we always recognize each other. And say "hi" or wave.

My favorite secretary would be...her name begins with an "E" but I can't remember it for the life of me! She still works as a secretary at Howe Elementary School. She was so neat. Once, when I had a loose tooth, she pulled it out for me. She's so neat! She also was my favorite because, when I couldn't be in Girl Scouts any more--she gave me a hug and calmed my tears. She also made sure my brother didn't pick on me. She was so cool! I'll never forget what she's done for me. But I've already forgotten her name! OOOOPS!

APPENDIX F

PATHWAY ESSAYS, NUMBER 2 "What Does It Mean To Be a Woman?" March, 1997

Chrissy, 15 (two months treatment)

There is what I think that being a woman means: That you are your moms predeed and joy. You get treat like you are a piece of meat when you are growing up. I think that we are people who cares. I think that we go though puberty and alot sooner than guys do and that we are growing more than guys. We carried the babies and care for them. We loved them. We feed the babies and diaper them. We cook and clean and be a wife and a mother.

Tiffany, 14 (two months treatment)

You have to get a job when you are grown up you have to rent apartments or by your own house. You have to get a car or rided the bus every morining just to get to work and to come home. They mit have kids when they get older you will have to awake them so they will not miss the bus and then you will have to make sure they have clean cloths on and make sure that they will not mis there bus. So you will have to make sure that they have did there homework so then you will have to got to the school for meeting for your kids. Then you will have to ground your kids and teach them a lesson for getting suspended from school you will have to show who is boss in the house and how they sould respect. When you are a woman you will have a lot of control over your life. When you are a women you can have a lot over your kids life and when they get older you will have mentralseion.

Sandy, 14 (three months into treatment)

What does it mean to be a women. I grow up with guys all my life, so I don't really no what it's like to be a women. I can only say what I think. I think that women have it hard to this world. Men, boy, young mans, or watever like to use girls, young laddies, women for whatever they want money, sex, cars a place to live I dont really understand gitls maybe to be a women is to have kids take care of yourself to have a job get married that all I really no. I think strongley think that I would never had been sexual abused if I was a boy.

Arlene, 17 (five months treatment)
(essay typed on word processor)

Well I think that men and women should be treated the same way. I think that they are both the same kind. I think women should work. I think that they both should work. I don't think that they should have place for boys and girls. I think that they should be together. I grow up around boys my whole life so think that we should be treated the same way as the boys. Because we are all living things. Well I think that men treat us like dogs. I think that more women are abused more than men are. I think girls are more mature than boys are. I think women show their feelings more than their feelings more. I think that boys have a stronger fight back more than girls do. I think that men get better jobs. I think that women get discriminated more than men do. I think that we get picked on if we are short or too tall. I think that men should look at women better than they do. I think women can work on cars in factories in larger companies. I think that men should go shopping, pay bills help around the house. I think that you both should do things for your kids. I think that it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman. I think that if a man wants a kid and you want a kid you should work together for it like going shopping going to the store to buy your kid needs. You both should go to school when you need to go. I think that you both can do things for yourself. I think if you think that you want to go out with your friends you should be allowed to do that.

Marie, 17 (six months treatment)

I don't know what it is like to be a woman. I am a young lady not a woman. I have seen a lot for a young lady. With my eyes I have seen women get beat-up, women getting dogged, women getting power and control, I have seen women beat up guys, just as bad as girls getting beat up by a guy. I think some guys are pigs just like some girls are pigs too. I also think that being of age does not say that you are a man or a woman you can say you are a woman but your actions speak louder than what you say. I also have seen a lot of players in my day I say if a man tries to play me, I would play him right back. I have played a lot of people in my life and I understand that it hurts a lot of people.

I don't like being a woman for a few personal reasons like getting your friend once a month, also getting ready in the morning, taking care of your nails. Taking care of your body and helping others. I am very happy I am a girl or a lady. I don't know what it feels like to be going through all the women problems I am too young.

I am glad I am a 17 year old young lady.

Peace,
Marie

Roberta, 16 (post breakthrough, six months treatment)

To be a woman means a lot to me personally. Some times I hate being a woman but then sometimes I'm one of the happiest people I know.

The things that I feel are irritating about being a woman is having to deal with the menstrual cycle. Boy, is that annoying! All the cramps and the time involved. But if we didn't have a menstrual cycle then none of us would be here, it helps to bear children. I also hate being a woman because of the amount of stereotypical names that are put on us. The worse thing, I feel, about being a woman is the amount of abuse in this world. Men think that they can hurt us because majority of men are larger than most women. It takes a way from a woman's life to be abused. It's hard to express the feelings of abuse.

The things that I like about being a woman are that we are able to bear children. Children are a joy and bring out the life in a woman. I also like the fact that there are some men out in the world that respect women and do their best to be a real man who doesn't get a kick out of abusing women.

To be a woman should mean to be honest and respectful. Everybody should do that. Women should also stand up for their rights. A woman's beliefs should influence a lot of the action and roles she plays. If a woman believes that she should abort a baby conceived by rape then it's her choice. It's her belief. If a woman doesn't like what a man is doing to her, she should speak up and say NO! It's not always easy but a woman should try her best.

To be a woman can be a joyful thing.

Bobbie Jo, 18 (post breakthrough, seven months treatment)

I think the Word women means, more like sticking up for yourself. Learning right from wrong. Men usually don't know right from wrong unless you tell them. Women are more emotional than men. But men stick up for themselves. If a woman should get hit from a man she should turn him in, or she can defend herself and tell men how they feel. Women sure are scared of men, but some can be brave. I am thinking that women want men to hit or beat them. I don't think it's right for men to beat or hit girls I think they do that to get negative attention from friends or family members. Or they want to fit in with my friends. I think that if I was a man I wouldn't get far by beating on people. I think the next time men want to hit girls they should think 2 before they do it, I like being a woman because I can do things like other women do. Like jogging I like to jog. I like who I am and I won't change that but first I have to go uphill first.

Aimee, 12 (four months treatment)

I like it a little but I don't like it all the time. It's like you always have to worry about everything. I don't like for me to worry about every little thing. I like the part where you get to enjoy shopping. I like to do things and I enjoy doing things. I think that my future is going to have many surprises. If it is I am going to have fun and when and when I die I am going to miss all the fun in my life. I am going to have the rest of my life be fun and cheerful. My life before I came here was hell, and I hate feeling like I did so I am going to make sure that I make what is meant to be a life a life. I meant for my life to work out but it never did so I am going to make my life better. I am going to miss having to argue

even though it was one of my maintenance behaviors, I am going to make my life a better than it was. It's like you get to atleast be free. You get freedom. By a mile I am going to be a good sport in life.

Shirley, 14 (post breakthrough, six months of treatment)

I think becomeing a woman means to start your period and also to develope your body and becomeing preganeant also I was four month pregneant when fell down a flight of 25 stairs and it hurt alot I beld for along long time I was really hurt emotionally and physically I wasn't glad I was pregnant but I didn't want what happend to me to actully happen. I still think about to this very day. I think my baby would have been a very beautiful baby It would have looked like me and his or her father but that didn't happen. I didnt really want to bring a baby to this word yet because I am just a baby myself I couldn't take care of it by my self anyways I still depend on my parents so it would be even harder for me and my parents I would have to get up in the middle of the night at like 2 3 or 4 in the morning so actually I am kind glad I didn't have the baby but it it still painfull to in so many way. I also think a way of becoming a woman is to start getting older In age wise when you hit the age 13 you start to become a younge lattie.

I also think its when you start datting guys and get to stay out late with them also going through pupertie when you start waring bras pads tampon taxpax when you know the guy you meet is the write one for you like for instance my boy friends chris is sweet, charing, handsomm, caring, loving, sharing, gentel, sentestive, honest, romantic, special, one of a kind. that what I think becomeing a woman is like to me in my point view women also yuse duches.

Christina, 13 (pre-breakthrough, three months treatment)

To be a woman it means to be crabby, crabs is were you are grumpy and not shareing like my mom. My mom is craby all the time and she is not careing or supportive. So I think she is not a woman yet. My mom is not a woman when it comes to her children. That is why I don't love my mom as much as my stepmother. My stepmother is more of a woman then my mom is because she is more careing, supportive, and more loveing. When you are a woman that is the hardest part of life because you get cramps, and you get your period. Being a woman is when you are thirteen or older. You are more supportive. Unlike my mom. My mom is a brat because she was probly not raised like a child but like a beating doll. My mom was sexually abused by her babysitter and she couldn't stop him and the same with me but by my mom's boyfriend. But a woman is when you can stop semethin bad from happening. Being a woman is when you have a family and freedom. And when you have peace.

No name, 16

To be a woman to me means that you show a lot of respect to yourself and to care for your children instead of abandoning your oldest child and not protecting them from being abused.

Being a woman also means not letting a man control your life and not to let them push you around. It means not to sacrifice your child for someone who is not going to marry you and they stay with first because you had his kids and treats your oldest child like crap.

A woman has to love and care for their children be there for them through really rough times in their children lives.

I don't consider my mom being a woman because she is someone who is not taking care of her children, not supporting them in school, work, treatment and at home. She is a person who only cares about a man that she is living with who doesn't give a hoot about her and he doesn't even want to marry her.

A woman has to be responsible for what they brought into the world and for everything that they do.

It means to be kind and caring and gentle to those who are around you.

To help others understand life and what's to become of their life ahead of them.

To be a person who stands up for themselves and for their children. To help their child talk about their problems that they are having in life.

Being a woman is thinking about how to handle situations like, money, bills, food, clothing etc. because you can't always depend on a man to take care of you and kids.

Being a woman is showing that you can do anything that you put your best into

APPENDIX G

NUMBERS AND TYPES OF STATEMENTS

1. Statements of fear:

Writer	First Week	Mid-Semester	End
A	4	1	2
B	3	2	0
C	1	1	1
D	4	N/A	0
E	5	N/A	0

2. Statements of frustration:

Writer	First Week	Mid-Semester	End
A	3	1	1
B	2	0	1
C	0	4	0
D	2	N/A	0
E	1	N/A	0

3. Positive statements about the writing process:

Writer	First Week	Mid-Semester	End
A	1	2	4
B	0	3	3
C	1	2	2
D	0	N/A	5
E	0	N/A	4

4. Positive statements about their own writing:

Writer	First Week	Mid-Semester	End
A	1	2	4
B	0	2	3
C	2	6	6
D	0	N/A	7
E	1	N/A	5

5. Plans for future improvement:

Writer	First Week	Mid-Semester	End
A	4	3	2
B	3	3	1
C	0	4	5
D	0	N/A	5
E	1	N/A	3

6. Evidence of linkage between topics and writing skills:

Lastly I looked for evidence that would link the topics they had chosen to read, write about and research with the progress they described in writing skills. Obviously, this wasn't applicable to self-evaluations early in the semester. But of the five papers I studied from the end of the semester, each included such statements. Examples:

What I thought about in this class showed me to expand as a better writer and emphasized that it did really matter what I had to say in my paper--more importantly than the proper structuring of an essay...I have succeeded in developing a strong voice in my papers...while providing factual information.

I had never been in a writing class before in which I could write about me...I found my voice...it was important to let myself into the subject of my writing.

I feel now that my ideas are important enough to be read. Last night after asking someone to read one of my papers, she later quoted my words to instill a point to her listener. From our readings I have learned how to be a

self-confident writer. I can see the ocean of ideas from the mountain of the topics I studied.

I have a strong feeling of who I am, at least in my writing. I have learned that "feminism" isn't the horrid word I once thought it was. Now critical thinking is something I do all the time.

One thing I was able to develop in English 401 was my critical thinking skills because of our class discussions where we were free without the male gaze to voice our opinions without being told that we were wrong or bad for thinking in a certain way.

Examples of Statements

Statements of fear:

I am scared [of this assignment].

My goal is only to survive.

Use of qualitatives such as "if": If I pass this course, I will have achieved something.

Use of negatives such as: I don't know..., and I don't know how to..., I can't [write, think critically, interpret]...

Statements of frustration:

What an impossible task...

I feel nervous, intimidated, etc.

I'm not sure about...

I have very little experience in...

I have difficulty in...

Positive statements about the writing process:

Words are transforming...

Writing clarifies issues: "My thoughts and feelings came out as I was writing."

Writing produces results: "I feel like I accomplish something."

Statements about benefits of writing: "Writing lets me express emotions"

Writing gives me creativity

Positive statements about their own writing:

My ideas are important enough to be read...

I have learned to... statements

positive adjectives applied to themselves: I am self-confident, creative, etc.

Evidence of doing new activities: "I have thought about many different topics."

I really enjoyed...

Plans for future improvement:

I *want* [not need] to work on...

I will be able to...

I wish to improve my....

I want to develop a strong voice, expand as a writer, use new formats

APPENDIX H

FIRST YEAR COLLEGE RESEARCH ESSAYS

The Weighting Game (Felicia's essay)

Turn on the television, flip through a magazine or even just walk down the street; thin, beautiful people are being forced before your eyes. Are these people real? Where did they come from? Are they fabricated in a laboratory or are they just the product of extensive amounts of surgery and make-up? No matter how you look at it the media is not going to show the ugly side of life. Who wants to look at some fat, blemished-face, greasy person?

The media tries to make pretend that the world is full of just beautiful people. In actuality, the "beautiful ones" make up a very small percentage of the population.

There is a real problem here. People are questioning their self worth because they do not measure up to the standards of the people they see everyday on television or in magazines. Teenage girls especially, are the targets. This group is the most vulnerable and impressionable and are constantly being bombarded with sights that are truly unattainable. They go to great lengths to try and change their appearance and spare no cost.

I have seen many people, a lot of them my friends, try and change their appearance to match up to some plastic, barbie-doll like figure. Sometimes it was for self satisfaction, but more times than not it was because it alluded to be more desirable. Little do they know that these people are monsters, products of someone else's twisted reality. They are mutants, no one comes out of the womb planning to be tan, thin and a size six. Only the very few truly genetically gifted are allotted these features. Society has molded people into such a perfectionist groupthink.

If the media would change their role models to be more realistic, then there would not be so much pressure on teens. Instead of a ninety-six pound bombshell gracing the cover of magazines why not use the girl next door? This would allow people to live their lives for who they are rather than trying to be something that they are not.

Anorexia and bulimia seem to be the worst problems occurring to the women who fall into the media trap of thinness. These are illnesses that plague up to 30 percent of college women. That number has risen even since the early 80s when it used to be only 5-10 percent of all women in the country. Anorexia used to be an eating disorder that was most prevalent in women who were from upper to middle class families who had some hidden past with a lot of pressure. These women wanted to prove something to their parents or just wanted attention. Nowadays these diseases plague everyone from all classes, people everywhere just want to be thin. Its major symptoms are losing 10 to 30 percent of their body weight, feeling like you look fat when you are really emaciated, poor self image, starvation, overexercising and a constant preoccupation with food. Some people have it so extreme that they cut themselves off socially so as to avoid being around

food as in going out to dinner. Bulimia is eating an excessive amount of food, sometimes up to ten thousand calories in one sitting, and then purging it out of their system. One either self induces vomiting or abuses laxatives. Whatever the disease, it changes one's personality. One becomes irritable and your friends start to wonder why you seem so gloomy. It usually stems from a poor self image, or, in rare cases, it is caused by a malfunction in the hypothalamus. These problems are becoming increasingly stronger in today's society. The nineties are the fitness years. If you do not have a regular fitness regimen, you are looked at as weird. We are constantly being bombarded with phrases like "fat free" and "food for your heart." You flip through a magazine and find these power built athletes with incredible muscle tone or the supermodels smiling their 96-pound smile. Women must understand that looking perfect are these women's jobs. They get paid to look flawless. Part of their job is to exercise. These women do not hold down another 9 to 5 job and have to come home and take care of the family. They have no other responsibility but to practice looking good. They have people fussing over them, spending hours to make sure they look like fairy tale princesses. Women often compare themselves to these women, and if they do not measure up, they feel inadequate. Images of models are very self destructive to women. These are pictures on the cover of magazines featuring a 104-pound bombshell in an incredibly sexy dress. An older woman is going to want to buy this dress. There is no way that she is going to look the same in this dress unless she has the same small measurements. These shots are not real. Women are taped and prodded at and snipped to squeeze into these dresses for a hour photo shoot. It is all an illusion.

I have experienced this to a small extent. But for the most part it is built into my personality. Until I was twelve years old I was classified as being 50 percent underweight for my height. I was the pickiest eater that any mother ever had to deal with. My diet consisted of french fries, onion rings, cereal, and plain pancakes and potatoes and pizza. I really did not eat anything but those foods. I also ate very small amounts. My mother would get very annoyed with my eating habits so I started to cook for myself at the age of ten. I was not picky for the fear of being thin but just that I did not like to eat anything. I did not even know what anorexia was. I started aerobics when I was seven years old and started weight lifting when I was ten. I do not know why, it just happened. People always worried that I was too thin, I just ignored them. I started to put on weight when I went to boarding school when I was 15 years old. Until then I could not break 100 pounds. I had to eat what they had at my school or else I would starve to death. In one year I gained thirty pounds. To say the least, I was horrified even though my parents said I looked "healthy." So then I became obsessive about food and exercise, even more so than before. I managed to drop 18 pounds, and I was finally sort of satisfied. I go into periods of obsession. I cannot say it is because I want to look like a supermodel, but it is more for personal satisfaction. I cannot even remember to a time that weight and exercise have not been on my mind at least 80 percent of my day. I chose an exercise science major so I can get paid for exercising. It is all I have ever wanted to do, and hopefully it is all I will ever be doing. I am constantly interested in what makes other people curious about their weight. I want to be able to teach people how to lose weight the right way as I know first hand how to lose weight the wrong way.

It is all a "weighting game." Who can be the slimmest gets the most riches meaning they get the most jobs, the most attention from men, the most attention, period. But deep down inside these people are not the happiest. They are confused and sick, physically, but they continue to strive for thinness. Why do they do this to themselves? Is it because they personally want to be fit and thin for their own personal satisfaction, or is it because we are continuously blasted with pictures and stereotypes of emaciated women who suffer to please our eyes. What many people fail to understand is that the pictures we are shown are not real. The pictures are airbrushed and touched up. Before the picture or movie shoot is even filmed the actresses and models spend hours getting made up so they look perfect. Supermodel Carol Alt said that it takes at least two hours to achieve the "natural" look. I have heard people say things like "I want to look like that girl in the magazine, the one who looks natural." That natural look is achieved with a lot of earth tone make up and the right lighting. There is no such thing as natural beauty in the model industry.

The fashion industry has a lot to do with the image they are giving off to women. For example, fashion shows or runway shows, they are for just the fashion industry. No one really wears the outlandish clothes that come trotting down the isle. These are for the "haute couture" to show off their most new and revalating styles. The models on the runway don't usually weigh more than one hundred and ten pounds and are about five feet, ten inches tall. This is a separate business from the everyday street wear that you see in the department store. Here the standard size is not a size six as it is for the runway shows but it is a size eight. This is not much better being that 40 percent of the nation's women are now a size fourteen or larger; 49 percent are 5'4" and under. (Glamour, 206) This is an interesting point. If this is so, then most of the people that I know are in the minority because most of my friends, including me, are a size six, which is reassuring to know. They use a size eight because it is the median size between a size two and a size fourteen. Codesigner for Dana Buchman, Karen Harman, says "It's a standard of measure, not something individual women should feel they're supposed to achieve." (Glamour, 205). All different designers sizes are different. If one is a size 5 in one line of clothing, they might be a ten in another. Sizes get to be hurtful because everyone wants to be a small size. There is supposed to be a difference between glamour shows and everyday wear, but the industry keeps it the same. They call the size eight models "fit models." Fit models are more representative of the population. The call runway models "hangers." Clothes look good on the hangers. The models who show them should look like hangers; tall and thin. They are supposed to create a beautiful moment. Anyway you look at it, there is hardly a difference between a size six and size eight. A letter was written to Glamour by two girls from a Women and Body Image class at Oberlin College. It states:

All models have the same body type. All women do not. A model is defined in the dictionary as "a standard" or "a representation." According to this definition, models of women should be tall and short, round and lean, solid and wispy, stocky and slight, light and dark. They should not weigh 23 percent less than the average American woman. They should not be thinner than 95 percent of the female population. They should not set a standard that most women can only achieve through starvation. (Glamour, 206)

I think these women hit the nail right on the head. They seem to have a firm grasp of the problem with the standards that women see in the media. People are very impressionable. Designers live in a fantasy world where they have visions of 5'7," 120 pound women. They should get their heads out of the clouds and focus on reality where most women that are 5'7" and weigh around 135 to 140 pounds. There is not only one body type. Women's bodies are getting proportionally larger. My best friend is a lot taller than I am, but she wears the same size as me. She also weighs more than I do. The reason for this is because she is a diehard athlete. She eats no fat in her diet at all and for that she has a body fat percentage of around 14 percent. If she were to go any lower, her health would be at risk. People have to realize that someone can weigh the same amount as you, but all body types are different, and thus everyone will look different. "What would have been a size six ten years ago is now a size eight," comments a spokeswoman for Dana Buchman. Another woman wrote into Glamour magazine stating, "Did you know that almost every teenager and adult uses a model's shape as her ideal?" If this is so, then the ideal needs to be changed. The fashion world is experiencing a reality check.

The department stores are ordering more larger size stock, reconsidering who their customer really is. Some companies are now using what they call "real models" who are actual people and not hired, trained models. The actual people might be the surfers on the beach or the family next door selling lemonade, or they are using older models. Steven Miesel, a fashion photographer, stated that: "Using older people in fashion advertising has opened up ideas about what beautiful is which is good because it makes people less neurotic about the way they look."

Lauren Hutton and Isabella Rossellini are both supermodels who are older and are not perfect. Ms. Hutton has a huge gap between her teeth, and she is definitely not a size six. Ms. Rossellini is in her forties, but she has the face of a twenty-year-old. Her only flaw is that she has the body of the more voluptuous model of the fifties. In the fifties and sixties they used real-looking models, and there was not a big upsurge of anorexia. "It is ridiculous to think that the whole world should look like one specific image; there is room for all kinds of beauty, there's definitely a new acceptance now of imperfect beauty." (Steven Miesel) Pioneers in the field of real models are companies like the Gap, Benetton, J. Crew, Esprit, Ralph Lauren and Banana Republic. They use models that have the natural look. They are not all made up with big hair and high heels. Real people are buying these clothes. They know who their customer is, and they are advertising to please their eyes. Although J. Crew uses "real models," the models are emaciatingly thin. The women who model the bathing suits have legs that look like sticks and faces that are gaunt. Sam Sheid, who is the vice president and creative director of Banana Republic, says: "Fashion used to be about glamour; and the supermodels made sense, but for the moment it's about anonymity of the street, so real people make sense." It is just not practical to subject people to supermodels and waifs, child-like thin bodies. No one really looks like this. These women are the products of diets they are forced to be in to get the contracts. Even if models were of normal size once, they were made to look like fantasy because of the people that hired them.

Carol Alt, a super model of the early eighties and now an aspiring actress, says, "Anybody who thinks that society pressures women to live up to our image should think of what we have to go through to maintain that shape." Models have an image to live up

to. Can you imagine not being able to go out with your friends or boyfriend and have fun by eating a pint of Ben and Jerry's or scarf down a pizza? There are a lot of sacrifices to be made. Where is the fun, and where is the laughter? A woman who is 5'5" and 140 pounds does not have a chance at ever becoming a super model, not because she is not beautiful but because she does not measure up to the industry standards. One must be at least 5'8" to be a cover model. Eileen Ford of the Ford Modeling Agency, one of the top modeling agencies in the world, won't even look at anyone who is not 5'8." Even with the height qualifications the girl should not weigh more than 120 pounds. I am 5'6" and weigh 126 pounds and when I was down to 115 pounds, people said I looked sick. Must one look sick to be beautiful? This is a sad country where one has to starve to be considered beautiful. Eileen Ford should not be so fussy when she looks like Dr. Ruth Westheimers' twin. This woman is judging others by their physical appearance when hers is not one too pleasing to look at. The pressure for an aspiring model is unbelievable. Your job depends on your weight. A supermodel can get paid up to \$10,000 for one runway job, all these riches for a life of starvation. It seems like a job requirement for a model is that she must be able to be anorexic or at least know how to control her weight without killing herself.

Kim Alexis, Carol Alt, and Beverly Johnson, who were all supermodels of the eighties, all had eating disorders. When they initially went to modeling agencies they were all told they would be perfect if they "just lost 15 pounds." These women were not fat or even pudgy. Kim Alexis was 5'10," 145 pounds. This is a fairly normal weight, and being a swimmer, most of her weight was muscle. When she was modeling she weighed as little as 125 pounds. Her weight was constantly fluxuating. She was losing 12 pounds for that job and 10 pounds for that job. These ups and downs are a great health risk. She was on so many diets that she confused her metabolism, and she lost her period for two full years. She is now stablized at a healthy 135 pounds. Carol Alt is 5'8" and her weight fluxuated between 115, at her thinnest, and at her present weight of 127 pounds. She was always trying to lose weight to get certain jobs. John Casablancas "guaranteed her a certain amount of money if she lost 20 pounds." This isn't work, it's bribery for dieting. Beverly Johnson was 5'9" and 135 pounds when she started to model, and even at that weight she was told to slim down. She went from 103, which is unsafe for a person that tall to be that slim, to 165 during her pregnancy. She now weighs 120 pounds which is still a little on the low side for a person who is 5'9." An everyday woman who is 5'9" weighs around 135-145, and that is still slim. She tortured her body so much that she now has a throid problem. She attributes this to her crash diets.

They used to do weird, fad diets or anything to lose weight. They would sometimes eat nothing, or a head of lettuce (which is only 50 calories) or a salad. Sometimes this was even considered too much. Ms. Alt used to drink eight cups of coffee and that was it. Sometimes it was one apple or a celery stick. On luncheons or dinners with prospective employers, they were not allowed to eat. Clients would say things like, "you're not going to eat that, are you?"

Beverly Johnson said,

In our profession, clothes look better on a hanger, so you have to look like a hanger. It will never change. I personally took extreme methods to lose weight and as result ended up bulimic and at one time, when I was 27 or

28, anorexic . . . and I looked like a Biafran. My ribs were poking out, and I started to cry.

Why should anyone have to cry and go through such stress to do something that they should love? Models seem like they have all the glamour and all the men. But the question is, "Are they really happy?" I would love to be a model, but I put enough pressure on myself to be thin, I cannot even imagine what I would do to my body if I were being paid to lose weight. I would have to lose at least 26 pounds to have a thin figure that could grace the cover of a magazine. It is not all campagne and caviar. It is long hours, early mornings, sacrifices and more sacrifices. It is only meant for the strong of heart and the slimmness of body.

Phrases like "You can never be too rich or too thin" are apart of the destruction of people's self image. They think if you are fat, then you are nothing. Women who do not naturally fit the typical mold of slimmness often resort to extreme dieting to plastic surgery. They try and measure up to the barbie doll image. It will never happen. No human could possibly be 36," 18," 33." She is anatomically incorrect. Sure, Barbie gets Ken, but what is he but another mutant of what the perfect male should look like. They are both plastic figures, and they could never be real people. Real people have curves and definition.

The key to a turnaround in self images is the media. If they did not constantly bombard us with stick figures and painted faces, the public might not try to be something that they are not. People should judge themselves by their self worth, not as compared to some paper doll. If they must compare their bodies to something else, they should look at their neighbor. The people that are around you everyday are more representative of the population. If we show real people, then people would not have to strive for whatever the ideal seems to be, because they are the ideal. It should not be if you are 5'6" and 115 pounds, you should wear a size six. People should be whatever makes them feel comfortable. Everyone is built differently and not everyone can be as slim as Naomi Campbell. People should be satisfied with what they were given. There should not be this constant preoccupation with thinness, it should be on a healthy look , not that of a sick child. You were given a certain body. You can try to make it look better, but do not try to destroy it by trying to make it something that it is not.

Drug Rehab: Does It Solve the Problem? (Kristi's essay)

I sit next to my mother surrounded by other families that fill almost the entire auditorium. This is the usual routine every Friday night. I'm not having fun at the movies or shopping at the mall with my friends like I used to on Friday nights. I'm here, two and a half hours away from home, sitting in a large room with other people who I know little about. All I know is that they are there for the same reasons as we. I glance around to look at all of the other siblings besides me. After meeting them in "sibling rap" I notice that I have little in common with most of them. It's comforting to find the few that I can identify with, but most of the time I feel out of place. I want to home with my family, my sister, my mother and me.

The staff members enter the room and open the divider that separates us from the addicts. It feels strange being forced apart from a member of our family. An overwhelming sadness and anguish overcomes me as I look at all the expressions on their faces. Most of them are sad and frightened. Others are angry and resentful for being here. Many are tired from the long hours of having to deal with their painful pasts. There are some who look happy because they're making progress in the program.

This is what it was like having a sister in a drug rehabilitation center. Not only did she have to go through the program, but so did our family. The six-month period was a time of struggle, but it led to strong family bonding.

So many families, like mine, have to make a big decision on whether or not to place their son or daughter into a drug treatment program. It is a risk. Currently, and estimated 37% of addicts come out of rehabilitation completely cured of their addiction (Gildea-Dinzeo 1995). Sadly, the 63% go back to drugs and fail to overcome their addiction. Many of these addicts lack family support, and many can't afford the expensive costs involved in a drug treatment center. The addicts who go untreated usually die. They commit suicide, get murdered, die of accident or injury. It is a given in this country that very few people ever recover from their addictions. It is the privileged ones who go into treatment centers who have the best odds for cure.

There are many different types of drug rehabilitation. The two major categories of treatment are inpatient and outpatient care. Inpatients stay at the center 24-hours a day. Usually the 21-day and longer programs are considered inpatient (Gildea-Dinzeo 1995). This includes the 28-day, 6 month, 2 year, and social detoxification programs. Social detox is like a quick start, when the patient may be in a hospital long enough to take care of their withdrawal effects. After that, they continue to do outpatient care, which may involve counseling and support groups. Outpatient care is when the patient does not spend the whole 24 hours at the center. Partial programs are examples of outpatient programs where the patient may spend the night at the center, but is out during the day at work or school. The patients return for meetings, counseling, and to sleep there. Most drug clients (85% in 1987) and most programs are in the outpatient category (Haaga 8).

Most people don't have the ability to go into inpatient programs because they are so expensive. In this country the average cost for a 21-day program is \$10,000 (Gildea-Dinzeo 1995). Most people who get into recovery for drug addiction get help through self-help programs like Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous instead of going into an inpatient program. "Long-term treatment has been shown to be the major predictor of positive outcome, and important means of increasing effectiveness is insuring that clients spend sufficient amounts of time in treatment" (Hubbard et al 171). There is now a lot of research being done on the effectiveness on inpatient programs compared to outpatient programs. There are many studies that show that outpatient treatment is just as effective as inpatient (Peck 7).

There is a lot of controversy over the issue of treatment effectiveness. A study during 1979-1981 called the Treatment Outcome Prospective Study (TOPS) studied people in outpatient and inpatient treatment programs. Both programs lost more than half their clients before they had been in treatment for three months, which is used in the TOPS evaluations as a marker for length of treatment that can be expected to produce

positive results (Haaga 18). TOPS is an example of a study with the objective to "assess the magnitude of treatment effects on key outcomes and to identify factors that contribute to these outcomes" (Hubbard et al 13). Many nationwide studies are investigating issues that are important to the understanding and improvement of treatment.

The drug treatment program that our family was involved in is called STRAIGHT. "It is recognized as one of the nation's most successful adolescent drug treatment programs" (Pamphlet). There are nine different locations in the U.S. The New England facility is located in Stoughton, Massachusetts. It is not considered an inpatient facility because the patients are not in the building for 24 hours. They are sent to different host families with other patients of the same sex, sleeping at the homes on weekdays and returning to the center in the mornings. During the weekends the patients stay at family homes from Friday night till Monday morning. Because our family lived so far away compared to the rest of the families involved, we only hosted patients over the weekend. Early on Monday mornings, before work and school began for the day, my mother would drive down to STRAIGHT and drop off the girls, which included my sister.

The patients progressed through the following five stages of the treatment cycle while participating in the STRAIGHT program. The First Phase is the period immediately after the person enters the program. They are considered "new-comers." They are working on themselves and developing honesty about past experiences using drugs, their thoughts, and feelings. The person lives with a host family who has a son or daughter in an advanced stage of the program. During this phase they lose all privileges; they cannot be trusted. The newcomer is assigned to a Second Phaser. My sister, Melissa, commented on how degrading it felt to have to have someone go to the bathroom with her and stand outside the stall or shower. Wherever she went she had an assigned person with her, holding onto her belt loop. Everywhere she went she had someone by her side. It was interesting because the people who were usually by her side were her family, my mother and me, but because of her drug problem, she had to give that up for awhile. Usually the majority of her time was spent sitting in groups during the day and night, talking with others.

Second Phase is when the person can come home. I can remember clearly the night Melissa made Second Phase. There was the usual routine of passing around the microphone to all of the addicts, and then if the family had a child on Second Phase, they could talk to their child. They could talk about past experiences that may have been very upsetting to them and their family. It was a time when the addicts and family members could relieve past emotions by getting them out into the open. When it came to Melissa's turn for the microphone, she stood up and yelled, "I'm coming home!" Immediately the whole auditorium filled with applause, and our family broke into tears, along with many other families. When we stood up Melissa came running over to us, and we all hugged. It was the first time that I had seen her up close in person since she had entered the program, and that had been 99 days before. Melissa, my mother, and me. The staff member congratulated Melissa over the microphone. This was a sign of real progress. Melissa was now in a higher phase, and she would now be responsible for new-comer girls. She was able to come home on the weekends with two other new-comer girls and one other girls in Third Phase.

In preparation for the girls' coming home on the weekends, my mother and I were required to put alarms on all windows and doors in our house, so if one of the girls was to try to escape we had a security system. We had to remove any sharp objects, such as knives, razors, pins, etc., and lock them up. I remember when my mother and I spent a whole afternoon taking down pictures that had been stapled on my sister's bedroom walls. We had to remove and throw away every single staple, and there were tons! Her room looked clean for once, except for some punched holes in the wall that stuck out. But whatever work that had to be done was worth it as long as my sister was coming home. The weekend was an exciting and happy moment. Even though Melissa didn't have all of her privileges, she still was there to talk to in person.

Third Phase is when the person goes back to school or works while focusing on family and self. When Melissa made Third Phase, she still came home on the weekends with other phasers, but now Melissa was in charge as an old-comer. She was responsible for two or three other girls in lower phases. She said that it was scary having so much responsibility and not wanting to do the wrong thing in fear of getting reprimanded by the staff and others. She had more privileges than before. Since she was 18, she had her choice of going to school or work. She decided to work since she did not want to attend school in Stoughton.

Fourth Phase is the time when the person begins staged withdrawal from active involvement in the program. They work on constructive use of leisure time, developing positive friendships, and taking part in recreational activities with family and friends.

Fifth Phase is the final phase when the person has "recaptured a well-rounded drug-free life style" and concentrates on social responsibilities and service to others. After Fifth Phase, the individual graduates the program and continues to participate in local N.A. or A.A. meetings.

There is no time limit set on how long an individual needs to be in each stage. Many people made it to a higher phase and stopped working on themselves or did something wrong and were set back a phase. It depends on the individual and the amount of time it takes them to make progress. For Melissa, it took 60 days for her to take things seriously and actually want to change. She said that she realized that our mother was paying a lot for her recovery and her family was there to support her, so she had a lot of motivation. She worked on herself really hard, and made it to Second Phase after 99 days of being in STRAIGHT. She said that was the happiest day of her life. After six months of being in STRAIGHT, my mother had to take her out of the program because of financial problems. Melissa felt like she was ready to leave, and she had made a lot of progress in the program.

A very important part of the STRAIGHT program was the involvement of the 12-Steps, which is followed closely in N.A. and A.A. meetings. I believe with many others that there is value to 12-Step programs. The 12-Steps are beneficial in treatment because they provide a lot of social support. Recovering addicts are with others who know what the individuals are going through and are going through it themselves or have been there before. 12-Steps provide reality that if we haven't been there, we cannot give. A 12-Step program is some place where the individual can go to be honest and open. In return they are loved for who they are and not judged for that. It gives the individual support that they need. It also involves spirituality, not necessarily religion, which is the

core in learning your connection to yourself, others, and the world. It is the foundation of who we are and why we are here. Addicts tend to lose that and get shut off from that component of life (DuPont 20). The 12-Steps are about living your life, full, positive, and spiritually based. It is not about stopping the addiction; that comes with therapy and other forms of treatment. I believe that the 12-Step program is an essential component for a successful treatment program. My sister thinks that the incorporation of the 12-Steps tremendously helped her with her recovery by giving her something to believe in. She had hope and motivation.

Melissa is one of the few but lucky people who was able to go into a drug rehabilitation center. Because families of drug addicts come from all social-economic classes, races, and creeds, only the privileged get care (Kunnes 28). This group of privileged individuals are primarily those who come from middle-class families. We were very lucky because we are a single-parent family. My mother had to remortgage the house to pay for most of my sister's treatment expense. Over the six-month period she spent thousands of dollars on STRAIGHT, and we're still continuing to pay back bills months later.

One of the most controversial areas for health reform concerns the treatment of drug problems (Kunnes 24). For the average addict it usually takes five times for treatment to work (Gildea-Dinzeo 1995). That means that they go in and out of some form of treatment five times. Because of this seemingly low success rate from addictions, insurance companies, which are a major source of finance for addicts' treatment, are dramatically changing. They are losing money from addicts who go into treatment repetitively. If insurance companies had their way, they probably wouldn't fund most mental health care, such as drug treatment programs. With insurance changes many people are referred to outpatient care because it usually goes without coverage (Ansher 15).

The average waiting list to get into a state or public detox center (a center supported by state or federal dollars) is six months. It is estimated that 100,000 drug users are on waiting lists for treatment (Kunnes 25). What happens with most addicts is that they reach a weak point when they seek assistance and when that assistance isn't available, they probably will not be seen again. This is a sad fact that an addict seeking help may not receive it. So what do addicts do when they face long waiting lists and lack of financial assistance?

Most addicts need some form of treatment program; it is highly unlikely that an addict can recover through seeing a counselor, like a social worker, alone, although it sometimes happens. Counseling is an important component of treatment, but most people need a couple of things going on simultaneously (Smith 5). There are many dynamics involved on deciding whether or not a treatment center is needed and what kind of treatment center would work. Within the numerous categories of drug treatment ". . . [T]here can be a very wide variation in the scope, content, intensity, and duration of treatment services, as well as the mix and type of staff" (Haaga et al 8). All of these factors should be considered when rating the effectiveness of drug treatment centers.

Addicts have different treatment needs. "There is no one treatment modality effective for all those afflicted, nor is there a well-run program that cannot help someone" (Stimmel 3). The evaluation of treatment effectiveness needs to address the needs of the

individual rather than those of the provider. The individual's needs should be carefully identified with appropriate referrals to programs that have demonstrated the ability to address such needs effectively. This is the only way to improve the chances of recovery success.

When my mother was researching drug treatment centers, she asked for advice from counselors and other professional women who knew my sister well and knew what kind of personality she has. My mother tried hard to find a treatment program that would work best for Melissa and would be most beneficial. Her school guidance counselor referred my mother to STRAIGHT. This center had a rigid structured program which Melissa needed because of her character. An added strength is that it involved the family. The participation of family in most treatment programs is not common. Family involvement is more likely to be seen in inpatient programs than outpatient. Melissa liked having our family involved because it gave her added strength and motivation. Without family involvement Melissa would not be where she is today. But family involvement is not appropriate for all addicts; some need to be separated from family because their involvement might be more harmful than helpful.

Interestingly, STRAIGHT is not considered an inpatient program because the patients go to host families to sleep, but therapy is going on everywhere they go. I consider STRAIGHT as an inpatient program just because patients are subjected to constant therapy and counseling 24 hours. They are not allowed to leave, unlike outpatient programs, unless they reach Third Phase when they go out into society to school or a job. STRAIGHT should be considered as an outpatient/inpatient treatment center.

My sister's success is proof to me that drug rehabilitation can solve the problem and it can be effective. "If it wasn't successful, we wouldn't be using it as the major form of treatment" (Gildea-Dinzeo 1995). The question of whether or not the treatment is effective depends on the person and if they are willing to work on themselves. It also depends on the addict's family structure and support group. During recovery the addict needs all the support possible, and that includes whatever support system exists. My sister was one of the few who really wanted to work on themselves. She says that "you can sit for months and months and listen to everything, but that is a silent way of rebelling. I did this for about 60 days, but then I realized that it was time for me to get my act together." Many addicts sit in group and do not accomplish the first goal, which is to become honest about past experiences and feelings. Once addicts become honest with others and themselves, doors open for recovery.

My sister was very lucky to have been placed in a drug treatment center that met her needs. There are many reasons why our family is thankful for her successful recovery. When my mother decided that STRAIGHT was the right choice for Melissa, she tricked her into driving to Stoughton. My mother lied to her and told her they were going to a factory outlet. This was very hard for her to do and she felt a tremendous amount of guilt which took a long time to get over. But she kept on saying that it was for Melissa's own good. If she didn't receive help she would have probably died. Luckily, Melissa at seventeen was still a minor. Once she was in the center, she was forced to stay. She was very resentful of my mother, and that took a while to get over. She turned eighteen two months after she entered STRAIGHT. I can remember how fearful we were that Melissa

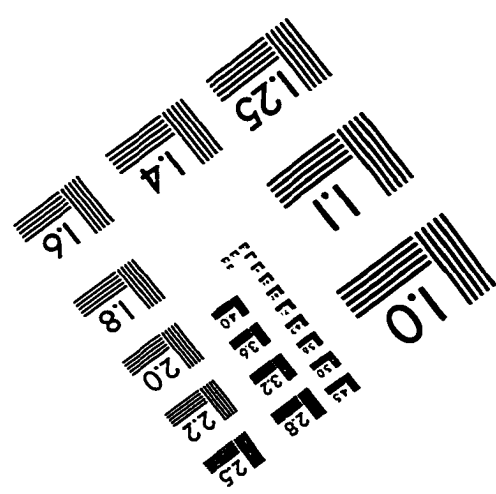
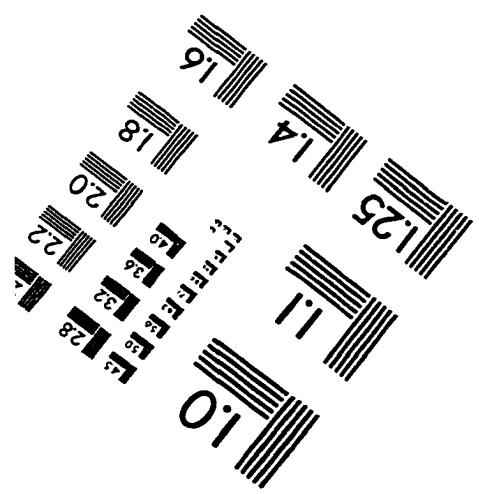
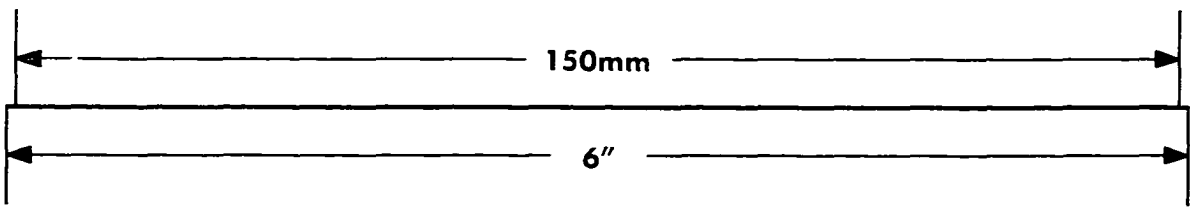
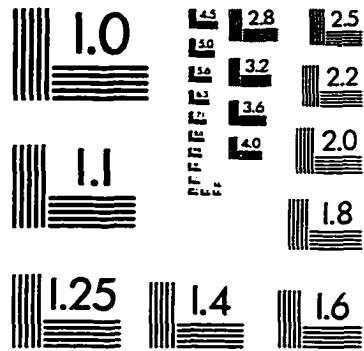
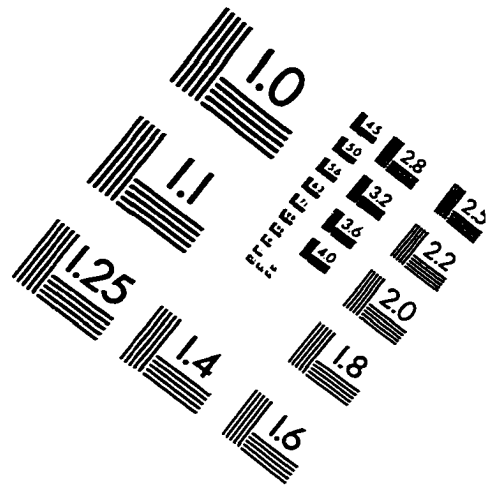
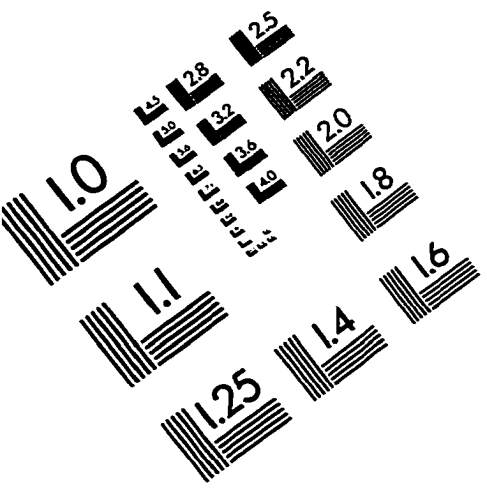
would leave the program on her own. Luckily, at that point in the program she was past denial and ready to work on herself. If my mother had not placed Melissa in the drug rehab, she would never have asked for help on her own.

My sister will be five years sober on October 4, 1995. I asked her how she feels about STRAIGHT's program and its effectiveness. She says that STRAIGHT's program was effective but only because she wanted it to be. In the beginning she was like all the other addicts there against their own will. Most had been placed there by their parents. Some people were there because they had been there so long that they were afraid to go back in society. The rehab had been their whole world. Melissa admits that STRAIGHT was emotionally harmful. It has been almost five years, but she still has nightmares about her experience. But she says they get better with time and she doesn't think about it so often. There was a lot of mental and sometimes physical abuse that went on, mostly between patients. Melissa witnessed some frightening scenes which are very hard for her to talk about. Although it was an overall good program, some of the staff did not seem efficiently trained. The staff held such power over everyone, including the family members, that fear ran the addicts' lives. This, I believe, is STRAIGHT's biggest downfall. Some of the staff have been charged with child abuse. In short, Melissa describes the treatment experience as "a living nightmare from hell, but it worked."

When I look back on the experience, I realize how much each member of our family has grown because of it. It was a learning process. I grew personally like never before in that six-month period. Sometimes I get angry and resentful because I was forced to grow up quickly at a young age, and I learned about aspects of life that were not pleasant to see or hear. But now I realize how important the experience was because I was subjected to so many different kinds of families with different problems. I learned how minor our family problems are compared to the majority. Now that I think about it, there were few other families like ours in STRAIGHT. I was one of the few in "sibling rap" that could honestly say that last weekend I didn't go out drinking or sneak out of the house to go to a party. My usual response was that I worked on school work and had a friend come over. I did feel different from the others, but I also felt grateful for the situation our family had.

I can honestly say I was a selfish person before entering STRAIGHT, and after the whole ordeal I could give more of myself to others. There is nothing more difficult now than explaining my experience in drug rehab to someone else. No one would be able to completely understand if they haven't been through it personally. Everyone of us in our family benefitted from our experience. No one will ever be able to break that.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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