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MEMORY-CRAFT: THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC TECHNOLOGY IN WOMEN'S
JOURNALS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Texts and Technology
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Major Professor: Dr. Craig Saper

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ABSTRACT

The term “memory-craft” refers to arts and crafts media where personal memorabilia and journaling are combined and assembled into book form. Examples of memory-crafts include scrapbooks, art journals, and altered books. Traditionally, women have been the primary assemblers of memory-crafts, using this form as a method of autobiography and genealogical archiving. Memory-crafting is often associated with the amateur home-crafter, and while historians have long understood its cultural significance, academia has not properly considered memory-craft as a type of alternative discourse.

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of memory-crafting as a non-traditional method of writing, especially among women who use it to record personal and familial narratives. Just as women are usually the primary care-takers of the family, through memory-craft they also become responsible for collecting and preserving memories, which would otherwise become lost. These memories of the everyday – birthday parties, family vacations, and wedding anniversaries – grow to be culturally significant over time. Through the use of domestic technology, which today includes both paper scraps and home computer systems, memory-crafts assist in the interpretation of the present and provide insight into the past.

To help explore the connection between domestic technology and memory-crafts, I have organized this study into four themes: history and memory-craft; women and domestic technology; feminist literary autobiography and memoir; and feminism and

hypermedia. My approach is a mixture of fictionalized personal narrative and analysis loosely modeled after *Writing Machines* by N. Katherine Halyes and *Alias Olympia* by Eunice Lipton. Just as I discuss experimental methods of writing in the form of memory-crafting, I also use an experimental writing technique which gathers from personal memories in the form of a persona named Tess and from the life of my Great Aunt Mamie Veach Dudley. Mamie's journals and letter to her sister document the memories of the Dudleys including a tragic double suicide, which still haunts the Dudleys almost 100 years later. As narrator and storyteller, my stories connect to those documented by Mamie and link the past to the present.

Along with Mamie's family records, I consider other memory-related works by women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries including Jane Austen, Anne Bronte, and Emily Dickinson, and I also examine contemporary memory-crafters such as those constructed by altered book artists Tom Phillips and Judith Margolis. Digital memory-craft is another source of support for my argument, and I look at web groups and bloggers. For example, I discuss the *Wish Jar Journal*, a weblog written by illustrator Keri Smith, where she journals her life and creative process and often mixes textual and visual elements in her blog posts. Writer and blogger Heather Armstrong from Dooce.com is another case study included in this project as her blog is an example of documenting familial events and memoir.

Because of their fragmented formats and narrative elements, hardcopy and digitally-based memory-crafts become artifacts which combine text and visual elements to tell a story and pass on knowledge of the everyday through the mixture of text and domestic technology. Memory-craft construction does not follow conventional writing

models. Therefore, this provides opportunity for experimentation by those writers who have traditionally been removed from established rhetorical writing methods.

This dissertation is dedicated to Minnie E. Dudley and Mamie Veach Dudley,
who deserve to be remembered.

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I must first thank my aunt, Mamie Veach Dudley, whose work as the Dudley family archivist sparked the original idea for this dissertation. Without her letter and journals, many of my family's memories would have been lost. Another member of the Dudley family I want to thank is my cousin, Roger Dudley, who provided me with much of the family research documentation used in this project.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Memory-craft is a term used in the arts and crafts industry to describe paper crafts such as scrapbooks, altered books, and art journals. As a type of domestic technology, they combine text and visual elements to physically record family legacy and personal memoirs. In doing so, memory-crafters become stewards of everyday history, “everyday practices that produce without capitalizing” (de Certeau xx). While scholars consider the historical value of memory-craft, which is primarily practiced by amateur artists recording everyday life events (trivial details about food, life, and personal relationships) limited academic work has focused on these artifacts as alternative forms of discourse. My research project argues that memories of the everyday become culturally significant over time, and through the use of domestic technology which today includes both paper scraps and home computer systems, memory-craft becomes an informed method of writing. The result is a type of alternative discourse, a different writing craft used for recording familial and personal narratives that assist in interpreting the present and providing insight into the past.

Review of Related Literature

A review of literature for this project is helpful for providing a framework for this study. Areas of interest include the following related themes: history and memory-craft; women and domestic technology; feminist literary autobiography and memoir; feminism and hypermedia.

History and Memory-craft

Enough physical evidence exists to suggest that Emily Dickinson most likely kept a scrapbook. The Dickinson archives possess a few scrapbooks that she might have helped assemble, including one created by a close family friend, Mary Warner. While none of the surviving scrapbooks can be specifically identified as created by the poet for her own purposes, author Barton Levi St. Armand in “Keepsakes: Mary Warner’s Scrapbook” uses Warner’s scrapbook to discuss the use of this medium “as a homemade anthology of consolation literature” (28). This physical artifact from the past allows a glimpse into the time and life of Dickinson because both women shared similar cultural experiences.

Victorian Scrapbooks and the American Middle Class, a thesis published through the University of Delaware and written by Raechel Elisabeth Guest, covers the historical background of scrapbooks in America during the Victorian era. Guest explains how the pastime became popular, how they were normally constructed, and who enjoyed creating them. She explains why this form was an important domestic activity for men, women, and children during this time period.

Forget Me Knot: Photography and Remembrance by Geoffrey Batchen examines the use of photographs as “memory objects” (97). He argues that the people in the photographs are asking to be remembered, and that we keep photographs around to give ourselves a sense of identity. Batchen also explores the method of combining photographs with other objects such as albums, jewelry, and locks of hair. These artifacts later remind those who come across them to stop and remember the past.

In "Scissoring and Scrapbooks: Nineteenth-Century Reading, Remaking, and Recirculating" by Ellen Gruber Garvey, she sees scrapbooks and commonplace books as vehicles for creating new media from old media, functioning as organizational forms of domestic technology. By reusing scraps, she believes this was a type of housekeeping but at the same time it provided a way for the reader to trade places with the author. Since scrapbooks were exhibited to others, normally members of the family and close friends, it was a form of self-publishing.

In "Scrapbooks: Intrinsic Value and Material Culture," by Juliana M. Kuipers, the author calls for a better understanding of the usefulness scrapbooks have in research. Preserving scrapbooks is a difficult undertaking. Their three-dimensional, multilayered structure cannot be easily copied onto archive media such as microfilm. Kuipers explains that this requires "material literacy" on the part of the preserver and researcher "so that the full value of scrapbooks may be utilized" (84). These cultural records provided a medium for women who otherwise would not have an opportunity to leave any sort of written record of their lives, and in the tradition of recycling, "creating something new from old" (86), scrapbooks allowed an outlet for women's voices.

Before the scrapbook came the commonplace book, and the history of this practice is discussed by editors Catherine La Correye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf in *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, which is actually a reprint of the original commonplace book compiled by Milcah Martha Moore. The book includes historical information from the editors, in particular the introduction written by Wulf, and it is also an example of the significance of these books which were utilized as portable libraries by being passed

along from one person to the next allowing a small circle of friends and family to read and enjoy.

Susan M. Stabile, in her book *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America*, studies the commonplace books of five women from the eighteenth-century: Elizabeth Fergusson, Hannah Griffitts, Deborah Logan, Annis Stockton, and Susanna Wright. As they collected and assembled memorabilia into their books, they created an aesthetic memorial of their lives. Of particular interest to Stabile are the physical elements the women used to record their memories such as furniture, architecture, and souvenirs.

Thomas J. Humphrey reviews Stabile's book in his article "Making Memories in Early America," published in *Reviews in American History*. He describes diary keeping as a form of "memory recovery," and views commonplace books as genealogical records. The physical books supplied a means for organizing and building memory.

Commonplace books eventually transitioned into extra-illustrated books and author Robert R. Wark explains the history behind this book form in his article, "The Gentle Pastime of Extra-Illustrating Books." With the increase interest in visual and verbal forms of communication during the mid-1700s, collectors began to take apart existing books and use them to house their illustration collections. This practice was called "grangerizing," named after James Granger who published a book designed to assist collectors of illustrations, *A Biographical History of England*. Instead, collectors began taking apart Granger's book, adding illustrations to the book, and then stitching it back together again. This was then an early form of altered-book making.

William H. Gass discusses one of the better known contemporary altered-books and the artist who created it in his article, "Tom Phillips: A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel, 1973." Gass describes the use of techniques such as erasure to alter the original text, W.H. Mallock' *A Human Document*, into a new narrative, "an altogether new syntactical space." The artist, Tom Phillips, also reminisces about his original impetus for altering the book in an introduction to the text, "Notes on A Humument." He relates it to a whim, a chance that he happened upon the right book at the right time.

Altered-books and concrete poetry are also investigated in *Reading the Illegible* by Craig Dworkin. In this text, Dworkin discusses the works of concrete poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé, known for his work *Un coup de dés* ("A Throw of the Dice"), Asger Jorn, and Guy Debord. While the texts created by artists, such as Tom Phillips, may seem unreadable, or illegible, Dworkin believes they can be read and that "we must learn, as readers, to take responsibility" (155) for their interpretation.

Cheryl Hartup, Associate Curator for the Miami Art Museum includes information about some of the concrete poets and book artists in the program she wrote for a spring 2003 exhibit entitled, *Visual Poetics: Art and the World*. Works from Phillips and Mallarmé were part of the exhibit and the program offers a brief historical and cultural perspective of the artists' works. Some of the other artists in the exhibit were Richard Minsky and his piece, "The Bill of Rights," and Rivane Neuenschwander's "Love Lettering (2002)," a video piece about chance and desire.

Richard Lanham also looks at the arts and the affect of electronic technology in his book, *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*. Much like Dworkin, he brings the reader into the conversation and believes, due to digital

technology, they are becoming more involved and are no longer passive receivers of text or art. He goes on to analyze how computers and other forms of electronic technology are changing the relationship between reader and writer as well as institutions such as higher education.

Before print, memory was critical because it was the only way to record the past. Frances A. Yates, in *The Art of Memory*, traces the history of memory, often classified as “mnemotechnics,” discussing the “technique of impressing ‘places’ and ‘images’ on memory” (xi). By using images or physical places, the technique allows the user to associate a thought with an object. As Yates explains, “Images are forms, marks [...] of what we wish to remember. [...] The art of memory is like an inner writing” (6). Yates starts her historical perspective with the Romans and ends with the Enlightenment period.

Women and Domestic Technology

Emily Dickinson’s use of scraps is examined in “Scraps, Stamps, and Cutouts: Emily Dickinson’s Domestic Technologies of Publication” by Jeanne Holland. Dickinson decided never to print her poetry, but this does not mean she didn’t publish her work. Holland explains a distinction between “print” and “publish” as viewed by the poet. By using her own form of domestic technologies, Dickinson was read by and published to her own select audience, a network of friends and family, but she did not wish to have her work printed in outside sources (newspapers and magazines). As a woman of the nineteenth-century from a family of means, she did not need to write to earn an income and instead “retire[d] to the domestic” (154). She mingled her domestic duties with her

domestic publishing. One example of the domestic technologies Holland suggests is the fascicles Dickinson sewed together. Rather than purchasing blank books and transcribing her poetry into them, she opted to construct her own small booklets. Eventually, the poet moved away from assembling booklets of her work and began to scribble on materials found around her home. She used scraps to first embellish her text and later to write on, forming a “dialogue” between “image and text” (141).

Lydia Marie Child, author of *The American Frugal Housewife*, along with Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catherine E. Beecher, authors of *The American Woman’s Home*, viewed domestic work as a profession. Nicole Tonkovich in the introduction to Beecher and Stowe’s book, explains that they considered housework as a type of domestic science. The labor of nineteenth century housewives required certain skills, and it was Child, Beecher, and Stowe’s objective to provide advice and direction to these women. This included the use of frugality and recycling, both characteristics of memory-crafting. Housework and memory archiving are also typically practiced by women who use common techniques to repurpose and reuse materials from the home.

Michel de Certeau’s philosophy mirrors that of Child, Beecher, and Stowe. In his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, he discusses the value of everyday routines and how ordinary people find methods for dealing with a cultural hierarchy that does not place them at the top. The housekeeper is one example of de Certeau’s ideas in that her work is usually considered meaningless or, at the very least, not given much merit. He suggests flipping the social structure that deems everyday practices as insignificant and elevating the consumer (the reader, the cook, the housewife) over the producer or product.

Johanna Drucker, Robertson Professor of Media Studies at the University of Virginia, tends to take the opposite viewpoint to some extent in her article “Critical Issues / Exemplary Works,” published in *The Bonefolder* journal. She places less value on commonly crafted artifacts. Furthermore, she calls for the development of a vocabulary and also guidelines to help distinguish the work of amateur book-crafters, who may use common supplies available at the local craft store, from professional book artists whose “creative work [is more] procedural.”

In *Reading the Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, Naomi Schor provides an historic perspective of the detail and argues that the ornamental is gendered as feminine. Similarly to domestic activities, women dominate this area, “with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence” (4). Her study includes an examination of Sir Joshua Reynolds’ *Discourse on Art* as well as works by Hegel, Freud, and Barthes.

Laurie Smith Keller in “Discovering and Doing: Science and Technology, an Introduction,” provides a connection between domestic duties (which normally include common housework), crafts, and technology. Since related tasks fall within the sphere of the home, they usually are the responsibility of the female members of the household. Crafts are a form of technology, and she looks at the notion of apprenticeship as a model to support her argument.

American Domesticity: From How-To Manual to Hollywood Melodrama by Kathleen Anne McHugh examines domesticity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Focusing on how-to manuals, cinema, and feminist texts, McHugh attempts to trace every day activities in the home to the role of women in American culture. Her study

begins with autobiography and housekeeping and moves on to include domestic economy, domestic engineering, and feminist domesticity.

Feminist Literary Autobiography and Memoir

Sinead McDermott, in “Memory, Nostalgia, and Gender in *A Thousand Acres*,” discusses “the use of nostalgia for feminist discourse.” Her point is that nostalgia is politically valid and should not be quickly dismissed because memories from the past affect the present. Women write diaries and keep family records (which lend themselves to nostalgia) as a way to live in the past since they are “deprived of outlets in the present.” McDermott argues that nostalgia should not be ruled out as a form of discourse.

Mary Catherine Bateson combines autobiography with biography in *Composing a Life*. Through memory, she chronicles the lives of four creative, professional women. By examining their pasts, Bateson believes this results in a “reimagining of the future” and also “gives meaning to the present” (29-30). As memories become less clear over time, women often choose to “edit the past” (32) in an effort to make their lives fit into what is socially expected. Self-reflection is a way they study their own lives as they struggle to accomplish what is expected of them while at the same time fulfilling their personal dreams.

Life as a type of composition is also touched on by Patricia P. Buckler and C. Kay Leeper who connect cultural memories to the construction of antebellum scrapbooks in “An Antebellum Woman’s Scrapbook as Autobiographical Compositions.” The authors believe scrapbooks are autobiographical artifacts used to document “the

interior lives of women.” These “domestic compositions” reflect the personal lives of women, but in particular, this article concentrates on the scrapbook of Miss Ann Elizabeth Buckler from Baltimore, Maryland, 1832 to 1855. Buckler’s scrapbook includes magazines, poems, and sketches, all assembled as “a deliberate effort by one individual to make sense of her life by composing it” (1). Therefore, this medium, according to the authors, follows the definition of autobiography. Through memoir and journaling, the popular form of scrapbooks documents both the personal and social lives of women, like Ann Buckler, who otherwise might only be mentioned historically as a name on a marriage license. She recorded her life and her memory as a way to understand herself, again a form of self-reflection. Scrapbooks allowed her a way to express herself and “gave shape and significance to her life while leaving a record of it” (8) for us more than 150 years later.

Memory as a creative process is discussed in “Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory” by Gayle Greene. She emphasizes that recorded memories are not necessarily faithful to the truth and it is not unusual for the documenter to fictionalize them when necessary. This sort of remembering is a way to become liberated. Greene believes this practice is critically important to feminists since “women especially need to remember because forgetting is a major obstacle to change” (298).

Susan Stanford Friedman also discusses memory and feminist theory in “Craving Stories: Narrative and Lyric in Feminist Theory and Poetic Practice.” She explains that a culture needs stories, especially those who are part of a marginalized group, and that the storyteller should not be dismissed “by the dominant symbolic order” (233). Narratives provide a method for remembering and acknowledging the past.

In “Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction,” Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith suggest that memory is culturally gendered because it relies on cultural codes and models. Part of this gender connection has also to do with power, and the authors believe that “cultural memory is always about the distribution of and contested claims to power” (6). Telling and retelling stories are methods used for transferring knowledge from one generation to the next.

Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy*, discusses the movement from an oral to literary tradition, and in chapter 6, “Oral Memory, the Story Line, and Characterization,” he focuses on women’s use of autobiography in early novel writing, explaining that they “worked from outside the oral tradition because of the simple fact that women were not commonly subjected to the orally based rhetorical training that boys got in school” (159). Instead they were skilled in domestic duties which were needed to run large households, and there was no institutionalized education available for women until the seventeenth century. Ong suggests that while women authors may have been exposed to various types of academic “Latin-based” material “they themselves normally expressed themselves in a different, far less oratorical voice, which had a great deal to do with the rise of the novel” (111 – 112). Ultimately, this directed many female writers to create a less formal literary voice. This again goes back to the idea of women’s limited exposure to formal rhetoric, and therefore, their experiences were based more in an oral rather than a literary culture (149), unlike that of men who had been sent away to school and had a wider range of life experiences.

Works by Virginia Woolf also help shape this theme since she wrote a number of essays concerning women’s literature. In her essay, “Women Novelists,” Woolf wonders

about the social history of women writers and why the novel became such a popular genre for women during the eighteenth century. She examines this phenomenon further in *A Room of One's Own*, explaining that “nothing is known about women before the eighteenth century” because “history scarcely mentions her” (*A Room* 45, 44). Much like Ong, her queries suggest they created their own rhetorical voice to fit their abilities.

A few examples which fit into the rhetorical model referenced by Woolf and Ong include Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* and a lesser known novel written by Anne Brontë entitled *Agnes Grey*. Though there is some time between the publication dates for both novels, Austen's novel was published in the early 1800s and Brontë's in the mid-1800s, their narratives share character and plot elements. Both novels have female protagonists from middle class homes, similarly educated, and socially challenged due to their class and financial status. Each young woman is limited by her social sphere and has few options when it comes to finding her way in the world.

Sarah R. Morrison in her article “Of Woman Borne: Male Experience and Feminine Truth in Jane Austen's Novels” looks closely at the different world of men and women represented in Austen's novels. While Austen's characters do not undermine the patriarchal social order of the time, Morrison believes that the author still managed to infuse her writing with “feminine vision.”

As an analysis of Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*, Will T. Hale's article, “Anne Brontë: Her Life and Writings,” does not particularly praise the story, but he underscores the idea of personal narrative and autobiographical techniques mentioned by Woolf and Ong. The novel seems to him more like a true story rather than a fictional tale. Furthermore, he explains that it seems her intent was more to educate than to entertain

her reader, and she simply decided to choose the novel form rather than a true autobiographical format.

Nancy Armstrong, in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, provides more support for the argument that early female novelists relied on autobiography to develop their discourse since their lives were restricted and controlled. With added leisure time and increasing literacy among women, it was believed that the wrong sort of information could damage a woman's mind. Conduct books, which were very popular at the time, preached the importance of limited female education, insisting that the fine arts and classical traditions be exclusive to the male sex (Armstrong 99 - 103). By attempting to shape women in order that they follow predefined social roles, "English conduct books sought to promote a gender-based philosophy of education" (99). Conduct writing advocated that "a woman's social environment presented her with too many forms of activity that smacked of amusement," and though the idea of "female labor" was not considered appropriate, "authors of conduct books generally insisted that the activities comprising the domestic arts – and therefore a women's duty – had to be carefully supervised" (99 – 100).

In "Life as a Narrative," Jerome Bruner takes a constructivist approach to narrative and autobiography. He argues that we create a life or reshape our lives just as we retell them, so that "we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives" (694). To support his ideas about self-told narratives, he describes four family members who demonstrate his theory for subscribing to the story each person tells about him or herself.

Autobiography is also the subject of Valerie Sanders' text, *The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in Nineteenth-Century England*. She explains that during the nineteenth-century women became more self-aware and began to want to discuss their experiences. Similarly to the character of Agnes Grey in Brontë's novel, there was a desire to pass along information in the hope of helping other women like themselves. They discovered that the novel model provided a way to accomplish this while it also provided an outlet from their otherwise tedious lives.

Feminism and Hypermedia

Researchers Susan C. Herring, Inna Kouper, Lois Ann Scheidt, and Elijah Wright, in their article "Women and Children Last: The Discursive Construction of Weblogs," take on a controversial topic in an attempt to determine if the blogosphere (a generic term used to describe areas of the Internet that houses weblogs) is dominated by male users. The researchers took an empirical approach to this study, using content analysis and quantitative data to explore their topic. The purpose of this study is to determine the reason, if previous quantitative studies have reported that as many or more bloggers are made up of females and young adults, "contemporary discourses about weblogs [...] tend to disproportionately feature adult, male bloggers." They believe that one reason for this paradox is due to the type of weblogs that are produced, and since certain types of weblogs are associated with certain groups of people, the weblogs are privileged and as a result, the authors of these weblogs are also privileged.

L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin compares scrapbooks to blogs in her article, "From Victorian Scrapbooks to Blogs: A Librarian Encounters Lives Revealed." Melvin

provides anecdotal descriptions of her experiences as a librarian when trying to determine a method of archiving unusual materials such as scrapbooks. She states that these are often not considered worth preserving but insists that scrapbooks are historically valuable and “a largely untapped form of historical evidence” (20). Their significance is also tied to the fact that they provide autobiographical information about usually silent groups, women and children. This medium, much like the now popular weblog, provided an outlet for women and children to write their life stories.

In *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, an anthology of essays edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, the introduction to this text states that Ryan’s purpose is to examine the creative process that is emerging due to electronic communication. She believes a kind of semantic freedom is developing and she compares this to other avant-garde movements. The collected essays explore various forms of experimental writing methods with an emphasis on digital media. One particular essay, “Women Writers and the Restive Text: Feminism, Experimental Writing, and Hypertext” by Barbara Page, discusses women writers’ use of alternative literary structures and argues that it is not necessary to write on a computer in order to create hypertext. By experimenting with nonlinear forms of discourse and “redesign[ing] the very topography of prose” (112) their work becomes hypertextual. Their writing follows a postmodern construction where they approach writing as a type of weaving, often including moments of self-reflection throughout the fabric of their discourse. Page refers to specific works by female authors to support her argument. For example, she examines the novel, *AVA*, written by Carole Maso, a record of the last day in the life of a woman who is dying from cancer. The fragmented narrative allows Maso’s character to

move freely back and forth from the past to the present, incorporating “powers of memory and desire” (113). As Page compares her selected examples of contemporary hyper-fiction authors to modern authors like Virginia Woolf, who used a similar stream of consciousness approach to narrative, she also turns to writers who have experimented with digital narration by using programs such as Storyspace. Page compares these fragmented narratives off-line to those on-line, and concludes that “if hypertext is to realize its potential as a medium for inclusive and democratic writing, it is profoundly important that women’s desire and creative will should contribute to its future shapings” (134).

Another text which deals with the avant-garde influence is Robert Ray’s *How a Film Theory Got Lost and Other Mysteries in Cultural Studies*. In his chapter, “How to Start an Avant-Garde,” Ray believes that movements like the avant-garde fill a cultural gap and he goes on to provide step-by-step procedures for starting an avant-garde movement. His purpose is to encourage the notion of invention, especially in the humanities, and he gives a call for action and challenges educational institutions to experiment declaring that “the future of pedagogy in an age of electronic reproduction depends on our doing so” (94).

Originally an inception from a Modern Language Association convention, the collection of essays, *Breaking the Sequence: Women’s Experimental Fiction*, edited by Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs researches women’s experimental fiction during the twentieth century. Virginia Woolf, Joyce Carol Oates, Gertrude Stein, and Jean Rhys are some of the authors discussed in this text. A few of the issues the collected

essays examine are invisibility, gender politics, character experimentation, and experimental novels.

Connecting to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Sarah Stein addresses the same ideas of space and the creative process involved with writing in her essay, "A Cyberroom of One's Own." Stein asserts that women still have similar challenges to those of Woolf's time period, only now the space has moved to virtual space or cyberspace. The essay examines what is needed in today's digital culture to assist women, and her conclusions are similar to Woolf's. Women need quiet and this means they need their own space in cyberspace. They also need to be "more involved in developing new communication modalities for digital forms" (155).

"Navigating the Narrative in Space: Gender and Spatiality in Virtual Worlds" by Mary Flanagan describes forms of technology, like the Internet, as places which allow an "alternative space within which we can invent unique methods of telling stories, forming identities, and remembering" (75). She examines cyberspace as a woman's place and believes that women do not usually follow traditional approaches to this medium. The lack of control in cyberspace - "the live, the networked and multiple" (78), - create new possibilities for story telling.

Project Overview

Chapter one provides an introduction to my proposed research, explaining the methodological approach I take, the questions I investigate, and the justification for my project. It defines memory-craft and the forms of memory-craft and women's journals used for this study. A literature review offers scholarly support and expands on four

related themes: history and memory-craft; women and domestic technology; feminist literary autobiography and memoir; and feminism and hypermedia. This chapter also includes an explanation of my methodology and discusses the theory driving the examination of my topic. Finally, personal and scholarly justifications are provided.

In chapter two, I define memory-craft relative to the study proposed and discuss some of the historical background of this medium. While this chapter involves some anthropological elements, I believe this area is necessary to examine and include in this project. Discourse and culture are related and overlap in memory-craft; they are both associated with the work of the author/memory-crafter. Historically, memory-craft emerged from commonplace books and extra-illustrated books popular during the nineteenth-century. Just as amateur scrapbookers today chronicle their lives through photographs and journaling, keepers of commonplace books collected paper pieces for their own book constructions. Victorians enjoyed the hobby of assembling extra-illustrated books by unstitching a book's binding, adding illustrations to chosen areas of the text, and then stitching the binding back together. These are some of the historical areas I plan to examine in my project as I study the cultural significance of memory-craft in recording memories as well as the reasons women have primarily taken on the role of memory archivists using this medium. Questions I will consider include: What is memory-craft? What cultural significance does it have to the past? What did memory-craft offer to women in general during different time periods? How do methods used to create memory-craft pass down and record memories?

I discuss women and domestic technology in the third chapter, including the use of scraps and crafting in the home and also covering home computers and peripheral

equipment. I look at memory-craft as a form of domestic technology. Emily Dickinson's methods of self-publishing present a starting point for this project's research in this area. While the main focus is not to offer an in-depth analysis of Dickinson's work, the poet provides a historical case study for examination, a place to begin. Jeanne Holland refers to Dickinson's use of making small booklets and embellishing her letters with bits of ribbon and other scraps as a way for the poet to "progressively [refine] her own domestic technologies of publication" (141). Much the same way Dickinson used the materials in her domestic sphere to publish her work, so do contemporary memory-crafters. However, today this technology has expanded to include paper and ribbon as well as home-based technology such as scanners, printers, and personal computers. The journals themselves are also forms of domestic technology used for storing memories for future generations. While memory-crafters collect and construct scrapbooks, journals, and altered books, they become stewards of autobiographical information. Questions I consider include: How is memory-craft a form of domestic technology? How are techniques of domestic technology used in the construction of memory-craft? How do methods used to create memory-craft pass down and record memories? How has the availability of electronic equipment in the home affected today's use of domestic technology and the way memory archivists use old and new forms of technology to create memory-craft?

Autobiography and memoir and their relationships to feminist literature is the next theme I discuss in chapter 4. Personal and familial memories are significant threads to our past and our future. By recording our own memories, we allow ourselves the opportunity to explore our identity and create an archive for future generations. Women

are often responsible for recording memories, and there is a wealth of literature connecting women and memory archiving. Just as we protect and preserve our family's daily needs, we also find ourselves taking on the task of preserving our family's memories, "the knowledge of ordinary culture" (de Certeau 14). As stated by Ong, because women have been historically shut out from traditional forms of discourse, they have created alternatives for themselves, such as the novel. While the novel genre is one of fiction and memory-craft is more often one of factual representation, they share similarities in the use of autobiography and memoir techniques. Jane Austen, Anne Bronte, and other early female novelists gleaned from their own lives to pen their fictional narratives. They interwove their own stories with that of their fictional characters creating a literary collage. Memory-crafters use this same technique, layering physical mementos with textual recordings. Questions I explore in this chapter include: What similarities do these alternative forms of discourse, novel and memory-craft, have in common? Are these alternative genres forms of feminist rhetoric? When memories aren't recorded is knowledge lost, and if so, what are the repercussions of these lost memories? Why have women taken the lead as memory archivists? Why do women continue to gravitate towards these non-traditional writing methods even during the twenty-first century?

In chapter 5, I discuss feminism and hypermedia, covering topics such as women's weblogs and on-line Internet groups. Combining ephemeral and electronic methods is a growing practice for memory-crafters, especially those who collaborate via the Internet. This "technology allows" memory- artists "an alternate space within which ... [they] can invent unique methods of telling stories, forming identities, and

remembering” (Flanagan 75). Yahoo! web groups, list-server members, and bloggers discuss their ideas and share scanned images of their work. They network on the network; like the Greek orators, they remember “in a curiously public way” (Ong 145). Questions for this chapter include: How are weblogs and other forms of Internet text preserving memories? How are they similar to hardcopy journals and other forms of memory-craft?

Finally, in the last chapter of this report, I conclude my study and provide an analysis of my findings. I revisit each of the four areas reviewed - history and memory-craft; women and domestic technology; feminist literary autobiography and memoir; feminism and hypermedia – and connect the threads of my investigation.

Theory and Methodology

The approach to the research for this project is qualitative since my study is exploratory. My primary methodology will be memoir, as demonstrated by N. Katherine Hayles’ book *Writing Machines* and Eunice Lipton’s book *Alias Olympia*. I loosely model my dissertation on the text by Hayles, who refers to her book as an “experiment” and simultaneously practices the methods she investigates where “the medium constructs the work and the work constructs the medium” (6). Her infusion of personal narrative, included as a character or persona named Kaye, provides a reflective evolution of the author’s thought-process, as she illustrates her developing understanding of the implications of technology’s influence on the humanities. I also incorporate a fictionalized personal narrative as I draw on traditional research and juxtapose this with excerpts from historical family documents, specifically early twentieth century letters and

journal entries from my Great Aunt Mamie Veach Dudley. I look for patterns between seemingly unrelated pieces of information, and like Hayles' book, I use the work of artists/authors as evidence to illustrate the possibilities available when domestic technology is used via memory-craft and women's journaling to record memories, an example of "how medium-specific possibilities and constraints shape text" (Hayles 31).

Lipton's book is another example I consider as an experimental technique that supplies me with alternatives which expand the research process and provide an "application of the research to emotional and poetic rather than strictly informational ends" (Scholes, Comley, and Ulmer 282-3). As illustrated by Lipton, there is "the possibility of the researcher openly identifying with the object of study, but in a way that puts in question, rather than simply reproducing, the dominant values of the discipline" (296-7). Just as Lipton used Olympia, I conduct my research through Mamie, a crafter of memory, who is my own "object of study." More specifically, like Hayles and Lipton, I mix narrative with my research and use Mamie's journals as the focus for my method of analysis. For my narrative, I assemble collaborative works and link the past to the present. As narrator and storyteller, my stories connect to those documented by Mamie, providing the "words [to] become the outlet or product of silent histories" (de Certeau xxi). I slip into Mamie's world. One focus for this is the story of the double suicide of Mamie's mother-in-law (Amelia Dudley) and sister-in-law (Minnie Dudley), paralleling this with my own contemporary fictional narrative concerning family and women's roles.

I also look to theorist Gregory L. Ulmer's *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention* for experimental forms of discourse. By integrating my family's story (as told by Mamie) with my own current narrative, rather than creating a "method of critique," I write "within

the popcycle of ideology” (197) using the institutions of Family, Entertainment, School, and Discipline. For the institution of Family, I include Mamie’s documentation of family history. The connection to Entertainment is structured around the idea of memory-craft as a favored past-time. The institution of School is the third area of the “popcycle,” and I allude to this in my own narrative, as I am both a student and teacher. The last institution is Discipline, and this cycle is taken from Michel de Certeau’s use of the “discipline of rhetoric [which] offers models for differentiating among the types of tactics” (xx). Additionally, de Certeau’s theories of the ordinary from *The Practice of Everyday Life* permit me to consider how ordinary tasks allow for the reorganization of discourse (5). Overall, my intent is aimed at identifying a mood and representing an issue rather than trying to solve a problem.

Secondary research strategies include case studies, historical inquiry, and ethnography. Case studies include an examination of specific memory-crafters and their hardcopy and digital works. For example, I look at writer and illustrator Keri Smith’s Internet weblog, which is an illustrated personal journal housed on the web. Altered-books created by Judith Margolis, an Israeli-based American artist, who shapes her work from her culture and personal experience is also a source for study. She structures the books to form narratives and combines text, black-ink etchings, and full-color illustrations. The historical inquiry encompasses an overview of memory-craft, documenting its origins and discussing historically significant connections to women. Emily Dickinson’s use of scraps in her own domestic publications is one area that I include in this research. Dickinson was both a crafter and poet, and her inclusion in this study touches on historical inquiry as well as provides a case study. Finally, I use

ethnography when I look at on-line web groups such as altered book groups, scrapbook groups, and weblog communities.

Justification

The justification for this project is both personal and scholarly. The personal side of this project involves my own family and letters and journals I discovered which belong to a distant aunt of mine, Mamie Veach Dudley. She was one of our family's first memory archivists, keeping a number of journals and writing long letters to family and friends. In one journal, she wrote of her family's 1901 trip down the Mississippi River. A second journal, written in an old ledger book leftover from their sundry store, describes their 1912 journey in covered wagons from Arkansas to Colorado. Finally, we have typewritten copies (transcribed by Cousin Kordova) of a letter Mamie wrote to her sister about a family tragedy: the double suicide of Minnie Dudley and Amelia Dudley. The letter was written over a series of days to allow Mamie to explain the sad circumstances that led the mother and daughter to take strychnine.

Today, family members continue to archive copies of Aunt Mamie's memories as well as collect their own. Cousin Anita keeps three-ring binders filled with pictures and a fact-sheet about each family member. My mother and sister keep memories in family scrapbooks, and following their Mormon faith, conduct research about our ancestors, collecting old photographs and copies of birth and death certificates. They gather memory artifacts of their immediate families to document weddings, birthdays, holidays, and special events with photographs and journaling fragments.

I'm also documenting the past through pieces of visual memorabilia and snippets of text in the form of an altered book, a hardcopy book once filled with text that I'm now physically altering. My non-blank canvas is turning into a record of my parents' 50 year love affair as I paint, cut, paste, and collage, erasing, adding, and rearranging the text to tell their story. The first page says: "[memories] that which is created or present becomes past." The next page spread has cut out photocopied photographs of each. My mother is 14; her hair is shoulder-length, cut into a bob, and curled under. I know that it is strawberry blonde, even though the photo is black and white. She looks just like my 15-year old niece. My father is wearing a button-down shirt and smiling just a little. He's young, 18 years old, and handsome. This is the beginning of my parent's narrative.

I reconstruct their memories with paper and paint, but I also record my own: first in a hardcopy journal during the Florida 2004 hurricanes and now through an Internet weblog where I chronicle my writing and jewelry work. Like many memory archivists, my techniques are a mixture of domestic and electronic technologies. I might use my flatbed scanner to scan-in old family photographs and burn a compact disk, but then I offer it as a Christmas gift, adorned with a hand-crafted bow and paper card, to family members.

After discovering Mamie and her familial stories, I began to research the idea of journaling and related memory-craft as a form of discourse. The more I explored, the more I learned about the women who had collected, assembled, and recorded the memories of their families and themselves. They used unconventional rhetorical media such as journals and scrapbooks to structure their archives. Historians are not unaware of these sorts of recording devices and have used them to understand the lives of

women from different time periods and cultures. However, I have found too little research on the connection between memory-craft and feminine discourse, and I believe this is an area, an alternative way to write, that demands further study. This is especially significant when new forms of Internet technology are considered, including on-line groups, listservers, and weblogs. All of these are vehicles of discourse and many are used by women as outlets for self-reflection. Today women record memories ephemerally as well as electronically, and it is this meeting of text and technology, both old and new, which is the focus of my study.

“All those moments, they’ll be lost in time, like tears in the rain.” ~ Blade Runner

CHAPTER TWO: A HISTORY OF COLLECTING MEMORIES

Arts and craft projects such as making greeting cards or stringing a macaroni noodle necklace invoke memories of childhood parties, summer camp, and creative freedom. Memories are tied to physical objects, “add[ing] the physical intimacy of touch” (Batchen 49), and this is even more the case when we have crafted these objects with our own hands. Crafting connects us tactically to the artifact and when we see it and touch it, a window opens up and offers us a peak into the past. As both a writer of text and crafter of objects, I write “how-to” articles on crafting functionally decorative objects. I live in a world of words and objects, and I am not the only crafter in this world. There are many of us here: the journal-writer who documents his trip to Europe; the mother who assembles a scrapbook about her child’s first Christmas; the altered book artist who records a challenging moment in her life. We all share a history of crafting memory using paper and memorabilia with others who have come before us and discovered a way to archive family and personal memories via journaling and assembling techniques, “an art of combination which cannot be dissociated from an art of using” (de Certeau xv). Craft and text crossover and intermingle as we all experiment with a type of writing craft, and this is what I examine in my own textual craft experiment beginning with the history of memory-craft. In this chapter, I define and discuss the various media that make up memory-craft such as scrapbooking and journaling. I examine its cultural significance to the past and the methods used to create these craft forms as a way to

archive memories. Finally, I consider contemporary memory-crafts' place in today's craft industry.

Crafts related to memory cover a large spectrum of mixed media, which provide a way to “make textual objects that signify an art” (de Certeau 28). However, for this study I will concentrate on three types of what I will refer to as “memory-craft:” scrapbooks, art journals, and altered books. The term “memory-craft” is not new to the crafts industry. According to Tonya Becerra, managing editor of *Legacy* magazine, “it’s been used in the art and craft arena for some time to describe the genre of collecting and incorporating memory into art—particularly as it relates to photographs and personal memorabilia [...] Yet, it’s a general term that can broaden and encompass collective memories of a culture.”

The forms I’ve chosen to examine share similar characteristics and techniques. They each begin with a book form, whether it is blank (as is the case with scrapbooks and journals) or already filled with text (such as scrapbooks and altered books). Methods of crafting these media combine paper-art, assembling, collage, and journaling. Scrapbooks usually begin with a blank book used as a place where the scrapbooker arranges photographs and memorabilia. Short areas of text (headers, titles, captions, and short paragraphs) add narrative to the visuals in the book. Art journals typically include more text, thus a longer narrative, and are a mixture of personal recordings and artwork, usually drawn or sketched by the journaler, but some journal keepers will also paste ephemera into their journal books as well. Altered books recycle previously printed books, sometimes discards, for use in assemblage and journaling. The altered book artist may chose to include or remove text already included

in the book and then arrange visual elements to correspond with the resulting discourse. All forms share an effort of combining text and images with the purpose of documenting moments in time.

By using methods of memoir, memory-craft media offer a way to document lives and record memories. Similar to a scrapbook, my investigative approach to this study is an assembly of memoir and analysis. However, since strict memoir does not allow me to narrate the story that I need to tell, much like Jane Austen, I borrow memories to create a world that is similar to my own but not an exact duplicate. I collect characters and anecdotes and assemble them into the narrative I need for my research. I use a protagonist named "Tess," a fictionalized persona, to help tell my story.

First, a little about Tess, and then I will let her take over the narrative. Tess was born to a middle-class family from Colorado who eventually settled in Florida; she grew up running barefoot down hot cement sidewalks and playing with Barbies under the shade tree on her front lawn. On Sundays, she attended Sunday school and service at the local Baptist church. Monday through Friday, at some financial expense to her parents, Tess attended St. Mary's Catholic School.

As a non-Catholic and the skinniest girl in class, Tess was always aware of being outside a community that encouraged piety, sports, and intellect (in that order). The first two options were inaccessible, but the third had some possibilities, and Tess loved books. With quiet effort and extra hours of studying, Tess found some success in school and eventually earned a B.A. and M.A. in English. Years later, after spending ten years as a copyeditor, a career that paid well but she found became less and less challenging,

Tess returned to school for a Ph.D. in English. She eventually became a college professor, and this is where I let Tess finish her story.



For almost 40 years, I've been looking for the right story to tell. Unfinished manuscripts litter my hard drive and various nooks throughout my house. I collect them, and as time passes, I rarely pick them up again. I have had lots of excuses, but inside I knew the problem: they weren't mine to tell. Then a few days ago, I found it. Or, really, it found me as I was helping mom box up Uncle Richard's things. He was also a collector, but he collected memories. His home-office was filled with boxes of letters, death certificates, old wedding announcements, and notebooks where he chronicled the lives of our family, the Dudley clan. We all knew of his hobby but had no idea of how it eventually possessed him.

Due to my recent unemployment and mom's retirement, we somehow inherited the job of clearing out Uncle Richard's house. We'd been at it for about half a day, filling up box after box of papers, when we realized this one room was going to take us days to go through. Mom brought me a glass of ice tea and then left to make a phone call. I sipped the cool drink and sat back to let my muscles relax when I felt something poke me in the middle of my back. It was the corner of an old book. We hadn't seen it because it was covered in stacks of loose papers that neither of us was looking forward to sorting through. But then, there it was prodding me.

I set my glass down on the floor, and tried to slide the thin volume from under the heap without disturbing it, but of course, the papers fell in an avalanche to the floor. My discovery yielded a softbound leather book. It was hand-stitched, and there were a few

water stains on the cover. I opened it, and on the front page in a simple style of script it began: "Our trip south, 1901." On top of this first page was a stack of old, fragile papers, a long letter to someone. I quickly looked at the last page to see it was signed by someone named "Mamie." I flipped back to the first page:

Karval, Colorado

December 1, 1915

Dear Sister,

I have been wanting to write you a letter for a long time, but I can't hardly ever get a chance to write to any one any more. It is about 10 o'clock now, but Riley and his father went to a debate tonight, and the rest are in bed, so I will write till they come back if I can stay awake, but I am awful sleepy right now. I got your letter. It certainly was a shock to us to hear that Mrs. Dudley and Minnie were dead. When the telegram came, Riley was in the store and I was cleaning the yard. We are 32 miles from a railroad. The mail carrier brought it out. It said: "Mother and Minnie are dead. Reply and come." Riley came running to me with the telegram and asked what he must do. It didn't seem like we could possibly spare him, but I said, "I suppose you will have to go," so he jumped right in the automobile and went right back with the mail carrier; that was Monday, and we just thought and thought all week.

Clomp, clomp, clomp, my mother stepped up the wooden staircase.

"Well, that's it," she announced. "I've called Cousin Zola, Juanita, and Walter. No takers."

I looked up, "What?"

“All this stuff, Tess,” she said waving her arms around her. “Nobody knows what to do with it. Richard didn’t mention it in his will. Technically, since Walter is the executor, I think he’s supposed to get it, but he doesn’t want it. I don’t have room enough in my condo as it is.”

“I’ll take it.”

I wasn’t sure why I said that or what I planned to do, but I wanted to hear more from Mamie. I quizzed mom about the suicides and Mamie, but she didn’t seem to know much. It was one of those family secrets she was told not to talk about. Mamie was her great aunt; yes, she knew she kept a few journals, liked to write, was a smart lady, used to make dill and sweet pickles and let my grandma pick out her own pickle from the barrel when she went to visit. Grandma liked the dill best, better than the sweet, and this used to surprise everyone. Aunt Mamie was loved and greatly admired, and she died when she was in her 50s. That’s all my mom could remember.

I ended up making two car trips home before I managed to fit Uncle Richard’s life-long project into my guest room. It was already littered with boxes from when I had to move out of my office at the school the week before. I hadn’t the energy to go through those yet, so I just pushed them to the back of the room and covered them with my new load from Richard’s house. Normally, mom would have given me a hard time about it, but she knew I needed a distraction and it was also one less thing for her to deal with. While there was a respectable showing at the wake and funeral, most of our family conveniently disappeared when it came time to take care of the practical issues of Richard’s estate. Unless they were mentioned in the will, and most of them weren’t, they

didn't have time. Most were too busy with their lives, raising children, working, doing what most people do.

I hoped there was more from Mamie among the boxes, but I wasn't ready to give up her letter yet:

We couldn't hear a thing till the next Saturday, and I got the Adage, and it didn't have anything right. Had about Mrs. Dudley using the butcher knife on her and making her take the strychnine. I had that to think about till we got the New Canton Press the next Wednesday. It told it pretty straight, and Riley and his father came home the same day. It was a long wait to get to hear anything. If it had just been Mrs. Dudley, none of the children would have been surprised, but none of them ever thought of Minnie killing herself. That is what hurt us all so bad. If some one could only have talked to her a few minutes and saved her it would not have been so bad. Mr. Dudley is in a terrible shape over it. He makes it very well through the day but when night comes he just takes on all night. That is the reason Riley took him to the debate tonight, to try and get his mind on something else. He put in a terrible night last night. We would not be surprised to find him dead any morning. They have had a terrible time with Mrs. Dudley for 2 ½ years; Mr. Dudley said Minnie would sometimes say, "Papa, I can't stand this much longer," but he never thought of her killing herself. He thought she meant she would leave home. He will just cry and say if he only could have known it, so he could have talked to her about it.

Strychnine – my mind wrapped around that word. For a moment, I thought of Madame Bovary, but I was halted by the sound of the front door opening, the jingle of

keys, and Mark's footsteps. I set the letter down, and began to make my way out of the jungle of cardboard to greet him. But before I could escape and close the door behind me, my husband's six foot frame filled the doorway.

"More boxes?" he asked.

"Oh, mom needed some place to store some of Uncle Richard's things," I stood up and gave him a quick kiss on the lips.

"A huh," he replied, and then as he looked around some more, "And, what are we supposed to do with all of this? Just store it?"

"Don't worry. I'm going to go through it all and find a place for it. He's got some boxes marked so it's kind of semi-organized already."

New subject: "Did you go by the unemployment office today?"

"No, I told you that I needed to help mom today."

"It's been over a week now, Tess. You have to file for unemployment and it takes weeks before you'll start getting checks from them. What's the hold up?"

"Yes, I know all of that. I know the drill. I promise. I'll go tomorrow before I do anything else, first thing."

He nodded, began to pull off his tie, and wandered off to boot up his computer and then change his clothes. As he walked away from me, he ran his hands through his wavy hair, a nervous habit of his that caused his hair to be forever uncombed. Another quiet evening of separation stretched before us. We were together in the same house, but neither of us could really talk much because we didn't want to talk about what happened or what was going to happen. Neither of us was sure what to do, especially me. I took my laptop out, plugged it in, and pulled up the Internet in the hopes that my

pretense at a job search would ease Mark's mind a little. He didn't say much, but I knew what he was thinking. We were both thinking the same thing: "What now?"



The discovery of Mamie's journals and letter provides a distraction for Tess right now. By not considering her own situation and instead reading Mamie's recordings of past family events, Tess is able to ignore, at least for a little while, her own small tragedy. At this point, Tess is only just beginning to understand the significance of Mamie's carefully documented archives.

Acquiring the art of penmanship was a critical skill for writers of commonplace books, precursors to today's memory-craft media of scrapbooks, art journals, and altered books. Diarists and commonplace transcribers, like Deborah Norris Logan (1761 – 1839), a member of the prominent Logan family of Philadelphia during the seventeen and eighteen hundreds, believed that "the art of memory depended on writing" (Stabile 74) and copying manuscripts was a way to "preserve memories in the order in which they were originally formed" (81). By carefully transcribing selected essays, poems, sermons, and other forms of literature into her commonplace books, Logan assembled a small portable library of text:

Understood as the craft of penmanship rather than the composition of ideas, "writing" was the art of "copying" during the eighteenth century. Hand written characters, therefore, were imaged as rhetorical topoi that could be memorized, arranged, and elegantly displayed. [...] Since penmanship was likened to arranging and impressing memory images (alphabetic characters) onto places

(writing tablets), it required the same standards for imitation as commonplace (Stabile 81).

Physical spaces allow the reader/writer to associate a thought with an object. Memory was therefore linked to a physical space, a place inside a commonplace book, using a similar mnemonic technique of artificial memory fashioned by the Romans before the invention of print. Giulio Camillo used this same association of memory and space when he created his memory theater during the sixteenth century, which was “based on the principles of the classical art of memory” (Yates 138). Camillo’s physical structure was dependant on mysteries of the occult; however, it illustrated the concept of securing memory to specific areas - places and objects. Geoffrey Batchen points to “memory objects” as a means for verifying “ones own place in time and space” and “establishing oneself within a social and historical network of relationships” (97). At this point in history, the printed book was beginning to replace the art of memory (Yates 159). Perhaps, though, it may be more accurate to conclude that the book does not replace memory so much as it replaced Camillo’s theater. It became the place for memories to be stored. In the case of commonplace books, the images are the written text and the objects are the books themselves. Logan and other commonplace bookkeepers followed this same principle as they recorded memories of their daily lives and transcribed the work of other authors into their own collection. They used the ordinary technique of transcription to “reorganize the place from which discourse is produced” (de Certeau 5). Commonplace books were new books created from existing books. Ellen Gruber Garvey compares this process to a gleaner in a cornfield who

“scoops up the grain and turns it into a new form, bakes bread with it, makes a new book of it,” and therefore, “the reader becomes an author” (210).

Commonplace books were assembled, by both men and women, and then the authors/memory-crafters shared their collected transcriptions among family and friends. Filled with essays, sermons, poetry, and other literature deemed significant by the transcriber and collector, the books had an educational and often spiritual focus. Women, in particular, used the format of the commonplace book to document “their personal memories through their mnemonic associations with material culture” resulting in a “more personal, kind of historical record” (Humphrey). Recording domesticity, such as Logan’s commonplace books and diaries and Aunt Mamie’s letters and journals, provided a way for women to construct their lives. This genealogical practice “focused on the local, the particular, the domestic. They aimed at accurately re-creating the historical record rather than invoking the past to fashion the future” (Stabile 4). The commonplace book became an heirloom for future generations and a practical reference for contemporary readers.

Milcah Martha Moore (1740 – 1829), a Philadelphia Quaker, was also a dedicated commonplace book transcriber. Three of her commonplace books still exist (housed in a private collection), and one of her manuscripts has been recently published: *Milcah Martha Moore’s Book*. One impetus for the modern publication of her book (1997) is due to the rare collection of work included in it. Among the collection in this volume are writings from Hannah Griffitts, Susanna Wright, and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson. Without the documentation provided by Moore, the writings of these three women were believed to either be lost or nonexistent. Their work was only

available through manuscript form and passed around among family and friends (Blecki xi – xii).

Because Moore's readership was from a small, select group they would have already been familiar with her chosen topics. As the commonplace books circulated, they created a kind of conversation amongst the group, who all shared similar characteristics as they were part of a highly literate and privileged class. They had time for leisure in the form of reading, writing, and travel. Also, though there were still social standards required of different genders, their Quaker beliefs positioned men and women equally when it came to spirituality:

Quakers had long made use of circulating manuscripts. [...] Unlike printed works, which could be circulated and read more widely, manuscript material might be circulated and read only to a select gathering. [...] *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, while related to broader traditions of manuscript circulation and women's literary and intellectual engagements, owes more to the specifically Quaker traditions that encouraged literacy for women and created a library of Quaker materials (23 – 25 Wulf).

Moore's book is also described by Karin A. Wulf as "a kind of literary diary" (1). While Debora Norris Logan kept her diaries and commonplace books separate, Moore included journal entries from some of her contributing authors. In particular, the travel journal of Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson is an example of the mix of diary and transcribed manuscript. Contemporary attitudes towards personal journals view these as private writings, but just as the commonplace books were distributed, journals were also shared. Fergusson's documentation of her trip would "provide entertainment for a

close circle of kin and Friends” (Wulf 26). Therefore, it is not unusual for Moore to have received the journal for her own reading and then decide to include some of the entries in her transcribed collection.

Mamie Veach Dudley (Aunt Mamie) also expected others to read her journals and her letters. Her main purpose, in fact, was to document and pass on information. In her letter to her sister, Ida, concerning the double suicide of Amelia and Minnie Dudley, she gives specific directions for Ida to read her letter to other family members: “You read this letter to them, and tell them I will try and write to them sometime.” When she begins both her journals, one documenting a 1901 trip down the Mississippi River and the other describing their move in 1912 from Brawley, Arkansas to Karval, Colorado, she includes a title at the top of each: “Our trip south, 1901” and “Our trip by land from Brawley, Ark. to Karval, Colo.” Mamie knew she was recording family history, and she expected and perhaps hoped that her work would be read by others and her experiences remembered.

It is impossible to say whether Mamie would have believed a distant relative like Tess would find and read her documents so many years in the future, that there would develop some kind of connection between two women whose lives were so distant, both as far as time and circumstance. Mamie was occupied with journaling about her family’s experiences while Tess is caught up more in thinking about herself right now. The journals and letter are distractions, but it is impossible for Tess to really escape completely from her problem.



The first time I'd lost my job at a college, we both hugged each other and made resolutions that I could go somewhere else and everything was going to be all right. Sure, I'd find another job. Don't let them get you down just because they didn't renew your contract after one year. They just didn't know a talented teacher when they had one. They were just too concerned about politics outside the classroom and not concerned enough about what a good English teacher does inside a classroom. I'd worked too hard to get my doctorate, and Mark and I had both made too many financial and familial sacrifices for me to just give it up after one bad experience.

I reworked my resume, and by the following fall semester, I landed a full-time position at a community college in the next county. It was a longer drive, but it was worth it. I also was savvier this time around. I cut my hair to just below my jaw line, so I had a nice, professional blunt cut. I bought a dozen suits and matching shoes with those horribly uncomfortable pointed toes. I did whatever I could to physically emulate the other female faculty members who had already reached tenure. In order to fit in with the idea of "community" that is so central to any community college, I volunteered for anything I could both on and off campus. I mentored at risk youth, helped the college newspaper staff, sold tickets at basketball games, joined the "Friends of the Library," the local Human Society, and became a member of a non-denominational church; for three years, I worked every angle I could while I taught a full load of classes. The tenure carrot was in front of me, and I followed it like an ignorant mule.

Then my final tenure review came up. I'd spent weeks on my portfolio and had even gone so far as to burn a copy in .pdf format on a CD for all the committee

members so that they had both a hard copy and electronic copy. I was feeling pretty confident. Granted, I hadn't had glowing reviews over the years, but I'd had been more than adequate and even gotten a verbal pat on the back on occasion. My track record with students was pretty good too. Sure, there was the periodic problem student, but for the most part, students liked me and my retention rate was normally around eighty percent.

However, as I walked into the conference room, my heart immediately sank. I was expecting to meet about six people, at least, and instead, two people sat waiting for me: one from human resources, Alisha Breton, and the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Mathews. They both stood and shook my hand quickly before we all sat down again.

Dr. Mathews began, "Tess, first, I want to say...."

As he spoke, a film came over me almost as if I was inside of some sort of jell-o mold. I knew he was talking and what he was saying, but I couldn't concentrate on the context, on the meaning. There really was no meaning other than they didn't want me. I didn't "fit in with the new mission of the college...with the direction they planned to take in the future...the economy was causing the school to rethink current financial decisions." Alisha ushered me seamlessly out of the conference room and into a smaller adjoining room, had me sign some papers, and then I was walking to my office to find boxes already sitting just outside for my convenience. Two hours later, I was driving home in stunned silence – no radio, no crying, just a car full of boxes and me gripping the wheel, unable to think.

Days had quickly turned into a week or more after leaving the campus that day, but finally to appease Mark, I made my way to the unemployment office. I knew we would need the money eventually, though I still had one more pay checking coming, and we had worked very hard for the past two years to create our first real nest egg. It was sad to think that we'd have to crack it open in a few months, but it was probably inevitable. Other than the fact that I'd been drifting around with no real direction since my dismissal, the main reason I didn't want to go to the unemployment office was because I knew what to expect. They really didn't know what to do with a 40 year old woman with a doctorate degree in English, four years of full-time college teaching experience, and ten years of book editing experience. On paper, I looked great if I lived in big city, but the reality of the local unemployment office is that most jobs they have are for the 30 year-old blue-collar crowd, not washed-up English professors.



While Tess reads about the past and Mamie's life as recorded in the journals, she also thinks about her own past, a recent past, specifically the day she lost her teaching position. In an effort to fit in with the community college faculty crowd, she had become another person, making herself look differently and act differently as a way to become the person she was expected to be. Her attempts at impressing administration with her extreme community involvement and the demonstration of her technical abilities as she creates a portfolio that is designed using modern media techniques is still not enough to secure her position in academia. The fancy .pdf style document could have been replaced with a printed hardcopy format and the results would have been the same.

The abundance of printed media eventually changed the popularity of the commonplace book and resulted in a transformation of this medium into the popular pastime of scrapbook keeping. However, journal writing, while not as fashionable as it once was, still endures. Moving from the transcription process required of commonplace books to the pasting procedure used for scrapbooks changed the format. Printed material was more available for cutting and repurposing. It also took less time to cut and paste than to transcribe printed material. The scrapbook was an easier way to create new media from old media.

Scrapbooks were especially popular with the American middle-class during the early nineteenth-century. Two similar forms of scrapbook developed from the commonplace book, “one text-oriented and the other picture-oriented” (Guest 3). Though both forms could include text and pictures, text-oriented books resembled the previous commonplace book format more. They would include transcriptions as well as clippings from newspapers and text from books; primary assemblers of these sorts of scrapbooks were adult men and women. The picture-rich scrapbooks were normally assembled by young adults and children and included chromolithographed cards and die-cut scraps (Guest 1 -2). Like the commonplace book, this new format of collecting and pasting scraps provided a way to collect a “reservoir of knowledge” and “could also serve as a creative amusement for women and children and were an essential feature of their domestic lives” (Guest 3).

Though all ages of men and women were active scrapbookers during this period, the pastime was very much a home-craft, sometimes practiced by individuals, sometimes functioning as a collaborative effort by family members. Topics varied. Individuals might

use the form to create a visual diary, while family members might work together to document family history, such as the death of a child. Barton Levi St. Armand provides an example of the possibility of the poet, Emily Dickinson, assisting with a scrapbook honoring her young nephew who died in 1882: “she may have had a hand in selecting or collecting illustrations for two of the children’s scrapbooks made out of old business ledgers” (26). Like much of the Dickinson documentation, any scrapbooks constructed primarily by the poet no longer exist, but St. Armand goes on to examine an artifact attributed to a close friend and peer of Dickinson, Mary Warner. As a young woman from the same time and geographic area as Dickinson, Warner may have shared some of the same “sensibility” and “basis of feeling” (29) with Dickinson. He views her scrapbook as “a homemade anthology of consolidation literature” (28) and possible example of what might have been produced by Dickinson, and other women, during this time.

With so many making scrapbooks (men, women, and children) this pastime soon spawned a small industry. Fancy blank books, colored engravings, chromolithographs, and die-cut images were produced by companies for use in scrapbooks. New products were mixed with old scraps, though scraps were not the only repurposed element of a scrapbook. The actual books housing the collection were often recycled as well. Just as Mamie wrote her journals in leftover ledger books from the Dudley’s sundry store, many “adults preferred to paste newspaper scraps into old account books rather than purchase a fancy album for their collection” (Guest 29). They used everyday materials in order “to make due with what they ha[d]” (de Certeau 18). Mamie even went to the extreme of writing on all areas of the paper. Her thrift left no margins and very little

blank area as she made sure she used all she had available to her for her writing. By reusing scraps, books, and leftover artifacts as a type of housekeeping, this was an activity “place[d] on the border between reading and authoring” (Garvey 214).

Collecting personal memorabilia and arranging them in a book form was a way to write a narrative, telling a story with visual elements and text. Florrie Hanks tells the story of her courtship to her husband Carlos in a hand-bound pamphlet-style scrapbook. Documenting from 1927 to 1943, the book narrates their love and life together including holidays, their son’s birth, and Carlos’ time as a soldier during World War II. In fact, the current owner of the scrapbook, book artist Miriam Schaer, speculates that Carlos may have died during the war:

I wonder (project really, as I have no real idea) that Carols may have died during WWII. What drew me to it initially were all the fabulous greeting cards from the 20’s, 30’s and 40’s Carlos sent to Florrie over the years that she saved [...] I was drawn to their incredible graphics, typography and printing. When I got it home and studied it more carefully, I was so touched at what I had.

As the new owner of Florrie and Carlos Hanks’ book, Schaer is able to peer into their world for a few moments, skipping around from one event to the next. Schaer found the book for sale in a thrift store; there is no family connection to the Hanks. However, Schaer is still able to feel a bond with this couple as she turns the pages of this now fragile testament to their lives.



Figure 1: Cover of Florrie Hanks' Scrapbook



Figure 2: A Valentine from Florrie Hanks' Scrapbook

Travel journals are another type of memory-craft similar to scrapbooks. While Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson's journal was a textual description of her travels, photo albums and travel journals also gave "everyday people the opportunity to represent their autobiographies in artful combinations of words and pictures" (Batchen 57). Juanita Dudley Goff, great niece to Mamie Veach Dudley, kept a travel journal, including descriptive text and photographs, of two family car trips, one in 1933 the other in 1937. Black and white photographs are attached to black construction paper, and Juanita provided bits of journaling and photograph captions throughout the book. The cover is leather bound with a ribbon tied in a bow for the binding. Juanita discusses going fishing, driving through the mountains, cooking dinner, and getting a flat tire at one point as she tries to document events they experience on each day.

Another form of book craft became popular in the mid-eighteenth century. Using similar methods to scrapbooks, creating extra-illustrated books was a method where books were taken apart and reassembled with the addition of illustrations throughout the book. At the time, bindings were hand-stitched instead of glued as they are now in contemporary book construction. By adding extra illustrations, or "grangerizing," a term used to describe the act of assembling extra-illustrated books, readers added prints, drawings, and later photographs as extra pages throughout the book. Then they stitched the books back together again, sometimes causing the texts to become so large that they had to be bound in separate volumes. Robert R. Wark attributes this pastime to an "interest in the relationships between visual and verbal means of communication [...] during the 1740s [which] develops steadily to a climax at the turn of the nineteenth century" (152).

Wark believes one of the first extra-illustrators was Richard Bull who compiled illustrations into a text by James Granger (thus the term “grangerize”) entitled *A Biographical History of England*. Bull was a print collector and friend of Granger, whose text was originally designed to encourage the collection of illustrations by “providing a guide for the acquisition and ordering of a collection of portrait prints that would be physically independent of the book” (154). However, Bull took this idea a step further and compiled and then reassembled Granger’s text into new volumes, even going so far as to adding annotations to many of the prints he included throughout the book.

Extra-illustrated books have a lot in common with a form of memory-craft referred to as altered books. Much like the early scrapbookers who recycled ledger books and assemblers of extra-illustrated books, in altered books, memory-crafters use an existing book as a starting point, a “non-blank” canvas where they can erase, add, and rearrange. Painting, cutting, pasting, and collage are additional techniques used by altered book artists. The earliest form of altered books dates back to the use of parchment and the medieval practice of removing text and reformatting velum manuscripts, known as palimpsests (Quinion). However, the crafting of altered books with the purpose of recording narratives and memories is a more modern concept.

Though not an altered book artist, the concrete poet, Stéphane Mallarmé in his work *Un coup de dés* (“A Throw of the Dice”) “is widely regarded as the predecessor of early twentieth-century experiments in language and image” (Hartup) and is responsible for inspiring numerous altered book artists. Much like Deborah Norris Logan’s approach to compiling commonplace books, Mallarmé used words in his poetry as if they were physical objects:

Although it would of course be inaccurate to reify it as some sort of singular originary moment, Mallarmé's book did in many ways inaugurate and help to instigate a century in which readers and writers could become increasingly attuned to visual poetics (Dworkin151).

Asger Jorn and Guy Debord, two artists from the Internationale Situationiste movement, used wine to stain pages from an old almanac, creating "wine-tinged memories" in order to "record a lost world" (24). The bohemian world inhabited by Jorn and Debord is evident in their books which give the impression of being handled while sitting in a café or drinking in a bar. In 1966, Tom Phillips used a more methodological approach when he began work on his altered book, *The Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel*. Primarily using erasure to rearrange the text of his selected source book, which originated as a novel by W.H. Mallock entitled *A Human Document*, Phillips is able to rearrange Mallock's narrative by covering areas of text, and "in concealing Mallock's original [text], [Phillips] releases outbursts of words that find themselves in an altogether new syntactical space" (Gass). He creates a new narrative from the old. Artist Marcel Broodthaers used a similar method to Phillips' altered book in 1969 by creating his own "edition" of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés*. Following "the instructions Mallarmé left for the layout and font of his poem" (Dworkin 150), Broodthaers also blocked out areas of the book forming a geometric page design.

As altered book artists combine aesthetics with a new narrative, what was once another author's text becomes shared and reconstructed by the book artist, raising questions concerning authorship, textual content, and readership. The altered book

artist experiments with a “textual surface” that is “malleable and self-conscious” (Lanham 5).

I have traced much of memory-craft’s origins starting with the commonplace book and touching on the idea of palimpsest. While different formats developed, they all shared similar characteristics: the preservation of memories; the assembling of collective information; the recycling and repurposing of materials; and the retelling of stories. The memory-craft formats may be tied to historical intentions, but the development of memory-craft continues to grow and thrive in today’s hobby industry.

According to a 2005 consumer study, conducted by the Craft and Hobby Association (CHA), “the new CHA study tracks the craft industry at an all time high of over \$30 billion for annual retail sales and confirms the fact that 75% of households across America contain at least one member who has crafted” (“New CHA Consumer Usage”). Scrapbooking is one of today’s most popular home crafts, boasting a “National Scrapbook Day” celebrated on May 7th. Another press release from CHA, “Transform Your Memories to Last Forever on National Scrapbook Day,” reports that memory-crafting, in particular scrapbooking, is one of the strongest hobbies in the industry:

Scrapbooking was originally thought of as a trend but has since turned into one of the country’s steadfast most popular craft activities. In fact, in 1998 at the Craft & Hobby Association’s (CHA) annual trade show, the largest craft and hobby trade exposition in the world, there was no formal scrapbooking section on the trade show floor. In 2005, almost 50% of the show floor was dedicated to the scrapbooking category. It is clearly an activity that shows no signs of stopping.

The new age of memory-crafts may have an organized industry urging its development, and “the stimulation of nostalgia is a major industry – the past has become a profitable commodity” (Batchen 14).

To Tess, the past as described by Mamie’s narratives is a curiosity and a family secret she knew nothing about. However, even though contemporary memory-crafting has ties to the crafting industry and it has become more than just a domestic pastime, the stories of the Dudleys are full of nostalgia for Tess. This time period and world of Mamie’s seem romantic to her as she struggles to find her way towards a future that has changed dramatically from what she had expected.



While I waited for my first meeting with an employment counselor, I filled out all the usual paper work. Trying to write as neatly as possible, I printed Tess Dudley Forrester across the top of the first of many forms I had to fill out that morning. No, I wasn’t a veteran or Hispanic or Black or Native American. I was just your regular white female, nothing special. I had no edge. Other than the fact that two community colleges just didn’t like me, I had no other reason to be oppressed. It was my personality, not my heritage that pushed me into the unemployment line for the second time in my life.

My handwriting was never that great, and I began to envy Mamie’s steady, flowing script. Her pretty loops and long curls felt honest to me. She was just writing to express herself, to untangle her emotions and ideas. She was not concerned about impressing anyone. English teachers, you know, should have neat handwriting. It seemed to be some sort of rule I only found out about when it was too late to do anything about my vicarious scrawl.

A middle-aged balding man in a gray suit and red tie stepped into the employment office waiting area, “Ms. Forrester?” As he looked around the waiting area, he sort of bent over from the waist and his tie swung back and forth before he stood up straight and it rested on his small belly.

‘Yes,’ I said, and picked up my purse and paper work and followed him over to his tiny cubicle. There was just enough room for one other chair, which was positioned directly in front of his desk.

He stretched out his arm and shook my hand, “Albert Burkley, nice to meet you. Take a seat.”

He took the papers from me and started to assemble them into a blue folder that had my name printed in bold black letters across the tab: Forrester, Tess.

“So, Ms. Forrester, I see you filled everything out already. Great. Now, let’s see...” his voice trailed off as he read over my application. “Oh, wow, a doctorate degree?”

“Yes, I have a Ph.D in Literature.”

“And you’ve taught at two colleges around here. Is that what you plan to do now? Find another teaching job?”

I knew the question was coming but hadn’t really thought much about my answer. If Albert had asked me this question a few years ago, I would have given an emphatic “yes.” At this point, after spending three years working on my PhD and a few more years getting kicked around two junior colleges, I had no plans. Nothing came to mind.

To be truthful, teaching hadn't really been what I had expected. Adjunct work had been nice, and when I had gotten my chance to teach full-time, I had a sanguine vision of passing on my knowledge to others. I liked to teach. I was sure I was meant to be a teacher. It felt right. But, this feeling mellowed. My career had become a job, and though I would have been satisfied, even more than satisfied with becoming a full-tenured professor and working there until retirement, I felt disappointment a little as well. I could never confess this to anyone. Mark and I had picked up and moved and spent thousands of dollars on tuition for me to return to school, so to tell anyone that it had been a mistake to leave my comfortable editing job and turn our world up side down only to find out that the grass wasn't as green as I thought, well, I just couldn't do that.

So, I lied to Albert, "Yes, I'll probably go back to teaching, but I'm open to other possibilities."

"What about teaching at a high school?" he naively asked.

I took a deep breath in order to control my urge to roll my eyes before I answered, "I'm not really interested in teaching children. That's why I went back to school. I work better with adults. Besides, I'm not certified to teach in the public school system."

"Too bad. The county always has plenty of teaching positions available."

"I'm sure they do."

"Well, I'm sure something else will show up that you're more suited for," he assured me. Then he signed a form approving me for unemployment compensation, handed it to me to give to the clerk on my way out, and made an appointment to see me again in two weeks.

His signature on that little piece of paper was all that I needed to get my checks coming and me out the door. In two weeks, there'd be more of the same questions, but for now, I was free from Albert and free from thinking about my future, at least for a little while longer.



Memory recordings become invitations to the reader to enter into a past world. For Tess, it is the world of the Dudleys during the early twentieth century. Family stories are preserved in an old ledger book and a personal correspondence. These functioned as Mamie Dudley's memory theater.

Collecting and documenting memories through a combination of paper craft and writing techniques, known as memory-crafts, may be a newly popular trend in the craft industry, but historically this writing technique shares a history with diaries and commonplace books. Deborah Norris Logan is one example of how early archivists preserved memories through journaling her personal thoughts and also transcribing the work of other writers into commonplace books. By chronicling memories inside books, these became storage devices which operated in a similar fashion to Giulio Camillo's memory theater. The books were a physical structure housing images or written texts. These early mnemonic writing techniques later transitioned into scrapbooks, extra-illustrated books, journals, and altered books – all “handmade memory objects” (Batchen 57) culturally significant to the past.

The specific methods of creating each type of memory-craft vary, but all have in common the notion of recording the past. Contemporary memory-craft still shares much with the letters and journals of Mamie Veach Dudley; the diaries of Deborah Norris

Logan; Milcah Martha Moore's commonplace books; the scrapbook of Mary Warner; the extra-illustrated text of Richard Bull; and Tom Phillips' altered book. Recorders of memory and collectors of knowledge, these early archivists shared the tasks of collecting, assembling, and documenting memories for future generations.

CHAPTER THREE: MEMORY-CRAFT AS DOMESTIC TECHNOLOGY

Vacuuming, washing dishes, dusting, and other examples of housework are all common forms of domestic technology. This “home” work falls under the same category of domestic science defined in the nineteenth-century by women such as Harriet Beecher Stowe (in her book *The American Woman’s Home*) and Lydia Child (in *The American Frugal Housewife*). Stowe and Child view housewifery as a profession that requires training and skill. While “domesticity is proposed as a *gendered* knowledge” (McHugh 26) by both women, additionally it is viewed as a “domestic profession” for women who “were not content to become supernumerary, but saw themselves as professionals, stateswomen, and beacons of charitable practices and informed womanhood” (Tonkovich xx).

Memory-craft is also a type of domestic technology, which includes the practice of memory-craft construction and the resulting product created from the process. Though procedures of typical housework may seem removed from the production of memory-craft, they are both most often practiced by women and share many of the same methods of recycling and economy:

The true economy of housekeeping is simply the art of gathering up all the fragments, so that nothing be lost. I mean fragments of *time* as well as *materials*. Nothing should be thrown away so long as it is possible to make any use of it, however trifling that use might be (Child 3).

The housekeeper of the nineteenth-century is a frugal manager of the home who does her best to avoid consumerism and “instead makes an art out of gathering together all that would otherwise be lost” (McHugh 20). Much as memory-craft requires collecting scraps to reuse in archiving memories of the home, housekeeping is also an art, finding uses for leftover fragments that would normally be discarded. Following Michel de Certeau’s philosophy of the everyday, the housekeeper performs “everyday practices that produce without capitalizing” (xx). Old swatches of material, perhaps once a dress for a young girl or a shirt belonging to a husband, are turned into quilts and reused again by family members in a different configuration. Stockings are mended by hand rather than thrown away. Hand-crafts are generally prized over purchased goods: “The value of making do, of getting by, seems here to overshadow the very question of necessity itself” (McHugh21).

Laurie Smith Keller examines the models of technology and its origins, viewing hand-crafts as types of technologies. She explains the connections between craft, technology, and domesticity:

Many of these basic concerns for food, shelter, health and communication are [...] domestic and therefore commonly fall into the sphere of women’s work [...] and] technology is about designing and making. [...] The craft model of technology most closely characterizes the older technologies such as potting, hand-weaving, wood-working, cookery and so on; it is the ‘master-apprentice model’ of technology (24-25).

Women, in particular as keepers of the home and caregivers of the family, are the primary engineers of domestic technology, both in the traditional sense of

housework and in the craft-related, amateur sphere of memory archiving. Naomi Schor points out that much like housework “the detail is gendered [...] bounded on the one side by the *ornamental*, with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence, and on the other, by the *everyday*, whose “prosiness” is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over by women” (4).

In this chapter, I begin by looking more closely at the notion that memory-craft is both a form of domestic technology and is at the same time constructed through techniques of domestic technology. I also focus on contemporary methods of domestic technology which are now accessible due to the availability of electronic equipment in the home and discuss how old and newer forms of technology are mixed to create memory-craft. Finally, I try to determine how methods used to create memory-craft pass down and record memory.

My mixture of narrative and analysis continues as I use the persona of Tess to tell a story within a story and connect narrative with analysis. Tess is forced to examine her own life while she reads more from her aunt’s letter and becomes fascinated with the family secret. As the researcher and writer of this study, I am layering and piecing together elements of fact and fiction. My manuscript is a mirror of this research approach where the text, part fictionalized story and part academic analysis, physically appear different.



After filing for unemployment, I went directly over to Richard’s house to help mom some more. When I arrived, she had a label machine in one hand and a pencil behind her ear. I asked for my next assignment and she directed me to clear out the upstairs’

closet. It contained odds and ends of clothing that were designated for Good Will: sweaters, coats, and an old soft flannel shirt. I remember seeing him wear the shirt a few times, and as I pulled it down off the hanger, I held it up to my nose and inhaled. It smelled of the sweet tobacco that had slowly killed him.

Like Uncle Richard, Mamie's mother-in-law, Amelia, also had time to consider who would receive her belongings after she died. She prepared for her death by purchasing a headstone, casket, burial plot, and a new dress to be buried in. According to Mamie's letter to Ida, Amelia became obsessed with the details of who would get what. Even after Amelia's death, her goal was to exude her infecting form of control over a family she claimed to love:

"But Mrs. Dudley had planned this for years. She had letter after letter written. She had written to all the children, and had told just how she wanted to be buried, and what she wanted on her tombstone, and some places the dates would be put of her death, and her age, and then she would have that rubbed out. Suppose she would think she would kill herself and then put it off. Riley's letter was written in December, 1913. She had it sealed, and written on the envelope – Don't open this till after I am dead a month. She had page after page written to Mr. Dudley. And she had two books started. One was a story of her life, the other would have been to torment Minnie. She did not get either one finished. She had been writing on her birthday, just nine days before her death. She had the book entitled, The Price She Paid, or, The Fatal Mistake. She started it when Minnie was born and told of her being the child of her old age, and when she grew up - I had Minnie always. We slept in each others arms, and was never apart. - Then, she went on to tell everything about her life, and where she got to going with the

boys and I don't know what all, but the price she paid was her mother's life. If Minnie had lived, it would have been hard for her. She just wrote piles of stuff. She would say, "Minnie doesn't love Mother any more, she only loves Harve Minton. May God forgive her." She told what she wanted every one to have. Every thing that she had paid part on, she gave to Mr. Dudley, but everything that was all her own, she gave to the children. All the presents they had given her came back to them. She sent me a handkerchief that Riley had given her 17 years ago. She asked me to keep it for Mother's sake, and he gave her a set of dishes when she was 44 years old, that came back to him. She had written she wanted me to have two of her dresses. A dark serge, and a tan voile. She gave us her parlor rug. A brussels rug, green with red roses. It is very pretty and a lot of her books.

In the front of each one was written, "Give this to W.R. Dudley after I am dead. Amelia Dudley, your mother." She had divided her books among all the children. She had all her rugs given away. She told just who she wanted to have each thing. She had the initials worked in the covers of the feather beds for them. She gave Sophia two dresses and Arthur her dining room rug, and a set of silverware, and some books. Andrew, her wardrobe and parlor suite and some books. Ralph, her coccoo clock, a stand, rug, and pictures and books. Emily, a new corduroy dress she had just got, and her organ and feather bed and some books. Matilda, a feather bed, a black velvet dress, a marriage certificate and her grandparents pictures, all in large frames, and some books. In some of her writings she would say to Mr. Dudley, "If Minnie don't marry you can give her bed, and bedding. If she marries Harve Minton don't give her anything." Mr. Dudley said sometimes she would say for them to go right ahead and

marry, and then in an hour or so just be wild about it. He said one morning a long time ago, she came down stairs and said, "Well, Harve and Minnie are going to marry. She has been to Barry and got her wedding slippers. Well, I guess she could do no better. He has no bad habits," and was in good spirits about it, and the next day she was going to kill herself over it. So that is just the way she was. I don't see how Minnie ever stood it as long as she did."

When I returned home, I remembered Mamie's references to local a newspaper that had printed a sensationalized version of the suicides, so I began to organize some of Richard's boxes. Eventually, I found a box full of newspaper articles half full of a mix of clippings in brown accordion-style folders and half full of green hanging files with a range of dates on the tabs: 1900 – 1901; 1902 – 1903; 1904 – 1905. Inspired, I dug out the hanging folders I'd taken with me from my file cabinets at school. The contents of these folders, letters of recommendation, semesters of carefully planned syllabi, handouts for numerous writing and literature assignments, once seemed so important to me. Now they simple provided documentation of my disappointing academic career. Indiscriminately, I emptied every folder over a trash bag, tied up each bag, and deposited them into our dumpster. By the end of the afternoon, I finished filing each clipping into the correctly labeled file, and eventually, I also found the article Mamie was talking about. She was right. The published article was shocking:

Adage

27 October 1915

*TERRIBLE TRAGEDY NEAR BREWSTER,
MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TAKE STRYCHINE*

*Mrs. Elijah Dudley Forces Her Daughter to Take Poison – Was Opposed to the
Young Man She Was Going With.*

A terrible tragedy took place in the Brewster Hollow, south of New Canton, Sunday evening, which resulted in the death of Mrs. Elijah Dudley and her daughter Minnie. Mrs. Dudley was the mother of Professor Andrew Dudley and Mrs. Cal Reeves, both of whom reside in this city. The story of the tragedy is a very peculiar one and some of the mother's actions during the past few months leave little doubt that Mrs. Dudley has not been of sound mind for some time and that she had decided, at least, to commit suicide herself. A few weeks ago she called at the undertaking parlors of Ed Keller and selected a casket and paid for it. When told that she was healthy looking and seemed to have many years to live yet, she answered by saying that she was afflicted with heart trouble and might drop off at any time.

The story told, however, as to the cause of the terrible tragedy indicates that she was opposed to the young man, Harvey Minton, with whom the daughter was keeping company, and the mother insisted that her daughter, whose age is given as twenty years, should not marry Minton. It is said that the daughter told Minton that she could not marry him as long as her mother lived, after the mother had refused Minton to visit the daughter at the family home.

On Sunday last Miss Dudley and a lady friend went to a neighbor's for a visit. There she met Ralph Minton. Some neighbor informed Mrs. Dudley that her daughter

and Ralph Minton were visiting at the same house and the mother went there and ordered her daughter to go home.

Mr. Elijah Dudley and his son Andrew had been somewhere, and just as they had returned home and were in the yard they heard Mrs. Dudley scream. They ran into the house and discovered that the screaming came from a room up-stairs. They went up and found the door locked. Mr. Dudley forced the door open, and when he and his son entered he found his daughter dead and his wife in convulsions, which soon ended in death. He found a glass in which was strychnine and a butcher knife with some blood on it. He also noticed that his daughter had been roughly handled, as she had three cuts on her wrists, her hair was all down and her clothing torn. From these signs it was almost a certainty that the mother told the daughter to take the strychnine, and that she at first refused to do so, and that her refusal led to the fight between her and her mother who evidently used the knife in her effort to compel the daughter to swallow the poison, which she finally did.

If Mamie was right, and Amelia did *not* force Minnie to drink the strychnine, then why did she do it? Minnie's world was so small, made up of friends, family, and home. Only in her 20s, she had her whole life to look forward to. I hoped Aunt Mamie would explain it all to me in her letter and journals, a world that to me seemed so simple compared to my own.



Minnie Dudleys' sheltered family life is not unusual for her time or social class. She came from a middle class home, and as was expected, she would continue to live

with her parents until she married. In a similar situation to Minnie, Emily Dickinson lived a sheltered life in the family home while at the same time writing a huge body of poetic work. The mystery of her reclusive existence continues to be an area of interest to scholars and the poet's fans; however, even while Dickinson chose to rarely leave her home, she managed to live an eventful life. Domestic duties and her writing filled many hours: baking, horticulture, and housework filled her days, and during all this, she still managed to continue to conduct a large correspondence through her letters as well as write her poetry. She industriously used her domestic environment.

Though not a twenty-first century memory-crafter, Emily Dickinson provides an early example of the use of domestic technology to craft text, which itself becomes a form of domestic technology. The poet assembled a number of her own hand-stitched booklets and decorated her poetry and letters with bits and pieces of ephemera, thus sharing many of the same techniques as contemporary altered book crafters. She provided her own source text for alteration, and "as reader and writer at play/work, Dickinson drew upon a pool of [...] textual clippings," her own private collection of clip art, which she "valued [...] as part of her poetic production" (Holland 150). These clippings and other paper pieces were sometimes used in a collage affect to connect to a poem's content, making "connections between image and poem" (146). Jeanne Holland refers to Dickinson's use of making small booklets and embellishing her letters with bits of ribbon and other scraps as a way for the poet to "progressively [refine] her own domestic technologies of publication" (141).

Much the same way Dickinson used the materials she collected from her domestic sphere to publish her work, so do contemporary memory-crafters. They collect

memorabilia from their local environment and assemble them with the purpose of recording personal memories and events in their lives. Today's memory-crafting is most often conducted by women in the home using a mixture of gathered scraps and items purchased from local craft stores. The domestic space used for crafting is part of the process. They work wherever they can find a spare spot – on the kitchen table, in a spare room, in a corner of the family room. They work on their crafts in the home and among family just as they work at their domestic duties of cooking and cleaning.

An important distinction remains between the home-crafter and the studio artist, as professional book artists attempt to differentiate their work from that of the amateur. Book artist and Robertson Professor of Media Studies at the University of Virginia, Johanna Drucker is concerned that no vocabulary or canon of work exists to clearly divide book art into home-craft and studio-art, and she argues that “our critical apparatus is about as sophisticated as that which exists for needlework, decoupage, and other ‘crafts’ using materials from Michaels.” Drucker is correct about the difference between the two, and I believe it is important to make this distinction. Home-made memory-crafts are usually crafted differently and purposed differently. The home-crafter is not occupied with the idea of “creative work [as] procedural” (Drucker) but is more focused on personal expression and sometimes genealogical preservation. Dickinson circulated her altered-text to a small group of associates, primarily through letter writing. It is not possible to know why she assembled her booklets, but as the poet never aspired to print her work, it is likely that she did not expect her booklets to be displayed to a mass audience. Like the commonplace book or travel journal, the finished piece created by the home-crafter is intended for the eyes of a few select friends and family

and not for examination by a museum curator or art critic. Ultimately, the home-produced memory-craft becomes a form of domestic discourse where the book-form is used as an apparatus for housing personal memories.

Through common methods of paper-art procedures, “technology can be carried out as a craft” (Keller 31). Some examples include gluing memorabilia or ephemera onto pages in a book; embellishing covers or pages with decorative fibers; assembling and attaching photographs; and providing small bits of text and journaling next to visual elements throughout the book. All of these methods incorporate materials and tools ordinarily found in the home (paper, paste, scissors, and notions).

In Gwen Diehn’s *The Decorated Page: Journals, Scrapbooks, and Albums Made Simply Beautiful*, she illustrates various traditional paper techniques and their use in paper arts. One example is the travel journal made by Pamela Lyle Westhaver, entitled *Salt Spring 2000*. In her journal, Westhaver pastes memorabilia such as movie and cruise ship tickets onto blank pages of a book. Then she hand writes a description of the event she is documenting. On another page, she attaches a clear plastic pocket to the page, journals around it, and inserts a group of photographs into the pocket. Other embellishments in the book include the use of assorted papers, watercolor pencils and crayon (34).

Electronic forms of technology have begun to encroach on the simple “cut and paste” methods. Flatbed scanners, digital cameras, color printers, and personal computers are commonly found in today’s middle class home. Domestic technology now includes this digital equipment, and the home memory-crafter seamlessly combines these media of hand-craft and digital-craft. Digital pictures are printed at home on

glossy paper using a special photograph-friendly color printer that can match the same dots per inch accomplished at the local one-hour photo shop. These digitally created images are then hand-pasted into a hardcopy book and embellished with collected scraps of memorabilia. The final touch is hand-written comments posted around the photographs. Polly Smith, in her crafted book entitled *Simon*, color photocopied a hospital receiving blanket. Then she added a photograph of the infant, Simon, and used this for the cover of the book (Diehn 49). Smith's book-cover technique is a typical example of how old and new media are commonly mixed together to become the ingredients of a modern memory-craft item.

A further development in memory-craft media is "digital scrapbooking" also referred to as "computer scrapbooking," which is becoming increasingly popular. Dozens of hardcopy books and Internet websites exist for memory-crafters who are working entirely via electronic equipment, from digital photographs to typed text. Corel Draw, Adobe Photoshop, and Paintshop Pro are software packages used to digitally assemble scrapbooks. Cutting and pasting are accomplished with a mouse rather than scissors and glue. Instead of a hardcopy version of the finished craft, files are stored electronically, saved to computer disk, or sometimes uploaded to personal websites.

As hardcopy or digitalized, through the use of crafting techniques, memory-crafters store and collect the past. Scraps, photographs, and journals allow the average home-crafter to assemble memories for future generations, and while memory-crafters collect and construct scrapbooks, journals, and altered books, they become stewards of autobiographical information.

Tess is also becoming a digital archivist as she begins to dig deeper into Richard's boxes of family memorabilia. After using computer technology in both a work and home environment, she is comfortable with digital equipment, and though she has a background in arts and crafts, her first instinct is to preserve Richard's records electronically.



I didn't allow myself to read any more of Mamie's letter until I managed to get through some of Richard's boxes. The box marked "Photographs" piqued my curiosity. Unfortunately, when I opened it, I discovered that it was filled with stacks and stacks of photographs. I searched for Minnie and Amelia, and I soon found three pictures. The first was a picture of a man with a young girl, about two or three years old, sitting on one of his knees. She was wearing a white dress with ruffles, and her hands were clasped together in her little lap. Her hair was parted in the middle and pulled back. Next to him, stood a woman with darker hair, severely pulled back except for one curl that lay against her forehead. She wore a dark dress, and one hand was placed on the back of the chair while her other arm rested to her side. The man wore a dark suit. His hair was parted to one side, and the rest of his face was covered by a heavy beard and mustache. On the back was written: *Elijah Dudley; Amelia Leddon Dudley; Minnie E. Dudley (late in life child)*. The background behind the family of three looked like a painting of faux clouds.

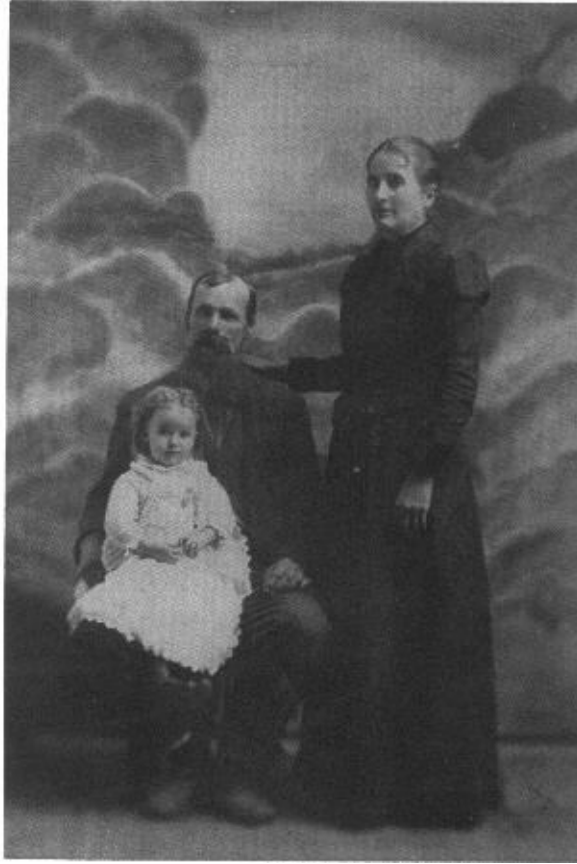


Figure 3: Elijah Dudley; Amelia Leddon Dudley; Minnie E. Dudley

The second photograph I found of the three of them was probably about ten years later. Elijah and Amelia were considerably older. His beard was completely white and her hair was streaked white and gray. Minnie's dark hair reached down to her waist. Her expression was one of patience, of calmness, of maybe serenity. She looked loved, and I wondered: Was she happy then?



Figure 4: Elijah Dudley; Minnie E. Dudley; Amelia Leddon Dudley

Finally, the third photo I dug up was just of Minnie. She was now a young woman and wore black laced up boots and a simple light-colored cotton shirt and skirt. It was hard to tell exactly how old she was and there was no information other than her name scrawled on the back of the photograph, but she looked around 18 to 20 years old, about the same age she was when she killed herself. She was no longer the calm, serene little girl in the previous picture. Instead, she was self-conscious, maybe even a little anxious. I looked into her face. A weak smile with timid eyes peered back at me. She wasn't going to tell me anything, but Mamie would.



Figure 5: Minnie E. Dudley

I located a photo of Aunt Mamie and her husband, Riley. They made a striking couple. He had deep-set, mysterious looking eyes and dark hair parted in the middle. He wore a wool suite and bow tie. Mamie had a luscious mass of dark hair piled into a bun on top of her head. Like her husband, Riley, she looked seriously into the camera lens. Her perfectly proportioned eyes, lips, and high cheekbones were set off by a lacy white high-collared blouse.



Figure 6: Mamie Veach Dudley; Riley Dudley

I soon discovered other photographs of the couple and also their children, Zola, LaVerne, Loren, and Virgil. One picture even included a pet deer they named Dixie. Still a fawn, the animal had white pok-a-dots and a small leather leash around its neck. This photograph was pasted to a piece of paper, and to the right was written: *“Dixie was the family’s pet deer. According to LaVerne in an interview conducted by Richard Dudley in 1970, Riley had killed the fawn’s mother while hunting. When he realized the fawn belonged to her, he decided to take it home and care for it so it wouldn’t starve to death. On the first day he brought her home, Dixie ran inside and made herself at home, just like a dog or cat. The family fell in love with her instantly.”*



Figure 7: Zola Dudley; Riley Dudley; Virgil Dudley; LaVerne Dudley; Mamie Veach Dudley; Loren Dudley; Dixie

By the end of the afternoon, I had the box together and I felt pretty good. I had accomplished my goal for the day. Then I had a thought. Why not scan in all these photographs? That way, they'd be preserved forever, and maybe I'd even make up a web page some day. I continued to work late into the night until I had all of them scanned, resized, saved, and organized in virtual folders on my hard drive.

After finally getting to bed, I dreamt my mother and Amelia were working together to organize all of Amelia's worldly possessions. Mom was wielding her label maker around while Amelia told her who got each item in her house. Ralph got the coo coo clock, so with a zap and a zing, mom printed up the word "Ralph" on a label and handed it to Amelia, who then peeled off the backing and stuck it to the clock. They continued

this process with rugs, feather beds, books, picture frames, furniture, and dresses. The whole time, I was walking around the house asking them where Minnie was, but neither of them would talk to me. They were too busy and acted as if I was in the way. When I awoke, I still felt this same feeling of frustration, and it haunted me the rest of the day.



Tess is haunted by the memories recorded by her Aunt Mamie, especially the description of the double suicide of Amelia and Minnie Dudley. Richard's collection began as a way for Tess to become distracted from her problems, but it is becoming more than just a distraction now for Tess. The stories are a way for her to enter into the past and learn about women from her family who were not unlike herself.

Mamie Veach Dudley's documentation of her family's travels and tragedies were written when she had time between her domestic duties. In between grinding coffee, peeling potatoes, and nursing a sick child, she felt it important to write down every day events. Some, like the family suicide, are sensational while other comments she includes in her writings are full of mundane details. Even then, these details illustrate a different world to the reader who, so many years later, is removed physically by time. These everyday details can be just as important as sensational stories since they show us how she and her family lived from day to day. From Mamie's journal titled "Our Trip South 1901" she writes about her husband and another man hunting:

Riley and Milt had bought eleven ducks for decoys. While we were camped above Louisiana, they disappeared. We did not know what had become of them but when we got to Louisiana we found them in the market. Some man found

them swimming down the river. He thought they were some ones decoys and drove them into the market. It cost them one dollar to get ten of them (1).

Mamie's journals and letters provide a body of familial knowledge that might not otherwise exist. Even my own grandmother, Juanita Dudley Goff, only recently learned about the double suicide of Amelia and Minnie Dudley, known as "The Brewster Tragedy." Growing up, my grandmother knew *of* a family secret, but it was never spoken of and the adults in her family felt it necessary to continue to keep silent about it. Since she was the youngest of eight children, it is understandable that my grandmother was protected from the truth, but as the years progressed, so did the silence. Fewer and fewer family members knew the story until Mamie's letter and journal were discovered by a cousin, Roger Dudley, who was conducting family genealogical research.

In 1988, Roger Dudley interviewed one of the last of the Dudleys who was alive during the tragedy, Zola Dudley, daughter of Mamie Veach Dudley. Zola was 16 at the time, and during the 1988 interview, she reluctantly talked about what happened. Other members of the interview include Zola's daughter, KorDova, and other family members who attempted to urge Zola to speak more about what had happened. However, Roger had to repeatedly ask her for information because of the stigma attached to this family secret:

Zola: We have clippings about Amelia and Minnie's death.

About 45 minutes later I brought it up again.

Roger: You mentioned you had the clippings on the deaths of Amelia and Minnie.

KorDova: That is something that mom is not happy to let out, when Norma (White) [from Amelia's family] came seeking information she wouldn't let her see those, but they do have the clippings.

Zola: Ruth and Gladys didn't want it told and wasn't about to say nothing.

KorDova: I'm not sure they knew a great deal about it at that time. But there's truth in it.

Kathryn: Where did Virgil get that?

Wayne: Gladys and Ruth told him I think.

KorDova: Wayne said that someone said they had been suffocated, smothered, (Minnie) but she wasn't.

Wayne: That's what Kathryn (Rogers' wife) told, she said that Rita Fitch told her, she's the one that told them. We were quizzing her, she had never even told Roger, her husband, about it. So we started and she said, that's what I heard.

Zola: We never heard that, maybe it happened that way I don't know.

KorDova: But the mother was so protective of this daughter and didn't want her to marry this boy and they were crazy about each other, they went to church that day and so the mother told her I'm going home and kill myself. It was in that newspaper article.

Roger: Was this the New Canton newspaper?

KorDova: I think so.

Zola: The Barry Adage maybe. The New Canton Press and the Barry Adage was the two papers. Only seven miles distance between the towns.

KorDova: But anyway they just sort of stood outside in the yard and visited for a while Elijah and Andrew, and grandma was still alive and then when they finally broke the door and went in and grandma was still alive and Minnie was dead and she said she couldn't believe it she took the poison before I did, it must have been strychnine. Grandma had taken it quite a while before Minnie did but Minnie died first. But Minnie said I can never live with this so I might as well end it all.

Zola: Kind of makes you sick to think about this,

KorDova: Moma doesn't like to talk about it or anybody else to talk about it. In those days something like that was a disgrace...

Zola: Well it was, such a tragedy too.

KorDova: And I guess when Elijah came out here he would sit and cry all the time.

Zola: I remember that. Loren would have to sleep with him and it was awful.

Loren slept with him and he'd be a crying and

Loren never did forget it. I can see why.

KorDova: They brought all of Grandma's Amelia's jewels out and Mom wanted them so bad and her mother wouldn't let her touch them and then when Aunt Emily came down Grandpa Elijah brought em all and said, "Here" gave them all to Emily. After Mother Dudley (Mamie) died Emily had us all up there (Greeley) for Christmas.

If not for Mamie's documentation, Minnie Dudley and her story might have been forgotten, and above all, people such as Minnie deserve to be remembered, especially

by her own family. Silence originally intended to protect eventually becomes a way to forget and hide the truth.

Ignoring the truth is a way to find relief from pain. The pain experienced by Tess mixes with the pain she imagines Minnie must have felt before she finally decided to kill herself. While it is difficult to understand why anyone would take the drastic step of suicide to escape a problem, to some extent Tess can empathize with the young woman who had few options available and what seemed like little family support.



One evening, Mark and I finally sat down for a talk about our finances. Admittedly, I knew little about the money we both made any more, and with everything else I was trying to deal with, I hadn't given more than a passing thought about it. But Mark had. He had crunched the numbers and determined that and we're going to be fine for at least the next six months. We probably wouldn't have to dip into our savings, and though we wouldn't be paying off the credit cards like we'd hoped, my unemployment would keep us floating for a while. However, after the six month mark, we are going to have to get creative if I didn't find some work.

Mark was sensitive enough not to point-blank ask me what I planned to do, but realistically, that's just what he was doing. And, I didn't know how to reply because I didn't have an answer to the question that he *didn't* ask me: "Tess Forrester, what are you going to do with the rest of your life?"

I thought for a moment of Minnie's answer to a similar question she posed to herself: "What was she going to do with her life?" If she married Harvey, her mother would kill herself and she'd have to live with that guilt and shame the rest of her life. If

she stayed at home and never married, her mother would continue to psychologically torture her every time she looked at a man or acted the least bit independent. Either way, she was guaranteed not to ever be happy.

Of course, I was not a 20-year-old girl in the mid-1900s with few choices. In fact, I was bombarded with choices. Mark and I had had no children; we felt complete with each other, and this never really changed even after 16 years of marriage and 5 years of courtship. So, at an age when many women were either having children for the first time or gearing their teenagers for college, I was still free to come and go as I pleased. Except for my husband and two cats, I didn't have to think about anyone else other than myself. I could do whatever I wanted, but that was the trick, finding out what I wanted. I thought I knew, but Fate was somehow telling me, "No, you only thought you wanted to be a college professor. You were wrong, so go find something else to be, and you've got six months, so get busy!"

Mark's sweet and understanding position was wonderful, but that didn't change my situation. It was there again waiting for me when I got up the next morning, and the question that I stored in the back of my brain only got louder each day that I woke up and began again to try to answer it. Actually, this question had always troubled me. I confess that I never really felt sure about any direction in my life. I felt like I could do a lot of things, but finding that one thing, *the thing*, always eluded me.

I did my best to ignore it and continued working in the guest room. This was now my life. I had taken Richard's life, adopted it for awhile, and as I organized, reorganized, scanned pictures and documents, labeled folders, and sorted through odds and ends of his treasured hobby, I began to think less and less about the question that had troubled

me for weeks. I returned to Mamie's letter to her sister Ida, looking for more about the Brewster story:

Minnie would write to Zola but you could never tell anything was wrong. I guess she couldn't send or receive a letter without her mother reading it. Last summer Mrs. Dudley wrote to us and said she had her burial clothes all ready and was going to town in a few days and buy her casket and tombstone. She said she had the carbolic acid ready and when ever Minnie married she was going to take it. Well she wrote that to us, Emily and Arthur. Matilda went down and stayed two or three days with them, and Minnie got a chance to tell her a few things. When she went back home she sat down and wrote to Emily. Arthur Davis sent us the letter, and told Riley, "For God sake write to your mother, as poor Minnie's life depends on it." Matilda sais in her letter "Poor little angel Minnie, for she must be an angel if there ever was one on earth, she does all the work, and waits on Mother, just does every thing for her, and is tortured all the time. She is just a mere shadow and I can't believe can live very long." She says poor Mother must be insane. She said she had letters written to all the children and told them it was Minnie's meanness and lies that caused her death, and had these letters laid on chairs, dressers, and every where so Minnie could read them ever way she would turn, and then she would dress in her burial clothes and walk around before her and she wouldn't let Minnie be with Harvey at all unless she was with them. She would go to church, and she would walk in-between them and sit between them, and Minnie knew they would be made a fuss of and would want to stay at home and Mrs. Dudley would make her go, because she wanted her to enjoy herself. She said Minnie and Harvey made up then that they wouldn't go together anymore while she lived, then Mrs. Dudley wrote and told

him if he didn't come back she would kill herself, and Matilda wrote, "It is death either way and hell the way it is." Well we knew Minnie was having a time. Riley wrote his mother a long letter talking to her about suicide. Telling her they had no chance to be forgiven, and I don't know what all. She answered right away and told him to not worry about Mother, she wasn't wroth it. She had faith in God, and all things were possible with God, and he had did more wonderful things than to save a poor old half crazy mother.

That was the last letter we got from her. We neglected to answer, and had not written to her any more, as we seen it would do no good. She said, "Minnie seems to be trying to keep her promise, and as long as she does, every thing will be all right, but when she breaks it, I will bid good bye to all." Minnie nor Mr. Dudley never wrote us a thing. I guess they had no chance.

Mr. Dudley says they went to the New Canton Fair Saturday, and he worked in Ralph's store. There was a home talent play in the hall that night. He was going to walk home and Mrs. Dudley told him to come up in the hall, and wait till the play was out, and they would all three ride home together. He said after the play was out Harvey came up and sais, "Mrs. Dudley, won't you let Minnie ride home with me." She sais, "No, I won't," just so loud ever one could hear her, and he just turned and went home. He must have been an awful good fellow or he would have stolen her and ran away long ago, but Minnie knew what she would do, and I suppose hated to do any thing that would cause her to take her life.

Well, they went to Sunday School to town Sunday morning, and Mr. Dudley didn't know her and Harvey made up to meet or if they had spoken to each other or not. He

was away that afternoon. Minnie and Gladys Chase went to Harry Easleys and Harvey was there. I have an idea Mrs. Dudley just followed her to see if she did see him. She came any way and took the horse and buggy home. Minnie went and talked to her, and the girls told at the inquest that Minnie said her mother told her to stay as long as she wanted to, but they said Minnie just turned all colors! I have an idea she told her to stay, that Mother wouldn't be there to bother her when she got home. Well, the Easley girls took her home right away. They ask her if they hadn't better go in with her, and she said no she wasn't afraid.

Oh, if Harvey had only gone with her, and stayed with her. But of course she would have been afraid to have let him go. I have an idea she thought if she went in alone she could do more with her mother than if some one was with her. Mr. Dudley worries so much about not being at home. When he got home, Andrew was there, and he sais, "Andy, why didn't you go in?" He sais, "The house is locked." Mr. Dudley sais, "Oh they never lock the house," and he said they talked out in the yard at least an hour and a half. He told Andy about the troubles, the first he had known anything about it, and after while Harvey came. He went and knocked at the door and Mr. Dudley told him there was no one at home. He said they stayed out and talked, and after while Andy said he must go home. It had got pretty cool, and Mr. Dudley said he would get him a coat. They went in the hall, and he heard Mrs. Dudley call his name three times. He sais, "Andy, there's something the matter here." Andy kicked the door in and there was Mrs. Dudley laid, right in the middle of the floor dressed in those burial clothes. Andy sais, "What's the matter?" She said, "I have just taken the fatal dose." They said, "Where's Minnie?" She said, "Up stairs in the same fix I'm in."

They ran up stairs, and Harvey grabbed her in his arms, and begged her to speak to him, but she could not. Andy called Rainwater to come as quick as possible, and ask what to do while he was on the way. Mrs. Rainwater said to give them raw eggs and lard. He said Mrs. Dudley said she didn't want to take them, and he said you've got to take them, and she said, "Well, if you will it, I'll take them, but it will do no good, it's strychnine." He said she wanted him to be careful and not get any on her dress. When the doctor came he was going to put medicine in her arm, and he couldn't get her sleeve up, and he said he would have to cut it. She said, "NO, you won't do any thing of that kind, this is my burial dress." Mr. Dudley said he told him to cut it any way.



As Tess comes closer to finishing the letter, she learns more about the Dudley's tragic story of a mother and daughter who could not live together and found death to be the only answer to their problems. Learning of the story, however, only brings up more questions than answers at this point, and by digging through Richard's archives and organizing them with the use of home computer equipment, Tess attempts to make some sense out of the fragments he has collected over the years. The paper pieces from the family archives, some pasted together on black construction paper, others left in unorganized piles in boxes, resemble the beginnings of a traditional scrapbook that has not yet been assembled.

Scraps, most often in the form of paper pieces, are readily available to the home-crafter because they are found in the home in the form of books, newspapers, and periodicals. Dating back to Emily Dickinson's crafting of her books and correspondence, clippings were a method for recycling and reusing items from her domestic environment.

Contemporary memory-crafters follow the same practice, but today, most women of Dickinson's social class also have the added use of electronic technology available in their homes. This expands the notion of domestic technology so that it now includes computer and peripheral equipment along with paper and glue.

Twenty-first century female memory-crafters may not have the added domestic requirements of doing all the family baking, for example, but it is usually more convenient to work on their crafts in the same general area where they must perform regular domestic chores such as cooking dinner. Thus the home is a critical element of the process, one that becomes much different than that of a professional book artist because their purposes are not the same. The home-crafter is more concerned with preserving her personal and family narrative while a studio-artist is more preoccupied with the creative process.

With affordable and accessible computer equipment combined with a trip to a local craft store, old and new media are easily mixed together in today's modern take on memory-crafting. Some crafters prefer to use computers and scanners to create personalized ephemeral material that they use in a final hardcopy scrapbook, altered book, or art journal. Others are moving more and more towards techniques which are created and then stored digitally. Both types of crafter share the same purpose of collecting and archiving the past for future generations, who may lose this knowledge if it is not preserved. Women's journaling as domestic discourse, whether as a scrapbook or diary, provide a means for remembering and for retelling our stories.

CHAPTER FOUR: COMPOSING PERSONAL NARRATIVES THROUGH MEMORY-CRAFTS

As memory-crafters construct their art journals and scrapbooks, they are literally constructing personal narratives. Piecing together fragments of text and visual elements allows them to show and tell the stories of their lives. They organize their memories into “self-told life narrative[s],” (Bruner 695) creating stories that eventually become autobiographies: “Narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative” (692).

Autobiography has long been a genre reflected in female discourse as women have had to work “from outside the oral tradition because of the simple fact that women were not commonly subjected to the orally based rhetorical training that boys got in school” (Ong 159). One alternative to more traditional rhetoric is a reflective approach. Along with writing personal stories via journaling and memory-craft construction, women began to incorporate memoir into other areas of writing, most notably that of the early women novelists. Walter Ong explains that these “non-rhetorical styles congenial to women writers helped make the novel what it is: more like a conversation than a platform performance” (160). An alternative, conversational form of discourse came from the efforts of early female novelists who were able “to experiment in ways of narrating women’s experiences within the constraints imposed on them by society’s notions as to what was suitable for publication” (Sanders 75 – 76). Authors such as Jane Austen crafted their novels by gleaning from their own worlds. Their familiar everyday surroundings and activities provided storylines and characters to fill their

fictional pages. Austen edited her personal story, cutting and pasting, rearranging, and connecting fragments of her life to form her novels.

Recording memories, even edited memories, allows opportunity for self-exploration. Women are most often the archivists of family life. The task of preserving family memories is added to other home-duties which protect and preserve a family's daily needs. Novel writing employs the use of fiction, and though memory-crafts are most often factual recordings, both alternative forms of writing share the use of autobiography and memoir techniques.

Using a similar methodology as those of early women novelists who mixed their own lives with those of their characters', this study continues to follow the format of fiction mingled with fact. In this interweaving of women's stories – Tess, Mamie, Minnie, and my own – and the examination of memory-craft as autobiography, I continue to move back and forth as I stitch them together through my own research, “a connecting, assembling, a bringing together of things in relation to one another” (Greene 297). I start with examining the similarities between alternative forms of female discourse, novel and memory-craft, to determine their commonalities. Then I consider how these alternative genres might be forms of feminist rhetoric. Next, I look at memories as a type of knowledge in order to establish the repercussions of lost, unrecorded memories. As I examine the connection between women's memory-craft and writing craft, I also want to achieve a better understanding of why women have taken the lead as memory archivists, and why they continue to gravitate towards non-traditional writing methods even during the twenty-first century.

Tess is again my main character in the storyline of this chapter. At this point in the narrative, she has been reading the story of “The Brewster Tragedy” as told by her great, great Aunt Mamie Veach Dudley through a letter to her sister, Ida Veach Bowman. As a result, Tess is uncovering the family secret that involves the double suicide of a domineering mother, Amelia Dudley, and her pitiable daughter, Minnie Dudley, whose fate was to be the cause of her mother’s death and her own. Tess finds herself drawn to Mamie’s storytelling out of both curiosity and a way to escape from her current unhappy circumstances. However, Tess is still forced to face her own professional tragedy of sorts as she tries to piece together a new career for herself. Unlike Minnie and female novelists of the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Tess has an overwhelming number of choices, which she feels adds even more pressure to finding the answer to a question that has always troubled her: “What are you going to do with your life?”



That night, I thought of Minnie before I dozed off to sleep, and she was soon in my dreams. I was sitting in a movie theater watching her on a movie screen. Mark sat a few rows in front of me. His hair was the usual tangled mess, and the light from the overhead projector highlighted some grey hairs that had recently started to appear.

First, I saw Minnie celebrating at a friend’s birthday party. Then she walked out of the house where the party was and started walking towards an old barn. It was dark out except for a full moon over head. She stepped into the barn with one foot, and leaned her head in a little calling out, “Harvey? Harvey, are you here?”

“Boo!” said Harvey, and he jumped in front of her.

She squealed with fright and delight at the same time, "You frightened me!"

He didn't reply and they both disappeared into the barn.

I woke up, and looked over at Mark. Milo, one of our cats, was sleeping in the spot right between our pillows, and when I turned and opened my eyes, he stretched, reached over, and put a paw on my forehead. Mark's back was towards me. By the morning, the dream I had was a little foggy, but I could remember parts of it, and before I worked on any more boxes, I decided it was time to finish Mamie's letter to her sister:

Well, Ida, this letter may sound awful foolish to you. This is Saturday morning and I will try and bring the letter to a close and send it to you. I have tried to tell you all about it, and by writing so many different times, I may have written the same thing over two or three times, as I did not read it over to see what I had written. But I knew you would like to hear all about it. I will tell you about Minnie's note she left. I have an idea when she got home, her mother has been all dressed in these burial clothes, and have her a talking to, and swallowed the strychnine right before her, and she has thought everyone would be against her, and has been so excited she went up stairs and took it herself. She wrote a note and put it under a stand cover in her room. It seems as though Rita (Matilda's girl) had talked mean to her. She said: "Now Rita, you see what I meant when I told you you would some day be sorry of your harsh words to me."

She started the note saying: "Dear Ones, So you all think I am doing wrong, do you? Are displeased with me? Rita said you were. Well, if you had my life to live 24 hours, and try as hard to live right, as I have, then you would see, I can't live it any longer when I hear every day that I am killing Mamma. And she won't let me do any thing to make things better. I begged so hard for her to let me live, but alas - I can't, so I

must leave you all here to be angels, while Satan must claim me. I have offered every thing in my power, but she won't consent to any thing, only to take her life, so I haven't any thing left to live for."

Farewell,

Your lost one

This is what I remember of it and then she said she had over a hundred dollars in the bank, amply enough for her expenses. Bank book in dresser drawer.

Well, it was awful sad but as Virgil sais, "It's already done, and is too late to be helped, so we just as well try and get it off our minds."

There was so many things Riley couldn't tell me when he got back, and I wrote to Emily, and asked her a lot of questions. Ida, I am going to send you Emily's letter, and the two latest pictures, and then I want you to send them back to me. I am sending them so you can see how she looked. The one where she is smiling is the last one she had taken. Mrs. Dudley sent it to us and you can see what she wrote on it. I think she just worried over Minnie leaving her till she went crazy. She never did want her kids to marry.

Ida, I was glad to get the card you sent me of Ma and your boy. Ma did not look natural. I think she would have looked more natural if she hadn't had those specs on. I am grandma too now. Virgil and wife have a fine boy. They named him Wayne. I think lots of Virgil's wife. She is an awful hard worker. She helps me lots. Does all my sewing. I am expecting the stork to bring me a Christmas present and I am having lots of nice things made, and sent and got some ready made.

Our children all go to school. Ida, I got Loren's and LaVerne's pictures taken a year ago, and intended to send you one, but as I seldom get time to write I did not get them sent off. I will send three now. One for you and Grace and ma. You give them to them. I got such a nice letter from Grace and have not answered it yet. You read this letter to them, and tell them I will try and write to them sometime. I don't get to write many letters, but I think I have broke the record this time. Here is 28 pages.

Would love to see you all,

Answer soon,

Lovingly, Mamie

I set the letter down and tried to concentrate on another box and to stop thinking of Minnie. I couldn't help but find her suicide note really disturbing. How can you just try to get something like that off your mind? Even so many years later, it was tragically sad. No one to help her, no one seemed to care much, even after it happened. It was "done," as Virgil had said. It was time to move on. My family today still doesn't want to talk about it. If we don't talk about it, then we can pretend it didn't happen.



Finishing the end of the letter brings Tess to the end of the story, at least one story of the Dudleys as told by Mamie. The lengthy letter is a compilation of memories from different members of the family: Mamie, Amelia, Minnie, Virgil, Elijah, and Riley. It was Mamie's intent to collect and record them.

Story-telling is integral to the construction of the novel as well as the compilation of memories and related artifacts into memory-crafts. Therefore it is an appropriate

place to begin examining the similarities between the early female novel and women's memory-crafting and the suggestion that both forms of writing-craft may be models for feminist rhetoric. While memory-crafts more often have a purpose of recording facts rather than creating a fictional world, the use of narration is still the focus of both types of discourse. Narrative lends itself to retelling memories as it is "an essential mode of understanding reality" because "telling stories fulfills the necessities of memory, testimony, and survival" (Friedman 228-9).

For the early novel, the story told was usually linear and followed traditional themes. In Jane Austen's writing, for example, many of the themes in her novels understandably revolve around the socially assigned roles of men and women "where the values endorsed by Austen seem to some to hearken backward to a more stable, coherent order and to others to undermine the patriarchal order" (Morrison). Though I cannot prove Austen intentionally infused her writing with "feminine vision," (Morrison) the social parody she creates in such novels as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion* are most likely the result of prescriptions imposed through conduct books, which indoctrinated women with advice on a wide variety of matters from how to spend their spare time to how they should care for the male members of their family, be they brother, father, or husband. Conduct writing advocated that "a woman's social environment presented her with too many forms of activity that smacked of amusement," and though the idea of "female labor" was not considered appropriate, "authors of conduct books generally insisted that the activities comprising the domestic arts – and therefore a women's duty – had to be carefully supervised" (Armstrong 99 – 100).

Austen's female heroines participate in many of these domestic activities. They are intelligent and well read but not overly bookish, even admitting to enjoying a scandalous novel such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe. Accomplished at least at one form of the leisure arts such as drawing, needlework, or music, her heroines can play the piano, stitch a piece of fancy work, or sketch a portrait, but they are not showy with their talents. Often excellent conversationalists, her heroines can handle themselves in any drawing room. The actions of Austen's characters are in accordance with the standards described in conduct writings and thus fit the role of the stereotypical female, but Austen also subtly comments on these stereotypes through characterization and direct narrative.

For memory-crafts, such as a scrapbook, the narrative may or may not follow a linear story-telling pattern like that of an Austen novel, depending on the theme. Sometimes it is a fragmented personal narrative where the author assembles bits and pieces of her life, attaching physical mementoes to the work along with textual descriptions. However, if a craft-text is documenting an event, such as a travel journal, a linear approach is often used. Mamie Veach Dudley's journals are examples of linear tales, as each describes the beginning, middle, and finally end of her journeys, including dates and times. The first narrated story is a trip down the Mississippi in a houseboat, an adventure with family and friends that turns tragic as eventually a member of the group is accidentally killed. In her second journal, Mamie narrates her family's move from Illinois to Colorado via covered wagon. As she writes about her family's trips, she describes her day-to-day activities, common to women of her time period. While her

husband leaves the boat or wagon to hunt or go into town, the women and children are left behind to take care of domestic duties:

Riley and Arthur woke the other boys and they landed the boat at 10:35. We staid at Memphis until Wednesday evening. The men went out in town. We wanted to go but on account of the children having whooping cough, could not.
(Dudley 8)

Years later, Juanita Dudley Goff, great niece to Mamie documented her own family vacations in a photo journal. She recorded a 1933 and a 1937 family car trip through the Colorado Mountains, pasting black and white photographs in a small bound album with pages made of black construction paper. In white pencil, barely readable today, Juanita scrawled in short captions and occasional paragraphs to describe the trips:

Monday June 14, 1937 – Went fishing [...] Caught 48 fish. Had a picnic dinner. We sat in a wood to eat. [...] Boy oh! Boy was I tired. I caught 3 fish. I fell in [...] after I caught my third fish. I was so excited. It was the largest fish of all. (Goff 30)

Like Austen, neither Mamie nor Juanita may have purposely attempted to address their roles as women, but undeniably this is the result as we see a photograph of Jaunita cooking dinner over a fire or we read about Mamie nursing a sick child. Though not raised on the teachings of conduct books, each woman clearly understood her role as caretaker of the family.

As Walter Ong explains, early women writers “worked from outside the oral tradition” (159), so this lead to alternative writing practices, including the novel and

memory-craft assemblage. Virginia Woolf also questions this shift to nontraditional writing methods by women, and she begins with examining “the origin of the extraordinary outburst in the eighteenth century of novel writing by women” (“Women Novelists” 14). According to Woolf, “nothing is known about women before the eighteenth century” because “history scarcely mentions her” (*A Room* 45, 44). Therefore, they created their own rhetorical voice to fit their abilities, making “new decisions about the form and direction of their memories” (Sanders 100). Novels were one method, and memory-craft was another model for women to document their lives. Narration provided choices for women writers, “marginalized groups in highly literate domains where the oral tradition is but a trace of a memory” (Friedman 230).

Autobiography was the main ingredient of both these writing methods. A woman’s life was centered on the home, and due to her sex, she was “excluded [...] from certain kinds of experience. Even their emotional life was strictly regulated by law and custom” (“Women and Fiction” 1258). Woolf goes on to explain that the result of this limited life experience was a uniquely feminine narrative voice. Authors such as Jane Austen were able to find their own style, which does not try to copy or impose a traditional, masculine structure. Like someone who is sitting in a drawing room talking to her readers, Austen uses a direct narrative approach.

Anne Brontë is another novelist who creates the appearance of autobiography rather than fiction by directly addressing the reader in the opening paragraph of *Agnes Grey*:

All true stories contain instruction; though in some, the treasure may be hard to find [...] Whether this be the case with my history or not, I am hardly competent

to judge; I sometimes think it might prove useful to some, and entertaining to others, but the world may judge for itself: shielded by my own obscurity, and the lapse of years, and a few fictitious names, I do not fear to venture, and will candidly lay before the public what I would not disclose to the most intimate friend. (1)

Will Hale describes the style of narrative in *Agnes Grey* as lacking artistry but also insists that it "does seem real" providing "all the actuality of a transcription of Anne's own life." To a certain extent, I believe Hale accurately describes Brontë's intent because she admits in the text that her purpose is to provide information rather than judgment. The details are culled from Anne Brontë's own horrible experiences while working as a governess. In order to inform the public about the pervasive abuse of women who must work as governesses, Brontë creates a fictional adaptation of the events from her own life (Hale). This use of informal narrative and autobiography again connect to the notions put forth by Ong and Woolf that women of this century developed their own style of story telling, and due to the limited sphere they lived in, they often used incidents from their own lives.

Anne Brontë's character, Agnes Grey, is much like herself. She is the youngest child, daughter of a clergyman, and educated at home. Though her family is considered middle class, they have little money, and this is one reason Agnes decides to become a governess. Also, like the Brontës, she wants the opportunity to explore more of the world because she has been exposed to only her immediate family and a few neighbors, rarely venturing more than a few miles from her home. Rather than be "made

to stagnate in a parsonage mending stockings” she wants “to wander free over the world” (*A Room* 73).

Techniques of narrative and autobiography allowed early women writers, novelists and memory-crafters, another model for writing about their lives and their familial experiences. Neither approach may have been intentionally purposed as feminist rhetoric. Jane Austen may have been truly more concerned with creating a fictional world for her readers. Anne Bronte might have decided to base her character of Agnes Grey on herself because, like most writers, she felt comfortable writing about what was familiar to her. Mamie and Juanita probably wrote as a way to record their trips for their children and grandchildren to read years later. Still, each woman found a way to preserve moments from their lives, illustrating with words and sometimes pictures what it was like in their world at that time. They were able to shape a “self-telling of life narratives” and “structure [their] perceptual experience[s], to organize memory” (Bruner 694). Therefore, it is worth considering if these similar writing models both resulted in a unique female voice.

A love of literature and storytelling is the original impetus for Tess’ return to school and wish for an academic career. Though most fiction is based on fact, especially that of the early women writers Tess enjoys reading, stories are also a way to escape into another world. In Tess’ case, it is a way to escape into someone else’s.



As I lived more and more in Uncle Richard’s world rather than my own, the nagging “what are you going to do?” question became more of a whisper than the usual

ear-piercing scream. But, my respite did not last long. I thought Mark would be the first to break my peace of mind, but true to his word, he allowed me time to do whatever I was doing, to obsess as much as I wanted. Of all people, it was Albert who broke into my new world with Mamie. Two weeks had drifted by me unnoticed, but Albert had it written down in his appointment book that we were to meet, and he left a pleasant but firm message on my answering machine, “Hi, this message is for Ms. Forrester. This is Albert Berkley from Employment Services calling about the appointment we were supposed to have today. I guess you must have forgotten. Please call me as soon as possible, Ms. Forrester, so we can reschedule. I’d really like to talk with you.”

Crap. He was right. I had forgotten, completely. Other than some preliminary Internet surfing, I hadn’t done as much as look at the local want ads. I waited until about 4:30 to call him back. This gave me time to think of something to say and also ensure that he wouldn’t try to “squeeze me in” for an appointment that same day. I thought of a good story to explain my absence, but as far as what I was going to say about my job search, I needed a little more time for that.

“Mr. Berkley?”

“Speaking.”

“This is Tess Forrester returning your call. I’m so sorry about missing our appointment. I have had a death in the family and have just been so caught up in all of that.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry. Wow. That’s awful!” Albert sounded genuinely concerned. I knew he was a nice man, and I felt a tinge of guilt with my white lie.

“Thank you. It was my uncle, so my mother has really needed all of my attention lately. I just totally forgot.”

“No problem, Ms. Forrester, I completely understand. We can fit you in another time. How about the day after tomorrow about eleven o’clock? Is that a good time for you?”

Of course, there was no good time to try to explain how I was supposedly looking for a job, but I agreed, and after hanging up with Albert, I spent the rest of the evening scanning the want ads and surfing monster dot com. By the next morning, I had three cover letters and resumes ready to mail off to three jobs I could care less about and had a pretty good idea I was so over qualified that I’d never hear from any of them.



As Virgil said, it was “done” and life must go on, and this is also true for Tess whether she wants it to be or not. Suicide is not a consideration for her, but she still is not ready to move on with her life. Like a compelling novel that is hard to put down, Tess finds it too easy to slip into Mamie’s story-world. Some of this is escapism and some of it involves personally identifying or connecting to these women, Mamie and Minnie.

Memories are collected and organized through the use of narrative. Story-telling is a convenient vehicle for archiving the past and passing down knowledge from one generation to the next, for “human experiences have been recorded one by one from the flow of memory” (Buckler and Leeper 4). By accessing a person’s memories, we learn about her life and her identity, and we begin to have an understanding of how she might have composed her life. In “An Antebellum Woman’s Scrapbook as

Autobiographical Compositions” by Patricia P. Buckler and C. Kay Leeper, the authors discuss the notion that scrapbooks are autobiographical artifacts used to document “the interior lives of women” (1). A scrapbook assembled in the mid-eighteen hundreds by Miss Ann Elizabeth Buckler provides an example of what the authors describe. Her book includes magazine clippings, poems, and sketches, all assembled as “a deliberate effort by one individual to make sense of her life by composing it” (1). Through this medium, by mixing memoir and journaling with visual images, Buckler authors her autobiography. Memory-crafts as hardcopy artifacts make an otherwise invisible person an individual, even if she may have been “ignored – one of the ‘Ladies’” (5) during her own time period. Without her scrapbook, Anne Buckler might only be mentioned historically on a marriage license, but her chosen form of memory-craft allowed her a way to express herself and “gave shape and significance to her life while leaving a record of it” (8).

Recording memories is a “means of connecting past and present and constructing a self and versions of experiences we can live with” (Greene 293). When we hold someone’s scrapbook or read another’s journal, we see their lives as they arranged it on the page through creative domesticity. Without this physical evidence left behind, we may otherwise not know them or have an opportunity to learn about their lives:

[...] the content, sources, and experiences that are recalled, forgotten, or suppressed are of profound political significance. What we know about the past, and thus our understanding of the present, is shaped by the voices that speak to us out of history (Hirsch and Smith 12).

In Juanita Goff's travel journal, little of the writing is now legible. The handwritten captions and miscellaneous sections of narrative "personalizes [the] photography" [...] and "suggest the voice of the writer" (Batchen 47). Like her memory, the text is fading, "in a state of ruin" (78). However, more unsettling are the missing photographs pulled from numerous pages in the book.

At the time of the trip, Juanita would have been about 18 years old and married to her first husband (my maternal grandfather) who later left her with two young children to support. According to my mother, it is likely that Juanita pulled and discarded photographs that included him in an effort to edit her memories and remove him from her past just as he had removed himself from her future as a way to "assure [herself] that time past [was] not time lost" (Greene 294). There is evidence of her being on the trip via her journaling and some remaining photographs, but even though Juanita mentions her husband in the text, there is no visual proof of him. As Juanita's granddaughter and also granddaughter to the now invisible husband, I am personally affected by this loss of knowledge. She rarely speaks of him. As a result, for most of my life I didn't know who he was or even that the man she was later married to, whom I called "Grandpa," was not my actual grandfather.

The edited journal no longer contains any photographs of my grandparents together. The parts of the text that I am able to read indicate that they had an enjoyable trip, but I cannot experience the entire story, only what my grandmother has left for me. The journal has become fragments of a narrative that she attempted to rewrite. The loss is "knowing them" at a time when they were young and possibly happy. Instead, my

memories are of them apart: he remorseful and guilt-ridden and she hurt and unforgiving.

Editing our world is a common practice of memory-crafting. In some ways, it is a performance where the crafter fashions the reality that she wants the reader to view. To look successful, Tess must look the part. She creates her illusion by crafting the perfect outfit for her employment interview so that she is able to play the character of the professional academic who is working hard to land another teaching job.



Getting ready to meet with Albert the following day, I had to dig through my closet for appropriate attire. My new uniform of jeans and a t-shirt had become a little too comfortable. I needed to look professional, together, like I've got a handle on this unemployment thing and a fabulous new job is just waiting for me around the next corner. I'm doing great; I'm out there hitting the pavement, working on leads all over the place. For this performance, I selected one of my many sweater sets and a wool skirt. It had been so long since I'd worn the skirt, I found it in my closet still encased in dry-cleaning plastic wrap. I finished my look with gray flats and pear stud earrings a pearl single-strand necklace, no bracelet.

I felt like I really looked the part and had a brainstorm while I was putting on my make-up. I called Mark at the office and asked if he's like to meet for lunch. We hadn't done something like that in years. Plus, for weeks he'd seen me in nothing but my holier than thou house-wear for losers wardrobe. I figured he might feel better if he saw me all dressed up, even with no job to go to. Again, another part to play I realized, but seeing me like this might reassure him.

At the unemployment office, I squeezed into Albert's cube and then the chair across from his desk. Albert began with a heartfelt wish that my family and I were doing okay after the tragedy, and for just a second, I thought he was talking about "The Brewster Tragedy" until I quickly realized he was talking about my Uncle Richard. After all the pleasantries, Albert finally moved onto asking about the job search.

"Well, I'm not finding much, but here's a list of a few places I've sent resumes off to," and I opened the portfolio I carried as a prop for my performance and handed him a list of names and addresses I had typed up the day before.

"Oh, great," He looked over the list, scanning it with his eyes quickly, and then set it aside before continuing, "You know, Ms. Forrester, after I spoke with you the other day, I pulled up one of our databases. You've probably already looked at it some. It is available through the Internet, but any way. I was looking through there and I found something I think you might me interested in. In fact, your education and background make you perfectly qualified for this."

With that, he pulled a piece of paper from my file folder resting on his desk and handed it to me:

"Instructor/Assistant Professor in English - Full-time tenured position

MA in English or Rhetoric/Composition required; PhD or ABD preferred. Minimum of 18 graduate hours in English or Rhetoric/Composition, with evidence of composition teaching excellence. The applicant should be qualified to teach developmental writing, Composition I and II, and business writing. Experience in teaching and advising adult/non-traditional students highly desirable, as is evidence of scholarship through publication of books, articles in professional journals, and/or other documented research

activity. Applicant must have a Christian commitment and the ability to integrate Christian faith with teaching and directing duties.”

“Oh,” I said, with an attempt at sounding a little interested. “Yes, I’m definitely qualified for this position. Though, that last part about the “Christian commitment” is a little...unusual. I’ve never taught at a private school or really thought about it.”

Actually, I was thinking, “Are you nuts? This place wants its faculty to teach the Bible in the classroom?” It’s not like I don’t believe in God, but I never considered this as part of an academic environment.

“But, sure, I’ll send them a resume. Thank you, Mr. Berkley.”

With that, he again signed my paperwork, which I handed to the clerk on the way out. I have to admit that Albert gave me something to think about. It was a teaching job, at a university no less. It wasn’t like I am an atheist or anything, but I think what surprised me more than the idea of teaching about Christ in an English class was the idea that I wasn’t sure if I really wanted to teach again at all. A short time ago, I would have jumped on this. I would have come up with some kind of Christian statement to include with my resume and cover letter. Maybe it wouldn’t have been sincere, but it would have been a teaching job, and hey, that’s what I was back then, a teacher. So what if I had to toss in a little Bible verse now and then. I knew my Bible. I could wing it, or at least, give the pretense that it was somehow included in my curriculum. But, today, I sort of shrugged my shoulders at it. It wasn’t worth it to me to do all of that. I didn’t want it badly enough, even if it could be the answer to my current situation.



When faced with a possible opportunity to return to teaching, a job that may not be her first choice but would at least help solve her problem, Tess realizes that she is not interested. The original plot structure of her narrative – returning to school, graduating with a Ph.D., and then becoming a tenured professor – has dramatically changed. Filling her days sitting at home, organizing another person’s collected memories doesn’t fit into her original plans.

Running a home and performing domestic duties which normally involve caring for household members have traditionally been assigned to women. Referring again to Ong, who explained that men were educated differently than women, “in medieval times and after, the education of girls was often intensive and produced effective managers of households” (111). Instead of receiving an institutionalized education, women became skilled in domestic duties which were needed to run large households. They were trained to manage the home and care for the family, and so it is no surprise that along with organizing the house women often became responsible for organizing and caring for familial memory as well.

Memory archiving falls into a similar category as common domestic chores because they are methods of caring for the family, both present and future members. Therefore, women seem naturally to take the lead as the family record-keeper: children’s art work is saved; photographs are arranged and labeled; family mementos are preserved. They collect, assemble, and document with the understanding that “memory is firmly situated in the present yet looks towards the future” (Hirsch and Smith 2).

As they tell their family's stories through memory-craft, they are also able to tell their own "through the testimony of witness" (Hirsch and Smith 7). Memory then becomes culturally gendered:

[...] the technologies of memory, the frame of interpretation, and the acts of transfer they enable are in themselves gendered, inasmuch as they depend on conventional paradigms and received cultural models, on codes that are culturally shared and available (7).

Telling a personal story is one way to leave a memory behind, a way to be remembered and create an "exchange of memories" (Batchen 47). Anne Buckler told her own life story, from 1832 to 1855, by using collected ephemera to document herself in a scrapbook (Buckler and Leeper 1). Mamie left her journals, which were written in ledger books and have now been photocopied and circulated to interested family members. Both women left documentation about their lives because they hoped to be remembered. Geoffrey Batchen points out that, in some cases, when text and images are combined, the memory-crafter literally is "asking us to remember her," and "these objects, then, are not really about remembering; they are instead dedicated to the fear of forgetting, or of being forgotten" (47). By taking the step of self-documentation, women can be hopeful that they will be remembered.

The rest of the Dudley family seems to have forgotten Minnie and Amelia's suicides, but with Mamie's help, Tess is now able to learn about them and remember them. The journals also provide a way for Mamie to be remembered as the family's record keeper and caregiver. Tess does not have five children like Mamie Dudley did,

but she does try to care for her smaller family, which has included helping her mother when needed and keeping a comfortable home for her husband, Mark.



Mark was extra sweet at lunch. He opened the door for me, even pulled out my chair a little when we sat down in our favorite Thai restaurant. It struck me how cute he looked across the table from me with his tie a little loose and his shirt a little wrinkled, like the absent minded professor. I made a mental note to myself to look through his closet when I got home and see how his clothes situation was going. He never really thought of that kind of thing, and I felt badly that he looked so disheveled sometimes when he was really a handsome man.

“What’s in the notebook?” He asked pointing to my portfolio.

I pulled out the paper Albert had given me and handed it to Mark across the table. He read silently until he got towards the end, exclaiming, “Christian commitment?! You aren’t seriously thinking of sending them something, are you Tess?”

“I might.”

“Why?”

“Hey, I’ve got to send out resumes for one thing or no more unemployment checks.”

“True,” he replied, and we continued to eat quietly for a few moments before he asked, “What about your old job?”

I looked at him questioningly.

“When you used to edit those books.”

“Oh, yes, Red Fern Press. Boy, that was so long ago. Other than a few Christmas cards now and then, I haven’t kept in touch with anyone. I don’t even make stuff any more. I’m so out of the craft-loop now.”

“Now you are, but you were “Miss Glue-Gun Without a Cause,” remember? You could jump in there again. Go by the craft store, cruise the Internet, you could do that again. They loved you there too. They appreciated you there.”

“Okay, I’ll stop by the bookstore on my way home and see what some of the latest titles are, and then I’ll start emailing people. I’m not sure if even the same people are there any more, but it’s worth checking into. Maybe I could at least get some freelance work.”

“It would help stretch out unemployment if you did that,” Mark reminded me.

I felt really satisfied after leaving Mark. The food was good, as usual, and I felt I was becoming a just a little productive. No big answer to my big question yet of course, but the idea of editing again gave me the hope of earning some income and appeasing Mark. His good humor couldn’t hold out forever, could it? If I was him, I’d have told me to get over it and get a job already. It was now a solid month and I’d done nothing but mope around the house. I was beyond pathetic.



Returning to the familiarity of editing is more appealing to Tess right now than teaching. It is what she knows. Writing, a world of storytelling, is where she originally came from and the reason she earned her first English degree in creative writing and then later her Masters in literature. Crafting stories is a comfortable place for her as it is for many women who find the novel a workable model for their writing efforts.

After examining questions concerning women as memory archivists and their use of alternative writing methods such as the early novel and memory-crafts, this leads to another question concerning why women still gravitate towards non-traditional writing models. Woolf believed the development of the female narrative voice through the genre of the novel was “not merely [a question] of literature, but to a large extent of social history” (“Women Novelists” 14), and the same may be true for other forms of writing practiced primarily by women. The novelists Woolf discusses needed different writing techniques because traditional rhetoric was unfamiliar to them. In their limited social sphere, memoir and autobiography were more accessible techniques. They wrote about what they knew. Furthermore, since their duties and lives revolved around domesticity, their employment never ended. It was their duty to provide familial services seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.

In the twenty-first century, these around-the-clock services may not be required of all women, but generally, domestic duties continue most often to become the responsibility of women, and “a household [still] requires sustained attention to many different needs [...] Time, space, and tools need to be used for multiple purposes, leftovers must be varied and combined [...and] one task may be put aside when the baby wakes up for a different task that will allow interaction” (Bateson 181). Novels, journals, and scrapbooks can be picked and up and put down easily in between work required throughout the day. Charlotte Bronte, for example, may have had to “put down her pen to pick the eyes out of the potatoes” (Women and Fiction” 1257). Mamie Veach Dudley explains to her sister that she is only able to write late in the evening when everyone is in bed or away from home:

I have been wanting to write you a letter for a long time, but I can't hardly ever get a chance to write to any one any more. It is about 10 o'clock now, but Riley and his father went to a debate tonight, and the rest are in bed, so I will write till they come back if I can stay awake, but I am awful sleepy right now. (1)

Other than the convenience of these non-traditional writing models, an additional attraction may be the perspective acquired through autobiography. Self-reflection guides the writer to “the undiscovered self [which] is an unexpected resource,” and ultimately, this “self-knowledge is empowering” (Bateson 5). Israeli-based American artist Judith Margolis considers her cultural and personal experiences when designing her work. In her altered-book, “The Winter Journal,” she recycles an 1874 book of essays by Addison and Steele. Using crafting techniques including painting, collage, and hand-stitching, she exposes fragments of the original text throughout the book as a way to write a new narrative. The fragile book “is a lesson in vulnerability and aging” (Margolis). In another book, Margolis combines journaling with sketching as she “chronicle[s] the challenge of coping with a mother’s illness and death while juggling the demands of family and work” (Margolis).

In the nineteenth-century, writing one’s own biography would have been considered by most women as an egotistical indulgence. However, through autobiographical fiction, some women included their personal experiences. They also wrote diaries, travel journals, and memoirs. Valerie Sanders explains this popularity of memory recording “testifies to a widespread preoccupation with individual experience, and a desire to communicate it, if only privately, or in a disguised form. Increasingly, women felt that what had happened to them, whether at home or abroad, whether

commonplace or extraordinary, deserved retelling, especially to other women, who could find it ‘useful’” (2 – 3).

In early women’s novels, it often feels like the author is speaking from one woman to another. Anne Bronte is one author who speaks to Tess. Bronte records her own fictionalized experiences as a governess using the novel format, specifically *Agnes Grey*, and Tess is able to relate to the character of Agnes who often feels like an outsider and confused about her own purpose in life.



On my way home, I stopped by Barnes and Noble and carried in my leather portfolio-slash-prop. I realized I could actually use this to make some notes about some of the latest craft titles out. As part of my usual bookstore ritual, I first made my way to the classical literature section. Though I had a copy or in some cases multiple copies of many of the titles on the shelves, I always enjoyed looking at them. My love of literature is one reason I returned to school. I wanted to share it, to show others how much there is to learn from books like *Jane Eyre* and *Pride and Prejudice*. I noticed there were a number of copies of *Agnes Grey* on the shelf and winced a little when I realized those copies were there probably because it was on my Composition II reading list. I was the only instructor at the college that had this title. None of the others were familiar with it. I had been looking for a Victorian novel that had a happy ending and would thus appeal to my students, and this lesser known novel by Anne Bronte was perfect. Agnes managed to get both her man and her dog at the end, meeting romantically on a beach no less.

I finally pulled myself away from the literature section and headed over to the arts and crafts books, browsing until I found about a dozen books published by my old employer, Red Fern Press. I pulled them out, stacked them up, and headed to the coffee counter.

I was still digging through my change purse when I heard behind me, "I'll get that and I'll have a café grande, unsweetened too."

I spun around to see behind me Jonathan Andrews, our college book rep. He was carrying a slender briefcase in one hand and with the other he picked up his coffee and then nodded his head at me while I stood there with my mouth open.

"Well, well, Tess Forrester. I can't believe my luck today," he said as he paid the counter attendant.

"Jonathan," was all I could mutter.

I was really in shock. He probably knew. About me and the job. I felt my face turn red with embarrassment. I wasn't sure what to say. He seemed his usual smooth self, always confident and pleasant. Even when faculty members would grill him about the books he was trying to convince the department to buy, he had an answer for everything. And right away too, never had to think for a minute about what to say, never seemed to get flustered or upset about all those questions from faculty.

Finally, I managed to say something at least slightly coherent, "Hi, I didn't see you behind me. How are you, Jonathan?"

"I'm great, great. And, you look great too. Really," he tried to assure me, "I mean I heard about the school and all. That place is so political. You're better off."

“Yes, well, I’ve never been much of a politician.” What was I saying? That was so stupid. I couldn’t believe the idiocy that was coming out of my mouth. I knew this guy. For years he had been selling us textbooks. I was even chair of one of the book selection committees, so we had worked closely together for months. He would come by my office just about once a week, and we talked about all kinds of stuff then, not just books. Why was I acting so stupid right now?

My stupidity aside, he continued to talk like I was a rational person, “You know. I have been trying to get a hold of you. I wasn’t sure if anyone at the department would give me your number, but I was getting ready to ask someone, so this is really perfect timing to run into you like this.”

“Oh, yes?” More stupid talk.

By this time we’d walked over to one of the small tables surrounding the coffee counter and I had unloaded all my books and coffee paraphernalia, and Jonathan sat across from me. He held his brief case on his lap, took a sip of coffee, and kept talking.

“I can’t really stay for long. I just wanted to make sure you got my card.”

With this, he opened up his case and dug around, pulling out a white and black business card. Then he took a pen and wrote another number and email address on the back.

“You can email me here or call me at home,” he said as he scrawled across the back.

Then he handed me the card.

“Home?” I asked.

“Yes, I’ve got something going, you know, on the side for now, but that’s getting ready to change, and I think you might be interested in it.”

“What exactly?”

He looked at his watch quickly, and then stood up, “Oh, man, I wish I could get into it more now, Tess. But, really, I’ve got to get across town ASAP. Call me, okay?”

“Yes, of course,” I said.

I couldn’t imagine what he could possibly want to talk with me about, and it was extra weird that he had written his home number on the back. But, I figured, hey, if nothing else, maybe I could find out about open positions with the publishing company he worked for. I wasn’t too thrilled about lugging books around to try to sell, but there might be other things or even contacts he could give me. It was worth checking into.

After he left, I got to work and started browsing through the stack of books I had collected. It seemed like Red Fern Press was really into paper arts, especially scrapbooking and altered books. That kind of surprised me. It wasn’t like I still didn’t occasionally check out a show on the Home and Garden Channel or DIY TV, but I was glad I was doing my homework before I started contacting people. I wrote down titles, author’s names, and then checked the inside cover and acknowledgement pages for familiar names. Most of them I didn’t recognize, but two names I did: Molly Lawrence and Rebecca Powers. The latter, in fact, looked like she’d gotten a small promotion since I last knew her.

Leaving the bookstore, I was full of energy. I had “things to do” and finally, that might mean, “places to go” instead of sitting around the house filing away old newspaper clippings and scanning in pictures of people I didn’t know. For a few

minutes, I thought of Minnie. I felt a little badly that I wasn't in there digging around Uncle Richard's collection to find out more about why she killed herself, but she was going to have to wait for now.



A different twist has developed in Tess' narrative. By removing herself from her protective domestic environment, at least for an afternoon, she is beginning to realize that she can adapt to her changing story. Unlike Minnie who felt she had no choices in life, Tess is starting to envision new possibilities that could lead her to new opportunities. She has also begun to think less about the issue of teaching literature and more about her personal connection to storytelling as she continues to immerse herself in Mamie's journals and considers how she plans to compose her life while it takes a new direction.

Although it may seem as though fictional female narrative and memory documentation have different intensions, both discourse methods share a number of similarities. First, story-telling is the primary connection between memory-craft and early female novels. Personal narrative is one of the oldest methods for passing on knowledge from one generation to the next, and lost memories are a type of lost knowledge "because forgetting is a major obstacle to change" (Greene 298). Stories help us remember people like Minnie Dudley. Without the knowledge of her tragic suicide, Minnie is simply an image on some old photographs which "need an explanatory narrative to become meaningful" (Hirsch and Smith 6). The narration provided by Mamie Veach Dudley to her sister, Ida, is a "testimony of a witness, [...] a story that stretches from the past to the present and the future" (7 – 8).

Story structure and themes are other common areas. Memory-crafters assemble their lives, sometimes linearly and sometimes in a fragmented form depending on the themes recorded. They construct self-portraits and family archives through journals, altered books, and scrapbooks. If they are recording an event, a linear approach, much like the beginning, middle, and end of a novel is used. More reflective memory-craft artifacts are usually fragmented. Early novelists, including Jane Austen and Anne Brontë, told fictional stories; however, they gathered fragments from their own lives, arranged them in a linear pattern, and transformed them into new narratives, much like Judith Margolis used text from a recycled book of essays in her altered book “The Winter Journal.” Austen and Brontë’s themes are dictated by social expectations, and the roles of women are clearly defined as their characters fit a standard code of conduct.

Through techniques of autobiography and memoir, women have traditionally turned to alternative forms of writing because they were not able to participate in conventional rhetorical models. Walter Ong and Virginia Woolf believe eighteenth and nineteenth century women’s novels resulted from the need for a new form of discourse that fit in with a female world, which included home and family. Writing novels “gave them an inviolable world of their own, a place of power and recreation away from domestic duties that were often fruitless and repetitive” (Sanders 100). This same notion is also true for memory-crafting, a primarily female craft even today. Women position themselves as family archivists because it is a task closely related to traditional domestic duties that they have historically been trained to manage. It is also an opportunity to write reflectively and tell their individual stories, which might otherwise be

forgotten. Anne Buckler, for instance, describes her life through words and images assembled in a scrapbook. Without this “form of expressive discourse,” it is possible her personal story would have disappeared and “we would know nothing of substance about her” (Buckler and Leeper 1, 5).

Many centuries later, women still seem to gravitate toward unconventional writing models. One reason for this practice may be due to “social history” (“Women Novelists” 14). Twenty-first century women may not be limited by the conduct writings familiar to Jane Austen, but for the most part, they are still primarily responsible for domestic duties involving home and family. Flexibility and convenience are important factors that novel writing and memory-crafting offer. Memoir and autobiographical techniques are another attraction as they provide a form of self-knowledge and empowerment. Women are able to compose a life and, if necessary, “edit the past to make it more intelligible in cultural terms” (Bateson 32). The shame of becoming a divorcé for Jaunita Dudley Goff disappeared as she edited her travel journal. She was able to rewrite her story “and improvised from the materials that came to hand, reshaping and reinterpreting” (237). Through memory-crafting, she was able to compose her personal narrative as she would want her family to remember it. Crafting memory, whether a fictionalized autobiography or a pictorial scrapbook, allows the author to construct her reflective discourse as she simultaneously chronicles her life and constructs her own world, perhaps escaping for a few moments from her domestic duties.

CHAPTER FIVE: CYPERSPACE AND MEMORIES: A SPACE OF ONE'S OWN

Much like the codex of memory-crafts, cyberspace offers women archivists “an alternate space within which” to “invent unique methods of telling stories, forming identities, and remembering” (Flanagan 75). In these spaces, memory-crafters talk to each other about their art work, exhibit their memory-craft to the on-line public, and share crafting techniques. Web group structures “encourage informality, brainstorming, and the throwing of ideas on the forum for the pure sake of testing the reactions of the audience” (Ryan 5). Group discussions are often personal and informational as members learn together and share their own experiences.

Weblogs tend to be more solitary than group discussions, more like a personal diary left open for anyone passing by to read. Through weblogs, archivists remember publicly, journaling about their lives and their families. Computer technology is becoming a standard tool in constructing memory-crafts as scanners, printers, and personal computers are almost as common to middle class homes as paper, glue, and scissors. Domestic technology includes a crafter’s personal computer as well as supplies purchased at the craft store. This combination of ephemeral and electronic methods is a trend where women archivists now network via computer networks.

The women who occupy web groups like those in the Yahoo! Altered Book Group are, not surprisingly, diverse when it comes to the average demographic categories of race, education, and income. This is also true of women who operate more

independently, writing and recording their memories and opinions via their own weblogs (or blogs), a form of web communication often resembling an electronic journal:

Online journals [...] are the precursor of the personal journal blog [...] Like journal blogs, they contain self-revealing content, are updated frequently, and tend to present messages in reverse chronological sequence. [...] From the outset, online journals, like the tradition of hand-written diaries they draw from, have been associated with women. (Herring, et al)

Motivations vary for why memory-crafters choose a public forum for their communication, but many share reasons for blogging, participating in forums, or joining listservers. They have adapted to an electronic environment that was not originally created with them in mind and found their own way through digital space. Following in a similar fashion to the avant-garde movement as described by Robert Ray in “How to Start an Avant-Garde,” Internet memory-crafters have “not remained unaffected by this new environment, characterized most of all by *speed*” (75). They have begun to create their own movement on line, filling “*the Gap*” (75) between ephemeral and electronic memory recording, and in many ways, mirroring the strategies outlined by Ray.

This chapter examines Ray’s rules for starting an avant-garde as a way to understand this move to hypermedia and the women who are now part of this on-line community. Who are these women and why do they choose to write on-line in such a public setting? How are weblogs and other forms of network texts preserving memories? How are they similar to hardcopy journals and other forms of memory-craft? Are hardcopy memory-crafts a form of hypertext?

My research approach in this chapter is one of “textuality as weaving,” (Page 112) as my persona, Tess, continues to tell her story and those of her ancestors’. I am also present as the researcher, and much like a collage technique popular in memory-crafting, I use the characters in my narrative to help paste together a story and explore my topic. Sometimes analysis is layered over by narrative, and sometimes it just touches the edges as I assemble my findings.

At this point in the narrative, Tess is still looking for an answer to her career dilemma, but she has also found a little hope for her future after beginning to remember her skills as a writer and admitting that she did not enjoy teaching as much as she thought she would. She has slowly started to network, both in person and over the Internet, and this has given her some confidence. However, as her own life is starting to look a little brighter, she is still struck by the sad outcome of Minnie’s situation.

Tess is touched by the girl’s hopelessness, and the fact that her family didn’t seem to care much as they continue to live their lives after she is gone. They remember her, but there isn’t much else they can do. Torn by her own everyday needs, which includes finding a new way to earn an income, Tess frets about her self-imposed requirement to remember Minnie as she starts to spend more time away from the photographs, news clippings, and journals – “silent histories” (de Certeau xxi) - that have occupied her time and thoughts over the past few months.



On the way home, I stopped by the grocery store and picked up a few pounds of shrimp and salad fixings. I never knew when Mark would be home from work, and since for the past four or more years I was usually working on my homework or grading

papers most of the evening, we didn't sit down during the week together for regular meals. After making the salad, I got to work on going through his closet. He had a bunch of shirts that needed buttons reattached and wrinkles removed. His ties were a mess as well. Much to my cats' disappointment, since I had gotten into the habit of taking a late afternoon nap these days, I pulled out the iron, ironing board, and my sewing box and spent the next three hours being Suzie-homemaker.

I thought of Mamie and her domestic duties included in her 1901 journal about her family's trip down the Mississippi River in a houseboat. As the men maneuvered the boat down the river or stopped to hunt, Mamie was busy as well.

Monday floated all day. It has been a dark and gloomy day. We saw 8 steam boats today. Got the names of five of them, Search, Sachem, Ferd Herold, Beta and Peters Lee. It was so windy today, the men concluded to land. We landed at six o'clock. It was the first time our boat had stopped in fifty two hours. I washed today. It is now 8 o'clock. I have washed the supper dishes, peeled potatoes, sliced meat, and ground the coffee for breakfast, and have written some about our trip. Eleven have gone to bed, so I guess I will go and finish the dozen. It is raining. Good Night.

Mark showed up about the time I was finishing ironing and sorting his tie collection.

"What's all this?" he asked.

"I decided to catch up on things around here. Are you hungry? I made a salad with some shrimp. It's sitting in the fridge."

"You cooked something?"

"Well, yes, shrimp."

He came over and donned the usual “honey-I-just-got-home” kiss, and then walked into the kitchen and opened the refrigerator door, as if he had to actually see the salad to believe it. Then he headed off to boot up his computer, check his email, and go through the regular mail that I dutifully set on his desk chair. I knew he needed some down time, so I left him alone for awhile before bombarding him with all the happenings of the day. Really, though, since I’d seen him for lunch, it was just the happening of running into Jonathan that I had to relay. But, everything that had happened that day brought my spirits up.

The next day I began searching through the Red Fern Press website and managed to locate the appropriate emails for the editors I still knew there. Then I needed to come up with an email, something short, to the point, but yet friendly and light, an email that didn’t sound too desperate, too “unemployed.” I decided to start with Rebecca. After typing and backspacing through about a dozen possibilities, I finally came up with:

Hi Becky,

I know you haven’t heard from me in ages, but I was thumbing through Red Fern’s latest title, Knitting for Newbies, and I noticed your name listed as the acquisitions editor. (Congrats on the promotion too by the way.) It occurred to me that it might be a good time to contact you. I’m contemplating (yet) another career move, and I was wondering if you know of any freelance opportunities currently available at Red Fern Press. As you know, I have a wide range of crafting experience. In fact, my latest venture has been with using my computer to scan in old family photos for a heritage-

style scrapbook project I'm working on. Anyway, I'd love to talk with you sometime when it's convenient for you.

~ Tess Forrester

Okay, I know. I had to add a few white lies there: replace “currently unemployed” with “career move” and “obsession with Mamie” to “heritage-style scrapbook.” But, I think it gave the tone I needed. I ran the spell checker, reread the message for the hundredth time, and clicked on the send button. Now, I just needed to wait - patiently.

Before the keyboard got cold, I pressed on and manipulated a new resume and cover letter for the college position Albert had given me. I knew I didn't have a hope in hell, nor did I want to seriously consider working at a Bible college, but it would look good if I wanted those checks from the state to keep coming for awhile. I decided against trying to slant the resume or cover letter to sound too religious. I mean, even if I did get the interview, I just couldn't imagine myself teaching English at a Bible college. Maybe I was falling out of academia or being kicked out, depending on how you looked at it, but there are limits to how far I would allow myself to tumble, only so low would I go.

I imagined some of the smirks on the faces of my previous faculty peers. Oh, if they could see me now. I never really got close to any of them. I joked with a few now and then, but I never managed to build a real bond with anyone. It was all on the surface, professional, polite, and fake. Since I had left, in fact, only one person had called me, and I got the feeling it was more of an effort to get the dirt on what happened rather than try to reach out a hand of comfort or aid. Julie, our department assistant-chair, called three days after I left. I was screening calls, so I didn't pick up, but later I

thought it best to email her and tell her I was fine, it was for the best, blah, blah, blah.
The usual lie.

She used to call me “Kid-o,” and after working there for about six months, I noticed her ridiculous nickname for me (what type of name is that for a woman over 35, really?) somehow stuck and a few of the other faculty members, both men and women, started calling me that. It really irked the crap out of me because most of them were no more than ten years older than I was and a few were about my same age, but they had all more teaching experience than I did. I was the new kid on the block, inexperienced in the classroom even if I did have real world experience, and they were determined to make sure *I knew* that *they knew* more than I did.



A doctoral degree and professional writing experience were not enough to earn Tess entry into academia. Immediately labeled as an outsider by her peers, Tess struggled to fit in to an institution that did not have room for someone like her. Attempts at conforming were never enough, and working alone, she did not have a support system to help her.

For artists of the avant-garde movement, supporting one another was critical to creating their own institution. Many crafters take the same approach, and Robert Ray's eight rules for starting an avant-garde (77) are characteristic of some of the methods used by craft groups and other predominately female web groups to establish themselves on the World Wide Web. Not all, but many of Ray's rules are applicable to memory-craft groups and craft bloggers. As a way to examine a sampling of these web groups, it is helpful to compare their Internet activities to Ray's rules. I begin with an

overview table listing each rule, and then unpack individual rules and examine applicable web examples.

Table 1: Ray's Rules for an Avant-Garde

No.	Rules	Web Crafters' Examples
1	Collaboration	Linking; mentoring; sharing
2	Name	Web groups, loose networks
3	Star	B-list bloggers, moderators
4	Training	Traditional and self-taught
5	Career	Niche content selling on-line
6	Distribution	Electronic venues
7	Labor	Fill many rolls
8	Publicity	Outsiders' network

Rule 1: "*Collaboration*. Outsiders working together have a better chance of imposing themselves than does someone working alone. [...] Other members of your group will refer to you, cite you, make contacts for you, and collaboration typically proves aesthetically stimulating as well" (77).

One way on-line crafters have developed their digital space is by working with and promoting one another. They often support each other by linking to their web sites and blogs and sharing information among group members. Yahoo's Altered Book Group

is very involved with collaborative activities: mentor programs; technique and supply swaps; and round-robins are regularly conducted in the group.

A blog “carnival” is another popular method for independent bloggers to work together. The carnival’s purpose is to start discussions where one blogger asks a question or poses a topic and fellow bloggers post an entry on their own blogs covering the question or topic, each providing a personal point of view. The blogger who started the carnival follows up with a collective post which includes all participating bloggers along with a link to each blogger’s post.

Rule 2: “*The Importance of a Name.* [...] The name provides a group identity. [...] The final stage of this group identity generally results in the formation of some official institute or association” (77).

Moderators who set up web groups or blogs must select a name and Internet address (URL) to identify themselves or their group. Most web groups have official names, such as the About.com Scrapbooking Forum, which is part of web site belonging to the About.com network. For Yahoo Internet groups, a free service of Yahoo which is usually run by independent users, owners of the group must determine a name for the group and also register this with the Yahoo network. The naming of groups may not lead to an “official institute” as Ray suggests, but it is a way for members to identify themselves on line.

Rule 3: “*The Star.* Avant-garde movements need a key figure whose glamour and prolificness will attract and focus the attention of outsiders” (77).

The leaders of these groups usually operate as moderators. For the About.com Scrapbooking Forum, its “star” is Rebecca Lundens, who is both the forum moderator

as well as the About.com guide for the adjoining scrapbooking site. Along with running the scrapbook site, Luden is known from television and national shows as an expert in her field.

“A” or more often “B-list” bloggers tend to instigate and coordinate carnivals, and since these types of blogs are well-established and have a large amount of Internet traffic, they provide a way for bloggers to build traffic and become better known in the blogosphere (a term used to refer to blogs in cyberspace). The Manolo writes an extremely popular blog, reportedly making a six figure income from a number of connected blogs where he writes about “shoes, fashion, celebrity, humor” (Rowse). He routinely links to other bloggers in his posts, has a large blog roll, and hosts carnivals regularly. The Manolo speaks of himself as a male (writing always in third person), but because this is his web persona, his exact identity and gender are not known for certain. Since he writes about topics popular among women, he has helped many female bloggers to also establish themselves on-line.

Rule 4: “*Traditional Training*. Even if you eventually reject its precepts, some encounters with a profession’s more or less official schools give you a sense of what to expect. With that work behind you, you have a better chance of justifying your own deviations by demonstrating that you have chosen to ignore standards that you have mastered” (78).

Most crafting groups are a mixture of professional and amateurs, and they tend to be self-taught, as home-crafting techniques like scrapbooking and altered books are not often taught at professional institutions. However, some also have traditional training and manage to build a career in a related field. Stephannie Barba is a professional

calligrapher and illustrator whose specialty is designing stationary. She studied various art forms including calligraphy, book design, and prepress at Parsons School of Design in New York. In an interview with *Another Girl at Play*, Barba echoes a similar comment to Ray's concerning traditional training: "Art school taught me the importance of breaking rules and making mistakes."

Rule 5: "*The Concept of the Career*. [...] Thinking in terms of a career means constructing a narrative that will make sense of an artist's development" (78).

Rebecca Ludens, from About.com, is one of the few traditionally trained crafters in her field: she is a freelance writer; has a degree in English; and works as a spokesperson and teacher for crafting merchandisers. She travels to craft shows to teach seminars and demonstrate products, and she also appears regularly on craft shows such as the DIY Network's "Scrapbooking" television show.

Christine Gooding has also turned scrapbooking into a career. Along with writing a scrapbooking blog for *b5media.com* called *Mad Cropper*, she has a web scrapbooking design business called *CreativeXpression*. For her business, she provides scrapbooking services, making customized scrapbooks, invitations, layouts, cards, and tags. Her web site includes examples of her work, such as this layout from a specialty theme album she created.

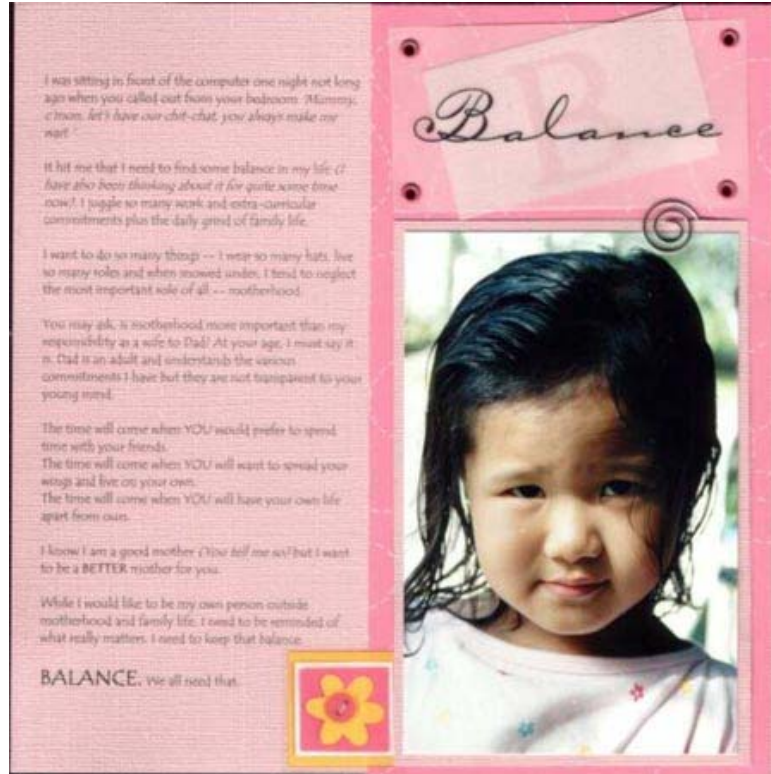


Figure 8: *CreativeXpression* Specialty Theme Album Layout

Rule 6: “*New Avenues for Distribution and Exhibition.* The Impressionists’ Salons des Refuses, group shows staged by dealers, and one-man exhibitions are all the equivalent of the new record labels [...] that provide places where off-beat work can appear when the official channels [...] are closed” (79).

Crafters arrange their own exhibition spaces when they move to digital space. The Yahoo! Altered Book group requires so much space for members to upload and store scans of their altered books that they made an additional group space, again on the Yahoo! network, specifically for this purpose, a digital salon. Members make a personal folder in this area and are allowed to post images of their altered books so that other members can view them. About.com’s scrapbook forum has a similar setup where

a “Page Ideas” folder is dedicated to the exhibition of members’ scanned scrapbook pages. Since they work outside traditional mainstream institutions, electronic forums offer these crafters an alternative venue for exhibiting their work.

Rule 7: “*Reconceptualization of the Division of Labor*. [...] In many ways, the avant-garde’s history represents a constant tinkering with the division of labor, usually in ways that challenge contemporary arrangements” (79).

Webloggers are writers, critics, designers, marketers, and theorists. They do not fill one function but as independent web writers, they must fill many roles to make their weblogs successful and to build a readership. Rebecca Ludens is a good example of using multiple skills in her job as the About.com Scrapbooking Guide. This job requires that she combines many roles, working as writer/web-master/designer/editor. Christine Gooding also combines her creative scrapbooking ventures with tasks such as writing for the b5media blogging network as a way to earn a little money while promoting her scrapbooking business.

Rule 8: “*The Role of Theory and Publicity*. [...] Impressionists redefined the notion of the artist, who became less an artisan, working for traditional patrons, than a romantic outsider, speculating on future recognition” (80).

Because of the amateur status of most memory-crafters and their general lack of professional training in the arts, they are not normally recognized as artists. The craft of creating altered books and scrapbooks is also not normally grouped with traditional artwork such as painting and sculpture. This sort of attitude toward home-crafts and crafters in general automatically sets them apart as outsiders. They use nontraditional

outlets such as web groups and blogs as means towards self-promotion, and some manage to turn their crafts into a career, but many more craft for the love of it.

Not all web craft groups follow all of Ray's rules, but many women's groups on-line seem to follow at least a few. One very close example is that of a movement begun by a group of independent female fashion bloggers, an area that is primarily made up of women bloggers. They write about apparel and fashion trends, provide personal critics, discuss their fashion experiences, and offer related news updates. Most work independently, gathering leads through electronic news alerts and hardcopy industry periodicals, but on occasion these bloggers find it helpful to join forces.

A movement started in January 2006 by blogger Julie Fredrickson (aka Almostgirl) is an example of one group that follows many of Ray's avant-garde rules. The first rule of collaboration began with Fredrickson's blog post entitled "The State of the Fashion Union: Invitation to All" where she invites fellow bloggers to join her in a carnival:

With Fashionweek kicking off the first week of next month in New York, Almost Girl and Fashiontribes thought it would be fun to do something similar to my Black Friday blogging extravaganza. Except this time, in honor of the Fall 06 shows, the theme will be "The State of the Fashion Union."

For Ray's second rule, "The Importance of the Name" (77), the title of the carnival became "The State of the Fashion Union," and this is how members later referred to this movement. Those who participated in the carnival were then part of this group, a loose association of bloggers who continued to discuss and network even outside of the carnival topics and questions assigned.

“The Star,” as termed by Ray in the third rule, is arguable. It may at first seem like it is Fredrickson, and while she played an important role in organizing the movement, The Manolo might fill this role better since he started the first carnival entitled “Carnivale of the Couture.” Later, The Manolo joined with Fredrickson and another blogger, Lesley Scott from Fashion Tribes, as a host for The State of the Fashion Union carnival. Because of The Manolo’s popularity, he encouraged participation on a large scale.

As far as traditional training (from Ray’s fourth rule), some of The State of the Fashion Union participants are from the fashion or journalism industry. Fredrickson is a graduate from the University of Chicago’s Fundamentals: Issues and Text Department and works as an independent fashion-journalist. Scott is a fashion editor who began her own ezine called “Fashion Tribes,” which also includes a weblog page.

Most of these fashion webbloggers feel as if they are filling a gap by providing fashion-related information on the web and are intentionally working to build careers for themselves as niche content providers, thus following Ray’s fifth rule relating to career. Fredrickson calls this content gap “two clicks behind,” suggesting that hardcopy media is behind the fashion journalism trend:

The problem is that fashion isn’t two clicks behind anymore. Certain areas of fashion such as the venerable old magazines and large fashion houses are two clicks behind. Those of us participating in the State of the Fashion Union are two clicks ahead and we are the early adopters and the trend setters. We understand that information is being processed more quickly, buzz is produced more organically, and advertisers want more direct and unmediated connections to

their readers. Blogging will provide this content. Bloggers will democratize the fashion industry or at very least provide an alternative source for those bored with the staid coverage of fashion.

The blogosphere follows Ray's next rule about alternative exhibition areas, and Fredrickson specifically mentions this through her "two clicks ahead" post, which refers to the notion that blogging provides an on-line area where outsiders can make their own space. Access to blog software and server space is inexpensive and even free from some blog networks such as Blogspot and Blogger.

As fashion journalists, web explorers, and promoters of their blogs, members of The State of the Fashion Union blog group also fit the profile of Ray's seventh rule concerning labor. They are multi-taskers, often working alone on their fashion blogs and responsible for researching and posting their own content on their self-assigned schedule.

Finally, for Ray's last rule, fashion bloggers become the "romantic outsider[s]," and Fredrickson is another example of this rule as the outcome of The State of the Fashion Union carnival encourages her to start a fashion-related network she calls "Coutorture." She purposefully creates a network of outsiders because "rejection by the academy," in this case traditional hardcopy fashion media, is "itself the sign of worth" (80).

Returning to the questions about who these women are and why they choose to write in a public environment like the Internet, from analyzing the three groups (altered book artists, scrapbookers, and fashion bloggers), it seems they share a few reasons for their choices. However, the main connection between them is the need for an

alternative space, which “demand[s] a *new critical idea*,” and allows them to work outside traditional institutions (Ray 79). By following some if not all of Ray’s rules for forming an avant-garde, these groups have designed and built their own sections of cyberspace. They have created their own narratives, both individual and group, designing “situation[s] in which alternative ways of seeing, hearing, listening, and understanding can develop” (Flanagan 81).

At this point in Tess’ narrative, she is also exploring cyberspace. She is writing up a new resume, emailing contacts about possible jobs, and creating her own web site. By networking through the Internet, she is reorienting herself with a crafting world she was once a part of before leaving it for academia.



Mark had not been too thrilled about my accidental meeting with Jonathan, especially when I mentioned he’d given me his home number. He was always so suspicious of people. Since I was spending the day at my computer, though, I went ahead and emailed Jonathan too.

Hi Jonathan,

Nice to see you yesterday. I have to say that I’m pretty curious about your new project.

Please, fill me in when you get a chance.

~ Tess

There, brief, to the point, casual.

Now, I just had to wait to hear from everyone. I began to surf around the net, looking at some of the Yahoo! scrapbook groups and as I clicked and weaved my way

around the Internet, moving from one site to another, I stumbled on a few interesting weblogs as well. Some enterprising crafters were even posting podcasts on their sites where they discussed their latest project or chatted about a recent event. One of my tasks in the English department had been to create web sites or help other faculty members make their own, and it occurred to me that this might be something to do while waiting, something I may even be able to point to when and if I heard from Red Fern Press. Since leaving the publisher, I had moved a few hours away, so it wasn't very convenient to show her the scrapbook I had claimed to be making. But, I could put up a quick web site, include some photographs of Mamie and her family, maybe skip the suicide story though.

I located an inexpensive web hosting company. It was going to cost about \$30 for the whole thing, but I figured it was money well spent if it got me a little freelance work. Finding an available URL wasn't easy, but I finally found one I liked: www.craftingmemory.com. It fit almost perfectly. I was crafting Mamie's memories in a way. Next, I started coding my homepage, adding image links and pasting in snippets I found scribbled on the backs of some of the original photographs. By that evening, I had a web page loaded up with a few links to other pages that included photographs of Mamie and her family, including her children: LaVerne, Loren, Virgil, and Zola.



Tess is not alone in deciding to code a website as a way to document memories. With her web experience, it seems natural for her to turn to digital space to do this, but is this the same as preserving memories via hardcopy? Because a hardcopy of a memory-crafter's journal or scrapbook might be discovered by a family member or

stranger years after the writer/collector has lived, it is easy to imagine how these artifacts help preserve memories for future generations to discover – the physical artifact is picked up, opened, and examined – the past is retold through the text and images of the narrative. But, is this also the case with weblogs and other forms of network texts? Do these also preserve memories? The ephemeral quality of electronic texts may be different than hardcopy memory-crafts: “We are made aware of the book as a physical presence in our hands” (Lanham 35). However, weblogs and digital scrapbooks are also intended as collections of memories.

Used as a public journal, the blog site Dooce (www.dooce.com) is an example of how weblogging software can be used just like a paper-based journal. Blogger Heather Armstrong writes about her life and her family. She talks about everyday experiences, and while her “personal journaling, traditionally associated with women, is generally not considered “serious” writing,” (Herring, et al) Armstrong’s blog is amazingly popular, sometimes receiving hundreds of comments on individual posts. She has also had a large amount of digital and print media written about her blogging career, including a write up in *People* magazine. The popularity of her blog has enabled her and her husband to live off ad revenue generated from the blog site, so they both stay home with their young daughter, Leta, and blog full-time.

Since Armstrong takes an autobiographical approach to her writing and often uses her wit to make her point, her topics may not seem culturally significant, but she frequently writes about serious topics such as raising a child with a disability; struggling with depression; and questioning her Mormon up-bringing. Armstrong summarizes her website as follows:

This website chronicles my life from a time when I was single and making a lot of money as a web designer in Los Angeles, to when I was dating my husband, to when I lost my job and lived life as an unemployed drunk, to when I married my husband and moved to Utah, to when I became pregnant, to when I threw up during the pregnancy, to when I became unbearably swollen during the pregnancy, to the birth, to the aftermath, to the postpartum depression I currently suffer. I talk a lot about poop, boobs, my dog, and my daughter.

This self-reflexive blog is a memoir in progress, incorporating text, photographs, video, and audio. While she writes on an almost daily basis, and due to blogging software her posts are stamped with a time and a date, she is documenting her life as it happens, an instantaneous record of events. She has no master plan that guides her narrative but collects and assembles her memories in the sequence in which they occur. Easy to use blogging software enables Armstrong to build “a space of new composition” (Page 114) while she arranges fragments of her life into her public journal.

Armstrong also includes what she terms a “Monthly Newsletter” to Leta, who at only two years old is not able to read the newsletters right now. But, the obvious intent is that one day she will be able to read them and will look back and maybe remember or at least have an opportunity to learn about how her mother felt at that time in her life:

Tuesday, 04 April 2006

Dear Leta,

Yesterday you turned twenty-six months old. I would characterize the last month of your life as That One Time You Refused To Eat Anything, with [One Time] being a variable X where $X = [\text{Every Single Day}]$. We have come to realize that food is an area in your life where you are trying to exercise control and the best way to deal with this is to make it a non-issue. So we give you options, and one of those options is always the choice of not eating. If you don't want to eat then I'm not going to make you eat although I may grab a fork and jab it into the flesh on the back of my hand.



Figure 9: Monthly Newsletter: Month Twenty-six

These open letters, like a scrapbook left out on a coffee table for guests to read, are reminiscent of the letter Mamie wrote to Ida concerning the Dudley suicides. There was no expectation of privacy like that of a diary entry. In fact, the writer wants other

people to read it. The letter was used to pass along information as well as preserve thoughts at that moment in time.

Another way weblogs preserve memories is by the arrangement of archives available through hyperlinks. These are usually located on a side column of the weblog page, though on Armstrong's weblog she has a drop-down menu located at the bottom of each page. Wherever they are located, most archives are organized in two different ways, by category and by date. The date is automatically stamped on the blog entry when it is published. These are then sometimes archived per month and year on the weblog. Categories are another way to organize past weblog posts. The categories are determined by the blogger and usually cover topics related to the overall subject of the blog. For example, Dooce has posts divided into categories such as Chuck (the family's dog); Leta (their daughter); Mormonism; Parenthood; and Depression. This archiving allows readers to move back and forth through different entries which were posted at different times, and as long as the web page is live on an Internet accessible server, the information is always available for viewing.

Though not writing a public memoir such as Armstrong's, Tess has also started to create an on-line journal about Mamie. She has used some of the images she scanned in earlier as well as snippets of text and anecdotes from Mamie's journal, an early form of blogging, to make what she soon discovers is a digital scrapbook. As she builds her new memory web site, she begins to see a connection between care-givers then and now. Like Armstrong, who is a stay-at-home mom and professional blogger, Mamie and the women Tess used to work with at Red Fern Press all must juggle many home and family related responsibilities.



The next day I was relieved to receive two emails, one from Becky at Red Fern and another from Jonathan.

Hi Tess,

I am so glad to hear from you. We all thought you must have fallen off the face of the earth or at the very least busy on that great American novel you used to joke about. As you can tell by the masthead in the knitting book, there have been a few changes around here since you left. Shirlyn retired and I took her place as acquisitions editor for this department.

Your heritage project sounds really interesting, and as you probably know, scrapbook and book art in general is “the” hottest craft right now. We have a big push going on this year to build our titles in that area, so I’m sure I can probably send some work your way. I’d love to chat with you on the phone when you have some time. I’m going to be out of the office tomorrow, but the day after I have the morning pretty free. Let me know a good time to call and also your new phone number.

Regards,

Becky

What a sweetheart. I felt really badly that I hadn’t kept in touch with her and the gang at Red Fern. Much like the English department, I wasn’t exactly on the same wave length as many of the editors at Red Fern, but they had always been really nice to me. Most were on the mommy track, working, having children, trying to be super-moms. Like Aunt Mamie, the welfare of their families came first, and this meant spending 40 hours

at work and many more working at home to care, feed, and nurture, well, everyone, children *and* husbands.

One constant chore for Mamie was tending to those who became ill on board the houseboat. She often mentioned family members and herself becoming sick during the Mississippi trip, and her son Virgil became extremely ill at one point:

This is Friday night. My darling little boy is sick. He has been feeling bad for several days and yesterday and to day has been very sick. If we were home we would have had a doctor for him before now. We have been doing every thing we knew to do for him. Oh, how I do wish we had never come to such a place. A woman came to see Virgil to day. It was the first white woman I had spoken to since we started. That was over two months ago. Oh, we are in trouble. Clarence away from us sick, and little Virgil sick. It takes twenty dollars to get a doctor over where Clarence is and ten dollars here. And to make matters worse we are out of money. May God help us out of our trouble and restore the sick to health is my prayer.

Monday night, December 23, Riley went to Friars Point yesterday and found a doctor that was a mason and got him to come see our boy. He said he had malarial fever. He has been very sick. He hasn't eaten anything for a week. We can't get him to eat a bite. The doctor (Slack J.J.) said he thought he would get along all right. Oh, I do hope he will. I do hate to have the sweet little darlings sick. I would rather be sick my self. I am not well at all. Riley got me five bottles of Sarsaparilla to day. That much ought to kill or cure one, hadn't it?

January 10 – Virgil is getting better but still in bed. He has been in bed three weeks and two days. How thankful I am he is getting better.

Even though Mamie didn't have a career as an acquisitions editor or anything else outside the home, the similarities between her life as a mother and care-giver and people like Becky reminded me of an incident recorded in some of the notes left by my uncle, which he compiled from various family interviews:

One occasion, which exemplifies Mamie's character, occurred while they were living in Hugo. The Cash Store turned out to grant quite a bit of credit and their financial situation got to the point of troubling Riley so much that he was unable to sleep. Mamie revealed to him that she had paid herself a small sum daily and socked it away when she worked at the Dudley store on the homestead and presented him with \$700. Riley was so overjoyed that he laughed and cried while tossing the sock of money up in the air and catching it.

I thought these anecdotes would make interesting additions to my web page, so I added them along with a photograph of the Dudley store. Most of the people in the photograph were men, but from reading Mamie's journal it seemed that everyone spent time working in their various stores at some point or other. I took one more look at my web page and decided it was probably good enough to include in my reply to Becky.

Hi Becky,

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. Day after tomorrow any time in the morning is fine. My number is -----.

If you get a chance, please take a look at the new heritage-style web site I'm working on: www.craftingmemory.com - I decided to "go digital" with my memory-crafts. Chalk it up to too many hours spent in front of the keyboard!

Talk with you soon,

Tess

Jonathan's email was a little trickier:

Hi Tess,

Thanks for getting in touch with me. I'm very excited about a new business venture I'm involved in, and with your writing/editing skills and computer knowledge, I think you might be a good fit for it. I'm not that great when it comes to explaining things via email, so do you think we could meet for lunch and talk about it? I'm going to be in your area tomorrow. Could we meet at the pizza place across from the college? Say, 1:00?

- J.A.

Meet for lunch? Mark would have a fit if I told him, and I hated not telling him everything. I had friends that would hide shopping bags in the trunk of their cars and sneak them in when their husbands weren't home, and even that seemed to me to be so dishonest. But, this could be an opportunity. This could be work, and I knew that Jonathan knew I was happily married even if Mark took the "When Harry Met Sally" stance that men and women couldn't be just friends. It has always been a sticky point between us, but since I so often worked primarily with women, it hadn't ever been much of an issue. It's just that I knew how he felt. I also reasoned to myself that if I meet with Jonathan before talking with Becky, I could have a better feel for how badly I would need work. Maybe I would totally pass on his offer and thus desperately need her help. Maybe not.

Hi Jonathan,

Tomorrow is good. I'll see you there at 1.

~ Tess



As Tess has begun to see a connection between the present and the past and merged her crafting skills with her HTML skills, my study of memory-craft has also established that electronic journals share a similar purpose to hardcopy memory texts. They both preserve memories, and in some cases, are designed by the writer/compiler to be read by other people as a way to share memories or communicate information, exactly Tess' purpose in constructing her web site: www.craftingmemory.com.

Hardcopy altered books or scrapbooks are made for readers/viewers to hold and browse through, reading captions and short paragraphs and looking at photographs and other illustrations throughout its pages. A personal weblog is a public journal available to anyone who has Internet accesses (as long as the website is not password protected). Along with text, visual and audio might be used by the blogger to enhance or illustrate the text. These might include scanned images, photographs, videos, podcasts ,and music.

The differences between off-line and on-line memory-craft are apparent. A scrapbook that the viewer holds in her hands and can touch has a tactile quality that its digital counter-part doesn't have. Ephemeral elements which make up the finished craft book are not accessible other than visually when included in an electronic form of memory-craft. However, there are many similarities shared by these two forms of memory recording.

The visual quality of both media is a good place to begin examining related characteristics. Both integrate and layer images with text to create a narrative. Photographs, scans, and video are just as important as the text which accompanies them. This mixture of text with visual elements does not require a linear structure. The inclusion of images is useful for experimentation and a collage approach to the story, for “collage is now a commonplace narrative technique” (Lanham 40). Scraps are assembled and ideas woven together. The scraps for a digital memory-craft may not be three dimensional, but bits of text, photographs, or illustrations are used by the electronic memory-crafter in much the same way as a scrapbooker might assemble a scrapbook.

Keri Smith’s blog, *Wish Jar Journal*, is comparable to Armstrong’s *Dooce* blog, but her topics are different, and since Smith is an illustrator as well as a writer, she adds a large number of her own illustrations throughout her blog. Smith writes about her life as an artist, her thoughts on creativity, and her lack of self-confidence. Sometimes a blog entry may be an illustration alone with no accompanying text or the text might be part of the image. In an April 19, 2006 entry, she posts a kind of instruction sheet. The post is mostly text and includes an image of a coin, but the entire post is a .jpg graphic file:

CREATE YOUR OWN LUCKY CHARMS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. SELECT SOME COMMON EVERYDAY ITEMS SUCH AS COINS, STONES, SHELLS, SMALL TOYS, JEWELERY, ORIGAMI.
2. HOLD THE CHARM IN YOUR HAND. THINK ABOUT AN AREA YOU COULD USE SOME LUCK IN, (I.E. YOUR FINANCES, GENERATING NEW IDEAS, A NEW PARTNERSHIP, GETTING A NEW GIG, A BOOK DEAL, ETC.)
3. MAKE A WISH.
4. HIDE THE CHARM SOMEWHERE ON YOUR PERSON.



Figure 10: Coin Image from *Wish Jar Journal*

Another post of Smith's includes a drawing of a red shoe and hand written text framing the shoe:

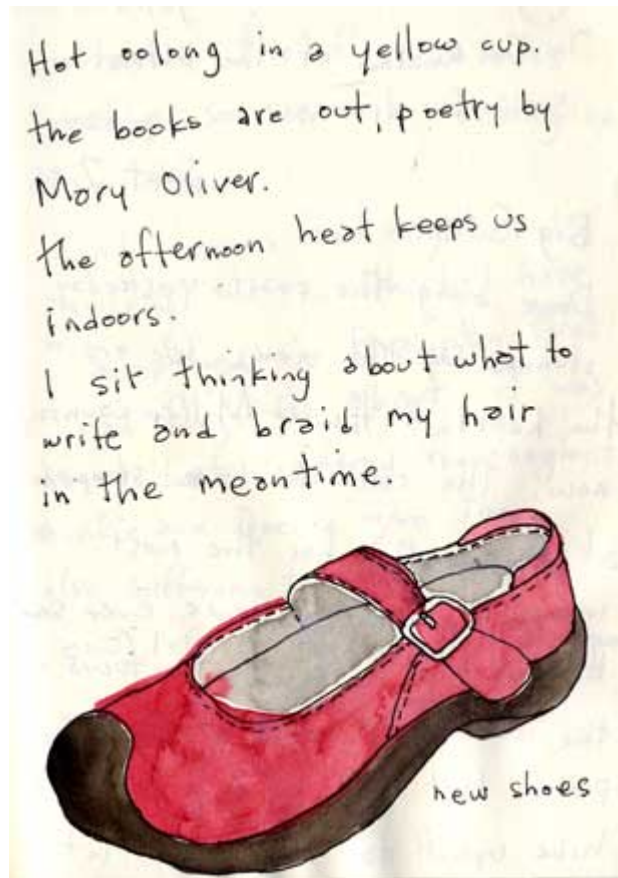


Figure 11: Shoe Illustration from *Wish Jar Journal*

Scraps of memories, a collage of thoughts, assembling and interweaving of ideas, these are all inherently part of memory-crafting whether it is conducted digitally or by using traditional paper-crafting techniques. By stitching together her own thoughts and weaving a new life for herself from the scraps of the past and the promises of the future, Tess is also starting to craft a new career for herself. It's not clearly in view for her yet, but it is starting to come together as she stumbles into freelance work and considers alternatives to teaching.



When I entered the restaurant, a whiff of grease and cheese greeted me. I was hungrier than I had realized, but of course, too nervous and self-conscious to eat much. In fact, it occurred to me that pizza was going to be a difficult food item to eat while looking professional and nonchalant. Jonathan waved me over to a corner booth, and during our polite chit chat, we agreed to split a large calzone. At least that I could eat that with a fork!

As we waited for our food, he began to explain his project to me: "I've started my own weblog network called E-education dot com. Right now, we mainly have science-related blogs, but I want to branch out into the humanities. I am retiring soon from publishing, and I'm ready to expand the network now that I'll have more time to devote to it."

"Retire?"

"Yes, I've been with the company 30 years next month, and I'm ready to start working for myself full-time. It's not going to be much money at first, but I have a few interested investors, and I think I can live off of my retirement fund for awhile. In fact, our channel editors are being paid right now from what the network is bringing in, so eventually, I'll be able to take a salary too."

Jonathan continued to explain that he wanted to offer me the position of Language Arts Channel Editor. My job would include recruiting blog writers and building that end of the network. My head was swimming, trying to take it all in. This wasn't just some work; this was a j-o-b! I would work at home just like all the other editors and writers did. The network was run completely via telecommuting. Staff met occasionally

in person, but for the most part, email and conference calls were the primary mode of communication. Most of their current bloggers were full-time teachers, and they blogged for E-education as a way to earn a little extra income.

As he told me more about the job and I munched my calazone, I got caught up in his contagious excitement and didn't notice someone approach our booth. It was, who else, but Julie from the college. Of course, of all people, *she* would be the one to see me there. It reminded me of all those Victorian novels I love to read where numerous coincidences propel the plot. In the last chapter of *Agnes Grey*, she goes for a walk on the beach, and of course, this is the same moment when her lover, Mr. Weston, is on his way to see her, so they meet by coincidence on the shore, her dog running to greet her. I used to tell my students that real life is full of coincidences. Maybe they aren't as dramatic as the last scene in *Agnes Grey*, but they do happen.

In mid-hand waving, Jonathan stopped, and we both looked up at Julie.

"Tess?" she asked.

"Oh, hi. I didn't see you there."

I really didn't know what else to say. She, of course, asked how I was doing, and before I realized what I was saying, I was telling her that I was doing great. I was freelance writing now, with a few editing jobs as well.

Jonathan saved me from my babbling attempt to sound like a successful writer, "In fact, I'm trying to hire her for a freelance job right now."

So, it *was* freelance, not a regular job. Julie left pretty quickly, and he continued to explain that it would be just part-time for awhile, a stipend of \$500 a month, and as the network grew, so would my salary and probably time requirements. Salary increases

would be based on search engine ranking and page views. The more traffic my channel brought in, the more money I could make. I could also take on writing blogs in my channel as well if I wanted. Network bloggers earned 60 percent of ad revenues for whichever blog topic or topics they wrote for. Right now, his more established bloggers were earning a few hundred dollars a month, some a little more. He knew my weakness for Victorian literature and even suggestion a blog devoted to Victorian novelists. I could write about the Brontes, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, and so on.

I wasn't sure what to say. The money would help stretch out unemployment, and it could leave me enough time to pick up some work from Red Fern, and who knows, maybe freelancing was my best option for now. Plus, I didn't think blogging would be that difficult since I already had tons of class notes to pull from. I had enough to at least get me started. It just wasn't going to be the same as the full-tenured \$40,000 a year job I was expecting, a job that Julie had trotted off to as I sat there trying to figure out, first, was I really interested in this job offer, and second, how I was going to tell Mark about it. I hadn't even mentioned the lunch appointment.

I left Jonathan with a non-committal "I'll think about it and get back to you," and I did plan to think about it. That evening I broached the subject to Mark, calling lunch "a meeting," and I skipped the part about Julie showing up. As I expected, Mark was not very enthusiastic. I got on-line and showed him the web site, and I spent a few hours by myself looking around. It had promise, but I wasn't a web expert or had even blogged before. I wasn't even sure what a channel editor did.

My phone call with Becky was also promising as far as freelance work, and it didn't take long before I was talking the publishing lingo I was so familiar with. She had

a new title idea, but she needed someone to flesh out a proposal so she could run it past sales. She loved my web site, and the book as it turned out was about digital scrapbooking. It would be a collaborative project where guest artists would provide projects and gallery submissions. I would author the book and be more of a curator, deciding which submissions to include, where to put them in the book, writing up instructions, and assembling the final copy. They wanted the dummy out to bookstores in three months and the final manuscript ready for design in six. Was I interested?

With no hesitation, I accepted the project. I knew Mark would approve, and I knew what I was getting into. It wasn't a ton of money, but one book might lead to another. I also made sure Becky knew I was available for any other assignments, even just copy editing another author's manuscript.

I found myself repeating the same story I had told Julie with a little added embellishments, "Teaching just didn't turn out to be what I had expected, and I really miss my writing. I've decided, then, to take the plunge and hang out my shingle as a full-time freelancer."

Whether or not she believed my story, Becky was enthusiastic and promised she'd send me any work she could. She would also pass my name on to other editors. I felt so relieved after I spoke with her. She was going to email the publisher's updated guidelines, and I had an assignment to get the proposal back to her in two weeks. I knew I could probably do it in one.



For Tess, her narrative is becoming a type of hypertext - one event leads into another. With many choices available, she somehow unexpectedly finds herself

returning to writing as she randomly selects options to investigate, first Red Fern Press and then E-education dot com. Coincidence is involved as scraps of her past teaching life, in the form of a former college associate, pop up unexpectedly, but she has begun to remember that writing was her original goal when she first discovered her love of literature. The layers of her life are now coming together.

Digital memory recordings and hardcopy memory-crafts integrate fragments of content and visual elements and layer these to create narratives. They also both preserve memories. Archives collected through weblogs, Internet pages, and web groups use many of the same functionalities, which include linking to other related information on the web. Known as hyperlinks, these are forms of hypertext where HTML or other types of coding allows readers to select links and move onto other spaces on the Internet, so that “the reader chooses the path of the narrative” (Page 123). Hypertext is therefore normally a part of digital archiving, but if hardcopy memory-crafts share traits of digital memory recordings, then do they also share electronic characteristics? Are hardcopy memory-crafts a form of hypertext?

To examine the notion of memory-crafts as hypertexts, it is helpful to first look at definitions of hypertext. Barbara Page in her essay “Women Writers and the Restive Text,” discusses on-line and off-line narratives authored by women writers who have employed untraditional approaches to their storytelling. Page explains hypertext as an “interweaving of disparate writings” with an “invitation to the reader to move freely both among texts and between texts and syntactic maps” (127). Sarah Stein, in “A Cyberroom of One’s Own,” describes hypertext as “alinear, decentered, polyvocal, relational, and mutable” (155).

Linking to other spaces on the Internet is comparable to incorporating external text into a journal or scrapbook. In hyperlinks, usually the link is indicated by a highlighted word or phrase. In filter weblogs, where “the content of *filters* is external to the blogger (links to world events, online happenings, etc.),” (Herring, et al) the link may also include a short quote from the original content site in reference. Even the more common journal-style blogs “may be considered in the tradition of extracting text and visual material from external sources to combine with personal narrative” (Melvin 23). Either way, the original text is merged with other content from an outside source. For commonplace books, the original text was transcribed into a new volume of work. Scrapbooks will many times include scraps of text – newspaper clippings, sections from books, postcards – pasted directly into the book. Altered books are recycled text, so the originally text might be cut, pasted, and rearranged by the crafter. Dickinson, for example, used pasting techniques for some of her correspondence when she pasted in items from her clip art collection (Holland 146).

By adding other texts to a memory-craft object, the weaving of dissimilar elements and topics begins to create a non-linear storyline for the reader. Viewing different sections of a page, the reader can determine which part of the story she wants to read first. Carlos and Florrie Hanks’ scrapbook, which is part of a collection owned by artist Miriam Schaer, is full of postcards and memorabilia from their marriage. Florrie collected items and added them to the book over the years, but they aren’t necessarily in any particular order. Her intention was to “combine [a] written narrative with visual ephemera to document an ongoing life story” (Melvin 23). Page numbers are not usually

included on scrapbooks pages, so the reader can decide to begin at any point in the book rather than start at the first page and move onto other pages in a specific order.

The memory-crafter may assemble the book, but readers determine where to begin examining the text. They oscillate “between looking AT the expressive surface and through it” (Lanham 42). This is again similar to electronic forms of memory-craft since the reader involves herself with the text, moving back and forth, interacting with the medium. Clicking or selecting hyperlinks offers a way for the reader to pick her own direction in the narrative. A memory-craft book also provides interactive components because by assembling unlike items on a page and developing a “narrative/iconic relationship” (44), the author is giving the reader a number of options. There are numerous items from which to choose, different directions to take. Mary Warner’s scrapbook includes “clippings scissored from a variety of local newspapers” and “an extraordinary amount of mortuary verse” (St. Armand 28). The reader may look at any number of items within the scrapbook, so there is not just one way to read it.

Memory-craft has historically incorporated many of the same functions as digital hypertext. As the original hypertext, it provides an interactive reading experience and does not dictate one prescribed method for reading. It provides a medium for dissimilar ideas to work together in a layered narrative, a story that is not necessarily linear. Sometimes, like clicking on a web page hot link, other sources of text are mingled in with the original content, again weaving text into a new narrative.

Tess is almost at the end of Mamie Dudley’s narrative. She reads more about the family’s trip down river and then onto Colorado, and begins to understand that it’s not

always possible to control everything in one's life. Sometimes opening up to new adventures may lead to new possibilities she didn't count on.



When I told Mark about the book deal, he hugged me, “See, I told you. Those people know what you're worth. Those are the people you need to keep happy.”

I knew he was referring to the job with Jonathan. “I know. I am going to do my best to get more work from them, but I'm still not sure about the channel editor job. I could do both very easily and still take on extra work. It's just not going to be the same as my teaching job. I'm lucky if I could make half that doing this kind of work.”

“Let's deal with one thing at a time. You have a job. You think too much about things you can't always control.”

Control was one thing the Dudley's didn't seem to have a lot of when they traveled down the Mississippi River. It amazed me, too, how the Dudley clan seemed to just pick up and move. I never found any explanation as to why they all decided to take the trip which started in October of 1901 and ended in July of 1902. However, a few hints suggested that maybe they were just trying to find their own way in the world, away from home. In one passage, Mamie talks about how they were camping on the shore after selling their boat and a storm came up. This trip was taken many years before Minnie's and Amelia's suicides, and from some of the comments and anecdotes in her journal, it sounded like Riley Dudley (Mamie's husband) was anxious to be on his own and away from, primarily, his father, who with five sons and three daughters was the powerful patriarch of the family.

Friday the men moved part of the things out of the boat in to the tents. They put the tents out on the river bank and carried all the things from the boat in to them. Saturday was a bad rainy day but they carried things up the river bank all day. We wrapped Virgil up in two comforts and then spread an oil cloth over him and Riley carried him to the tent. I was very uneasy about him, was afraid it would make him worse. They finished moving Sunday, the colored people took possession of the boat. All broke the Sabbath. That night, oh, there came such a storm. Oh the wind just blew. We thought our tents would blow over. Milt's stove pipe all blew down. Riley got a board and braced it against the tent pole and stood and held it for about two hours. I laughed at him. I asked him if he didn't wish he was at home and Pa was here. He said "no" but he wished his wife and children were at home where Pa was.

As I waited on Becky's email that would include not only the new guidelines but also my new book contract, I returned to the guest room and worked some more on organizing Uncle Richard's archives. I also put together a new box, just for Mamie. It had her photographs, her letters, marriage certificate, death certificate, and journals. Much like Uncle Richard, she was her family's historian, keeping records, documenting events, and telling a story about herself as a mother, wife, and woman. She wasn't that different from the women who were the target audience of Red Fern's new book I was about to write. They were of similar social and economic classes, but they now had access to home computer systems and had begun to mix paper crafting with home computer equipment like color printers and scanners.

In Richard's notes, I found a few more photos of the family along with a newspaper clipping from the July 13, 1912 Barry Adage. In one photograph, Mamie's

daughter, LaVerne was about three or four years old. Standing next to her was a fawn. A second photograph included the whole family along with the fawn, who also had a thin leather leash around its neck. I decided to go ahead and include that story and the photographs on my growing memory web page.

31 July 1912 News from Round About

Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Dudley of Brawley, Ark, who are former residents of New Canton, favored the Adage with a photograph of their little daughter, LaVerne, and her pet fawn Dixie. The later was captured June 1st, and he is now quite tame and follows little LaVerne wherever she goes.

An interview in 1987 with Zola Dudley explained how they adopted their new pet: *"Dad hunted and we lived right on a farm where there was trees just up to the place and Dad brought two deer in and one of them died."*

Mamie also wrote about Dixie's death while on their 1912 trip to Colorado:

Sep. 28. Poor Little Dixie died that night. My! My! How bad I did feel about losing him. He was so sweet. Riley and Virgil buried him Sun. morning.

Zola's mentioned this in her interview as well: *"Of course Mom cried she was just like a real close pet. That deer would run and jump on the porch and into the house if it got scared just like any animal."*

I was getting involved more on the web with my new memory project and my research into digital scrapbooking, but I still wasn't sure about becoming a blogger or channel editor for that matter. Since Jonathon was still a few weeks away from retirement and I was still undecided about what to tell him, I found the easiest thing to

do was, basically, nothing. I emailed him after the lunch, which is what I've always been told to do after any kind of interview, but I didn't make any promises.

Hi Jonathon,

Thanks for lunch today and your offer to work with E-education. It sounds like an exciting opportunity, but I'm going to need a little time to make a decision. I'm going to think it over, discuss it with Mark, and get back with you as soon as I can.

Talk with you soon,

Tess

So, that's how I left it – hanging out there – noncommittal. I did think about it, but I was also starting to get busy writing up the book proposal, and for the most part, my discussion with Mark on that topic had pretty much ended. He thought I should pass on it, and I knew his suggestion was not coming from an objective view point, so it was up to me to decide.



Tess is now an outsider to academia. The decision to return to crafting and publishing seems natural for her, as does her memory web site. She has found a way to remember Mamie and other family members through a medium that allows her to share the story with the world via the World Wide Web. But she is still struggling with her second decision concerning joining the blogosphere as a professional blogger. Adding it to her writing resume is an unexpected twist to her story. Since she is not already a member of the blog world or any other on-line groups, she must decide by herself.

Crafting web groups and bloggers share many of the same traits as Robert Ray's prescription for starting an avant-garde movement (77 – 80) such as promoting each other; creating a group identity; attracting attention through a key member; and purposely becoming a network of outsiders. These digital memory-crafters all have various reasons for writing on-line, but most of them share the need for alternative space that allows them to work outside traditional institutions.

This movement from ephemeral media to digital or hypermedia provides a new space for memory-crafters to experiment with nonlinear narratives, but both text forms are used to preserve memories. Public journals, now called weblogs by most Internet users, are a popular form of electronic journaling. There are different types of weblogs, but according to a sample taken by Susan C. Herring, et al, "the personal journal is the most popular type in every demographic category." These memoirs in progress incorporate text, photographs, video, and audio to produce a kind of on-line scrapbook of life. They work as open letters to the public, passing on the thoughts of the blogger at that moment in time.

Differences in hardcopy and digital memory archiving are obvious. A hardcopy scrapbook has a tactical element that a digital equivalent does not possess. However, along with having similar purposes of passing along information and documenting the past, both also share other qualities. For example, both use collage methods as scraps of ideas are woven together. The stories formed have a "narrative/iconic relationship" (Lanham 44).

Linking is another functionality shared by digital archives and hardcopy memory-crafts. Some filter blogs will include links as well as snippets of text from the linked

source. Scraps of information are collected, stored, and presented on-line in a similar way that newspaper clippings or photographs are pasted into scrapbooks and an altered book text is pasted over and rearranged. The reading experience is interactive as the user decides where in the scrapbook to begin reading or the computer user selects links and travels to different places on the Internet. Text and images are positioned in a nonlinear narrative; both types then – digital and ephemeral – are forms of hyperlinks, an “interweaving of disparate writings” (Page 127).

Today’s home computer systems are not that removed from the tools and supplies located in a home craft studio. Even if a “room of one’s own” can’t always include a solitary room, away from family and domestic duties, memory archivist can occupy virtual space, and these areas cross over one another as they experiment with hypermedia. On-line or off-line both areas provide outlets for creative production and alternatives for writing, especially for women who are used to working outside traditional institutions.

CHAPTER SIX: MEMORY-CRAFT AS WRITING CRAFT

Emily Dickinson's poem, "There is no Frigate like a Book," alludes to the treasures kept between the pages of a book and the journey of the imagination. Books continue to operate as mnemonic storage devices, even with the availability of digital media. Crafters have also used the book structure to record memories in the form of memory-crafts. Examples include scrapbooks, art journals, and altered books, all of which have a history tied to personal narrative and memory archiving. Women, in particular, influenced by their domestic environment have taken the lead as familial archivists. Documenting and thus securing "the knowledge of ordinary culture" (de Certeau 14), they become stewards of personal and family history.

As a professional crafter and writer, I have always been interested in this connection to writing and crafting and the notion of viewing writing as a craft. The discovery of some of my own family history collected by a great aunt in various journals and documents helped to connect these ideas for me even further and clarify my personal reasons for exploring this research topic. I believe that eventually memory-crafts become an informed method of writing, a different writing craft used for recording memories through personal narrative and this has been the focus of my study, looking at memory-crafts as alternative forms of discourse.

My completed research project specifically argues that memories of the everyday become culturally significant over time, and through the use of domestic technology which today includes both paper scraps and home computer systems, memory-craft

becomes a writing model which assists in the interpretation of the present and provides insight into the past. To help organize my project, I divided my topic into four related themes: chapter two discusses history and memory-craft; chapter three studies women and domestic technology; chapter four covers feminist literary autobiography and memoir; and chapter five looks at feminism and hypermedia. In this concluding chapter, I will again touch on each of these themes as a way to present my final results.

The fictionalized personal narrative I used as a research method throughout the study is still a part of this concluding chapter, and as I begin to weave together the pieces of the project and make connections between them, I will also conclude the story of my persona, Tess Forrester. As a scholar, writer, and crafter, she is much like me: raised in a middle-class family; later educated in literature; and finally searching for a fulfilling career. However, Tess is not limited to my reality. I followed the literary style of many of my favorite Victorian novelists, such as Anne Bronte and Jane Austen, and rearrange and borrow fragments from other people's lives to create a story that is similar to my own but not an exact duplication. Like a collage, I have assembled scraps from the real world and my imagined world as a way to develop a story that would assist in my research.

Returning now to this narrative, Tess is researching memory-crafts to help with her latest project, a book on digital scrapbooking for Red Fern Press. She is also becoming more accustomed to the idea of working as a freelance writer and web blogger. Writing is opening up other opportunities for her besides teaching, and as she examines this other direction for her career, she is also exploring different writing

methods, learning to merge her writing, craft, and computer skills into unique forms of discourse.



Becky had suggested that my web site was a type of digital scrapbook, but I still wasn't sure if I knew enough about scrapbooking (at least what was going on with the hobby today) and digital arts, so I made a trip to my local library. Just by browsing the shelves, I found a wealth of information and I could see why Becky and Red Fern were so hot to get going on this book. I picked out about a half dozen titles from other publishers – *The Everything Scrapbooking Book*; *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Scrapbooking*; *Scrapbooking with Memory Makers*; *The Simple Art of Scrapbooking*; *Digital Designs for Scrapbooking*; and *Digital Memories*. Obviously, other publishers were already well into the digital crafts topic, so Red Fern was behind the trend.

While I was there, I took a side trip over to the writing section, particularly looking at the freelance writing books. It seemed kind of silly to me, sort of like reading a book about dieting but not actually being on a diet, but then I reminded myself that I was now a freelance writer. Maybe I just had one little job that only paid a few thousand dollars for the next few months, but titles like *The Well-Fed Writer* and *Six-Figure Freelancing* sounded promising. Heck, I was just hoping for five figures.

Almost a week after emailing Jonathan, he called me. I had caller ID on and considered not answering, but I knew I needed to make a decision, so I picked up.

“Tess? It's Jonathan. I know you said you'd get back with me, but I thought I'd go ahead and follow up. Have you had time to think about my offer?”

“Yes, I’m sorry I haven’t called you sooner. I’ve been thinking about it, but I guess I have some questions. I’ve been on the site and looked around a lot, but honestly, I’m not really sure if I understand what a channel editor actually does.”

“Okay, sure, I could see how that’s really not that obvious from just looking at the network. There are a lot of things involved in becoming a channel editor. Some of it is behinds the scenes kind of work. For example, one thing you would do is help coordinate technical issues, with the help of our tech guys, of course. Once the sites are set up on the network, do all the links work? Is the site functioning as it should? Then, there’s recruiting new writers, communication with current writers, bouncing off ideas, helping form an editorial direction. In many respects, it’s like being the editor of a bunch of mini-magazines. You will find writers to write on certain topics and then help them do that and build their article base, or content as we call it, for each web site. So, yeah, that’s a good comparison. Each site is like a mini-magazine and you would be the editor of each one in your channel.”

“What sort of sites will make up the channel then?”

“That’s something you can actually help us with. Our audience is college-level, though we have a lot of readers from high schools and college-prep. We want to be a resource that students might find while using Google for research. We’d also like to appeal to instructors who may be looking for supplemental materials for their curriculum.”

“So, you might want a site about Victorian lit for example or one about writing essays and research papers?”

“Yes, exactly. I realize, right now, payment for the job is not really lucrative. Of course, we hope to change this one day. But, at the moment, this is what we can offer. Most editors do it right now because they want to get involved in growing the network - with the hope of future benefits.”

Growth for the future – what could I say? I wasn’t sure what was in my future, and while I was unsure about putting time into something that may or may not turn into some decent income, it wasn’t like I didn’t have time to do it. I took the job. About a week after emailing the completed book proposal to Becky, I was on-line working as E-education’s Language Arts Channel Editor, in addition to writing the channel’s Victorian Literature blog. Between the two, I was hoping to bring in about \$600 a month on a regular basis and fill in the gaps with work from Red Fern, which also soon came. Becky managed to get the digital scrapbooking proposal approved and even sent me a few other manuscripts to copyedit. It wasn’t nearly what I had made at the college, but it was something, a new beginning for me.



As a freelance writer, Tess is required to piece together different jobs to construct a new career. A new book, a copyediting job, and blogging combine to help her earn income, and this multi-tasking is the way freelancers normally work. This process is very much like assembling a large collage or scrapbook where all of the items may not necessarily relate exactly to each other, but combined, they make sense or in the case of freelance writing, they make a career. Each small piece, each writing job, is important when added together.

This assembling of unlike items mirrors that of memory-crafters, both past and present, for memory-crafting has a rich history. In this study, I examined the origins of memory-crafting and focused on three types of memory-crafts, including scrapbooks, art journals, and altered books. I selected these forms because they shared some common characteristics. All utilize a book form, they incorporate similar crafting techniques, and each includes the use of narrative. Books used in these crafts may be blank or repurposed books, but eventually, the original codex is transformed into a new format and used to store personal narratives. These stories are retold most often by a mixture of text and images. Scrapbooks, for example, may have photographs pasted throughout the pages along with short areas of text, captions, titles, and headers. Art journals will sometimes have more text than a scrapbook, especially when used for the intention of documenting an event, a trip for example. The images are more secondary to the journaling. Altered books reuse old books already filled with text, so paper-art techniques of erasure, collage, and assembly are helpful in constructing a visual and textual narrative.

While the contemporary versions of these crafts, especially scrapbooks, are extremely popular today, their predecessors were also very popular at different time periods. Commonplace books, a form of early memory-craft, were collections of other texts. They were assembled and constructed from various sources (journals, letters, poetry, essays, and sermons for example) via an editor/writer who transcribed works from original manuscripts into a new book. Rather than memorize all of this information, which was necessary before writing developed, books allowed for this storage area to replace the mind. This is when the printed book began to replace the art of memory

(Yates 159). In a similar way to Giulio Camillo's memory theater, the book now became a physical place for memory to be stored.

A writer of commonplace books seems more like an editor compared with today's idea about how a writer functions. But, diarists such as Deborah Norris Logan (1761 – 1839) were considered more writers than editors because writing was considered copying, not developing original content. Logan used the ordinary technique of transcription to “reorganize the place from which discourse is produced” (de Certeau 5). Her commonplace books became self-published miniature libraries, portable enough to pass around among her close circle of family and friends. First a reader, then an author, Logan created historical documents of a personal nature since she selected pieces to transcribe which she judged as significant.

Philadelphia Quaker and commonplace book transcriber, Milcah Martha Moore (1740 – 1829) boasts a few commonplace books which still exist today, including one modern reprinting: *Milcah Martha Moore's Book*, copyright 1997. Moore's books exemplify the notion of archiving as several of the works she collected are the only physical evidence of some writers' efforts. As a member of a privileged class who was educated and had time to read extensively as well as write, often about travel or spiritual beliefs, Moore became a literary diarist of sorts (Wulf 1).

Moore's books were a mix of transcribed journals and other literary works while Logan kept her personal diaries separate from her commonplace books. However, none of these texts were meant to be private documents for the writer's eyes only. Just the opposite was true as it was not unusual to pass around a journal for others to read. This sharing of text is reminiscent of the letter and journals written by Mamie Veach Dudley

and referenced throughout this study. Mamie writes a letter to her sister, Ida, with the purpose of relaying a family tragedy, and at the end of the letter she gives instructions for Ida to read the letter to other family members. Her journals are also meant to be public documents as a way to record two family trips, one taken in 1901 and the other in 1912.

Commonplace books eventually transformed into scrapbooks, which was a very popular pastime during the nineteenth century among the American middle-class. All ages and genders enjoyed this activity, though they usually approached it differently. Scrapbooks were either “text oriented” or “picture-oriented” (Guest 3), and while some may have been a mixture of both text and pictures, there was a distinct difference between scrapbooks assembled by men, women, and children. Text heavy books were normally constructed by adult men and women; picture filled books were more often assembled by young adults and children. The result was a combination of knowledge collection and amusement, especially for “women and children” who used it as “an essential feature of their domestic lives” (3).

Emily Dickinson who is placed in this time period and social class likely participated in scrapbooking (Levi St. Armand 26 – 29). No record exists to prove this, but her hand-sewn booklets of poetry offer evidence of her use of domestic technology for purposes of publication. Another artifact that provides reasons for this possible exercise of scrapbooking is the scrapbook of a close friend of Dickinson’s, Mary Warner. Her book is an example of what many women of her period and age group produced during this time, a compilation of illustrations, transcribed poetry, and ephemeral memorabilia.

Even the hardcopy books themselves were sometimes leftover scraps. Especially popular was the use of old ledger books, which is the form that Mamie Dudley used for her two journals. Appropriately enough, these probably came from the various family sundry stores that were opened at different times and different locations by the Dudleys. This use of everyday materials in order “to make due with what they ha[d]” (de Certeau 18) is in keeping with the whole idea of scrapbooking, to recycle, reuse, and repurpose materials.

In keeping with the notion of reusing, altered books are the epitome of recycled text. Beginning first with a form referred to as extra-illustrated books, hand-stitched volumes were deconstructed for the collector to add additional illustrations throughout the pages. Similar to scrapbooks, a small industry emerged that produced illustrations and other image-related items specifically for this purpose. Once the illustrations were added, the collector reassembled the volume and stitched the spine back together (Wark 151).

These extra-illustrated books were the prototypes of what later became altered books. Again, a mix of extra-illustrated and scrapbooks, altered books reuse an existing text. Various methods are available to reconstruct the book. Cutting, pasting, collage, painting, erasure - these are all available to the altered book maker to rewrite an existing narrative into a new narrative. Tom Phillips is recognized for creating one of the most well-known altered books entitled *The Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel*. In particular, Phillips relies on erasure to block out areas of text, leaving other sections of text. The result is a new story in a new space (Gass).

All of these memory-crafts – commonplace books, scrapbooks, journals, extra-illustrated books, and altered books – developed over time offer connections to the past and raise questions about authorship, textual content, and readership. They offer a “continual oscillation between unselfconscious expression and self-conscious design” (Lanham 43) as the author and reader switch places - back and forth - both sharing in the construction of a personal narrative. Culturally, they are significant in that they are historical artifacts and mnemonic devices used to store memories.

With today’s contemporary market geared toward the memory-crafter and pastimes such as scrapbooking which has become a billion dollar industry (“New CHA Consumer Usage”), there are fewer “scraps” used in what was once a type of recycling and the pages may have a more glossy finish, a less home-made appearance. But, the purpose and techniques are not very different from those used by the family historians, these stewards of our past who originally employed memory-crafting as a way to record their lives and pass on their knowledge.

Returning now to my narrative and Tess, at this point she is still trying to collect scraps of various jobs to design her new career as a freelance writer. She has her own misgivings about this new venture, but her family she realizes is also affected by her career decisions. She does not live in a vacuum where she can do whatever she pleases. Her work influences her familial relationships, most notable with her husband, Mark, who she must prove to that blogging, a nontraditional form of writing in many ways similar to a journal, is one way she can earn a viable income.



On the whole, Mark was very supportive, all except for the job with Jonathan at E-education. That was an issue he just wouldn't budge on no matter what I said, and it finally escalated into a fight that had been boiling under the surface since I received my dismissal from school.

"First of all, even if I wasn't suspicious of his motives, Tess, which I am, you are going to be working for peanuts. And, for what? So that maybe, maybe, you'll make more some day? So that you can build *his* Internet network? What are *you* going to get out of that?"

"Your suspicions don't make any sense. Everyone works from their own homes. Other than occasional emails, I will barely, if ever, see him. Plus, he knows I'm married. Heck, I saw this guy way more when I worked at the college than I ever will actually work *for* him."

"That's suppose to make this okay? Besides that, you could be getting other work that actually pays something – a real job."

And there it was. He'd finally said it. The issue that I had been feeling guilty about since driving away from school that day was out there now – put into words. It wasn't like I hadn't thought before about writing full-time, but I was too practical for that. I also felt it wouldn't be fair to Mark for me to put us both into a financially vicarious position when I had skills enough to get a real, regular, half-way decent job. Even if it meant doing something I didn't care about, I knew I could probably get office work of some kind. A crappy job maybe, but it could be a regular pay check that we could both count

on. We went back and forth, but the more we argued the more we seemed to disagree and it just became easier to stop talking about it.

I didn't talk about my blogging work any more than was totally necessary, and I continued to pull in work from Red Fern. I also started contacting other editors like Becky who might be able to use my editing skills, slowly building my list of clients. To help recruit for E-education, I even sucked up my pride and called Julie at the college to see if she might know of fellow teachers, especially adjuncts, who might be interested in blogging for the network. She was too busy, of course, with her demanding workload at the school, but she agreed to send out an email notice to English faculty with my contact information, and soon, I managed to build a small blogging staff for my channel.

At this point, all my writing was of a practical nature. I needed to prove to Mark, and more so myself, that I could do this. I was too far into it now to question myself and chuck it all for any "real" job. It wasn't like I wasn't tempted. I kept an eye on the classified and saw a number of possibilities. A local non-profit group needed a grant writer. I could do that. The county had an educational program specialist position open with the agriculture center. It wasn't exactly my idea of higher education, but again, something I could do. So, I kept going with the idea that in a year, if I didn't make at least a certain amount, I'd cave in for a "real" job.

This year long goal of mine I also kept to myself. It just didn't help to talk to Mark about it because invariably the blog job would come up in the conversation, so I kept information about my freelance writing to Red Fern and other jobs that came my way. But, of course, after I got a few pay checks from them, we had to talk about it, even if for

no other reason than the logistics of moving money from the PayPal to our regular account.

“What’s this deposit for \$623.48?”

“Oh, that’s from E-education, my first payment. They pay a month behind, so even though I’ve been doing it for a few months, this is the first official check from them.”

“So, you’ll get this every month from them?”

“Around that, at least \$500. It depends on how much traffic my channel generates. They will normally pay on the last day of each month.”

He just nodded and walked away with the check book register in his hand. Again, the conversation was put on hold. Another couple of months and I was bringing in a few thousand here and there. It started to add up, but it was still sort of feast and famine. I wouldn’t see anything for weeks, and then in one day, I might get my blog money via PayPal and a Red Fern book check and a copyediting check in the mail all on the same day. Now, if every week or even every few weeks I could get that same amount of money show up on a regular basis, this freelance thing might work.



Tess is now making a little progress as far as her freelance writing, though she is keeping an eye on the want ads and is still not ready to commit to a vicarious existence as a writer. It continues to be a heated issue with her husband. His suspicions concerning her blog work concern not only the person she would be working for but also the fact that she could put a lot of time and effort into a position that may or may not

eventually reward her financially. Tension grows in her domestic world as she struggles with her own misgivings and tries to keep the conflict to a minimum in her home.

Home management was considered a science, a type of domestic technology, by some nineteenth century women. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lydia Child specialized in offering housewifery-related advice. The idea of domestic technology continues to center on chores required to run a household (cleaning and cooking), and though they may not be considered a science to the average twenty-first century woman, most find they still have home-bound responsibilities that require them to balance domesticity with other demands in their lives.

Home-crafts are another form of domestic technology, and memory-craft construction fits in with many homemade techniques. Like cleaning and cooking, the duty of the family archivist is most often taken on by women since they are also primarily keepers of the home and the family caregivers. Typical housework and memory-crafting also both concentrate on types of recycling and methods of economy. Frugality becomes an art form, a way to “gather together all that would otherwise be lost,” (McHugh 20) when applied to running a household or assembling a scrapbook, altered book, or personal journal.

My study analyzes the idea of memory-craft as a form of domestic technology. In addition, I also consider crafting methods used to produce memory-crafts as types of domestic technologies. Emily Dickinson is an example of a nineteenth century woman who resembled the reading audience of domestic advisors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe. She practiced various types of home-based domestic technologies including the typical duties required in managing a home: baking, cleaning, and gardening. Dickinson

was also a crafter of texts. She constructed small booklets of her poetry by hand-stitching papers together, and just as many contemporary crafters do today, she kept a stash of clip art, which she used to embellish letters and poems, creating a “poetic production” (Holland 150).

This same sort of reuse of scraps to embellish is a common practice among contemporary memory-crafters. The practice of assembling booklets in the form of scrapbooks, journals, and altered books continues to be a home-based craft conducted in domestic space primarily by women. This space might be a corner of a room or the kitchen table. The space selected for crafting is one element which differentiates them from professional book artists who might work in an artist’s studio. This difference between amateur and professional book crafter is significant because it points to the fact that the reasons for crafting are different and therefore the purpose of the final product is different. As explained by Johanna Drucker, Robertson Professor of Media Studies at the University of Virginia, amateur memory-crafters are not concerned with “creative work [as] procedural.” Their purpose is more grounded in the everyday, of recording personal memories and creating domestic discourse, “practices that produce without capitalizing” (de Certeau xx).

Paper, paste, scissors, and paper scraps are common items found in most homes, and these become tools of domestic technology when used to construct memory-crafts. Thus the finished product, the scrapbook or other type of crafted book, becomes a form of domestic technology as do the items used to construct and assemble the finished work. In this way, “technology” is “carried out as a craft” by the memory-crafter (Keller 31).

Cutting and pasting is no longer a technique exclusive to paper crafts. Since the average middle class home now includes personal computers and peripheral equipment such as scanners and color printers, domestic technology in memory-crafting currently includes digital equipment. This combination of old and new technologies may distinguish older forms of crafting from more contemporary methods, but the end result is still the same: a collection of personal memories housed in a book, whether of hardcopy or electronic form.

As the family's custodian of knowledge and genealogical data, the memory-crafter uses the book form to assist in passing down memories to future generations. This is particularly significant when it comes to everyday or family events that may not have world wide importance, but to another member of the family, even reading about the housewifery duties of a distance aunt may be of interest. Family stories only known by a small group of family members who eventually pass on become lost memories if there is no physical documentation left for other generations. The sensational story of my own family's mother-daughter suicide between Minnie Dudley (sister-in-law to Mamie Dudley) and Amelia Dudley (mother to Minnie and mother-in-law to Mamie Dudley) is an example of memories fading as most relatives who were alive while it happened are no longer living.

Believed to be a shameful family incident as well as a tragedy that still touched the nerves of elderly relatives, the story is rarely discussed. As the silence continued, the details of the story were forgotten. In a 1988 interview conducted by Roger Dudley, who originally discovered Mamie's journals and letter, Zola Dudley, daughter to Mamie, was reluctant to discuss it. Zola's daughter, KorDova, finally interrupts during the

interview to explain: “Mamma doesn’t like to talk about it or anybody else to talk about it. In those days something like that was a disgrace.” My own grandmother, Juanita Dudley Goff, only learned of the details herself about a decade ago, as she was just a baby at the time the suicide occurred. Since she was the youngest child, family members thought they were protecting her. If not for Mamie’s letter to Ida, there would be no record available to future members of the Dudley clan. These journals and the letter, important at least to the Dudleys, are domestic devices which allow Minnie and Amelia’s family to remember them. Mamie’s journals are also records of memory, stories of her travels and adventures, narratives that as her distant relation I still enjoy reading and remembering with her, at least ephemerally.

In dealing with her own new adventure, Tess has lost track of Mamie and her distant relatives for awhile as she continues to try to sway her husband into supporting her decisions concerning freelance writing. She feels she must be the one to decide which writing jobs she should take, whether they are writing blogs or books.



To help ensure I didn’t spend too much time blogging considering the low wage I was making, I kept very careful track of the time I spent. I got myself organized and spent one day a week working on my Victorian literature blog, setting posts to publish automatically through the system’s Word Press software. This way, the blog posts published at specific times throughout the week, and I wasn’t required to work on the blog every day. Since some of my work as editor required that I periodically check in with bloggers on my channel, I broke up the editing chores into chunks of time during the week.

While on-line blogging one day, I received an unexpected message through my E-education email.

Hello Tess,

I am scouting on behalf of a major publisher for someone to write a book on English literature. Would you be interested? If so, I would like to tell you more.

thanks for any help.

best

Mary Allen

Allen Olsen Literary Agency

After a quick Google search, I found her and her agency listed under the Writer's Digest web site. She looked legitimate, not a vanity press as I had suspected. Though they had worked with some fiction titles, they mainly specialized in non-fiction, including a lot of the "dummy" series books published by Wiley and Sons, who of course, happen to also publish a large number of textbooks. I replied to her email right away.

Hi Mary,

Yes, I'm very interested. Just fill me in on the details and we can go from there.

~ Tess

It was a Saturday. Obviously, this woman had emailed me late yesterday, but I just hadn't checked my email until that morning. She may or may not answer me today, but I couldn't wait to tell Mark.

"Hey! I just got an email from a real literary agent!"

“Really? What about?”

“She wants to talk about a book deal, a literature book, maybe a textbook or something. I’m not sure she didn’t give any details, just asked if I was interested.”

“And of course, you said...”

“Well, duh, I said yes,” and I started dancing around his desk.

“With a literary agent, you could probably get a lot more work. I say dump the blogging and go for it.”

I thought he was kidding at first and then realized he wasn’t. He actually was telling me I should go ahead and leave my blog job right now, even though I didn’t know a thing about this new book deal or the agent or anything else. I stopped dancing and looked at him in disbelief.

“I’m not dumping anything, at least not until I get some details and a contract signed. And even then, I don’t see why I can’t do both. In fact, that’s how this woman found me, through my E-education email address. If not for that, she may not have ever contacted me.”

“You don’t know that.”

“No, but it sure helped.”

He started to back track a little, “I’m just saying, if you can hook up with her, it would be a good time to reconsider your blog work.”

“Unless I can’t handle the workload, there’s nothing to reconsider. I’m writing the blog. That’s it.”

“That’s it? I don’t have a say in any of it? I thought we were partners here.”

“We are, but you are trying to force me into making decisions that I don’t agree with.”

“*I’m forcing you? I’m forcing you? Aren’t you already doing whatever you want? You went ahead and started writing the blog even though I think it’s the wrong thing to do, even though you’re getting paid next to nothing. How is that forcing you?*”

As he made this speech, he got up, put his wallet in his back pocket, picked up his keys from the kitchen table, and headed for the front door.

“Where are you going?”

“I’ve got stuff to do.”

Bang, he slammed the door and drove off.



Conflict turns into silence for Tess and Mark. It is again easier to ignore or not talk about difficult issues, best to try to pretend they don’t exist. This heightened drama resembles the story lines in the literature Tess loves so much. They are the classic plotline of any romance novel: miscommunication, confusion, misunderstandings. All come together for a rise in the climax of the story.

Tess Forrester’s narrative in this study imitates life. Similar to techniques used by early female novelists, fiction is disguised as autobiography, a genre long associated with female discourse. Reflective writing is also used in memory-crafts, and while they may not be fictional, they are comparable to novels, especially those written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by women writers including Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters. Memory-crafts are “self-told narrative[s]” (Bruner 695) constructed through fragments of text and images, cut and pasted together in the same way Anne

Brontë assembled novels such as *Agnes Grey*; some elements are borrowed from real life, though edited to fit in with the reality represented by the author.

In both women's memory-crafts and early female novels, story-telling is a critical element to these nontraditional methods which may be models of feminist rhetoric. Both models differ when it comes to recording facts versus recording fiction, and more often novels will have a linear approach while memory-craft tends to be more fragments. However, through narrative they provide a way to retell memories. Women writers like Jane Austen may not have intentionally included a feminist viewpoint in their novels, but a sort of "feminine vision" (Morrison) is evident in her characters' roles, which are clearly defined in relation to their gender. This may have come naturally to Austen whose own life was prescribed according to a patriarchal order, and while it is subtle, the author comments on these socially assigned roles through the use of characterization and direct narrative.

In memory-crafting the same sort of gender specific statements are made, though again subtly. Mamie's journals chronicle her family's trips, and as part of that story, she describes her own activities which often include caring for sick family members and preparing meals. She understands her role as the family caregiver. Mamie does not mention these domestic duties to make a statement about feminism, but the result is the same as her role as "woman" is defined by the story she tells.

Women like Austen and Mamie "worked from outside the oral tradition" (Ong 159); thus, narration offered them other choices. The models of the novel and memory-crafts allowed them a way to create their own rhetorical voice, and autobiography was one of the main elements of these alternative writing models. Culling from their own

lives is easier for women of Austen and Mamie's time periods because of their limited experiences. Their lives revolve around home and family because that is where they spend most of their time.

Story-telling is a helpful tool for documenting memories and passing on knowledge to future generations. Autobiography again is an important factor for documenting "the interior lives of women" (Buckler and Leeper 1). Scrapbooks and other forms of memory-crafts are personal stories pieced together by the memory-crafter, and later these become artifacts, evidence of their existence. Without these, their memories are lost and this knowledge is then lost by later generations.

An example of my own personal loss is that of my grandmother, Juanita Dudley Goff, and her travel journal, which she used to record two family trips with her husband (my grandfather) and her parents. Later, after a bitter divorce, she edited these journals, removing photographs and pages throughout. It is possible that these photographs included my grandfather and the removed pages referenced his being on the trip with her. Since I never saw them together, the complete journal might have given me a glimpse into their lives before the divorce. As it is now, it is a fragmented narrative that does not allow me to experience the entire story.

Many of the examples I provide for this study point to early memory-crafters and novelists, but today women continue to gravitate towards nontraditional models of writing. They also are most often the family archivist. This is an interesting situation since the twenty-first century offers them so many more choices than were available to women from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One reason for this may be that memory archiving falls into a comparable category to domestic chores. Time restrictions

and other domestic duties may be another reason women continue as the primary developers of memory-crafting. The majority of women work outside of the home, but this does not necessarily relieve them of familial responsibility. Journals, scrapbooks, and other fragmented forms of discourse are easier to pick up and set down than a text which requires a linear format. This flexibility is a convenience women continue to find fits more easily into their world. Finally, the use of autobiographic writing techniques is another attraction of memory archiving among women who believe “what had happened to them, whether at home or abroad, whether commonplace or extraordinary, deserved retelling, especially to other women” (Sanders 3).

While Tess has been at home now more than she was when she worked full-time at the college, she has begun to take on more domestic chores around the house. It is one way she discovers she can give back to her husband, a contribution to their family which is not monetary, but that may at least make his life more comfortable. Eventually, housework helps to distract her and take her mind off the disagreement she had with her husband over blogging.



We rarely ever fought, even after all these years together. I hated fighting. He had such a strong will sometimes, and I normally felt he had the best judgment when it came to most issues that came up between us that I usually was the one who compromised. But, this was too much. I liked blogging, writing about literature, working from home, and being my own boss for a change. It even looked like I might find more work because of the blog job. Some of his reasoning against it was money related, but more so, I felt he was just irrationally jealousy. He didn't trust me.

I was left alone the rest of the day to think and fester, and as I did so, I got my usual cleaning bug. Any time I'm upset, really upset, I have to clean. It is the only thing that helps me get my nervous energy out. After cleaning most of the house, I decided it was time to finish the plans I had for organizing Uncle Richard's archives. I had purchased a few file cabinets for my office and intended to use one for Richard's collection. As I pulled out the papers from Mamie's box, I stopped a moment to read her obituary:

To know Mrs. Dudley was to love her. Her friends were numbered by her acquaintances. Of a gay, cheerful disposition, she was always thoughtful of others, kind and considerate of the sick and needy. Though in ill health for a number of years and bedfast for the past ten months, her sense of humor never forsook her. Pain and suffering never conquered her lovable, gallant spirit. She was a great lover of nature, of everything bright and beautiful. She possessed a magnetic personality, always looking on the bright side of life, dispelling gloom and cheering others by her gay contagious laughter. Though gone from our midst, her good deeds will ever live in the hearts of friends and relatives.

She died of cancer October 17, 1933. I felt blessed to have gotten a chance for her to tell me her story and that of her sister-in-law's Minnie. The photographs and clippings as well as interviews conducted by Richard had actually helped me create a nice digital scrapbook, and I was happy that I could immortalize Mamie by using some of my memory website pages for projects in the new Red Fern book I was working on. I wonder what Richard would have thought of that?

Putting Minnie's photos away along with those of her mother Amelia's, I still felt a little cheated of the details as to what exactly happened to them. Mamie told me a lot, but it was second hand news in the form of a letter. If only Minnie had kept a journal like Mamie had. She could have told me everything. I thought back to the weird dream I had many months ago of Minnie and Harvey in the barn. There was a story there. Maybe I could still figure out a way to tell it for her some day. Maybe I could imagine it.

I sat down at the computer keyboard and began to do just that. I typed and typed for a good couple of hours. The story wasn't polished at all, but as I used to tell my composition students all the time, nothing in draft form is written in cement. It is better to get it out, like a band-aid, just rip off. Get the words out and then go back and do the real writing. That's what I was finally beginning to feel like too, a real writer. After how many years in college and how many different jobs? It took me about 40 years to figure this out?



Except for the fact that Tess' husband still does not agree with her decision to blog for E-education dot com, blogging has been encouraging for Tess and has begun to open up new opportunities for her writing career. Because of her small amount of success and now future prospects popping up through contact with a literary agent, she is beginning to feel like writing may be what she was meant to do. She also realizes that writing is a way for her to remember Minnie, the young woman who killed herself, and it is also a means for honoring Mamie, who left records of the family for future generations. Alternative forms of writing suit Tess's needs, at least for right now. The

Internet has been a valuable tool for both networking and writing as Tess explores this new digital space.

Books replaced the mind as storage areas for memory, and now a new space is available for memory collection and storage, virtual space or cyberspace. Digital space provides a new area for women to practice alternative forms of discourse and this includes memory-crafting. More public than the average scrapbook, web sites, weblogs, and web groups encourage collaboration and experimentation among memory-crafters. With digital equipment accessible to the average home-crafter, a mixture of electronic archiving and traditional crafting methods is a trend that is becoming increasingly popular among women archivists. Weblogs, in particular, are becoming a dominate form of memory recording.

The women in these web groups vary as far as demographics, as do their motivations for journaling publicly, but many also share reasons for writing weblogs, joining forums, or contributing to listservers. Though the Internet was not originally designed with these groups in mind, they have still managed to adapt to this electronic environment and develop their own space. Their adaptation is characteristic of the Avant-Garde movement as they fill a gap between ephemeral and electronic memory archiving.

In "How to Start an Avant-Garde," Robert Ray offers eight rules for starting an avant-garde and many of Ray's rules are applicable to women who are part of this on-line memory-craft movement. As they build a space for themselves on the Internet, they employ many of the same methods discussed by Ray: teamwork; name recognition; key

figures as leaders; training traditionally; career development; alternative exhibitions; multi-tasking; and self-promotion.

Of the eight steps, collaborative efforts (described as step one) are the most apparent use of Ray's methodology. Through listservers and web groups, members often work together to help promote, encourage, and mentor one another. Blog carnivals, a way for bloggers to discuss the same topic and then link to one another, are an example of working together to help promote each others' opinions and blogs. Weblogs, web sites, and web groups, as described in Ray's sixth step, also give memory-crafters areas on line to show their work, "places where off-beat work can appear when the official channels [...] are closed" (Ray 79).

Working outside traditional writing methods, memory-crafters and other dominantly female groups help to fill a gap. They once only did this through hardcopy means, and now through the use of the Internet, they accomplish it in cyberspace, an alternative space, which "demand[s] a *new critical idea*" (Ray 79). They design their own space as they create their personal narratives, combining and sometimes replacing traditional paper and paste techniques with computerized cut and paste methods.

The methods may be different between hardcopy memory-crafting and digital memory-crafting, but the intention is similar. Both are areas that house our memories and preserve them for future generations. Both provide a means for documenting personal narratives. Even though books are "a physical presence in our hands" (Lanham 35), their purpose is not that different than a weblog viewed on a computer screen. Popular bloggers such as Heather Armstrong who writes the *Dooce* blog exemplify the notion of self-reflexive writing through a digital apparatus. By combining

text, photographs, video, and audio, her weblog, a kind of memoir in progress, resembles a hardcopy scrapbook as she gathers her daily memories together and weaves them into a story for public viewing.

The difference between hardcopy and digital memory-crafts mainly deal with the tactile affect, the fact that you can physically hold and touch a hardcopy scrapbook in your hands. This is not really possible with a digital scrapbook. However, looking beyond the obvious tactile quality of hardcopy and digital books, there are more similarities than difference when it comes to memory-crafts.

First, there are the visual elements of both media. Images and text are commonly combined, layered, stitched together, or pasted next to one another. Because of this mixture of images and text a linear structure is not necessary, and therefore, it opens up experimental possibilities: photographs, scanned images, video all are combined with text. The scraps now may not be something you can hold in your hand, but they share the idea of bits and pieces of text and images collected, mixed, and assembled into the final product. Illustrator Keri Smith's blog, *Wish Jar Journals*, is an example of this practice as she combines her own illustrations (which she draws as hardcopies and then scans before adding them) with her blog posts. Sometimes the illustration is the post, a mixture of images and text.

An assembly and weaving of memories is part of memory-crafting whether it is done off-line to create scrapbook or altered book or on-line to create a digital scrapbook or web journal. The methods may be slightly different due to the difference between digital and hardcopy, but the purpose is the same.

Another similarity between digital and hardcopy memory-crafts is an interactive reading experience. With digital memory-crafts, these may be in the form of hyperlinks where embedded links to other areas on the Internet allow the reader to move to other pages of the text or even to other web sites. Through these available links, “the reader chooses the path of the narrative” (Page 123) instead of allowing the author to dictate the direction of the story.

Hypertext is not necessarily a new concept. While it may be hard-coded onto web pages, the notion of hypertext – an “interweaving of disparate writings” (Page 127) – has always been a method available to memory-crafters. Journals frequently contain selections from the author’s life story that she documents when time permits. In Mamie’s journals, she writes when she can and does not attempt to record a linear tale of her trips. She doesn’t have time to write a neat and tidy story with a beginning, middle, and end, only record scraps or pieces of events that fill her days. Weblogs follow this same form as the blogger writes about what is important to her that day. It is a memoir, but just as she goes to the computer and writes her posts and then leaves to attend to other matters (caring for the baby, cleaning the kitchen, heading off to work) the reader sees just that small piece of her life at that moment in time.

The inclusion of external text and images is another hypertextual element shared by digital and hardcopy memory-crafting. Rearranging and pasting in text and images from other books is a technique commonly used in altered books. Including clippings from newspapers and other scraps of text (invitations, personal notes, and correspondence) is an element of many scrapbooks as well. Webloggers follow this method of reusing text by linking to other sources on the web and sometimes

incorporating short bits of text in the form of quotations from these sources in with their own blog posts; the original text of the blogger is merged with content from an outside source.

Combining dissimilar elements and topics is a way to create a non-linear narrative. Then it is up to the reader to decide where to start and stop reading, skipping around from one bit of information to the next. This type of skim reading and moving from item to item or icon to icon on a page follows the same way readers view hypertext. Just like flipping through pages of a scrapbook and stopping wherever they find a place of interest, the hypertext reader can click on a link and move to different places in cyberspace. The digital crafter may assemble the web page just as the scrapbooker may paste in the memorabilia in a book, but the reader determines where to begin reading and where to become involved in the story.

Both media – no matter if they were created to exist in digital space or off-line – provide an interactive reading experience and a way for readers to determine how and in what order a document will be read. The purpose of the memory-crafter is not to dictate how a work will be read. The content is offered “as is.” Woven together, unlike items are assembled on a page resulting in a “narrative/iconic relationship” (Lanham 44).

Tess’s narrative is coming to an end. Over a matter of months, she has lost what she thought was going to be her ultimate career, teaching college English. Instead, she has stumbled into writing, which ironically is what originally prompted her to pursue teaching. Every writer starts with a love of literature, and this is followed by the idea that maybe the reader could turn into a writer. However, teaching is so much more practical,

a job that results in a regular pay check. At least, that is what Tess believed until her world changed one day.



I heard a key in the door. He was home. It wasn't dark yet, but Mark had been gone almost the whole day. I still wasn't ready to compromise, nor did I know how to convince him that I was right. That this is what I was meant to do – be a writer.

I didn't move from my chair but continued typing. I didn't have anything to say, so it was better to just ignore him. Plus, admittedly, I was still hurt and a little angry from the fight we'd had.

“Hey,” he stood there leaning on the door jam.

“Hey,” I replied, stopped typing, and looked up.

“We need to talk.”

“I'm not sure what else to say,” I shrugged.

“Well, I have some more to say to you,” and he walked into the living room.

I followed him and stood there with my arms crossed ready to just let it hit me with it, whatever else it was that he had to tell me.

“I drove around today, had to go by the hardware store, get my oil changed, and I picked up some cat food at the vet, and well, as I was driving, I thought a lot about your writing and everything.”

“Yes?”

“And I got you something. Stay here for a minute. It's in the car.”

He left, and when he returned, as he opened the door with one hand, he held a small black puppy tucked under the other arm. The puppy looked like a long haired lab

mix, and he had a red collar around his neck. His head was disproportionately larger than his body, and his little legs dangled as Mark held him.

Mark stopped, and held the puppy out to me with both hands, his arms reaching towards me. I grabbed the puppy and held him against me.

“When I stopped by the vet’s today, I started chatting with some of the techs behind the desk and they told me someone had abandoned a puppy there last night, put him over the fence and left him. We’re always talking about getting a dog, but with our jobs we never could. So, I figured since you are going to be working from home now, you might like a little extra company.”

“He is so cute,” as I held him up against me he started licking my face relentlessly.

“So, this means you are okay with everything?”

“I’m still not thrilled with the blog stuff, but I know that I can trust you. I love you, and I trust you. As far as the rest of your writing, actually, considering you just started doing this, you are averaging a few thousand a month. Now, of course, some weeks you go by without getting anything, which kind of sucks.”

“True.”

“But, if we budget carefully, then we can probably handle this for awhile.”

“I was thinking of trying it for a year and if it doesn’t work out...”

“I’m not sure if a year is enough.”

I looked up at him in surprise as the puppy continued to wiggle around in my arms.

“But, I’ll let you decide that, okay.”

For now, that's how my own story ends. I still often think about my big life question: What are you going to do? Maybe I am meant to write. Maybe something else will show up in my life, and Fate will tell me to switch gears yet again. It would be nice if every story ended pleasant and tidy like the Victorian novels I love to read - the girl marries the country vicar or the governess becomes the woman of the manor. But, real life, of course, is more about taking chances, moving across the country in a covered wagon or traveling down the Mississippi on a house boat. Right now, I plan to take a chance on writing and just see where it leads me.



My own reasons for conducting this study began with Mamie's journals and letter. I wish I could say that I discovered them by accident like Tess does in my story and that I used them to help resolve critical personal and career conflicts. However, while her journals did not have the same dramatic affect on my life as they had on Tess, they still spoke to me and encouraged me to pursue an academic journey.

As I began to read through Mamie's collected works, I realized that these documents were a precious archive of family memories. The stories are still touching today: a family suicide, an ill child, and trips taken far from home. Even her daily routines are of interest to family members because they allow us to glimpse into the past. Without them, family knowledge concerning the Dudleys, (my mother's side of the family) would have been lost.

Mamie's writings are obviously historically significant as well, but this is not necessarily a new area of research. Therefore, I was more interested in looking at crafting memories as an informed method of writing. Memory-crafts, starting with

commonplace books and diaries and later transforming into scrapbooks, altered books, and art journals, are not normally grouped with traditional forms of writing, yet they accomplish many of the same functions, housing knowledge and preserving stories.

The frugal scrapbooker might recycle an old ledger book as Mamie did for her journaling, or today she may create a memory-craft through digital technology, publishing it publicly on the Internet as a web site or weblog. Either way, the result is an alternative type of writing, a home-made craft, and a record of familial and personal narratives. These outlets are also forms of self-reflection, and just as women are the predominate caretakers of home and family, they have also taken the lead as family archivists. Operating as stewards of personal and family information, their work is more than a simple domestic craft used for entertainment. They are recording devices.

Because of their fragmented formats and narrative qualities, memory-crafts become artifacts which combine text and visual elements to tell a story and pass on knowledge of the every day by merging text and domestic technology. The construction of memory-crafts does not follow established writing techniques, and therefore, this allows an opportunity for experimentation by writers who have been traditionally removed from mainstream rhetorical methods. While the formats are unconventional, the end product is a mnemonic structure for storing memories.

This old form of writing down memories becomes an interesting new possibility for discourse when considering memory-crafts as something more than a codex book filled with scraps and clippings. By duplicating many of the hardcopy crafting methods on a digital apparatus such as the Internet, the memory-crafter has discovered a way to bridge the gap between text and technology. The implications are significant for all

writers who are looking for alternative methods that are applicable to both electronic and hardcopy texts.

APPENDIX: PERMISSION LETTERS

Tammy Powley

writer and designer

1773 SW Penrose Ave.
Port St. Lucie, FL 34953
772.336.7147
tammy@tammpowley.com

August 11, 2006

Heather B. Armstrong
Blurbodocery
1338 Foothill Drive #230
Salt Lake City, UT 84108

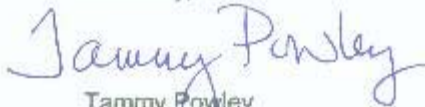
Dear Mrs. Armstrong,

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled "Memory-Craft: The Role of Domestic Technology in Women's Journals," and I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation an image from Dooce.com. Specifically, I would like to use the first image from the following post: http://www.dooce.com/archives/daily/04_04_2006.html (also see attached hardcopy for reference).

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the publication of my dissertation on demand by UMI. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or other authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that you own the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed SASE. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,


Tammy Powley

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE OR REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: 
Heather B. Armstrong

Date: 8-17-2006

Writing, Editing, and Consulting Services

Tammy Powley

writer and designer

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tammy@tammypowley.com
August 11, 2006

Christine Gooding
2 Brackenfield Place
Parklands, Christchurch 8083
New Zealand

Dear Christine,

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled "Memory-Craft: The Role of Domestic Technology in Women's Journals," and I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation an image from *CreativeXpression.net*. Specifically, I would like to use the following image:



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If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed SASE. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tammy Powley
Tammy Powley

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE OR REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: *Christine Gooding*
Christine Gooding
Date: 11/8/06

Writing, Editing, and Consulting Services

Tammy Powley

writer and designer

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tammy@tammypowley.com

August 14, 2006

Keri Smith
191 2nd Street
Troy, NY 12180

Dear Keri,

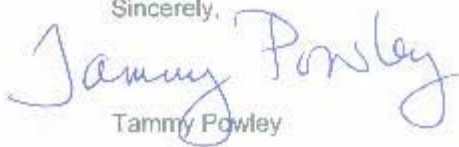
This letter confirms our recent email discussion. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled "Memory-Craft: The Role of Domestic Technology in Women's Journals," and I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation two images from your blog, *Wish Jar Journal*. Specifically, I would like to use images from the following blog posts (also see attached hardcopies for reference):

<http://www.kerismith.com/blog/archives/000367.html> and
<http://www.kerismith.com/blog/archives/000277.html>

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Sincerely,


Tammy Powley

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE OR REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: Keri Smith
Keri Smith

Date: August 17/06

Writing, Editing, and Consulting Services

thanks Tammy!
I love the ideas
for this project.
keep me posted
on it.

K.

Tammy Powley

writer and designer

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August 14, 2006

Miriam Schaer
199 Eighth Avenue, A3
Brooklyn, NY 11215

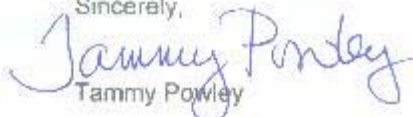
Dear Miriam,

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled "Memory-Craft: The Role of Domestic Technology in Women's Journals," and I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation images from your personal scrapbook collection, which you were kind enough to email to me some months ago. Specifically, I would like to use the cover.jpg image and the valentine.jpg image.

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If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed SASE. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,


Tammy Powley

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE OR REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: 
Miriam Schaer

Date: 16 August '06

Writing, Editing, and Consulting Services

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