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The composition of anonymity: Toward a theory, history, and pedagogy

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THE COMPOSITION OF ANONYMITY:
TOWARD A THEORY, HISTORY, AND PEDAGOGY

BY

TIMOTHY THOMAS DANSDILL

BA, Sarah Lawrence College, 1979
MA, The University of Massachusetts/Boston, 1990

DISSERTATION

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

Doctor of Philosophy
in
English

May, 2001

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Ph.D. DISSERTATION

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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Thomas Newkirk

Thomas Newkirk, Professor of English

4.18.01

DATE

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Frankie May Howell, and to my father, John Joseph Dansdill. They would not understood what I have written about anonymity, or why. If asked to read it, my mother would have said, "I'll sure try.". My father would have wisecracked: "So, Anonymous, how'll you get credit?" Their ashes, scattered across a day bright as this acid free page, would be my ink.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

My basic academic aim in this dissertation is to have my readers begin to think deeply about anonymity. It is a subject you might not have thought about before, until that is, the advent of a full blown digital age barely a decade past. (The anonymous discourse of the World Wide Web is a dissertation in its own right.) The preliminary and highly selective nature of this study (signaled by my use of "Toward" in all title headings)prevents me from moving beyond the origins of anonymity as the dark side of an all-pervasive author-function that I have bowed down to almost slavishly in the case of Foucault who, in having asked, "What is an Author?, led me to answer: "Anonymous."

This answer, and its attendant question, "What is Anonymous?" make very little sense. Foucault didn't write "What is an Author?' anonymously. Nor could I seriously consider writing this dissertation on anonymity anonymously. As a pragmatic fact of life, this dissertation would not have any being if its writer were anonymous. Who could defend a dissertation anonymously? Whoever gave academic credit to Anonymous? Who has a transcript or curriculum vitae on file labeled Anonymous? The answer to all these questions is: *Nobody*. It is sheer absurdity to speak of the identity, authority, or community of someone named Anonymous.

The anonymous narrator in *Texts for Nothing* asks—"What matters who's speaking?" This question by an "absent character" is authorized into existence not by Anonymous, but by a Nobel Prize winning AUTHOR named Beckett who compels another major AUTHOR, Foucault, to ask "What is an Author?" And still I answer: "Anonymous"—or more suggestively: *The Anonymous Function*.

What is the Anonymous Function? Whatever the answer to that question, it would seem to reduce significantly the absurdity of mentioning identity, authority, and community. The answer will require that my reader be someone whose erudition is willing to run from (pun intended) the dialectical reasoning of philosophy into (but mostly around) all kinds of hybridized disciplinary "studies" (*cultural, feminist, composition*). For the sake of some measure of simplicity, I place anonymity in a subordinate binary relation to each of the dominant discourses of identity, authority, and community. The reality of their relations, however, is an "allatonceness" (Ann Berthoff) that baffles my attempts at a clear analysis.

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I try to keep these dominant discourses artificially segregated and subordinated within the confines of specific chapters to get some control over anonymity's discursive complexity. I believe my readers will begin to see their discursive synthesis, however, in what I contend amounts to *The Composition of Anonymity.*

As certain as I am of the author-function being ultimately subordinate to the anonymous function, I am utterly uncertain of the audience function--of why and how I should tell you, my reader, to pay attention to what I have to say about anonymity. Thus, I present the following epigraphs as a way to evoke my feelings and intuitions about the passions that compose the meaning and action of anonymity in the world. If these epigraphs don't move your curiosity, as they do my own, then no amount of academic embellishment can fill the absence between us. The presence of that absence is what I mean by the composition of anonymity-- or rather, how anonymity composes us—in the reader, writer, and the written.

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JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO
[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO
I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET
What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO
By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

William Shakespeare (or Edward DeVere?)

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I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you—Nobody—Too?
Then there's a pair of us?
Don't tell! they'd advertize—you know!

How dreary—to be- Somebody!
How public—like a frog—
To tell one's name—the livelong June—
To an admiring Bog!

Emily Dickinson

The Unknown Citizen
(To JS/07/M/378
This Marble Monument
Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a
saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community....

The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every
way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it
cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their
education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

W.H. Auden

****

What if it turns out, Tim, that anonymity is
finally an issue of masking?

Robert J. Connors

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ABSTRACT

THE COMPOSITION OF ANONYMITY:

TOWARD A THEORY, HISTORY, AND PEDAGOGY

by

Timothy Thomas Dansdill

University of New Hampshire, May, 2001

In keeping with its recognized function of non-identity through the suppression of proper name recognition, anonymity is not recognized as "essential" to nominalist consciousness or to intersubjective action through language. The founding philosophical discourses of identity, authority, and community reveal an "anonymous function"--a transgressive discourse of impersonation, authenticity, and immunity--which this dissertation traces in phenomeonlogy, discourse theory, poetics, rhetoric, and composition.

The first two chapters draw from phenomenology (Schutz and Natanson), and discourse theory (Foucault), to propose a theory of anonymity as integral to any understanding of personal identity across the entire performative range of self/other orientations. Chapter three draws on literary theory and history (Forster, Foucault, and Docherty) to propose a history of anonymity that reverses the dominant position accorded to author-ity and the author-function. Three ancient texts—*The Book of Genesis;* the *Epic of* Gilgamesh; and *The Odyssey* demonstrate the "anonymous function.". Chapter four adapts Blanchot and Bakhtin to suggest a rhetoric of anonymity in which audience and community function anonymously. "Contact zone" theory and practice (Pratt, Bizzell, Miller, hooks) is then reviewed and redescribed to propose in chapter five a pedagogy of anonymity--one devoted to merging composition-rhetoric's conflicting demands for "structure" and "agency" in student writing. Anonymous composition logically extends the rhetorical mandate of the course evaluation exit document. 20 pieces of anonymous student writing on identity politics are analyzed for functions of impersonation, veracity, and immunity.

INTRODUCTION

Prologue

"Why Anonymity?" asked Diane. She directs the daycare center where my children now spend their days. She was down on the rug with a girl I immediately recognized as my soon to be five year old daughter, ClydaJane. Diane has been working with pre-school children for about as long as I've been alive. She asked that question with a clearly ironic smile spreading from the corners of her mouth when she saw that I realized she was calling out each letter of my daughter's name. She paused, with emphasis, while ClydaJane wrote with a crayon across the top of a picture she had just drawn. Her question froze me, even though that *Why* part fires and consumes any inquiry.

So I laughed, loving the irony of it all. I finally answered, still in the ironic mode we are both comfortable in, but this time emphasizing a *double entendre* I did not expect her to pick up on: "Because *Nobody* seems interested in answering that question." "Gotta write about something," Diane said. "Bingo. Ditto." said I, as ClydaJane held up her written name proudly and said: "See, Daddy, I did it again." And I hugged her tight, proud of her pride—her growing authority—in self-identification, and delighted that the little discourse community we initiated a year ago on a piece of paper I have on the wall above my writing desk is repeating and proliferating itself in this larger community of discourse.

Yes, indeed, Why anonymity? Because anonymity, in keeping with its recognized function of non-identity through the suppression of proper name recognition, is not generally taken into account when we try to understand the actions of language—speaking/listening and writing/reading. The function of language itself, being both social and anonymous, subordinates the presence of anonymity. It makes what we call the *"social* construction" of identity, authority, and community the dominant account of how human beings rationalize a universe of discourse whose vast centripedal and centrifugal forces subject, project, and interject meaning through spoken and written utterances.

This dissertation turns these presuppositions of nominalist consciousness on their head in order to explore and propose the *anonymous* construction and function of discourse. The beginning of an answer to all these can be found in the mode of inquiry itself. The subject of any extended inquiry is generally, and

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generously, available through the most cursory search of a library's catalogs. Electronic indexes and databases now enable the curious researcher to conduct a series of three discrete "Searches"--by *Author*, *Title*, or *Subject*. One also has the option to *Search Everything*. Given my subject, a search by *Author* is not so much absurd or perverse as it is bemusing, humbling--confirming Dudley Fitts' observation in his introduction as editor of the *Greek Anthology* that "the most popular author in history is "Anonymous."

A random run through a bibliographic list titled *Anonymous Classics of the Western World* reveals the usual "Dark Age" and medieval suspects. We have Beowulf; Sir *Gawain and the Green Knight*; *The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spen*. There is also a teeming mass of manuscripts one has never heard of, and will never likely look into. Yet, scholars of "authorial attribution" are busily--stubbornly-- working away as I write to drop the pervasive mask of Anonymous, to identify and reintroduce these orphaned, feral texts back into the Community of unquestioned Identity where the writer revealed (and his/her scholar-advocate) will enjoy a new or long-lost "Authority."

Add to the groaning lists of literary and historical texts the even more numerous catalogues of anonymous manuscripts of music. Follow this up with Art History's catalogs of unattributed paintings and sculpture. Then top all these "significant" objects off with the endless "ephemera" both on view and hoarded away in the "permanent" collections of the world's various kinds of museums. Very quickly the curious inquirer begins to understand the empirical sense of augmentation and proliferation in Fitts' observation.

What then does it really mean to do an Author-Search on the Subject of "Anonymous" (meaning "of unknown, or undeclared, origin or authorship")? It means that one must come round dialectically to what it means to search for what, in the original meaning of "theory," "remains to be seen" of the origin and function of the Author in its largest, yet most lost, sense. The basic lines of both a "Subject Search" and "Title Search" of "Anonymous" will lead the inquirer back onto the rails of an "Author Search." In (re) searching (for) "Anonymous" I realized that one part of what I am calling the "composition" of anonymity is obviously historical, but is also, in the most compelling sense, theoretical. Thus, before I could even consider what or how to write about "Anonymous," I had to reconsider, philosophically, the possibility put forth by Richard Whitlock in 1654: "That it were...wisdom itself, to read all Authors as Anonymous, looking on the Common Sense, not Proper Names of Books."

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My personal sense of a "Common Sense"—in effect, the authority of my experience, —was founded on and, arguably, foundered in, a love of philosophical wisdom. Plato was a true passion of mine in high school and in the first years of college. I drank in *The Cratylus, or of Names and Naming*, the very first treatise on the problem of "nominalism" or the meaninglessness of etymologies and genealogies. At stake in this dialogue was choosing to believe in, and living the consequences of, a steady state of Form versus the continuous, arbitrary transformations of Flux. There was no both/and possibility. I look back on *The Cratylus'* critique of names as the prototype of Derridean deconstruction, of nominal slippage, supplementarity, and ultimately, *absence* in relation not only to things, but also to any form of nomination.

When *Cratylus* was written, nominalism was a very hot controversy. As poet at war with the philosopher in myself, I was no less disturbed some two and a half millennia later with the argument Plato had put into Socrates' mouth. It seemed a convincing argument against believing with the young Hermogenes that the names of things had any real connection worthy of the word, knowledge, never mind true wisdom.[1] I produce Plato/Socrates' anti-nominalist conclusion below to telegraph what the reader will come to understand as the *anonymous function* or the *composition* of anonymity as theory, history, and pedagogy. A covert aim is to work *toward,* rather than definitively demonstrate, the unnamed, unnaming, and perhaps the unnamable, in the act of writing itself.

> *Soc.* And the work of the legislator is to give names, and the dialectician must be his director if the names are to be rightly given?
> *Her.* That is true.
> *Soc.* Then, Hermogenes, I should say that this giving of names can be no such light matter as you fancy, or the work of light or chance persons; and Cratylus is right in saying that things have names by nature, and that not every man is an artificer of names; but he only who looks to the name which each thing has, and is, will be able to express the ideal forms of things in letters and syllables.
> *Her.* I cannot answer you, Socrates; but I find a difficulty in changing my opinion all in a moment; and I think that I should be more readily persuaded, if you would show me what this is which you term the natural fitness of names.
> *Soc.* My good Hermogenes, I have none to show. Was I not telling you just now (but you have forgotten), that I knew nothing, and was proposing to share the inquiry with you?
> .....Soc. How true being is to be studied or discovered is, I suspect, beyond you and me to determine; and we must be content to admit that the knowledge of things is not to be derived from names.
> ....Soc. [No one] "of sense will like put oneself or the education of one's mind in the power of names" [since to do so is to] "condemn oneself and other existences to an unhealthy state of unreality.

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The "common sense" I have today of this passage, a quarter century since I first read it, is that though "true being" is now a thoroughly suspect, and popularly written as ~~BEING~~, I remain attached to it as a category for studying and discovering the knowledge to be derived from anonymity (meaning: "the condition of having no [*proper*] name").

Implied in Plato's critique of names is that there is an anonymous quality, an unnamable sense, to his now outworn notions of, and arguments for, Ideal Forms. Plato's reversal of our contemporary connotations of naming as normative—deeming it a healthy state of reality—makes of anonymity a *healthy* state of reality, not suspect or deviant. Such use of a basic dialectical (and therefore nominally "deconstructive") principal of reversal and reappraisal does not ignore or deny Suzanne Langer's famous phrase, that "...the notion of giving something a *name* is the vastest generative idea that ever was conceived; its influence might well transform the entire mode of living and feeling, in the whole species, within a few generations"(*Philosophy in a New Key*). I simply wish to trace and consider the elements and arrangements within and around the notion of giving something a name that point to the possibility and reality that the composition of anonymity, as naming's Other, is equally generative, influential, and transformative.

The "nominalist" PRESENCE of "Anonymous" would seem to be at "play," in the Derridean sense, across the entire range of discourse as "signature, event, and context." The composition of anonymity in broad theoretical terms infers anonymity's massive metaphysical and philosophical background. I follow throughout this investigation an obsessively-compulsive Derridean (and given the cue from *The Cratylus*, a Platonically dialectical) principle of reversal that endorses the "presence" of anonymity's absence wherein dominant terms of discourse such as "identity" are not so much subordinated or repressed, but are, instead, recessed so that anonymity can come out to play.

We find anonymity's work of reversal (and its serious play) in the *OED*'s earliest recorded reference to "Anonymous." In 1601, Philemon Holland, a translator of the writings of ancient historians, including Xenophon, Plutarch, and Livy, translated this sentence from Pliny's *History of the World*. "Anonymos, finding no name to be called by, got thereupon the name Anonymos." Playful as this appears to be, the import is that Anonymous is a name, and therefore no exception to the rule of the proper name. Or, if it is an exception, it is precisely the sort that proves the absolute authority of Nominalism. Forster tells us in

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his little essay "Anonymity: An Enquiry," "it is a queer affair," this name of what unnames. That essay, as we will see, is both playful and deadly serious about the generative functions and transformative consequences of anonymity.

My reader might have noticed that I have gradually linked, and subtly replaced, the term "Anonymous" with that of "Anonymity." My reason for doing so returns us to the curious inquirer who performs a simultaneous Author-Subject-Title-Search using the term "Anonymity" instead of "Anonymous." What he or she will find is a virtual Other End of the infinite reference spectrum for "Anonymous": "Anonymity" is the subject of four books.

Anonymity is a personal narrative by Susan Bergman, a memoir of growing up with a loving father who spent his life passing as a monogamous heterosexual while also sexually involved with other men until his death by AIDS. One is a study by Maurice Natanson, a phenomenologist and student of phenomenologist Alfred Schutz (mentored by phenomenologist Edmund Husserl). One is a study by David Beck, a hermeneuticist, on the link between anonymity and the "discipleship paradigm" in The New Testament. The last is a brief essay by E.M. Forster (yes, *the* Author).

I will not involve Bergman's personal narrative of passing and identity politics, though every fiber of my pedagogical being as a teacher of an expressivist/social constructionist hybrid approach to composition tells me the irony/opportunity is too much to pass up. The other three references form the functionally nominalist, nominally authoritative core out of which the foregoing chapters on anonymity's identifiable "origins" in phenomenology, discourse theory, hermeneutics, rhetoric, and finally, composition studies have their BEING.

Doing Things with Anonymity

Taking a cure from Austin's famous work, *Doing Things with Words*, the more direct answer to the question as to why Anonymity is a significant issue in social and rhetorical life is to ask not what it is, but rather: what does anonymity enable or accomplish as a social and rhetorical phenomenon; what are the consequences of its action as a pervasive "speech act" that derives from and responds to both healthy and unhealthy states of reality? In answer, I provide a series of seven anecdotes that extend Langer's premise: if anonymity is not the vastest generative idea ever conceived, its influence does seem to have transformed entire modes of living and feeling in the generations that have succeeded her mid-20th century ideas of

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philosophy in a new key. I chose these anecdotes at random, unable to decide which, among the many file folders I have amassed over the past four years, would be most "representative" (in Burke's sense) of anonymity's generative and transformative presence in discursive life.

Anecdote #1.

This, from "digital discourse" is from Eric Hughes, one of the original Cypherpunks. "Privacy is necessary for an open society in the electronic age," he writes in the opening of "A Cypherpunk's Manifesto," which he put online in 1993. The document continues.

> People have been defending their own privacy for centuries with whispers, darkness, envelopes, closed doors, secret handshakes, and couriers. The technologies of the past did not allow for strong privacy, but electronic technologies do.
> We the Cypherpunks are dedicated to building anonymous systems. We are defending our privacy with cryptography, with anonymous mail forwarding systems, with digital signatures, and with electronic money...
> Cryptography will ineluctably spread over the whole globe, and with it the anonymous transactions systems that it makes possible.

The Cypherpunks' philosophy is extreme—they believe that cryptography and anonymous transactions should and will inevitably make the idea of the nation-state wither away—and their numbers are relatively few, but their influence is growing, "augmenting" as it were, as a counter to the prevailing discourse of centralized authority. In this first anecdote, there is clearly a lack of identity (or at least of "identification") between Anonymous State Authority and the Anonymity of the People to be secure in their persons. We can see the clash of vision as to what will best foster and expand a healthy or unhealthy state of economic and social reality.

Anecdote #2

This, also from "digital discourse" involves the increasing concern over 'cyber-stalking." There is a call by many social commentators to eliminate the anonymous shield which deviant individuals--*a.k.a.* "cyberstalkers"--have used to engage young children in virtual chat rooms. These same commentators wrestle, however, with the potential loss of anonymity that they deem absolutely necessary to protect the private identity profiles of normal Internet users from "unauthorized" surveillance and intrusion by corporations seeking to "personalize" their consumer customer bases.

In this second anecdote we see, again, a clash between a clearly unhealthy —deviant or libertine—sense of community values versus some pragmatic and moderate version of the extreme—libertarian—privacy rationale of the Cypherpunks.

Anecdote #3

This, from political discourse, illustrates anonymity's "heroic' or noble aspect, rather than its craven or insidious capacity. It is well-known that the presidential debate commission set up by our two party system is sponsored by the likes of AT&T, United Airlines, and Anhaeuser-Busch. A recent visit by a reporter from National Public Radio to Wake Forest College, one of the sites of the year 2000 presidential debates, revealed that Wake Forest gave Anhaeuser-Busch the authority to turn its student lounge into a bar for the exclusive use of the press corps attending the debate.

The power of Anhaeuser -Busch to prevent Wake Forest students from using their own facility flows directly from millions of dollars the corporation paid to the college for the right to have its name and product identified with this aspect of our democratic election process. The company's public relations team claims that, "Anhaeuser-Busch is only interested in being a good corporate citizen. We do not realize much else from our largesse." But in an interview with a political analyst who specializes in corporate influence in U.S. politics, it was pointed out that the laws governing political contributions permit "anonymous donations" to the Debate Commission. The official said: "If Budweiser were genuinely interested in "good corporate citizenship" exclusively, they would of course pursue this option. That they wish instead to have voters identify their beer with the democratic process is patently obvious."

In this third anecdote, the corporate drive for consumer identification—in this case "the King of Beers" as visibly identified with the democratic process to elect a President-- shuns the invisible honor being an anonymous donor.

Anecdote #4

This, from the corporate workplace, illustrates anonymity's constructive discursive capacity. In a National Public Radio series titled "The Changing Workplace" reporter David Malthus focuses on work related stress and employee dissatisfaction. The giant pharmaceutical corporation MERCK INC. is universally cited as a "superior work environment" because it uses "internal anonymous surveys" to uncover and

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mediate two pervasive problems: "employee stress and managerial mistrust." Merck's use of anonymity has been cited as a "progressive resource" in improving the work environment.

In this fourth anecdote, we see the generative effects of corporate employees dropping their identities to speak freely and objectively to authorities about problems in ongoing face-to-face and name-name relations so as to transform an unhealthy corporate community where authoritative indifference or arrogance is a reality.

Anecdote #5

This final anecdote from higher education. It highlights anonymity's ambivalent relation to academic assumptions about legitimate authority (and therefore of student identity, and of the university as a community.) My spouse is a professor at Wesleyan University, an institution that prides itself on its Honor Code. Each incoming student is introduced to this code (running many pages) on policies of plagiarism and cheating. Students are required to sign a sworn statement that not only will they not cheat in their studies, they will also report any act of cheating among their peers.

A student sent my spouse an e-mail letter informing her that she observed another student cheating. Since my spouse did not see the accused student, she called the Dean of Student Life for advice. The first question from the Dean was: "Did the accusing student send you an anonymous e-mail through the web site bulletin board or did she use her real name on her own account? Students who name themselves are taken more seriously." When my spouse assured her that the student named herself, the Dean went on to tell her, without any sense of an inherent contradiction, that "anonymous senior surveys" reveal that "violations of the honor code are rampant." The university is only rarely given the opportunity to prosecute a case, however, because "students do not want to be identified as ratting on their peers."

This case got to the point of informing the accused that he would be summoned before the Honor Board to face his accuser. Having identified her self to (and with) university authorities, the accusing student was told she could not refuse to help prosecute the case. If she did, she would be in violation of the Honor Code no less than the student accused of cheating. At the last moment the accusing student disavowed her charge, telling the Dean that she could not be absolutely sure of what she saw. The Dean told my wife that the pressure of being identified in a high profile case of "Honor" usually makes students think twice about seeing the process through.

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The point of this anecdote highlights the hybrid, highly variable, and even excruciatingly ambivalent uses and effects of anonymity as a discourse that comprises and composes our larger sense of community, identity, and authority.

Here we see university authorities denigrating the legitimacy of anonymous disclosure even as they are utterly dependent upon its function as a truth effect. Furthermore, the student community speaks with one authoritative voice of concern that the Honor Code is a sham. Yet the student community's anonymity helps them to evade the responsibility of being identified with the university that has authorized them to name those who undermine the Code's ideal of fair and open play across the disciplines. The discourse of Identity—in this case, being named as a participant who must cross between two communities with different senses of authority—carries with it the checks and balances of anonymity.

Anecdote #6.

This anecdote, again from "digital discourse," is from the distance learning Website of Mercy College (or MerLIN) "where" I taught two online courses—one on Drama, the other on Short Fiction—using the TOPCLASS educational template.

> Students, It is the time of the year for faculty evaluations on MerLIN. Please go to the link above and find your class. The classes are not under departments so scroll down until you find yours. Make sure you have the right section and teacher. Click on that class and you will be able to submit your faculty evaluation. These evaluations are posted to a database anonymously. If you submit more than one evaluation per class it will kick out both. Click on the above link to fill out your faculty evaluations.

Here is the cybernetic version of the familiar anonymous course evaluation that students universally compose at the end of every course in the still pervasive face-to face/ "brick and mortar" context of higher education. Unlike the groaning metal file cabinets in most departments, these anonymous student evaluations are out there in 0/1 code, a closed "fellowship of discourse" that is, however, "open to the winds" (phrases from Foucault we will look to in Chapter two) of Mercy College's community.

This online sense of "community" further mediates the anonymous discourse community (more towards "immunity" and its meaning of "being without office") that presently persists in face-to-face, hard copy file access in all academic departments. It places the necessary rhetorical immunity that makes the anonymous performance evaluation work into an authorized event and communicative context that is literally elsewhere, out there, in an event and context "without office." Mercy College's authorizes access

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to its anonymous discourse community through the now familiar log on "signatures" (proper name plus private pseudonym).

Thousands of people form an effectively anonymous readership that reads these anonymous writings about faculty, classes, and what was performed or learned. The only "named" individual—or truly nominal identity—in this discourse community is that of the instructor. Here is a highly mediated version of the immediate, intersubjective experience of identity and identification that reign in this faculty-student writing ritual at the close of every course. We see here the rich and complex—rational and healthy-- interaction of the discourses of identity, authority, and community under the anonymous function.

In other terms, here is an academic version of Merck's incorporate use by employees to open up and judge the performance of its most visible, or front line, authorities. In this case, teachers are the "executives" and students are the anonymous "employees," and the online database becomes discourse itself—at once social and anonymous (in Bakhtin's sense, as we will see in Chapter Four.)

Anecdote #7.

This final anecdote is from an academic community--the UNH department of Composition.

> 7 December, 1994
>
> Dear Tim D.--
>
> After your presentation we were in such a state of disbelief that we could barely form words for it. Even now, we hardly know where to begin, but we do know that we cannot end this semester without responding honestly to your work and your presentation of it. So let us get this straight--this is a writing course on personal narrative and universal ideas, and you are allowing your students to 'function' under the misconception that gender equals sexuality, so that they continue to write into the void about their sexual experiences. And they write anonymously, so that there is no sense of ownership in the best sense of the word, no sense of taking responsibility for one's words and therefore attitudes, beliefs, or actions, and no sense of awareness of audience in order to refine their thought processes. Thought processes? Are there any? Maybe we missed that part, but we saw no evidence of your guiding hand as a teacher, to gently but firmly direct students' solipsism into an awareness of how their responses to their experiences affect others. Do you at least show them how the sexual can be interpreted in the context of gender issues? Your attitude of amusement is prurient at best and pornographic at worst. You seem to take lightly and without analysis potentially traumatic disclosures ranging from abuse and rape to masturbation with 'adult' videos. While you 'respond' at great length to a select few of these pieces, the responses fall to suggest ways writers can develop actual idea-based essays by interpreting their own behavior and refining writing skills; other pieces go without response at all. Fostering awareness of gender identity and influences from our personal and social fives is a worthwhile cause, but using composition classes as guinea pigs for your own purposes either personal or academic doesn't sit right with us. In addition to your inappropriate-- use of your course's topic, your shocking abuse of photocopying privileges and your lack of eye contact send off bad vibes. If this is how experienced and worldly readers and teachers feel about what you are doing, how must a young student feel being forced into this kind of private (as opposed to personal; Denise

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Levertov's distinction) narrative exposure without any compassionate or instructive guidance? As one person in attendance said, it's like therapy without therapy—meaning it leaves one vulnerable and exposed in a potentially damaging and destructive isolation that is truly disturbing to consider. We are concerned for your students and sincerely hope you will stop this voyeuristic exercise and get yourself off to the nearest psychiatrist. Academia may have begun your personal journey toward enlightenment, but serious counseling may be the only way to continue it.
Sincerely,

<div align="center">Henry Miller and Anais Nin</div>

In this final anecdote we see the use of anonymity to, perhaps, allow people to "tell the truth as they see it" in the same way that Merck Corporation and Mercy College uses it. (Strictly speaking, this is pseudonymity, in the cunning play of Proper—Authorial—Names associated with transgressive writing to mask the actual names of the writers. But in effect, the overall mode and consequence is functionally anonymous.)

Whereas the use of anonymity in the Merck or Mercy cases maintains the mode and motive of candid inquiry to be later used in *colloquy*, (which operates in both corporate and academic style performance evaluations requiring anonymity), the mode and motive in the final anecdote is one of obloquy. As such, it falls within what Judith Butler has called "excitable speech." As such, this anecdote trenchantly demonstrates what she generally means by "linguistic vulnerability" (in this case mine) in relation to the rhetorical immunity provided by my colleagues' particular use of the anonymous function.

They are "responding honestly" under condition of anonymity to my work and my presentation of it. I cannot, however, respond honestly to their harsh working over, and re-presentation of my work and my presentation. A void is created: they are invisible/invulnerable; I am visible/vulnerable. They are Odysseus/Udeis (as we will see in Chapter Three); I am the hapless Polyphemus, his one big IDEA put out, it would seem by a joking, but smarting (Enlightened) stroke of fiery speech. Unlike what they accuse me of--teaching my students to write into a void with "no sense of awareness of audience"--they are writing to ME, but I cannot respond. They have indeed taught me a lesson about the variable uses and power of anonymity. It would very much seem to be that in this case, *it matters very much who's speaking*.

Unaware that my students were writing not to a void, but to an Other--sometimes an author, sometimes an imagined identity different than their own--"Miller" and "Nin" respond honestly, and with some degree of authority (as anonymous colleagues). But they do not respond aesthetically, ethically, or in the best

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sense, pedagogically. In other words, their act of masking or impersonation is not authentic. (Neither the real Miller nor the real Nin, given their views of gender and sexuality, would respond in this way to my course, I believe. I have read them both extensively, and there is a tenderness in their libertinism, even in Miller's sexist/sexual narcissism.)

Still, the views these writers took of my pedagogy based on my presentation have elements of credibility: the relation of anonymity to audience awareness is problematic; the relation of responsibility and accountability is equally vexed. It is interesting that these writer's sense of a contact zone will figure later--after the effects of their timely "December 7th" (Pearl Harbor) sneak attack had been measured; it is reported they intended to reveal their true identities sometime into the process of community reaction. By contrast, the students in my classes had written responses from me and full discussion of their views and values in face-face class sessions.

It is difficult to see such a use of anonymity as intended for any thing other than to personally injure, publicly censure, or to do both. Butler's idea of "excitable speech" may extend from pure racial or homophobic hatred to an ambivalent kind of razzing or hazing among prankster-minded associates. This anecdote falls "somewhere" in between an unhealthy and healthy use of the anonymous function. Its censorious character fulfilled a double function. First, by using one of the more suspect aspects of the anonymous function to sardonically "teach" me an "object lesson" about the ethical and rhetorical consequences of an anonymous pedagogy, "Miller" and "Nin" wished to provoke a pathos of reaction--not an ethos of discussion--in the department. Second, in their "excitement" to incite, they overlooked the problem of their immediate respons-ibility for the identity, and therefore, the author-ity behind their charges.

Nevertheless, despite their avoidance of face-to-face discussion, their "community" intention for this writing throws a troubling shadow over the community use I employed with students' anonymous writing in my course. Those texts became common property--attained "immunity", were without office--for use and comment by everyone without any need to know who had written what. Why no need to identify the writer? Because the values and views expressed were what was important, and these were open for discussion for further review and revision. The texts, as part of the writing community, became part of the communicative authority and identity of the course as well.

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Yet, troubling, and injurious things were written, especially in matters of race, in some of the anonymous writing in one of my courses. The only sense of accountability and responsibility I could generate was to explore the roots of such fear and loathing--not to "out" the identities of the writers, but to address the problem of racism there and now, in the presence of young racists and young empathists, to let them hear what the effects of their writing could mean to someone of color, or to someone of their own color who did or didn't share their view. The ethos was pressurized and poignant. It was not therapy without therapy as my anonymous antagonists would have it; it was therapy transgressing the Prohibited zone; dissensus and consensus politics in close contact. The distance of the anonymous writer from his/her direct identification with his/her writing was compensated for by the embodied, face-to-face experience of response--of being a listener to oneself as other. Everybody spoke when I asked: "So what do you think of this person's racial views?" *Nobody was ever silent in response to anonymous writing.*

By contrast, it is not at all clear that this letter from my colleagues parodying the sexually "transgressive" reputation of two major authors by trafficking in their name recognition had any communicative ethos in mind. The intention was to shock me into silence; humiliate me into a halfway place between repentance and recrimination. They succeeded until I found a way to turn their excitable speech into an opportunity to examine its place in a much larger spectrum of anonymous expression. It is just another exhibit now in a case that is not about deciding for or against the anonymous function. The problem with anonymity is that one must be both for and against it--for it is as vexing as some forms of group identity, of unquestioned authority, or perfectly prescribed standards of community.

Lessons from Doing Things With Anonymity.

Taken together, what these anecdotes should suggest to my readers is that anonymity is itself a mass medium that converges our aspirations and suspicions about the health and sickness, the freedom and oppression, within the discourses of a founding rhetorical identity (the Subject), of historical origin (Authority), and of some sense of universal mediation (Community.) In this introductory, anecdotal approach to sketching out an idea of what anonymity does as a speech act--whose rhetorical absence amounts to a transdiscursive presence--my readers should recognize its vexing structure and function. Whether deviant and regressive, developmental and progressive, or divisive and transgressive, it would

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seem that anonymity's equivocal relation to identity and community, together with its ambivalent relation to authority, is traceable to its unique capacity for *transgression* (literally, "to cross over").

If there is a single pragmatic concept that could be said to capture what it is that anonymity *performs* in relation to the discourses of community, identity, and authority, then it would be this action of transgression as a "crossing over." But together with the idea and actuality of crossing over and between, I argue for another key concept, that is, I think, related to transgression (as both a violation and as a vehicle of discourse). I am thinking of the notion of a "contact zone." As we will see the, this concept has a brief but rich and complex history, extending from the writings of Bakhtin into those of Mary Louise Pratt and on into the field of composition-rhetoric where a host of teacher-researchers have appropriated the term.

If anonymity can be said to be a site of resistance as well as re-vision, that it upholds both energies, allowing for their 'transgression," (both healthy and unhealthy in Plato's original sense), then it can surely also be thought of as an ultimate zone of contact for engaging or imagining a range of positions and compositions of what it means to be a Self among one' others and an Other among one's selves.

If the meanings and actions of identity (self-sameness), authority (increase), and community (common, unofficial) can be said to operate as zones of contact, and if anonymity has a role in each of these as discourses, then the idea of an anonymous contact zone must be composed of discursive elements and arranged in communicatively rational ways which we need to better understand. In Section III. I will the summarize the composition of anonymity as a matrix of phenomenological, discursive, hermeneutic, rhetorical, and pedagogical lines which cross and curve into the contours of a zone of contact I will come to nominate as *the anonymous function*.

<u>Outline Of Chapters</u>

<u>Chapter One: Toward a Phenomenology of Anonymity.</u>

This opening chapter assumes that Plato's argument against Nominalism as an unhealthy state of reality is essentially correct, though for reasons that have nothing to do with Truth or Being. It aims to uncover the post-philosophical function of anonymity and set it squarely down as a founding (but generally invisible and unknown)discourse which enables us to consider what we mean by Identity as an impossible *both/and* phenomenon of inter- and intra-subjective life. Anonymity informs or prescribes a felt, unified,

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translinguistic, sense of Self, as well as a fluid, parasitical sense of performance scripted by whatever discursive event or context we find our 'selves' experiencing.

In this chapter, because I believe no theory of anonymity makes sense without invoking the dominant discourse of Identity, I highlight the discourse of Personal Identity and Identity Politics in terms of inter- and intra-subjectivity to shed some insight on the nameless nature of the self and its shifting functions in private and public identity performances. After drawing counsel from social theorists (Brubaker and Cooper) who find that the range of personal and political agency granted to 'Identity' makes it practically an inert, insupportable lifeworld structure, the logic I play out is that anonymity informs our sense of *identification of others* in both the psychic and social realms. Though I can't ever come to the rescue of identity's disoriented and dystopic fate, anonymity, I argue, has always rocked Identity's stubborn discursive delusion of self-sameness.[3]

My concern with a theory of Anonymity as intersubjective with Identity in this opening chapter comes from its sources out of Husserl's "phenomenological" conception of "the lifeworld." From Plato to Kant, philosophy can be roughly reduced to a concern with the "noumenon" (thing in itself) and "phenomenon" ("mental appearance"). We have seen from Plato that names were not considered noumenal, but were instead unstable, untrustworthy constructions of the mind. Names—and by extension all words—could *tell* us about things in themselves, but not *really show* us their truth in being.

Husserl, and the tradition of phenomenology he helped to inaugurate, was interested in bridging this artificial separation of thing-word, body-mind, and by intersubjective extension, self-other, by accounting for the lifeworld and its (im)mediate embodiments. Alfred Schutz was an associate of Husserl's who became interested in phenomenological questions and wrote several treatises on social meaning in the lifeworld. His texts are riddled with references to the "mediated" and "anonymous" nature of social phenomena. One of his American students, Maurice Natanson, identifies this continuous reference to the presence of anonymity in social relations and wrote a treatise: *Anonymity : The Philosophy of Alfred Schutz.*

My purpose and goal in this chapter is to closely read and summarize the work of Schutz and Natanson (which covers the last half of 20th century thinking directly devoted to anonymity as a phenomenon) and redescribe it for the purpose of contending that anonymity is a *noumenal* function— a thing in itself—that

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informs the appearance and passage of all social phenomena. Anonymity—I contend—troubles the founding discourses of what we mean phenomenally by Identity, Authority, and Community precisely because it is a thing in itself which our Nominalist tradition cannot—or cares not to—acknowledge precisely because it is the name of what unnames or is unnamed.

Chapter One is therefore a rough, but ready, background against which we will come to understand Foucault's outline of Language as a continuously circulating, expanding "universe of discourse." (That is, language as Nominalism in the largest, systemic or structural sense is *universal* –"one turning"– within which *discourse* –"utterly running around"—functions in a pervasive anonymity.) In order to get to Foucault's view of discourse (the subject of Chapter Two), I take Schutz's social—objectively inter-subjective—view of anonymity and show how Natanson, his student, tried (but ultimately failed) to extend that view to a personal, private—*intra-subjective*—view of anonymity's function.

Natanson fails primarily because his training in phenomenology prevents him from fully following the psychoanalytical lead his private view of anonymity requires.[2] Natanson, succeeds, however, in making a major case out of Schutz's minor reference to the problem of "enclaves": that they represent a major point of entry for considering anonymity as an equally *intra-subjective* aspect of imagination—of imagining otherness. If we are to really understand the imaginative "composition" of anonymity. (which, as we will see, is anticipated in the inquiry E.M. Forster makes into anonymity), the functional similarity of *enclaves* to *contact zones* can not go unnoticed. (That is, the phenomenological sense we take away from 'enclaves" becomes more noumenological—and therefore rhetorical, connecting the subject positions of speaker, spoken, and audience with their textual counterparts.)

Chapter Two: Toward a Discourse of Anonymity.

Where Chapter One builds the case for a theory of anonymity by emphasizing its "phenomenological" or passing appearance within and across the immediate relations of identity, Chapter Two emphasizes the "noumenal" effects of anonymity, as a discursive thing in itself within and across identity's mediated relations through language. The slippage or transgression of meaning between these chapters—on identity as anonymously embodied and then as anonymously unfolded—is unavoidable given the impossible work the

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term and discourse of identity must always perform as both an inutterable, yet essential sense of Self, and as a continuously scripted and performed sense of an Other among all Others.

Chapter Two builds on Chapter One's critique of identity as an indeterminable psycho-social chaos of private endearments and public enjambments by closely reading Foucault's early text, "The Discourse on Language." I attempt to theorize this circular question of Anonymity's (Public) Identity versus Identity's (Personal) Anonymity by placing it within Foucault's essay, "The Discourse on Language." I contend that the discourse on language has ignored the "presence" of anonymity because it troubles its three formative philosophical assumptions: the idea of a founding subject, (the Discourse of Identity), the idea of an originating experience, (the Discourse of Authority), and the idea of universal mediation (the Discourse of Community).

I adapt Derrida's ideas about signature, event, and discursive context to develop the first principle of the *anonymous function*. Namely, that the *I* of the subject as writer –even under the regime of the proper name–is essentially anonymous. The sense of Identity between subjectivity and writing—of their being "selfsame"—is an illusory "presence" supplemented by the energy of anonymity's nominal "absence" circulating the discourses of community, identity, and authority.

In building up anonymity's discursive concentration (since it seems to be "diluted" in our general sense of discourse), I also suggest how Foucault owes an equal debt to Blanchot, a theorist whose influence he acknowledges much later in his career. I then gather up the terms, "anonymous" and "anonymity" (few and far between as they are) and suggest how these show up in a few commentators who make up part of Foucault's vast post-structuralist wake.

The point of all this gleaning is to connect the pervasive anonymity in the Schutz/Natanson account of any individual's life activity—in his or her I/Thou; We/They orientations–to the function of language activity at large. If the discourse of identity, (ultimately the belief in a Transcendental Subject), is overloaded with ambiguous meanings and orientations, then I try to make the case that anonymity has very much to do with identity's (Subjectivity's) problematic trajectories in what is (used to be) the language of ~~BEING~~ and what is always the Becoming of language. Chapter Two sets the stage for understanding the two other fundamental assumptions which found the discourse of language: a faith in an spoken/written

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Origin (The Word) and the hope for its Universal Mediation. I, not Foucault, correlate these three founding discourses to the problem of Identity, Authority, and Community.

Having connected the tunnel started via phenomenological anonymity on one side of the collapsing mountain of Being with the tunnel of anonymous discourse theory on the other, I propose in Chapter two three principles that reflect the functional interdependence of Identity, Authority, and Community that has not been recognized heretofore as the common light—or darkness visible—of the anonymous function.

I have constructed these principles from my understanding of Schutz, Natanson, Foucault, Forster, and Bakhtin. These principles run forward from a given subjective self-consciousness into the depth and distance of language at large, and back, through all time and space. They speak the voices in our heads, and underwrite all texts accumulating, circulating, disappearing through history.

> Principle One: The *I* of the writing Subject—even under the sign of the proper name—is essentially anonymous because the act of writing makes the writer endlessly absent from his or her own writing. This states the anonymous function of identity.
>
> Principle Two: That an Origin can not be determined from reading, and "originality" can not be ascribed to those whom we all read, (*a.k.a.* authors who remain writers, merely writers, as Bakhtin has it.) A reader's experience of the writer, (never mind the writer's name), disappears in the act of reading. The Subject position of the reader—equally anonymous to the writer in the act of writing—endlessly disappears into the written as it is read. Rhetorical indifference, the motive and consequence of anonymity in its purest, healthiest condition, extends to the indiscriminate, proliferative acts of writing and of reading, making the text as much the destination, as the origin, of Nobody—and therefore of Everybody. This states the anonymous function of Author-ity.
>
> Principle Three: Following Foucault's definition of Universal mediation—"when all things come eventually to take the form of discourse,... then all [will] be able to return to the silent interiority of self-consciousness" (157)—the *I* of self-consciousness cannot be founded upon the experience of an originating subject, but must give itself up as the intersubjective shifter of a discursive Other that is, according to Principle One and Principle Two, *a function of anonymous Identity and Authority*. This principle therefore projects the anonymous function of Community.

The totalization of anonymity implied by these principles—its virtual hegemony over the interiority and exteriority of all language consciousness —will not be taken seriously by any one who refuses to consider the vulnerability of Nominalism and its hegemony in the processes of identity, authority, and

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community. All names and naming have their proper function. They may in fact be the vastest generative idea ever conceived. The problem is: Who conceived them? When? How? I try to set up the possibility that any useful answer to those questions must look toward a discourse of anonymity.

Chapter Three: Toward a History of Anonymity.

In this chapter, I show how the meaning and action of "authority" as a discourse is as vexed as that of 'identity.' I rely mainly on the work of Thomas Docherty for this critique. I then move to a consideration of Foucault's early essay "What is an Author?" where he suggests the possibility of an anonymous function by opening with Beckett's absent character, who asks in *Texts for Nothing: What matters who's speaking?* I closely read this essay, extracting and concentrating the presence of anonymity by adding the solvent of my strong reading to Foucault's careful establishment of the author-function as being nevertheless an unstable regime whose trace elements are anonymous.

Between the textual evidence gathered here and in his treatment of discourse in the previous chapter, I conclude that Foucault is really treating the anonymity of discourse and the anonymous identity of the author-function within it. I surmise that he does not wish to bring in the influence of Maurice Blanchot lest he tip Foucault's nostalgia for a founding structure of Presence in the function of the author into nihilism. Foucault does however conclude the essay by imagining all discourse unfolding in a pervasive anonymity.

Along the way of closely reading this essay, I summarize the various aspects of the author-function and show how they can function negatively (in the photographic sense) to help us picture the anonymous function in three representative texts from ancient literature: *The Old Testament; The Epic of Gilgamesh; The Odyssey*. The problem of author-ity in these texts is double: not only is the determination of a sole, unitary author impossible, but anecdotes within the texts themselves point to the problems--and solutions-- that being unknown, because unnamed, present. I draw these anecdotes through two inter-animating levels of anonymity. The "overt" level of the anonymous is itself composed of two intersecting lines of inquiry. On the front line we have texts in which the identity of an original author is unknown (as in *The New Testament*.) Behind this bright line of the pure "Anonymous" is the more dotted line of traditional attribution (as in *The* Odyssey.)

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I ultimately use the themes and theses of the author-function as set forth by Foucault to exert a triple sense of anonymity's pervasive functionality. By repeating the epigraph from Beckett at the end of his treatise on the author, and summarizing it as "a rhetorical indifference," Foucault leaves an opening for me to construct a Rhetoric of Anonymity. My overall purpose in this chapter is to demonstrate how anonymity has always informed the arrangements and constructions of authority, specifically the "author function," whose inherent instability subverts its capacity as a "nomination barrier."[4] On the other side of author-ity's nomination barrier lies the "no man's land" --or everyone's story-- of what I am contending is the anonymous function.

Chapter Four: Toward a Rhetoric of Anonymity.

This chapter links rhetoric--the basic art of linking a speaker with what's been spoken to a listener--back to the problem of Universal Mediation as the third founding discourse of ~~BEING~~. As with the chapters on identity and authority, I use several commentators on community to demonstrate the contested nature of the concept. I draw first on a compositionist, Vandenberg, whose review of the meaning of "discourse community" vacillates between the concreteness of the latter and the abstraction of the former. It seems they need each other to mean much of anything.

I then turn to a political philosopher (Mason) who finds community is deeply contested in its emancipatory sense, causing a fault line between its ideal meaning and normative meaning, which is not contested, he argues. By contrast, a sociologist of journalism (Stamm), finds levels to community-- structure, tie, and process, that would seem to destabilize Mason's claim that the normative sense of community is uncontested.

I then bring Blanchot back in, and reflect briefly on his *The Unavowable Community* and his argument that there is "an absence in the center" of what we mean by it. Taking these together, I then turn to Bakhtin's notion of a "contact zone" and trace its aesthetic, special conception of a listener--listening to an author's "character zones"-- into composition-rhetoric's reception of the term. My intention is to link up the problem of community as a discourse with the problem of a contact zone. I see the two as essentially the same, except that community is too large for a rhetoric, whereas contact zone is too localized and proximal for a discourse.

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Once I work these local and global lines of contact, I make the case that a rhetoric of anonymity is a contact zone at the very center of what we mean--or think we mean--by community. If there are "faultlines" (Miller) in the contact zone of community, of discourse, and of a discourse community, these are due, in significant part, to the rhetorical transgression of anonymity which crosses over the disconnection of the speaker (writer) and the spoken (written) to place the listener/reader in an exclusive relation to the spoken/written.

Anonymity is already a zone of contact for the academic discourse community at large in the form of the anonymous performance evaluation. I argue that this contact zone, which appears to transgress the norms of rhetorical relation, is actually essential to maintaining them. It behooves us therefore, to experiment further with a rhetoric of anonymity by introducing its transgressions of writer, text, and reader into the main compositional lines of the writing course. Toward this end, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* contains three essays--"Essentialism and Experience," "Eros, Eroticism, and the Pedagogical Process," and especially, "Building a Teaching Community"-- that enabled me to imagine the use of anonymous composition within a Bakhtinian-driven theory of pedagogical possibility.

Also in the late work of Mikhail Bakhtin, are some reflections on the author, the writer, and the which "superaddressee" contain a curious coinage--"transgredience"--which I use and adapt as a speculative lens on my own curricular and pedagogical experiments with anonymity and identity politics. As I read Bakhtin's coinage, the separate ingredients of expressivism and expositionism, so called, together with his almost mystical belief in a superaddressee, point up the poignancy of what I am calling the anonymous function.[5] The argument is that anonymity serves as a rhetorical transgredient in all our assumptions about the writer's identity, authority, and community. Gloria Watkins, whose own engagement with the anonymous function is reflected in the fact that she publishes under the pseudonym *bell hooks*.

Though her calls for risk taking and vulnerability do not approach anything like an anonymous pedagogy, one can see the logic of it in her pedagogical exhortations. Her sense of transgression and Bakhtin's sense of "transgredience" are brought together to suggest that a rhetoric of anonymity activates the speech of *Nobody* --a super-addressee, which transcends our traditional ideas of who we are really writing to, and what for. If not for, or to, an author-ity, if not for, or to, our self-identity, than the audience of anonymous writing is a sense of community that has yet to come about because it never will. This

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makes writing an act of yearning, a mask we place upon the audience that may not be there, but we make it be there by othering ourselves in writing.

This sense of transgressive othering, of communing, without the offices of authorship or of a stable identity, returns us to the contact zone of composition whose fault lines lie, in my simplified binary, along the expressivist logics of self-discovery, autonomy, and authenticity as suggested by Murray, Elbow, and Macrorie. The alignment of expressivism with an essentialist unitary self (witting and unwitting) poses it, in abstract terms, against the alignment of a social constructionist approach to teaching writing in which the self will more or less perform according the discourses it is introduced to. Thus, give students authoritative guidelines—accomplished authors to read, "good" writers to model from, and they will identify with those authoritative ways of being and becoming writers themselves. Thus, Bizzell, Bartholomae, and recently, Alan France represent the social constructionist approach.

Clearly, teachers mix and match heuristics from both approaches; there are very few either/or practitioners of composition-rhetoric. But if we are to teach students and ourselves as teachers to transgress the fault lines in our contact zones for composition, we need to risk what anonymity may provide: the expression of private views and values that have obvious social implications, ideologies that are already and always being constructed freely by academic authorities for their non-pedagogical (out of classroom)discourse communities. Anonymous composition, if properly trained on the contact zone between autobiographical and academic material, will reveal the fault lines in falsely separating private from public senses of what's academically appropriate. As both contact zone and fault line, anonymous writing amounts to a rhetoric of composition's split within itself.

Thus, for example, whatever our students *really* believe about what happens in their classes is--or should be-- taken seriously by the entire academic community in a close review of anonymous performance evaluations. It is very likely, I suspect, that such evaluations go unread by the vast majority of departmental discourse communities, and often go unread by instructor's themselves. The expressive and socially constructive potential of this particular contact zone is rhetorically and pedagogically, under imagined, if not, arguably, wasted. But if anonymous writing were made a permanent part of the composition course, of all courses, regardless of content, a new kind of zone of contact and discursive context for academic "community" might be established.

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Chapter Five: Toward A Pedagogy of Anonymity.

This final chapter analyzes 25 pieces of anonymous writing (from a total of 33) on issues of gender and sexuality from an advanced course in composition I taught at The University of New Hampshire in 1994. It then analyzes 10 documents on race identity (from a total of 40 documents) in a freshman course on race, gender, and class identity that I taught the following semester, in 1995.

My preliminary findings suggest that the use of anonymity in composition places expressivist and social constructionist ideals into a zone of contact. Further, in shielding identity, it does not destroy, but expands a sense of community by projecting a sense of otherness on the part of writers. Moreover, the sense of audience that emerges from anonymous writing is a complex awareness--not of the instructor (since the writing cannot be graded); not of one's fellow writers, since they know this writing will be the property of all under discussion; the audience is *Nobody* in particular--an intersubjective merger of self and others.

Where does this sense of audience come from? From deep down in the personality, as Forster tells us. His brief essay, "On Anonymity", argues the question of whether writing should be signed. He ends the essay with a "plea for something more vital: imagination.... [For] there are no names down there, no personality as we understand personality." This link between anonymity and imagination serves as a kind of silver backing for my reflections on anonymity's historical composition of an awareness of audience. How does the anonymous writer imagine his/her audience? The attempt is to "mirror" anonymity's imagination across a broad, but necessarily limited, spectrum of literary anecdote. I then try to pick up this anonymous—audit imagination—(Bakhtin's "special conception of the listener") and make it come into the anonymous community of the composition course devoted to the expression and construction of identity politics.

Under anonymity, perhaps, college writers find themselves forgetting—and regretting— themselves just long enough to attempt the same rhetorical indifference that makes us forget the name of the author we are reading, involved as we are with character or idea, attitude or argument. And the audience of students' anonymous writing—which is themselves—doesn't need to forget the name of who's writing; the focus on

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what's written proceeds immediately. This double sense of rhetorical indifference, in which writer and reader disappear, and only the writing emerges, becomes its own kind of audience. It is tantamount, I believe, what Bakhtin calls the "super-receiver."

Perhaps because the writers in their non-identity are freed from worrying about the authority of who is listening/reading, since everyone is, they can simultaneously conceive and receive the community in voices that sometimes yearn for, and spurn, the founding discourses of identity, authority, and community. There is a spectrum of empathy to antipathy running through these anonymous writings. In this chapter, I do not make the outsized claim that anonymous writing is a new communally Utopian contact zone where universal mediation takes place in some new unhindered, expansive way. I do, however, trace something of what hooks discerns in calling for teaching vulnerability toward the practice of freedom. To do that we have to be willing to transgress some of the boundaries that composition-rhetoric leaves in place out of inertia, apathy, or fear of the unknown—or the yet to be named.

Conclusion to the Introduction.

Having outlined the theoretical, historical, rhetorical, and pedagogical case for anonymity as a hybrid, opportunistic, pervasive action in our lifeworld that can be best understood by pairing it with more dominant terms such as Identity, and Authority, I personally believe that it is Composition's *Community* of Anonymity that is primary. Thus, the collective legacy of expressivism as handed down from Donald Murray ("discovery"), Ken Macrorie ("authenticity"), and Peter Elbow ("autonomy") can also be understood in triadic relations similar to anonymity's discursive transposition across the "asymmetric opposites" of community, identity, and authority.

It is my contention that the use of anonymous writing in the "personal plus textual" approach to teaching composition bridges what many would have us believe are opposing banks of the river that is college composition.[6] I contend that anonymous writing is a "bridging" discourse not only because it spans often untenable distinctions between (and assumptions about) private and public composition. Anonymous writing ultimately enables students to "cross over" (again, to literally *transgress*) some not so hard and fast genre boundaries of exposition and narration.

The difference between personal expression as a discursive starting point and academic exposition as the final destination always returns to how teachers ask students to question who they are really composing

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for. It is this issue of disclosure and reception that underwrites what anonymity can do as a rhetorical situation in which a writer's subject position and the position of writing as a subject become, in Bakhtin's words, "a double voiced discourse."

Far from addressing a rhetorical void, the voice of the anonymous writer in my courses (which focus on the composition of gender, sexuality, race, and other issues of identity politics) echoes Forster's sense that anonymity enables imaginative—more public and civic—possibilities of expression. I extend his suggestion that there is no personal identity under the condition of anonymity——the nomination barrier having been transgressed.

I propose, therefore, the third principle of the anonymous function. Anonymous writing helps mediate between equally universal discursive claims: personal narrative and academic exposition share the same equivocal, ambivalent pronoun shifter—"I." It is neither subjective nor objective, but projective of an inter-subjective imagination whose sense lies in the composition of a discourse community.

My case for anonymity as a pedagogical and rhetorical resource that has been misperceived or actively avoided because of its transgressive power lives or dies in the anecdotes of students' anonymous writing I analyze. A different discourse of community emerges—one that reflects and intensifies the expressivist credo of Discovery-Authenticity-Autonomy—when anonymity becomes part of normal composition pedagogy. That is a truth claim that is fragile in the face of what we normally assume about the power of the proper name and the legitimacy which attaches to the signature as shorthand for an Identity Authorizing itself for a Community.

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NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] *Who Speaks for Plato: Studies in Platonic Anonymity* an edited book of essays, covers problems of Socrates' identity and Plato's absent authorial voice. Theslef argues the "often forgotten fact" that "Plato's Socrates is never a real "authority" and that he "felt himself to be a new Socrates, continuing the search his Master had begun. If so, his personal anonymity is...easily explicable"(59). West reviews the "mouthpiece theory" that would have Socrates, the Master, speak for the Disciple, Plato. "If one adopts this interpretive method, the problem of Plato's anonymity is resolved" (101). West, however, is not convinced. Two scholars, writing on the same issue of Plato's authority open up the equivocal, contested ground of that authority's identity crisis, as it were. If an AUTHOR such as Plato functions anonymously--on what Foucault has called a "transdiscursive" level--then the discursive relation of anonymity to community, identity, and authority cannot be ignored.

[2] In arguing thus, I try hard not to make of anonymity a post-structuralist or post-humanist hobby horse. It is far more "original" than those critiques would have us believe. Frankly, it is undecidable whether anonymity functions as the metaphorical *rider* of Identity or is that rocking horse's *runners*. The hobby horse itself is really language itself as an endless metonymic function, My Derridean play with anonymity as Identity's other, displacing and standing for Identity when its dominant position in a binary relation that is language itself, collapses, enabling the suppressed, subordinate term, Anonymity, some brief sense of precedence or succession, is part of the hidden *origin*, not post-structuralist destination, of language.

[3] The scope of this dissertation prevents me, too, from extending Natanson's psychoanalytical (as opposed to a *transcendental*) clue to the anonymous function. That clue would have us follow the phenomenological work of Merleau-Ponty on the embodied character of all discourse—"the flesh of the world." It would have us jump off into certain "corporeal" and "linguistic" feminists such as Gross and Butler who owe much to the Lacan-inspired psychoanalytical feminism of Kristeva and her American followers. Thus, my reader might sense some degree of "disembodiment" because of my determination to first trace the male dominated origins of the anonymous function. If so, then it is because at this point in my project, I do not understand how to incorporate the inutterably feminist presence of, and influence on, what one must ultimately come to mean by the anonymous function. Namely, we know the subject/abject positions of Woman as Body—in the representative containment of all her choreographic ("dancer's writing"), pornographic ("prostitute's writing") positions as womb space, mother-love, home-fire, genius nurse, whore-void. These are at the center of what it means to be Anonymous, because Woman as Mind was erased from the discourse of Author-ity in all its philosophical, historical, literary, and legal discursive turns for so long. If I ever turn this dissertation into a book, the incorporation of the imperative/problem: "Woman thy Name is Anonymous" and the feminist question/solution: "Am I that Name?" will be addressed. No true—authoritative and authentic--*Composition* of the anonymous function would ignore the name/unnaming of more than one half of our discoursing universe.

[4] "Nomination barrier" is from David Beck's *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel*. He also cites and adapts Patrick Docherty's theory of "absent character." Given his proximity to my subject and thesis, it would normally make sense for me to incorporate Beck more directly in my approach to a history of anonymity. That I discovered his work after digesting Docherty's ideas leads me instead to give precedence to our common adaptation of Docherty's absent character motif. The notion of a "nomination barrier" is essential, especially given my ambition to explain anonymity from a perspective much wider than Beck's. Beck's approach to linking anonymous

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characterization with readerly identification to Docherty's "absent" character theory comes at the very beginning of his study.

> The absence of a name can enhance a reader's potential for identifying with a character in a narrative. The lack of a name removes the *nomination barrier* [emphasis added] that distinguishes the character from other characters and from the reader. The inducement to identity with a character occurs when anonymity combines with other elements of characterization, including a progressive unveiling of the character which is both positive and consistent (1-2).

Beck's "discipleship paradigm" applies, of course, to Holger and West's counterfactual questionings of Platonic anonymity. I argue that anonymity animates a larger trans-discursive complex of community, identity, and authority across all rhetorical situations, including the composition classroom.

I do apply Beck's notion of a *nomination barrier* to historical anecdotes of anonymous authority. It will be most useful in Chapter Five's account of what happens when an expressivist approach to composition pedagogy concludes that anonymity can be a useful way to test and otherwise transgress the nomination barriers which normally stand between students and their instructors.

[5] That Bakhtin hid his own authorship through collective ghostwriting in the face of Stalinist repression is more than coincidental to his reflections on a transgredient contact zone where the discourse of nobody, alone in discourse, is nevertheless "populated" with the voices of others—(perhaps a transcendental return to an anonymous origin, of what we imagine to be Other as Author-itative (more toward Authoritarian) Discourse. Uncannily, in "Toward a Pedagogy of Anonymity," we witness one student addressing God to rescue him/her from racialized Others.

[6] The phrase "personal plus textual essay" and its suggestions of Bakhtinian hybridity comes from an essay by Gordon Harvey in *College English* titled "Presence in the Essay." Harvey counsels a purist approach to teaching the genre of the essay, and refers to my sense of an expressive-expositional hybrid as "Frankenstinian discourse." Given my notion of the anonymous function, it is significant that Shelley's evermore humanly *present* "monster" remains anonymous, yet his transgressions of community, identity, and authority are commonly confused with his creator, the rather more "absent" character of Dr. Victor Frankenstein. Chapter Five will look skirt the idea of anonymous expressivism as a hopeful monster. It is also significant, that after my presentation of an anonymous pedagogy to my colleagues, one sniffingly—and again erroneously-- dismissed my ideas of textually named and unnamed discourse merging in the composition of the writing course as it does in the greater course of the lifeworld itself as "a Frankenstein."

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CHAPTER ONE

TOWARD A PHENOMENOLOGY OF ANONYMITY

Locating Anonymity within the Dilution of 'Identity'

"Identity" is what Kenneth Burke might call a "god-term." As a founding structure of all philosophical discourse, it can be imagined as the supreme being of both metaphysical analysis and epistemological application. Thousands of years of "Western" and "Eastern" thinking are invested in, and represented by, this single term. It becomes an automatic fall back point, a portmanteau concept, everyone claims, yet no one can really carry off. It is so massively packed, spilling over with "hard" won political facts, but also with "soft" philosophical parades of what Derrida has termed "the Metaphysics of Presence."

The word literally means "the same, sameness," and it naturally connotes the sense of self-sameness--or permanence-- any individual feels, or believes he or she can feel, even as the body changes, ages, fades. This makes *personal* "identity" a function of memory, of remembering, of autobiographical stability--that one can identify a history--tell a life story. Our roughly remembered sense of self-sameness--being the hero or heroine of our experience in the world over a given lifetime--creates voice(s), conscientiousness, an intra-subjective independence that is nevertheless dependent on the self-same suppositions of Others, making, therefore, inter-subjectivity possible, inevitable, and the penultimate condition between natality and mortality. Thus, "identity" must do the work of phenomenological or lived experience: it is a concrete, embodied practice. It must also do the work of what Burke has called "logological or languaged experience: it is an abstraction, the point of, and part of, all analysis.

The problem of the essence and the existence of Identity fascinated both Descartes and Hume. Their introspective analyses--and those of many philosophers in between and after them--represent a kind of historical parentheses that amount to a modern tradition of general skepticism that belies a deep anxiety about Identity which endures in the present epoch of "post-humanist" and "social constructivist" analysis.

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In a fine overview of the "problem" of Identity, Douglas Kellner captures the (post) modern anxiety about identity as a lived experience and as an academic catch-all for radically incommensurate notions of its meaning and action.

> ...[O]ne is caught up in so many different, sometimes conflicting, roles that one no longer knows who one is. In these ways, identity in modernity becomes increasingly problematical and the issue of identity itself becomes a problem. Indeed, only in a society anxious about identity could the problems of personal identity, or self-identity, or identity crises, arise and be subject to worry and debate. Theories of self-identity (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre) are often anxious concerning the fragility of identity and analyze in detail those experiences and social forces which undermine and threaten personal identity Thus, in modernity, the problem of identity consisted in how we constitute, perceive, interpret, and present our self to ourselves and to others. As noted, for some theorists, identity is a discovery and affirmation of an innate essence that determines what I am, while for others identity is a construct and a creation from available social roles and material. Contemporary postmodern thought has by and large rejected the essentialist and rationalist notion of identity and builds on the constructivist notion which it in turn problematizes (Kellner, 144). [1]

In their 2000 article "Beyond "identity," social analysts Brubaker and Cooper sum up the 'problem' of identity in a legitimate, yet typically cranky appeal to academic precision. Identity becomes a 'problem' because it can't possibly do the double—and ever re-doubling— work that four centuries of essentialist to constructivist statement and counter-statement have authorized it to do.

> We argue that the prevailing constructivist stance on identity—the attempt to "soften" the term, to acquit it of the charge of "essentialism" by stipulating that identities are constructed, fluid, and multiple—leaves us without a rationale for talking about "identities" at all and ill-equipped to examine the "hard" dynamics and essentialist claims of contemporary identity politics. "Soft" constructivism allows putative "identities" to proliferate. But as they proliferate, the term loses its analytical purchase. If identity is everywhere, [then] it is nowhere (1).

In their final suggestion of syllogistic reasoning whose conclusion points to a useless Utopianism for Identity, I perceive that the problematic of Identity is a function of anonymity. Identity is everywhere—a discursive mesh of sensual and textual bodies always in play. Everyone—any one—has claims to identity. Yet no one of us can nominate Identity as an unambiguous category of either autobiographical or analytical practice. Amidst the proliferation and diffusion of identity talk, claims, crises, politics, I see the discourse of anonymity, the suppressed, unreified Other of Identity and its equally diffuse predication, Identification, with its legal and psychoanalytical meanings. Because I believe it is both a suppressed and pre-possessive term in the discourse of Identity, I can grant metonymic, or dynamically substitutive energy, to anonymity.

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My argument, in theoretical terms, is that no "...one can analyze "identity-talk" and "identity-politics" without, as analysts, positing the existence of [*anonymities*]" (Brubaker and Cooper, 5). I have, given my premises, elided the author's use of "identities" and substituted anonymities to suggest that it is not an antonym of identity (or of other contested and congested god-terms such as "authority" or "community"). In more poetic terms, (with apologies to Blake), my argument for anonymity is that it is the invisible metonym that flies through our nominalist nights of practice, of analysis. It founds--and finds out--the uneasy amalgams of what we employ to mean and mean to employ, and unnames us somewhere--nowhere-- between rage and remembrance, sorrow and joy.

The 'problem' of identity is its multiple groundings, it continuous academic grindings (to the point of becoming ground down) into anonymities of individuality and collectivity, of sameness and difference, of the solitary and of solidarity, of the self as core and as cover, of the essential and the performative. In contending with Craig Calhoun's *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Brubaker and Cooper quote him in order to agree with his baseline assumption of our universal identification in a collectively nominalist consciousness. But our common Identity as Namers effectively unnames--anonymizes--Identity. And therein lies the rub that I dub the anonymous function.

> It is certainly true that "[we] know of no people without names, no languages or cultures
> in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not
> made." But it is not clear why this implies the ubiquity of identity, unless we dilute
> "identity" to the point of designating *all* practices involving naming and self-other
> distinctions (13-14).

I am making neither a "hard" or "soft" case for the ubiquitous function of anonymity in the problem of identity. It is self-evident that anonymity dilutes identity as both a category of phenomenological practice and programmatic analysis. *All* phenomenological practices involving naming and therefore, self-other distinctions, are *de*-signated by the structural and functional orientations of an anonymous lifeworld where identity has become so overburdened as to be incapable of naming our inter-subjective orientations. In order to make that case--endlessly open and shut--I turn to Alfred Schutz, a philosopher of the social whom Brubaker and Cooper would have done well to incorporate in their call to move "beyond identity."

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A Phenomenology of Inter-Subjective Anonymity

The first phenomenological account of anonymity may be traced to Alfred Schutz. Influenced by Edmund Husserl's work on the meaning and structure of the human sciences, Schutz wanted to extend Husserl's *lifeworld* concept (a concept often accompanied by the word "anonymous" Habermas' and Giddens' reworkings of Husserl). His goal was to understand "[t]he everyday life world [which] is...fundamentally intersubjective; it is a social world" (Schutz, 16). Exiled by the Nazis, Schutz lived in the United States where, before his death in 1959. He influenced many social theorists including Habermas, Giddens, and Talcot Parsons. *The Structures of the Lifeworld*, which his student, Thomas Luckmann completed in 1973 from Schutz's notes, crystallizes and clarifies the philosophical discourse of Identity--the Self-Other Relation-- as it has obscurely trickled down from Hegel through Heidegger. In addition, one can find in Schutz the merger of a philosophical and anthropological humanism which Buber popularized in his "I-Thou" relation (a treatment which also influenced Bakhtin, and to which he returned at the end of his life.)

Chapter Two of *The Structures of the Lifeworld* --titled "The Stratifications of the Lifeworld"--lays out what I see as the basic phenomenological relation of anonymity to the fundamental intersubjectivity of the lifeworld. My summary of this relation is not definitive. It is meant to confirm and codify the total presence of anonymity--from relations of "I" to "You" to "We" to "They"--so that we might better understand the Discourse of Identity as beholden to a theory--or what remains to be seen, about Anonymity.

This section of *The Structures of the Lifeworld* also contains an interesting reference to "*finite provinces of meaning*" and their essential incompatibility with, or irreducibility to, one another without some kind "...of a "leap" (in Kierkegaard's sense)" (24). This existential leap is "...accompanied by a shock experience that is brought about by the radical alteration of the tension of consciousness" (24). According to Schutz, though the everyday lifeworlds of Home, Work, Church, State are relatively finite provinces of meaning, we "traverse a whole series of such provinces." In such, "[t]here are just as many shock experiences as there are finite provinces of meaning able to receive the accent of reality through changes of attitude" (24). Schutz provides a footnote to this passing mention of "finite provinces of meaning" and their attendant "shock experiences" that speculates on "the problem of "enclaves" and the necessity of " a reflective attitude"--presumably to deal with the shock of leaping between lifeworld provinces (24).

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Maurice Natanson, a student of Schutz, seizes on this notion of "enclaves" to develop a thesis that anonymity operates in the overlap (or perhaps *overleap*) of intersubjective meaning. We will look at what he calls "passion in the enclave" so as to complete the theory of anonymity as one that remains, if not always attended to or "seen" in both inter-subjective and *intra-subjective* provinces of the lifeworld. (Why this is important to establish will become clear once we enter the "lifeworld" of the composition classroom in Chapter Five, "A Pedagogy of Anonymity.")

Schutz is interested to "stratify" the lived, and generally taken as granted, sense of having an inter-subjective, social Identity according to the basic positionalities of the Self in relation to Other Selves. Accordingly, he moves from the immediate experience of self-consciousness to the less, but still relatively immediate experience of the Other. He does this through a reworking of the I/Thou relation into a series of more highly "mediated" "orientations" toward the "We" and the "They" with some suggestion of the "It" or totally Other relation of Cosmos, God—whatever one's sense of the Unnamable might be. This is a phenomenological, and therefore, classically categorical, treatment of these levels of Identity. My only goal is to suggest to the reader the pervasive role that anonymity plays in Schutz's systematic explanation of lifeworld orientation.

Schutz reminds us that "[a]ll experience of social reality is founded on the fundamental axiom positing the existence of other beings "like me" (61). He then distinguishes how this fundamental identification of some one Other than one's Self is "arranged according to various levels of proximity, depth, and *anonymity* in lived experience (61, emphasis added). In Schutz's distillation of the discourse of Identity (of the "self-same," the "like me" tendency of consciousness), it turns out that "anonymity" is one of the "structures in which the social world becomes built up in experience" (61). Anonymity quickly and pervasively becomes a factor once "the face-to-face situation...the only social situation characterized by temporal and spatial immediacy" is set as a phenomenological baseline. It would not seem so, of course, until we attend to Schutz's stratifications of the Self/Other situation.

Since attention to the self is a phenomenological given, the social situation presupposes "that I turn my attention to the Other" (62). This turning of the Self and its internal community outward, as it were, "is a universal form in which the Other is experienced "in person" "(62.) Succinctly, the "I" experiences a "*thou-orientation*." It is a personal, essentially "unilateral" orientation that is itself subtly nuanced and articulated in terms of alienation and intimacy within the spatio-temporal proximity of the situation. If the Other

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attends to my "I" than the orientation is, of course "reciprocal." That is, "...a social relation becomes constituted" which Schutz designates the *"we-relation."* Schutz is careful to remind his reader that there is no "pure" Thou or We relation. Both are "...actualized only in various stages of concrete apprehension and typification of the Other" (63). At the same time, once the immediate, intimate sense of Self has been reoriented to the social world, the apprehension and typification of the Other is always "mediated" (63).

Of course, as long as there is a face-to-face orientation, what Schutz is calling the " "pure" we-relation, which is constituted in a reciprocal thou-orientation" (64), is immediate, but there are "gradations of immediacy" (65). He looks into these gradations of one's "fellow man" [*sic*] 67 in the examples of lovers, kin, various kinds of friends, and acquaintances. He sees that "[t]he mirroring of self in the experience of the stranger (more exactly, in my grasp of the Other's experience of me) [which] is a constitutive element of the we-relation" (67). These gradations of immediacy-- in what amounts to a reciprocal attempt at self-recognition--are eventually mediated, as we will see, by gradations of anonymity. "In general,' [however] it is...in the we-relation that the intersubjectivity of the life-world is developed and continually confirmed" (68).

What I read as an intimation of anonymity's function in the inter-subjectivity of the lifeworld, Schutz concludes consideration of the we-relation in this way: "The lifeworld is not my private world nor your private world, nor yours and mine added together, but rather the world of our *common experience* (68). I insist that that common experience--or sense of *community*, immediate or otherwise-- is beholden to anonymity. This sense emerges, I believe, in the often unconsidered interstices or borderlands that Schutz appears to be alluding to in the always and already anonymous Otherness of this "Our" orientation. In this already anonymous orientation the "...differences in the immediacy of my [your, our, their] experience of the Other already stand out" (69).

This brings Schutz to a consideration not of immediate others, but to "...the transitions of living we-relations to social relations between contemporaries" (73). Thus "The more we approach the latter, [i.e. "contemporaries] the smaller is the degree of immediacy and the higher the degree of anonymity characterizing my experience of the Other" (73). (It will be of interest to the reader to note here, early on, that Schutz's equation of anonymity with lack of "immediacy" is logical, even natural, in strict definitional terms of the social. A different logic is operative in the psychosocial terrain of the teaching situation, and in the complex rhetorical passions that inhabit the "enclaves" of reading texts and writing them.)

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In a subsection of the "Stratifications" chapter titled " *The contemporary as type and the they-orientation,*" Schutz begins a ten page stretch of analysis that comprises another subsection titled "*The levels of anonymity in the social world.*" "Contemporaries" are not in bodily time and space but in "world time" (74) which we know through experience, knowledge, and "...the help of various lifeworldly idealizations" (74). The relation between "idealization" and "anonymization" becomes critical for Schutz's thesis. (The reader can look forward to accepting or rejecting my sense that it is a relation equally crucial in a pedagogy of anonymity.) "Idealization" is a complex term, but it appears to be equivalent to what he means by "typification"--how we must necessarily "type" Others--even intimate Others-- according various constraints of language and knowledge. Thus, "[i]n contrast to the way I grasp the conscious life of a fellow-man, [*sic*] the experiences of mere contemporaries [*a.k.a.* "they-relations"] appear to me as more or less anonymous events" (75).

We have, then, a large reservoir of "...typical knowledge concerning typical processes" in the social world (75). We have a generalized sense of otherness at this level of the social. In "...whose consciousness [do] these typical processes transpire" is open question of "idealization": "the idealizations of "and so forth" and "again and again," that is, assumptions of typical anonymous repeatability" (76). We are all familiar with, but generally, do not bother to reflect on the typical anonymous repeatability of self/other identification in the series of situations that constitute our everyday lifeworlds.

These become, in effect, "objective meaning-contexts"; and the more these "replace subjective-meaning contexts, the more anonymous will be the reference point of [our] they-orientation" (76). This is where "typification" sets in and not only informs, but largely founds our "stock of knowledge" about the world (77). The fluidity and positionality of subjective and objective meaning contexts is obvious, on self-reflection. Each of us is aware that we can zoom in or out of the I/Thou/We orientation into a they-orientation, depending on the situation involving "contemporaries." (Schutz uses the example of a card game in which some individuals are known to each other, others are new to the game. The game of cards itself is a highly typified, objective context. Intimacy and anonymity wind and weave throughout the inter-subjective meaning contexts within the orientation toward the objective context of a card game as played by anyone, everyone--all contemporaries in world-time as it were, past, present, future, never.

Schutz opens the subsection, "The levels of anonymity in the social world" this way: "The foundational moment of the they-orientation is that one imagines the Other, whose existence is assumed or suspected, as

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a reference point of typical virtues, characteristics, etc" (79). It is this act of imagination--or "idealization"--that links up with what he is calling "anonymization." That is, "...the world of contemporaries is stratified according to levels of anonymity" (80). We imaginatively realize the Other through acts of idealization and/or demonization (though Schutz doesn't break down idealization along this line of binaric typification.)

For Schutz, "[t]he most important variable [in this act of imagining the Other] is the degree of anonymity"; and he sees "[t]he anonymity of a typification [as] inversely proportional to its fullness of content" (80). Thus, "[t]he sooner I can immediately experience the typical characteristics of "someone" as properties of a fellow-man, [sic] as components of his conscious life, the less anonymous is the typification in question" (81). In effect, we have a sliding, eliding continuum of otherness always and already operative throughout our inter-subjective social rounds of being and becoming. His nominative examples of anonymous typification include: "citizen of the world," "leftist intellectual liberal," "combatant," "American" " (81). It is easy to add to this list, so easy in fact, that I (-Thou) begin to imagine a "mobius strip" construct or "double-helix" contour prescribing the codes of linguistic consciousness itself: nominalizing and anonymizing at once.

In this subsection Schutz takes us through various "individualized types" that shade and adumbrate themselves away from a "friend." Thus what he calls "*personal types* " are constructed and projected on the basis of " "people like X" " (82). These are not just "anyone", since they orbit our personal stock of past and immediate experience with a host of intimate others. (Presumably, a favorite author, or more accurately, an author's created character, can assume this status of a personal type, as we will see in Chapter Two in our treatment of the anonymous author function.)

Several steps beyond these personalized gradations (what I think of, following Bakhtin, as "transgredient" and therefore rhetorically *transgressive* moments of personal identity and identification), are "the *functionary type*": "...typifications which closely approach pure behavioral types and which have already reached a higher degree of anonymity"[2] (82). Schutz uses the example of the "postal employee" who delivers our personal correspondence day to day. Both these types remain highly "individualized"-- they are still relatively "close to lived experience" compared to "[t]ypifications of so-called social collectives..." (83). Based on his descriptions, these types cover, in my own experience, the YMCA, the Salvation Army, the U.S. Congress. These are still "...built on individualized functionary types or even personal types" (82) which we can recast in terms of a "we-orientation."

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Finally, according to Schutz, we get to typifications "...like " *the* state," " *the* economy," " *the* social classes," etc, they are completely unamenable to conversion into the living reality" (83) of reciprocal Self/Other orientations. These typifications are "[h]ighly anonymous Objective-meaning contexts and behavior-contexts" and constitute what social theorists of many stripes--from Althusser to Foucault-- "ideological apparatuses" or "regimes of truth." Writing a decade before the onset of "post-structural" conceptions of Identity, Schutz sees these highly anonymous contexts of identification as being "...embodied in symbols that operate by instituting communities, ...in which these symbols become taken-for granted data of the social and cultural world into which the individual is born" (84).

The term "typification" becomes a crucial conceptual axis upon which Schutz turns and returns to the anonymity and "anonymization" of the lifeworld. My overview of anonymity's phenomenology according to Schutz is intended to suggest its functional range across a bewildering number of situations just beyond the pale of an immediate face-to-face orientation. Anonymity, it would seem, is not only a typically *social stratification*. It also typifies nearly every inter-subjective situation outside of family, friendship, certain collaborative relations, and lovemaking. It may, in fact, function in these more "immediate" orientations, as well, as we will begin to trace in Natanson's development of the enclave, below.

We can roughly conclude from Schutz that the essential sociality of subjective experience is idealized and is, to a greater or lesser extent, objectified across a highly nuanced spectrum of intensely private-- "immediate"--to highly public--"mediated"-- "provinces" or "enclaves" of meaningful orientation. The arrangement of these meaningful forms of orientation is accompanied by "prescribed levels of anonymity"; therefore, to understand the social formation and meaning of subjective experience, we cannot discount nor disavow the function of anonymity.

In the final chapter of Schutz's study, (titled "Knowledge and Society"). Schutz provides a compositional cue (or maybe a clue) to his notion of anonymity as "prescribed." My tendency toward the idealization of anonymization leads me to take the term of *pre-scription* in that literal way which doubles back into symbolization. Anonymity is *written on the wind* of discourse itself. Discourse is at once social and anonymous, centripedal and centrifugal, as Bakhtin has it. The whole of utterance, of language, is an inter-subjective (dis) orientation of naming and self/other distinctions that move beyond any congested and contested holding term like "Identity." Given that the object of my inquiry is anonymous writing and the

composition of identity politics, it is fortuitous that Schutz provides one example from writing and one from self/other identification to suggest the range of anonymity's rhetorical and attitudinal (im)mediacies.

> Thus, for example, the fullness of symptoms in which the Other is given diminishes, according to whether one is concerned with the exchange of letters, with news which is obtained through a third person, etc. In order to illustrate the variations in *anonymity*, we need only think of the difference between the exchange of letters between two married people and a business letter, or a last will and testament which refers to later generations, stock transactions, judicial decrees, etc.
> .... Social attitudes can be related, on the one hand, to a concrete individual ("my absent father"), or also to different degrees of *anonymous* social groups, roles, institutions, social objectivations, etc. (aversion to lawyers, fear of the police, respect for the Ten Commandments, preference for Italian, etc) (253, emphasis added).

In the first example, Schutz is running a gauntlet familiar to any teacher of composition—or to any one who must be aware of "audience." To make students aware of the general importance of audience, to help them discover the genre conventions that virtually prescribe particular kinds of addressivity, I have used an exercise from rhetorician Ross Winterowd that provokes a range of "variation" similar to what Schutz describes. The subject is money. The problem is that the graduating student needs some. The object is to write a letter that will best insure a solution to this problem. The assignment is to write three letters: one to the student's parent or parents; one to a "best," but long lost, friend from grade school who always had money; and one to a loan institution.

The resulting letters invariably demonstrate variations in familiarity—of a sense of identity, of authority, of community—that are clearly coextensive with Schutz's "variations in anonymity." Though not written anonymously, the letters do point to the inevitable sense of an anonymous "To Whom It May Concern" the farther one traces the implications of the rhetorical directive, "Consider Your Audience."

The second example from Schutz conforms to my epistemological interests as a teacher of composition. Students write properly named personal narratives on their immediate sense and source of personal identity (as in Schutz's "my absent father"), and gradually "relate" these compositions to larger, more anonymous, socially constructed, "groups, roles, objectivations" through academic research. At the same time, writing as an anonymous community, the fullness of symptoms in which the Other is given replenishes or diminishes students' named discourse of identity according to how they exchange and extend the personal, textual, attitudinal, and social anonymity already suggested in their nominally identified compositions.

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Making anonymity a worthwhile rhetorical phenomenon in composition pedagogy requires that teachers stress the *inter-* part of *intersubjectivity* and *intertextuality*. Understanding the *inter* requires that teachers make the case for the same sort of Kiekergaardian "leap" between the private and public that Schutz describes as happening between discrete provinces of meaning—between lifeworlds. The "shock experience" which accompanies this leap, according to Schutz, is evident, as we will see in some of the anonymous writing, but cannot be adequately conveyed except in the face-to-face, "we" relation of named students confronting the "they-relation" of their own anonymous writing. Some of the writing might be thought of as *outresubjective or outretextual*—of mere "shock value." That possibility is part of a legitimately "critical pedagogy" in which leaps and risks—transgressions— must be undertaken between expressivist and constructionist "enclaves."

Before we can reflect on anonymity as a pedagogical phenomenon, however, there is a need to extend Schutz's phenomenological account of anonymity from the intersubjective, into the intra-subjective. Even in my cursory outline and overview of Schutz's treatise on the function of anonymity in the structures of the lifeworld, the reader can begin to understand why one of his students, Maurice Natanson, might nominate its function in the "enclave" as worthy of a separate phenomenological investigation.

A Phenomenology of Intra-Subjective Anonymity

Maurice Natanson has determined that the leit motif of Schutz's work was anonymity, and has written a book titled *Anonymity: A Study in the Philosophy of Alfred Schutz*, which is one of many books published under Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy series. In his introduction Natanson tells us that he is "convinced that anonymity provides what Husserl called "a transcendental clue" to the understanding of Schutz's philosophy of the social world. Our task is the tracing of that clue" (22).

Schutz's central insight about anonymity is its apparent "social" discontinuity with regard to the voice(s) in our heads that we identify as subjectivity or personal identity. Anonymity for Schutz is a social, not a psychic, operation. We are not strangers to ourselves, only estranged by the sheer phenomenological otherness of the situational array outside our personally embodied space. (One can begin to see Schutz's foundational importance to the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, whose approach to anonymity we cannot

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follow up in these pages.) To confirm this, Natanson quotes from one of Schutz's earlier books *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*

> [W]hen we speak of subjective meaning in the social world, we are referring to the constituting processes in the consciousness of persons who produced that which is objectively meaningful. We are therefore referring to their "intended meaning," whether they themselves are aware of these constituting processes or not. *The world of subjective meaning is therefore never anonymous*, for it is essentially only something dependent upon and still within the operating intentionality of an Ego-consciousness, my own or someone else's (22 emphasis added).

In other words, what can never be anonymous is the inner curve of the "I-you" dialog we use in making sense to ourselves--for ourselves, a ME like no Other. This is the narrative of personal identity reserved in our heads. It is that lifelong internal monologue which Bakhtin, as we shall see, was interested to explain in terms of a "dialogical imagination." Anonymity only takes hold in inter- subjective, not intra-subjective relations. We don't mask our identities from our selves, according to Schutz.[3]

Shutz's insight is consistent with Blanchot's insight about the writer's identity disappearing in the act of writing, since subjective meaning has left the head and its self-reflection and entered the fascination of the page. Anonymity is structured in broad social, not deep personal, life. Natanson basically thematizes and over-determines Schutz's stance on the subjective to make some basic but generally overlooked phenomenological facts about the anonymity of everyday life. An extended passage from Natanson is worthwhile at this point. It summarizes and authorizes what I educed from Schutz's stratified approach to anonymity as a lifeworld structure.

> For the most part, anonymity is not considered by most of us in daily life to be a desirable condition or circumstance. Who "most of us" are is one of the philosophical aspects of the problem of anonymity... (23).
>
> Most of us must settle for knowing a small number of people, for knowing about a larger circle of fellow humans, and for being aware of multitudes who are and will remain anonymous. This is the normal state of affairs. And if it is "normal" that most individuals are anonymous to most other individuals, then it is evident that anonymity is a standard feature of everyday life. anonymity is part of the structure of the social world. ...[A]nonymity is an invariant feature of an existence lived in the taken-for-granted terms of ordinary life. What is implied by this taken-for-grantedness is the reciprocity of anonymity: I am anonymous to most Others just as most Others are anonymous to me....
>
> In any case, there is no difficulty in understanding what it means for someone to be treated as a number by the bureaucracy, to be looked at as though you weren't there, to have nobody interested in you, to be a perpetual stranger, not to belong--anywhere. The experience of anonymity is widespread, if not commo-nplace; the concern with that experience--its thematization, in phenomenological terms---is not an integral part of daily life (24-25).

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Obviously, my concern with the experience of anonymity is to thematize it and make it an integral part of composition's daily pedagogical life. Since it is an integral part of the social structure of the lifeworld (including that of academia), my concern is with how it prescribes the agency of self/other relations in composition pedagogy. As both a theorist of discourse, and as a teacher in composition-rhetoric, my interest is in the double nature of anonymity that Natanson elaborates from Schutz's work. We have already noted the reciprocity of anonymity that makes it a standard feature of social life. In this phenomenological--taken-as-granted-- kind of anonymity, there is a an autonomy, a freedom, that gives (inter)subjectivity its hermetic seal and social security--its selfsameness, its identity, as I have argued in Section I.

But there is also the anonymous experience that Natanson tells us usually carries our common sense of anonymity as wholly negative--the kind of Kafkaesque depersonalization and alienation that no first name basis can overcome. This essentially existential (versus the reciprocally social) experience of anonymity carries a sense of unfreedom, and in binary relation to a positive sense of self-identity, projects a negative charge of (In)Different Otherness.

With this great binary tension of Self/Other in its ambit, it is less of a stretch to understand the total "dialectical" (more toward "dialogical") reverberations of anonymity. And though we are still sketching out what I consider a "background anonymity," I am hopeful that the reader can intuit something of what I mean by anonymity's figure or character as represented in the "reciprocity" or inter-subjectivity of anonymous writing in a college composition class.

As I understand the theory and practice of what has come to be known in composition-rhetoric studies as "expressivism," it is not about personal narratives for the performance of Self only. At its most expressive--most social and political--the expressivist approach is dedicated to the expression of an Other. And the reciprocal--and "negative"-- powers of anonymity can aid and abet this expressive goal. Just as no composition of philosophy according to Schutz and thematized by Natanson can ignore the double edge of anonymity, neither can a philosophy of composition, in my view, ignore what the Natanson extracts from his mentor to call the "enclaves" of anonymity. It is to these I will now turn before concluding this particular subsection on anonymity's background.

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Schutz develops his concept of "enclaves"--shorthand for "provinces of meaning" from his understanding of Sarte's theory of the Other (which, by my lights, was appropriated by Lacan, Bakhtin, and a host of other "critical" theorists). Natanson seizes on enclaves--which he defines as "phenomena of intersubjectivity." He then attempts a more detailed description than the footnoted asides of Schutz.

> Within the course of daily life, enclaves are more often than not "inhabited by Others....
> You and I share some region of work, family relationship, avocation, past history, which
> is our intersection in the world, not only unshared by, but unknown to, Others (96).

Simply understood, I think Natanson is speaking of "the private realm." We all have our private, intimate relations, real or imagined. Since every one senses privacy, the collective sense of individual claims to privacy points to a *public* domain in an ideal sense-- a community of subjectivity. The crucial link between anonymity and the sense and maintenance of personal, private identity gives anonymity a social, public identification. Anonymity is the "open secret" of inter-subjectivity.

Natanson seems to be distinguishing between intimate and generalized Others, or Strangers, within "the paramount reality" of the anonymous social world. This is a double overlap of intimacies with certain known Others, and the reciprocal recognition of anonymity with Others in general. Natanson concludes that when it comes to understanding the firewall between intimate and generalized otherness there is a "temptation...to concentrate on intimacies, on private features of the individual's life: hidden religious or sexual activity, for example" (96). But if we are to understand enclaves, such intimacies prevent their status as "a more vital, a more nearly structural aspect of the social world" (96).

He returns to trying to define what an enclave is by telling us what it is not. "It might be thought that formal alliances--marriage, friendship, business partnerships [and he later includes academic departments]--might automatically establish enclaves; they do not" (110). The reason they do not is because if anything "intimately shared in such relationships" does "not cross the boundaries of the finite province in which they are held"--if, in other words, their secrets don't secrete, they are something else. The moment the privacies of different provinces are conjoined, an enclave is entered" (110). At this point "enclaves" seem to both rely upon and deny the privacies of self-identity.

Natanson's conclusion about enclaves subverts one of his mentor's central contentions that "The world of subjective meaning is...never anonymous, for it is essentially only something dependent upon and still

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within the operating intentionality of an Ego-consciousness, my own or someone else's." There is

something "objective" about the condition and operation of anonymity. Its meaning is, at a minimum "inter-

subjective." But Natanson contends that

> [w]hat lies within the enclave, from an egological standpoint, includes an intensity of experience concerning several provinces of meaning, a remembered, anticipated, imagined, or fantasized state of affairs in which only the aspect of experience relevant to the enclave is attended to while the rest—an immense remainder—is not only set at a distance but is apperceived as *anonymous*.... A glimpse of "otherness" is provided within such a conception of the enclave (110-112, emphasis added).

Natanson had initially defined enclaves from something like a "sociological" standpoint—"the more familiar

state of affairs in which the individual knows Others only through the enclaves formed by the taking of

social roles" (112). This makes sense, given Schutz's attention to the socially structured character of the

kinds of anonymity with which Natanson begins his study.

Why he shifts to an almost psychoanalytic take on enclaves is part of a larger problem for philosophers

who consider themselves phenomenologists, who have split the difference between epistemology and

ontology and are caught on the horns of the dilemma of Identity as blurred emergencies of external and

internal Identification. That problem we cannot address here.[4] Our inquiry involves the "immense

remainder" of Self identity (reminiscent of Freud's "repressed elements" that Lacan says are "structured

like a language"). Does Self-identity have any access to, or is it accessed by, the "immense remainder" of

the world and its anonymously social otherness? Remember that he defined the enclave as: "The moment

the privacies of different provinces are conjoined, an enclave is entered."

That definition appears to effectively eliminate the pedestrian, emancipatory reciprocity of Self/Other

anonymity; it points to the widespread experience of repressive anonymization. In other words, the

possibility of self-identity depends on an immense anonymous remainder that is distanced from the

immediate needs of that continued identification. Its presence is not only an immense remainder; it is a

reminder—a glimpse of one's own otherness. Thus, (and I am connecting disparate elements that Natanson

can't or won't), "...what is distanced from the [egological] enclave intimates an altogether different realm,

one in which truncation of possibility signifies the recognition of anonymity no longer as a mode of

abstraction but as otherness" (112). We are reminded here of Brubaker's and Cooper's irritation over

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Identity's claim to abstract as well as practical categories. Otherness becomes a practice in the enclave. The glimpse of otherness provided by such "a conception of the enclave" "is to be distinguished from the more familiar state of affairs in which the individual knows Others only through the enclaves formed by the taking of social roles." (These, as we have seen, include the commonplace anonymity known as reciprocity).

Let's try to summarize Natanson's summary of Schutz's original conception of anonymity—that it is an abstraction we use upon the social world and its commonplace otherness to the self, an abstraction that permits homogenous or typified recognitions that make for a generalized intersubjective behavior that is essentially anonymous. Natanson argues that his teacher has made an important point about how human beings tend to customize—to "typify"— reality with its capacity for uncertainty, chaos, accident. The way we do this is to purify the continuous confusions of perception and action through an act of self-protective reflection or typification. Schutz, once again, describes it this way. " In the typifying synthesis of recognition I perform an act of anonymization in which I abstract the lived experience from its setting within the stream of consciousness and thereby render it impersonal" (Natanson 114).

There are any number of (stereo)typical situations that demonstrate the presence of anonymity. Schutz was apparently not given to examples, according to Natanson, though I have found some, as we have already witnessed. As Natanson tells us, Schutz used the word "anonymous"

> to...replace the time-bound, circumstance-determined, situated particulars of individual existence.... Thus: the greater the purity, [as if intersubjectivity exists apart from its relational and situational particulars] the greater the anonymity. In this way, [for Schutz} typification generates sameness (114).

Conformity, typification, sameness (the etymological meaning of identity) are wrapped up in Schutz's conception of anonymity; it is how he displays the structure of social life in its generalized "impersonal" character. This description follows from one of anonymity's synonyms—"non-descript." And there is a kind of rightness to what he was pointing to. When all is going according to plan, whether at a train station, at an assembly plant, or in a classroom, "...the more standardized the prevailing action pattern is, the more anonymous it is, the greater the subjective chance of conformity and, therewith, of the success of intersubjective behavior" (In Natanson, 113).

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Nantanson's departure from his mentor pivots on, as we have seen, anonymity as a lived experience of de-personalization, in contrast to the typical background reciprocity of im-personalization. His detour into the imaginative—intra-subjective— realm is an attempt, I think, to challenge one of Schutz's opening assertions that subjectivity, the meaning we make from and for the continuance of selfsameness, is never anonymous. This challenge depends not upon sameness but upon difference, in turning a reciprocal logic of identity into a disjunctive one of otherness. Natanson seems to be saying that anonymity runs down into the self's glimpse of its own otherness as well as out into the social. He assures us that his teacher has performed a useful analysis of anonymity based on a "dialectic of common sense." But when we come to the end of that dialectic, (which we quickly must when we countenance actual situations of intersubjectivity), we come to "the beginning of that more primordial meaning of anonymity which we have called "otherness" " (114).

The otherness of anonymity, the enclaves it inhabits and interprets, may be said to dilute, even confute, the discourse of Identity. On the other hand, Natanson's intra-subjective take on anonymity helps us re-name self-other distinctions through the unnaming of our "identities" which are "first intimated by [their] passion in the enclave which anonymity provides." However, we have now before us a few phenomenological suppositions. There is the hard and fast categorization of Identity as a politics of idealizing an "Us" and demonizing, or at least, reducing the humanity of a "Them." We have lived practices in which subjectivity requires a vast distancing of others (both within and without a given self), "origin and passion [are] taken from [others], [and] the anonymized Other continues to be a human "otherwise" " (115). This typification of an anonymous Otherwise, in both idealized and demonized terms, shows up, gets mirrored in the masking operations of an anonymous pedagogy.

Conclusion to Chapter One

My attempt to retrace the "phenomenological" character of anonymity through Schutz and Natanson leaves much to be desired in terms of clarity. If there is one practical theme that stands out from my summary analyses of Brubaker and Cooper, Schutz and Natanson, it would seem to be that subjective, self-same Identity, performatively anonymous or not, has an Other-wise orientation which the traditional discourse of Identity does not account for. It therefore becomes us (so to speak) to see the anonymous identity function

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as a fictive possibility for college writers. The Anonymous is a fugitive YOU that a given I --already other-

wise--is always ready to discursively intimate in the enclave/community of We anonymity provides.

Given the passionate enclave an "expressivist" pedagogy should provide, the passion in the enclave

anonymity provides (e.g., cyberspace's chatrooms) could become an intra- and inter-subjective discourse

community. In this zone of taking social roles, the ambiguity of secrecy and disclosure creates new

possibilities of reciprocity that will in turn help us to rethink the relations of identity in community. Given

the theoretical bent of this chapter, it is not yet clear *what* gets rethought in the anonymous enclaves of a

composition course whose problematic frame if the discourse of identity itself. Natanson can help us chart

this pedagogical whatness in advance of actually analyzing students' anonymous writing.

> Although it is not clear which encounters [of Self/Other] qualify as constitutive in
> establishing enclaves, it does seem in the encounter with the Other that, in being "looked
> at," in finding myself as an "object" for the subjectivity of the Other--as Sartre contends--
> a central moment in the becoming of the enclave is revealed: negativity is occasioned by
> the "look" of the Other but experienced in me, the "looked-at," as a "nothing" which is
> already the herald of otherness (116-17).

So then, what has this to do with anonymity, either in the commonsense definition of a person unnamed,

unidentified, unknown, hidden, invisible, non-descript, or in the two highly nuanced corollaries set forth by

Schutz and nuanced nearly to terminological death by Natanson's attempt at a phenomenological

thematization? According to Natanson (courtesy of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Husserl, Blanchot, among

"others" I would think), the self-looked at (virtually from birth) negates the negation in that gaze, and that

immense remainder of a self's "nothing" distances and defends the enclave, makes it possible. And why is

the enclave important to the discourse of anonymity? Because

> [o] thers are permitted access to the enclave in abused form; their unity negated, their
> possibilities denied, the work of the enclave accomplished, [then] *others* have become, at
> last, anonymous. And this anonymity holds good for fictive as well as "real" persons. A
> grand census of the enclaves would have to include those who are imagined as well as
> those who possess actuality--who have "papers" to establish their identity. It is time for
> the credentials of those who have fictive being to be examined (117).

This theoretical overview of anonymity as a phenomenological discourse in its own right is a truncated

attempt at a grand census of anonymity's discursive enclaves. My reader can reasonably conclude, however,

that anonymity does have a clear role in the lived realities--both psychological and social--of everyone's

identity. The idea of "enclaves"--their private/public equivocation--stands or falls on understanding the

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reach of "inter-subjectivity" and its origin in an *alter*-able, fictive sense of the otherness prescribed by the discourse of anonymity. It is a discourse that prescribes the problematic and overburdened enclaves of Identity itself.

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Chapter Notes

[1]
The work of Erving Goffman, a so-called "symbolic interactionist," remains useful for its peculiar sense of *skepsis* on *self*-identity as a continuously anxious balancing act or performance of "cynical" and "sincere" social roles in everyday life." By my lights, Goffmann brings the entire existential problem of self-identity into a complex intersubjective performativity of roles that at times do the work of masking and other times of mirroring the basic intersubjective orientation of self in *face-to-face* orientations. What happens to personal identity in more mediated situations, such as writing, is not, however, a problem Goffmann is interested to engage. Ever new "cynical" and "sincere" possibilities for making, masking, and mirroring one's "person" through various personae are marketed by a capitalist culture. Captialist role making is devoted to technologizing personal identity as a reproducible commodity. Such identities become *consumed* by the flow of information exchange and consumption. This is also usefully summed up by Kellner with Goffmannesque trace elements.

> "It is thus claimed that in PM culture, the subject has disintegrated into a flux of euphoric intensities, fragmented and disconnected, and that the decentered postmodern self no longer experiences anxiety (with hysteria becoming the typical postmodern psychic malady) and no longer possesses the depth, substantiality, and coherence that was the ideal and occasional achievement of the modern self. Postmodern theorists claim that subjects have imploded into masses, that a fragmented, disjointed and discontinuous mode of experience is a fundamental characteristic of postmodern culture, of both its subjective experiences and texts (144).
>
> Identity today thus becomes a freely chosen game, a theatrical presentation of the self, in which one is able to present oneself in a variety of roles, images, and activities, relatively unconcerned about shifts, transformations, and dramatic changes....
>
> ...This analysis would suggest that what might be called postmodern identity is an extension of the freely chosen and multiple identities of the modern self that accepts and affirms am unstable and rapidly mutating condition, which was a problem for the modern self, producing anxiety and identity crisis.... Yet one surmises that there is a shift of identity formation and that postmodern selves are becoming more multiple, transitory, and open... (158).
>
> Rather than identity disappearing in a postmodern society, it is merely subject to new determination and new forces while offering as well new possibilities, styles, models, and forms. Yet the overwhelming variety of subject positions for identity, in an affluent image culture no doubt create highly unstable identities while constantly providing new openings to restructure one's identity. (174)

The anonymity of mass culture—that it provides new openings to compose or restructure one's identity—has its local counterpart in what I will be arguing in Chapter Five, A Pedagogy of Anonymous Composition.

[2]
The status of the "functionary type" relates of course to immediate personal experience. The various situations of meeting and talking with all sorts of strangers—from shopping to traveling—inevitably beg the functionary question of: "When do I ask for this Other's name, or name myself? "Typically," the anonymity of my I/Thou orientation never crosses what one theorist has termed the "nomination barrier." I find this to be the case even in more supposedly "reciprocal" and proximal situations, such as parents encountering and recognizing one another over the course of a year as they pick up their children from pre-school. "Hello" and "Hi" are *pro forma*, but these greetings only underscore an anonymous functionary norm that no one seems aware of, never mind curious about. "Parents" are there to drop off and pick up *their* "child" or "children." Our identifications become typified, enabling a level of anonymity that "floats all boats" as it were. An additional sense of porous yet "incompatible" provinces of meaning between family and school lifeworlds is that the children of other parents will refer to me as "Clydajane's Dad" or "Zoeann's Dad"--demonstrating a blurry, but still bright line between named and anonymized socialization through functionary encounters.

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3
I will be making much of the obvious function of anonymity as a *masking* operation in the history of literature, and in the practice of composition. But if the problem of identity is its complicity with anonymity, then anonymity also performs *mirroring* function. The standard rhetorical anonymity used by editors of newspapers in their viewpoint essays is not only meant, for example, to perform a sense of community in masking the identity of individual writers, a "common sense" which in turn lends a shared sense of authorship and author-ity to its readers. The anonymous editorial page functions even more as a two way "mirror" for "reflection" on important issues of the day. This is one of anonymity's rhetorically reconstructive powers.

In terms of understanding its "media [ating]/mirroring power as a discursive danger, I nominate the increasing appropriation and re-presentation of familial, fraternal, and other sorts of filial (com)passion by visual media with their celebrity performances of inter-subjective intimacy. We might reasonably conclude that anonymity is not only a "prescribed" level in the discourse of Identity and Identification, but one "postscripted" within the structures of the simulated Life(less)-World entertained by Baudrillard. (That anonymization holds both powers and dangers as a structuring discourse is something alluded to by Foucault, as we shall see.) The anonymity of television—from the discourse of advertising to its culture of celebrity—is the primary reason I won't have it in my home; my children's intersubjective lifeworld would be infected, I believe, in their identification with its parody of cathartic intimacy.

Similarly, I remember how my first experience with pornographic film in college enabled me to understand the difference between "making" love and "having" sex; in the former, anonymous inter-subjectivity is not possible. This is one of the dangers of the anonymous. Yet, in this connection, there are legitimate powers of empathic identification. The film *Last Tango in Paris* profoundly affected me as a young man. In retrospect, it was the film's poignant and conflicted sense of identification in Marlon Brando's character that sticks with me. Recall that Brando's character refuses to give his name to the young woman he is having an affair with. When she tries to give him her name, he refuses it—shouts her down. This intersubjective—erotic— anonymity is contrasted to the scene in which Brando's character is seen speaking—praying, really—to his dead mother, addressing her by her proper name. His identification with her is anything but anonymous, and yet her death—her absence—in every sense, but in name, reinforces the form and meaning of Schutz's sense of anonymity.

As we will see, this paradoxical energy of anonymity—its capacity for alienation and intimacy— points to its power and danger for intersubjective expression and construction of the Other within the composition classroom.)

4
The question of the rightness or usefulness of psychoanalytic theory as regards this question is of course ignored by Schutz. Despite his interest in all "phenomenon," he is a philosopher, after all. As a philosopher-historian (some have called him a new kind of "geographer"), Foucault also skates around the psychosocial implications of the Prohibited in his historical outline of discourse. But he does acknowledge the important work of Freud and Lacan on the question of subjective meaning in the social world—summed up in a single word "speech," which often stands in for "discourse" itself. What Schutz is calling subjective meaning in the social world cleaves close to a Vygotskyean notion of the speech in our heads. And it is equivalent to what Foucault is calling first speech, then discourse. And, in the psychoanalytic connection, it is important to repeat what Focuault does say about such speech or subjective meaning: "[P] sychoanalysis has already shown us that speech is not merely the medium which manifests—or dissembles—desire; it is also the object of desire" (149). Assuming Schutz agrees with this assertion, he would then maintain that subjective meaning, as the object of desire, is never anonymous, even though it can be, and often is, prohibited. The relation between prohibited and anonymous discourse is obvious, according to my commentary on Foucault. Schutz's student, Natanson, sees this blind spot in his mentor's conception of the anonymous, and tries to exploit it in developing a notion of the anonymous "enclave" in which there is a desire for an other, or at least, an otherness, of self-identity—as we will see.

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CHAPTER TWO

TOWARD A DISCOURSE OF ANONYMITY

Anonymous Discourse and Post-Structuralism

With the terminological confusion that continues to surround, and very nearly surmount, the usefulness of "poststructuralism" for anything but its own self-reflexive theorization, it is useful to remember that the very last sentence of Foucault's "The Discourse on Language." It plays an interesting role in the term's gestation, if not its overt appearance. "And now, let those who are weak on vocabulary, let those with little comprehension of theory call all this—if its appeal is stronger than its meaning for them—structuralism" (162). As can be predicted from one of the internal rules of discourse Foucault laid out, "commentators" rushed in to infer that Foucault was christening his work, and calling for, a thoroughgoing "post-structuralism." He never, to my knowledge, used or avowed the term "post-structuralist" to describe either his interests in, or conclusions about, discourse. Still, it is easy to identify him with the discourse of post-structuralism given the way he distinguishes, for example, the personal author from a collective, historical, and impersonal "author-function." So to with his distinction between the "subject" (as in a person with a self-identified sense of subjectivity) and "subject position."

That I have identified what I am calling the anonymous function as playing a critical role in the now "post-structural" understanding of both the author-function and the subject position does not mean that anonymity is a post-structural development. If I had time and space I would conclusively demonstrate that anonymity functions transhistorically, across and within all disciplines and discursive functions. If anything, anonymity is the powder post beetle of post-structuralism, the termite in the White Master's House of Nominalism. It is absent, yet powerfully, culminatively present. It is visible historically (the author function of "Anonymous" is generic yet non-descript), but is invisible rhetorically (with speaker-writer and listener-reader positions exchanged and mediated in largely unrecognized actions upon our senses

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of identity, authority, and community). Nevertheless, the anonymous functions as a pragmatic, not a nihilistic, part of our lifeworld.

My "commentary" on the anonymous function is authorized by Foucault's early essays "The Discourse of Language" and "What is an Author?" The research I have done to enable that commentary –wherever anonymity is named or...metaphorized– has taken me into and across so many commentators repeating Foucault's findings about discourse that I now understand not only the role of these published "authors" but my own role as a writer on anonymity. Foucault's definition of commentary is, therefore, not post-anything but takes us past the structural as we think of it and back to the functional: the function of repeating, of saying, of voicing, of reciting what we think we hear and believe about what really matters.

> [C]ommentary's only role is to say *finally*, what has silently been articulated *deep down*. It must...repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said. The infinite rippling of commentary is agitated from within by the dream of masked repetition: in the distance there is, perhaps, nothing other than what was there at the point of departure: simple recitation (153).

In my (re) search for the function of anonymity, Foucault's cursory remarks on the discontinuity of the philosophy of the subject and of discursive subject positions, for example, kept returning as I read in a "dream of masked repetition. Take, for example, this passage by Chantal Mouffe in *The Return of the Political*, written 22 years after the appearance of Foucault's essay. Utterly laced with Foucauldian trace terms, it assumes its readership takes them as granted, part of current disciplinary organization, so there is no need for authorial attribution. "We" is the author, its academic audience, and Foucault the author-ity, invisible in the anonymous distance of discourse now considered public/political domain.

> We can thus conceive the social agent as constituted by an ensemble of 'subject positions'... constructed by a diversity of discourses among which there is no necessary relation, but rather a constant movement of overdetermination and displacement. The 'identity' of such a multiple and contradictory subject is therefore always contingent and precarious, temporarily fixed at the intersection of those subject positions (1993 77).

If this dissertation were an extended bibliographic essay I could extend this "dream of masked repetition" almost indefinitely. The "poststructuralist" sentiment/sediment it expresses happens to resonate with my own theoretical views personally, and with my general view of anonymity as a shifting, positional ensemble of the discourses of community, identity, and authority.

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As we will see in "The Pedagogy of Anonymity," anonymous writing is one of that "diversity of discourses" which constructs the subject position of the college writer. The personal "identity" of the college writer is an important part of expressivist inquiry into the academic relation between writing and experience. The social constructionist approach to college writing, by contrast, sees the college writer as "an ensemble of 'subject positions'" of which the questions and problems of 'personal identity' become irrelevant in the greater project of understanding the issues of the discursive 'construction' of the 'ensemble' that is the "social agent." Anonymous discourse, I will contend, operates at, and even enacts, the "intersection" of those academic "subject positions" (personal narration and authorial analysis) among which the expressivst and constructionist believe "there is no necessary relation."

In the present chapter, however, the goal is to suggest the very necessary relation between a poststructuralist notion of discourse and the anonymous function. Poststructuralist discourse references anonymity and the anonymous--or its superordinate terms, identity, subject, author--in a dream of masked repetition that my commentary might waken in my readers

The reiteration of anonymity--both direct and suggested--within poststructuralist discourse might lead readers to assume that anonymity is partly responsible for subverting humanism's privileged discursive subject. But even cursory reflection will tell us that the anonymous vastly predates any theory of personality or individuality, which are themselves no more than five centuries young. As we will see in a brief history of the anonymous author function, the idea of a "personal" author was alien to the social agency of textual construction and representation.

While we are on the subject of personal expression versus social construction, it is important to remember the conclusions of Ferdinand de Saussure. He was a structuralist who believed that the whole of language carried a sort of God or Author-like *priority*: its systemic, "synchronic" presence bears the same indifference to individual, "diachronic" users as the genetic code does to any one species member. He privileged the speech function of language over its writing function, reconfirming in linguistic terms what Plato had affirmed in philosophical terms over the Sophist's use of writing. I also think, though, that Derrida is right about the (dia) chronic need to reverse and play with the dominant speech/subordinate writing binary opposition, make it into something like a synchronous polarity, a continuum of self-

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identity into a shifting ensemble of utterance, a community of discursive subject positions.) Following Saussure, the system of language is anonymous to its users as are the users to *the* (not *their*) system. Following Derrida, the nominalism dictating the structure and function of the sign system is highly mutable; in other words, the name of the signifier is unknown, hidden--*anonymous* --to the signified and *vice versa.*

Following both thinkers, I intuit a double anonymity--a natural, nameless duplicity-- operating across the gaps of an determinate system governing the indeterminate linguistic identity of any one self in relation with a range of others. Following, finally, the ethos of an expressivist (more toward *confessivist*) approach to writers and writing, I see the discursive "I" as indispensable, yet anonymous

> *in relation* to the conditions imposed (a) by the code and (b) by the context of enunciation, in which the speaking subject caught up in discourse is indeed up against it, so to speak, but still, in a strong sense, operative, [and] still is an indispensable term in a functionally understood process (Lewis, 7).

To repeat: the speaking/writing "I" subject is still very much operative under the condition of anonymity, and is, if such is possible, even more caught up against discourse as a functionally understood process. I therefore think of myself as a Post-structural Romantic, a Social Expressivist, a Personal Textualist. That is, I agree with the following: "No one has quite managed to extricate philosophic discourse from an idealist, still essentially Cartesian problematics in which priority ultimately reverts to the mission of an individual subject: to secure knowledge of self and world" (Lewis, 13).

But I also agree with the flip side of that insight. That is, the order of that discourse of self and world needs continuous questioning and provocation. "For understanding the reaction against [post]structuralism," according to Lewis, "it is the threat it poses to institutional authority, rather than the theme of the decentered subject, that is decisive"(21). My theoretical and pedagogical interest in anonymous discourse derives from a similar decisive understanding. It is capable of interrogating and subverting both institutional authority and the logic of centralized identity. Subject positions that might go un-expressed or un-constructed become part of the ongoing academic commentary. "The simple recitation" it performs is not only the writing/reading-speaking/listening process of whatever composition

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pedagogy one chooses. Anonymous discourse can claim performativity across the entire disciplinary script of the humanities.

Let's return a moment more to "commentary" as described by Foucault above. Like Chantal Mouffe, Paul Bove is an unabashed post-structuralist. His debt of "simple recitation" to Foucault is clear in the essay, "Discourse," which he wrote for the now ubiquitous reference *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. It is also clearly useful to me, to my sense of the anonymous function as having been "articulated *deep down* " so that I cannot help but recite and repeat my sense of its articulated silence, of darkness visible in our nominalist need.

> In its thinking about discourse...poststructuralism offers us a kind of *nominalism*: all that exists are discrete historical events, and the propositions or concepts which claim to tell the truth about them have no reality beyond that acquired by being consistent within the logic of the system that makes them possible....[In effect,] [t]he function of discourse and the realities it constructs are fundamentally *anonymous*. This does not mean that no individuals hold these perspectives nor that no individuals effect them. It means, rather, that their effective realties depend upon no particular subject in history (Bove 56, emphasis added).

Bove's unabashed advocacy of a post-structuralist view does not prevent me from seeing its congruence with the stubborn Cartesian (and Rousseauesque) insistences of Philip Lewis, who is far less assured that there is any thing "post" in poststructuralism. At the risk of endlessly repeating my thesis, it seems to me that the discourse of anonymity is key to closing the circuit between nihilism (problems of cause, construction, and conviction) and pragmatism (problems of "personality, power, and provocation" in Cornel West's view). The reason it is key is that a discourse of anonymity can be seen to run parallel to the explanatory processes of *nominalism* (problems of naming). I have set forth the commonsensical "meaning" of anonymity and the anonymous as key terms. They are, however, "finally more important for their function, for their place within intellectual [and social, political, and cultural] practice, than they are for what they may be said to "mean" in the abstract" (Bove 51).

My aim at a truth claim (or truth effect) for anonymity, therefore, is that it will be seen to be integral to an endless discursive circulation of authorities, identities, and communities. The question of what for, with what consequences, is the substance this dissertation will try to analyze and understand.

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Anonymous Play in the Absent Field of Presence

In "The Discourse on Language" Foucault holds that "[e]xchange and communication are positive forces at play within complex but restrictive systems" (155). This subsection will extend that teaching to the discourse of anonymity.

Within the (un)settled history of metaphysics, for example, particularly as Derrida has (un)settled it, the anonymous is clearly at play within the structure and sign "of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word." Though he does not employ the terms "anonymous" or "anonymity" in demonstrating the profound "absence" behind the various nominees for the "transcendental signified," he might well have. At the beginning of "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," he asserts that this concerted effort to establish and enforce a "metaphysics of presence" is demonstrated in

> all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center [that they] have always designated an invariable presence--*eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ouisa* (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth (84).

It is crucial that we keep the question of the presence/absence binary as simple as possible when tracing the relation of anonymity to what it names or designates. Our purpose in this dissertation is to better understand the *rhetorical*, rather than the *metaphysical*, "presence" anonymity. The apparent absence of the subject as designated by a proper name is a worthwhile metaphysical aside, but we are interested to understand and interpret the anonymous subject at "play" in real rhetorical situations that are between or beside the points of the history of its presence/absence. Derrida teaches us that

> [p]lay is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences.... Play is always play of absence and presence, but if it is to be thought radically, play must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence. Being must be conceived as a presence or absence on the basis of the possibility of play and not the other way around" (93).

Following Derrida's teaching that substitution and supplementarity are the ever-present rule of language's (de)termination of actual things and actions signified *in absentia*, I read the above passage and nominate anonymity as a worthwhile substitute for, and supplement of, play.

If it is to be thought radically, anonymity must be understood as *the alternative of presence and absence*. Or if that is too totalizing, anonymity must be considered to be at play within the contest over who or what is present and/or absent in language, in linguistic self-consciousness and, for that matter, in

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what Gordon Harvey calls the composition of the "personal plus textual essay." My speculation is that the "Being" of anonymity is perfectly and poignantly rhetorical because it "becomes ontological," in DeLuca's sense. That is, rhetoric and philosophy were unjustly separated in their youth by Plato, and the anonymous is not only a Sophist's compensation. It is, to adapt DeLuca's sense of an ontological rhetoric: "the mobilization of signs for the articulation of identities, ideologies, consciousness, communities, publics, cultures" (346). This rhetorical mobilization and ontological affirmation that I see in the condition of anonymity depends on one's chosen frame of interpretation.

In one final adaptation from Derrida's teaching, I have chosen to interpret the subject of anonymity and anonymous subjectivity from the side of "Nietzschean *affirmation*" as opposed to "the saddened, *negative*. nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauistic side" of "the lost or impossible presence of the absent origin" (93). I have read both authors, and I believe in Derrida's distinction between their interpretive frames as these affect the subject of anonymity's relation to the inter-play of community, identity, and authority. Nietzschean affirmation, as Derrida describes it in positively nominal terms, uncannily clings to the anonymity not only of animal life, but also to that of humankind. The mobile, performative, ensemble of identity is shifting endlessly, often insensibly, between the subject position of a first person singular "I" and that of a first person plural "We."

Derrida describes The Rousseauistic interpretation of structure, sign, and play this way: "It dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign, and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile...." The Nietzschean dreams or recites another interpretation. It is

> [t]he other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name of man being the name of that being who has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin, and the end of play (93).

Taking Derrida at his word, this "other" interpretation is an interpretation of *the other* that I believe is the affirmative order of anonymity's structure, sign, and play in the discourse of language. But in order to understand that claim, we will need to leave Derrida's rhetorical spin of philosophy and its subject, and look to Foucault's historical and, dare I use the word, *structural* location of anonymity within the discourse of language. If anonymity is at play within discourse to the extent I am claiming, it takes its own linguistic turn like anything else we've come to imagine as "human.'

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The Prohibited Subject

"The Discourse on Language" Foucault sets forth three themes which he believes, as we saw with Derrida, have been undermined by the linguistic and, ultimately, rhetorical turn away from the philosophy of founding structures. These themes are "the founding subject"; "the originating experience"; and "universal mediation" (157). Within the massive metaphysical and philosophical background represented by this trinity I recognize the anonymity as a rhetoric that foregrounds the discursive play of identity (or founding subject); authority (or originating experience); and community (or universal mediation).[1] Foucault builds his historical outline of discourse by linking the three great themes of philosophy to the activities of writing, reading, and their exchange. I intend to adapt these themes, as well as several other principles he lays out in "The Discourse on Language" and in "What is an Author?" I freely adapt to help us better understand what anonymity is and how it functions in the gaps left open between the subject and discourse, the author and text, the proper name and identity.

One adapted definition of anonymous discourse might then read: [Anonymous] "discourse is really only an activity, of writing in the first case [of the founding subject], of reading in the second [of originating experience], and exchange in the third" [case of universal mediation] ("The Discourse on Language," 158). The problem with the relation of discourse to the three themes, however, is that the themes have been traditionally proposed and conserved in order "to elide the reality of discourse" (157). The reality of discourse is that it unfolds in a pervasive anonymity--thus linking what Foucault calls the author-function with way I call the anonymous function. If I can persuade the reader that Identity, Authority, Community are realities in large part informed by anonymity, than the themes don't elide the reality of discourse but ride on the back of anonymity. Anonymity and reality are in closer dialogue than we might at first imagine.

Like Derrida, one of Foucault's more critical principles is that of *reversal*. He uses it, however, at a different order of hermeneutical resolution. I intend to demonstrate the principle of reversal as it applies to anonymity's relation to the discourse of identity in this chapter, (and to authority and community, in the

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chapters, which follow). Before doing so, I am bound to comment on his commentary as it relates to anonymity's function within the discourse of language.

Foucault's central thesis about discourse is that its "institutional" power is produced, "controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and dangers" (149). He then discusses at length "the three great systems of exclusion governing discourse--prohibited words, the division of madness [and reason] and the will to truth [over falsehood]" (151). The second type of exclusion does not concern the discourse of anonymity directly, if at all. The first and the third forms of exclusion, however, can tell us a great deal about the powers and dangers of anonymity. In the simplest form of recitation, anonymous discourse permits prohibited words, and is therefore, a highly contested, deeply ambiguous discourse in its representation of the will to truth [over falsehood.] Under anonymous condition or its function, the nominal identity of the speaker/writer has been for a host of reasons "prohibited.

Women interested to write, who managed, gradually, to overcome the constraints on their literacy through access to books, then to the tools of writing, were prohibited from the manly art of writing and the masculine career of authorship. As any number of examples from feminist historiography and literary analysis will show, the will to the truth of writing for women had only one avenue: through the "falsehood" of Anonymous (or the dissemblance of the Pseudonymous.)

The slave who has been prohibited from learning the discourse of the master, and is therefore rendered anonymous in social-political terms, will nevertheless master the tools of the master and write in a will to truth (often anonymously) against the anonymous falsehood of slavery.

Anonymous Chinese dissidents, prohibited from speaking against totalitarian rule, use untraceable web sites to carry forth the will to the truth of democracy.

The information held by the industry or government "whistleblower" is often officially prohibited (marked "confidential" or "top secret") and to reveal his or her identity would be prohibit the revelation of those documents' truth.

The location, never mind diagnosis, of AIDS and HIV infected persons was next to impossible, according to Health officials in every major city of the United States. This stigmatized and hidden--

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essentially prohibitive condition--had to be brought into the will to truth of public health. The only way was through an anonymous telephone and e-mail system.

The anonymous government official spinning the rationales of power operates from a very different sense of the prohibited, and is engaged in a different will to truth that is not always the same as that of the print media's. The reader is left to figure the discrepancies between a will to truth or falsehood. (The use by Kissinger, Haldeman, and Nixon himself, of the subject position of "high administration official on condition of anonymity" sends--or descends-- the relation of these two great systems of discursive exclusion back into the second great system: that of reasonable madness.)

Foucault believes the *prohibited* class is the "most obvious and familiar," covering three types: "objects, ritual with its surrounding circumstances, [and] the privileged or exclusive right to speak of a particular subject." These three types of prohibition "interrelate, reinforce and complement each other, forming a complex web, continually subject to modification" (149). He spends very little time on the first two classes of exclusion, but does focus on the third type, which we will call "speaking rights." The question of a prohibition on speaking rights (and rites) is obvious and familiar. Foucault reminds us: "We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything" (149).

We know, for sure, that women and slaves, in their historic subject positions, and to a lesser extent, the dissident, the whistleblower, and the diseased person understand this problem of speaking rights in a brutal, opaque, ineluctable fashion. The high administration official, and for that matter, the identity of the hate monger who has taken the Klan's white hood into cyberspace, also understand this relation between prohibition, speaking rights, and anonymity in a much more manipulative and transparent fashion. What I find interesting, is that the anecdotes I have chosen at random, from the top of my research memory, as it were, form a sort of discursive web whose constructive elements Foucault has already discerned.

For Foucault, "the areas where this web is most tightly woven today, where the danger spots are most numerous, are those dealing with politics and sexuality" (149). We might find this assertion outmoded now, at the opening of the 21st century. There seem to be no discursive prohibitions at all. The inter/discourses of sex and politics, of sexual politics (and political sexuality) do, however, continue to

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fascinate and stir up an incipient sense of prohibition. Foucault's observation continues to carry weight, for "[i]t is as though [such] discussion, far from being a transparent, neutral element, allowing us to disarm sexuality and to pacify politics, were one of those privileged areas in which they exercised some of their most awesome powers" (149). Why should this be so? And what is the link of sexuality and politics to the discourse of anonymity?

According to Foucault, the answer to the first question depends on an understanding of "speech" (verbal and textual *language*) that "reveals its links with desire and power." For this insight he draws from the history of psychoanalytic discourse, telling us that it has "already shown us that speech is not merely the medium which manifests—or dissembles —desire; it is also the object of desire" (149).

The answer to the second question is a historical one better left to another Foucauldian context ("What is an Author?") which we will take up below. But what can be said provisionally is that anonymous discourse both assembles and dissembles desire; the anonymous is an object[ive] of both political and sexual identification. It is, in short, the subject position of identity politics writ large, in which its private and public realms transcode and transgress. Much in our private codes and public rights of speech carries a binding and conforming sense of prohibition that transcends any legal sense. It is this internalized sense of one's forbidden identifications being watched and listened to that Foucault demonstrates so forcefully in his histories of 'carceral consciousness'—from a penal to a pastoral power of the "Panopticon." The anonymous function is both an instrument of the Panoptic power and a weapon against it.

Its power resides in its capacity as "a transparent, neutral element, allowing us to disarm sexuality and pacify politics." Because it has this power (and danger) anonymous discourse is not just another "medium which manifests—or dissembles—desire; it is also the object of desire" precisely because of its proximity to--and identity within-- the rules of exclusion and prohibition. It must be remembered that Foucault does not come anywhere near to these speculative claims for the anonymous function. But given his separate analyses of discourse and authorship, I believe my syntheses of his conclusions can be adapted to better understand anonymity as a discourse.

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Anonymous Authenticity

The third great system of exclusion--the will to truth--needs its own treatment before we turn to the relation

of anonymous discourse to "internal rules, where discourse exercises its own control" (152)--namely,

through commentary, the author, and disciplinary organization. The third rule of exclusion--"the will to

truth [or falsehood]"-- prepares the way toward understanding the pedagogical battle in composition

between expressivist "authenticity" and social constructionist "author-ity."

In his background sketch as to how truth became divided (sometime in Greece, 5th century BC), we see

the line getting drawn between philosophy and sophistry--"between Hesiod and Plato, separating true

discourse from false" (150). To summarize Foucault's already dense precis of this particular rule, his

research found that Plato's legacy has tended to affect (Derrida would say *infect* in a "parasitical" way) not

just scientific "truth," but the truth of "Western literature." " It has, for centuries, sought to base itself...in

the plausible, upon sincerity and science--in short, upon true discourse" (150).

We can sense that Foucault sees the will to truth as itself a sort of *sophistic rhetoric* that "has,

gradually, been attempting to assimilate the others [i.e., prohibitions and madness] in order both to modify

them and to provide them with a firm foundation" (151).

Foucault does not use the term *sophistry* or *rhetoric* when explaining the assimilative operations of

true discourse, but he might have. Read his explanation of how it has operated over and against the central

objects of human conflict--power and desire, or politics and sexuality.

> [I]f, since the time of the Greeks, true discourse no longer responds to desire or to that
> which exercises power in the will to truth, in the will to speak out in true discourse,
> what, then, is at work, if not desire and power? True discourse, liberated by the nature of
> its form from desire and power, is incapable of recognizing the will to truth which
> pervades it; and the will to truth, having imposed itself upon us for so long, is such that
> the truth it seeks to reveal cannot fail to mask it (151).

This is a signature "poststructural" approach to the always-problematic binary. For our purposes, the issues

of revelation, recognition, and response "in the will to speak out in true discourse" point directly to the

revelatory masking operations of anonymity and the anonymous. As I see it, anonymity is a *truer*

discourse in that it has always responded to the exercise of desire or that which exercises power.

Anonymous discourse, intimately tied by the nature of its form to desire and power, is quite capable of

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recognizing the prohibited which pervades it and provides it, paradoxically, with the mask that helps reveal the sources of sexuality and politics, of identity politics in the largest sense—discourse itself.

When I assert that anonymity is a *truer discourse of truth*, I am not advocating some naive sense of rhetoric that sees itself as a mere transmitter of preformed, ahistorical Truth. My emphasis is on *discourse*. But unlike Foucault, who can't bring himself to fully and finally countenance the power of rhetoric, so that he is always burrowing around trying to uncover and discover the meaning of discourse, I see discursive meaning continually reconstructing itself through the largely unacknowledged rhetorical practices of anonymity. Foucault anticipates and works out the upshot of discursive constructs, of course, making possible the now ubiquitous "subject positions." But it is not clear to me that he focuses his massive learning on the linkage between discursive subject positions and anonymity. If anonymity offers—or at least troubles—the possibility of a "truer discourse" because it mixes a range of speaking rights and subject positions, then we can begin to discern its possible academic presence and application within composition-rhetoric.

Anonymous Author-ity

Foucault is critically important to this dissertation because he does at least acknowledge the presence of anonymity in the production and distribution of discourse. But where he looks to constructs such as the author first, I look and see the anonymous foremost. But as with all binary logic, we must understand the dominant term first before we can gain access to its suppressed other. Foucault carefully distinguishes between "...the author in the sense of the individual who delivered the speech or wrote the text in question, [and] the author as the unifying principle in a particular group of writings or statements, lying at the origins of their significance, as the seat of their coherence" (153).

As Foucault goes on to detail the author principle, it is certainly set in opposition to the contingencies of anonymity where identity is a relative, mobile construct. In contrast, "[t]he author principle limits this same chance element through the action of an *identity* whose form is that of *individuality* and the *I* " (153).[2] Foucault, however, is in *principle* quite alert to the discursive pervasiveness of authorial anonymity.

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> All around us, there are sayings and texts whose meaning or effectiveness has nothing to do with any author to whom they might be attributed: mundane remarks, quickly forgotten; orders and contracts that are signed, but have no recognizable author; technical prescriptions *anonymously* transmitted (153, emphasis added).

This became the case with literature starting in the 17th century and "has become steadily more important."

Unlike scientific discourse, literary discourse "circulated relatively anonymously throughout the Middle Ages," but in modern times

> [w]e ask authors to answer for the unity of the works published in their names; we ask that they reveal, or at least display the hidden sense pervading their work; we ask them to reveal their personal lives, to account for their experiences and the real story that gave birth to their writings. The author is he [or she] who implants, into the troublesome language of fiction, its unities, its coherence, its links with reality" (153).

Together with his contrast between the author principle and the commentary principle—"the action of an *identity* taking the form of repetition and *sameness* —I see first the problematic relation of a writer to his or her writing. Moreover, there is the related, but altogether different, order of (non)identity between a writer who becomes an author and his or writing becomes a "work."

Foucault is careful to distinguish the author from the writer—that "from his new position as an author" the author function comes to be in "the still shaky profile of his *oeuvre* (153). This idea of writing as a "work" (as in a work of art) is clearly indebted, I think, to Maurice Blanchot's 1955 work *The Essential Solitude*. In one subsection titled "The Work, the Book," Blanchot reiterates the great presence/absence binary coiled within the discourse of being and its philosophical proxy, identity. Blanchot's way of framing these distinctions also influenced Derrida's deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence.

> The writer writes a book, but the book is not yet the work, the work is not a work until the word *being* is pronounced in it.... The writer belongs to the work, but what belongs to him [or her] is only a book, a mute accumulation of sterile words, the most meaningless thing in the world.... And in the end, the work ignores him [or her], it closes on his [or her] absence, in the impersonal, *anonymous* statement that it is—and nothing more (825, emphasis added).

Blanchot is having the writer be a catch all for author here, but what is important is not the meaning of writer, but that of the work, which Foucault does not declare quite so directly as his mentor does here. Foucault finds the impersonal anonymous statement circulating in the systems of disciplinarity and commentary, but cannot quite bring himself to assert from the shadow of Blanchot that anonymity is at the

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heart of the author function also. (How I restate this question within a rereading of "What is an Author?" awaits us below.)

The Disciplinarity of Anonymity

I have concluded provisionally that anonymity plays a crucial part in not only the structure of the sign (Derrida) but in the function of the author's "signature" (Foucault). It should now be easier to move from the theoretical identity of the anonymous function to consider its presence within the field of composition studies. I am particularly keen to trace the anonymous work in expressivist theory and pedagogy and will take this up below. Composition teaching deals with writers--student writers--not authors, and with acts of writing, not finished works. Yet, with Foucault's and Blanchot's insights fresh before us, it seems to me that the principle of reversal is at work when it comes to considering the mandates of literary studies and composition studies within the discipline of English.

As I see the lay of the discursive land, then, literary studies is tied to the commentary principle, while composition studies is, paradoxically, linked to the author principle on the strength of what we ask of student writers. Foucault appears to be describing the author exclusively, and yet, what does the expressivist teacher ask of students--if not the following: "[W]e ask them to reveal their personal lives, to account for their experiences and the real story that gave birth to their writings." Expressivism is all about author-izing student writers to perform a discursive recognition that is coiled, like a double helix of individuality and the "I", within their own *proper name re-cognition*. But when we push Foucault's casualness about authorial anonymity to its original Blanchotian affirmation, we understand that "The Act of Writing" (another subsection of Blanchot's *The Essential Solitude*)

> is to pass from the I to the He [or She], so that what happens to [the] me happens to no
> one, is *anonymous* because of the fact that it is none of my business, [and this] repeats
> itself in an infinite dispersal (emphasis added, 831).

Anonymous writing is personal writing that places the expressivist "I" into an infinite dispersal of "other" identity claims, creating for the writer an absence of personal identity that makes for a presence whose author-ity derives from *being* in the act of writing, rather than becoming a writer.

This issue of composition studies defined as a separate field within the "disciplinary" rubric of English by virtue of a pedagogical corollary to certain aspects of authorship leads us directly into Foucault's third

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principle of internal rules of control—*the disciplinary principle*. He argues that this rule is opposed to that

of the author and the commentary principles.

> Opposed to that of the author, because disciplines are defined by...their corpus of propositions considered to be true, the interplay of rules and definitions, of techniques and tools: all these constitute a sort of *anonymous* system, freely available to whoever wishes, or whoever is able to make use of them, without there being any question of their meaning or their validity being derived from whoever happened to invent them (154, emphasis added).

The *anonymous system* of a discipline—essentially its authoritative texts—is an order of concreteness related

to the more abstractly anonymous system of language which all individual users (we are all on *parole*)

make use of without there being any question of who invented language. So we see that anonymity and

discourse are intimately entwined.

It is customary to see the author as that individual, or that *I* (in principle, anyway) drawing a bright

line of identity and identification (for a given discipline's commentators) between these two overarching

layers of systemic anonymity. But perhaps anonymity's discursive orders of reification or resolution go all

the way down. I propose that we begin to extrapolate from Foucault's discursive rules and limits to

conclude that the author principle is no less saturated with anonymity than are disciplinarity and

commentary. Perhaps the author, like "beauty" is only a skin-deep identification, whereas anonymity is

tantamount to what we might consider "being" if ontology, rather than rhetoric, were still of use in

understanding discursive existence.

This proposal runs against the current of Foucault's line of argument. Authorship as a "unifying

principle in a particular group of writings" cannot be said to constitute a sort of anonymous system, freely

available to whoever is able to make use of it. As we will see, the principle of authorship is tied up with

the legal discourse wherein the *proper* name becomes a kind of exclusive discursive right of *property*—more

commonly known as a *copyright*. Thus, commentators or other users of discursive systems must "get

permission from the author or the author's agents" before using his or her *individual* text in what appears to

be an anonymous system freely available to "whoever."

Conversely, the disciplinary principle doesn't operate through the action of an authorial *identity* whose

form is that of individuality and the *I*. "Disciplines constitute a system of control in the production of

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discourse, fixing its limits through the action of an identity taking the form of a permanent reactivation of the rules" (155). It operates upon a collectivity—a *community* of interests who follow these rules—rather than the exclusive individuality roles exclusive to the author principle. And though disciplinarity relies upon the principle of commentary (the second internal rule of exclusion codified by Foucault), commentary and disciplinarity are also at odds. Commentary, as we saw, is "simple recitation"; "the dream of masked repetition," which fancies itself original. "[I]n a discipline, what is supposed at the point of departure...is that which is required for the construction of new statements" (154). Put in another way, if a discipline does not begin with and accrue fresh propositions for *community* use, it loses the *identity* of its *authority* and *vice versa.*

As a dutiful commentator I have reiterated Foucault's principle of authorship: that it retains the discourse of individuality; that its collection of *I* 's is no dream of masked repetition; that "new" (if not "original") authors appear all the time within (or they are appropriated by) a discipline. (This is not to say that many "authors" are not simply engaging in the commentary game, hypnotized by the specters of initially fresh propositions within the dream of masked repetition that often constitutes publication within a discipline.) We have seen that each of these principles works to control and limit the powers and dangers of discourse. The disciplinary principle, however, is ultimately opposed to commentary and authorship essentially on the strength of its capacity to formulate—"and of doing so ad infinitum"—an "anonymous system" of "fresh propositions." These must also "fit into a certain type of theoretical field" (154). And yet the disciplinary principle does this work utterly dependent upon the two principles it is opposed to.

Therefore, it can be inferred, merely on the strength of Foucault's use of the term, that anonymity is a fundamental *force* holding the discourse of language together. Let us assume this is so, that anonymity is the formal cause of the three principles Foucault outlines. That means that authorship, as final cause, is a projection of anonymity with a highly ambivalent or unstable hold on the discourse of identity. Foucault's own historical outline of the principle strongly suggests something of this instability, while reducing its priority as a principle to one among many factors of discourse. With that established, we have before us the profoundly obvious fact that the author principle is borne out of discursive anonymity. It *originates* in the

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very anonymous system of *language* freely available to whoever is able to make use of it for the discourses of truth, power, desire, and subjectivity or, in Foucault's case, of discourse itself.

The Rarity of Anonymity

In moving, finally, to "a third group of rules serving to control discourse" (155) Foucault summarizes the first group of external rules (The Prohibited; Madness; Will to Truth). These deal with ways to avert "the hazards of [discourse's] appearance," while the second group of internal rules amount to coping with "the mastery of the powers contained within discourse." Now we are to understand this third group as "more a question of determining the conditions under which [discourse] may be employed, of imposing a certain number of rules upon those individuals who employ [discourse], thus denying access to everyone else." Already it is easy to discern again the presence of anonymity in the way it is elided by the discursive claims of identity. We had seen that the disciplinary principle is constituted by an anonymous system freely available to all. Now we are told that this final group of rules "amounts to a rarefaction among speaking subjects: none may enter into discourse on a specific subject unless he has satisfied certain conditions..." (155).

What Foucault is up to with this last group of rules of discursive control and exclusion is, I believe, to put a human face on a history that has otherwise privileged event horizons, large synchronic movements, *anonymous* operating systems. Like Saussure, he recognizes that *langue* is controlling and finalizing, but we are all on *parole*, after all: the carceral Panopticon of is watchfully listening to us all. What he means "exactly" by *rarefaction* is that "...not all areas of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some are forbidden territory (differentiated and differentiating) while others are virtually open to the winds and stand, without any prior restrictions, open to all" (155).

This description should remind us of his definition of the first rule of exclusion--the Prohibited. Specific speech *rights*, in other words, get codified in particular institutions and their particular discursive situations. Thus, lawyer/client, or doctor/patient discourse are not open to all, while a telephone talk program, a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous, praying in a church, or visiting an Internet chatroom, are virtually open to the winds.

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He is basically drawing a line between public and private--or what I call opportunistic and oligarchic--discourse. And because his subtextual subject is about governmentality, or the hidden ways language users are subjected to discursive rules, it is easy to forget that Foucault sees these rules of exclusion, restriction, or limitation as enabling rather than enervating. "Exchange and communication are positive forces at play within complex but restrictive systems; it is probable they cannot operate independently of these" (155) is a credo that ties in nicely with Foucault's overall sense of power/knowledge regimes as opportune rather than oppressive. With this run up, he introduces the rubric of " 'fellowships of discourse', whose function is to preserve or to reproduce discourse, but in order that it should circulate within a closed community, according to strict regulations, without those in possession being dispossessed by this very distribution" (156).

I have tried to cover all of the rules under the first two groups while pointing to the two that most resonate in a discourse of anonymity--prohibited speech and the author principle. Now we come to what is Foucault's version of saving the best (or worst) news for the end of his treatise. Foucault insists that these discursive fellowships, (religious and musical apprenticeships are his examples), though "archaic" and rare, manage to persist within contemporary discourse communities with "their ambiguous interplay of secrecy and disclosure," and their "non-interchangeability" of speaking and listening roles (156).

My interpretive inclination throughout has been to substitute anonymity for the primary referent in a given authorial context. In this context, I don't believe anyone would question that anonymity features an ambiguous interplay of secrecy and disclosure. The identity of a writer is kept secret from the reader or from a readership. Yet much is disclosed--ranging from deeply private to compelling public issues--depending on the status of the writer's stated identification with this or that regime of truth (that is, of private desire or public power.)

The complexity of anonymity's range or regime of ambiguity between secrecy and disclosure operates in the private desire of the stigmatized individual (a homosexual, for example) to publicly--yet secretly--disclose and share this highly political side of her/his sexual identity in the universal mediation of an anonymous chatroom. This same ambiguous regime of secretive disclosure informs the desire of the "high

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government official" who on "condition of anonymity" truthfully reveals the rationales of governmental power, or just as often, "spins" the wheel of power politics.

The other part of Foucault's requirement for the "rarity" of 'fellowships of discourse'—"non-interchangeability" of speaking and listening roles"—holds—or appears to hold— for the "closed community" of reporters and their sources. The unnamed official desires to speak privately, secretly— completely "off" the record— to the named reporter who discloses to the public official information. There would seem to be a "non-interchangeability" between this governmental *source* of information flow and its media *tributary*. And yet the authenticity and authority of this information is vouched for—in effect, *voiced over*, and in a real sense *impersonated*—by the identity of the named writer, not the anonymous speaker/writer. Thus, the "non-interchangeability" of this established fellowship of discourse between two rhetorical subject positions across two discourse communities is not as closed or immobile as we might think.

If the nominal identity is closed on one end of information input, then it is obviously wide open on the output end. Less obviously, the closed nature of the identity, authority, and community of the discursive exchange is actually an open, flowing, secret. Foucault's qualification that such fellowships of discourse feature a "non-interchangeability" of speaker/listener subject positions becomes very fluid, indeed, when we look to the more "private" sector example of the anonymous homosexual in a multiple user domain in cyberspace. He/she is seeking a fellowship of community through a closed identity —yet one that is wide open in identification. (Of course, the problem of the anonymous "pedophile" in cyberspace, stalking young people on their personal websites which are open to the digital winds, hurls us back into the rule of exclusion—the Prohibited, and highlights the 'danger spots' in an attempt to "pacify" politics or, in this case, sexuality.)

Unfortunately, I do not have the space to fully treat the fascinating inter-changeability and fluidity between discursive desire and discursive power as these are linked back to Foucault's first great system of exclusion governing discourse. (The "*prohibited* class" and the problem of "speaking rights" when "dealing with politics and sexuality" (149) take on greater urgency in Chapter Five.) Obviously, the complex desire for power in dealing with governmental politics requires both an "ambiguity" *and* a "fellowship" between informant secrecy and information disclosure. So too, an informant's power of desire in dealing with

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identity politics requires an equally ambiguous relation between discursive identity, authority, and community.

Inspired by Foucault's critical genealogy of discourse, I am contending that anonymity is the discursive link or web which both ties and defies our definitions of private and public discourse, as well as our notions of privacy and publicity in general. Where Foucault is interested to categorize discourse into great systems of exclusion and inclusion, however, I am interested to *rhetoricize* them. I am preparing us to understand that the "non-interchangeability" and "closed community" of what Foucault is calling the historical "rarity" of discourse is opened up by theorizing an *anonymous function* which certainly operates historically, but our interest is how anonymity functions rhetorically in the writing class.

More traditionally minded teacher-researchers in the general disciplinary matrix of English might wish to cleave to Foucault's notions of "rarity" and of a "closed community" dictating particular "speaking rights." Thus, literary theorists, analysts, and teachers of literature wish to exclude "compositionists" from their "closed community" of discourse. Likewise, compositionists of the social constructionist mould, argue for the "rarity" and "non-interchangeability" of their discursive approach over that of the expressivists, and *vice-versa*.

We can now begin to see that it is the objectively anonymous character of discourse at-large. Better yet, through my distillation and revelation of that character across Foucault's many themes, classes and rules of discourse, I hope my readers can see that the anonymity is never far from, and may in fact (in)form, the subject of discourse. More specifically, it is my hope that my readers will begin to understand that function in more specific rhetorical terms. In the composition of discourse there is a historically "impersonal" effect in the anonymous "web" as it is interchangeably "dealing with politics and sexuality. The power of desire and the desire of power share a community of immunity, an *impersonating* effect, a rhetoric of self-other making, which needs to be experimented with and examined within the discourse of composition.

There are, as Foucault tells us, "powers and dangers" in this anonymous discourse I have intuited and extrapolated from Foucault's historical outline of language itself as a "Discourse." As a member of my dissertation committee, Professor Cinthia Gannett, concluded recently, anonymous discourse is "a perilous

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pedagogy." This insight follows of course, from an understanding theoretically of anonymity's role in the discourse of language itself.

The most difficult case to make about anonymity, of course, is that it has any thing to do with "fellowship" or what I am calling *community*. Anonymity does, however, operate from and for a sense of community; anonymous identities interplay ambiguously between presence and absence, secrecy and disclosure. And in this last go round with his schemas of discourse Foucault offers ever-greater credence for my hypotheses about the discourse of anonymity. "[D]o not be deceived," Foucault writes:

> even in the order of published discourse, we still find secret-appropriation and non-interchangeability at work. It could even be that the act of writing, as it is institutionalized today, with its... personality of the writer...occurs within a diffuse yet constraining, 'fellowship of discourse.' The separateness of the writer, continually opposed to the activity of all other writing and speaking subjects, the fundamental singularity [the writer] has long accorded to 'writing,'—all this manifests...the existence of a certain 'fellowship of discourse' (156).

To render this simply, the cult[ure] of the authorial "person" is a *function* of the secrecy and disclosure, and non-interchangeability that has grown up around the institutionalization of writing. More complexly, we see the singularities of writing and the author holding each the other in an ambiguity that hearkens back to the power/desire binary Foucault opens this essay with.

Remember too that Foucault is focusing on "academic" realms. He mentions in passing that there are "entirely different schemas of exclusivity and disclosure"—"secrets" diffused and circulated across scientific, medical, technical, and even "economic or political discourse (156). The common sense of anonymity as a kind of rarity given the pervasiveness of identification and the discourse of identity is undercut by the variety and depth of anonymity's presence, not only in the discourse of authorial identity, but in a given disciplinary community.

As I have already asserted, I believe anonymity plays a crucial, protean role in these schemas of exclusion and disclosure, and may in fact be the ultimate schematic holding 'writing' as structure and author as 'function' in a tight orbit of (in)visibility—"an ambiguous interplay of secrecy and disclosure." But in holding that premise I am reminded of anonymity's negative reputation in the popular imagination. In my attempt to present it as a positive force by high-glossing Foucault's extremely over-determined outline of discourse, I would be remiss if I did not explain the discourse of anonymity according to "a

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principle of *reversal* " (158). He reserves this principle for what he calls the " 'critical' group' which sets the reversal-principle to work" (160).

The Critical Function of Anonymous Discourse

The 'critical group' is to be distinguished from the 'genealogical' group. It covers those "external rules" and concern "that part of discourse which deals with power and desire" (152). Their main connection to a discourse of anonymity involves "what is *prohibited* " (149), as we saw above. We recall that the main areas of prohibition are sexuality and politics (and religion to a lesser extent). Near the end of his lecture Foucault sets up his consideration of the reversal principle by questioning the apparent "logophilia" of our civilization. He believes "a certain fear hides this apparent supremacy accorded" to discourse.

This fear is reflected in the zones of prohibited discourse. These are "...taboos, [those] barriers, thresholds and limits [which] were deliberately disposed in order, at least partly, to master and control the great proliferation of discourse, in such a way as to relieve its richness of its most dangerous elements; to organize its disorder so as to skate around its most uncontrollable aspects" (158). And so he concludes, in a reversal of our common sense of discourse, that "a profound logophobia" is at work in and around discourse.

One of my interests in anonymous discourse is of course the source of its negative connotations. It is my hunch that anonymity, operating as it does along and across the borders of discursive prohibition, is both an object of, and complicit with, this profound logophobia. Since my personal inclination is toward a profound logophilia, I do not fear these zones of prohibition or the relations of anonymous discourse to those zones. As we shall see, the Foucauldian historian in me is countered and balanced by the Bakhtinian rhetorician.

That is, I see these zones of prohibition for what they are, but also for what they can be--as Bakhtinian "zones of contact" for "double-voiced discourse." I would have the reader suspicious of anonymity to find in it a curious power of reversal, or at least, of ambiguity, so that he or she would find in it those factors which play a positive role. Put in another way, there is no traducing the tradition of anonymity, so we might as well give it the benefit of our doubt. Perhaps we can better begin to do this if we understand what Foucault means by "a principle of *reversal*."

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Enough has already been glossed from Foucault's analysis of "those factors which seem to play a positive role, such as the author, discipline, will to truth" to conclude that they mask a "negative activity of the cutting-out and rarefaction of discourse" (158). If we then apply this reversal principle to the factor of anonymity, particularly in relation to the author, we see that anonymity may in fact mask a positive activity in that it performs a cutting-out of authorial claims and control, and thus reopens and proliferates the rarefaction of discourse. But what then? What are the positive consequences of negating the controls and limits exerted by the author principle? Aren't we just on a theoretical see-saw with Anonymous on one end and Author on the other, one now up, the other down, now you see one, now the other—the descent of anonymity beckons, as the ascent of authorship beckoned (to paraphrase William Carols Williams)?

As we will see in my Bakhtininan treatment of "A Rhetoric of Anonymity," the sense of being hurled inward and outward simultaneously by the discourse of language—what Bakhtin calls the "centripedal" and "centrifugal" forces of language—attends to the private/public force of anonymous writing in a composition course. I am referring to that course that is devoted to merging contending expressivist and constructionist identifications which seem, at times, to be pulling the entire field of composition-rhetoric inside out and back again.

Once we have ceased considering the author function as a fundamental and creative action, and can bring ourselves to consider the anonymous in those terms, it turns out that we have gone as far as we can go with a "critical" approach to the anonymous/author binary. Into the breach between them comes discursive prohibition. We now have "to bring other methodological principles into play" (158), which means we now have to play the "genealogical" game in earnest.

The Genealogical Function of Anonymous Discourse

In contrast to the external rules, the genealogical group covers "internal rules" that are "involved in the mastery of another dimension of discourse: that of events and chance" (152). Commentary, the author, and disciplinary organization constitute these rules. The author, as we will see in the next chapter, is of greatest concern to a general understanding of the anonymous function as not only a reversal of the "author - function" but its profound transversal and transgression. We will also understand how a principle of reversal can place the author (ultimately underwritten by the philosophy of the subject) in a zone of

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prohibition while raising the profile of the anonymous as a potentially positive force of discursive proliferation in the universal interest of exchange and communication.

Foucault describes three principles that put the genealogical group to work: *discontinuity, specificity*, and *exteriority*. According to the first principle, "discourse must be treated as a discontinuous activity, its different manifestations sometimes coming together, but just as easily unaware of, or excluding each other." According to the second principle, "...there is no prediscursive fate disposing the word in our favor. We must conceive discourse as...a practice we impose upon [things]." The last principle "holds that we are not to burrow to the hidden core of discourse... we should look [only] for its external conditions of existence, for that which gives rise to the chance series of these events and fixes its limits" (158). I have attempted, in direct contradiction of Foucault, to burrow to anonymity's truly, or literally, hidden core.

Conclusion to Chapter Two

The upshot of these principles taken together help us to reach two provisional conclusions that directly concern the discourse of anonymity as I have come to understand it. The first is that the principle of authorship might help to uphold and extend Tradition and its history of ideas as a necessary fiction. Its fellowship of internal controls can't tell us much of anything, however, about the origination, creation, or unity of discourse, because there really aren't any points for entry and understanding along these lines. Foucault is teaching us to blow by Eliot's distinction of the working relation between Tradition and Individual Talent and just look at discourse circulating, impersonally, serially, discontinuously— anonymously.

The second conclusion is that the subject positions of 'writing' and the subject as 'writer' (together with their indispensable others, 'reading' and 'reader') have secretive roots in the *prohibited*. These positions take up potentially transgressive positions, however chance and discontinuous, within desire and power, rather than in some will to truth or knowledge. The actions of their *identities* take on forms that are not of *individuality* and the *I* in the controlling sense of the author, but as objects of sexuality and identity politics that are the subjects of writing in its most *allusive,* yet *elusive* and therefore, most *inclusive* context. (I like to believe, however, that within the Prohibited, there lies a will to truth or knowledge. But that is where "The Taboo" and "The Truth" set a discursive boundary—a genre distinction—that is not meant to be transgressed or otherwise blended within academic settings, but only by writers who operate not under laws of commentary and exclusion, but under those of creativity and inclusion.

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At the end of "The Discourse on Language" Foucault hopes for both kinds of study, critical and genealogical, with the first "one of studied casualness" the second "one of felicitous positivism." Whatever becomes of these projects on discourse, Foucault emphasizes "that the analysis of discourse thus understood, does not reveal the universality of a meaning, but brings to light the action of imposed rarity ['critical' group], with a fundamental power of affirmation" ['genealogical' group] (162).

The methodological message I draw from this early lecture by Foucault is that there is no "genealogical" approach to anonymous discourse. It has no formative signature primarily because it effaces--even as it continually retraces--large areas of academic institutional purview, and not only because it is the antithesis of the author principle, with its cult of identity and attributed originality. The absenting presence of anonymous discourse also profoundly affects the principles of commentary and disciplinary organization that form an academically discursive fellowship with the author effect. For all that, the absence of a genealogical approach to anonymity does not preclude a mood of "felicitous positivism" or of the mode of an "affirmative approach" in creating, as we shall see, a pedagogy of anonymity.

I have attempted in these first two chapters to create some semblance of anonymity's internal and external conditions of existence. It is an attempt that takes it for granted that the subject who is prescribed by social anonymity is also one who de-scribes him or herself anonymously is dispersed across "a multiplicity of possible positions and functions." Given its inter/intrasubjective force in self-other orientations, as well as in acts of writing for oneself and for a range of others, I am certain that anonymity is a discontinuous, essentially ungovernable "ensemble" of desire and power, of sexuality and politics, of identity and difference. The anonymous is at-large--prescribing and describing all practices of naming and identification.

Having brought us a bit closer "toward" the anonymous function as a lived phenomenon of subjectivity, and as a function of the discourse of language within the problem of 'identity,' in Chapter Three--Toward a History of Anonymity-- I look at the problem of literary author-ity as an anonymous function. Its 'problematic,' or at least ironic, character was first suggested by E.M Forster in "On Anonymity." It was then broadly sketched by Michel Foucault in "What is an Author." It has, of late, been handled panoramically in two studies by Thomas Docherty: *On Modern Authority* and *Absent Character*.

In a very real sense, all three thinkers pursue a "genealogical" approach to understanding the levels of authority in the author function. Our job, thanks to Schutz and Natanson, will be to tease out the critical levels of anonymity working and playing in parallel to those of authority. In effect, we will pursue a "critical approach" to the genealogical problem of the authority of anonymity. As such, the supposed "rarity" of anonymity will, on the principle of reversal, reveal itself as a ubiquity that, I believe, Bakhtin understood in his notions of the "contact zone" and the "transgredient moment" (which we take up in Chapter Four--A Rhetoric of Anonymity.)

When the time comes to give the entire ungovernable ensemble of desire and power, of writer identity and reader authority, its truly "critical" due in Chapter Five, my critical approach will be "genealogical" in tone. The handling of 'a perilous pedagogy' requires a felicitous positivism, rather than one of studied casualness, in Foucault's distinction. So far I have tried to maintain a playful, ironic distance on the idea of a genealogical approach to anonymity. This enables us to more seriously entertain the idea of a purely critical approach to all of anonymity's functions.[3]

Chapter Notes

[1]It is tempting to account for a critical genealogy of anonymity as a sophistic nemesis of the formative philosophies that posit a founding subject, originating experience, and universal mediation. To avoid complexity and lengthy commentary, however, I will only suggest a sophistical genealogy as I might in the future develop it within my view of anonymity's structure, sign, and play in the discourse of language.

Principle One: The *I* of the writing subject—even under the sign of the proper name—is essentially anonymous.

Principle Two: To the extent that origins can be determined from reading, and "originality" ascribed to those whom we all read (*a.k.a.* authors), experience of the real eludes discursive recognition; it does not acknowledge processes of naming and its attendant orders of truth formation.

Principle Three: Following Foucault's definition of Universal mediation—"when all things come eventually to take the form of discourse, then all [will] be able to return to the silent interiority of self-consciousness" (157)— the *I* of self-consciousness cannot be founded upon the experience of an originating subject. It must give itself up as the intersubjective shifter of a discursive other that is, according to Principle One, *anonymous*.

[2] Looking ahead at further Foucauldian distinctions, (as well as my own adaptive commentaries on them), *authorial anonymity* is very nearly a self-negating construction. Since we don't know the *identity* of the individual responsible for the speech act, his or her status as a unifying principle for a *community* that might wish to respond to that status under the commentary principle, is unknown, insignificant, and incoherent under normative conditions of discursive *authority*. If not an accident of time or contingency of human conflict wherein an author's nominal, and therefore biographical, identity is lost or destroyed, then the deliberate inclination to discourse anonymously is institutionally suspect (with many paradoxical exceptions, however, as the Introduction will detail).

[3] Having already thrown my interpretive fate in with Derrida's notion of Nietzschean affirmation, and given the clear connection of Nietzsche's method of approach with what has come to be called by both Derrida and Foucault as "genealogical," the attentive reader would find me guilty of a massive self-contradiction here. How can I claim an affirmative approach to anonymity, but assert that there is no genealogical interpretation of it worth pursuing? The apparent contradiction disappears when it is realized that I consider both Derrida and Foucault to be "critical" theorists who have helped to bring a *rhetorical* approach back into vogue that is, by my lights, best upheld by Bakhtin. The contributions of Foucault, Derrida, as well as Schutz and Natanson to my dissertation are themselves genealogical or historical, rather than critical. They are not responsible for any prohibited zone of discourse; they only point to the anonymous as prohibition's contact zone (to be taken up in Chapter Five's Pedagogy of Anonymity.) Any critical interpretation of anonymity and its prohibitional effects comes from my interpretive and pedagogical experience, not theirs. Ultimately, my approach to the discourse of anonymity and to anonymous discourse is rhetorical rather than critical or genealogical. That is, I am interested in the inter-relation and inter-subjectivity—the *community*—of speaker-listener and writer-reader.

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CHAPTER THREE

TOWARD A HISTORY OF ANONYMITY

Anonymity and the Problem of Authority

Critical Genealogies

In Chapter One we examined the discursive problem of Identity. In Chapter Two we examined the problem of Discourse itself. In each examination we traced the common trajectory and complicity of anonymity in their problematic conditions as academic terms and as lived actions of an individualized "I" in relation to a range of Others--immediate and mediated, real and imagined. In Chapter three we examine the problem of Authority as a founding philosophical discourse and as a locatable origin and lived condition in the lifeworld. The discursive relation of Authority to that of Identity extends from their shared provinces of denotative meaning. It is a relation that opens transactions (more toward transgressions) in acts of anonymous writing where the Identity of the Author is "defaced"-- or at least effaced. Thus the Identification of Authority must reside in the dialogical imagination of a reader, of a readership, and over time, of an Audience, that is never really present, never quite absent, as an Anonymous Community indifferent to who is speaking/writing.

Outside the philosophical treatments of Schutz and Natanson, only one literary "author"--E.M. Forster-- has directly attended to the problem of the author (and of the authority of the author function) as an anonymous function. After his little literary essay --"Anonymity: An Enquiry"-- written in 1925, we have Michel Foucault's little historical outline--"What is an Author?"--written in 1969, which indirectly addresses the anonymity surrounding the "author-function." Beyond these two, the work of Thomas Docherty comes closest to a literary and historical synthesis that links the problem of authority to the problem of anonymity. Docherty though important, is also indirect in his treatment of these concepts of character and proper name displacement. He does not develop outright an "anonymous function" that, by my lights, is logical given his concern with "modern authority" in "the theory and condition of writing" and in the use of what he calls "absent character" in modern fiction.

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We will consider each of these writers on the problem of what I will henceforth term *author-ity*. This will highlight the historic relation of the writing person who becomes an "author," to that of the larger discourse of "authority" whose center or "presence" has been located in notions of an Origin (whether of God, the King, the State, the People). Before we do, however, I want to set up some of the overlapping problematics between the discourses of Identity and Authority that I could not entertain in our examinations of phenomenological and discursive anonymity.

My reader will recall that I concluded my parallax view of the relation of Foucault's "The Discourse on Language" to a discourse of anonymity by saying that, given his definition, it is not possible--for obvious reasons of pervasive namelessness--to take a "genealogical" approach to anonymity. Equally obvious, however, is the fact that in the "genesis" or origin of writing itself--and in some of our most "original" texts--the anonymous is with us speaking "in the beginning" (whether in the *Vedas* or in *Genesis*).

In a collection of essays edited by Stewart Hall titled *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Nikolas Rose, in "Identity, Genealogy, History" attempts, in a clear debt to Foucault, what he calls "the genealogy of subjectification" or "How should we do the history of the person?" (128). This genealogical approach would try to trace how we "authorize" personhood or personal identity, and

> ...would focus directly upon the *practices* within which human beings have been located in particular 'regimes of the person'. This would not be a continuous history of the self, but rather an account of *the diversity of languages of 'personhood' that have taken shape-* -character, personality, identity, citizen, individual, normal, lunatic, patient, client, husband, mother, daughter.... *--and the norms, techniques and relations of authority within which these have circulated* in legal, domestic, industrial and other practices for acting upon the conduct of persons (131, emphasis added).

Rose proposes a number of "linked pathways"--including "Problematizations," "Technologies," and "Authorities" (131-133). My interest is in his notion of "authority" as a pathway. The question he poses to open his focus on Authorities is quite useful for focusing ourselves on the problem of what I am calling Author-ity. "Who is accorded or claims the capacity to speak truthfully about humans, their nature and their problems, and what characterizes the truths about persons that are accorded such authority?" (132). For Rose, and for us, the focus upon authority--"...the diversity of ways in which authority is authorized...seems to be a distinctive feature of this kind of [genealogical] investigation (133).

The relations between authority and personal identity have many roots and routes. Rose is interested in the late work of Foucault that sketches out the history of "technologies of the self." (Foucault traces out the

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importance of autobiographical writing among the privileged class of ancient Roman political authorities where the intended reader is the writer--selfsame, but now othered in the act of writing about one's authoriative self.) In a marvelous summary of Foucault's rather scattered overview of the self-authorizing power of writing, Rose writes:

> Technologies of the self take the form of elaboration of certain techniques for the conduct of one's relation with oneself, for example requiring one to relate to oneself epistemologically (know yourself), despotically (master yourself) or in other ways (care for yourself). They are embodied in particular technical practices (confession, diary writing, group discussion, and the 12 Steps program of Alcoholics Anonymous). *And they are always practiced under the actual or imagined authority of some system of truth and of some authoritative individual,* whether these be theological and priestly, psychological and therapeutic or disciplinary and tutelary (135, emphasis added).

The discourse of identity--of self: knowledge, mastery, or care--finds its origin in some way through a discourse of authority that it itself tied to some kind of ethics or ethos. Though based on immediate self-other relations, this ethos is projected in increasingly mediated ways into anonymous enclaves both intersubjective (Subject-King; Citizen-State; Student-University) intrasubjective (Sinner-God; Ego- Ego Ideal; Student-Author) and transgressive (Slave-Master; Lover-Beloved; Child-Parent; Subject-Discourse.).

And it is clear enough from what we have discovered about the phenomenological and discursive nature of anonymity, that the source of an author-itative technology of self is not always known or nameable. As a technology of the self, autobiography, for example, attempts to create for a reader a continuous, authentic history of the self. This is of course impossible: the writer can authorize his or her own personal experience, but cannot access in any complete way all the actual or imagined authorities that comprise a given "person." Not only do the forces of personal or passionate identification vary, but also the senses of authority being identified also vary in the intensity of their presence.

In keeping with the word's historical action, re-presenting the intersubjective "masks" of one's "person" through the practice of writing is not so much an un-masking, as it is a mirroring, of the self in the otherness of language itself. Arguably, it is the code of language, not the revealed credo of a person somehow before and beyond that code, that is the source of authority for personal identity.

Rose, in authentic Foucauldian language, imagines the pathway provided by the discourse of authority as being "... not a matter, therefore, of narrating a general history of the idea of the person or self, but of tracing the technical forms accorded to the relation to oneself in various practices..."(138).[1]

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As a "technical form" or "technique" of authorizing self-other relations and distinctions, anonymous writing is not, in the vast oceanic history of *writing* (as distinguished from the surface history of *authorship*) does not submerge the characterization of subjectivity or personal identity. In keeping with the originally problematic meaning of authority itself, anonymity *augments*--proliferates--the identity and identification of the *person*. In doing so, anonymous writing experiments with the location and provocation of various authorities: "*those who have authority* " and "*those subject to authority* " (Rose, 146). How it does this, or why it has to be considered whenever we attempt to understand the meaning and action of authority, is a question taken up by Thomas Docherty in *On Modern Authority: The Theory and Condition of Writing: 1500 to the Present Day.*

Docherty opens his study of modern authority by attacking E.D. Hirsch's now famous "intentionalist" position and what Docherty calls his "authoritarian" model of the author--the Author as God, singular, unitary, unchanging. First Hirsch:

> When we simply use an author's words for own purposes without respecting his [*sic*] intention, we transgress...the ethics of language, just as we transgress ethical norms when we use another person merely for our own ends" (Docherty 22).

Docherty has trouble, as most of us do, with the idea that we--or rather, certain authorities such as Hirsch standing in mediate relation to an Author--can divine the "original" intention of a given author. More troubling to Docherty is Hirsch's assumption about an author's sense of private "property" rights to a common discourse--the system of language itself.

> Firstly, in a modern print culture the words in question are not 'the author's words' in a strictly possessive sense: the author, at most, 'borrows' the words that the common lexicon is generous or gracious enough to afford an author. The typographic font is a public fountain, and cannot be drunk dry of potential fluency or meaning as its words are used up or 'possessed' by 'authors' (22).

This private/public split over language and a given author's proper[ty] rights to it becomes crucial to our anxiety or suspicion about anonymous writing. Where is this language coming from? Why doesn't the writer authorize his/her proper[tizing] name--in effect identify his/her authority to claim this language as his/her own? Aside from the rhetorical motives of protecting one's identity against authorities who might punish--justly or unjustly-- the writer for language so used, these questions move onto the larger question of rhetorical--even disciplinary--indifference as a transgression of--a "violence" to--what is hermeneutically

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sealed and properly authoritative. Docherty extends his criticism of the Hirsch-Bloom canonical purity and propriety in this way.

> But transgressive criticism...is seen as willful violence only from the point of view of a consciousness which understands or accepts dogmatically that texts are monuments (which must not be 'defaced'), monuments to the quasi-sanctity of another consciousness, that of an author (who is to be 'obeyed' simply by dint of being 'authoritative') (31).[2]

Once Docherty lays out the problems of authority in his introduction, he opens Part One of his book—significantly titled "(Fe) male Authority"—with a subsection titled "Authority in Crisis: The Threat of Female Emancipation." He covers the complexites of private and public "properties" as these are tied up in the "...none too devious etymology" of authority. We find that Vico "explicitly linked 'property' to 'authority,' arguing a connection between *autos* ("self") and *auctor* ("author") on the "Renaissance" idea that one is the privately "proper" owner/author of one's own self. Whatever the legitimacy of this liberty with etymology, Docherty, believing that language in the abstract belongs to everyone and or to no one, it is the writing, not the writer, that has and will hold "authority." In this connection, we need to look more closely at the meaning of "author-ity" itself. And on this score, Docherty is quite democratic in his authoritative unpacking of the word's inter/intrasubjective relations to 'identity' as a 'property' of the self.

> The OED finds an alternative root for 'author' in *augere*, with its suggestion of beginning or increasing. Both etymologies [Vico's and the OED's] here bear fruit. Property certainly gives some kind of identity to its owner; the word itself does derive from *proprius*, 'related to one's self.' Property, then, does give the kind of 'title' name or identity at issue. But in order to retain such a name or identity, such an 'entitlement', the owner not only reifies herself or himself in the 'property' but also must by definition strive to solidify, increase or regenerate more of this property in order for the name or identity to remain stable. It is precisely this capitalistic 'title to property' that More is questioning, among other things, in *Utopia* (60).

My reader will recall that what upset analysts Brubaker and Cooper so much about the problem of identity is that it had been claimed as the proper name for so many different kinds of meanings and actions—of entirely incommensurate discourses— that it has, in effect, been "authorized" (as in *augmented*) into a kind of "Utopia"—a conceptual *Erewhon*. As such, it continues to increase as the proper authority of Everyone— or No One. We have the eternal call for an autonomous and stable sense of Identity. We have Docherty's history of Author-ity as requiring an equally strong sense of retaining and regenerating the Proper Name of Male autonomy over discourse. Between these we can begin to see the problem that Anonymous Writers (largely women, but also Other subject positions lacking authority)—began to (com)pose for the Authority

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of Identity and the Identity of Authority.[3]

Docherty titles part two of his book, "Natural Authority" (with "Natural" crossed out). With the augmentation and proliferation of "Author-ity" opened up by female writing, Docherty begins to play seriously with the idea of an original or natural Authority. H does not propose an anonymous function as being integral to this play within and against authority. He does make much --especially in Chapter Six, titled "The Impossibility of Authenticity"--of "the struggle for authority" that has clearly emerged at the beginning of the modern period (1650-1700 AD) and which continues today in so-called "post-modern" terms. For,

> [o]nce God and nature as a source of authentication of authorities disappear, then what is left is either tradition (a kind of intertextual authority) or the authority of the present 'individual talent' struggling both with and also against such a tradition. Some attempts to rediscover authenticity, but again...[the acts of "authoritative" interpretation had proliferated beyond the point of a pure hermeneutic return to the Word].
> The stage was set, then, for the struggle of authority which was much later to be posed as fundamental philosophical question by Humpty-Dumpty, in another text where the reflexive mirror plays a huge role, Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* :

> 'When *I* use a word', Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean--neither more nor less.'
> 'The question is', said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean different things.'
> 'The question is', said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master--that's all' (In Docherty, 228).

We all know what happened to Humpty Dumpty. The sense we got from our Chapter One analysis of the "master" term Identity is that it has, like Docherty's sense of the master term of Authority, "had a great fall." If neither is "to be master" --even when there seems to have been a vigorous effort to shore them up as an inter-textual construction within an emerging capitalist discourse of "property"--then naturally we have to look to the "wall" which both have fallen from. In this chapter, "Towards a History of Anonymity," I will be making the case that that Wall is none other than the "nomination barrier" whose structure is a master function of anonymity--"that's all."

Forster: Anonymous Information or Imagination?

Forty-four years before Michel Foucault opened and closed his essay "What is an Author?" with an epigraph from Samuel Beckett's *Texts for Nothing* ("What matters who's speaking?"), E.M. Forster opened his essay "Anonymity: An Enquiry" with a less polemical, but similarly rhetorical question. "Do you like to know who a book's by?" (7). His own answer--"The question is more profound and even more

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literary than may appear"—is supported by an example that compares the difference between the "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens." The difference comes down to one of authorship, of course. When we speak of the former, we say "a poem by Coleridge," whereas, when we speak of the latter we say, "a poem." He then asks, in an uncanny anticipation of both Beckett and Foucault, "What difference, if any, does this difference between them make upon our minds?"(7-8).

Forster contends in the next fifteen pages that "[w]ords are all of one family," but that they have two fundamental functions: to convey information and to create atmosphere, "...and the combination of those functions is infinite" (12). He provisionally concludes "...that what is information ought to be signed; and secondly, that what is not information need not be signed" (13). By "atmosphere" Forster means passion, *pathos*: ".. the power that words have to raise our emotions or quicken our blood. It is also *something else*, and to define that other thing would be to explain the secret of the universe" (13).

Forster does, of course, attempt to define that "*something else* "—the Otherness of that function. He believes that "all literature," in its function to create "another world" "...tends towards a condition of anonymity...."

> It wants not to be signed.... It is always tugging in that direction and saying in effect: "I, not my author, exist really...." It may here be objected that literature expresses personality, that it is the result of the author's individual outlook, that we are right in asking for his [*sic*] name. It is his [*sic*] property—he [*sic*] ought to have the credit"(15).

Forster acknowledges that this is an important objection, but that it is "...also a modern one, for in the past neither writers nor readers attached high importance to personality that they do today" (15). He then reminds readers of the vast anonymous writings that comprise the Greek *Anthology* and sweeps through, in another anticipation of Foucault (who suspiciously does not acknowledge Forster's inquiry) by mentioning the anonymous stretch of the medieval period. Personal Authorship, he reminds us, "...troubled neither the composers nor the translators of the Bible"; "...they did not make a cult of expression as we do to-day. Surely they were right, and modern critics go too far in their insistence on personality" (16).

Forster then appeals to the findings of Freud and Jung (still radical and fresh in 1925 for a host of writers—Forster, Woolf, and James—experimenting with "stream of consciousness" narratives that would be pushed to the limit by Beckett). The reason modern critics go too far in their insistence on the personal

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author is that they don't understand that like words, linguistic consciousness "...has two personalities, one on the surface, one deeper down." The upper one "has a name." The lower one "is a very queer affair" (16). He is quite puzzled by this lower personality, but without, he is sure that no literature could be written, nor could it be read. Having delved into the phenomenology of anonymity courtesy of Schutz and Natanson, we can at least speculate along with Forster that this "very queer affair" of a nameless voice, of words without a speaker, of a passionate otherness "...is in any case the force that makes for anonymity" (17).

Forster ends his inquiry into anonymity pretty much the way he began it. But he makes some close and rapid connections that point to the reason that Foucault can "imagine all discourse unfolding in a pervasive anonymity" at the conclusion of "What is an Author?"

> We decided pretty easily that information ought to be signed: common sense leads to this conclusion, and newspapers which are largely unsigned have gained by that device their undesirable influence over civilization.... [As for literature,] [w]hile the author wrote he [*sic*] forgot his [*sic*] name; while we read him [*sic*] we forget both his[*sic*] name and our own" (22).

Common sense does seem to confirm what Forster is saying about the act of deep reading—any reading of anything, not just literature, in my experience. The anonymity, as we learned from Natanson becomes reciprocal, a passionate enclave in which the otherness of the text of nobody—for nobody—is revealed and in which we revel. I make no plea for this mastering force of anonymity in the way that Forster does. I simply point the reader to the uncanny community his notion of the imagination shares with Natanson's more obscure and dry phenomenological treatment of "passion for the other in the enclave that anonymity provides."

> My plea is for something more vital: imagination.... Whether those words are signed or unsigned becomes, as soon as the imagination redeems us, a matter of no importance, because we have approximated to the state in which they were written, and there are no names down there, no personality as we understand personality, no marrying or giving in marriage. What is down there—ah, that is another enquiry...(23).

It is an odd phrasing Forster uses—"no marrying or giving in marriage"—in connection to the community of anonymous writer and reader in that No Where of the imagination. But it does suggest a sense of author-ity that is expressed, augmented, proliferated beyond the claims of personal identity. I read Forster's essay as a serious play/plea for more anonymous imagination (if such were possible) and less identification and explanation. He was, after all, a literary author whose writings have become famous

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for their characters' sense of solitary otherness, tlheir search for a passionate private enclave, in the world. It is no surprise that he links redemption to imaginmation (a position at least as old as poetry itself).

More surprising is the idea that redemption iss therefore available in the anonymity that provides this primary imagination. But his plea for the masteryv and mystery of anonymity is also a ploy, since he does not, much like Beckett and Foucault, test the limirts of his plea by leaving his own works unsigned. (But personal credit must be given, as history will lbe forgiven, until the monstrous/mountainous author-function is folded once again into its original anonymous care and core.

Foucault: The (In) Difference of Anonymity

The scope of this chapter permits only a scan of anonymity's ancient literary "author-ity." I will look at anecdotes from three universally "representative" ttexts: *The Epic of Gilgamesh; the Book of Genesis; the Odyssey.* A historically minded reader of the truly Old school might reasonably expect some attempt at a "genealogical" account of, say, the number, frequemncy, and periodization of pseudonyms, or the presence of the category "Anonymous" as an archival marker aacross literary, musical, and artistic antiquities. But as we saw in Chapter Two any historical account or "moment" of Anonymity, and of the "Anonymous" in particular, requires a "critical" rather than a genealorgical approach. (Or, what is required to best understand the anonymous function is an awareness that it reverses and exchanges the rules and themes of each approach to history until naming and identifying giive way to reflection and imagination.)

The only "genealogical" approach we might talke must be with regard to what Thomas Docherty calls "absent characters." Or it could be framed by whatz Nikolas Rose calls a discontinuous history of the 'the person' (with emphasis, by my lights, on the Freznch sense of *personne* as the mask of "nobody" or "no one"). "God," as developed and deployed by tlhe anonymous writers and compositors of The Old Testament, is the most "original" of this line of ccharacters in the Western hermeneutic/literary tradition. "His son," Jesus of Nazareth, developed and deployed by named writer-disciples, would be next in a genealogical line. (Anonymity and absent charactezr in The New Testament is beyond the scope of this chapter, however.)

Though counter-intuitive, the genealogical sensee is a smaller circle within the much wider circle drawn by a "critical approach. A critical sense, accordingz to Foucault, "sets the reversal-principle to work." The

first and most obvious consequence of setting it to work in a history of the anonymous is that *nominalism*—theories of the name, and of the proper name most significantly—becomes *anomalous*. That is, when anonymity takes a proper name, it takes on one name only—*Anonymous*—and that name deviates from and subverts the general rule and regime of nominalism.[4]

Anonymous is a proper name, which earns the capital letter of a true name even though it merely classifies unknown writers, does not isolate the unique qualities of properly named authors, and can be prefixed by *an* or *the*. My basis for this conclusion remains stable even if the sign(ature) of (the) Anonymous destabilizes the norms of identity and identification. Anonymity is always-already demonstrating the principle of reversal, radiating the logic of both/and, rather than one of either/or. Any history of anonymity, therefore, would need to proceed not in some linear, narrative form, but must showcase anecdotes that tell us of its antiquity, its poetry, and its mysterious "indifference."

It is this last quality—anonymity's power of indifference—that upsets our customary assumptions about the power of names and of naming. Considered as a proper name, Anonymous designates a person who is unknown because unnamed. But it also describes a "work" that can be known, obviously, but cannot be attributed and codified under the normative proprietary regimes of Foucault's Author-Function. The anonymous work, cannot, in other words, be Properly Named. More critical than what constitutes the "work" of the Author, is the answer to his more specific question, "What is the name of an author?" That question must always beg its critical other: What is the name of Anonymous? Forster tells us the answer to that question is "the secret of the universe." Schutz and Natanson, more sure of themselves as a phenomenologists, tells us over and over again the name is not important, it is the levels of anonymity that provide our nominalizing distinctions and orientations in both private and public terms.

The origin, departure, and destination of anonymous discourse might strike the reader as artificial and abstract. Foucault makes them rather more concrete in "What is an Author?" (completed two years before "The Discourse on Language" and later collected in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 1977). He does so by all but concluding that the Author is ultimately anonymous. As we saw in my commentary on Foucault's work on discourse in Chapter Two, he radically demoted the author to one of twelve principles and themes. My ultimate take on the implications of that post-structural dispersion of the authorial subject's authority is that it resoundingly affirms the power of anonymity according to Foucault's own use of it to account for "discourse."

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One of the more interesting interpretive outcomes of "What is an Author?" is that the answer Foucault provides to that titular question is itself a question in the form of an epigraph that he repeats at the end of the essay. The question is taken from Samuel Beckett's little monological study *Texts for Nothing*— a run up to his famous tetraolgy of anonymously voiced experiments whose final work is titled *The Unnamable*. The question, as written in Beckett's original text, reads: "What matter who's speaking, someone said, what matter who's speaking." Foucault finds this tidbit from Beckett significant enough to assert that

> [i]n an indifference such as this we must recognize one of the fundamental ethical principles of contemporary writing. ...[I]t stands as an immanent rule, endlessly adopted and yet never fully applied (139).

Needless to say, most of us, regardless of our disciplinary (and therefore institutional) affiliations, believe that the answer to that question is no matter of indifference at all--that it makes a vast difference not only to know, or to *identify* who is speaking/ writing, but to maintain that *identity*.[5]

Foucault uses the occasion of the Beckett epigraph to create his own detour from some standardized remarks about authorial status and his "research into authenticity and attribution" so as to restrict himself "to the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text" (139). In trying to restrict himself thus, Foucault draws forth four major "themes" concerning the "author." These Themes are 1) Rhetorical Indifference; 2) Authorial Death; 3) Naming the Author; and 4) Authorial Function. Under each of these themes he sets forth at least two major theses so as to illustrate and elaborate their categorical importance.

Thus, Rhetorical Indifference involves the ascent of writing itself that creates "an opening where the writing subject endlessly disappears" (139). Rhetorical Indifference also points up "the kinship between writing and death" (139).

According to Foucault, this kinship is important enough that it be recapitulated as the second major theme: "the author's death." The concepts of the "work" and of *ecriture* (or Writing as a transcendental God-term whose presence is, as Derrida has shown, an absence) serve to illustrate this second major theme (140).

The third theme involves the complex problem of how "The name of an author" emerges from authorial death, disappearance, and absence. Its theses concern the Proper Name, and its complex, heterogeneous relation to the name of the author (141).

The fourth theme spells out the "author-function" under four theses: the author as a feature of "property"

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rights (and proprietary rites); as a historical feature that "is not universal or constant in all discourse"(143); as a projective secular feature (and literary future) of "Christian exegesis" (143) that (as a counter to the third thesis) was concerned with establishing the authenticity and uniformity of authorial authority; and finally, as a performative feature wherein the author-function "operates so as to effect the simultaneous dispersion of...three egos" (145).

In a series of hypothetical questions that constitute the essay's last paragraphs, however, Foucault outlines the kind of critical history that would have to be written not about the author-function, but rather, about the function of the anonymous (though he does not state this directly). As we have seen in my previous analysis, anonymity bears a problematic relation to our more important "holding terms" of discourse. A critical account of what really involves what we often believe to be the author's exclusive discursive coordinates--identity, authority, and ultimately, community-- actually help us locate the anonymous (though Foucault does not say so.)

The end of "What is an Author?" speculates briefly on "the absolute nature and creative role of the subject" (148). (And, as we now know, he picks up this reconsideration two years later in "The Discourse on Language"). What Foucault is asking (for) at the end of "What is an Author?" is not that the discourse of the subject "be entirely abandoned" but rather that it "(and its substitutes)...be stripped of [their] creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse." This means that the "author-function" is "only one of the possible specifications of the subject" (148). What all of this means for attempting a critical anecdotal history of the anonymous through the work of the reversal principle is that when we tally up the functional relations of author, subject, and discourse we discover the following hypothesis:

A) The subject is a function of discourse.
B) The author-function is a species of the subject.
C) In writing (and Writing) the subject writing endlessly disappears.
D) The historically significant, but highly mutable, "presence" of the author must therefore "endlessly disappear," as it were, given the significant "absence" of the anonymous specification of the subject. This yields
E) wherefrom

[w]e can easily imagine a culture where discourse would circulate without the need for an author. Discourses, whatever their status, form, or value, and regardless of our manner of handling them, would unfold *in a pervasive anonymity* (148, emphasis added).

Following the logic of Foucault's conclusions, I could not be accused of jumping to an untoward conclusion that a history of the anonymous should begin with our own discursive present. It could focus

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exclusively on the Internet, the WorldWide Web, Electronic Mail, never mind traditional media such as the daily newspaper, radio, and television. In doing so we could revise Foucault's "we can easily imagine...a pervasive anonymity" to read: "A pervasive anonymity easily realizes us." Forster, as we saw, had pretty much concluded this in his "enquiry"--except he was not cognizant of discourse as a totalizing "god-term"; his was the old fall back of an anonymizing "imagination." Foucault, though more "post-structural" bears a similar sense of anonymity as structural to the imagination.[6]

The truly critical approach to a history of the anonymous however must pay attention to some of the themes and theses Foucault has outlined in his own historical outline of the author. Such attention must have as their object works of literature first and foremost, and the more "well known" the better so as to highlight their unknown specifications. In the sections following in which I take up issues of authority and the anonymous function within that problematic discourse, I will apply various strains and combinations of Foucault's author-function themes and theses. I have chosen for my analyses *The Book of Genesis*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and *The Odyssey* so that we can begin to understand the problem of originality and the growth of what mean by authority from some presumed Origin, can not be understood apart from an anonymous function. the "other" side of an author-function

The Genesis of Anonymity

Anonymity's Shifting "I"

The last thesis in Foucault's outline of the author-function—performativity—most easily reverses itself so as to constitute the anonymous-function through what he calls "pronoun shifters." Foucault rehashes this, one of the certitudes of literary analysis (but one which always freezes first year English majors with looks of amazement or disbelief) in this way. In a more complex and variable text with an author (his example is the "novel"), [i]t is well known that...[when narrated] in the first person, neither the first person pronoun, the present indicative tense, nor for that matter, its signs of localization refer directly to the writer, either to the time when he wrote, or to the specific act of writing... (144).

In effect, trying to link author with his or her choice of a narrative voice is like trying to identify an official who agrees to speak to the public on condition of anonymity. There is an element of the unrecognizable and unacknowledged (with the stress on *recognition* and *knowledge*) in the whole business of voice that at the very least lends itself to considering the force and function of anonymity. Crudely, what Foucault is repeating bears repeating according to my terms: *The first person pronoun—the "I" function—is an anonymous function.* It might seem that I am leaping before looking more deeply at Foucault. But further on he mentions the effect of "shifters" (144)—that is, personal pronouns--which do not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy" (145).

The obvious and natural existence of authorial projection and impersonation of "personae" (otherwise called "characters") in texts remains for many people a sure sign that the "imagination" is a real phenomenon. It has psychological and sociological routes that cross and merge into that continuous cultural traffic that Foucault, as we saw in chapter one, would sum up as the "discourse of language." Anonymity plays across the dispersion and performance of these subjective/discursive positions.

For a powerful sense of how the theses anonymity's proper name and its shifting claim on/of a subjective position, the responsible analyst is actually required to go back to the beginning of literature. *Genesis,* however, much a Bloomian mistake, a deliberate, belated misreading of what it means to *begin,* is aptly named for illustrating these theses. (*Gilgamesh,* on the other hand, is better suited for elucidating anonymity's work of writing (im)mortality.)

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After laying out his themes and theses of the author-function, Foucault never asserts outright that he is really inquiring into the reversal of that function—that he is really answering my question: "What is the anonymous function?" What he flirts with in the final paragraphs I must radically assert and defend, lest I have no thesis. The Anonymous, itself an Ideal or Transcendental signifier (though, in keeping with its empirical gradient, remains unnamed and unknown as such) makes not only the name of the author, but all proper (more toward propertied or proprietary) names possible. Under the critical principle of reversal, then, it has the capacity to make real, empirical, liberatory inroads into how we use and abuse our so-called identities, our questionable authorities, and our fragile communities.

Furthermore, like any controlling historical category, anonymity cuts a both/and swath: it is both present and absent, public and private, open and closed, protective and hurtful. In my historical scan of three primordial texts, we will see early indications of both valences. As a matter of historical analysis of primordial texts, anonymity has been both a burr under the saddle and the horse that lets the historian (literary or otherwise) ride over the (non)identity of those writers responsible for the world's oldest writings. Again, Foucault makes the definitive historical case while making yet again the ulterior argument that anonymity's constancy undercuts the pervasiveness of " the "author" as a function of discourse."

> [T]he "author-function" is not universal or constant in all discourse. Even within our civilization, the same types of texts have not always required authors; there was a time when those texts which we call "literary" (stories, folk tales, epics, and tragedies) were accepted, circulated, and valorized without any question about the identity of their author. Their anonymity was ignored because their real or supposed age was a sufficient guarantee of their authenticity (143).

The "authors" of the *Gilgamesh*, of *The Bible*, and *The Odyssey* (despite the customary attribution to "Homer") are unknown. As Foucault states, their anonymity is accepted, circulated, and valorized.[7] My task is to reverse the ignorance of history: to not ignore anonymity; to try to know its function; and take to heart part of Foucault's nay saying at the end of "What is an Author?": "No longer the tiresome repetitions: "Who is the real author?" Instead, we must apply one of his alternative questions: "What placements are determined for possible subjects" (148)—subjects made possible not by the author-function, but by the anonymous-function.

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Analyzing the Anonymous Authority of *Genesis*

In order to take on *Genesis* as one of the representative anecdotes of the anonymous-function, for example, I find it impossible to free myself from Foucault's designations. The rhetorical situation in this piece of primordial writing fits exactly with his general sense that a human author's empirical activity has been "effaced to allow the play, in parallel or opposition, of religious and critical modes of characterization." That fact of effacement grants "a primordial status to [the] writing" in and of itself, as I understand and adapt Foucault. The fact of authorial anonymity in *Genesis* also (un)knowingly "sustains the privileges of the author" by extending them "within a grey neutrality" (which I would equate with the "presence" of God as "fundamental" Author.) I therefore know of no better opportunity for engaging in the play of oppositions and parallels between the author and the anonymous than in a primordial text such as *Genesis*. Its empirical author has been effaced, yet extended under an "Author" whose unspeakable name, according to Jewish orthodoxy, lends it an anonymity whose transcendence acts as a "check" on the disappearance of the author function.

The rhetorical situation in *Genesis*--the nature of what Lloyd Bitzer would call its "exigency"--is one where anonymity stands in place of the conception of writing which Foucault argues "sustains the privileges of the author through the safeguard of the a priori" (141). Since the empirical author of *Genesis* is primarily interested to establish the *a priori* existence of "God" as Author of The Book of Life, the role of anonymity in safeguarding this conception becomes so critical as to appear integral, indivisible, and *original* to that existence. Hermeneutics, originally the art of interpreting "holy" scripture, has long since become a set piece of secular humanistic exegesis.

One lesson Harold Bloom has learned from the response to his ideas about interpretation as deliberate misreading is that there are no purely secular texts, because canonization [of this or that text] by the secular academies is not merely a displaced version of Jewish of Christian or Moslem canonization. It is precisely the thing itself, the investment of a text with unity, presence, form, meaning, followed by the insistence that the canonized text possesses these attributes immutably, quite apart from the interpretive activities of the academies (Bloom 293). I suppose I am trying to make the case for the canonization of anonymity, if only for its immutable "presence" as a form of absence. Its presence, form, and meaning in a canonical exemplum such as *Genesis* (a text notoriously lacking in "unity") do however require academic interpretation.

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I liken my reliance on Foucault's historical synopsis of the author-function to interpret anonymity's apriori presence to that of the physician's need for machines that reveal the body's interior (e.g. x-ray, CAT Scan, MRI). In addition to the conceptions of death, writing and of the work, two other Foucauldian ways of seeing anonymity are the theme of the author's "proper name" and the thesis of pronoun "shifters." I adapt and combine these to try to answer my adaptation of one of Foucault's "new" questions: "What placements are determined for possible [anonymous] subjects?" *Genesis*, in particular, resonates to the theme of the author's proper name, as well as to the thesis of the role of personal pronouns or "shifters" with respect to the unnamed "person" of a given author.

My reading of certain passages in *Genesis* is a direct response to these ethical imperatives to a better understanding of the author-function. And, in taking seriously a critical approach to a history of the anonymous, its principle of reversal enables me to see in the shifts and disappearances in authorial point of view and presence the emergence of *the anonymous-function*. But before we look at particular sections of *Genesis* that illustrate what I mean by "the anonymous-function," The Author of the Book of Books, following Foucault's conclusion, would therefore represent the ultimate retainer of societal discourse. (That all hotel rooms in the nation have a Bible in the drawer of the bedside table, that our national currency and pledge of allegiance feature the name of "God", attests to a thoroughgoing, if now largely formulaic, retention of discursive author-ity.) But what exactly is the proper placement of this authorial subject?

Our initial attempt at an answer might well start with Genesis 1:3: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." When we read this, we assume what any grammarian assumes. The writer (unnamed) is recounting what someone named "God" (or what the Greeks called "Logos") first spoke as the first real speaker in a universe of discourse to come. This writer's point of view is ironically "omniscient" and technically profane: God, supposedly the eternally present, transhistorical First and Last Person to turn the lights on and off, is presented in the "third person" past tense. This mere writer has the first word in 1:1-2. "Anonymous" presents God, supernatural Author of creation, as any natural author would with a given character created through a chosen point of view. The Babylonian Epic *of Creation* not nearly so old as *Gilgamesh*, but much older than *Genesis* also has an anonymous author whose third person point of view creates an aura of author-ity. Interestingly, that author (or rather, an incorporated group of scholar-scribes) makes no bones about divine Identity at all. The "First Tablet" begins this way:

> When on high the heavens were not named,
> And beneath a home bore no name...;

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...When none of the gods had been brought into being,
　　And they were not named, and fates were not fixed,
　　Then were created the gods in the midst thereof (Langdon 67).

Anonymous and Anonymity were both the form of discourse and the discourse of the void in this epic of creation. Orthodox believers or plain allocentric secularist might claim that *Genesis*, because it begins in nomination, represents an advance in Self-Other consciousness over the *Epic of Creation*. I believe that the anonymous function begs to differ(entiate) itself from a Profane/Sacred binary.

With *Genesis*, historically considered, we intuit a scribe (or more likely, a group of scribes) names unknown, who trans-scribed the tale of a nomadic tribe with an anonymous oral tradition of long precedent. Their anonymous transcriptions, recounting a local community's origins, *author-ized* the textual identity of that community's implied Author-Function(ary). Even a cursory reading of Genesis *reveals* gaps and contradictions in plot and character continuity that signal the collective and patchwork activity of many writers over the course of the book's final development. Somehow, however, in face of all human discursive activity prior to and following its creation, this "epic" of Judaeo-Christian tradition has managed to claim for itself a divine author-ity. Part of the reason it has been able to do so, I will argue, is the way its "anonymous-function" was parlayed into a projection of an ultimate Author. This Author, as transcendental signifier, is imagined to hold a copyright on human discourse itself. Yet all historical evidence confirms that anonymous authorship was the generic, normative expectation of textual production beginning in Mesopotamia some *two thousand years* before the appearance of *Genesis*.[8]

The external source evidence of the anonymous function is a *sine qua non* of ancient studies. More will be said about the cultural pervasiveness of anonymity in the ancient world when I consider the *Epic of Gilgamesh* below. Our concern is with the plausibility that ancient "literary" texts *internalized* the external, perdurable culture of anonymity through the "novel" application of such literary devices and licenses as point of *vision*, projection of *voice*, and the predication of *value*. This trinity, I believe, has much to do with the emergence of omniscient "third person" poetics as a central marker of our first literary texts.

In *Genesis* this omniscient third person past tense formation continues through 1:25, enabling the reader to see what God saw, thus creating the artifice of God in/as the first person: "And God made the beasts of the earth...: and God saw that it was good." But then a remarkable shift occurs in 1:26 that continues through 1:29. It is this section we will focus on deeply, using Foucault's fourth criterion of the

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author-function, the effect of "shifters" (144). These are personal pronouns that do "not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy" (145).

Genesis 1:26 begins this way: "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness:..." 1:29 begins this way: "And God said, Behold, *I* have given you every herb bearing seed..." (emphases added.) The sudden appearance of these personal pronouns needs to be considered in concentric circular terms. The smaller circle radiates the terms Foucault has set forth as illustrative of the author-function as a series of subject(ive) positions. The larger circle circum-scribes what I argue is the "anonymous-function"-- the author-function's negative image, nemesis, or genetic "counter memory" (to adapt Foucault's coinage) of those subject positions.

Whether we are critical thinkers or unquestioning believers, the odd use of the plural pronouns "us" and "our" in 1:26 tells us several things. In Foucault's language, God's subject position is not at all stable, comprising, at the very least "a "second self" whose similarity to the author is never fixed and undergoes considerable alteration within the course of a single book" (144). God is first represented as a third person, a re-creation of an actual but anonymous writer. God is then presented, at a minimum, as having a double presence, (or in Catholic exegesis, this early passage is "testament" to his "three-personed" Godhead.) We should logically assume that this second, third, or plural sense of self does not refer to our anonymous writer.[9] The "discourse" of Genesis is linked not to a mere scribe or immediate author, but to a "fundamental" Author. But once we perform this identification, Foucault assures us that "the role of "shifters" is more complex and variable" than in texts without an author.

The appearance of the "I" shifter at the end of *Genesis* 1--"Behold, I have given you...."-- coincides with the creation of human beings: "male and female he created them. " This "I" shift is used by the immediate writer of Genesis to indicate God's fundamental authority, while indicating he is shifting from monological to dialogical speech, since he has just created the very first listeners or dialogical counterparts (still in a nascent condition of anonymity and non-speech).

In chapter two of *Genesis* the writer returns to a third person omniscient point of view as God creates, but does not name, the "Garden of Eden." The writer reporting this activity does not shift to the "I" and have God name Eden's four rivers; the writer does this. Similarly, in 2:17 the writer reports that God "took the man and put him into the garden of Eden." This writer has God command the unnamed man not to eat

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of from the tree of knowledge (whereas the unnamed woman, created at the same time as the man according to the writer in Chapter 1, has become a non-creature.)

Suddenly, in 2:18, the writer has God speak of the man's aloneness and shifts to the "I": "I will make him a help meet for him." Just as suddenly, the writer reports in 2:19 that God has brought all the beasts of the field "unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." It is to this act of naming that we will now turn to develop the elentic side of another of Foucault's themes of the author-function. We must keep in mind our critical project of reversing his themes' polarity so that we might trace the hidden transdiscursive power of the anonymous-function. (The reader who dismisses this attempt at reversal will see my thesis as nothing more than a slavish dependence upon the author-function.) But as we know, the question that opens and closes Foucault's examination of the author-function appears to confirm the anonymous function: "What matters who's speaking?

The poststructuralist thinker who is trying to apply a critical, rather than a genealogical, view of the author-function, is presented with a very unstable situation in applying the principle of reversal to these opening passages of *Genesis*. Again, we don't know the identity of the writer of *Genesis*. This anonymous scribe's use of shifters, however, could lead us to *believe* that the character, "God", is the text's *true* author. In pursuit of our critical principle of reversal let's assume this belief to be true, particularly so when the text's pronoun "shifters" ("signs that refer to the author") shift from "us" to "I". According to Foucault, in this more complex and variable text with an author (his example is the "novel"),

> [i]t is well known that...[when narrated] in the first person, neither the first person pronoun, the present indicative tense, nor for that matter, its signs of localization refer directly to the writer, either to the time when he wrote, or to the specific act of writing...
> (144).

I realize we are ourselves shifting--or continuously reversing--the subject positions of natural and supernatural "writer." Let's see if we can freeze this movement a moment and come to a conclusion that advances our argument about the anonymous-function as superordinate, rather than subordinate, to the author-function.

If we are referring to the natural writer, we can see that Foucault's description applies quite well. In fact, our anonymous writer's decision to shift to the "I" shifter is an unambiguous sign that not he (or "she," according to Harold Bloom, below) but that the Author, God, is doing the narrating. But Foucault also

tells us, as I pointed out above, that these first person elements "stand as a "second self" whose similarity to the author is never fixed...." So we must reach the same conclusion whether we assume a natural writer behind *Genesis* or a supernatural Author. That conclusion is this: The identity of the Author, never mind that of the actual writer of *Genesis* depends upon anonymity to sustain the authoritarian privileges of the author-function as it has come down and enveloped through history.

Furthermore, if the reader will grant even a shred of credibility to my contention that the anonymous-function is the binary other of the author-function, then that same reader will appreciate my interpolations to the following critical distinction as made by Foucault. If the "true"" author is at least doubly anonymous, then

> [i]t would be as false to seek [God,] the [Transcendentally Anonymous,] author in relation to the actual [anonymous] writer as to the fictional narrator [named "God" by the actual anonymous writer]; the "author-function" [and so too the suppressed "anonymous-function"] arises out of their scission—in the division and distance of the two (144).

So we have a mysterious, yet masterful division in *Genesis* between writer, author, and fictional narrator (with theology claiming of course that God is the person behind all three). We also have a distance between the author-function and its anonymous counterpart. This total scission *cuts across* the philosophy and the politics of Identity, and *folds* the subject position of the writer so seamlessly into the act of writing that he or she endlessly shifts or dis-appears, as can be seen in these opening passages from a founding narrative. The meaning of *Genesis* under the logic of the anonymous function is the authorization of the Identity of the human with the Authority of creative self-expression. The ambiguous dis-appearance of shifters in *Genesis*, particularly the "I", points up the thesis of an anonymous subjective performance—of anonymity as the original subject position which is crucial to this book's performative "genetics."

Basil Cottle's study, *Names*, can help us get a hold on what Plato was originally up to in his critique of nominalism via *The Cratylus*. Cottle is cognizant of the scission of the Identity/Anonymity binary in that he finds it "an odd concept—that Man's naming of creatures confirmed their subjection to him" (11). We can extend our "genetic" understanding of the discourse of the anonymous and its radical power of reversal. When it comes to considering the meaning of the Name of the Author, we should think of the ambiguity and elision of personal pronouns in *Genesis* as a problem of subject positioning and subjection of others.

That is, an anonymous "immediate" human author has represented "God" as the Author of the Human.

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This ultimate Author then names "Adam" ("first man"), who is then authorized to name all subject creatures (including "Eve"—literally "serpent" and "garden"). We then find ourselves as readers pondering the following pentagon. First, we have an unnamed group of (im)mediate writers. Second, these writers create a character and project it as a fundamental Author. Third, this Author is made to make and name Man. Fourth, Man names Woman "Serpent in the Garden" because, fifth, she transgressed the authorial power subjection through naming by provoking knowledge through language and therefrom the authority of subjectivity.

Eve's eating of the fruit from the tree of knowledge was a transgressive, liberatory act. God considered the power of naming knowledge enough. The power of Logos, reserved to him, was prohibited to those created in his own image. Eve altered existing power relations. She chose what Foucault would call the "unthought" or "what is *prohibited* " ("The Discourse on Language", 149). She chose actual "thinking" over Adamic "knowledge" (naming things without any sense of signature, event, or context.) Her independent discursive act (not in speaking to God's nemesis, but dialoguing with her own daemon) transformed her "subjection" (under God's control) into a subject position (self-knowledge).

In effect, Eve's transgression toward an actual Identity unveiled the Transcendent Anonymity of God and the Empirical Anonymity of his proxy, Adam. Eve becomes the first poststructuralist, or denier of the transcendental tradition. Her transgression was not an exclusively feminist act, but in fact the first act of liberatory secular humanism. Her punishment, under the principle of reversal, was to become an unthought, anonymous, while Adam was given the power of subjection over her which God once held over him: "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (*Genesis*. 3:16). The feminist mission has been to uncover and reverse this act of anonymization of "Woman" ever since Eve.

But I digress from our central concern. It is the anonymity of the human author of *Genesis* which creates the character of an Author who occupies, in Foucault's terms, "a "transdiscursive" position" ("What is an Author?" 145). This subject position is the absence of subjectivity even as it is supercharged with the presence of subjection. Cottle reminds us that this transdiscursive position (*a.k.a.* "The God of the Jews") "was known to have a Name, but it was unspeakable as His Face was invisible, and only its four consonants, which Greeks called the Tetragrammaton, were displayed" (31).[10] From the discursive "get-go" of *Genesis*, then, anonymity was an integral part of the socially taboo, or *prohibited* practices that made its writing possible. The Name of God, an originating prohibition, turns out to be The Name of the

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Anonymous.

So even though the immediate author of *Genesis* will remain forever unnamed and unknown, his/her transdiscursive *persona* will always be known--but never definitively, properly Named. (Or rather *vice-versa*.) This double, triple, or up to Eve--quintuple (and therefore quintessentially troubled) undecidability about the subject(ion) of discursive author-ity in *Genesis* leads Cottle to make a wry observation. "But leave the Godhead unnamed, the monotheist might argue, and you give the lie to the old quip about man's making God in his own image" (37). And yet, as we have seen, it is not implausible to assume that the willed anonymity of a human author (what George Eliot would call "anonymous heroism") was instrumental in impressing upon history the image of an anonymous God who cannot be definitively named or known. The name of God, as a truth effect of both faith and reason, is the unthought that reverses itself into the god of the Name Prohibited, leaving us to weigh (and inveigh against) the "genetic" authority of *Anonymous*.

Anonymity: Deictic Deity or Everyday Elentic?

I have been stressing in my initial look at the text of *Genesis* the ambiguities of Identity and Anonymity, of Writer and Author, and their intersections: the Anonymity of Authority, the Writer's (Non)Identity. I have also been toying with the text under the assumption that those signifiers or shifters, which refer to the author, are as much or more at play than in other, more belated texts. We get a sense of the undifferentiated quality of these authorial indices, and find it difficult to settle the question of whether or not the text of *Genesis* is with or without an Author. Yet at the same time we know for sure that the writer is deeply anonymous, and the attribution of official authorship will remain forever unnamed and unknown for all but the true believer and Jesuitical exegete.

This pervasive ambiguity makes it truly difficult to come on board with Foucault and state categorically that the themes and theses of "the author-function" are operating normatively in *Genesis*. And, if there is something deviant about *Genesis*, we can, under the law of binary operations, argue that "the anonymous-function" is in the ascendancy in this historic text. Finally, if anonymity is functioning with so high a profile in one of the world's acknowledged *Ur* texts or master narratives, it might be necessary to grant a greater sense of history to the structure and function of the anonymous in *all* writing.

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Before I move to the next Biblical passage to illustrate another of Foucault's themes of the author-function under the blacklight of the anonymous, there is one more acute angle to measure within the distinction between what Foucault is calling the "author-function" and the "actual writer." He tells us that if the text does not have an author, its shifters "refer to a real speaker and to an actual deictic situation, with certain exceptions such as the case of an indirect speech in the first person" (144). As we have seen, the "real" speaker referred to in the Bible is a person named "God." This speaker is re-presented through an "omniscient" point of view, referred to in the third person, past tense frame.

The rhetorical reality of this speaker is clear and convincing enough to those who participate in both private and public rhetorical situations. The outstanding example, given our present subject, is that God is believed to be, or at least invoked as, a real speaker in the Churches as well as in all 50 State Houses and the U.S. Congress through the genre of "prayer." I have more or less settled the question of whether *Genesis* has an author. (It does not; it has an anonymous writer who creates the subject position of a real speaker through the ambiguity of personal pronoun shifters.) It is logical to conclude therefore that the moniker "God" is not a reference to "a real speaker." As a transdiscursive element however, "God" is spoken to and is believed to be listening. As the one and only "superaddressee" (a function that, according to Bakhtin, carries a high degree of anonymity) God transcends dialogical common sense. This absent, yet ideal, listener gets repositioned as the speaker of whatever "house" one cares to metonymize: at home, in church--from the State of the Nation to the state of the soul.

Before us is the consideration of whether the appearance of the shifter "I" in Genesis refers to "an actual deictic situation." "Deictic" (from the ancient Greek, "to show") is defined as "capable of direct proof; of showing or pointing out directly." Foucault chose the term because it is a standard grammatical reference in dealing with personal pronouns: pronouns differ from nouns in that they are essentially deictic. I like the term because it provides an opportunity for unparalleled play on *deity*. There is no etymological common ground between the Greek *deiknynai* ("to show") and the Greek root for "god." The deictic problems of identity and authorship in Genesis do however stem from the ambiguity of deity. The pronominal shifts between the third and first persons make it difficult for God "to show" up in the text, except as a subject position. If anything, my cursory analysis of the he/I/our shifters suggests the logical opposite of a deictic

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situation. The "absence" of God in Genesis is an *elentic* situation—"serving to refute" "his" rhetorical reality and, following the meaning of the original Greek, *elenchein*, permits the interested reader "to cross examine" the text over and against Foucault's categorical definition.

We are now left with the very important exception that Foucault supplies. If the shifters in Genesis do not in fact refer to a real speaker or to a deictic situation, that must mean that there is an author. But perhaps the issue is moot (and mute) since it also seems clear enough that the anonymous writer's shift to the "I" of God is a "case of indirect speech in the first person." According to the rules of an authorless text, therefore, we can only conclude again, and this time definitively, that the text of Genesis shows no proof of either a real speaker or of pointing out, in direct fashion, an actual deity. But that means that the discourse of Genesis must be "linked to an author" wherein "the role of "shifters" is more complex and variable."[11]

Well aware that I am arguing in circles, caught in the centripetal force of a complex and variable text that only tightens the tautological relation between author function and actual writer, I will repeat once more my belief that this elenctic situation is caused and contained by the "anonymous function." Furthermore, my counter theses of the anonymous function, though crude, uncategorical, and slavishly dependent on Foucault's theses of the "author-function," turn the author-function on its head, turn it into an *ignoration elenchi*, or "ignorance of proof." This means that it is a fallacy in logic to suppose that the point at issue—the anonymous function—can be proved or disproved by an argument—the author-function— which proves or disproves something not at issue. That is, *the author-function is not at issue in Genesis. The anonymous function is what is at issue. To use the author-function to prove or disprove the anonymity of God through the theses of authorial uniformity, regularity, and historicity is a fallacy not only of logic, but also of Logos itself* (Logos being the ultimately anonymous Word of History.)

The fact remains, however, that however liberal the law of binary relations in permitting the sublation and transgression of a dominant term by its suppressed term, the dominant term of argument cannot be eliminated, even under the logic of its obvious ignorance of proof. I need the deictic situation of the author function in order to privilege the anonymous function's elentic situation (whose other meanings along with cross-examine and refute are transgressive: "to shame, to scold, to swear"). Nor should it go unnoticed that

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Foucault does supply another possibility in his essay. He admits that he has "given the term "author" an excessively narrow meaning" at times. He pauses to remind the reader that it is easy to confuse the author as a real, phenomenal person, and the author as a circum-textual, epi-phenomenal, function. After all the rigmarole of shifters in authored and authorless texts, he asserts that

> it is obvious that even within the realm of discourse a person can be the author of much more than a book—of a theory, for instance, of a tradition or a discipline within which new books and authors can proliferate (145).

He concludes, as we mentioned above, that "such authors occupy a "transdiscursive" position." Since he believes that "Homer, Aristotle and the Church Fathers played this role," why might we not therefore conclude that "God" also occupies this "transdiscursive" subject position? Whereas the Church Fathers (many of whom were anonymous) for example, were once living authors, and might be called "initiators of discursive practices" (145), *we might well call the author-ity of God in Genesis the initiation of anonymity as the transdiscursive alternative to the intrinsic norms of authorship*. This declaration needs some clarification before we can complete our exegesis of the anonymous in *Genesis*.

By extending Foucault's argument about initiators of discursive practices to their (Il)Logical origin in God's rhetorical situation, I am in danger of contradicting my Nietzschean belief that there is no origin or point of return. This pitfall is avoided however by always remembering that anonymity, as a discursive practice, is a primary point of reference in any speculation about the origins of discourse. If its origination point is to be appreciated it must be traced (or its traces would be found) in the earliest existing texts. Foucault distinguishes between origins of "rediscovery", "reactivation", and a "return."

My sense of these distinctions eliminates the first, since the "rediscovery" of the anonymous function would have the effect of an "analogy or isomorphism with current forms of knowledge that allow the perception of forgotten or obscured figures" (145). My capacity for tautology is large, but to state that the anonymous author function allows us to clearly locate and understand anonymous figures has the analogical effect of asking the proverbial snake which has swallowed its own tail to cough up the truth of its continuous (dis)appearance. (The Anonymous as a primary signifier is, in any case, more about shedding, than swallowing, the philosophical skein of Identity.)

Adapting Foucault once more, we could consider more clearly the "reactivation" of the anonymous as a

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primary point of present historical reference--that it "refers to something quite different: the insertion of [anonymous] discourse into totally new domains of generalization, practice, and transformations" (145). The recent national concern with the privacy domains of the Internet and the World Wide Web clearly demonstrates anonymity's general, practical, and transformative insertion. (I will take up this sense of reactivation in my analysis of anonymous discourse as a transformative practice for composition pedagogy in Chapter Four.) But whatever one's sense of Biblical scholarship or the contemporaneity of hermeneutics, it hardly qualifies as opening up "totally new domains."

I have no immediate hermeneutic choice, then, but to return to the "phrase, "return to," Foucault's third distinction. If I "return to" *Genesis* as one of anonymity's most primary points of reference, "it is because of a basic and constructive omission, an omission that is not the result of accident or incomprehension" (146). That omission turns out to be the anonymous representation of "God" as the self-admitted/omitted personification of all discursive initiation. Following Foucault's definition of how this fundamental omission operates, the absent character, "God," becomes a "barrier imposed by [His own] omission."

In my exegetical return to *Genesis* I want to show that this paradoxical notion of God's omission or absence as "[b]oth the cause of [His anonymous] barrier and means for [His anonymous] removal" "arises from the discursive practice in question." The discursive practice in question involves an unnamed and unknown writer devoted to the representation of an essentially unknowable, onomastic character--"God". There is no real return but only and "always a return to a text in itself, specifically, to a primary and unadorned text with particular attention to those things registered in the interstices of the text, its gaps and absences." *Genesis is* just such a text. To return to it as the initiation of anonymous discourse is to return "to those empty spaces that have been masked by omission or concealed in a false and misleading plenitude" (147).

As I read and adapt Foucault's call for a return to a textual absence that transdiscursively initiates the metaphysics of presence, it is not a stretch to transpose his conclusion that "it [i.e. the eternal return of the anonymous function] is an effective and necessary means of transforming discursive practice." Why is my insertion of the anonymous no distortion or some sort of Bloomian "misprision" of his intention for the author function? The answer is supplied by Foucault and involves five (quintessential) reasons.

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First, my sense of these "returns...tend to reinforce the *enigmatic* link between an author and his works" (emphasis added).

Second, if that link is enigmatic, then it cannot be an absolute condition that a "text has an inaugurative value precisely because it is the work of a particular author"; that is, "our returns are [also] conditioned by this knowledge" [of the anonymous function].

Third, "[b]ringing to light," the book of *Genesis* "to the extent that we recognize it as a book" [by Anonymous], "can transform not only our historical knowledge, but the field of" [discourse theory] "--if only through a shift of accent or of the center of gravity."

Fourth, "[t]hese returns [to the Anonymous], an important component of discursive practices, form a relationship between "fundamental" ["God"] and "mediate" [Adam/Eve] authors, which is not *identical* to that which links an ordinary text to its immediate author" [who, in the case of Genesis, is "Anonymous"] (emphasis added).

Fifth, "the "author-function" is sufficiently complex at the level of a book or a series of texts that bear a definite signature. It also has "other determining factors when analyzed in terms of larger entities--groups of works or entire disciplines," according to Foucault (147). How much more complex then is the "anonymous function" which appears to shadow and answer Foucault's adumbrations of the author question? With the logic of the anonymous function now (un) settled to our total (dis)satisfaction, I can now continue a counter-exegesis of *Genesis*.

The Name of Anonymous: 'The Lord God of Your Fathers'

I now move to consider three sections of *Genesis* in which the character "God" is portrayed by its anonymous writer as an authority who cares about preserving rather than punishing those created in "our image." All three sections have in common the theme of "the Proper Name as set forth by Foucault and reconsidered above. Two sections are from *Genesis* --17:1-5, where God makes his covenant with Abram and changes his name to Abraham; and 32:24-30, where "a man" wrestles with Jacob and his name is changed to Israel. I will also comment on the identity of God's anonymity in *Exodus* 3: 2-15, where Moses encounters "God" in a "burning bush." All three passages highlight the dialogical acquisition and transference of authoritative names even as the name of God remains anonymous.

As an early interlocutor of the Bible--first as a very small child listening in Church and in Catholic

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school, later as a voracious reader re-searching my identity apart from religious orthodoxy—I was always fascinated by the hide and seek character of "God." You can't get very far into the Bible without noticing that "God" cyclically calls on his male creatures—from Adam to the last of the Prophets (excluding Jesus, interestingly)—in this way: "So and So, where are you?" And So and So invariably answers: "Here am I, Lord." This sense of identity as a matter of spatio-temporal location helped me to dimly discern that an "other" axis of identity—*Who am I?* — was also at work in these call and response rituals. The "identity crisis" in *Genesis* of course is summed up by the answer of a vexed 'God" to Moses' question, *Who am I and Who are You?* (That answer—"I AM WHO I AM"—is said with such emphasis I can almost hear the "GODMANIT!" that has presumably been expurgated by certain anonymous "Church Fathers".)[12]

More seriously, the "identity crisis" in *Genesis* can be thought of as rising, falling and melding along two amplitudes of identification. The first is the heterogeneity of God's authority. The second, which actually causes the first, is the hermeneutic finding that the authorship of *Genesis* is itself heterogeneous, comprising at least three, and perhaps four anonymous writers. (Arguably, when we read this "book" we are reading a text that should rightly be re-titled *HeteroGenesis*. That coinage re-cognizes Foucault's thesis that the author-function has never been stable over time, sometimes enduring, even relying on, anonymous authorship, other times, making its proper(ty) claims via a proper name.)

To extend something of the ersatz presence of the early creator "God" to that of a more political chieftain God, the anonymous writer of *Genesis* 17 has this "God" renew the Covenant that was broken by Adam when he took Eve's lead and ate of the Tree of Life. This "God" "appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God.... And I will make my covenant between me and thee.... And Abram fell on his face" (17: 1-3). We have here a now familiar character ploy and communicative device. Face-to-face interaction with God fuses the deictic and elentic energies described above. In effect, the announcement of God's "presence" is tantamount to the concealment of an "identity." This primordial anonymity has long maintained its (r)evolutionary "spin" in modern press coverage of political and governmental activity: the rhetoric of full, authoritative disclosure is possible only through the invisibility or dazzling vagueness of some 'highly placed, official source.' In contemporary terms, readers of political news must fall on their faces, unable or unwilling to demand full recognition of the identities of their own elected authorities.

Abram's face being well hidden from the well hidden face of Being, the writer then reports that "God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee..." (17:4). Again, we find an

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evasion of who or what God's "me" is. In its stead, Abram is given what "we" (the faithful) are supposed to believe is tantamount to the identity of God. His "Covenant"--his agreement to meet with his helpmeet or proxy-- is his Identity. His Word--Logos--is Identical to what we might call the "me", ego, or self. "God" then performs the sort of flapdoodle nominalism that Frank Baum parodizes through that humbug from Omaha, "The Wizard of Oz": "Neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (17:5).

To underscore the indivisibly "genetic" structure and function of his Logos, "God" promises to "establish my covenant between...thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (17:17). It is no secret that hermeneutics, despite its seminal tie to secrecy--the "hermetic seal,"--is all about the bloody rupture of truth, the leakage of meaning, the secretion of signifier into signified, until everything is actually "significant" to any given interpretant. The covenant of "God", as it underwrites Judaeo-Christian identity, is that its efficacy springs from a literal undercutting of this hermetic seal in all male members who "must needs be circumcised: and [only then] my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (17:13).

Crazily, any newborn male with the hermetic seal of his foreskin not cut off is a "soul [that] shall be cut off from his people; [for] he hath broken my covenant" (17:14). What God's chosen "people" amounts to is a triple mutilation in the form of an historically *ungenerous* exclusion of certain *genitalia*, of a certain *gender*, and most certainly, of the *genesis* of cultural difference. The entire project and projection rests significantly on the exclusion of women, and ultimate anonymity of Woman.[13] All this primordial prejudice, all this "genetic" damage, is Author-ized by an anonymous writer in the ambiguously (in)direct speech of an unseen character. That character's unspeakable name enables the equation of that anonymous speech with the idea of Identity itself--the bloody *cum* seminal circumcision of the sexual, the familial, the gendered, the ethnic, the racial, the national.

In *Genesis* 32: 24-31, Jacob (son of Isaac, grandson of Abraham), is met by "God" through a proxy, "a man" who is generally interpreted to be one of "the angels of God" (32.1) whom Jacob meets at the start of his journey. It is an odd passage that reiterates Cottle's sense that subjection through naming is an "odd concept." Jacob gets into a wrestling match with this nameless "man" in the middle of the night and wrestles him to a draw "until the breaking of the day" (32. 24). Frustrated, this (over)"man" resorts to the dirty trick of using supernatural powers of what amounts to "accupressure" and puts "the hollow of Jacob's

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thigh out of joint" (32.25). But Jacob wrestles on. Reminiscent of a vampire, the angel of God begs

Jacob to let him go "for the day breaketh. Clearly aware that he has an unparalleled opportunity for

advancement, Jacob refuses, "except that thou bless me" (32.27). In what follows I see as a remarkably

representative anecdote of the anonymous-function, or at the very least, yet another example of anonymity's

binary relation—its historic, virtually "genetic," covenant— with identity.

> And he said unto him, What is thy name? And [Jacob] said, Jacob.
> And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou
> power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.
> And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore
> is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.
> And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have see God face to face, and my
> life is preserved. (*Genesis* 32. 27-30)

Cottle, in a chapter titled "The Acquisition and Transference of Names," makes much of this passage.

He calls it "[o]ne of the most haunting stories in the Bible" in that it exemplifies his assertion that "the

privilege of possessing it [i.e. a proper name] and the right to change it are jealously guarded" (36). What

Cottle sees in the ex-change of names between Jacob and "God" (the former becomes "Israel" or 'Prince of

God', the latter "Penuel" or 'the face of God') is that "a whole new life for the Hebrews is implicit in [this

exchange]" 36. Because Cottle is writing about *Names*, while I am writing about *Namelessness*, it would

be expected that his angle of interpretation would differ from my own, even as we are [mis]taking different

sides of the same hermeneutic co[i]n.

What I see of course is God's high-handed evasion (a mixture of arrogant refusal covered by a blessing)

of Jacob's legitimate desire to know the name of his nemesis. Jacob identified himself upon request and

expected to know the man's identity in turn. Clearly, when the question was met with a question and a

blessing, Jacob inferred he had met his maker. "God" apparently disappears before this more than

competent, self-confident "Prince of God" gets it into his head to prohibitively name—or, in a truly

transgressive act, *rename*—"God." Instead, "God" remains anonymous (under cover of that universal

pseudonym). Jacob not daring to describe the person, designates the place of the struggle, 'Face of God.'

The anonymous writer of this tale never of course has Jacob describe the face of god. We are only told

that he has seen the main 'Man' "face-to face." Given the Hebrew's fear of pronouncing the name of God,

and their habit of re-presenting his face as unbearable, as of the sun, it is sensible to conclude that Jacob is

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expressing profound relief at the end of this passage. He says that he has seen God face to face yet his "life has been preserved." But if there were such a state as being super-sensible in our hermeneutics, I would conclude that Jacob's life has been preserved precisely because of the anonymity of the exchange.

The anonymity of the actual writer of this tale, an empirical fact of history, makes possible, as I have asserted above, the transcendental anonymity of the "God" character. It also enables the transactional anonymity running through the plot and development of some of the bible's central protagonists--Adam, Eve, Abraham, Jacob, and, as we will see, Moses. The narrative device, strategy, or *trope* of anonymity is becoming, I believe, quite clear. Whether it is to be thought of as an emergent property of the author function or the transmigratory ground upon which author-ity is figured and reversed is an open question. That the function of anonymity is indispensable to the Authority of *Genesis* is, I think, incontrovertible.

The final Biblical anecdote that best illustrates the function of anonymity as the enabler of a fundamental identity of a god and the collective identification of a "people" can be found in *Exodus* 3.2-6; 10-15.[14] Arthur Hertzberg, editor-commentator of *Judaism*, reminds us that unlike the covenant with Abraham, whose name change represented the creation of a familial tribe, "[t]he covenant with Moses is a new and wider one, with a people as a whole. This is symbolized by the "new name" by which God makes Himself known" 21). What Hertzberg is referring to of course is that the writers responsible for *Exodus* (different than those of *Genesis*) decided to once again raise, by transgressing, the "nomination barrier. "God" changes his name to "Lord" when speaking to Moses.

> And God spoke to Moses saying, "I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty but by My name of Lord I did not make Myself known to them.... Therefore say to the children of Israel, [*formerly known as the children of Jacob* renamed "Prince of God" by "God" now "Lord God"], 'I am the Lord, who will bring you out.... And I will take you to Myself for people and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brought you out.... I am the Lord' (*Exodus* 6: 2-8).

Moses, as is well known, deviates from the normative line of God's chosen. When we encounter him, he is nameless, almost purely anonymous given his unnamed parentage-- the son of an "man of the house of Levi" who took "to wife a daughter of Levi" (*Exodus* 2. 1). Levi, the third son of Jacob, had three sons, Gershon, Kohath and Merari. But the writers of the Bible, usually such sticklers for paternal genealogy, do not mention these names.

Moses, an anonymous bastard (and perhaps the issue of the incest taboo?), was named by an Egyptian woman who found him floating in a basket on the Nile River. Certain compassionate midwives--Shiphrah and Puah--who ignored the Pharoah's edict to drown all newborn Jewish males, had saved him. (Our anonymous writer, in a nice aside tells us that "[B]ecause the midwives feared God, ...he made them houses" *Exodus* 1. 21). He was then hidden away and then cast unto the waters by his unnamed mother in order to avoid the Pharaoh's version of "The Final Solution."

The initial encounter with God in the form of a burning bush reiterates the theme of hiding God's identity, keeping it mysterious, enigmatic, and powerfully anonymous. God's face cannot be seen; it is his voice that is crucial in all of these anecdotes, from the Garden of Eden to Mt. Horeb. (Though the anonymous writer of Jacob's encounter would have the reader believe that the face of God was seen, it is fairly clear that the prohibition on His Name, leaves His Face as anonymous as his voice.) In a now familiar gambit, the anonymous author handles the problems of identity and identification this way: "Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father [anonymous!], the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (*Exodus*. 3. 6). Obviously, the burning bush has petered out and God is something of a "man" with a face that Jacob is said to have seen. But Moses, unlike that more intrepid creation of our writer, is afraid to look at his face, never mind ask for his anonymical name behind all those patronyms.

As we know, "God" has chosen Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. Given Moses' sense of uncertainty about his origins, his question--"Who am I, that I should...bring forth the children of Israel...?" (3.11)--takes on all the modern freight of an identity crisis underpinning the "prophetic" question of his *authority* to undertake such an adventure. In *The Authoritative and the Authoritarian*, Joseph Vining combines legal and humanistic scholarship to inquire into sources of the law's authority. In a chapter titled "Authenticity: Connecting the Speaker and the Spoken," looks into the differences between the authentic authority of a Supreme Court judge and a literary author.

The difference seems to come down to one of "delegation" of authority, and with it, authenticity. Looking at the problem of clerks writing opinions in "the name of the judge" he concludes that "ghostwriting" takes many forms and is differentially (in)authentic or (non)authoritative as it runs across

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the incommensurate discourses of the legal opinion and literary production. Vining nuances the problems of author-ity's possible inauthenticity in this way, which leads us, literally, back to the source of the (Mosaic) law as handed down—delegated—by an unseen, effectively, ghost-writing, authority.

> Thus the problem of delegation is not simply one of deceptive packaging, which is immaterial and can be forgotten (as the dust jacket of a book is forgotten) because it is the writing that is important, not is packaging.... But, it may be said, justices do not speak for themselves even when they themselves think and speak. They speak for the Court. Great authorities, it may be said, rarely speak for themselves. Moses came down from Mount Sinai with tablets purporting to have been written by the finger of God.... The only difference seems to be that the justices sign their own names when speaking for another and Moses did not....[T]he putative author and the true author are separate, yet the texts have had authority. Knowing, or believing, or assuming that Jehovah himself did not cut the tablets does not seem to affect the authority of what is written on them (55-56).

What Vining appears to be overlooking, as with so many commentators on the problem of authority, the sources of its authenticity, etc., is that some function or form of anonymity is always near to hand in these transactions between proper authority and a properly named identity behind such authority.

When Jacob essentially asks "God", *Who are you?* His answer is a name change and a profound promotion. "God" is made to perform a similar evasion and indirection when answering Moses' quest[ion] of identity *qua* authority: "And he said, Certainly I will be with thee" (3.12). Moses wants to know who he is in both an essential sense of identity and a performative sense of his authority. All he gets is the assurance of an unseen, anonymous presence—"God—whom he "shall serve...upon this mountain." It turns out, however, that our anonymous writer is as vexed by a divine identity gambit as all thinkers (and believers) should be. The writer then turns the same characterological trick that was done with Abraham and Jacob, lending Moses their same level of hermeneutic suspicion or brinkmanship.

> And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me , What is his name? What shall I say unto them?
> And God said unto Moses, I AM WHO I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you (3.13-14).

Much has been made of this passage.[15] My first sense that it had real carrying power into a child's life beyond the walls of a church was in the cartoon *Popeye the Sailor Man*, who habitually pronounced, in a speedy riff "IamthatIam!" Popeye used it in a humble yet cooly confident sort of way. There was a what-you-see-is-what-you-get finality to his way of making no excuses for his identity. It would have taken a far more tongue in cheek writer, willing to push much further the anxiety of a Moses or Abraham, or the incipient skepticism of a Jacob into a character who might ask God:

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Tell them 'I AM' sent me? You've got to be joking. I have no credibility as it is, and you want me to base my assumption of leadership of an entire Community on the premise that your Authority is a tautological reduction of Identity in and of itself—that I spoke, on condition of Anonymity, with someone named 'I AM?' They'll think me an insane solipsist. Just tell me who you are. What's you're real name, so that I might share the Identity of its Authority with our Community?

In a connection to this passage and shadowing our ongoing theme, Marmorstein quotes *K. Abba b. Mamal*, who paraphrased the God/Moses exchange in this way.

> 'God says to Moses, "Thou wilt know my name? I am called according to my deeds. When I judge the creatures, I am xxxx; when I fight the wicked], I am xxxx; when I leave the sins of man in suspense, I am xxx; and when I am compassionate, I am xx! " ' (52). [As I don't know the Hebrew, nor do I have typography to reproduce it, I have substituted an *x* for each of the original letters in each word.]

We see in this Rabbi's paraphrase of the Exodus passage a conflation of the arrogant, evasive God answering the natural and justifiable inquiries of Abraham and Jacob. We also see the fundamental philosophy of *nominalism* that is underwritten by what I have been calling the anonymous-function in these anonymous writers' repeated representation of 'God' as a naming, nameful, yet maddeningly nameless character.[16]

It is as if the anonymous writer(s) of this passage became aware of his/ her/ their excessive, transgressively anonymous epithet at the end of 3:14. Immediately after the writer tells us that the character 'God' tells Moses that "I AM hath sent me unto you' 3:15 that writer seems to pull back his/her character into a semblance of rationality. The writer has some pragmatic awareness that genealogy, however much a function of anonymity, would better advance Moses' political chances.

> And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel. The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial into all generations.

3.16 begins with "Go...." and virtually repeats this patrimonial appeal word for word, as recognizing that the cranky enigmatic (a)nominalism of *IAM* had fallen a bit awry. But again, a cursory glance at this four part genealogical evocation reveals that the name of 'God' remains up for grabs. Which name is his name "forever" that will serve as an eternal generational "memorial"? The reader now very well knows what my answer is. It is the anonymous function, the fluid pseudonymity of Identity itself, that has become eternalized—and internalized—for all generations requiring a "religious" (literally "to bind") identification with what the originator of Critical Theory, Max Horkheimer, has called "the Totally Other."

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(Too?) Much has already been made, in both the body of my text and in footnotes, of the use of pseudonymity to create a divine presence from an essentially absent and anonymous character. Those who initially wrote "God" into existence recognized the importance of maintaining an enigmatic atmosphere even as the character of a Creator who just "Is" had to be named in some way. As the Prohibition on His Name came into effect, new names were substituted. But neither the writers of *Genesis* nor of *Exodus* were operating under that Prohibition. To achieve the (ob)scenic truth effect of a divinity that *is* unknowable making itself known these writers initiated and continued (through acts of redaction) the "nomination barrier" whose final cause is the "anonymous function."

Enough representative anecdotes have been presented that the reader should be able to *divine* what I mean: take out the names "God" and "Lord" and you are left with a funny, wise yet foolish, often irascible self-referentaility. The rule of "Me", "Myself, but most of all that great discursive solvent, the anonymous "I", dominates these anecdotes. This first person point of view, under the screen of third person autobiographical voice points, I think to Foucault's definition of discourse as "universal mediation": "when all things come eventually to take the form of discourse,...then all [will] be able to return to the silent interiority of self-consciousness" (157).

When I consider the legacy of the Bible's early anonymous writers, I don't think it can be over-stated that their most outstanding achievement (because so rhetorically understated it resists rhetorical understanding) is this subjective projection from behind and beyond a nomination barrier. But studies of texts far more ancient than those of the bible have clearly established a link between the anonymous Semitic writers of *Genesis* and their Babylonian, Sumerian and Mesopotamian predecessors. The device of the anonymous third person autobiographical voice is equally operative in *Gilgamesh*, though the density and gravity of its nomination barrier leaves much to be desired by those who believe in only One True Anonymous writer whose Name returns all to the silent interiority of no Other consciousness.

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Gilgamesh: The Genesis of Third Person Autobiography

Many pages back I had said that Foucault's theme linking writing and death could be best illustrated by considering *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the oldest known piece of "fictional" writing yet discovered.[17] It is fitting to apply his characterization of contemporary writing and writers to its ancient situation in *Gilgamesh*.

> If we wish to know the writer in our day, it will be through the singularity of his [or her] absence and in his [or her] link to death, which has transformed him [or her] into a victim of his [or her] own writing (140).

We now know that Foucault was mainly addressing the metaphysics, with a nod, perhaps, to the rhetoricity of a writer's relation to his or her text (as in "What matters who's speaking?") By accessing the work of Piotr Michalowski, Mesopotamian scholar, we can better understand how the rhetoricity of anonymity is inevitably tied up with its historicity. Whereas for Foucault, the voice of the author amounts to a theory of indifference, for Michalowski, "[t]he voice is more than sound: it is the locus of authority" (182). Both Michalowski's assertion about the ancient anonymous writer of *Gilgamesh* and Foucault's assertion about the indifference and absence of the writer in our own day can be brought together. Their synthesis serves as an "olamic" (or, depending on one's tradition of immanence or transcendence, "kairotic") reminder that anonymity does not mean the end of a text's import. On the contrary, anonymity can be seen to be the "formal" and possibly "final" cause of a text's Authority.

The work of Kramer has shown us that *Gilgamesh* is "The First Case of Literary Borrowing" (181). The notion of a properly named Author, with its hard and fast intention as the property of a copywright, simply didn't exist at the time *Gilgamesh* was finally cobbled together. Writing in 1985, Kovacs takes up Kramer's 1950's realization that Mesopotamian literature was a culture of literary borrowing. He applies it to the going concern with the author this way: "As was traditional in Mesopotamian literature, "authorship" consisted largely in the creative adaptation of existing themes and plots from other literature to new purposes" (xxi-xxii). Borrowing and adaptations were not only commonplace in ancient literary circles, but as Michalowski, writing in 1996 has it, they were expected at a time "when anonymity of authorship was the rule" (185).

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In other words, "collaborative", "patch", and what our hierarchical culture of the truly gifted autonomous author would consider "plagiaristic" writing was the rule of those giants in whose anonymous shadows we now stand.[18] Distinctions between writing as an original *action*--between "scribing" and "describing"--and all the acts of writing's *redaction* (gathering, adaptation, translation in order to get it ready for publication) simply did not hold at the time of the Sumerian *Gilgamesh* and its later Babylonian versions. Michalowski informs us that "the anonymity of Mesopotamian literature..." is precisely the kind of pervasive anonymity that Foucault imagines in 1969 will one day unfold and take hold. Why? How? Because it "...provides a marked contrast to the Romantic and post-Romantic concept of the author that we [in the wake of Foucault's anatomy of authorship's poltergeists] find so difficult to shake"(183).

Furthermore, through the deliberate anonymous construction of various ancient scholar-scribes, and the anonymously intentional destruction of those original tablets ("deliberately broken to bits when Nineveh was sacked in 612 B.C " Biggs, XII.), *Gilgamesh* speaks to us as a "double-voiced discourse," to adapt a phrase from Bakhtin. That is, the singular absence of its actual writer(s) provides the transformative link of "Gilgamesh" as the central character that epononymously becomes the text's "fundamental" Author. As we will see, King Gilgamesh, a mortal character seeking divine immortality, represents the very earliest cultural concern with Foucault's paradoxical sense of Writing as Death's ultimate victimizer of the Immortality it would supposedly confer upon the writer who would be an Author. Truly, if we would know the writer of our own day, we must, at some level, look back to the beginning of writing itself.

The advantage of starting an anecdotal history of the anonymous with a look at passages from the Judeo-Christian bible is that it helps to highlight the less obvious intentions and tropes of anonymity in a literary precursor such as *Gilgamesh*. Regardless of anonymity's overwhelming "identity", my argument that the writers of The Old Testament maintained anonymity in order to foist and foster the delusion of divine authorship is ultimately a thought experiment rather than an empirical conclusion. Foucault's themes and theses about authorship serve as speculative instruments that magnify and amplify anonymity's visibility or signal strength, but they are not the thing itself, and should never be confused as such. With *The Epic of Gilgamesh* the reader might come to conclude that my sense of the anonymous is a grasping at hermeneutic straw men or a running on Foucauldian fumes. I do believe the reader will be convinced,

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however, of the power of the principle of reversal to animate their reception of this text.

The modern Sumerian scholar S.N. Kramer has already been invoked in a footnote to remind us that certain ancient anonymous scholar-scribes of Babylonia nominated one of their own antecedents as the "mediate author" of *Gilgamesh*. As his "postmodern successor, Michalowski, makes abundantly clear, however,

> *Sin-leqe-unninni*, or someone under such a name, remodeled the older Gilgamesh tale on the pattern of an equally old Naram-Sin text [legendary King considered the "prime writer of his own deeds"] and added a prologue that turned the whole story into a third-person autobiography, thus radically changing the whole narrative (187-188).

Kovacs, whose translation we will be using as part of our anecdotal analysis, extends my argument linking the narrative innovation of this "third person" to an anonymous *vision, voice, and value*–that such an autobiographical presence sprang organically from an all-pervasive anonymous function.

> Though Tablet I of the Old Babylonian version is not extant, we know that it began at line 28 with the traditional royal hymn of praise. The narrator's opening lines were added by a later author who wanted to impart very different values, honoring not Gilgamesh's adventures but his achievement of understanding and humanity (2).

The fact that the name of a scholar-scribe was nominated from among an anonymous collectivity that had in turn borrowed heavily from anonymous Sumerian sources to create the Babylonian original is of course interesting, given the present thesis. But because "source analysis" is neither my specialty nor the heart of my obsession, such questions of historicity pale and fall away in comparison to questions of anonymous rhetoricity, of unidentifiable voices of author-ity that continue to speak to and resonate with otherwise incommensurate communities of interpreters.

My residual passion for literary themes and problems, particularly those that point up the heights and depths of (mis)understanding and (in)humanity will not go away however. That is why it is important for my thesis of the anonymous-function that *Gilgamesh* too, according to Kramer, "revolves about forces and problems common to [humankind] everywhere through the ages." Of these forces and problems, I will focus on "the impelling urge for fame and name", "the all-absorbing fear of death," and its binary other, "the all-compelling longing for immortality." According to Kramer, it is "the varied interplay of these emotional and spiritual drives in [humankind] that constitutes the drama of the "Epic of Gilgamesh"– drama which transcends the confines of time and space (183). Now that we are familiar with the Hebraic

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concept of *olam* (with its obvious complement to the Greek concept of *kairos*) it becomes all the more "timely" to consider the possibility that the anonymous-function—as an authoritative absence— has a timeless role in this sense of spatio-temporal transcendence or "presence." In other words, "the impelling urge for name and fame" is continuously transgressed by the equally compelling desire (in the form of a cultural directive) for collaborative namelessness and obscurity.

Before we can get to representative anecdotes that elucidate pet themes and theses, a fuller summary of Michalowski's findings on the "third person" autobiographical construction are in order, since such a "voice" or tropic projection reminds us of Foucault's idea of a "third" ego in the structure of authorship. It should also remind us a bit of what is going on in the book of *Genesis*.. As with the epic of *Gilgamesh,* it is also narrated in the third person. My adaptation of Foucault's description of pronoun shifters and their relation to the projection of various "egos" by an "author" purportedly "fundamental," "actual," or "mediate," was meant to implement and underscore the projection of God's "ego." In other words, the books of *Genesis* and *Exodus* are to be treated (by secularists and orthodoxists alike) as a "third-person autobiography" of "God".

According to Michalowski, where these two grand narratives part company is in the flood story. In *Gilgamesh,* (which is universally agreed upon to be far older than the so called divinely authorized Old Testament version featuring Noah and "God"), the flood story "was used for an amazing new narrative purpose, one that appears to have been an innovation within Mesopotamian literature" (188). It turns out that this innovation was the anonymous deployment of this "third person autobiography." This primordial literary innovation within *Gilgamesh* uses the autobiography of "Uta-napishtim" (the very first "Noah" figure). Without descending into this part of the actual text, it is important to treat this "historicist" situation in some detail before considering specific passages that exemplify the themes of name and fame, and of death and immortality. Micahlowski must be our interpretive guide.

In essence, Michalowski's source analyses enables what he admits to be only an "intuition" that the inserted third person autobiography of "Uta-napishtim" "directs Gilgamesh to the ultimate end of his quest. He will achieve immortality only through the epic itself because his immortal fame [and name] will only be a function of the tale that he will write down with his own hand" (188). Of course, as Michalowski

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knows much better than I, the figure "Gilgamesh" is a character as much or as more as he is an actual historical personage. True, there was a King Gilgamesh of Uruk, who is credited with building the great walls of the city of Ur (from which we derive the term *ur-text*.) None of the scholarship I have read, however, gives credit of authorship to "Gilgamesh".)[19]

Taken together, Auerbach, Michalowski, and most recently Gallagher and Greenblatt, help us conclude that a millennium of Mesopotamian, Sumerian, and Babylonian cultural *mimesis* or "textuality was quite specific in its local knowledge and network of assumptions. As Gallagher and Greenblatt would have it, this textuality [was] "not a system distinct from lived experience but an imitation of it, and "imitation" (that is, representation) is the principal way human beings come to understand their existence and share it with others" (40). As it just so happened for thousands of years, however, ancient forms of *mimesis*, the principal way to understand and share--in effect, communicate--were pervasively anonymous.

Rhetorically and historically considered, Gilgamesh does not write down the tale with his own hand, *but the double anonymous screen of third person autobiographical positioning projects the mimetic or representational sense that "he" did so.* The third person autobiography of "Uta-napishtim" which Michalowski writes about occurs deep in the epic, at the end of the tenth and into the eleventh of the twelve surviving tablets that comprise The Standard Version. Its appearance is, according to Michalowski, unprecedented. It is the first person autobiographical voice which opens the Prologue of *Gilgamesh*, however--the opening lines which Kovacs attributes to a later anonymous author who wanted to impart a very different sense of vision, voice, and value-- that must first concern us.

Even though patch written by a later anonymous writer, it has become the locus of all the tablets' authority. And though, strictly speaking, this narrative voice cannot be considered "third person autobiographical," I consider it, according to a Bakhtininan rhetoric, a *superaddressee.* In other words, there is the person of "Gilgamesh" ("He who has seen everything"). There is the person of the writer who is speaking to us about this person who has seen everything. Yet if we follow in the considerable wake of both Foucault's discursive histories and Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, we find, first, that author and narrator are never one and the same persona. Second, this authorial projection of an "other" voice to speak to a reader, is often, according to Booth, an "unreliable narrator" and has been so at least since

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Henry James' fiction. He writes, "Some of our greatest problems come when we are given another character as unreliable as the hero to his ambiguous story" (339).

According to Booth, there is a tendency in modern fiction for such characters to disrupt the "normative" function of narration which has been regulated by a Western tradition of "rhetorical purity." This sense of extends to narrative vision, voice, and to the (e)valuation of what happens in the story as being consistent, ingenuous, trustworthy--in essence "reliable." [20] At some point this reliability is undermined by authorial shifts in perspective. Part of what I am arguing is that the ambiguous figure of the unreliable narrator so far preceded the "modernist" experiments of James that it can either be likened to the discursive equivalent of "the lost wax method" or it is overtly operating in the ancient culture of anonymous discourse that produced *Gilgamesh, The Odyssey*, and *The Bible*. Furthermore, anonymity transgresses this tradition of rhetorical purity even as it underwrites a tradition of transcendental author-ity.

Thus, in narrator at the opening of *Gilgamesh* we surmise that an unknown author (very unreliably known as "Sin-leqe-unninni") emended the opening of *Gilgamesh*. He or she did so to create a persona who is not writing (his? her?) first person autobiography. He or she is instead addressing a super "third" person who is meant to "identical" to the person of Gilgamesh, that part human, part divine, heroic king. It is difficult to rely on this narrator, who is obviously re-presenting "Gilgamesh" as a posthumous figure. But because this anonymous narrator is the projection of an anonymous author, its double unreliability performs a positive reflection or redaction upon the rhetorical position of the reader in Western history.

Much in the same way that two negatives added together equal a positive number, this superadded anonymity paradoxically falls into the sort of narrative reliability that has constituted the tradition of rhetorical purity--or so I would I argue. Moreover, anticipating a Bahktinian rhetoric, these heterogeneous of elements of (un)reliability create the reflexive conditions that (im)personate a reading self. In a very real and most lasting sense, then, the originally anonymous narrator envisions, voices, and values the endless anonymity of the reader. The polarity of these anonymities creates a sense of community, identity, and authority which transcends any particular immanence of authorship --whether original, mediate, or one more author-itative translator--and readership.

In this shifting rhetoric of the anonymous--at once embedded" in all embracing ancient culture of

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anonymity, and floating free as a narrative future possibility--we have the "vatic" voice that Eliot and others have distinguished and that has become a staple assumption of literary rhetorical analysis. "Vatic" comes from a long etymological line having to do with a voice or song that is "possessed" somehow divinely. It correlates with Bakhtin's sense of the superaddressee. It also points up anonymity's nomination barrier where vision, voice, and value turn the quest(ion)of identity into a transparent veil--an ambi-valence--over someone, anyone who has seen everything, who will make known, who will teach in our own alikeness.

As for the actual representative textual anecdote from *Gilgamesh*, I present two versions. The first is a "transformation" by a poet who has no knowledge of the original language. The second is a strict "translation" by a Mesopotamian scholar, and only one of two women that I know of, who has rendered *Gilgamesh* for the umpteenth time into "authoritative" English.

> Fame haunts the man who visits hell,
> who lives to tell my entire tale identically.
> So like a sage, a trickster or saint,
> GILGAMESH
> was a hero who knew secrets and saw forbidden places,
> who could even speak of the time before the
> Flood because he lived long, learned much,
> and spoke his life to those who first
> cut into clay his bird-like words (Jackson, p.2; 1997).

> He who has seen everything, *I will make known* (?) to the lands.
> *I will teach* (?) about him who experienced all things,
> ...alike,
> Anu granted him the totality of knowledge of *all*.
> He saw the secret, discovered the Hidden,
> he brought information of (the time) before the Flood.
> He went on a distant journey, pushing himself to exhaustion,
> but then was brought to peace.
> He carved on a stone stela all of his toils
> and built the wall of Uruk-Haven (Kovacs, p.3; 1989).[21]

Our sense of anonymity's binary other has long since settled upon 'identity," (even as we must try to keep in mind that anonymity resists such singular reiteration, that if "identity" is its *media res*, "community" is where it begins, and "authority" is its end). Not surprisingly, I am keen on Jackson's use of "identically" and the triple role of "sage, trickster, saint" used to describe "Gilga" ("mesh" being a generic epithet for "hero"), but which also point back to the identity of the narrator behind "my tale." Kovacs' more strict translation places the first person "I" of this narrator up front and center, but does not,

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like Jackson, or those I featured in my endnotes, transform "alike" into an identity issue.

Kovacs teaches that this anonymous narrator's addition of 27 lines, which has managed to displace what would be the original start of the poem given the loss of Tablet I, deviates from the norm of ancient anonymous authorship, according to Michalowski. As an atmospheric historicist, Michalowski equates Gilgamesh's fame with his ability to write down the tale of his quest— to perform the first autobiography. The quest for fame is tied up with self-authorization in the form of an autobiography whose author-ity derives not from a first person, but from a third person point of view. His argument must lead us, he asserts, "back to the beginning of the text—in Sin-leqe-unnini's version—to the fact that whole composition is an elaborate *naru*, a gigantic royal inscription" (188). (Kovacs and Micahlowski agree that the name "Sin-leqe-unnini" is not a proper name at all, but is itself pseudonymic cover operation of what I am calling the anonymous function.)

It is to the beginning of the text that I have led us, given Kovacs' cue about the mediate author. I have tried to make clear the rhetorical complexity and effect of this anonymous text as a projection of a larger cultural discourse of anonymity. But I am not really up to it and must let Micahlowski confirm, and to some extent clarify, what I groping to understand about anonymity writ large, not just in terms of its Mesopotamian genesis.

The fact that the whole composition is a gigantic royal inscription, projecting the impression (however much obviously "ghost written") that it is the word of Lord Gilgamesh reminds us of how *Genesis* is assumed to be "the Word of the Lord." This notion of super-inscription and of a superaddressee should tell us something too about the rhetorical power and performance of the anonymous function over the course of history, as a force of history. The parallaxis of Kovacs' anonymous narrator and Micahlowski's thesis of an unprecedented third person autobiographical voice can be best understood if we can appreciate, according to Michalowski, "the commemorative nature of first-millennium Babylonian narrative." Like anonymity's network terminations of community and identity—the "commemorative" nature of Babylonian narrative

> *authority* is rooted in antiquity but [in the opening of *Gilgamesh*] now seeks authors and authorities, [and thus] reaches its highest level. It is a matter that we will have to rethink in the future, since our own notions of hero, author, and redactor are simply inadequate to handle such a situation. The Gilgamesh text is narrated in third person, is ascribed to an author named Sin-leqe-unninni, but is actually treated as a third person autobiography of Gilgamesh(188).

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If this is not a direct affirmation of Booth's "unreliable narrator" thesis, I don't know what is. It also, obviously, hurls its innovation as modernist, back to the very beginning of narration itself. It is also an illustration of Foucault's thesis of the work and of whether an anonymous work is not something written by a person called an "author." Always accompanying this authorial disappearance is the sure answer that the royal work of inscription bypasses "the individuality of the writer" who may or may not attain "status as an author" (140). I have presented, I think, a fairly persuasive scholarly case that the anonymous discourse culture that produced *Gilgamesh* was in existence to create the illusion that the text is a "giant royal inscription."

Furthermore, the narrative voice behind that inscription achieves a "vatic" third person status equivalent to that of the man-god, King Gilgamesh, speaking transdiscursively to all once and future readers. That is, the story of Gilgamesh's story, though unattributable, is not at all unrealiable. Quite the contrary, it is highly conscientious—its motive and agency being not "vicious" but "vatic" in the best sense, and to a degree that only the anonymous-function can underwrite and thus guarantee. If this is be the case, then we must reverse our sense that *the anonymous-function* is an "unreliable" narrative structure dedicated to undermining readers' expectations through the kind of viciousness that Booth describes.

> It is not simply that 'the story of one's story' [i.e. narrative] has become more than the original idea [i.e. motif or theme of the story]; that in itself would not necessarily cause trouble. But the reflector, [i.e. "narrator"] in becoming *inconscient* about his own motives and about the reality around him, becomes a vicious agent in the story (347).

This is not the say that anonymous writing does not have its share of vicious agents (as we will see in the chapter on "A Pedagogy of Anonymity"). It is only to say that any consideration of the rhetoric of ancient fiction must assume more modernist motives and tendencies.

I will not burden my readers with the Boothian complexity of the Uta-napishtim third person autobiography which Gilgamesh listens to so as to learn how to achieve an immortality he fails to achieve. I have been trying to compress a Boothian with a Bakhtinian rhetoric so as to point up Micahlowski's and Kovacs' conclusions about *Gilgamesh* : that it ultimately derives the identity of its authority from an anonymous community of scribes. My larger point is that this squaring of anonymity with community, identity, and authority demonstrates the "historicist" credibility of the anonymous function. A legacy of individual reliability or autonomous purity was not the primary motives of ancient discourse. Immortality

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of fame and name were not to be achieved through the named property of a properly named author's *work*. The work of ancient anonymity was not caught up in our more covetous, meretricious—*vicious*—cult(ure) of authorship. It was more concerned with a vatic, *commemoritorious* (a made up word combining a "commemorative" and "meritorious") sense of author-ity.

The End of Gilgamesh: Anonymous Procreation or Famous Death?

I want to close out this section of representative anecdotes in pursuit of the anonymity of *Gilgamesh* with a cue from Kramer as quoted above—the interlocked problem of fame, name, death, immortality. If I intuit his universal thematic appeal argument for this epic correctly, he would, I think, conclude that the humanity and understanding to be found between two male characters who are the true prototypes for the "buddy film" lies ultimately in this epic's depiction of death/"hell." *Gligamesh* is, in Jackson's words, literature's "first recorded vision of afterlife (91). This takes place in the final. Twelfth Tablet. Gilgamesh visits his dearly departed friend Enkidu in hell. (Thus Jackson's poetic license in transforming the epic into an "envelope" with hell in the first line.) The reader is led at first to believe that Gilgamesh, though he has lost both his friend, and the secret of eternal life, has at least his fame and name inscribed upon the walls of the city he built. Whereas, for Enkidu,

> Hell became his home
> .... Not even the soldier's death-in-battle,
> with all its false and phony honor,
> helped Enkidu. Death just swallowed him, unrecognized (93-94).

In this passage we can see the eschatological linkage between death and anonymity which can not but underwrite perennialist attitudes regarding fame, name, and Authorship in whose hold the individual, who holds a ticket of passage of whatever class, might sail immortality's vast ocean. The unpublished work of mere writers gets swallowed, unrecognized. But if Foucault is to be believed, the work of the author is no less a death wish. More interesting, though, is the conversation Gilgamesh and Enkidu have when the former is permitted a short visit with his dead friend in hell. Gilgamesh, though utterly grief-stricken, is curious about death and identity:

> Speak to me please, dear brother,
> whispered Gilgamesh.
> Tell me of death and where you are (95).

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Gilgamesh then asks Enkidu a series of questions that revolve around the requirements and meaning of lasting fame. Most pointedly is his question about fatherhood, since Gilgamesh is remembered as the builder of the walls of Uruk (where, as we saw above, the story of his story is meant to be imagined as inscribed as an *Ur-text*). Nowhere in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is there mention of a genealogical or even a patriarchal legacy as with the "heroic" characters in *Genesis* or *Exodus*. As we will see, it is the mother of Gilgamesh, Ninsun, who "affirms the centrality of family and kin to human life, the importance of the private sphere to men who dominate the public sphere" (harris, 81). But once in hell, a different form of fame haunts Gilgamesh, the man, who has failed in his quest to become a god. He asks Enkidu: "Did you see there a man who never fathered any child?" And Enkidu answers: "I saw there a no-man who died." Back and forth, Gilgamesh asks about men who did or did not father, beginning with one child, and ending with seven children. Enkidu's answer is always joy for the father, and the anonymous loneliness for the childless man, ending with the immortality of the fully familied man, as in,

"And could you find a man with six or seven boys?"
"You could and they are treated as the gods" (95).

Given our ongoing dialectic between a transcendental and a transactional level of the anonymous, this final tablet of *Gilgamesh* is quite telling. It tells us that he has perhaps botched his quest for fame and name. He wore himself out seeking the secret of immortality. The only immortality he will achieve is having a giant royal inscription inside a wall of his own purported construction. The stories he hears in hell add up to a very different name for fame: the anonymous heroism of having and raising a family.

The dramatic poignancy of this last tablet is considerable, even if it did not bear so directly on my thesis as it is developed in later chapters. Even more to the historicist point of my thesis is the fact that this last tablet is often disdained and rejected by many translators because it is by another anonymous community of patchwriters come-lately (some few centuries hence). Kovacs, honoring the rules of a strict historical translation, leaves it out. Jackson, of a more poetic sensibility, perhaps understands the theme of rhetorical indifference—"What matters who's speaking?–how it manages, under condition of anonymity, to reverse the apathy (more toward *a-pathos*) of academic attributive authority into the poignancy of identity's common composition.

The paternalism of this dialogue in hell permits us to point our consideration of *Gilgamesh* in another

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direction: the historical anonymity of Woman. Michalowski is quite explicit about this when he traces the exceptions to the pervasive authorial anonymity in Mesopotamia. Significantly, these exceptions involve five texts by two women writers: Enheduana and Lu-Inanna, both priestesses. Given the pervasive anonymity and pseudonymity of the time, Micahlowski stresses that "there is no assurance that [either woman] was truly the author of these pieces." He concludes this way: "The uniqueness of these claims of authorship only serves to underline the anonymity of Sumerian literature" (184). What is perhaps an extreme case of waving a weak hermeneutic flashlight at such dark Sumerian stars, I want to pursue the anonymity of *Gilgamesh* in a more historicist-feminist direction, than that supplied by humanists like Kramer, or translators like Jackson.

The more poignant, "counterhistorical", and atmospherically anonymous alternative for closing out our analysis of *Gilgamesh* rests with the cue provided by Michalowski. He finds in the uniqueness of Sumerian claims to authorship by a couple of temple priestesses underlines the anonymity of Sumerian literature generally. What I find in his finding is the overwhelming identity of woman becoming progressively--historically--anonymous. In "The Marginalization of the Goddesses," Tikva Frymer-Kensky clearly shows how

> [t]his diminution of the goddesses continued and intensified in the Old Babylonian periods and later. There are very few stories about females in Akkadian literature, [the official scholarly term for the discursive culture in which *Gilgamesh* appears] and those females who do appear are generally in ancillary roles and in stereotypical figures of mother, advisor, and temptress (97).

After listing all "the major female figures of Sumerian literature [that] have shrunk [into sexual consorts] or disappeared" into that immanence that has come to mark Woman as Anonymous under The Name of the Father, Frymer-Kensky tells us that finally, "Nisaba's role as goddess of writing and patron of scribal schools was taken over by [the male god] Nabu" (97). With this poignant historical background before us, it is fitting that I summarize Rivkah Harris' "Images of Women in the Gilgamesh Epic," since it engages in the sort of counter-historical activity of the new historicism and draws on Foucault's principle of reversal in the bargain--what she calls "symbolic inversion."

True to Frymer-Kinsky's findings, Harris finds that "[t]he adventures of the heroes [Gilgamesh and Enkidu] preclude a primary role for women. In their dialogue in hell, only fathers and sons, not mothers

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and daughters, are linked to a legitimate sense of fame, name, and immortality. The force of the feminine, and the function of women, are confined to that of "intercessors, playing intermediary roles"(79). It turns out, however that two of the women, "wives," are significantly anonymous, whereas two prostitutes are given names and are thus elevated in status. Harris believes this role/status reversal—"symbolic inversion"— to be "[a] crucial element in the epic" and constitutes the earliest instance of such inversion. Quoting Barbara Babcock, editor of the study, *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, Harris defines symbolic inversion as

> any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic or artistic, religious or social or political (81).

We can ignore the general conclusion that anonymity is just such an "act of expressive behavior," that it presents a pervasive discursive alternative to all codes, values and norms, yet remains unacknowledged. *Gilgamesh*, however, much like the smaller of Burke's two concentric circles, is symbolic reversion's *ur text* operating within the much wider transdiscursive orbit that is the anonymous function.

Nor, I think, is this symbolic reversion reserved for marginal female characters. The liberties which Jackson takes in his opening trinity of epithets for Gilgamesh—"sage, trickster, saint"—wittingly reinforce this sense of reversion, particularly its most telling form—"the comic principle of inversion which involves a sudden, comic switch of expected roles" (Harris, 81). I say comic because the original epithet, the one that opens most translations of *Gilgamesh* is "He who has seen everything." That this great hero, in hell, is shown to have been quite blind as to what is important for posterity, certainly reverses the epic's dominant motif that an anonymous "fame" does not haunt, but instead insures, the act of "inscription" or *ecriture*. (Or, ever mindful of Foucault's own principle of reversal, Writing itself haunts the author's "work" insuring the anonymity of its fame.)

But rather than stand on Harris' feminist shoulders to wave my dim flashlight at the male stars of *Gilgamesh*, I wish to conclude where she does, but with an additional twist that the anonymous function always exerts. Harris has managed to notice something about the female characters in the epic of *Gilgamesh* that nearly two hundred years of male translation and commentary has been blind to and reduced to the depressingly familiar binocularism of the Mother/Whore spectrum.

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Relying on Hannah Arendt's distinction between the private and the public as detailed in *The Human Condition*, Harris reminds us that "[b]oth prostitute and tavernkeeper belong to the extra-domestic domain; both were important in the leisure activities of Mesopotamian men." But, unlike the two wives in the epic, the innkeeper and the prostitute are both named, "given individuality and personhood" (82). According to Harris, this comic inversion must have been enormously amusing to Mesopotamian audiences (at least the men.)

On the other hand "[t]he two married women in *Gilgamesh*, the wife of Utnapishtim [the only mortal to have achieved immortality and whose third person autobiography so complicates the narrative] and the Scorpion-man's wife, are unnamed , anonymous creatures" (84). As far as I can interpret, Harris does not find this side of the inversion comic. From my point of view it is nothing if not inversely, --and perhaps perversely-- poignant in that from the rhetorical position of their anonymity they ensure that Gilgamesh carries on his quest. Utnapishtim's wife gives Gilgamesh bread after he fails the sleep test that would grant him eternal life. The Scorpion-man's wife recognizes that Gilgamesh is part human and convinces her husband to assist him in his river passage. In these inversions I see the earliest instance of an *anonymous heroism* that became, in a modern example, the unspoken maxim of George Eliot's fiction. Harris concludes her fine investigation with a question

> The Gilgamesh Epic informs and reveals cultural stereotypes and ideals, perhaps
> even the irretrievable life experiences of its author(s), but what can it inform us
> about everyday life?

My answer relies, like so much of my interpretive momentum, on the metonymic function. Given the presence and power of the anonymous function (a presence I don't think Harris has adequately perceived in her interpretation), the question should end as "but what can the Gilgamesh Epic inform us about the anonymity of everyday life?" Rephrased thus, I think it teaches us far more than the nomination barriers that were erected by the later authors of the books of *Genesis* and Exodus. Also, with the interpolation of "anonymity" we have a reconfirmation of the discursive "anonymous heroism" that motivated the epic's authors. That much of what has passed for a pervasive everyday anonymity has been the resort and role of women is not a comedic, but a tragic, representative anecdote, one that is only glanced at in the even more patriarchally charged books of the Bible. My present scope does not permit consideration of Beck's analysis of the "discipleship paradigm." If it did, we would come to realize that in the books of *The New*

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Testament the figure of the anonymous womann returns with a poignancy that, as we have seen, has its genesis in *Gilgamesh*. In the interim, we will ttrn to an anecdote of the anonymous that represents its invulnerability and/or injury, but also symbolizes the "eye" of anonymity's discursive hurricane of centrifugal forces (the discourse of Authority), andd centripedal forces (the Discourse of Identity).

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The Odyssey of Anonymity

"Nobody is hurting me": Enlightenment and Anonymity

In our analysis of the anecdote from Homer's *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus cunningly saves himself from the literalist Cyclops, Polyphemus, who had promised to eat "Udeis" (*NoBody*) last, I will draw from several of these Foucauldian themes simultaneously to confirm and extend a now famous reading of the same passage by the critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment.*

If I were to apply any one of Focuault's themes, it would involve the performative feature of what I call the anonymous-function (which, in principle, reverses the author-function.) It seems clear enough that Odysseus' adoption of the protective and projective pseudonym "Udeis"—Nobody— is also an *introjective anonym*. It points ironically to his own properly named status as very much a Somebody—dispersing Ideal Ego #1 within the epic itself. Ideal Ego #2 is Odysseus as a key Authority figure in the mythic and ethical lifeworld of Ancient Greek culture. In terms of our "Western Canonical Tradition," the cunningly character of "Odysseus/Udeis" created by the Homeric author-function, (since we have no substantive knowledge of a personal author, "Homer"), begins to iconically blend, or stand in, with an anonymous Homeric Tradition, such that the duplicity of Nobody/Somebody effect becomes the original dispersion of Ideal Ego #3 from the anonymous-function of rhetorical indifference: "What matter who's speaking?"

But I will not pursue this line of analysis. I am more interested in tracing some of the isssues of identity and duplicity, impersonation and authenticity, suggested by this Homeric anecdote. For they help us to better build a case for the pedagogical use of anonymity as a rhetoric of community in which the disappearance of Somebody becomes the problematic opening within a course of composition where Everybody is reading what Nobody is writing. The purported author of *The Odysey* occupies a different category of authorial anonymity than of that of *Gilgamesh* or of *Genesis* in that he is named. The name of "Homer" remains, however, a textbook illustration of what Foucault means by the problem of the author's proper name. A recent article in *U.S. News &World Report* (July, 2000) reveals a growing popular fascination with issues of authorial attribution and authenticity that have been "business as usual" at least since the time of Nietzsche, and other 19th century founders of philological analysis. The article, by Jay

Tolson, is a vulgar, and therefore quite useful, reduction of the scholarly "problem" of authorial attribution. As part of a series the magazine inaugurated around the hype of "millenium fever" titled *Mysteries of History* the title poses this question: 'Was Homer a solo act of a bevy of bards?" The subtitle reads: *"Classicists have few clues but lots of theories"* (39).

What's most useful about the article is the way Tolson handles the historical literature on the identity of Homer—the living individual/personal author. Fifth Century Greeks had long since accepted the legend that Homer was a blind itinerant performer who lived, according to the notorious historical fictions of Herodotus, "400 years before my time—and no more than that" (Tolson, 39). No one ever doubted Homer's standing as personal author and "sole creator" of the epics that have come down to us until the early 18th century when Vico, extending the work of Bacon, began seriously upsetting canonical and curricular assumptions about Traditional Author-ity that would reach its satirical epitome with Swift's *The Battle of the Books*. Tolson skips this part of the disagreement over Homeric Authority to focus on the late 20th century.

We have scholars like Barry Powell who theorize an " 'Adapter' —the recorder of Homer's works"– versus Robert Fagles, the reigning king of Homeric translators who operates more on "feeling" that Homer was sole creator (39). What I find interesting in this struggle of theory and feeling about original versus evolutionary authorship is how it conforms to what we saw in Forster's distinction between the "information" and the "atmosphere" of author-ity. To say that one can't *believe* there was more than one "Homer," or that one *feels* the work of many hands is, I *believe and feel*, a confirmation of the anonymous function.

Aside what one or we might believe or feel, the information we do seem to have at present *The Odyssey,* as we have come to know it in its many translations from "the original," is itself a collection or composite of at least two texts—one truly primordial, the other more recent, as in "ancient." From the Ancient Greek, meaning "scraped again," the continuously erased and rescribed parchment manuscripts of *The Odyssey* —as well as those of the Old Testament and Gilgamesh—by unnamed and unknown hands ("Manuscribers"), can be seen in the patched palimpsestic writing of "Homeric" "mythic" and "epic" genres spanning centuries of "...a histrorical process which can still be discerned where the disparate elements of the Odyssey have been editorially reconciled" (Horkheimer and Adorno, 43). We haven't the space or scope to consider, however, this complexity of "blurred genres" supporting "blurred author-ities" amounting to

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anonymity's function as a transhistorical *palimpsest.*

In our final anecdotal approach towards a history of anonymity, we will focus on the name which Odysseus uses to deceive a one-eyed, flesh-eating, immortal demiurge—the Cyclops named Polyphemus. We will lean heavily on Horkheimer's and Adorno's chapter, "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment" in their now famous treatise, *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* As with so much of my research into critical literature that supports my thesis of an anonymous function, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* neither mentions the words "anonymous," or "anonymity," nor treats, in even an indirect way, their functions. Nevertheless, as founder's of what we have come to call "critical theory, Horkheimer and Adorno link the instrumental rationality of the Enlightenment subject to what they call "...the sophistic *double-entendre* of Odysseus' false name" (65). This, as we shall see, confirms much of what I have been trying to demonstrate as anonymity's ever-present function as a problematic solution of nominalist consciousness itself.

Simply put, the concept of Enlightenment Reason—starting with Bacon and finding fruition in Kant—"...has always aimed at liberating men [*sic*] from fear and establishing their sovereignty" (Horkheimer and Adorno, 3). This primal fear of primitive humans was directed at Nature, its awesome forces. Such terror gradually coalesced into reverence, and reverence into myth-making, magic, and the religious impulse—to literally "bind" the individual to the natural. Horkheimer and Adorno sum up the relation of terror to the sacred and therefore to the emergence of language as the original utterance of Self-Other identification in a new nominalist consciousness this way.

> The gasp of surprise which which accompanies the experience of the unusual becomes its name. It fixes the transcedence of the unknown in relation to the known, and therefore terror as sacredness (15).

Anonymous Nature, the Great Unknown (because Unidentical, Utterly Other and therefore reciprocally Unspeakable/Unnameable, but gradually identified in mythic, religious, and scientific versions of reason as a literal coming to *terms*), underscores the Known as a series of tentative *nominations* "...as evidence for an Other...[in which language expresses the contradiction that something *is* itself and at one and the same time something other than itself, identical and not identical" (15).

In other words, we are back to the philosophical discourse of the Origin—of Identity, Authority, Community. With this attempt at sketching the primordial function of anonymity in relation to the emergence of language as the technology of self-preservation and affirmation, of sameness amidst sheer, contingent difference, Horkheimer and Adorno posit "Odysseus" as "...a prototype of the bourgeois

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individual, a notion originating in the consistent self-affirmation which has its anicent pattern in the figure of the protagonist compelled to wander" (43).

What these two thinkers go on to argue in "Odysseus or Myth and Englightenment" is that this prototypical actor/seeker after sovereignty, of freedom from Natural Terror, in fact "...loses himself in order to find himself." And, given the confusion and conflation of older mythic texts with later epic texts that comprise the books of The Odyssesy, we see that, "[a]t the Homeric level, the identity of the self is so much a function of the unidentical, of dissociated, unarticulated myths, that it must derive itself from those myths (48). That is, the identity of the self must derive itself from the anonymous function.

But how does this prototypical, this new, self in the character of Odysseus accomplish this leap from undifferentiated anonymity into self-nominative identity, autonomy, and therefore authority? How does the "self" (*autos*)—the "I"—which "Homer" introduces in relation to Odyssesus' encounter with Polyphemus make itself Other to the natural order of otherness represented by the Cyclops? "Artifice is the means by which the adventuring self loses itself in order to preserve itself" (49). That is, Odysseus, as the prototype of enlightened self-consciousness, deceptively, but protectively calls himself "Udeis" (*No Body*) when he realizes that he might not survive the encounter with Polyphemus, that his body would be eaten as a sacrifice to expiate his original sin against Poseidon, father of the Cyclopes. Here is the key passage from *The Odyssey.*

> You, Cylops, asked my worthy name. This I will tell,
> and you must give to me, as promised, your guest gift.
> My name is "Udeis". *Odysseus* is what I am called
> by mother and by father and by all my friends.'

Later, the blinded, agonized Cyclopes reports to his fellows on who put out his eye.

> 'Friends, NoBody ["Udeis"] slays me by deceit; there
> was no force."
> And they, in turn, replied to him with these winged
> words:
> 'If Nobody there to you, alone, does violence,
> can you escape the sickness Zeus imposed on you?'

Recounting this story to his hosts, the Phoenecians, who had asked this "Udeis" (this "NoBody") to identify himself after his incognito story of linguistic conning and self-preservative cunning, Odysseus finishes his allegory of anonymity with this comment: "Now thus the Cyclopes spoke and left, and in my heart I laughed that name and clever scheme had so   deceived them all."

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One direction we might take in understanding how the anonymous function operates in this famous passage from one of the founding texts of Western literature is to look at its relation to what Judith Butler calls "linguistic "vulnerability." As we will see below, Odysseus' superior sense of an Austinian "how to do things with words" makes the Cyclops linguistically vulnerable to the homonymic blurring between the name of the hero, "Odysseus" and that of "Udeis" (NoBody). The use of the anonymous function to protect his identity (and his life) is a case of what I call anonymity's rhetorical immunity or, to modify Butler, "linguistic invulnerability."

The irony of the blind Polyphemus bellowing for help--"Nobody is hurting me"--and receiving none because of the non-descript, essentially anonymous, name Odysseus has used to identify himself is an exquisite, excruciating irony. It reminds that excitable, and "injurious speech" (Butler) is always possible under conditions of anonymity, even as it protects (in this case, justifiably) the identity of the speaker. In my reading of the Odyssesus/Udeis duplicity we see not only the transgressive power of naming as underwritten by anonymity, but their "traumatic" (Butler) power. The scope of this study, however, cannot take up the ethics of anonymity's relation to traumatic substitution, linguistic (in)vulnerability and injurious speech.[22]

In effect, what Horkheimer and Adorno refer to as "the sophistic *double-entendre* of Odysseus' false name," is both a no-name and one phonically self-same to his actual name. It the metonymic epitome of what I have been calling the variable and pervasive functionality of anonymity, of its play across the founding discourses of modernity and "enlightenment"—so-called.[23] Odysseus' self-sacrifice through the serious play of anonymizing while metonymizing his own name, confirms his standing characterization as being "cunning." For Horkheimer and Adorno, this nominalist, calculating consciousness—its "deceit and artifice" (50)--is at the center of enlightenment rationality. There also, at this originating, radiating center, is the dialectic of self-mastery through self-renunciation which Foucault made much of, and which we saw as integral to Nikolas Roses' attempt at a "genealogy of subjectification" or "a history of the person," the sources and technologies of authority that make for personality and inter-subjectivity. Again, uncannily, Horkheimer and Adorno ramp up, forty years earlier, to this same sort of genealogical approach in their "critical" theory of the Odysseus myth of rationality through anonymity.

The calculation that, once blinded, Polyphemus would answer his tribesman's question

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["Who is hurting you, brother?"] as to the source of this anguish with the word "Nobody!" —thus concealing the deed and helping the guilty man to escape punishment—is only a thin rationalistic covering (67).

That is, Horheimer and Adorno need to remind us that Odysseus' new found authority in playing the dialectic of enlightenment within vicious/virtuous circles within circles of imitation and deception, of identity and anonymity, that he will end in an extreme form of self-authorization—*hubris*. It is a neat ethical turn, for they want to instruct the reader that the dialectic of enlightenment, the mastery of nature through various forms of renunication and deception of otherness, has brought as much loss in reason as it has gained for civilization.

In their focus on the deception and artifice in the nominalized identity crisis between Odysseus as Somebody who becomes Nobody in order to survive as Somebody, Horkheimer and Adorno see our way past Odysseus' consummate *impersonation* as finally anonymous, a Nobody, whose enlightened self-interest saves him from the fate of his consumed companions.

> In reality, the subject Odysseus denies his own identity, which makes him a subject, and keeps himself alive by imitating the amorphous [more toward *anonymous* non-identity of Nature]. He calls himself Nobody because Polyphemus is not a self, and the confusion of name and thing prevents the deceived savage from evading the trap...(67).

Odysseus' adroit use of the anonymous function as a technology of self-mastery (through a tight orbit of nominal renunciation, enuciation, and denunciation) can be seen as *maladroit* and arrogant according to Horkheimer and Adorno. For it must be remembered that once he has escaped the cave of the now blinded Polyphemus, Odyssesus taunts the Cyclops, revealing anonymous concealment by yelling "..his real name and his origin" (68). This is an act of hubris—of insolence—and therefore of nominalist stupidity rather than one of anonymous author-ity, as I read and adapt the endlogic of Horkheimer and Adorno. Their conclusion is that, "...once having been known as nobody, lest he again become nobody, he must restore his own identity with the magic word [that is "Udeis" now reintonated to sound like *Odysseus*] already dissociated from rational identity" (68).

This is indeed an act of hubris in that Poseidon hears the name *Odysseus* rather than "Udeis" and pursues him once again with renewed vengeance. And, in perhaps their most insightful take on the Homeric anonymous function as it supports and subverts the author-ity of the proper name, they cap their

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charge of hubris this way: "The cunning of the clever man who assumes the form of stupidity turns to stupidity as soon as he surrenders that form. That is the dialectic of eloquence" (68). In other words, Odyssesus, a man, a King, in fact, who understands words, their distance from things, how they can refer to many things at once, or to no thing at all, just a stream of other words, very rationally—cunningly (literally "knowingly")— nominates the word in closest proximity to his own proper name. A cunning King suddenly becomes a stupid non-descript non-person—Nobody— with the slightest inflection of his own proper name.

In the technology of self-affirmation as renunciation that his practice of the anonymous function literally *proto-types*, the character Odysseus/Udeis had been relying on *sophrosyne*— the opposite of *hubris*. That is, however cunning and deceptive, the artifice of his double name game of protecting a heroic Somebody behind a vulnerable Nobody in order to reproject himself as heroic Somebody, was an act not of insolence but of the highest *discretion* and *prudence*. The anonymous function becomes a form of stupidity in the deepest sense: it is a act of astonishment, amazing the un-worded, in-eloquent Polyphemus. But as soon as Odysseus indiscreetly, arrogantly drops the anonymous persona, he has committed a "stupid" act in the worst sense. The sophrosyne of the anonymously functioning Nobody turns to the hubris of the properly named hero, Odysseus.

Thus, the anonymous function, as I read Horkheimer and Adorno's reading of this anecdote, is at the center of what they are calling the "the dialectic of eloquence" in which the authority and authenticity of discourse are in continuous, inter-subjective tension, in much the same way that Forster's twin functions of language as information and language as atmosphere inform his inquiry into anonymity. The charged atmosphere of Odysseus' properly named heroic, yet hubristic authority is a surface whose anonymous depth is the authentic (as in sophrosynically "prudent") information of being *Noman,* Nobody.

This problem between authenticity and authority and their relation to anonymity's proper-improper naming, its person-impersonating, or mask-unmasking effect has been picked up as we saw above by Thomas Docherty. In Part Two of his study, *Modern Authority* titled "Natural Authority" (in which "Natural" is x'd over), Docherty genealogically traces this problematic relation of authority in a Chapter titled "The Impossibility of Authenticity." What he has to say about the impossibility of authenticity by

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the time we get to the age of Shakespeare (speaking of a problem of author-ity) is already well under way at the Homeric origin of literature.

> To impersonate another person, as Shakespearean twins demonstrate, is to question the very individuality of the person thus duplicated. As a result, the question of the authenticity of the 'original' is raised. When one person stops imitating or impersonating another, she or he does not return to an authentic selfhood, but returns instead to an impersonation of the 'originary' self.

It would seem that Horkheimer and Adorno get close to "the secret of the universe" as Forster put it, by noting Odysseus' originating play of nominalist self-consciousness through the impersonation of Nobody. The reader will remember that Forster speaks of a "lower personality" a "down there" where there are no names. Horkheimer and Adorno posit a self for Odyssesus but no self for Polyphemus. The Odyssean self, built on the impersonation of an originary non-identity, are one and the same for them.

> Odyssesus' two contradictory actions in his encounter with Polyphemus, his answering to the name, and his disowning it, are neverthelessone. He acknowledges himself to himself by denying himself under the name Nobody; he saves his life by losing himself (60).

Thus if we follow Docherty's alignment of "an authentic selfhood" with the problem of an author-itative impersonation or impersonation of authority, we end up wondering with him whether "...there arises a realization that the question of an originary source becomes simply unanswerable: an essential nature gives way entirely to the play...of artifice...which might be called duplicity" (214). And then we find ourselves with back with H&A critically theorising that Odysseus' orginating "[a]rtifice is the means by which the adventuring self loses itself in order to preserve itself" (49).

If this literally original--author-itative—characterization of Odysseus is to be taken as the prototype of an authentic, intersubjective self-identity, then the function of anonymity in what "might be called [its] duplicity" is rather incontrovertible. This possibility of an orginating anonymous duplicity is itself a sophistic *double entendre*, since we have no authentic sense of who Homer was, only the knowledge that the character of Odysseus created under the authoritative name of Homer is an authentic prototype of self-other duplicity.

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Conclusion to Chapter Three

Anonymous duplicity brings me, by way of a conclusion, to the observation of Walter Benjamin, a fellow member of the original group of critical theorists founded by Horkheimer and Adorno. "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning....Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity...what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object" (852). The "author-ity" of the object *The Odyssey*, much like that of *The Book of Genesis* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, is really not a problem. Nor is the respective "authenticity" of their characters operating across a range of nomination barriers and anonymous contact zones, as we have seen. The problem lies in the function of anonymity within the double--or duplicitous--discourse of authority and authenticity.

It is a problem, I am arguing, because, we don't wish to believe that the irresolution and duplicity of discursive anonymity explains the continuing centrality of Foucault's *author-function*. Nor do we wish to consider that if that function is to be denominated as central, (as Anis Bawarshi, a worker in the field of composition-rhetoric, does by renominating "the genre function" in its place), then it is the anonymous function that enables whatever substitution or displacement we might become enamored of as authentic and authoritative. As a matter of fact, I can't name a single person who might concur--making me quite certain that absolutely *Nobody* believes in the authentic and original authority of anonymity.

The anonymous function comes down to merely a "rhetorical question" that is effectively unanswerable in terms of its historical testimony:"What matters who is speaking?" The answer to this question matters very much indeed, as we will now see in Chapter Four, where the matter of connecting the speaker and the spoken is not one of rhetorical indifference at all to the one or to those who are the "spoken to." Identity, Authority, their problematic origins and authenticity are ultimately connected to the concerns of a community, and of specifc "audiences," be these listeners, readers, or viewers.

My consideration of the inter-related problems of authority and authenticity as ones that cannot be fully understood without accounting for the largely unaccountable presence and influence of an anonymous function will now turn, then, to the problematic anonymity of community, and of the audience function. "The murmumr of indifference" that Foucault says accompanies Beckett's unanswerable question, "What matters who's speaking?" is countered rhetorically by a question of community in the form of a declaration: *What matters is: who's listening*? The disconnection between the anonymous speaker/writer and the

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spoken/written emphasizes the linkage between community—as a special conception of the Listener—and anonymity—as a special conception of the Other. We now take up this issue as one intimately linked to the meaning and function of community in Chapter Four, "Towards a Rhetoric of Anonymity." Bakhtin can help us understand stand that community is a kind of identity shield or immunity from the discourse of author-ity, and that the rhetorical immunity at the operative center of the anonymous function has much to do with what has come to be called a zone of contact between a Writing Self and its Other.

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Chapter Notes

[1]As we will see in Chapter Five, the linkage of the anonymous pastoral practice of confession, for example, to that of an expressivist approach to composition under conditions of anonymous writing problematizes the practice of actual and imagined authority in the composition course. This is especially apparent in a course that values both named and unnamed texts within face-to-face orientations of group discussion of both kinds of writing.

[2]Looking ahead from the present problem of compositional author-ity to that of the composition community, many of my composition colleagues were hostile to my use of anonymous writing, I believe, because they were similarly invested in the sacrosanct and monumental tradition of the author-function. Not really committed to personal writing, they often used author-driven *belles letters* anthologies to teach composition. They therefore uncritically, or at least to some extent, unconsciously, transferred and projected this "author-tarian" conception of writing into their own positions of authority as teachers of composition in charge of giving students a dubious "ownership" of their texts. Thus, they might have conceived of my anonymous pedagogy as a literal "defacement" of the subject position of the "student" and his or her "personal" investment as a writer "speaking" to a reading "audience." It did not matter to them that the ethos of the situation in which students' anonymous writing was re-presented and commonly shared was hardly faceless, for I required that all students discuss in face-to-face interactions the exigent senses of authority named in the *writing* as it transgressed self-other identifications, not the contingent identities of the *writers* so un-properly named. Reactionary colleagues were not as concerned with an expressivist identity crisis, as they were with what anonymity might present for them as a crisis of their own authority.

[3]Even though my analysis of the presence of the anonymous function in Ancient Author-ities deals with supposedly Male writers--"God," Gilgamesh, Homer-- I try to identify the authority of Anonymity as always provoking the voice, image, and im-proper name of Woman as Author. The (fe)male author, always on the original anonymous margins of the history of authorship, gradually--ironically-- *augments* the problematic center of author-ity until writing does become a Utopian province of meaning, a passionate enclave for anyone, everyone--an *erewhon* available to the anonymous No One writers and readers become in the anonymous textuality of history itself.

[4]More precisely and more complexly, *Anonymous* becomes the *nomenclature* for all pseudonyms that have ever been used in place of an "actual" proper name that the individual, for various personal, social, rhetorical, ideological, and economic reasons, has determined must remain invisible, in suspended animation, and most important, not so much without a discourse of *author-ity*, but functionally distant from what it nominates. If the so called "nomination barrier" is perfected by the writers of the book of *Genesis* it was—theoretically-- invented by the nameless scribes who figured out from the Phoenicians how to alphabetize oral discourse. Horkheimer and Adorno, as we will see when we look at *The Odyssey*, speculate that the first Ur-Writer who transcribed the oral poems of the unknown personal author, "Homer" (or whatever nameless group of listeners who connected the spoken with a speaker so named), discovered "nominalism" out of the literal "formalism" of the words "scribed" onto parchments that became palimpsests--literally "scraped again and again" over generations of revision and redaction. Thus, these Homeric Adapters (or re/de-scribers) realized in breaching the nomination barrier that they had not only transgressed the oral and the written, they had crossed erasure and rescription. In doing so, they exposed "..the fact that they [words] distance themselves from every fulfilling content, and at a distance refer to every possible content--to Nobody ["Udeis] as to Odysseus" [Wandering Hero] (60).

[5] The ethos or ethical principle governing the teaching of composition extends across the disciplines. That is, it matters very much indeed who's speaking or writing, to which audience/readership, and that together this basic rhetorical relation (which is essentially grounded in the metaphysics of presence, and out of that "speaks" to a phenomenology of Self/Other) influences what is being communicated. In "The Speaker Respoken: Material Rhetoric as Feminist Methodology," Vicki Tolar Collins features the Beckett quote used by Foucault as her own epigraph to remind us that "Who is speaking and who is silenced are core feminist issues in both rhetoric and literary studies" (*CE* 61/5: 545). I will discuss this feminist ethos of material and rhetorical (in)difference in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five, A Rhetoric and a

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Pedagogy of Anonymity, respectively.

[6] As I will make clear, my sense of what Foucault is ultimately up to (and up against) in "What is an Author?" is a dalliance with the "dark star" of anonymous discourse--that it is more powerful--more permeable and permanent--than its more open and over-determined counterpart, authorial discourse. When at the end of the essay he imagines all discourse circulating "without any need of an author," unfolding "in a pervasive anonymity" (148), he is providing the overriding answer to the question of what is an author: *the name of the author depends upon and unfolds from the pervasive anonymity of writing itself.* Thus, though the example of an anonymous poster having a writer and not an author would seem to highlight the importance of authorial identity and authority in all discourse, it is actually a cue to the ever-unfolding pervasiveness of anonymous discourse that has only spread more deeply and widely since Foucault's speculations in 1969. Foucault could hardly be unaware of the pervasive anonymity of radio and television's advertising underwriters, never mind the longstanding tradition of anonymous editorializing in print media. With the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, Foucault's generalized notion of anonymity's pervasiveness had begun to take on a concrete discursive reality that looked like it might reverse the dominant-subordinate order of exclusive author/excluded writer. Copyright law, however, being grounded in notions of proper-ty under the ownership of an Author proper-ly (usually Corporately) named is ultimately having its way with free digitized identities and common law anonymity. That is because the right of the Author is an extension of Capital as the only believable *a priori* category. The progressive priority of Capital has, ironically, displaced trust in the transcendental signifier responsible for faith in the value of currency and the currency of all value--namely, an unnamable and therefore unknowable sense of *God.*

[7] Foucault also reminds us that anonymous author-ity has been very conveniently ignored. It has been historically convenient, and in the case of *The Holy Bible,* ideologically essential. We attribute authorship to "Gilgamesh"-- King of Ur, or to "God," King of the Universe, or to "Homer," king of Poets. Yet all scholarship points to a either a collaborative effort at an undetermined point in time when orality was congealing toward textuality, or to a corporate patch-write, a collective redaction of an undetermined original. To push to the limit of Foucault's assertions, the anonymity of these preeminently "literary" texts does not diminish but instead thoroughly guarantees their authenticity. In this passage, as in other places in "What is an Author," Foucault seems to be robbing from the Peter of the author-function in order to pay the Paul of what I have been calling the anonymous-function. In any case, no historical outline of the anonymous can ignore the presence of these absent authorial identities. Again, the common suspicion of contemporary uses of anonymity and the anonymous as somehow inauthentic deserves, like all common sense conclusions, to be questioned, tested according to a critical principle of reversal, and if need be, overturned for its bad faith or un-truth effect.

[8] As we will see in our analyses of representative anecdotes from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*--"the predominant epic of them all" (Ferry, viii)--the obvious heterogeneity and discontinuity of the *Genesis* epic in part derives from the anonymous function, the same function responsible for its projection as unified. The case of *Gilgamesh* sets a rule from which *Genesis* can hardly be thought to be some transcendent, ahistorical exception. "The earliest indications [of *Gilgamesh*] are of an oral tradition, with many variants, taking shape in a variety of compositions which later were merged, seemingly cobbled together into a work of literature by some unknown Babylonian poet" (Ferry, ix).

[9]Believers of the truly, madly, deeply persuasion, however, read these shifters as a sign that God, the Author of The Book, first wrote himself into existence using the omniscient past tense point of view. In effect, the anonymous writer, and the authoritative character being described as God is one and the same authorial ego. In effect, there is no anonymous scribe, only God, at once present in the Word and absent only to the reader who sees His Book as reducible to "literature" rather than what it "IS": revealed scripture. But anonymity, or the anonymous-function, will no more disappear at the insistence of orthodoxy, than will the author-function which, as we know from Foucault, gets canonized, in large part because of St. Jerome's principles of authentication. As we can see, and as I have been repeating and will reiterate throughout this dissertation, there can be no author-function without the anonymous-function. They are as tightly braided as the double helix of genetics, as the speaker/audience system of self-consciousness, or as the identity of writer and author in *Genesis.*

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[10]Yet another indication of the transparent, taken-as-granted, generally unexamined presence of the anonymous is this open secret of the Tetragrammaton. It continues to be considered "blasphemy" (literally 'evil speaking') to pronounce the forbidden name of god. My take on this as a blasphemer, or at least, as a disbelieving atheist who believes firmly in life before death, is that to come clean and pronounce the name of god would give up the whole game of divine authority and human subjection. Say the name and "God" becomes just another subject. But this subject has a purely rhetorical, not historically embodied name—a name lacking real historical reference but for that concocted by a group of anonymous writers working near the beginning of fiction. Logically, the name should lose Truth-value, most of its meaning, and therefore its hermeneutic cachet. A look into *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* provides the following entry on Tetragrammaton. What this entry says to me is that the forbidden name of god turns into an anonymity that is itself the source of a renaming so obsessive and neurotic as to preserve not only an Identity that does not in fact exist, but unwittingly transgresses the original Prohibition. But such is the paradoxical, uncanny nature of the anonymous function. A prohibition on Naming and Identity turns the Anonymous and Anonymity into an acceptable rhetorical action. Paradoxically, anonymity is viewed as transgressive, abnormal, anti-social, in much of the secular humanist side of language life.

> The Hebrew word of four letters constituting a divine proper name which the Jews out of reverence or fear of desecration ceased to pronounce about three centuries BC and for which they substituted Adonai or Elohim and being variously transliterated without indication of vocalization usually by YHWH, YHVH, JHVH, JHWH, IHVH and with vowels usually by Jehovah, Yahweh, Jahveh, Jahweh, Yahveh, Jahve, Jahwe, Yahve, Yahwe (264)

[11] It is difficult to imagine a more complex and variable discursive situation than the text of *The Bible* (literally, "The Book"). Its authorlessness is radically anonymous, which means, according to Foucault, that its shifters refer, first of all to "a real speaker." This is quite puzzling. This can be cleared up to some extent by granting that Foucault is making a distinction between a *canonical* (originally, "holy") Author and merely *profane* (literally, "before the temple") writers or mediate authors. This distinction is implied in his summary of the relation of modern literary criticism and "Christian exegesis when it wished to prove the value of a text by ascertaining the holiness of its author" (143). In this summary—the thesis of the author-function's "projective" character— he shows how modern literary criticism, "in its desire to "recover" the author from a work, employs devices strongly reminiscent of Christian exegesis." He then recounts St. Jerome's "four principles of authenticity" guaranteed to "disclose the involvement of several authors" versus the singularly authentic author. There is, in terms of the texts to be considered, "a standard level of quality"; "a certain field of conceptual or theoretical coherence"; "stylistic uniformity"; and " definite historical figure in which a series of events converge" (144). Clearly, when we turn to *The Holy Bible*, the supposed Alpha/Omega Book of books, with these Christian exegetical principles in mind, the questions of authentic authorial quality, coherence, uniformity, and singularity fly in all rhetorical directions. The center of Jerome's authorial authentication cannot hold this Book's centripedal and centrifugal forces (cf. Bakhtin in Chapter Four, "Toward a Rhetoric of Anonymity"). So now we have a disparate series of anonymous writers responsible for the most canonical of all texts, a "holy" text that is wholly—"utterly"— unworthy of Jerome's principles of authentication. On Jeromian principle, the Bible should have been rejected (even after taking "The Apochrypha" or the Bible's rejected texts into account—never mind the Dead Sea scrolls still awaiting exegetical authentication or rejection).

[12] Catholicism of the old order overtly underscored this double indemnity and indecision of one's creaturely identity. This was no accident. Its operation is another angle on what Foucault meant by "pastoral power" and how it springs from the culture of the confessional. It was a rhetorical action that helped advance its goals of fear and shame. It would not surprise me to finally realize that my Catholic immersion in *The Bible* was the "genesis" of my present interest in anonymity as the guarantor of community, identity, and authority. I have since managed to expunge the major part of my belief in a Catholic God, and am happily engaged in the transgression and reversal of its retroactive remnants. What I see as the interlocked Catholic legacy of exegesis and confession is not so easily "transcended", however, into an immanent practice. (Though the recent academic vogue of "auto-critique" gives me hope. It leads me to suspect that part of its deeper motivation is hidden in the collapse of the Catholic Church

[13] "God" does change Abraham's wife's name from "Sarai to Sarah, but he does not of course tell her of

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his plan to make her "a mother of nations." As we learned from Basil Cottle above, it is an odd concept "that Man's naming of creatures confirmed their subjection to him." It is not so odd however when a non-descript, virtually unidentifiable character has the power to (re) name his creatures and in so doing confirm their subjection to "Him." And when fiction invents life (thus the title (*Genesis*) it is a truly mind-boggling subjection that would have real listeners or readers turn into billions of believers who have subsequently identified with a covenant predicated upon a name game played by an anonymous author. The immense reminder and remainder of the name of Woman as an ultimate anonymization may be summed up in the consideration that the name of the Father always and already eliminates the Name of the Mother, but it is not a problem we can explore here. Cottle goes on to speak of "primitive races, [*sic*] and even primitive folk [*sic*] in English villages, who feel that our [*sic*] knowledge of their names is related to a power over their bodies, though being numbered (by National Health, or one's bank, or even the genial National Trust) is closer to depersonalization and slavery" (11). I see here the multivalent nature of anonymity, an issue we will take up more directly in Chapter Four, on "A Rhetoric of Anonymity." In short, all kinds of "primitive" types have clung to the protectiveness of anonymity, rightly frightened of European (or bureaucratic) elites armed with the power of naming as codified and extended through the power of literacy. Cottle turns this protective form of the anonymous on its head and speaks of anonymity as depersonalizing to the point of creating nondescript slaves—audits of modern bureaucratic life. He is hinting that the subject citizen comes to wish for the more "primitive" situation where a person was at least in part identified, and maintained some sense of group identity, through his or her name, rather than, say, a social security number. As with the covenant of circumcision proffered by an anonymous double—Author/writer—modern anonymity is both a cut and suture across the idea of Community, Identity, and Authority.

[14] It should not go unnoted that the entire Book of Esther never once features, makes reference to, or otherwise uses, the name "God." This tale, of a beautiful Jewess who is beloved by a Persian King bent on destroying all Jews, is of course anonymously authored. That it does not even use the word "God," never mind get close to the Tetragrammaton, tells us that it was written at the height of the time when Jews strictly observed the prohibition on using God's name, either in Temple, or outside. It is a strange, virtually a-theistic, story. It points up the total anonymity of a God who obviously enables his people to prevail against their enemies, but because of the Tetragrammaton, the covenant or commandments at the end of the story concerning the Holy Days of Purim seem to be created by a Woman. God forbid!

[15] Harold Bloom's essay, ""Before Moses Was, I Am": The Original and the Belated Testaments" makes very much of this passage. Ever-true to his lifelong project of all textual interpretation being some variation on a deliberate misreading, he finds that The Revised Standard Version of The Bible is "like every other version, [in that] it cannot handle Yahweh's awesome, untranslatable play upon his own name: *ehyeh asher ehyeh*. I expand upon a suggestion of Martin Buber's when I render this as "I will be present wherever and whenever I will be present." For that is the Yahwist's vision of *olam* as "a time without boundaries," and of the relation of Yahweh to a dynamics of time that transcends spatial limitations" (293-294). Bloom went on to write an entire book treating the problem of the identity of the Yahwist author of the first books of the Old Testament, titled *The Book of J*. He is therefore cognizant of the writer/Author split in The Old Testament, which often gets elided or overlooked because of the tradition of belatedly sacralizing certain texts as "the world of God", rather than as the writing of an intentionally anonymous writer. My take on Bloom's Buberian retranslation of "IAM WHO I AM" is not altered a whit. It is an artifice, an artful dodge employed repeatedly by a writer committed to creating an *olam* via the power of writing as the grand synthesis of expression and intention that transcends the writer into what has since been codified by T.S. Eliot as the "vatic voice." The voice of "I AM" is the *olam* that would transgress its "nominal" existence as the original Prohibition, or name that must not be uttered. "I AM" becomes the substitute for Identity as the tautology of the self-same. The Name of God was Prohibited because its content is fundamentally absurd. As in Baum's parody, no amount of smoke, fire, or angry, amplified voice, can ultimately disguise its anonymous construction (and your little dog/god that is its undoing, too, dearie.)

[16] The take of rabbinical scholarship on this question of an inchoate, incorporate, and perhaps incontinent nominalism turns out to be quite fascinating. Rabbi Arthur Marmorstein's *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* has a chapter titled "The Names of God in the Bible" in which he tracks the various epithetic sum totals down through the ages. Some say 57, others 70. His definitive genealogical work finds that there are 91 ancient rabbinical synonyms. "I" is one of these.   "God" is another, as is "Man," and most

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tellingly, "The Name." Marmorstein also has a chapter, "The Pronunciation of the Tetragrammatron," which traces the history of the prohibition on saying God's true name. He clearly shows that the prohibition was not always in effect, that it shifted according to where one was, and whether one was naked or clothed, and what kind of Jew one was. "As to the manner of pronouncing the Name, however, there is a consensus of all reports. It seems that even in the Temple the pronunciation was not distinct. The High Priest tried to utter the Name in such a way that the people listening to the blessing should not hear the Name distinctly" (26).

[17] At this writing, there are three extant versions of the Gilgamesh epic that were composed over a thousand-year period. Additional tablets and fragments have been discovered and await translation. In the foreword to her 1989 translation, Maureen Gallery Kovacs informs us that it "is assumed that stories about the deeds of the famous King of Uruk, Gilgamesh, circulated in his own time, ca. 2700 BC. The earliest *written* epics about Gilgamesh were produced in the Sumerian language...ca. 2000 BC (xxii-xxiii). Texts considerably older than *The Epic of Gilgamesh* survive from somewhere between the Fourth and Third Millennium BCE According to Tikva Frymer-Kensky, the *Abu Salabikh* are "our earliest religious documents" (96), considerably older than the semitic sources that produced the books of what is now called the Judeo-Christisian Bible. But it is *The Epic of Gilgamesh*—*a.k.a.* "the Old Babylonian Version- that presents, according to S.N. Kramer, "the earliest example of literary evolution." That is, somewhere around 2500 BCE someone of Sumerian birth decided to let a human being hold "the center of the stage" (183). A more recent *Gilgamesh* cycle—*AKA* "the Standard Version"— has been attributed by "ancient Babylonian scholars...to a man named Sin-leqe-unninni, a scholar scribe who probably lived in the Middle Babylonian period (about 1300B.C)" (Biggs, XV). Recent scholars agree that the text's ultimate authorial origins are lost in Mesopotamian civilization. But enough of this. Whenever I try to mimic the genealogical seriousness of scholars devoted to authorial attribution, Foucault's borrowing from Beckett's *The Unnamable* keeps up its echo: *What matters who's speaking*?

[18] This last sentence is of course patching from Rebecca Moore Howard's *Standing in the Shadows of Giants: Plagiarists, Authors, Collaborators*. We will have occasion to return to her contentions and conclusions in the chapter on anonymous pedagogy. In the present "historical" consideration of the ancient "anonymous-function," we can reflect, however on how her four defining properties of the author might be greeted by the ancient scribal circles—aboriginal composition classes or writing centers—of four thousand years ago: "the author is or can be autonomous and should be original. The autonomous, original writer deserves property rights to his or her work. The writer who is not autonomous and original demonstrates an absence of morality, earns the label "plagiarist," and deserves punishment" (58). In Foucauldian terms, the pagan collaborators who patched and plagiarized the *Gilgamesh* material lacked all discipline and not only should have been punished, but have been, in that anonymity is their legacy. A different set of anonymous scribes and compositors responsible for the various patch jobs that constitute the Judeo-Christian Bible, on the other hand, become the disciples of "God," the only true autonomous author. "God's" exclusive property rights to his text are summed up by St. John in The Book of Revelations in a clear warning to all future collaborators, patchwriters, and plagiarists: 'If anyone adds to or takes from this book, his punishment is banishment from the sight of God." The sheer hypocrisy of this can be summed up by referring ourselves to one of the more representative anecdotes of *Genesis*—namely, the Great Flood, in which "God" renews His covenant with "Noah" after drowning the whole world, including the innocent children of the iniquitous. That this event is *borrowed* from *Gilgamesh*, a text 1500 years older than *Genesis*, and becomes part of the patchwriting of *Genesis* is an undisputed fact of non-orthodox textual hermeneuticists. In *Gilgamesh* one reads that the Sumerian Gods and Goddesses wept over and regretted the actions of one of their number in bringing the Flood with such indiscriminate vengeance. One is forcefully reminded that the anonymous creators of the *Genesis* God decided to include no such sense of remorse in their divine persona. How much the better would a Western religious tradition have been if it had understood the more compassionate collaboration of *Gilgamesh* and stood in the anonymous shadows of giants whose subtext suggests dedication over discipline, perseverance over punishment?

[19] Compared to the 'discipline and punish' author-ity situation of the Judeo-Christian "Bible,' which has generally succeeded in attributing authorship to "God," the naturally assumed anonymity of *Gilgamesh* is historically and communicatively rational. Even the little that we now know of writing's history, of its rarified, elite circle of priests and scholar-scribes, it is clear that the gift and burden of composition was its *atmospheric anonymity* (if I may be permitted to redact Gallagher's and Greenblatt's redaction of

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Auerbach's "atmospheric realism"). For a general sense of what I mean by atmospheric anonymity in connection with the history of writing, the interested reader should look at the introduction to Ernst Doblhofer's *Voices in Stone: The Decipherment of Ancient Scripts.*

[20]The importance of "rhetorical purity" to a rhetoric of anonymity will be explored in Chapter Three, where Booth's rhetoric of fiction is placed into the context of Bakhtin's idea of rhetoric. Because Bakhtin is quite cognizant of a rhetorical *impurity*, given his notions of "heteroglossia" and "double-voiced discourse" he is probably the best theoretician-historian for understanding the sense of an anonymous narrator as the extreme case of unreliability and impurity.

[21]I chose Jackson's translation (or "transformation') of *Gilgamesh* from a bewildering number of (un) like efforts. His takes the most transformative or appropriative liberties with the "original" (itself an appropriated transformation.) His take on the politics of identity—"who lives to tell my tale identically"— contrasts nicely with the more strict translation of Kovacs' "alike," which is far more ambiguous, and can only be said to correlate with the identity or consubstantiality of all things, not rhetorical agents.

[22] Aside from the perfect application of her analysis of "Linguistic survival" to *The Odyssey*—"[I]t appears that the metaphorical connection between physical and linguistic vulnerability is essential to the description of linguistic vulnerability itself"(4). Butler's *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* would be the center of a proposed, but for now, unwritten Chapter 6, "Towards an Ethics of Anonymity." My reader can, however, look forward to Butler's ideas of performativity, injury, vulnerability and their relation to the anonymous "recirculation" and mediation function in Chapters Four—Toward a Rhetoric of Anonymity, and Chapter Five—Toward a Pedagogy of Anonymity. For now, two passages from Butler on "the force of the name. The first could help us radically extend Horkheimer's and Adorno's reading of the prototypical passage from Homer, in which Odyssesus is triumphant, and Polyphemus is traumatized, through the force of the name and its anonymously variable (in)vulnerability. Thus, I might title this first passage from Butler

"The Trauma of Polyphemus"

> If we understand the force of the name to be an effect of its historicity, then that force is
> not the mere causal effect of an inflicted blow, but works in part through an encoded
> memory or a trauma, one that lives in language and is carried in language. The force of
> the name depends not only on its iterability, but on a form of repetition that is linked to
> trauma, on what is, strictly speaking, not remembered but relived, and relived in and
> through the linguistic substitution for the traumatic event (36).

The second passage can help us look forward to how the force of the unnamed, historically a part of composition pedagogy in the anonymous course evaluation, is an intersubjective transgression of potential "trauma" and "excitement" within the scene of writing instruction. The question posed by Butler holds an answer that may be supplied by the anonymous function, as we will see in Chapter Five. Thus, I might title this second passage,

"Recirculation/ Reverse Citation Via Anonymous Writing"

> Can repetition be both the way that trauma is repeated but also the way in which it
> breaks with the historicity to which it is in thrall" What makes for a reverse citation in
> the scene of trauma, how can hate speech be cited against itself?
> In the case of hate speech, there appears to be no way to ameliorate its effects except
> through its recirculation, even if that recirculation takes place in the context of a public
> discourse that calls for censorship of such speech: the censor is compelled to repeat the
> speech that the censor would prohibit.... There is no way to invoke examples of racist
> speech, for instance, in a classroom without invoking the sensibility of racism, the
> trauma and, for some, the excitement.

[23]Horkeheimer and Adorno take a long excursus into the relation of human sacrifice and the nominal sacrifice by Odysseus' of his identity. We cannot follow this up in these pages, but the reader should be

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reminded of Foucault's theme of writing as "a voluntary obliteration of the self that does not require representation in books." Uncannily, the identities of the writing collective nominally obliterated, yet reiterated, under the author-ity "Homer" did, proto-typically, represent this 'post-'enlightenment theme of anonymous-self-sacrifice

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARD A RHETORIC OF ANONYMITY

Identifying the Authority of Community

Both mysterious and mundane, the linkages between the structural anonymity of language (Saussure) and anonymous social function (what Schutz calls "typification") point beyond a discourse of Identity to summon or provoke a discourse of community. Why is this so? The short, popular, but reductively vulgar answer is: "We are all socially constructed." More robustly, the discourse of Identity teaches us that every individual existence continually summons "a plurality of others...though it would risk losing itself in the infinite if that number were not determined..." (Blanchot 6). Sheer otherness, the sense we have of ourselves, is determined by an anonymous function (Natanson). The plurality of others summoned by a given personal identity summon in turn,

> ...a community: a finite community, for it in turn has its principle in the *finitude* of the
> beings which form it and which would not tolerate that it (the community) forget to carry
> this finitude constituting those beings to a higher degree of tension (Blanchot 6).

This *higher degree of tension*, I have been arguing throughout Chapters One and Two, amounts to the anonymous function—a curve of binding energy between language and the individual lifeworld. The Discourse of Author-ity, attempts to both negate and elaborate the anonymous function of language by claiming—impersonating-- this *higher degree of tension* as its own.

Thus, before we could entertain the intimate linkage between anonymity and community, in Chapter Three, "Toward a History of Anonymity," we had to countenance the mask of the author-function, to expose it as the anonymous function. (The tension between the "mask" and the absent "face" of the rhetor/author is a lesser degree of tension than that between the being of an individual listener/reader and an audience/readership, but it remains awesome.) That is why we tried to understand (again paradoxically) the problematic discourse of authority--particularly that of the author-function as a point of origin--within the larger historical moment of the anonymous function.

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The communicative rationality of any shared sense of Identity (understood as a performative relation between sameness and difference) is not only at work between speakers with bodies in history, but also between bodies of work--texts--whose "speakers" transcend the identity of a given Author. That is, the author-function, as central as it is to Discourse (political, philosophical, legal scientific, poetic), is itself pervasively anonymous; it is a function of the anonymity that haunts and heralds all senses of authority as origin.

In Chapter Four, "Towards a Rhetoric of Anonymity," our overall aim is to understand in rhetorical terms the subject position not of the Rhetor/Author, but of the speaker/writer who is, or becomes anonymous, for whatever motive or condition, chosen or not, and the relation of this anonymous subject position to that of a particular (discourse) community. Throughout this dissertation, I have repeatedly, tiresomely, invoked a shortened form of the Beckett line from *Texts for Nothing*: " 'What does it matter who is speaking," someone said, "what does it matter who is speaking?' "

I did so initially to try to get to the rhetorical heart of Foucault's critical use of it as an epigraph to his "What is an Author?" As a rhetorical question whose answer lies in an understanding of rhetoric itself (from the Greek *eiro* : "I say"), Focuault's evocation of Beckett's question from an anonymous "someone" suggested that that "someone" is *no body* in the sense of an embodied speaker/writer.

The body in question is *some body* of discourse—of writing—that speaks. The author-function is not a corporeal, embodied function, but a rhetorical, evocative one that owes much, if not all, to the function of anonymity. But Focuault's rhetorical use of Beckett's almost anti-rhetorical question, (if it doesn't matter who is speaking, then it doesn't matter who's listening, and therefore *nothing matters*), was a tactical opening toward understanding the massive and pervasive structural conditions of discourse which turn individual users into ephemeral, ultimately anonymous, functionaries.

In a genuine "rhetorical" (from the Greek, *eiro* : "I speak") treatment of the anonymous function, however we will want to locate the special conception of a speaker/writer and a listener/reader which must pertain in the anonymous function—which does *matter* very much indeed, as we have seen, in many senses, if not yet a purely "rhetorical" sense.[1] For that "special conception" or "image" of a writer and a reader dialogically imagining the other, it seems to me that Bakhtin becomes the rhetorician of choice, even

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though he was essentially a literary historian. But we have much to consider before we can get to Bakhtin's special conceptions of a speaker and listener in a "contact zone."

First, we will try to understand the discourse of community and its source in the very same anonymous function that is never far from what mean by a discourse of identity and authority, respectively. As a way to set up the heteroglossic nature of the discourses of Identity, Authority, and Community (since, only in theory, never in lived practice, can we separate these discourses, for they are of "one turning"--a literal universe of discourse), let's pick up some of the loose etymological interstices or *aporia* left in our wake between Identity (as "sameness"), Authority (as "increase"), and Community (as "in common" and "without office".)

It is a "phenomeological" fact that the discourse of community is a lived "public" meaning for any and all persons whose identities are oriented towards various "privacies" or enclaves of meaning which operate inter- and intra-subjectively simultaneously. That is, there are sites and sights of "official" and "unofficial" authority throughout any community--so-called. Yet, the total sense of a community is that it is itself "without office": it is an emergent property, floating in some sense free, of the personal identities and historical authorities, which inform its lived reality.

Hearkening to its etymological roots, community develops an "immunity" to the claims of Identity and Authority even as it holds in tension their combined forces as an *increase of the same*. How is this possible? And what has this to do with the anonymous function? The short answer to the first question is: This is possible because of the unrecognized function of anonymity. The short answer to the second question is that the non-recognition of the transparency of anonymity at work in the discourse of community points to its role in community as a discourse that features an immunity to authority. That is, taking its root in "the common: it is "without office" of authority. To get some sense of how and why this is so, I turn to Joseph Vining, whose book *The Authoritative and the Authoritarian* traces the legal and literary--root and vine--growth that we presuppose as the discourse of authority.

In a chapter titled *Authenticity: Connecting the Speaker and the Spoken* , Vining begins to approach not only a rhetorical situation, but also one that Burke would call an act of "identification" between speaker and listener (and perhaps an entire audience) to bring about a desired (on the part of speaker and audience?) change.

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I also begin to hear in Vining, however, a Bakhtinian hint of the rhetorical: of what he termed a "special conception of the listener," and of what he meant by a "contact zone" (as we will see below). For Vining, authority and holding one's attention are the same. There seems to be a virtually complete identity between them, Authority identifies the power of its office in whether or not it holds the attention of a community—literally those without office. It is always dangerous to jump from the primary speech genres of rhetoric in its original sense to the secondary genres of writing, but Vining does so in a way that Bakhtin also often does in order to make a point about all of discourse. But whereas Bakhtin increasingly opened up the boundaries between what he called authoritative or authoritarian discourse and internally persuasive discourse, Vining does so to make a much more closed down, exclusionary point about authority and the presupposition of its authenticity.

> Whether a listener continues to pay attention to a speaker, and whether a speaker has authority for [her], is the same question. But delegating writing without office does not produce a new authentic voice, nor attention, nor authority....If one did begin to pay attention one would soon stop. And actually one would not pay attention in the first place if the deception were known from the beginning—any more than one would pay serious attention to an opinion that one knows is only the outcome of a process, the speech of no one (58).

Of course he has a point. As I pointed out very early on, Beckett's *Texts for Nothing*, for example, would not have received the attention of a world wide reading community that it has if he had not written them—if they weren't key run ups to his experiments in that have made him so famous an author-ity of absent character and anonymous voices. *Texts for Nothing* are "the speech of no one," putatively rhetorically indifferent, but that speech was created by a very well known writer with office—that is, an AUTHOR. But Vining is way off in at least two crucial, *rhetorical*, senses.

First, in terms of the larger project of the discourse of authority, (of the author-function), "putative authors" are assumed not to exist as individuals. Their speech is the speech of no one and the result of "a process"—*a writing process* whose function derives not from the deception or inauthenticity between a writer and a community, but from a profound act of impersonation and imagination that works dialogically. Forster taught us this much in his inquiry: the reader forgets the name of the author and enters—often enough, but let's take Beckett specifically—the speech of no one.

Second, Vining's (*authoritarian*?) idea is that no one pays attention to a text written by no one, (meaning an anonymous writer, or collective of such). If Forster is correct, then the entire logic of reading

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is not to remember the author, but to take in dialogically the process of writing as a special conception of speaking, and the process of reading as a special conception of listening. The very *process* of authority works this way in and through a community through a pervasive "condition of anonymity."

Finally, Vining is clearly blind to various kinds of discourse communities. His officious dismissal of a writing process pretty much eliminates the common project of composition: we are teaching, given his grand legislative schema of delegated writing, *no one*. But the charge that one stops paying attention to common writing is particularly belied by the attention I found was paid to the writing of no one, as we will see in Chapter Five, "Toward A Pedagogy of Anonymity."

For now, given that we are in the process of developing the relation of an unstable, contestable discourse of community to a rhetoric of anonymity, what is most amazing to me is how Vining glides toward, than blindly passes over the obvious contact zone between the office of anonymous authority and a given community whose "common" sense of itself is without office, but very much anonymous in its function as well. With his focus on the authenticity of authority, he neither sees the authenticity presupposed by anonymity, nor that community, when reduced to its most *common* denominator, requires *the immunity of anonymity*.

What does this mean— *the immunity of anonymity* ? It means that we might begin to think of anonymity as not only a communicative function, with all the rationalities (full and fragmented) that inform identified and authorized discourse. We need to finally think of anonymity as a function of community in the largest, ideal sense (since we already know it functions in the normative, face-to-face, text-to-text representations of our everyday lifewor[l]ds.

To get to that ideal sense of community, we will need to first look at what some thinkers are presently concluding about the discourse of community. We'll also have a look at Blanchot's conception of community, since it is my reading of his use of absence that has made possible the sense that anonymity is a form of absence that gives presence both to what mean and can't possibly maintain about identity, authority, and now, community.

The Discourses of Community: No Signs of Abating

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Is Community Both Normative And Emancipatory?

This entire dissertation has carried on a border conflict with binary and dualistic thinking. Anonymity, I have tried to argue, is not—never has been, never will be—the binary other of Identity, Authority, or Community. Anonymity is an emergent property of each of these dominant terms of discourse. Anonymity has no binary opposition except for that of Nominalism. But even in that ultimate binary code, we saw that it is impossible to decode one from the other— in much the same way that 1 depends on 0 for "writing" the code of all word processing and Internet communication. (The ultimate "other" of Anonymity might be *Celebrity*, what with its cult of "name recognition," but when we begin to consider the anonymous functions of that subject position—name changes, enormous regimes of privacy and identity protection in order to enable a consistent public or star image, we quickly retreat.)

The relation of anonymity to the discourse of community, however, is the least binaric, I think. Part of the reason for this has to do with the initially simple breakdown of community into the public/private realmification that Hannah Arendt, Jurgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, among many others, have worked up in detail, and so well. For that fatal binary split, we need look no more far afield than into community itself. There appears to be a "normative" and an "emancipatory" concept of community that we can look to from the get go when inquiring into the fissionable meaning and function of community.

My reader might remember that we leaned heavily on Brubaker's and Cooper's "Beyond Identity" to set up its problematic condition as a term holding together one of the founding discourses of philosophy--that of the Subject. Near the end of their analysis they conclude that the "[t]he use of 'Identity' to define a host of incommensurate meanings across a wide range of disciplines *shows no signs of abating* (45, emphasis added). Whether or not the problematic Identity of the Subject is due, in whole or in part, to the anonymous function, is a matter of dispute. What is indisputable is that the Name of Identity--and what it Names--is never self-same, or identical, to itself, even when it becomes a "god-term" or "terministic screen" of subjective consciousness. So too, with the discourse of community, and its fate as the portmanteau word that must carry the freight of the founding philosophical discourse of "universal mediation."

Andrew Mason, in "Two Concepts of Community," makes the case for the "normative/emancipatory" split in what community means and does. He reminds us that there are "...vigorous disputes over what

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counts as a community. Some argue that communities have to be face to face, while others allow that they may unite those who do not know each other" (3). Already we see the proximity of the discourse of community to that of anonymity. In making his case for two concepts of community, Mason finds that the "normative" concept, though vague, is not "essentially contested," while the "emancipatory" concept, though more morally robust, is split within itself along lines of the meaning of "solidarity."

The role of anonymizing forces in shaping both the illusions of individuality and commonality across both accounts of an ideal emancipatory community cannot be calculated, but only added to the overall question of authenticity. (It would seem that the contest over the meaning of an emancipatory community carries over into educational settings, particularly when the term "discourse" is super-added to that of "community," as we will soon see.)

Mason concludes that "[t]here is nothing wrong with employing both senses of community, [but it would be confused to suppose that community in the emancipatory sense...is a more authentic community than in the ordinary sense" (14). What I conclude, given the split in the emancipatory sense, is that anonymity functions in the vaguely "social" ties that stabilize the normative sense, as well as in the more "moral qualities" which radically split the emancipatory sense of community.

The fact of social anonymity makes the first connection clear, but what of the second? The answer comes back to the ideological nature of emancipation, and the resulting turn to politics and therefore to claims of identity and authority for what makes for—drives-- community in the first place. Politics of class, race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, nation are not always open and "face-to-face." They strive, often thrive, anonymously, in other words, and they must often be opened to community view and evaluation—"universally mediated" in some ideal sense—through the very same function of anonymity, since the normative eyes and ears of community by vague association—not by emancipation—make a given individual vulnerable.

What's Normative About Community?

Mason's contention that the "normative" sense of community is not essentially contested, or that it is, at least, stable, is belied by Keith Stem's study, *Newspaper Use and Community Ties: Toward a Dynamic Theory.* In normative terms, the discourse of community, (vastly enlarged from Mason's positing of it as the uncontested binary other of an emancipatory concept), is "the construction of community—a sharing of

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values and objectives—[and it] requires a communication process.") This process however, is "much distrusted and abused" (146). Part of this mistrust and abuse stems from the use of anonymous polls and of anonymous sources to make news. Despite the fault lines in what amounts to these anonymous "contact zones," they are widely used.

For Stamm, "[t]he heart of the matter is that community process still lacks a communication mechanism that lives up to the democratic ideal of citizen involvement" (147). Face to face meetings in the old town hall model have become impractical in the massification of the lifeworld. Letters to the board of Editors, (not accepted unless signed), have been a standing way for a community as a given readership, to respond to the social, political, and other changes re-presented in the anonymous view of those same editors who do not sign their names, or identify their author-function.

The normative and emancipatory conceptions of community have become, in Century 21, a contact zone in its own right, where abstraction and concreteness, presence and absence, merge and reverse their ties to process, structure and place. The role of the anonymous function in these {uncertain}ties is, like community itself, "defended according to what it might become rather than for what it is or has been" (18).

Community and Composition: Headed Off (Dis)Course?

Coincidentally, yet significantly, I think, "...no signs of abating" are the final four words of Peter Vandenberg's "Discourse Community," one of the essays in a book he edited with Paul Heliker titled *Keywords in Composition Studies*. The full phrase--"the perceived explanatory power of *discourse community* shows no signs of abating" (70)--is a somewhat tongue-in-cheek residue of how composition studies has received and revised these two constituent terms during its struggle to legitimate itself as not only the second coming of rhetoric, but as a field with epistemological and pedagogical status equal to that of literary studies.

The strength of Vandenberg's entry, as with all the entries in this little book meant mainly for the practicing compositionist, is that it takes an "OED" approach to its subject matter. That is, in three pages this key term gets trenchant, if not exhaustive, treatment. We learn that *discourse community* has circulated in composition studies for less than twenty years. To the best of his knowledge, we can credit Richard Ohmann's 1964 discussion, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric," with juxtaposing the two terms, with not very illuminating results. "The community that a piece of genuine writing creates is... fundamental [to] modes of

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perception, thought, and feeling. That is, discourse works within and reflects...a world view" (In Vandenberg 67-68).

Vandenburg then jumps to M. Jimmie Killingworth's 1992 article in *Rhetoric Review* to buttress support for the idea that once combined, the two terms become "useful in the theory and analysis of writing because [they embrace] the rhetorical concern with social interchange (discourse) and with the situation or context (community)" " (In Vandenberg, 68). Bartholomae and Herzberg are then brought to bear on the meaning and significance of *discourse*. The former gussies up the common dictionary definition: It is a "peculiar way of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing"; with well-defined "projects and agendas that determine what writers can and will do." The latter advances common sense about the term in this way: "discourse is a means of maintaining and extending [a] group's knowledge and of initiating new members into the group" (In Vandenberg, 68).

Vandenberg concludes treatment of the meaning of discourse with an interesting question: "Is discourse enabling or prohibitive?" (68). (Interesting because, this is a question that we bring to our understanding of *anonymous* discourse.) The question is meant to set the reader up for similarly questioning the capacities of *community*. According to Vandenberg's findings, *community* has received far more attention from compositionists, primarily because of its indeterminacy or "instability."

Joseph Harris' treatment of the term is given greatest authority: " *community* ...makes a rhetorical claim on us that is hard to resist." But he finds that our notions of community are just that, existing "at one remove from actual experience....They are all literally utopias--nowheres, meta-communities--that are tied to no particular time or place" (Vandenberg 68). Elaine Maimon's treatment of the term is seen to be so inclusive as to become meaningless: every site within the academy (never mind outside it) is a community. Harris' reading of Maimon's pan-directional use of community as "gambits," or "*performatives--* statements...in which saying does indeed make it so" bolsters the sense that the term is vulnerable not only to utopianism, but to becoming uncritical.

Vandenberg finds that, according to Killingsworth, *discourse* needs "the ballast of *community*, which designates a (real or imagined) site for production" because discourse by itself is a one-way ticket to abstraction. Vandenberg then quotes Killingsworth at length on the distinction between "local" and "global" communities. Essentially, a local discourse community is "occupational" and "demographic," while "The

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global discourse community [is] mental" (In Vandenberg, 69). As can be expected, the local and the global communities are "involved simultaneously" in and around any individual. In fact, the ultimate space for local/global interrelation is "the individual as community" (Killingsworth) in whom, according to Vandenberg, "conflicting discourse practices" can be observed in both one's self and in the selves of others.

Vandenberg pays homage to Bruffee's Burkean take on community, and brings Harris back in to bolster it. In effect, composition studies has embraced the notion that *community* is a consensus of assumptions and values--what might otherwise be called our "common sense." Without this common sensical view of community the goal of collaborative projects can be quickly lost. And yet Vandenberg is careful to include Harris' final take on this idea of *community* : there is "only an affinity of beliefs and purposes'; "one does not need consensus to have community" (In Vandenberg, 69).

Vandenberg sharpens this line of argument by quoting from his own earlier work on community:

> When used to authorize a writing pedagogy...consensus-based conceptions...tacitly support the preservation of institutional authority by privileging discursive authority, a gesture that renders a community an oligarchy, an exclusive rather than inclusive construct (69).

He gives Bizzell the last word, (arguably the greatest scholar of discourse communities our field has produced, and whose opinion on the meaning of "contact zone" extends her reputation, as we will see below.) Bizzell's sense of this useful/useless hyphenated term leaves the curious composition-rhetorician with a decidedly equivocal sense of *Discourse Community* : it can come "to seem like an oppressive affirmation of one--and only one--set of discursive practices" (In Vandenberg, 70).

Composition's Discourse Community of Anonymity

My interest in anonymity as a discourse, (and as a discourse community writ locally and globally) follows from the sense of Vandenberg's case for individual identities as local/global sites of communal conflict. I see the "the individual as community" function as coincident with anonymous discourse. Much of the "consensus" governing our assumptions and values on anonymity is that it does not belong to the discourse of community. If any discourse could be said to be a real or imagined site for production--a "nowhere" belonging to "nobody"-- it is the discourse of anonymity. Certainly, within the prevailing authorizations of this or that writing pedagogy, anonymous writing is so far from institutional recognition, so removed from institutional hierarchies of authentic disciplinary identity, authority, and community that it might not even

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register as a marginal discourse. In the terms bandied by Vandenberg, it lacks the commonsensical "ballast" of *community*, and is even more "abstract" then *discourse*.

Within the institutional purview of rhetoric-composition studies it is fairly safe to assert categorically that anonymity lacks all power as a *discourse community* (although within literary and philosophical studies the "presence of its absence," so to speak should now be far less transparent). But that safe assumption is belied by the pervasive use--the discursive-communal use--of anonymity in collegial review of manuscripts for article publication and conference presentation. More telling--and defining, really--of anonymity's function as a discourse community in its own right is the now nearly universal institution of anonymous course evaluations. These are required of students at the end of each semester's course work, and represent the last (and for many courses, the only) piece of writing they perform.

This anonymous writing performance has a multiple readership: the instructor and his or her superiors directly. Indirectly, and ideally, however, the audience for this universal communication is one that might be thought of as universally mediated by all of one's colleagues, students--really anyone who is part of a given college or university discourse community. In its ritual repetition, accumulation, and retention across the discourse communities of every departmental discipline, (students' anonymously compose these forms four times a semester, eight times in an academic year for four years), I believe a good case can be made that anonymity, in deed, functions not only for, but from, the complex and equivocal sense of discourse community outlined by Vandenberg. To pick up a cue from Homer's prototypical anecdote, it can be said by any one teaching from and for a particular discourse community that *Nobody is evaluating me.*

Following Vandenberg, I have a clear temptation to pursue the questions that arise from his analysis of discourse community: Is this {anonymous}discourse community enabling or prohibitive, inclusive or oppressive? Does it belong in an anonymous abstract nowhere to anonymous nobodies, or is it the open, common property of an anonymous everyone situated in concrete, rhetorical situations? Rather than pursue these questions, I will simply underscore what the reader might also sense to be a "problem" for the meaning of community. If anonymity is a discourse without office, we now see why community itself, true to its etymology, is also without office.

Let's assume that the discourse of community and the community of discourse are as vexed and vacuous as Vandenberg makes them out to be. (And remember he limits these questions and their open-ended

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answers to the discourse community of rhetoric-composition exclusively.) How, then, are we to think about a sense of discourse and its sense of community that are prescribed by university mandate to foster an authentic rhetoric of universal mediation (in which writer and the written are disconnected) by virtue of its anonymous function (I mean the course evaluation)? Given the (discursive) evidence I have accumulated across the last three chapters, we can begin to see, I think, that the anonymous function may well be a problem for the discourses of identity, authority, and community.

Given the principle of reversal we have been pursuing throughout this dissertation, the anonymous is clearly a functioning part of community's permanent immunity from its own ideal. But immunity works in two orientations. For just as anonymity operates through the absence of a connection between speaker and the spoken, it presents to the listener a special conception of the speaker—a rhetorical indifference that connects both to a community—if it is anywhere—in the text itself.

Here, then, is the beginning of what Bakhtin, in my reading, eventually meant by the contact zone: where the text is held in common, without the office of writer in the way, the reader can focus on the grain of the voice (Barthes) and the going view (Bakhtin). The question then becomes: When a sense of authority is no longer delegated between the identity claim of the writer and the reader's identification with that claim, is there, following Vining, a reason to pay any further attention. Before we get to Bakhtin, Blanchot and Lunsford are made to commune on the possibility of reconfiguring the discourse of community as a place unowned by the discourse of author-ity. Thought of in this way, community as a place of a "common share" becomes less oppressive than Bizzell has rightly pointed out above.

Sharing Community: Blanchot Meets Lunsford

The sense we took away from Vandenberg's review of *community* was that it does not, taken by itself, escape the blandishments of abstraction. Its fate, like that of 'identity', as a catchall, would seem to decrease, not increase, its authority. And, given its juxtaposition to *discourse*, itself impossibly abstract without the "ballast" of the comparatively more "concrete" community, we have anonymity's nameless rhetorical indifference increasing the volume of its function, and thus it dislocates both.

Vandenberg's pragmatic point about "the individual as community" blending "mental" and "demographic" locations meshes nicely with the poststructuralist certitude that discourse in general, and anonymous discourse in particular, depends upon "no particular subject in history" (Bove 56). But we have

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already located anonymity as both a local and a global discourse in my first three chapters. It might, in fact, be thought that a complete phenomenology of anonymity covering its embodied and disembodied effects, amounts to its *eco-location*.

What we really need to do now, prior to positing Bakhtin as the best rhetorician of anonymity--what with his notions of "contact zones" and "a special conception of the listener"--is to determine anonymity's *echo-location*, in a metaphorical or metonymic sense. We can hold in mind the actual "biological" (in bats) or "technological" (in submarines) processes for locating distant or invisible objects by means of sound waves reflected back to the sender by the objects sought. We must, however, take the strangest kind of "eschatological" turn toward Writing, itself, as a finally in-human process for (dis)avowing whatever we mean by community.

Only one writer that I know of locates Writing as a final, echoing anonymous process in his own writing: Maurice Blanchot. His work is so dense and obscure, I will not spend much time on it in support of anonymity's echo-location through "processes" of what, given Vandenberg's hints, is beginning to look like the pervasive *absence* of community. Nevertheless, all of his work--from *The Space of Literature* to the one we shall linger on, *The Unavowable Community*--seem to be about absence: whether of the writer from writing, or of a community for those who have no community. We have encountered Blanchot earlier, in Chapter Two, when we discovered Foucault's and Derrida's dependence on his notion of the "work" of "absence" as summed up in his 1955 "The Essential Solitude":

> The writer belongs to the work, but what belongs to him [or her] is only a book, a mute accumulation of sterile words, the most meaningless thing in the world....A book is not a work until *being* is pronounced in it. And in the end, the work ignores him [or her], it closes on his [or her] absence, in the impersonal, *anonymous* statement that it is--and nothing more (825 emphasis added).

I won't belabor Blanchot's repeat of what Plato seems to have been saying in *The Cratylus* : that the work of ~~BEING~~ is anonymous. For Blanchot, the "work" of writing--whether it end in a book for the public library or in a diary for the hope chest --not only distances the writer toward an unutterable, endless point of disappearance. (Ong teaches us just about as much in "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction": if the reader must imagine an absent writer in the form of an author-function, then so must the writer imagine an absent reader in the form of an audience function. Both functions operate anonymously.)

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The writer's sense of community can not be involved with the work of writing because that work requires, then "closes on," the writer's absence, permitting a reader can find a presence in the work of words, impersonal and anonymous as these are. The reader has no community with the writer at all, but may have with the work of writing that is the writer's *unworking*, according to Blanchot in *The Unavowable Community*. I write *may have community* because, as we have seen in Vanderberg's equivocal conclusions about a "discourse community," there may be "no (discourse) there" in community, and "no (community) there" in discourse at some concrete level of a singular writer or reader.

Why, or how could this be so? Part of the answer returns us to Schutz's reciprocal sense of intersubjective anonymity. But Blanchot pushes the otherness of intersubjectivity to the sort of limits of the "enclave" Nantanson attempted to elaborate from basic anonymous sociality. Here is how Blanchot captures the problem in the second section of *The Unavowable Community*, titled "The Exigency of Community."

> ...[I]f the relation of one of us with another one of us ceases to be that of the Same with the Same, [literally, the traditional intersubjective sense of Identity] but rather introduces the Other as irreducible and--given the equality between them--always in a situation of dissymmetry in relation to the one looking at that Other, then a completely different relationship imposes itself and imposes another form of society which one would hardly dare call a "community" (3).

Blanchot goes on to play the familiar dialectical game I stand guilty of throughout this dissertation: we learn of the "exigency of community" (or of identity, or of authority)--its urgent necessity-- by having the word continuously hailed into existence for our attention by any number of discourse communities. This is necessary, lest we forget to remember that its presence in our lives is somehow always and already absent. (Where is our normative sense and existence of community to be found--never mind trying to locate an emancipatory sense/essence of community?)

After making a good case that the pervasive sense of otherness in identity's regime of sameness prevents the meaning of community, he starts his next sentence this way.

> Or else one accepts the idea of naming it community, while asking oneself what is at stake in the concept of community and whether the community, no matter if it has existed or not, does not in the end always posit the *absence* of community (3).

Call it *community*, but understand that in naming it thus, an absence must be accounted for. How so? As we saw in a phenomenology of anonymity, the discourse of Identity is shot through with otherness in our

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intersubjective and intrasubjective orientations. This continuum of otherness functions anonymously, as we saw. For Blanchot, it is the anonymity of death that calls the self-other relation into the question of community: "That is what founds community" (9). But Blanchot is not nihilistic regarding the death-community connection. He simply wants to make sure that we understand that community is immune to the discourses of Identity and Authority. Its material rhetoric, its function in connecting the speaker to the spoken—the Speaker Respoken— (Vining and Tolar Collins at odds) makes community

> ...not the place of Sovereignty....[E]ven by giving it various names: death, the relation to the other, or speech when the latter is not folded up in ways of speaking and hence does not permit any relation (of identity or alterity) with itself. Inasmuch as the community on behalf of everyone rules (for me and for itself) over a beside-oneself (its absence) that is its fate; it gives rise to an unshared though necessarily multiple speech in a way that does not let it develop itself in words: always already lost, it has no use, creates no work and does not glorify itself in that loss.

This characterization of community has clear ties to the function of anonymity: it makes possible a speech that is beside-oneself, a multiple speech that might or might not be shared by a community in the sense of being the common space for sharing views, values, visions that we cannot always hold in common: thus the unstable sense of community as both emancipatory and oppressive. Isn't this precisely the going view and value of anonymity itself? Further, the anonymous writer, by definition, sacrifices itself, s/he does not "glory itself" in the loss of shared identification that might—or might not-- constitute the meaning of community.

On the issue of community making possible what Blanchot calls a "necessarily multiple speech" that does develop itself in terms, or "in words" of the Sovereignty of the Subject, of a single Identity or Identification (in those "words"), I am reminded of another invocation of feminist rhetoric in the same volume of *College English* in which Tolar-Collins' article appeared. In "Rhetoric, Feminism, and Textual Ownership, Andrea Abernethy Lunsford reviews her work with Lisa Ede in *Singular Texts/Plural Authors*, noting "...some of the problems attendant on continuing to try to fit the square peg of multiple, polyvocal creativity into the round hole of singular "authorship."

Their critique of "the hegemony of romantic authorship" (529) leads them to "...an open acknowledgement of the weaving together of others' words characteristic to some degree of all writing" (540). This notion of writing, of language use, as "...a stitching, a seaming together of a garment...that is taken from "what is out there" and that is thus both yours and not yours...[is]...very much in the spirit"

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(540) of what I believe Blanchot is trying to ascertain about the absence of community. If community is not

the place of the Sovereign, romantic conception of the Author, then it is a kind of anonymous "garment":

"It is what exposes by exposing itself. It includes the exteriority of being that excludes it" (Blanchot, 12).

In other words, "what is out there" and thus what is yours and not yours" (Lunsford). Lunsford goes on

to analyze

> [t]he result of such a reconfiguration[:] [it] would be to open up what Susan West calls
> the "authordoxy" to multiple voices, not just to those who are *author* ized to
> speak/write/be heard and thus to enlarge and enrich the conversation for all...in a way
> that "invites the participation of others" (West 190, in Lunsford 540).

What unites Lunsford's and West's feminist rhetoric of community with Blanchot's "rhetoric" of the same,

in contradistinction to the rhetoric of author-ity, is the possibility of exposing the non-identifiable property

lines of discursive ownership as a "multiple speech." What separates them is Blanchot's insistence that

community is so always beside-oneself—and certainly beside the rule of "authordoxy"—that it is

effectively absent for the very "multiple speech" it makes possible. In other words, Lunsford's

"commitment to giving voice to multiple positionalities as well as to women's voices that have been muted

or ignored" (540) would seem to revile Blanchot's sense that such multiple speech possibilities creates a

community that is "always already lost...has no use, creates no work...." And yet, I think she would have

to agree that the common taking from "what is out there" to weave a text of otherness "does not glorify

itself in that loss" of Sovereignty which Community [and] Writing produces.

But there is a further, deeper affinity between the great composition-rhetorician Lunsford and

the great critical theorist Blanchot. I did not supply Blanchot's final sentences in the passage

quoted above that open a subsection of *The Unavowable Community* , titled, "Community and

Writing."

> Thus the gift of speech, a gift of "pure" loss that cannot make sure of ever being received
> by the other, even though the other is the only one to make possible, if not speech, then at
> least the supplication to speak which carries with it the risk of being rejected or lost or
> not received. Hence the foreboding that the community, in its very failure, is linked to a
> certain kind of writing, a writing that has nothing else to search for than the last words:
> "Come, come, you for whom the injunction, the prayer, the expectation is not appropriate
> (12).

In this invocation I hear echoing Lunsford's call for "participating in such a refiguration" (540).

She is calling on the need of all "[s]cholars of rhetoric and composition...to identify, theorize, and

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begin systematically practicing and teaching alternative forms of subjectivity and alternative modes of ownership" (541). Her invocation supports the same call by Blanchot for "a certain kind of writing" that is not addressed to "God" or its proxy the author-function, but to that reconfiguration of subject positions as multiple speaking positions in ownership becomes nominally absent. The rhetorical space or place of community has to be reconfigured so that its normative meaning, of holding in common, of commonly shared views and values, does not run the risk (as we saw in Vandenberg's critique of community) of becoming re-authorized in terms of sovereign ownership. In teaching alternative modes of subjectivity and ownership, we may have to require what Blanchot tells us in another subsection titled, "The Sharing of the Secret."

> ...that what was most personal could not be kept as the secret of one person alone, as it broke the boundaries of the person and demanded to be shared, better, to affirm itself as the very act of sharing. This sharing refers back to the community and is exposed in it; it can be theorized there—that is the risk it runs—becoming a truth or an object that could be owned while the community...maintains itself only as the place—the non-place—where nothing is owned, its secret being that it has no secret, working only at the unworking that traverses even writing, or that, in every public or private exchange of words, makes the final silence resound, the silence where, however, it is never certain that everything comes, finally, to an end (19-20).

In crossing Lunsford's and Blanchot's understanding of an alternative sense of community (where the ownership of subjectivity and the subjectivity of ownership become (un)stitched and (un)seam(ly), what we begin to understand as the garment of anonymity is really what community exposes by exposing itself as an "unworking" of the public and private fringes of writing.

We also understand that what Vining was calling the "secrecy of office" (of author-ity, of "authordoxy"), is revealed by community whose secret is that it is without office, which is no secret at all once we introduce the ownerless sharing of anonymous writing—that *absence*-- into the absence of community that is always and already that absence of the anonymous.

Most important to understand is that the sharing of personal identity is emancipatory to the extent that the community of sharing monologues is maximized as a no place where no writing is owned. Only anonymity can ensure this edge of nowhere in which nobody needs to own or own up to what's written. Writers endlessly disappear in the act of anonymous writing . Anonymity is not the place of Sovereignty, it is the final unresting place of community, as community is anonymity's never ending test case for whom the injunction, the prayer, the expectation, is not appropriate. The composition of community as a function

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of anonymity should enlarge and enrich the conversation for all...in a way that invites the participation of others. But because it is linked to a certain kind of writing, a writing that unworks our expectations of identity, authority and community, its sense of otherness, its multiplication of voices would appear to have no use, to create no work (the work of the Academy, for example, and whatever in hell it means by a discourse community.)

Between the disappearance of the writer and the absence of a community whose finite reality is typified by anonymous social relations, however, I posit a radical performativity of self-other relations that creates a shared sense of what no one would dare call community. Call it then, a zone of contact, descried, as we saw in Blanchot's and Lunsford's common sense of private/public boundaries getting broken and reconfigured, a zone of contact where the personal and public—one's own or an other's word— becomes (dis)owned and possibly (un)shared. It is this sense of community, as a place of rhetorical unworking and immunity that sets up a more considered sense of anonymity as a rhetoric in the work of Bakhtin.

Bakhtin's Rhetoric of Anonymous Contact Zones

Anonymity's Dialogic Destination

What have we learned from our excursus into the meaning of community as a discourse of anonymity? It might be summed in this way. There is no such thing as a community without a discourse. If anonymity is a discourse without a community, then anonymity and community share a vast discursive identity, a common sense of office that is without office. The idea [l] of an anonymous discourse community reconfigures the discursive share of Identity and the ownership Authority, and in so doing opens up both oppressive and emancipatory possibilities for new subject positions to speak/write. In real terms of action, however, the composition of an anonymous discourse community "seems to propose itself," (to adapt Blanchot's foreboding about the oppressiveness of community itself which Bizzell, as we saw, also senses),

> as a tendency towards a *communion*, even a fusion, an effervescence assembling the elements only to give rise to a unity (a supra-individuality) that would expose itself to the same objections arising from the simple consideration of the single individual, locked in his [*sic*] immanence (7).

How can we escape from this ironically solipsistic--arhetorical--sense of an anonymous community? How can we aid and abet the rhetorical return to an *eiro* -- "I say..."-- that fully

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reconfigures the subject position of a first person singular as always and already an interalia—a "We" who is both *Some body* and *No body*? I know of no better theorist than Bakhtin. The Blanchot passage uncannily echoes one of Bakhtin's last reflections made in "From Notes Made in 1970-71," right down to its technical jargon. But notice how Bakhtin opens up, emancipates the single individual, locked in his/her immanence though the suggestion of a communal anonymous function. In this passage, Bakhtin is speculating finally on what he had long since posited as a *super-addressee* of all discourse—that this ultimate sense of audience originates in intra-subjective consciousness, but does not remain there.

> Does man [*sic*] remain only within himself [*sic*], that is, remain solitary? Something absolutely new appears here: the supraperson, the *supra-I*, that is, the witness and the judge (204).

Despite this clear sense of proximity to what I have been contending is the anonymous function, the reader might ask skeptically, *Why Bakhtin?* For many of us know full well that the riverine nature of his works have become one common well to which all kinds of disc-ho[u]rses are brought to water. So now I lead a discursive horse with no name. Why Bakhtin? Bakhtin imagines a zone of contact where anonymity and community *drink.*

Bakhtin's imagination of discourse—whether authoritarian or internally persuasive, or double-voiced—always points towards the "dialogical", not the *dialectical*, as I have been doing throughout. *Dialectical* reasoning about the relation of anonymity to the discourses of Identity, Authority, and Community can not get us to a rhetorical conception of anonymity. I can tell you right now that I believe that the anonymous function is inherently *dialogical* and therefore eminently *rhetorical*, but readers are more likely to give credence to my belief if I summon the author-ity of Bakhtin.

The obvious place to begin, then, is with Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* , a group of four essays gathered from a larger collection of his essays representing some thirty years of thinking on the poetics of the novel, and amounting to his "middle period." (It is interesting to note that Bakhtin's early period, under Stalinism, saw the use of collective, untraceable—and to this day contested—authorship, in which three books attributed to Bakhtin, come from the Circle of Bakhtin, with Medvedev and Voloshinov, significantly figuring in his (who's?) author-function.)

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My present scope does not permit any reflection on Bakhtin's lifelong interest in the author-function and its relation to the novel as the historical epitome of what he calls *heteroglossic, internally dialogized, discourse.* I cannot treat his distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic" double-voiced discourse, except to remind the reader that he felt that the separation of poetics and rhetoric created two kinds of "monological discourse" which pass themselves off as authentically double-voiced. Lost to this discussion is a review and redescription of six ancient forms of "autobiography"—particularly the "rhetorical" and the "stoical" autobiography—which Bakhtin discusses in such detail in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" that no contemporary expressivist should ever feel a sense of being ahistorical or arhetorical.

But what of my sense of Bakhtin as a rhetorician rather than a literary historian who merges poetics, philology, and linguistics into what he would later come to call "translinguistic understanding?" He did not have good things to say about rhetorical discourse, generally, casting it into the realm, along with poetic discourse, of "inauthentic double voiced discourse." It was thoroughly "monological," in actuality. It had a hand, with poetic discourse, in "centralizing" language life—a centralization which "novelistic discourse" had to struggle against long and hard in "the zone of contact" that arose between them. Yet, near the end of "Discourse in the Novel," in a subsection titled *The Speaking Person in the Novel,* Bakhtin has this to say about rhetoric and the rhetorical. His theme up to this point, (as we will see below), has been the image of a speaking person in discourse that is anticipated in the listener, creating, in effect various speech and character zones.

It was Bakhtin's desire to merge several lines of investigation toward a new human science. It might stand up to "[t [he entire methodological apparatus of the mathematical and natural sciences [that] is directed toward mastery over *mute objects, brute things,* that do not reveal themselves in words, that do not *comment on themselves*" (351). Rhetoric in its present state and form could not answer this call. "The importance of another's speech as a subject in rhetoric is so great that the word frequently begins to cover over and substitute itself for reality" (353). Whatever sense of "double-voicedness" rhetoric might achieve "...is abstract and thus lends itself to formal, purely logical analysis of the ideas that are parceled out in voices, an analysis that then exhausts it" (354 In the "contact zone" as Bakhtin analyzes it, we can sense that he wanted to take from the study of psychology "the possible inner monologues of developing human

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beings, the monologue that lasts a whole life" (345). He wished to make these monologues the purview of a

rhetoric that could preserve the multiplicity of *voices*.

<u>Anonymity's Rhetorical Force</u>

Bakhtin's examination of discourse is obsessed with *voice* and voices, double-voicedness, with the

"image of a speaker," and "the image of a listener." Together these dialogically concretize a much

more abstract "image" "that is not the image of a man [*sic*] in his [*sic*] own right, but precisely *the*

image of a language (336). It is to this more specific focus on what seems to be a "phonocentric,"

but which becomes a *dialogic*, imagination that we first turn. In it we can sense Bakhtin's desire to

synthesize and synergize the best tendencies of rhetoric and poetics, psychology and philology.

We will ultimately focus on just a few pages from the subsection, *The Speaking Person in the*

Novel. To set up this discussion of the contact zone however, we open with two passages from the

first essay in *The Dialogic Imagination*. Once we have determined the context of that phrase, as

Bakhtin intended it in understanding the novel in its earliest appearance, we can then slowly

"refract" and "reaccenutate" its meaning and function as partaking of anonymous speech as itself a

"novel" discourse.

> In "Epic and Novel: Bakhtin has this to say about the origin of the novel,

>> The novel took shape precisely at the point when epic distance was disintegrating, when
>> both the world and man [*sic*] were assuming a degree of comic familiarity, when the
>> object of artistic representation was being degraded to the level of a contemporary reality
>> that was inconclusive and fluid. From the very beginning the novel was structured not in
>> the distanced image of the absolute past but *in the zone of direct contact with*
>> *inconclusive present-day reality. At its core lay personal experience and free creative*
>> *imagination* (39, emphasis added).

As we will see below, Bakhtin returns to this use of the zone of contact or *contact zone* and this discussion

of distance and proximity. In this first appearance what I find important is the resemblance of the novel's

struggle to re-present of "personal experience and free creative imagination" and the still embattled status

of "expressivism" within the field of composition-rhetoric. I see in Bakhtin's description a reminder of

expressivist discourse's devotion to having students engage *the zone of direct contact with inconclusive*

present-day reality. In contrast, "academic discourse" is "structured...in the distanced image of the

absolute past" (in the sense of other's/author's already achieved experience of the written). These are

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artificially pure binary oppositions, to be sure—just as Bakhtin's oppositions between "epic and novel" are. The discursive reality is always heteroglossic (as we saw in our study of "ancient epic" material.)

And, in terms of a hybrid, heteroglossic sense of writing as a developing reality, we all understand that what Bakhtin is calling "a zone of direct contact" has become for composition-rhetoric almost a *genre* in itself. For if first year writing has anything in common across its many discursive forms and function, it has to be that its nearly universally required status makes it "...a genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review. Such, indeed, is the only possibility open to a genre that structures itself in a zone of direct contact with developing reality" [whether that developing reality is defined as academic discourse analysis or academic autobiographical analysis] (39).

Where and how anonymous writing could or should become part of that struggle, of that zone of contact with students' developing academic reality—and with developing students' academic reality— is the subject of our close reading of Bakhtin's contact zone theme. That close reading of the contact zone should develop yet another possibility that anonymity informs the larger inconclusive discourse of community, a discourse out of which any sense of contact zones as a lived reality will appear. For now, we will return to the anonymity of discourse in more conventional rhetorical terms: the anonymous nature of the utterance.

Near the beginning of the fourth essay in *The Dialogical Imagination*, "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin reminds us of the forces in language, and of their anonymous orientation.

> Every utterance participates in the "unitary language" (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia the centrifugal, stratifying forces (272).

> The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, *anonymous* and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance (272, emphasis added).

For our purposes of understanding anonymity as the background condition for identity in community, we see a juxtaposition that should no longer strike us as peculiar: anonymity and sociality. We have been prepared to accept that anonymity is part of the authentic dialogic environment of every utterance. With Bakhtin we also begin to see that anonymity is essential to maintaining the structure and sense of community when understood as a tension-filled negotiation between what is meant by the private/public self-presentations and our private/public otherness.

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That language is both anonymous and social is clear enough—a pure Saussurean precipitate that has undergone Bakhtin's unique metaphorical spin, as in the description of the utterance just before the second passage in question. What are *langue* and *parole* for Saussure, are for Bakhtin "unitary language" and "heteroglossia". Never mind trying to picture a situation in which a phenomenon wants to spin both outward and inward. Bakhtin believes it "possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as [just such] a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language" (272). Having, I hope, exposed the discourse of anonymity as sharing this contradictory unity, I will not take up too much space here to underscore what has already been done in the name of Saussurean-Derridean binaries.

It is important to repeat, however, the counter-intuitive logic of the anonymous: it operates from and appeals to a social whole—a *supra-individuality* as Blanchot told us above. That the individual identity of its speaker/writer is concealed is merely a recapitulation of the thoroughgoing anonymity of those who, in occupying an audience or a readership, have no individual identity either. The normative rhetorical situation has the writer or speaker named and therefore "known" (if only in a formal, conventional sense). This norm "turns" on the expectation that the writer/speaker desires to self-identify for larger purposes of identification with a social but anonymous group of reader/listeners. When the writer/speaker position remains "centrifugal" (turning outward toward the social) but unknown, a curious "centripetal" effect ensues, wherein the anonymity of the writer "exposes" the anonymous but social mass of reader/listeners. The writerly (rather than authorial) desire to identify with a readership is brought into tension with the habit and desire of a readership to identify (if only in name) who is attempting an identification with a "me" or an "us." When taken together in Bakhtin's "centripetal" image, connecting the anonymous writer and reader constitutes a "unitary" sense of the social.

Not only are the subject positions of writer/reader now "tension-filled" with a pervasive anonymity both social and personal, but the normative tendencies of writing and reception to be centrifugal and centripetal can be seen to reverse spin. The anonymous writer is seen as making some sort of inward turn while appealing outward to the community. The receiving community on the other hand can be seen to spin outward toward the unnamed in a flurry of desire to first identify the writer, rather than identify with the writing—"the image of a language."

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This description of what I believe happens within the action of anonymity relies on Bakhtinian categories of spin control. I don't think my adoption and adaptation is coincidental. For one thing, both Saussure and Bakhtin see language as a whole "structure"--a kind of commonwealth for all, but specific to no one person. We see this in Bakhtin's description: "anonymous and social as language."

The most critical point in my adaptation of Bakhtin to anonymous discourse is to understand that the anonymous text is "simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and [is] accented as an individual utterance" regardless of the concealed identity of the writer. In fact, that very concealment raises the intensity or level of difference of the anonymous text. To think of the anonymous "utterance" as a genre of "dialogized heteroglossia" is to begin to understand the place it holds and shares in diversifying and stratifying, in widening and deepening, the needs and uses of a discourse (of) community (both abstract and concrete, individually accented and socially anonymous at once.)

It would appear that anonymity not only holds in tension the centripetal and centrifugal forces of language and its users. Anonymity also resonates because it *impersonates* a fully rhetorical condition in which writer/reader and writing/reading become an act of *communion*. The communion possible here happens along a continuum of otherness. Its presence—if desired-- in the discourse of community is always, at the same, time an unspeakable absence whose special conception is all of us, listening.

Anonymity's Rhetorical Face

I have been building a general case for the "double-voicedness" of a presupposed contact zone that is anonymous and social because the contact zone is itself a construct of the "dialogic imagination" which is heteroglossic and hybridized by virtue of many contending "monological" forms. We also know that the monological "I" of private phonocentric consciousness is anonymous with regard to the "I" of the writer, the "I" in writing. Bakhtin's bias, as we know, is toward the novelist, not what he calls the "prose writer," or "the writer, simply the writer." Still, he has much to tell us about the intra-subjective anonymity of the writer.

> Even had he [*sic*] created an autobiography or a confession of the most astonishing truthfulness, all the same s/he, as its creator, remains outside the world s/he has represented in her/his work. If I relate (or write about) an event that has just happened to me, then I as the *teller* (or writer) of this event am already outside the time and space in which the event occurred. It is just as impossible to forge an identity between myself, my own "I," and that "I" that is the subject of my stories as it is to lift myself up by my own hair (256).

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Bakhtin is alive to what he latter calls "the alien discourses" that inhabit, dialogize, and bring on an incipient double-voicedness in the most personal writing. He just wants to valorize their ultimate rhetoricity in the way the novelist handles them, choosing from the alien discourses of autobiography or confession as easily as she or he does from radio-nation, journalese, TVspeak.

But Bakhtin can never elide, if he would remain true to the project of a *dialogic imagination*, the monological; he can only dismiss or displace its historic author-ity in the rhetorical and poetic forms both denigrated and appropriated by Plato. He can't and won't, because of his abiding interest in the image of a listener/reader. Thus, in a Bakhtinian redescription of rhetoric, the *eiro* "I speak" undergoes a centrifugal spin, in which

> [a] ll rhetorical forms, monologic in their compositional structure, are oriented toward the listener and his (her) answer. It is highly significant for rhetoric that this relationship toward the concrete listener is a relationship that enters into the very internal construction of rhetorical discourse (280).

However, Bakhtin, goes on to tell us, the rhetorical conception takes "...the listener for a person who passively understands but not one who actively answers and reacts" (280). This is where he jumps from rhetorical to novelistic discourse, building a case that the latter creates an "internal dialogism"-- "aspects...that take the listener...who actively answers and reacts" (280). In fact, Bakhtin tells us, "[r]esponsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse...(280).

The key issue in what I would · call the "diabolical" account of double-voicedness (autobiographically lifting oneself up by one's own hair), is that it remains a rhetoric of the listener/reader, not of the speaker/writer. The writing "I" creates a written "I"--an other--which takes on an active, responsive understanding not for the writer but for still other readers. This "I"--already an alien discourse to the "I" that performed it, "...enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system." As a "speaker," this "I" anonymous to the writer who created it, "breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener [-reader]" to become a "...new form of internal dialogism of the word" (282). Bakhtin is careful to distinguish the "alien" (literally "other") nature of the writing itself (as "object") from this new form of the alien. It is not "...the object [of writing] that serves as the arena for the encounter, but rather the subjective belief system of the listener [reader]" (282).

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Under the protective/reflective, rhetorically alien, condition of anonymity, it is my belief that students'

new found orientation toward the position of the listener/reader is altered once again through a doubling of

the encounter "on alien territory." It is this sense of anonymity as the rhetorical common ground of such

alien conceptions of listening—internally and externally dialogized—that begins to describe its structure

and function as a contact zone.

I cannot prove, of course, that Bakhtin would agree that anonymity, as a rhetorical form, answers his

description of a fundamental force of responsive understanding which, in effect, "looks" rhetorically to the

listener, while rhetorically overlooking, or remaining indifferent to, the speaker. I cannot prove that he

would see that anonymity functions "...moreover [as] an *active* understanding, one that discourse senses as

resistance or support enriching the discourse" (280-1). (Though I think that students' anonymous (dis)

course evaluations, together with the academic herd of unseen, but not unheard, anonymous readers who

actively respond to fellow colleagues seeking publication more than fulfills the idea that it functions as

resistance or support enriching discourse.)

I do think, however, that we can begin to understand something of what anonymity's "double-

voicedness" might "look" like in a Bakhtinian rhetorical accounting. In the case of the anonymous student

course evaluation, the special conception of the listener becomes double-voiced and internally dialogized

when we remember that students are an audience of, and for, academic discourse; they are trained to

listen—often passively— for 12 years. The special conception of a listener which the anonymous course

evaluation creates is one in which a speaker/writer (institutionally anonymous) seeks to break "through the

alien conceptual horizon of the [student as] listener" 282).

But whereas Bakhtin goes on to describe this "speaker" as constructing "his [her] own utterance on alien

territory, against his [her], the listener's, apperceptive background," the internal dialogism and the

centripetal force of the passive listener gets reversed into the image of the entire "student body." This

anonymous collective apperceptive "body" is "saving face" first, in order to share its centrifugal force at

last. That is, students' various audiences to the heteroglossic academic discourses of a semester are given

the chance to break through the alien conceptual horizon of the teacher's, and his/her institutionally,

apperceptive background. In effect, through the internal dialogism of anonymity, anonymous listeners

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speak to anonymous listeners in a double-voiced discourse seeking a more active, responsive understanding.

In the case of the anonymous peer review, this reversal and reaccentuation of the forces of language and the imagined faces of speaker and listener is already predicated upon the kind of "active, responsive understanding" Bakhtin underscores as fundamental. Yet the anonymous function remains constant as an internally dialogized, double-voiced discourse that reaccentuates a sense of audience, not of speech: readers of a writer who becomes their reader.[2]

If these two examples do not descry the kind of contact zone that anonymous discourse can be said to create and occupy, then I have profoundly misread Bakhtin's conceptual and rhetorical conceptions of the listener as an image of the language—social and anonymous—itself. Keeping always in mind Bakhtin's bias toward novelistic discourse, I nevertheless see and hear in the following passage the rhetorical presence and inventiveness of the anonymous function. In my bias, the 'writer: transgresses the "novelist" and "the living heteroglossia of language" is always and already, as we know, "social and anonymous." The anonymous function as "double-voicedness," then makes its presence felt, as we saw, through the author-function, but also in the specific figure of the novelist.

> This double-voicedness makes its presence felt by the novelist in the living heteroglossia of language, and in the multi-languagedness surrounding and nourishing his own consciousness; it is not invented in superficial, isolated rhetorical polemics with another person (326-7).

Bakhtin would find the anonymous discourse of my two examples of course evaluations, and peer review salutation, inauthentic pretenders to genuine double-voicedness. In his view, what might be thought of as authentically *rhetorical* double-voicedness would be neither poetic nor polemical. Each is "monological" in his author-functional view. Yet, we also know that what Bakhtin has called the "possible inner monologues of developing human beings, the monologue that lasts a whole life" (345), is behind (or before, and following ever after) his fully achieved sense of "double-voicedness." This lifelong monologue that secures the certainty of self-consciousness is, as we have already seen, populated by voices that are not our own, but which, assuming phonocentric normalcy, we dialogize as our own in a contact zone otherwise known as the "I-Thou" orientation.

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The rhetorical, internally dialogized nature of this private, immediate, intrasubjective zone of self-other contact was not of much interest to Bakhtin. He was interested in its externalized, textualized reaccentuations that nevertheless, become again, internally dialogized. The idea that anonymity is a double-voiced contact zone, one rhetorically devoted to a special conception of a listener/reader, is now ready to be realized in Bakhtin's actual use of the term.

Anonymity's Rhetorical Voice

The "Glossary" put together by editor Michael Holquist at the end of *The Dialogic Imagination* opens a definition of "speech zones" this way: "Zones are both a territory and a sphere of influence. Intentions must pass through "zones" dominated by other characters, and are therefore refracted" (434). This is not of direct interest to our discussion, since "zones" specifically aid in understanding the meaning of novelistic discourse's "dialogized heteroglossia" as always having more than one "voice" (unlike, lyric poetry, for example, which Bakhtin calls "single-voiced discourse.") But as we saw in our discussion of the meaning and function of community, it seems to be a *loading zone*—much in the way that Identity is--for a number of incongruous uses and meanings. These include a "territorial" sense, and a values/views consensus site, whose "sphere of influence can indeed be said to "refract" the intentions of individual identity.

Of far greater interest to us, now that we have the basic drift that an author's character's speech is polyvocal, (including the absent character that is the author's), is Holquist's author-itative closing to this definition. (Fittingly enough, it also ends the Glossary.)

> In Bakhtin's view there are no zones belonging to no one, no "no-man's land." There are disputed zones, but never empty ones. A zone is a locus for hearing a voice; it is brought about *by* the voice" (434).

It would seem that that "no one," "no body," (or *noman*, the commonly mistranslated word for "Udeis", the name used by the character Odysseus in one of the founding speaking moments of an anonymous contact zone), couldn't claim an identity, authority, or a community. The anonymous, because it comes from no one, a no body, cannot claim a *voice*. In Holquist's entry just above that for "zone" (whether a zone for "character" or for "speech"), we discover, however, that a "voice" is "the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness. A voice always has a will or desire behind it, its own timbre and overtones" (434).

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It would seem, then, that anonymity and its function either presents a problem for "voice" and the speech/character zone it creates and is created by, or it is *the problem of voice* and *the problem of the contact zone*. It would seem that if there are any dialogic "fault lines" in the contact zone created by speaking personalities, those fault lines are opened, widened, deepened, yet simultaneously *transgressed* –crossed—by anonymous speaking personalities which, as we have seen in Chapter Three, "Toward a History of Anonymity," create, in order to populate, any number of contact zones.

Holquist is obviously basing his determination of Bakhtin's "view" of these matters of voice and zone on the text he has himself edited. Let's return, then, to *The Dialogic Imagination* to confirm or disconfirm the definitions of zone and voice as set forth in the "Glossary." The section to focus on in the final essay "Discourse in the Novel," is *The Speaking Person in the Novel*. As we have already seen, for Bakhtin, "the fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel,...is the *speaking person and his [sic] discourse* " (332). Common sense tells us, and Bakhtin reminds us, that this speaking person is an "image," an "artistic creation." Further, the speaking person is "always, to one degree or another, an *ideologue*"—that is, one "who must defend and try out his [*sic*] ideological positions, who must become both a polemicist and an apologist" (333). Thus, in one of Bakhtin's many contradictions, genuine dialogized heteroglossia does, in fact, engage to some degree or another, a monological rhetorical purity, where polemics and apologetics are the rule.

It could not be otherwise: Bakhtin's own system of a dialogic imagination is indebted, to some degree, to the lifelong monologue we carry around in our own heads: the polemics and apologetics of the voice that has been called self-consciousness, or more ethico-religious, "conscience." Just as Yeats held that poets write out of "an argument with themselves," so do we all operate from a contact zone whose speaking personality is dialogic—"it anticipates a listener" has "a special conception of a listener," in Bakhtin's words.

The monological, single-voiced, discourse of self-consciousness is actually "rhetorical" in its most robust sense of an "active, responsive understanding." The speaking personality—the character zone—of the self is thus not only an ideological, discourse, but an "alien discourse" as well, since the self is dia-logic, is split within itself between at least one speaking personality and one which is a listener—an *other*. The self-sense of otherness in its dialogic personality is not *alienation* in the existential sense developed by

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Nietzsche through Heidegger through Sartre, etc. It is an *interalia* –the "I" is the subject of a "You"—the most immediate of all orientations, and one that, we decided, contains an anonymous function.

Thus, when Bakhtin considers "novelistic discourse," he is enacting a trans-positional—or what he very early on in his career called a *transgredient* –*moment* from the speech zone of individual consciousness, a zone which is not purely or finally nominalistic, but rather, anonymistic in its provocations, its summonings, of *voice*. "The theme of the speaking person," he writes, "is after all a subject *sui generis*, [that is, "unique" or "singular"] one that poses special tasks for our language in *all* its spheres" (337). And most certainly, Bakhtin is alive to the "alien discourse" of the image or theme of this rhetorical, ideological, consciousness of the speaker. Writing about the "the transmitted speech of another" he concludes that it always "...must be kept in mind [fitting translation, that] if we are to make good our claim that of all words uttered in daily life, no less than half belong to someone else" (339).

Trying to be quantitative, Bakhtin is basically reaffirming the [half] self- [half] other theme of the binaric discourse of identity, and its subsequently more nuanced, phenomenological history. And, as we know from our own self-reflection of "I" whatever half belongs "to someone else" much of it is, to return to Natanson who is returning to psychoanalysis, "an immense remainder"—what I call "an immense, intense reminder" of the anonymity of our "other" half.

So already we are beginning to see that Holquist, in his pursuit of compression with clarity that characterizes any "Glossary", has significantly misstated the situation of the "character/speech zone." This zone may well be the zone of "no one," since "some one else" is just another no name for the other-ness of all such zones where "voices" take up the paradoxical position of watchful listening and responsive understanding. This rhetoric of an intra-subjective anonymity of "the speaking person" does not ignore that of the speech zones of inter-subjectivity, where what Bakhtin calls "representability" must not be forgotten. That is, "[I] n order to assess and divine the real meaning of others' words in everyday life, the following are surely of decisive significance: *who* precisely is speaking, and under *what* concrete circumstances?" (340).

Bakhtin has left the phenomenological or "artistic representation" of speech zones for "real" world, face-to-face speech zones to make a point that we have not left uncovered in earlier chapters. Namely, the immediacy of face-to-face, intersubjective orientations is the least anonymous of all orientations, as we

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learned from Schutz. And yet, we also understand that the subtle shadings of such orientations make the question of *"who* precisely is speaking" answerable to the function of anonymity as a contact zone whose immediate proximities and mediated distances continuously emerge within the larger problematic discourse of community itself.

Where does this leave Holquist's declaration that Bakhtin's view of speech zones, of the contact zones created by *voice*, does not entail an anonymous function or orientation? The scope of our discussion cannot take up Bakhtin's discussion of "authoritative" and "internally persuasive" discourse as "a playing with distances, with fusion and dissolution, with approach and retreat" (344). (In the idea of distance the anonymous function returns not with a vengeance, but with a murmuring voice of rhetorical indifference: "What matters who is speaking, someone said...."). We are therefore poised to look at Bakhtin's actual use of the phrase "the contact zone" (or perhaps the translator's phrase, lifted from Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*.)

In brief, Bakhtin's believes that "authoritative discourse," (founding exemplars being the holy canonical trinity I looked at in Chapter Three), does not permit us to frame its speech zones it into our contexts; it is not heteroglossic. (I believe my analysis of *Genesis* fully contradicts Bakhtin's dictum, since, if framed within the context of the anonymous function therein, it is decidedly heteroglossic, and double-voiced.) He is partially correct, in view of the anonymous function, that "[t [he zone of the framing context must likewise be distanced—" for we understood, and, I hope, still understand, that anonymity is a distancing act between speaker/writer and listener/reader.

But anonymity is also a complex act of proximity for the writing itself as a special double-voiced conception of the listener/reader-- of *other voices* in its contact zone. Thus, when he finishes that last declaration, "The zone of the framing context must likewise be distanced—*no familiar contact is possible here either*" (344, my emphasis). We have to await the findings of Chapter Five, "Toward a Pedagogy of Anonymity," to understand just how wrong Bakhtin really is about the possibility of familiar contact in the rhetorical zone of anonymity's "alien discourse." This familiar contact operates on two planes—between the unnamed writer and his/her image of speaking others, and between the named, face-to face readers of these writings of "no one" speaking about some one—the self itself an alien among its others.

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In the following passage, Bakhtin uses the very phrase, "the contact zone." In terms of Bakhtin's thematically recursive approach and style, its reappearance after many years and essays after "Epic and Novel," is not surprising, and would seem to be a recapitulation of that earlier description, which we have treated above. But its appearance in this later context takes on a more universal meaning. He is no longer concerned with the novel and its discursive struggle, but with all discourse—with idea of any and every discourse *community* coming to terms with its sense of author-ity—of "authoritative discourse." Here is where the fault lines inevitably appear between what should be distanced or centralized. Here is where—and how— voices of discursive emancipation come to figure in and refigure the contact zone.

These non-authoritative voices are not the guarantees of the discourse of identity, and certainly not of community, given its contestable discourse. They involve fresh personal experience and free creative expression that are essentially without office. This makes them to some extent immune to the official, already author-zed (default) line. Thus immunity enables the finding of fault in authority's default line (of appropriateness, or correctness, for example.) As a phrase, *contact zone* has become critical to understanding these multivocal fault lines in the discourses of identity, authority, and community that trouble composition-rhetoric. These fault lines also enable it to transgress its theoretical and pedagogical troubles, making it one of those "fields" of "studies" that thrive (contra North) on heteroglossic, and multi-vocal discourses.

> In the history of literary language, there is a struggle constantly being waged to overcome the official line with its tendency to distance itself from the zone of contact, a struggle against various kinds and degrees of authority. *In this process discourse gets drawn into the contact zone,* which results in semantic and emotionally expressive (intonational) changes: there is a weakening and degradation of the capacity to generate metaphors, and discourse becomes more reified, more concrete, more filled with everyday elements and so forth (345 emphasis added).

Readers will note that Bakhtin is still taking a shot at what he considers the monological purity of poetry, especially lyric poetry, with its proven (Bakhtin would say *craven*) capacity to generate metaphors, but not much else of ideological worth. (In this, of course, he is wrong, ultimately, but he is still writing in the flush of a faith in the novel as coming to incorporate *all* discourse. What has, in fact, happened, if we march with Foucault, is that the "novel" is no longer new, and becomes just another *episteme*, no less, no more, authoritatively or internally persuasive than The Bible or the daily newspaper. Bakhtin comes to this realization as his career closes.)

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More important to notice, I think, is the attempted ascendancy of *prose* writing that, in keeping with its etymology, does not *turn* like "verse" toward an authoritative past. Unofficial Prose does not genuflect before a canonical altar. It *walks* past it in the concrete pursuit of the everyday expression. In this, I think, we can identify a bit of what's at stake in the struggle over the meaning and function of the *contact zone* in composition-rhetoric. Before we get to some of the field's reception and contestation of the term, we might reflect, once again, on Bakhtin's hope for a new rhetoric of the contact zone. How far, from what Holquist asserts as being the view of Bakhtin, is that zone in which anonymity maintains a voice no less pervasive and functional than what we found in our analysis of community as the site of some hoped for process of universal mediation?

The answer lies in the run up to what I believe amounts to Bakhtin's call for a new rhetoric of the contact zone. The preparation for the contact zone is his conclusion about "internally persuasive discourse." This is sort of discursive life force is that struggle to hear and speak "one's own word" within a lifelong monologue whose "...process is made more complex by the fact that a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness"(348). He describes a process by which both a writer and a reader conduct "experimental guesswork [wherein] the image of the speaking person and his [*sic*] discourse become the object of creative, artistic imagination" (348).[3]

We now begin to sense some anonymous fault lines in the contact zones of speech, character, and of discourse at large, which Holquist did not take account. Between the image of the speaking person and the struggle of alien voices with an image that, as we have learned, always anticipates a listener there is always a matter of what Bakhtin calls "experimental guesswork." But to discover that sense of a possible new rhetoric of the contact zone, where not only "alien voices," but the voices of "no body" do indeed speak, we need to leave *The Dialogic Imagination* and look to Bakhtin's late writings *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*.

At the end of "The Problem of Speech Genres" Bakhtin clarifies a blurring he often made in the essays comprising *The Dialogic Imagination* regarding the "voices" of spoken versus written genres. This blurring was natural, of course, since the "image of a speaking/listening person" is critical to understanding—to imagining—the dialogic representation of reality in a novel. But Bakhtin was also fascinated, as we saw, by the "monological" nature of individual self-

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consciousness and the voices it holds in tension as both a centripetal and centrifugal source for what happens in novelistic discourse. By the time we get to "The Problem of Speech Genres" he is keen to re-sharpen some of the distinctions that tended to blend under the scrutiny of his experimental guesswork, between the utterance as an image and as an action.

> Thus, addressivity, the quality of turning to someone, is a constitutive feature of the utterance; without it the utterance does not and cannot exist. The various typical forms this addressivity assumes and the various concepts of the addressee are constitutive, definitive features of various speech genres (99).

In this sense of turning to someone, we understand that the quality of this addressivity is various. There is intensely intimate, beloved, private, bedroom address, in which the exchange of voices are such that no one else will ever hear, (or care to hear, except that filmic love scenes always parody these privacies with a watchful listening from nowhere). There are voices of strangers sitting in the airplane seats in front of you. What of the collective addressivity in a full restaurant growing louder until it is bearable because it is absolutely unhearable--a non-language buzz and boom cocooning your intimate, private dinner talk? In the next paragraph, Bakhtin might have saved many readers much trouble in their first and second passes through *The Dialogic Imagination* if he had stated this, the paragraph following the one above.

> As distinct from utterance (and speech genres), the signifying units of a language—the word and the sentence—lack this quality of being directed or addressed to someone: these units *belong to nobody and are addressed to nobody*. Moreover, they in themselves are devoid of any kind of relation to the other's utterance, the other's word (99, emphasis added).

True, true, Holquist was defining "speech" zones when he asserted that "in Bakhtin's view there are no zones belonging to no one, no "no-man's land." But once we remember that these speech zones, these loci created by the voice for the voice, are in turn, made out of words, we begin to understand--actively, responsively understand--how anonymity structures the contact zone of *no body*.

In his some of his very last writing—"From Notes Made in 1970-71: He asks" "Do there exist genres without an addressee? And then he writes, as if in answer: "The world without names.... Not from the thing to the word, but from the word to the thing, the word gives birth to the thing" (153). Words belong to nobody and are addressed to nobody. The contact zone of anonymity is complete, and never empty, replete with a community that it might become. It gives voice to what is silenced. The unspeakable absence, and

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the absence of the unspoken, at the heart of community as a contact zone, cannot be understood in theoretical or rhetorical terms without taking account of an anonymous function.

Anonymity and Pedagogical Artists of the Contact Zone

Fault lines Part One: Pratt, Bakhtin, Hesford

I first became acquainted with Pratt's notion of a "contact zone" after I had first read Bakhtin in 1990. I picked up her book *Imperial Eyes; Travel Writing and Transculturation* and made my first foray into ethological and ethnographic research on the colonialist and imperialist encounters between the Western subject and its Native/Savage Others. I did not then appreciate the anonymous function in the moment of such encounters. It was not until Pratt published "The Arts of the Contact Zone" where it was reproduced in Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading*—an anthology I used as a TA while at The University of Massachusetts/Boston—that I began to sense the enormity of the concept's importance.

I never did trace back the question of whether Holquist seized on Pratt to translate Bakhtin's concept of contact zone, or the Russian translates Bakhtin's inimitable neologizing straight into English, and Pratt picked it up through Holquist. It matters little, since Bakhtin and Pratt, have much in common for composition-rhetoricians. Both have been drawn into its discourse community so deeply and widely that to get some sense of cogency behind the vast references to both thinkers, I seize upon the concept they share, as it were, to help composition-rhetoric, stay in contact with its own struggles and encounters.

In terms of my own research to contextualize my own past attempts to enable a contact zone through anonymous writing about the politics of identity, (1994-5 at The University of New Hampshire), the latest reference to Pratt's use of contact zone appears in the 1998 *Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words* (Jarratt and Worsham. Editors.) In that book, Wendy Hersford's "Ye Are Witnesses": Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity" sums up Pratt's idea this way to set the stage for her own pedagogical experiments and experiences during the fall of 1993 at Oberlin.

> Pratt's notion of the contact zone helps us understand how historically oppressed groups negotiate identities and imagine communities in the context of institutional power relations.

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Hesford has not read *Imperial Eyes*. Like all others, she seizes upon the "Arts of the Contact Zone." Pratt's use of it in the larger study is not nearly so upbeat as related here. Still, the idea of imagining communities within a contact zone created by voices of a dominant Other which then provoke the suppressed voices of the subordinated Other (thus the subtitle of the Jarratt/Worsham edition, "In Other Words") returns us to Bakhtin's speech zones, and gives a poignant double meaning to the idea that they are/are not inhabited by "no one." She then quotes from Pratt's "Arts of the Contact Zone" to define the term.

> ...a space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact
> with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion,
> radical inequality, and intractable conflict (Hesford, in Jarratt and Worsham 134).

The zone of contact Hesford creates her own intention and Pratt's actual definition is very much reminiscent of Bakhtin's sense of the struggle to make an authoritative discourse part of one's own word, make it internally persuasive, rather than hard edged and unalterable. Hesford then completes the ideological transformation of Pratt's idea of contact which she initiated with her uncited use (from Pratt) of "imagine[ed] communities" by applying its imperialist orientation to the normative entitlements of a first world academic orientation.

Of course, Pratt performs this ideological transformation herself--in total—when she reaccentuates her book length study of subject peoples under Western domination into a pedagogical application within the dominant zone of Western imperial power. In this sense, to hearken back to Bakhtin, Hesford is struggling against Pratt's authoritative, official line on the contact zone. She seems to be suggesting that Pratt's conception, as "the official line with its tendency to distance itself from the zone of [academic] contact," needs to be overcome—even though Pratt has already overcome her own official line. The discourse of academic community, in other words, is one of various kinds of struggle with its own authority.

> When applied to the academy, Pratt's concept of the contact zone challenges images of
> colleges and universities as stable and unified cultural sites where the principles of
> cooperation and equality obtain. In fact, colleges and universities are sites where the
> contradictions of power, politics of representation, and construction of historical memory
> are made visible. Collisions and conflicts among students illustrate how power is
> expressed and contested through written, spoken, and symbolic representation (134).

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I have no disagreement with Hesford's appropriation and application of the term. It very much describes my pedagogical experience, except that I find the "contradictions" and "politics" she speaks of were far less visible, thus my idea of an anonymous contact zone.

Fault lines Part Two: Pratt, Bakhtin, van Slyck

Phyllis van Slyck's 1997 article "Repositioning Ourselves in the Contact Zone," is the next most recent appearance of the term. It also tells us much about how rhetoric's-rhetoric's discourse of community is (again Bakhtin) "a struggle [that is] constantly being waged to overcome the official line with its tendency to distance itself from the zone of contact, a struggle against various kinds and degrees of authority. *In this process* [the] *discourse* [of community itself] *gets drawn into the contact zone,* which results in semantic and emotionally expressive (intonational) changes" in the original conception of the contact zone itself.

Van Slyck samples from Pratt's article, opening with this epigraph:

> *What is the place of unsolicited oppositional discourse, parody, resistance, critique in the imagined classroom community? Are teachers supposed to feel that their teaching has been most successful when they have eliminated such things and unified the social world, probably in their own image? Who wins when we do that? Who loses?* (in van Slyck 149).

As we will see in Chapter Five, "Toward a Pedagogy of Anonymity," the answer to these questions, especially the first two, get treated in terms of the anonymous function: the place of all three of Pratt's types of "oppositional discourse" is located there; and furthermore, that "place" or contact zone that is anonymous writing is "the imagined classroom community"—the emancipatory/oppressive, essentially contested concept revealed over and against the normative sense—"unified social world"-- of community that generally pertains in teaching not to transgress, but to process community.

I have never felt more successful in my teaching then when I was teaching in the contact zone of anonymous writing. I state that even as I was made to feel a failure by many colleagues who felt that the prevention or elimination of such transgressive, oppositional discourse (however residual and inconsistent) is the sign of an emancipatory classroom community. Why? Because controlled consensus becomes self-fulfilling: a normative, authoritative discourse of community of the going view and going value of compositional identity "wins" and the hybrid, centrifugal, heteroglossic otherness of writing itself "loses."

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van Slyck's pedagogy is not an anonymous one, but a close reading and oral/written response to "...a variety of postcolonial, nonwestern, and other so-called minority texts, in conjunction with western texts...in an artificial space—the classroom—which does not appear to them to be safe or neutral" (151). Precisely because of their view of classroom vulnerability, and the power of office held by the teacher within that artificial space, making no real sense of community possible—normative or emancipatory –the rhetorical immunity of anonymity is necessary for sense of safety and neutrality in terms of teacherly/ institutional power in the contact zone of the classroom.

van Slyck wants "to offer students modes of resistance to their own and their peers' cultural chauvinism, yet [she does] want members of the class to divide into separate and hostile camps" (151-52). I admire her recapitulation of the contact zone in terms more faithful to Pratt's original agenda than Hesford's or mine, which import first world identity politics into the contact zone. She cannot have the ideological struggle and resistance inherent to the contact zone without having it operate as an *absence* –or profound dissensus between normative and emancipatory senses-- *of community*. Quoting Catherine Stimpson who is, naturally, appropriating Bakhtin, she asks: "How can I demonstrate "that it is possible to live openly with difference in a dialogic community?"...--that students "...can engage in cultural analysis and ethical negotiations, without necessarily coming to consensus"(152).

In reading her article, I she her giving the contact zone a short leash, pulling it back, before the logic of its anonymously communal elements can assert the logic of an answer to her questions. She is more obsessed with proving to students that their "values are socially and culturally constructed" (152), and having them "...recognize that the illusion of a "core" self is at the heart of essentialist positions which privilege one culture over another" (153), then she is fully drawing them into the contact zone and its anonymous destinies. Divided and hostile camps, tension in the enclaves, pressure between intersubjective and intrasubjective transgressions that, in Pratt's words, "clash and grapple with each other,"—these are inevitable "fault lines" in the anonymous contact zone.

Because her pedagogy stands on the shoulders of not only Pratt, but also upon Bizzell's and Miller's earlier (1994) invocations of the contact zone, she has the luxury and responsibility to quote each of them. Speaking of Miller, but not directly of his notion of "fault lines" in the contact zone, van Slyck repeats his reminder, itself quoting Pratt, that " "...there is still a great deal of work to be done in constructing the

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'pedagogical arts of the contact zone' " and that one of the most important steps [summarizing him] is to reconfigure power relations in the classroom" (152). She then quotes Bizzell, whose "OPINION: "CONTACT ZONES" AND ENGLISH STUDIES" preceded Miller's "Fault lines in the Contact Zone" by two months in 1994. Van Slyck's quote is really Bizzell quoting Pratt's original idea-- "historically defined contact zones, moments when different groups within the society contend for...power " (154-55).

Thus van Slyck's focus on "power"—as understood by Miller and Bizzell (which is itself a contact zone with fault lines), reduces the possibility of the contact zone into simply redrawing, not transgressing the boundaries of academic power in the figure of the teacher. Standing on their shoulder, van Slyck asserts the power of the contact zone as an academically author-itative discourse community, not one in which is filled and defined by students' voices as well: "Contact zones *must therefore be defined* [my emphasis] more broadly as spaces where diverse *world* literatures, and the cultures they represent and critique, may be taught in thematically organized contexts"(154). (Certainly, I taught the politics of identity in a thematically organized context, using readings. The difference—the essential difference—was the anonymity of one of the contact zones enacted by what was defined for composition.)

Van Slyck's "proposal for an English department contact zone course" (155) is simply repeating the official line laid down by Bizzell three years before on what contact zones are for, and how they should be deployed (Bizzell's "opinion": give the power of deciding what a discourse community back to literature where it has always belonged, and get the expressivists—specifically Elbowians-- out of the contact zone. Swell, Prof. Bizzell! Contact the zone of postcolonialism if you must, but is that contact zone- the only one that can interrogate the insidious, falsely emancipatory Western Self's sense of entitlement through normative, exemplary identities of whiteness, middle classness, heterosexuality?

Eiro—I say: Bizzell, along with van Slyck, are traitors to, or at least traders on, composition 's indigenous contact zone and its own imagined community of discourse where the illusion of a unitary, autobiographical self meets its own social construction through writing the intersubjective experiences of identity within the anonymous ties and processes of otherness. Quoting Gerald Graff (no friend to composition, except that his dissensus model of teaching has yet to be fully adapted to writing in and of itself), van Slyck believes such courses would become universal, standardized and could thus "be put into dialogue with one another to

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create a sense of [Graff's] "continuing community" " (155). I will grant that she and Bizzell are correct—*if we are advocating abdicating control of composition as a distinct discourse community.*

More generously, van Slyck is interested, as are we all, in teaching students "to define ethical positions" and that it is, in deed, "[p]art of our responsibility…to help students see that unreflective group consensus does not constitute an ethical position and that sometimes becoming an individual means standing apart from one's community and questioning its practices and values" (156). To not see—or attempt the experimental guesswork of –an anonymous contact zone as a way to stand apart from one's community so as to question its practices and values, is, I think *unethical.* The powers that be institute anonymous course evaluations not for the going view and going value, but to aid students in standing apart from the academic discourse community and questioning its practices and values. So much more then, would this sense of resistance, parody, critique that Pratt calls for under van Slyck's own regime of (in) citation, under conditions of anonymous classroom conditions.

Significantly, on the final page of her article, van Slyck quotes from Bakhtin's subsection "The Speaking Person in the Novel". His idea of "ideological becoming," in which we "selectively assimilate the words of others" is an opportunity for all of us "to explore our increasing cultural hybridity" (168). If anonymous writing (and that's a big *IF*) does perform at all what I am claiming for it—namely, contact with a continuum of otherness, hostile and humble, compassionate and contestatory, oppressive and emancipatory, sincere and cynical—then the sense of hybridity van Slyck has apparently unwittingly adapted from Bakhtin's own notion of a contact zone will not go unnoticed or reimagined by the community of the composition classroom.

Being the hybrid voices of no body, the anonymous function is a process of ideological becoming no less ethical in its remarkable range of dissensus and consensus than what van Slyck is call "*world* literature." "Anonymous" is part of world literature and of all writing beyond literature. It is a process in which people have undergone various kinds of ideological becoming for as long as writing has existed. Van Slyck's (and inferentially, Bizzell's) "multicultural vision" is a confirmation of Henry Louis Gates' definition that such vision entails "identities [being] always in dialogue…as sites of contest and negotiation, self-fashioning and refashioning" (in van Slyck).

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When she ends her article by citing "this process" as described by Gates, it occurs to me that Gates has always understood, better than almost anyone, except for the great African-American writers it is his privilege to reposition in the white canonical contact zone of literature what van Slyck is only now calling for. Van Slyck ends by calling us all to embrace "this process" of dialogically imagined identities so that "...we may all begin to reposition *ourselves* in the contact zone" (168 emphasis added). American slaves began by repositioning their identities in an anonymous contact zone not even Pratt can barely imagine. I find van Slyck's invocation of a literary critic and theorist whose race has been the metonymic default line for invisibility and anonymity in its most oppressive sense yet another ironic oversight of the anonymous function, always and already rhetorically (in)different to the *other* side of "our" "discovery" of the contact zone.

Fault lines Part Three: Pratt, Bakhtin, and Bizzell

Patricia Bizzell's February, 1994 *College English* piece, "Opinion: "Contact Zones" and English Studies," is remarkable for its continuation of the ideological re-positioning of composition-rhetoric's on-going struggle between "academic discourse" and "expressivist writing." Her brief excursus enables van Slyck's impressive, but strangely myopic, proposal for reconfiguring and re-positioning composition as a post-western contact zone, where the personal narrative is exposed as narcissistic, uncritical pandering to an American obsession with a unitary, solitary self. By positing the true and rightful place of composition pedagogy—of all its writing—to be part of a larger "ideological becoming," of "struggling with an other's authoritative word," as Bakhtin had it, Bizzell appears to have chased expressivism from the field to clear the way for composition-rhetoric as an exclusively literary sharecropper whose harvest is multiculturalism generally, and post-colonial critique specifically. Even Elbow, as she has it, is unnerved by the lack of a place for literature in composition pedagogy during a summit conference some years ago on English Studies. She pillories Elbow this way:

> Elbow, although an advocate of composition pedagogies in which each writer is to do pretty much as he or she pleases, was sufficiently troubled by [the evasion of the place of literature in answering the question, *What is English?*] that he propose his own list of literary contents for English studies in an appendix (165).

I have no office, no authority, but I too advocate a pedagogy in which each writer writes as he pleases. The most personal writing— (to be distinguished from navel gazing, bourgeois, first World self-congratulation, or the composition of complaint that spews from a larger culture of complaint (to be distinguished from legitimate discourses of trauma, of bodies/ psyches in pain) the most personal writing is intellectual and inter-textual. I have never encountered a personal narrative that couldn't be re-mastered into a research paper that would satisfy Bizzell's adaptation of Pratt's contact zone in which "all students [may see] their roots traced back to legacies of both glory and shame" (Pratt, in Bizzell, 167). The hybridity, the double-voiced discourse, of the normatively named contact zone that is the personal plus textual essay is achievable. I have many class books of students' final essays to prove it.

Bizzell's ultimate call for a contact zone leans on a different section in Pratt than does van

Slyck's derivative elaboration of Bizzell's original sighting. She approves of Pratt's call for, oddly

enough

> exercises in storytelling and identifying with the...attitudes of others... experiments in...the arts of critique, parody, and comparison Including unseemly comparisons...; ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories); ways to move *into and out of* rhetorics of authenticity; ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the all-important concept of *cultural mediation* (Pratt, Bizzell 168).

Interesting, isn't it that Bizzell elbows Elbow for "autobiography", expunges the expressivist ethos from any proximity to this new contact zone, and then shoe horns most of what he's been arguing for, especially in *Writing with Power*, under the heel of Pratt's "autoethnography." Equally interesting is the unwitting confirmation of a transgressive expressivism suggested by anonymous writing in the contact zone. As a "way for people to engage with suppressed aspects of personal and public history; as a way to move into and out of rhetorics of authenticity through parody and impersonation; and as a systematic approach to *cultural mediation* (where even, initially "mutual respect" is transgressed), anonymous writing is one "way" toward those goals.

Bizzell, hidebound and blind because of Elbow's challenge of otherness (a challenge that has its roots the Sophists' challenge to Platonism), ironically imagines much what an anonymous discourse community is all about. Her author-itative "Opinion" is a startling example of late Bakhtinian rhetoric in which he asks: "It is customary to speak about the authorial mask, But in which utterances (speech acts) is there a *face* and

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not a mask, that is no authorship?" (152). That is, she knows not where of the no one she is speaking for. Her famous linkage between "academic discourse" and "critical consciousness" must clearly be examined for the high threshold anxiety that must obtain for her perform a repression of the expressivist and anonymous voices that must have their *eiro*—their communal say—in spite of her identification with author-ity.

<u>Fault lines Part Four: Pratt, Bakhtin, and Miller</u>

Richard Miller's "Fault lines in the Contact Zone" is my version of saving the best and worst for last in arguing for and defending my sense that the anonymous function is not only an integral part of what we mean by the discourse of community, but is essential to how we position our teaching and our students' writing within Pratt's own pedagogically applied sense of an "autoethnographic" contact zone. The presence of the anonymous function in his descriptions of his classroom and the surrounding academic discourse community is far more pervasive and penetrating than what Foucault abstractly imagined "unfolding" at the end of "What is an Author?" In resummoning Blanchot from *The Unavowable Community*, perhaps I should write: *The perilous and paralyzing absence that is anonymity* in Miller's descriptions of academic writing and response. Remember Blanchot asserting,

> the supplication to speak which carries with it the risk of being rejected or lost or not received. Hence the foreboding that the community, in its very failure, is linked to a certain kind of writing, a writing that has nothing else to search for than the last words: "Come, come, you for whom the injunction, the prayer, the expectation is not appropriate (12).

> ...while asking oneself what is at stake in the concept of community and whether the community, no matter if it has existed or not, does not in the end always posit the *absence* of community?

Miller uncannily picks up Blanchot's sense of "foreboding" that is the absent community of anonymous writing, a writing that has nothing else to search for, precisely because it cannot be properly identified as belonging to *somebody*. Because it belongs, rather, to *no body*, anonymity as a certain kind of writing, lacks any authoritative claim to a community because addressivity and answerability are effectively, dialogically, *absent*. It therefore, cannot be taken seriously, ultimately. It is rejected as craven precisely because of its cunning, as absent precisely because of its arch altitude, as reprobate precisely because of its attempt to revise the intimate, embodied, binary of response and responsibility.

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There is no audience for anonymity, Miller argues, because its anticipation of audience is an image of a listener who remains silent, who cannot imagine how to become a speaker in turn. What matters who is speaking/writing, concludes the listener/reader anticipated by the anonymous function: for if I respond, to whom shall I respond? What is his/her/their address(ivity)? The most rabid, radioactive speech/character zone brought into being by the anonymous speaker/writer has a very feverish but short run as a dis-ease, a very short half-life, Miller tells us.

> The conventions governing the interchange, [of three anonymous posters and an anonymous interview with the feminist author of the first poster in the school magazine] in effect, guarantee only that the described situation will continue: in this sphere, anonymous threats and ambiguous slogans combine to produce a kind of political paralysis, *where nothing happens because nobody knows where anybody stands* (403, emphasis added).

Yet, the emergence of the anonymous function was found interesting enough—pedagogically irresistible—to Miller that he had to import its alien discourse into his classroom for analysis leading to this and other conclusions with his students. His conclusions about the composition-rhetoric of anonymity—what its pedagogical object lessons are—are not, in my view, a matter of a very long rhetorical run for a very short didactic slide. The "fault lines" he traces in anonymity's contact zone are numerous and interesting for study, perhaps, in a more universally curricular, and ethically applied fashion in the same way, if not for the same *rhetorical* "conventions" of "otherness", that "post-colonial" textuality (reading and writing) was at the time being advocated by Bizzell and at the end of the 90's by van Slyck.

The core documents around which Miller builds his sense of "fault lines" in the contact zone of anonymity are three anonymous posters that have surfaced in what he calls an on again, off again, "corridor war" involving anonymous feminist speech against a rape culture and counter- anonymous speech threatening violent "revolution" against those who would dare declare this undeclared war on women. The first anonymous poster

<div align="center">

DON'T MAKE
YOUR
MOTHER
HAVE TO TELL
HER FRIENDS
THAT YOU'RE
A
RAPIST
(400)

</div>

<div align="center">

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</div>

is brought in as exhibit A—a perfect heuristic-for bringing to life Pratt's definition of " "autoethnographic texts" as "heterogeneous on the reception end as well as the production end" (Pratt in Miller 401). "Here was writing from the contact zone that was simultaneously oppositional, parodic, resistant, and critical: how, I asked, were we to read it? (401).

Miller found the ensuing class discussion—which basically endorsed the poster's condemnation of rape and rapists, but found the intention-message of the feminist/artist provocateur unhelpfully ambiguous—predictable, approaching banality. Given the combination of the context and the location of this discussion and the spell cast by the rhetorical structure of the first poster, it is hard to see how they could have said anything else" (401).

The "context" Miller is referring to is a kidnapping and sexual violation that had occurred the previous weekend. Against that context, I find it difficult to see how the appearance of the first poster could not have said anything else and with "signature" of *no one* else. The second poster is a Derridean "play" at threatening the feminist outrage and extremity of the first. Its graphic complexity is almost impossible to reproduce here. Suffice to say it contains sexist slurs such as: WHORE TRAMP BITCH HOLE SLIT WENCH DYKE TEASE and ends with DOGS RUN.

These two posters, virtually back to back, are followed a month later by another anonymous poster

NOT ALL
MEN RAPE
SOME OF US
JUST WATCH
(402).

Taken together, Miller found that his students unleashed brilliant flood of interpretations of the meaning of all three posters, followed by stories of personal experience with daily acts of verbal or physical harassment/violence based on the gender/sex of a given victim (generally female). What troubled him was that none of this social constructionist and expressivist flash (orally reflected and discussed, not written) led "...to any sort of consensus about which reading...was "correct" (402).

Miller concludes, "[t]his is one of the hazards of allowing students to work with writing in the contact zone"(402). He finds three hazards: meaning is up for grabs; local, situated knowledge can trump a teacher's global, textual knowledge; teacher authority in guiding consensus about plausible readings is undermined. I quote at length his conclusion, having initially misread it, as

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advocating against an endorsement of what bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress* would call authority of experience, teacher vulnerability, and boundary transgression between empancipatory and oppressive discourses inevitable to identity politics and its contact zones.

> In place of a community of uniform and obedient students, one finds a contestatory space where the vertiginous possibilities of the multivalent, multivocal text become at least momentary reality in the hands of a loosely federated, heterogeneous group with widely divergent reading abilities and political commitments (402).

Miller is stoic, if not stern in his conceptual attitude toward both the contact zone as a premise and its specific engagement via anonymous discourse. He finds students' entrance into the contact zone created by what Judith Butler would call "excitable speech", and the resulting politics of that speech's performativity, "exciting" but hardly the final goal of his pedagogical approach and ambitions for his students. By the time of the third poster and the ensuing discussion, Miller concluded that the contact zone enacted by anonymity "...designed to be "dangerous and political" ended up being dismissed as the work of cowards afraid to make their position clear" (403). Like the peril (described above) of having students have their way with the interpretive and authoritiative boundaries of the normative contact zone that is the classroom, the apparently "emancipatory" contact zone opened by anonymous speech, is ultimately "cast aside as nonsense" because it lacks, as I said up top, addressivity and answerability.

So Miller was pushing his students past the initial excitable speech zone moment to come to some kind of reflective, ripened conclusion. And he feels this rhetorical lesson learned about the provocative character of anonymous discourse is "...is not an insignificant lesson to learn in a course devoted to thinking about writing as a process" (403). Thus, anonymous writing as a process may "buy the writer or writers the freedom to express opinions and prejudices openly, but it does so at the cost of undermining the credibility or significance of what is being said...[and] also helps to create an environment of suspicion and hostility" (403). So then, I must stand corrected, phenomenologically, discursively, historically, rhetorically, and, I suppose, where the anonymous contact zone most counts—pedagogically.

<u>Rebuttal and Conclusion</u>

The writing of *No Body* –like the speech of Udeis/Odysseus—might be a primal act of enlightenment in the sense of coming into our nominalist consciousness that identity is split, that we can do all sorts of things

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with words, and words with us. But Odysseus had to become Somebody; he had to disclose himself after concealing himself, even at the risk of getting himself killed after blinding his adversary through anonymity.

The risk in losing himself through continuous impersonation was too great, the stress of his wandering/wondering too profound, that he had to rename to remind himself of who he was and where he was ultimately oriented, to his Sovereignty first and last, to his wife, Penelope, distantly, to his son, Telemachus, far off, almost the other he had been before his odyssey as no body. Anonymously impersonating an old beggar, once home, he chooses his time to rename and reveal himself—the anonymous function shielding his identity, until the time was right for revealing his power: to take his revenge and kill his rivals.

Anonymity is serious play; no body doubts its perilous two-way tactics of subjection. Yet it remains a useful contact zone, if not a permanent state of mind, since the mind is always embodied, and the body is not *no* body. It is a body, and is named, among other bodies. Anonymity is a contact zone, as Miller tells us, "where nothing happens because nobody knows where anybody stands" (403).

But-- and this is a big BUT—Miller did not make the "autoethnographic texts" of the anonymous contact zone a working part of his own course "devoted to thinking about writing as a process" as I have. He engages with his conclusions about anonymous writing to "drive home the importance of balancing the strengths and weaknesses available within any given rhetorical approach" (403).

BUT: he did not begin his writing course with anonymity. He has done an incisive job of weighing those strengths and weaknesses and concluded that the anonymous contact zone is so full of fault lines that it falls through into its own unanswerable, nonsensical, other-wise/unwise otherness of the rebel yell/rhetorical hell of nobody.

BUT: he did not text his findings from a rhetorical situation completely outside and other to his own to determine if the same results pertain. In driving home his point that the fear and suspicion generated by the last two posters' suggestion of complicity—sins of omission, not of commission—with the kidnapping/rape, he quotes one of his students as asking: "What if...the people producing these posters are in this class?" Miller answer to this is what I've already quoted: "a kind of political paralysis" and a rhetorical suspicion and sense of threat.

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BUT: if he had engaged the anonymous contact zone as part of the pedagogical and rhetorical goals of the writing process itself as "autoethnographic" he might have witnessed students who don't need to ask the question What if...there are racists, sexual abuse victims, onanists, beautiful empaths, sexually confused searchers, god-hungerers, parodists, crticasters, sexists, anti-feminists?

Yes, what if   NOBODY were any of these identities. What if the class discussed the dialogical imaginations invoked or provoked by these contact zones? What if they were the super-person, the super-addressee, the No Body at the center of audience that is the resonant, watchful listening absence at the center of community itself? What if those heterogeneous productions became common discursive property? And what if only one student only revealed her identity at the beginning of one course and only one--another --student revealed his identity at the end of that course in a reflective essay on his writing processes and what he learned about gender and sexual identity?

What then? What are we to do with all these cowards and suspects, the hostiles and the humbles, the humbugs and the humorists, with their undermined credibility and significance what was said/written in and about the anonymous contact zone? What if the fault lines are also de-fault lines for experimental guesswork about the essence of identity and the performative discourses constantly transforming it? What if anonymity and the discourses of identity, authority, and community it contacts and hybridizes turn out finally to be a matter of masking?

I present Richard Miller for a concluding answer to these eminently rhetorical questions. If, given those What Ifs,

Then This:

> In the uncharted realm of teaching and studying in the contact zone, the teacher's traditional claim to authority is thus constantly undermined and reconfigured which, in turn, enables the real work of learning how to negotiate and place oneself in dialogue with different ways of knowing to commence. This can be strangely disconcerting work [and remember, he didn't *really* work the zone], requiring, as it does, the recognition that in may places *what passes as reason or rationality in the academy functions not as something separate from rhetoric, but rather as one of many rhetorical devices* (407 emphasis added).

The anonymous discourse community, undermining the discourse of universal mediation, also initiates it, for it is not something separate from rhetoric. As one of many rhetorical devices it deserves, fault lines and all, a sustained trial as a contact zone, if for no other rhetorical reason than to connect its heterogeneous

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production with that of its fellow discourse of heterogeneous reception which also passes as rationality in the academy, and functions not as something separate from rhetoric as undermined but ever reconfigured super addressee—namely the anonymous course evaluation?

And what are we to do with these students who entered the course anonymously (in a critical emancipatory sense) in the contact zone I provided and exited it anonymously in the contact zone provided by the academic discourse community? Again Miller provides an answer.

> For teachers who believe in education as a force for positive social change, the appropriate response to these new working conditions is not to exile students to penitentiaries or the psych- wards for writing offensive, anti-social papers. Nor is it to give free reign to one's self-righteous indignation and call the resultant interchange a "political intervention" [which is precisely what occurred in the Henry Miller/Anais Nin parodistic power play in my department]. The most promising pedagogical response lies, rather, in closely attending to what our students say and write in an ongoing effort to learn how to read, understand, and respond to the strange, sometimes threatening, multivocal texts they produce while writing in the contact zone (408).

Richard Miller comes closest to understanding the strangeness, what I call the *transgresshold* of anonymous discourse. Yet, not having closely attended to his own students' possible need/desire for anonymity, he doesn't give full justice to the idea and practice of a contact zone in which one's own and an other's word contend with and subtend each the other. In effect, he has traced a fault line up to, but still outside, the door of his own authority and of his students' struggle with its authentic disclosure of how a classroom discourse community should conceal, or could reveal, itself as a contact zone where all the arts of rhetoric and composition come into play.

If Chapter Five, "Towards a Pedagogy of Anonymity," had been an analysis of my close pedagogical writing in response to students' struggles in the contact zone—addressed to No Body, yes?—then Miller would more closely understand the rhetorical usefulness of anonymity generated within, not without, the composition course. But of course, he does already understand that the fault lines lie not in ourselves, nor in others, but in the rhetorical situation, the facemask, that contact zone of writing that is always in parity with a voice already other-wise, already disappearing as *eiro*— as "I" write

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Chapter Notes

[1] It matters on the strength of one familiar and pervasive example: "An official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said today: 'I...'" This is a material, embodied rhetoric, even as it is the speech of *no body*: a reporter telephones or meets face-to-face with "someone" whom he or she knows but can't identify to the community lest the authority that official holds in trust be compromised in personal or organizational terms. Yet, though anonymity would seem to decrease authority, it actually *increases* the power of its office. However, as I pointed out in the endnote to the General Introduction, there is a massive feminist critique of rhetoric, and possibly of the anonymous-function, as a complicit form of silencing--not speaking-- the existence of those marginalized within the dominantly male operation of the author-function. Vicki Tolar Collins also uses the Beckett line as an epigraph to open "The Speaker Respoken: Material Rhetoric as Feminist Methodology." Her opening assertions are worth quoting in full and commenting on, before we proceed with my admittedly male dominated investigation.

> Postmodern indifference to who is speaking is a position authentically available only to those who already possess the authority to speak. When the primary modes of persuasion of a text (oral or written) are the ethos of the speaker and the moral argument of her narrative, who is speaking does indeed matter to the speaker, to the audience, to the discourse community, and to historians of rhetoric.... And when women's lives are formed and women's voices are managed and silenced by the ways a production authority uses their discourse and the forms and forums in which it is published, who is speaking and who controls the materiality of the message matters very much—culturally, rhetorically, and ethically (545).

Tolar Collins nails the point I have made about the author-ities of Beckett, and then Foucault, having the luxury or privilege to be rhetorically indifferent, and to therefore countenance the invisible face or visible mask of what I am calling the anonymous function. Whereas, women, blacks, émigrés, criminals, and a host of *other*wise enslaved, oppressed, and marginalized persons have had to resort to the anonymous function to make their voices heard. Their subject positions are, in material and rhetorical terms, the name of Anonymous. Their essential "difference" from the discourse of Identity, the cycles of violence and indifference to their speech by the discourse of authority, made, by default, the anonymous function their only rhetorical option—a kind of author-function *alter*-native. This entire discourse of anonymity as a suppressed rhetoric of identity, authority, community--or *otherness*—is notably "absent" in these first four chapters. It was meant to be a part of Chapter Three's "Modern" and Postmodern" sections that had to be excised because of space considerations. I try to bring Tolar-Collins consideration of The (Other) Speaker Respoken... into what I consider a material rhetoric as feminist methodology in Chapter Five, "Towards a Pedagogy of Anonymity," where students' anonymous writing—male and female—become a matter of asking, over and ever again: "what does it matter who is speaking?" Anonymity is a *matter*—the *material rhetoric*—of private and State secrecy. In the final chapter, students' anonymous documents—their testimony, confession, argumentation, invocation, all reaffirm my sense that an anonymous pedagogy is a material rhetoric as feminist methodology. My use of Bakhtin to aestheticize what I mean by a rhetoric of anonymity is in large part due to the image, the imagination of who someone is in saying *eiro: "I say...."*

[2] Here's an added centrifugal twist of what I mean: The author's self-generated summary of his or her professional activity, which appears at the bottom of articles published in *College English*, for example, is "alter-ed" by anonymous editors by substituting "He teaches..." or "She teaches..." for the original "I"—as in "I teach...." At the end of one such anonymous blurb—now an example of dialogized heteroglossia or double-voiced discourse for the community of *College English*-- we find the final sentence of writer, Anis Bawarshi. It reads: "He thanks the article's anonymous readers for their thoughtful guidance." A further twist here can be entertained, since Bawarshi's article is titled "The Genre Function." In this essay similar claims are made for the pervasiveness of "genre" that I making for anonymity as a function.

[3] It would seem that both sides of the theoretical and pedagogical contact zone of composition-rhetoric could claim that they are engaging in this kind of "experimental guesswork." The academic expressivists

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would seize on the idea of struggling with one's own word—as the image of a speaking person whose own voice is a kind of experimental guesswork with alien voices struggling for influence and expression within the speech and character zones of personal narrative. The academic discursivists would seize on a sentence that appears in between the two I've quoted above: "The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's consciousness, is enormous." The fact is, most compositionists are experimenting—consciously or not—with a hybrid approach to teaching writing, since they are aware, given their own images of a speaking person and alien voices, that a personal/intellectual struggle and experimental guesswork is ongoing within any individual consciousness during the performance of writing.

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CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARD A PEDAGOGY OF ANONYMITY

Expressing Anonymous Social Construction

The Anonymous Function Within the Structure of English

We have, in the last four chapters, understood that it is not accurate to imagine anonymity's dialectical relations as one of binary opposition. Rather, we must think of it as a synchronizing polarity. As such, it prescribes our understanding of autonomous self-other relations in all writing (Identity); it proscribes the authentic origin and propagation of canonical or official writing (Authority); and it describes the discovery of the universal hope of mediation through a rhetorical sense of writing as a speech zone that anticipates a special, perhaps surprising, conception of the listener/reader.

In this final chapter, we will begin to see how the total *Composition* of anonymity—given the almost spectral range of its powers and dangers of impersonation—is a "problem" for composition-rhetoric as a pedagogical performance of identity, author-ity, and community. Anonymous writing is a problem because it epitomizes the powers and dangers of a "performativity revolution" (France 150) within the structure of English Studies whose fault lines run deep and wide between the study of literature and the study of composition. It is a problem because it throws the expressivist claim for an autonomous, authentic sense of self-agency and textual ownership in student writing into a "contact zone" where it meets the social constructionist claim for cultural structure and *author*-itative citation.

The result of this dialectical contact between agency and structure, between the performance of self and the social prescription of subjectivity under conditions of anonymity, are dialogical possibilities for a discourse "community of dissensus" where personal and social, private and public "thinking is a shared process without identity or unity (Readings 192). In seeking to create a concretely lived, dialogic imagination within the abstract hope of universal mediation, anonymous writing functions precisely as a shared process without identity or authority—without unity--in a discourse of community devoted to

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responsively understanding the politics of identity as a matter of agency and structure, of autobiographical expression and academic scrutiny.

Alan France, in a recent article, "Dialectics of Self: Structure and Agency as the Subject of English," approvingly quotes Bernard Donald, who appears to be in support of an anonymous pedagogy. "In our desire to foster student agency, we too often make of the composition classroom..."a safe place where students can experiment with expressions but where the structure of those expressions remain outside the door" (148). Anonymous writing is just such a contact zone for both expressing and examining the performative agencies and structures of identity politics that would otherwise remain at the threshold of personal and the social constructions of identity. Within the terms set forth by Ruth Spack in her article, "The (In)Visibility of the Person(al) in Academe," we will come to understand that the safe-risk contact zone of anonymity enables students to give voice to what Toni Morrison has called "Unspeakable Things Unspoken"—"such as "race," "class," "gender,"...and "sexual orientation"—all terms whose meanings are contested—and these concepts have entered [as I will demonstrate, *anonymous*] pedagogical discussions in ways than challenge even revolutionary theories and practices" (9).

The rhetorical immunity provided by anonymity effects and affects the performative relations between personal and impersonal writing, enabling the emergence of seven major themes that I have identified in students' anonymous writing. It is the goal of this chapter to analyze those themes of the anonymous function within the larger dialectical structures and dialogical functions out of which composition-rhetoric finds its pedagogical mission as a revolutionary theory and practice of subjectivity split between the anonymous subject of writing itself and the subject position of the anonymous writer.

General Questions Guiding the Reading of Anonymous Writing

Given the structure of English Studies as struggling with a larger post-structural—performativity--revolution, does my particular application of the anonymous function as understood in previous chapters enable other teachers to imagine through Peter Elbow, in his *What Is English?*, that *anonymous discourse* is devoted to:

> "*Using language* actively in a diversity of ways and settings--...in a range of social settings with various audiences where the language makes a difference[?];
>
> *Reflecting on language use.* Turning back and self-consciously reflecting on how one has been using language—examining these processes of talking, listening, writing, and reading [?];

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Trying to ensure that this using and reflecting go on in *conditions of both nourishment and challenge*...[?] (Elbow 18; emphasis in original).

Given the function of composition-rhetoric within the structure of English Studies, does my particular application of the anonymous function as understood in previous chapters enable other teachers to imagine through Mary Louise Pratt in her "Arts of the Contact Zone" that the *contact zone* of anonymity is devoted to:

> exercise in storytelling and in identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, and attitudes of others;
> experiments in...the arts of critique, parody, and comparison (including unseemly comparisons between elite and vernacular forms);
> ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories);
> ways to move *into and out of* rhetorics of authenticity;
> ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect;
> a systematic approach to the all-important concept of *cultural mediation* (40; emphasis in original).

Finally, given the function of the composition course within the larger structures of composition-rhetoric and English Studies, does my particular application of the anonymous function as understood in previous chapters enable other teachers to imagine through Henry Giroux and Roger Simon in their *Popular Culture, Schooling, and Everyday Life* that anonymity as "*critical* pedagogy" is devoted to:

> ...critically appropriat[ing] forms of knowledge that exist outside students' immediate experience"[?];
> [making] the familiar strange and the strange familiar[?];
> [taking]...risks and struggle with ongoing relations of power"? (Giroux and Simon 3).

My personal interest in the anonymous function was in its reputation as a transgressive mechanism: was its reputation as the contact zone for craven, injurious speech, invective, and malevolent threat, fully justified? Or might it also stimulate the empathic imagination, where impersonation, rather than denigration, of the Other finds a fresh outlet in students' struggles with the politics of identity? What would be the discursive and dialogical crossover effect if both these voices and visions emerged under anonymous writing conditions? How would these voices influence my authority in the classroom? What would be my role—more vulnerable? —in mediating between the poignant and pointed invulnerability of the identities created by anonymous writing?

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These questions were stimulated by a close reading of bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. This chapter will try to answer these questions and others on the basis of classroom practice and experience of the anonymous function.

Methodologies Guiding the Reading of Anonymous Writing

My methodology for reading what I consider to be themes of the anonymous function in students' anonymous writings is informed by three central tenets of expressivist, or authentic voice, pedagogy. We haven't the space here to (re)consider Elbow's legacy of autonomy, Macrorie's and/or Coles' concerns with *authenticity*, or with Murray's notion of writing for *discovery* (or what he calls *surprise*). As we saw in the first four chapters, Autonomy, Authenticity, and Discovery also happen to be critical to an understanding of the discursive regimes of identity, authority, community—all of which depend upon the subordination of anonymity for their dominant status in language life.

I have also very loosely adapted the methods of case study for my close reading of these documents. I will be pointing up points of conflict, struggle, and transformation in the writing. I will also be interjecting my own notes on the class discussions of these documents—what I call the "community of anonymity." My weaving of my notes on these discussions is a form of autocritique, and is, in fact, "feminist" in its methodology because, ironically, it does not recognize the anonymity of an objective professor whose evaluating "I" remains above or outside the revelations of students. In asking that students take on anonymity's cloak of invisibility in order to make most visible the many faces of their identity politics, I as teacher and researcher had to appeal to them (and to you, reader) not "as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests" (Harding, 9).

In teaching the composition of gender and sexual identity, and also racial identity and identification, and then re-searching that teaching experience, I realize that I, "the inquirer... must be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of the research" (Harding, 9). That I was doing as much while teaching these courses, and was then placed in that same critical plane by colleagues for their scrutiny of the results of the research I had reported to them, leads me to conclude that my use of feminist autocritique is meant to be a dis-placement of authorship and its claims on identification.

That this could be seen by certain feminists as another male-ordered appropriation or subversion of feminist knowledge is a risk I am willing to take, especially given my final, feminist conclusion: students

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need to write identification papers (rather, papers dealing with identification) without their nominal identities attached. Why do they *need* to write anonymously? Because the authentic detachment of personal identity from the subject position of "college writer" honors an expressivist goal even as it argues for a socially constructed view of the student, her writing, her personal identity. Depending on who's "feminism" one decides to commit to, the point where expressivism and feminism meet in composition pedagogy is generally agreed to be within a "contact zone" of the personal and the political, the private and the academic, and in the transgression of these for empancipatory, educative effects.

The Structure-Function of the Writing Assignments

In Chapter Five I will examine the roles of writing, reading, and exchanging within an anonymous "discourse community" I constructed and oversaw as part of my general pedagogical approach and practice in the teaching of composition courses at The University of New Hampshire from 1994-95. We will focus on students' anonymous writing within an otherwise conventional course in college composition. My approach attempts to merge the objectives of both an expressivist and a social constructionist approach to teaching college writing. In seeking to take up the founding theme of universal mediation, my courses are devoted to the writing, reading, and discussion (the composition-rhetoric) of identity politics gender, sexuality, and race). What I mean by a "conventional course" in composition is that students write weekly assignments on issues of identity—gender, sexuality, race, class, etc.

One kind of assignment is a reader response essay to assigned readings from either an edited reader I require for the course, or from my own edited course packet comprised of readings that I deem to be both useful in terms of laying out the social and ethical complexities of particular identity enclaves, and highly provocative in the way they examine in public what students might have believed are "private" matters shared within their familial or peer group settings.[1]

Another kind of assignment is a personal narrative about some aspect of identity that students have either responded to as readers of assigned academic material, or as writers reflecting on some issue that has been provoked or suggested by their reading and our class discussion of the reader response essays.

Between these two kinds of assignments, both of which are signed, I assigned anonymous essays that would probe more deeply (and perhaps candidly) into the issues opened up by students' nominally identified writings. The idea was to weave (the literal meaning of *text*) together different kinds of

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"discourse"—academic, autobiographical, and anonymous—so as to capture something like a total *composition* of identity.

The final writing assignment for both courses involved a "research essay" which could incorporate all three kinds of writing done during the course, together with additional library research and anonymous survey work students could choose to conduct in the class, in their other classes, in their dormitories, and on the larger campus.

I therefore suggestively titled my courses: "Identity: Reading It/Writing It/Revising It"; "Mediating Identities"; "The Composition of Gender"; "The Composition of Identity." These last two course titles featured the anonymous writing I will present and analyze below according to several "emergent themes" of what I have been calling the "anonymous function." I will closely read and comment on 20 pieces of anonymous writing from these two courses.[2]

In both courses, I made the following proposal to students. I had included it in the outline for both courses and reproduced it above the specific prompts for writing anonymously in issues of identity.

> I am asking you to generate responses to privately held feelings and convictions about gender and sexual identity. Anonymity is the best guarantee I can think of for removing all obstacles from telling these particular "truths" while at the same time ensuring protection of your named identities. These documents will be Xeroxed and distributed to the class and become part of its public domain of discussion and reference (Dansdill).

I constructed the actual prompts for composition that followed this guideline to be as open as possible. For the Advanced Course in Composition ("The Composition of Gender"), the first assignment prompt read: "Please feel free to write on any issue of gender or gender identity which you consider to be significant." For the second assignment the prompt read: "Please feel free to write on any issue of sex or sexual identity which you consider to be significant." For the First Year Course in Composition ("The Composition of Identity,") there were four such prompts. The only change in wording was "...any issue of [*race, gender, sexuality, class*]."

Seven Emergent Themes of the Anonymous Function

The Seven Themes I have identified as "emergent" properties of the anonymous function arose from a larger sample of anonymous student writing (88 documents). Scope here permits only a reading of 25 anonymous documents.

1. The Significance of Unnecessary Anonymity
2. Relations of Normal Reader Response to Anonymous Reader Response

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3. Patterns of Impersonation
4. Identity Crises
5. Offenses of Feminism/Defenses of Men and/or Patriarchy
6. Indeterminable Gender
7. Transgressive Relations

Since I did not carry out any form of control group analysis (for example, having my students, or students in another composition course, write on the same self-selected topic with their names attached), these seven themes, and the content that supports them, cannot be said to represent anything like a "scientific" sampling of anonymous writing behaviors. Nevertheless, the themes or patterns that I have found can be understood and applied to the more "normative" event and context of composition teaching and learning—namely, the universal expectation and presence of students' nominal identities. Those of us who are accustomed to reading students' college writing under the normative event and context of their signatures

The scope of this dissertation does not permit a detailed analysis of all seven themes across the 20 documents I have chosen for analysis. I have chosen to focus on Themes #3-7, with particular attention to #3 and #7, because I believe that the acts of Impersonation and Transgression I found in students' anonymous writing constitute an important finding about the expressivist argument for authenticity in students' nominally identified writing. The 20 documents cover writings in response to prompts dealing with significant experiences of gendered and sexual identity, as well as a separate group on racialized identity.

My findings on acts of Transgression (expected) and on acts of Impersonation (unexpected) are important because these point to a range of empathy and antipathy that is only partially present under normative expressivist conditions where students' names are part and parcel of the demand/expectation for sincerity or authenticity in writing about personally significant experiences. Despite my lack of "scientific" controls, it is fairly safe to assume that the absence of their nominal identities—or rather, the presence of the anonymous function—is responsible for some sense or degree of what Goffmann, in two studies, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, has referred to respectively as the sincere/cynical performance, and "discrepant identities."

I will also try to make a larger case, however, that this finding of anonymous impersonation/transgression, or the empathy and antipathy of anonymity, is worthy also of the social constructionists' claim to an epistemologically superior pedagogy. They make this claim because of their apparent attention to more "socially" or "politically" significant issues than those fostered by an

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expressivist regard for the merely "personal." One of the arguments leveled against expressivist composition by social constructionism is that it is full of myopic ideological insights. It would be in the constructionist interest to experiment with the rhetorical immunity that anonymity supplies so as to determine whether or not the personal biases and self-absorbed values that are attached, fairly or unfairly, to expressivist composition, are in fact underwritten by a larger discourse of socially constructed expression.

In making the claim that expanding the use of anonymity in the composition classroom (being always and already present in the form of students' anonymous course evaluations) can be used as a bridging discourse between expressivist and constructionist approaches, I will also be trying to make the case for a sense of community--what Maurice Blanchot might call an "unavowable community"--that is unavailable or not completely accessible under these two contending approaches. I contend that the sense of community through anonymity is both personally expressive and socially constructive because of the passion--whether empathic or antagonistic-- its enclave of concealed disclosure generates.

This sense of passion (or, in keeping with the idea of community, of "communion") is often missing from both expressivist and constructionist approaches to generating and elaborating students' understanding of academic discourse. The views and opinions expressed anonymously are, by definition, done so because they are not considered ethically normative or because of a wish by the writer, for various reasons, to protect a range of realms--from those privacy and reputation, to economic and even physical well being. As we have seen, the range of motives for using anonymity--from human rights to hate speech--is far reaching in terms of its possible sense of discourse and of the community it will variously convince, persuade, outrage, entertain and, in general, become identified with.

Surely, all tried and true composition-rhetoricians--both expressivist and constructionist-- will have sufficient courage of their convictions about what best passes for authentic and/or authoritative writing to test those convictions against my claims for the anonymous function: that it subtends and extends their ideas about community, discourse, and that most temporary and temporized of all academic phenomena-- the discourse community of a required course in college composition.

Before we analyze the five most important themes that emerged in my use of anonymous writing in a decidedly hybrid approach to teaching composition, we need to look, in a provisional way, at the other two themes that emerged in my analysis of 20 documents on race and gender issues.

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The Significance of Unnecessary Anonymity

Given the contradictory, paradoxical, and performative mobility of the anonymous function, the idea of anonymity as "unnecessary" is good place to open a discussion of what might pass for anonymity's necessity. Despite the fact that the determination of what passed for necessary or unnecessary sorts of anonymity was limited to my own intuitive standards of interpretation according to Patterson and Kim's operational definition of anonymity within what they call "the cathartic process," I do think a clear line was established as I began to recognize emergent patterns. [3]

I have been maintaining that anonymity's necessary disputability is a function of masking, and more universally, of *impersonation* itself. What is pedagogically useful about that? That is, why do we need to test the meaning of a *persona*--private and public--a meaning that is always a response to our conceptions of Self and Other, against the regime of impersonation of which anonymity is a function, and quite possibly a contributing cause?

In the first document and others to follow, what I am equivocally tracing as the function of "unnecessary anonymity" is my way of constructing an "out group" that indicates and reiterates anonymity's necessary presence. I will repeat, in a tiresome manner, I suspect, that all teachers value the medium (if not always the message) of students' anonymous evaluations of our teaching, a document that becomes open to all, part of an anonymous institutional readership and record, a community discourse, and arguably, a discourse community unto itself. That is, the anonymous course evaluation is necessary, rather than unnecessary, (though most teachers and their evaluating peer committees, when they read them at all, take the unstable range of students' insights, opinions and assaults with huge "grains of salt".)

In my determination to analyze anonymity's borderline or equivocal necessity, I hope to prepare my readers for those documents where anonymity is clearly needed, and that there are pedagogical opportunities--if not outright necessities--well before and beyond its present use as an institutional evaluation tool and community exit document. The first exemplary document demonstrates, I think, the usefulness of anonymity as an *entrance* document, and of continuing its presence within a given course as a discourse of recognizance. Such an allowance of the anonymous within and around all the named writing going on opens up the meaning and sense of community within the composition class. If, therefore, there is

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a general suspicion of what passes for "feminism" as a popularly received discourse by students entering the academy, then it is not likely that that suspicion, and possible antipathy, is going to emerge in either the expressivist or social constructionist approaches. And yet, any authentic conception of authenticity in students' voices and views would hope to account for antipathetic, as well as empathetic, performances.

To use a more familiar set of concepts, the "private" and the "public" performances of composition are in constant tension and contention. That is a normative situation because it is the function of discourse to transgress and blur the boundaries of the private and the public. In parallel, the binding energy holding any sense we have of community is an open border between private and public. Because the anonymous function, for better and for worse, protects the private realm in actions upon and reactions from a public realm, the relation of anonymity and community is not merely conceptual, but rhetorically actual. Therefore, a working hypothesis of the anonymous function in college writing as a performance of identity and identification assumes that what students *really* privately *believe* about the politics of identity has a place in our public reasons about what *really matters* about the politics of identity as a vast set of academic, author-driven discourses.

Anonymity's relation to, and effect upon, the academic discourse community as envisioned by either expressivist or constructivist assumptions are one not only of literal transgression, or crossing, of the lines between the private/public. It is one also of literal *provocation*--of calling forth--of voicing and witnessing what is *really* important for students to learn about writing, about themselves and others as writers, and what composition as the total process of putting the writing subject and the subject of writing together really means as an act of community--of shared and unshared values. The significance of an anonymity that I deem to be unnecessary to the discourses of privacy and publicity, of Self-Other references, is that it nevertheless points the way to significant relations of social construction--of important assumptions about what we share in common and what we don't share (in the double sense of both identifying and concealing our differences.)

The numbers and frequency of unnecessary uses of anonymity are significant because they call attention to our normative connotations of the anonymous condition as one of subterfuge or irresponsibility. Unnecessary anonymity might also signal many students' resistance to the idea of anonymity out of suspicion that their identities would not be protected despite the pains I took to make printing (random fonts), distribution and return (in a box outside my office) secure and confidential. Moreover, it is quite

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likely that given the uniform age (18-20) and background (suburban middle class) of my students, they did not have anything in their views and beliefs--within their inherited ideological matrix--that could answer to the paradoxical form and function of anonymity: that is, they had nothing to "hide and seek", to reveal under concealment. My finding about this particular "significance" of the unnecessary use of anonymity points, most tellingly perhaps, to the sincerity/authenticity of their performances as writers. I cannot, however, delve too deeply into these issues and questions.

After reading through the 31 documents generated in the Advanced Course in Composition, I came up with the following Breakdown according to the "General Subjects" covered in the anonymous writing.

A. Gender Roles and Rules: 12 documents
B. Hetero-Relations: 12 docs.
C. Sex and Sexuality: Calls and Responses: 5 docs.
D. Crises of Identity and Identification: 2 docs.

I then determined and correlated the number of documents under each general subject area in which Anonymity is probably unnecessary according to the justification in the course outline and in my specific guideline for each assignment prompt.

A. 7 (58%)
B. 3 (37%)
C. 0
D. 0
Total: 10 (32%)

Thus, roughly one third of all documents were unnecessarily anonymous, with well over half of those written about gender and gender identity (A.) falling into the unnecessary category. More interesting, ultimately, is that fact that over 60% of those written under the prompt of sex and sexual identity (B.) required anonymity. More interesting still is t 68% of all documents required anonymity. Still, a 33% rate for unnecessary anonymity is significant. Another strand of significance to be explored is the fact that, in keeping with my hybrid approach to teaching both expressively and constructively, a number of the total documents had to be correlated to the decision by many students to use a Reader Response mode to assigned class readings, rather than writing anonymously from a pure expressivist standpoint.

In hindsight, I might have made a mistake in my prompt with the phrase "feel free" since it gave students an out to write anonymously under the more neutralized and neutralizing contexts of reader response--as critics--rather than as writers themselves on these discourses of their identities. On the other

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hand, the use of anonymity by critics, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, was widespread. Presumably, the kind of insolence, indignation, or vilification that accompanied the necessary judgment of the worthiness of this writer, or that authority, required anonymity. I did not find this to be the case with this group of students. My open invitation probably diluted my expected expressivist results with more social constructionist reactions as represented by reader response. And yet the finding is nevertheless not so much an indictment or rejection of anonymity, as it is an indication of where anonymity best plays its part in the discourse of identity--expressed and constructed.

The highest percentage of unnecessary anonymity falls under the subject matter category of Gender Roles and Rules, with the largest percentage of Reader Response to academic discourse assignments occupying almost half of that total percentage of unnecessity. Hetero-Self Relations, has a much smaller percentage of unnecessary anonymity, though its total appropriation through Reader Response, like that of Gender Roles and Rules, is almost 50%. And yet the total percentage of unnecessary anonymity for this subject category remains stable at around 33% once Reader Response is factored in. By contrast, for the other two remaining categories--"Sex and Sexuality: Calls and Responses" and "Crises of Identity and Identification"--the convergence of reader response in unnecessary anonymity is virtually non-existent.

My provisional conclusion on this score is that the more personal, private, or socially taboo the subject matter, the more likely is the necessity of anonymity. This is not a very profound conclusion, of course. It is, in fact, belaboring the obvious. Anonymity is, despite its scope and range, a phenomenon of masking, even as it *unmasks* the more personal and private parts of identity politics. But listing numbers of documents and relative percentages cannot usefully demonstrate the distinctions I found between necessary and unnecessary anonymity. Here then, are some representative documents in support of my categorizations. I begin our close reading of students' anonymous writing with 15 documents from the Advanced Course in Composition ("The Composition of Gender") I taught in the fall of 1994. The first two documents represent the equivocal range of anonymity's rhetorical "necessity" or non-necessity as discussed above.

Document #1: Resistance to Anonymity--An Authentic Performance

The first document we will look at under the first emergent theme is significant because it is an unequivocal-- and ironically, highly *provocative*-- example of how and why anonymity might be utterly unnecessary in composition instruction. The student is writing under the broad subject area of Gender

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Roles and Rules. In the classic expressivist mode, the writer (whose real name has been repleced with a pseudonym to protect her identity) is recalling a significant event from her childhood when, invited to a friend's sixth birthday party, she determined that she was "*not* going to wear that "girlie" dress to the party."

> I was *determined* to wear my very best, most flattering pair of red Osh-Kosh B'Gosh corduroy overalls. This wasn't just any family birthday party either. All the doctors' and lawyers' children would be there. This was high class. I couldn't understand *why* I had to wear that ugly piece of femininity.... I had put my heat and mind into making the decision. I knew what was right. The strength that my mother had created wasn't going to fail. I did go to the party with my red overalls on.
>   It's rather funny how my mother had tried to prepare me to face the nasty looks and teasing that I would receive for wearing overalls. I looked like a boy in those overalls, and I didn't look "good" enough in those overalls. I didn't look *feminine* in those overalls. I looked the way I wanted to look. When I arrived at the party however, all of the girls in their "cute little pinafores" were jealous, and I felt sorry for them.
>   My mother was no "Eternal Feminine," but she wasn't any brute either.... She taught me that there were no boundaries.
>   My parents were the main role models for what I believed is masculine or what I believe is feminine. My mother and father shared all of the household duties, and often switched roles. My father changed diapers without a wink, and brushed my hair, and bathed us.
>   ..... There were always waffly lines regarding gender roles in my household. All in all, in my home, it didn't and still doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl, man or woman, it just mattered whether you loved one another and were true to one another.
>   "Rood Christian"

The major point of reference in this document is the family, with a passing reader response reference to the "Eternal Feminine" which figured in many of the readings I required for the course. Anyone reading this, but particularly the expressivist teacher, would consider this a well-written opening attempt, or "essay", that discloses something personally significant but which the writer could comfortably share with a wider discourse community. Open-minded social constructionists--Bartholomae and Petrosky of the early days of *Ways of Reading*, for example-- would also find potential in this essay, and would seize upon the slightly arch reference to class distinctions, the permanent effects of the feminist revolution, and the dialectical--even dialogical--potential in the writer's knowing academic reference to the "Eternal Feminine."

If either type of writing teacher were told that the essay was written in response to a prompt that justified and required anonymity on the part of the writer, I'm positive that both would agree that anonymity wasn't necessary for recognizing or representing anything in the essay as written. Both would assert, I think, that the writer's voice is "authentic" and the "authority" of experience compelling. But the

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fact that anonymity is unnecessary in the writing of this essay is more transparent: the writer printed and signed her real name at the end of the essay (which I have replaced with a pseudonym). When I asked her about her reason for doing so at the beginning of the second-class session, she replied, very directly: "I have nothing to hide. I don't believe in anonymity."

I scheduled a conference so that we could talk more at length about how we might honor her right to sign off on everything she wrote, while I proceeded with my experiment in a mix of signed and unsigned writings. Within minutes, and with the same openness and firmness--ingenuousness, really--that informed her essay, she told me she was willing "to play along" since there was more than enough space for her to nominally identify herself. I was prepared to cancel the anonymous component in honor of her rights as a dissenting minority. If "Rood" believed anonymity was an unnecessary and possibly unnatural interrogation of private/public speaking rights, then I would have to agree, since my own sense of anonymity, as a transgressive, equivocal discourse was sensitive to the contradictory nature of concealed disclosure. She told me she thought the class was extremely interesting, and that as a matter of what I had presented as "teacher-research," she would support our experiment with anonymity even if she didn't believe she would "hold anything back" because of her name.

Rood's sense of her inherent accountability and responsibility--her fundamental authenticity--confirmed one gnawing theoretical doubt I had about using anonymous writing: the premise behind Patterson's and Kim's use of anonymity in *The Day America Told the Truth* was that we generally don't tell the truth, to ourselves or to others, about issues that really matter to all of us. Rood was rightfully indignant that writing anything in her name was at some level disingenuous, and that she--whatever defined her core sense of self--was to some degree the result of an *imposture*, or at least that her personal sense was informed, and performed, by a much larger function of *impersonation*.

Mainstream expressivists would, I think, rush into the breach opened by Rood's disavowal of anonymity. It is a questionable ethical assumption, a suspect pedagogical appeal, and in general, bad public relations, to relay to students that they are engaged in various acts of deflection and indirection, imposture and impersonation when they are required to write personal narratives that are by and large scripted by the familiar discourses of family, schooling, peer relations, and popular culture. Since composition is a
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required course, one approach is to require them to write from personal experience, another is to require them to analyze others' writing. Now we have the prospect that students are required to tell the truth about what they *really* believe about matters of personal and social, cultural and moral significance, and the only way to do that is to tell them that their nominal identities are masks that must come off.

"Rood's" belief that she had nothing to hide—that she had in fact disclosed what she *really* thought and felt about gender roles and rules—could not be countermanded by my hypothesis that anonymous writing would somehow plumb more authentic depths of her identity politics. In other words, for better or for worse, we need to take "Rood Christian" and all our students at their word, beginning with those words that are arguably the most fundamental: their Proper Names.

As a tried and true teacher of expressivist principles, I agree with my own imagined upbraiding. As critical theorist, however, and one who takes seriously to heart the definitions and descriptions of what passes for "critical pedagogy," I am not satisfied with the tried and the true only, but with the unmarked boundaries of possibility, of what remains to be seen spoken and heard. I knew that Anonymous writing was an all or none proposition for my composition courses, and for the sense of community I was hoping to open. Rood Christian rescued my situation while justifying her own. Her character, and the character of her first essay, openly tested the limits of my authority and my authenticity as a teacher and theorist. Satisfied, from what I could discern, that my pedagogy and I were not in fact disingenuous, as she might have suspected at first, "Rood" disappeared into the anonymous discourse community that then developed over the rest of the semester.

I might be accused of belittling and befuddling Derrida's ideas of signature, event, and context, but I see that conference with Rood Christian as a defining event in recognizing the complexities of pedagogy itself, never mind an anonymous pedagogy. More important, I see her signature of her proper name in effect underwriting, and literally undermining, the context of my requirement of anonymity. Her real name, in effect, reminded me that requiring anonymity might be utterly unnecessary to what I am contending about some larger issues of authenticity and identity, authority and community.

I now turn to two more documents from a much longer series of documents that point up gradations or "transgressions" of anonymity's (un)necessity. Bakhtin might call these gradations "transgredient moments"

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in which the discourses of identity, community, and authority might be said to (e)merge as functions of the anonymous. Like the openly self-identified essay by "Rood" these next two documents are written by females—if their deployment of pronoun reference is to be believed. There is no assurance that these, or the next group of documents that I am going to assume are written by "male" writers, can be identified according to the writer's gender identity. My assumption that they *might be* is to perform a double play with the imaginative impersonation function that is anonymity itself. It is up to the reader to determine whether it is important, given the anonymous function and the themes I have identified as emergent, to know the "identity" of the writers in what should be, in the most abstracted sense of anonymity, a genderless zone of contact that always remains to be seen and heard.

I have been telegraphing, and by turns, short-circuiting my contention that the anonymous function, when required all along the line of composition's assignment structure, opens up expressivist assumptions about authenticity, revealing its "discrepant identity," to borrow a phrase from Goffman, and/or what Robert Brooke, also adapting from Goffman, might have called authenticity's "underlife in student writing instruction." Concurrently, I have promised to show that anonymity functions not only as a direct current within expressivist notions of the personally authentic, but manages an alternating current which constructivists might tap into as "socially" authentic, enabling the kind of author-driven analysis and academic research that is said to distinguish it from the expressivists focus on "MEsearch."

The first document would seem to establish, however, an unequivocal basis for building a case against anonymity and its putative function as a provocation of greater authenticity in student writing. Document #2 falls into the same line of unnecessity, but it begins to show an expressivist contour that skates close to the kind of Prohibited Speech Foucault alluded to in his "critical " approach to language: the discourses of desire and power, or of sexuality and politics. It, and the next document, were shared and discussed in the first class session I devoted to theorizing the pedagogical difference—if any—in creating a "community of anonymity."

Document #2: Expressing the Social Constructs of Desire and Power

> I have a very close friend who is a man. There is no sexual tension between us, only friendship. As I spend more time with this friend, whom I'll call Rich, I repeatedly see his personality change when in the presence of other males. When he is my room, rocking in

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a creaky old rocking chair that belonged to my grandfather, he becomes more thoughtful and expressive. He has grown more and more comfortable with trusting me with his intimate thoughts, and he talks until all the things that are confusing him are said and he can take a deep breath and wait for some advice. I'm not certain if he needs "womanly advice" or just someone to listen to him. Regardless, we all need support, and I'm glad that Rich can be open with me and let me be his friend.

But when the discussion is ended, and he is done telling me why he has been so angry with everyone, or withdrawn from his friends, or stressed, or feeling pressured by school and roommates, we return to his house and an amazing change occurs. His male friends are all at the, sitting around having one of their "discussions" These "discussions" are characteristic of this group of men. It is what bonds their friendships. They speak with authoritative and opinionated voices, and are often times moved to their feet as they "discuss" the "benefits" of drug use, the "ridiculous" policies of the University and the "ineffectiveness" of the Durham police. These men are educated and they do make some intelligent statements, but usually it is a nondebate on hand. They validate one another's statements and tell and retell stories about their personal experiences that serve to further strengthen their shared opinion. Rich gets excited about these sessions in which he adopts an argumentative voice (though no one ever disagrees with anyone) and becomes the authority on whatever is the topic of the evening.

If I, or anyone else who hasn't conformed to the opinions of this group, risk making our opposing opinion known, we are faced with listening to five men validate each other and agree that the independent voice is definitely wrong. Another reason why I have declined participation in these discussions is that I have learned that the purpose of the talks isn't really to reach a conclusion, but to strengthen the ties of friendship between these men. I don't recognize the man I am friends with among these loud and opinionated people, and I have learned to no longer look for him. Rich isn't moody. He isn't necessarily weak; he is confused. I know I am not the only one who wonders who he really is; he asks himself everyday. That is exactly why he spends those hours in my room. He is too proud to let this inward side be shown to his male counterparts and he is too tender not to express it at all.

The first thing I notice in this document is this young woman's wisdom well beyond her years. She is a listener and an "empath," to borrow a coinage from *Star Trek—The Next Generation*. Her antipathy toward this male bonding ritual is perfectly tempered by a fine sense of irony. Of the documents covered by the subject area of Gender Roles and Rules, I see it as the epitome of the theme of anonymous empathy that points up the constructive, "therapeutic" mode of the anonymous function. Anonymity is necessary to cover the identity of her friend whom she'll call "Rich" (anonymity within anonymity) and, quite plausibly, to safeguard her connection to that reference to "sexual tension" and its difference from what has come to be misnamed as a "platonic" friendship.

My own attraction to this anonymous document is the exploration of masculine identity, and of her male friend's identity, as a "confused" struggle between the reflective and the reactive self. There is a sense that the writer is herself splitting the difference between male and female communication communities along stereotypical lines and, in doing so, is canceling out any special vantage point presumably gained by

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becoming anonymous. Again, too, it is not at all unlikely that this writer would have touched on the "otherness" at the core of her friend's gender identity and identification with equal insight and poignancy if she had responded to a standard expressivist prompt. And there is no reason why the writer wouldn't have practiced one tangent of the anonymous function--pseudonymity-- to protect the identity of her friend even as she signed her own name to the essay. Certainly, the "Men Are From Mars, Women From Venus" binarization would have emerged under her signature.

And yet, what I hear in this essay is a quality of voice that is intimate and distant--"impersonal"--a quality that I identify with one of anonymity's effects. But without a control group to prove my intuition, I can only appeal to my readers' sense of what I, thanks to Beckett and Foucault, am pointing to: "What matters who is speaking?" *What matters is what is being expressed*: "I have a very close friend..." The distance that anonymity literally "provokes"--calls forth, from the writer's first person point of view adds a paradoxical proximity, even intimacy, that would not, I contend, emerge in this writer's obviously already strong responsive understanding. Many feminist theorists and rhetoricians would of course take me to task on this question of rhetorical indifference. Thus, I can conjure my own well-developed feminist "other" responding to my tiresome repetition of the Beckett/Foucault interrogation in this way

> It may not matter to males who have the luxury of playing around with the sort of invisibility and oblivion that a male ordered history of language activity has, until recently, visited upon women. But it matters very much who is speaking when women, within that prison house of language, have had to hide their identities with an anonymity that wasn't existentially heroic or arch-ironic, but necessary to their literary and often physical survival. Think of the Brontes or of "George Elliot." Anonymity has been the enforced name of women from laws barring their literacy to laws requiring they change their names into those of their husbands. Far from being an empancipatory function, your use of anonymity in the composition classroom is an unwitting, and possibly perverse, reassertion of what Derrida has called Phallogocentrism.

My response to my internalized feminist Other is dogged, but not dogmatic. The anonymous is of course logocentric, but this writer's use of it does not suggest the name of the father and the signifier of the phallus penetrating a woman's "lack" of reason. Or perhaps it is, in reverse. If Cixous is correct, the laugh of this anonymous "Medusa" becomes more of a knowing smile at the impotent posturing of male dominated discourse, a confusion that we can recognize at the end of documents (not analyzed here), where the daughter of a father writes uncannily of his identification with the Mother, and of the Mother not being

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there to hold his hand so that he might shed neither manly nor womanly tears, but simply cry in that poignancy and passion that represents the "phallacy" of men's communicative rationality.

The lingering question of whether the present document, or any of the others I have presented, is worthy of the term "academic discourse" from a social constructionist point of view is, I believe, already answered by the present document's hybridity of artistic expression and critical analysis which cannot be dismissed as narcissistic, or even as essentially personal. It is itself a proto-treatise on the socially constructed reality of gender and a narrative of an acute listener in Burke's "parlor"--one who hears a deep confusion in its "conversation of mankind."

The final document in this section of anonymous women writers culminates a theme or pattern we saw as a category or an Emergent Theme--defense of men and anti-feminism. This theme alone is, I think, a significant finding, for it means that many women are afraid to voice their real feelings and ideas about what feminism means and what it has done or is doing for helping them define and redefine confusing issues of gender. If only 30% of women are afraid to speak up for what they sense is a politically incorrect attitude in the supposedly liberal hot bed of academia, it would seem to me we have a serious communicative issue in composition studies alone.

I would think that even my scintilla of documentary evidence would be of interest to the feminist teacher, to women's studies programmers, and to any one, male or female, who might wish to know what students really think and believe about such critical issues of culture and society as male and female roles and relationships. It also seems to me that the functional hybridity I have been trying to link to compositional anonymity also culminates a trend running through the previous documents. Moreover, the uncertain and equivocal nature of what motivates choice of subject matter when anonymity is presented (never mind required) to a young writer as a rhetorical position seems to settle itself decisively into the utterly necessary range with this document.

Document #3: Reader Response and (Un)Necessary Anonymity

English 501, the one class that scares me. My biggest fear in this class is that I am not a feminist of any sort and I despise male bashing of all kinds. I hope this will not make me an outcast. I am trying to see both sides of each argument and understand them as well.... I just cannot agree with some of the authors we have read so far that blame men for all of the problems of the world. Not all men are sexist pigs, as was stated in The Utne Reader.

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Would it be fair to say that all women are radical feminists? Not all men are out to rape, attack, and destroy the future of women. Would it be fair to say that all women are nurturing, baby-making housewives? What really drove me crazy was the idea, brought up in The Utne Reader, of mating two eggs to eliminate the male gender completely. The article stated that mothers did not want to raise sons who would most likely be potential rapists and murderers. Get real. I've got a wonderful little brother, and a marvelous caring, father. It sounds to me like that we've have given up and lost all faith in human nature. That was most upsetting. Humans cannot live a normal, healthy life if they are constantly in fear. Sometimes women can be their own worst enemies.

I agree with the articles stating that communication is the key to a healthy relationship. But that applies not only to romantic relationships but also to friendships, work relationships, and mere acquaintances as well. I also agree that women deserve equal salary for equal work and that there should not be any limitations placed on women in the work force. I guess I'm an advocate of equality rather than the domination of one gender over another. Many of the articles we have read seem to be arguing with each other over who is the dominant gender when, in reality, it is neither. Both are fighting to hard and are too blind to meet in the middle. How dare either gender say or feel that they are superior to the other? Now the question is, if wither group is right, what do we do? How do we remedy the situation of inequality without starting another war?

The pattern of using reader response to initiate and open a set of personal beliefs and opinions was a familiar one in the anonymous writing done in this class on issues of gender identity. My present scope does not permit the full range of the relation between reader response and anonymous response. I assume the writer is a woman, though, as with many of the previous documents, the use of pronouns is, I think, deliberately neutral/neuter in order to make an ideological point, as well as ensure complete identity protection. The anti-feminist edge became pronounced in many of these documents, except that this document sticks to a level of generalized others, rather than introducing and sustaining a significant other such as a father or mother, which was a feature of many documents we can't analyze here.

The fact that the class scares the writer is added rhetorical incentive, and pedagogical justification, for the use of anonymity. I am not, of course, advocating that students should be fearful in any class. The writer's fear reference is to her views regarding feminism, and the assumption is that in giving equal time to women's as well as men's movement readings (in sum, a complete gender studies course of reading and response)I may in fact be advocating feminism. The writer is afraid that if I knew his/her genuine views, it might affect her/his grade. The reference to being "a social outcast" extends this fear of an instructor's potential ideological bias and possible abuse of power at the writer's expense to how the writer's views may be taken by other class members. The writer is therefore using the mask of anonymity to speak the truth, as s/he understands it, about gender roles and rules, coming out as a mainstream liberal humanist.

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The writer's view of gender relations, from what I could gather, represented the majority view of the class, male and female, as we began our responses to these documents. I was tempted in this particular discussion to point to the difference between different kinds of feminists, working for very different kinds of equality--from pay/work equity and reproductive rights, to liberation from Disney stereotyping in mainstream culture to our massive porno-rape culture. I was tempted to point out that there are pornographic feminists and there are eco-feminists. The discourse of feminism, and the discovery and recovery of the detested and contested "feminine" is everywhere, in the inkling of female representation in Congress, in the glass ceiling of corporate culture, on the screens and pages of mass media.

But I did not. I was happy to point out that this writer's desire "to meet in the middle" of the discourse of gender justified the use of anonymity, for the anonymous is itself a middling function: it both protects and projects a writer's legitimate fears; it conjoins reader response and writer recognition; and it builds a discursive bridge between the always confusing, contested concepts of identity and community.

Whether or not the anonymity of the writer is functioning in the way I am contending, that it structures this sort of hybrid, middling (literally, "mediocre") outcome, is of course, wide open to argument. I cannot begin to reproduce the class discussion of this and the other documents. At the opening of the course and throughout the semester I underscored to students that their triple performative roles as named writers, unnamed writers, and as named, face-to face reader/respondents, to both levels of identity composition amounted to an experimental discourse community. My reader will have to take my word that the anonymity of these texts opened up remarkable lines of communal inquiry and reflection. This community effect of anonymity--whether the anonymity is purely necessary or not--is itself worth the experiment with invisible writers/visible readers.

The next three documents I have chosen for discussion of the significance of "unnecessary anonymity" are written by "males." Like the previous three documents, they demonstrate a mix of expressivist and social constructionist "trace elements." In short, I am proposing that these and other documents we have analyzed re-present a personal plus textual potential--a transgredient moment--that expressivists and constructivists will claim as both familiar and strange.

Document #4: Expressing One's Social Construction as a "Male"

> This is probably one of the world's wonders. Why is it that women are unable to
> make up their minds? They will say one thing, change their minds, and leave

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males to figure out what the hell they are really trying to say. This can be very confusing for the male. What are his options? If he argues with her he is wrong, arrogant. Yet if he acts the opposite then he is just trying to appease her so as not to have a conflict--or is he really just guessing at what she really wants and therefore not honestly interested in taking her feelings into account?

Perhaps much of this is founded in our roles of being males and females. Scientifically, it has been shown that males change their minds more than females, but once a male has chosen he will usually stick with that decision. Females, on the other hand, will continue to waffle on issues right up to and sometimes beyond the point of no return.

Now the question is whether this study reflects biological programming or our socially programmed views. If they are biological there isn't anything we can do about it, but if social, there is something that could be done. If this one quality of males and females was changed there might be a significant upgrade in the relations between the sexes. By this I mean that if males and females were able to settle down and make decisions and perhaps stick with them, unless of course the circumstances change, the relationships of our sexes may improve, and there would be one less battle to fight.

Document #4 is a more familiar expression of gender identity's socially constructed estrangement and engagement. Is its anonymity completely necessary? When compared to the overall rhetoric of mixed motives and equivocal effects of the previous documents, my intuition tells me, Yes: The writer, ("male"), needs anonymity to safely make his stereotypical, almost loutish, but personally authentic views of gender roles and rules known. That these authentic views are of questionable authority--a vague composite of personal plus textual experience--is precisely why and how anonymity becomes a general heuristic and dialogical necessity.

I have attempted to headline a definitive interpretation of each of these documents, and then find as I transcribe them into the body of my text, a closer reading occurs in the course of "typing" my students writing. Even in this document, which opens with what I called a loutish, or bigoted, male attitude regarding women's putatively fickle nature, we can see a progressive movement toward a more responsive understanding--toward an empathic imagination of how and where the biological and the social might meet and complete one another. The overt subject--male versus female decision-making--is a not so transparent call for greater communication.

The writer's vague textualized appeals to scientific authority turn into rather more expressive appeals to being "able to settle down." The social constructivist would jump on this as just another ill-conceived expression of personal bias: hasn't the writer read Deborah Tanner, for example? The expressivist might equally jump on it as evading more specific elaborations of the writer's own gender role troubles: cut all the

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pseudo-scientific references to a pseudo-objective authority and tell your readers what's at issue personally so that it can be better understood in broader terms of general readability, if not social utility.

What I find compelling about this document is the either/or   *and* neither/nor status in terms of its narrative and analytical identity. Now, can I prove that anonymity produces this personal plus textual hybridity (which I see as an opportunity for the writer and for his fellow readers as we discuss its strengths, weaknesses, and discursive possibilities)? No, I can't. But given the potential freedom of expression and construction which anonymity can offer, I contend that the writer's rhetorical equivocation (an initially sexist voice and final communitarian vision) contains a personal and social vulnerability—a *quivering* of gender roles, rules, and relations—that is an important part of how anonymity reveals itself to a larger, and largely unidentifiable, community.

Document #5: Tradition and Transgression

In Document #5, we see a nod toward the reconstructive effects of a feminist consciousness nearly unheard of in "males" prior the last two generational cohorts (1960-1985) of which this writer is a middle member.

She Paid

"Let me pay this time," she said. "When you ask me out on a date, you can pay," I replied, not ever foreseeing that day. A couple of weeks later I got a call. "Hi, it's me. What are you doing Friday night?" "Nothing yet." "Good, I'm taking you to the movies, my treat. Be ready for seven-thirty. I'll pick you up." Ha, I thought, she took me up on my offer. At the time I told her that she could pay when she took me out, it sounded like a good idea. Now, it didn't. It was almost as if she was calling my bluff. What was I supposed to do? I decided to play along with the whole thing. Yet, for a date with a girl I had been out with a couple of times, I was more uneasy about the whole arrangement then I should have been,

The date ended up being rather awkward for me. When I got home that night, I started thinking about why it was uncomfortable. All she did was drive me to a movie and pay for my ticket. That was it. It was a trivial experience, but it highlighted the importance of socially constructed gender roles we play. The role reversal had taken me out of a familiar role and forced me to play another. Her paying shouldn't have mattered, but it did. It was a classic example of the complexity of gender issues that are reinforced to the point that we take them for granted. I know now that it wasn't the date that was awkward, it was making the choice between clinging to traditions of old, or adapting to the ever-changing social arena.

The title tells us much about the power issues involved in dating and in who bankrolls its experience. It is possible that the writer's admission of feeling "awkward" and that having his socially "reinforced" role reversed made him "uncomfortable" was sufficient enough to justify writing anonymously. As an example of what I have contending about anonymous discourse as a bridging discourse between expressivist and

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constructivist writing this text is exemplary of, if a bit thin in, its hybrid indications of transgressing the personal and social.

Nevertheless, the expressivist use of dialogue to establish a sense of his, and his woman's friend's, personal character edges into a fairly sharp and analytically succinct analysis of the "socially constructed gender roles we play." It is this in the writing that caught my attention. Without resorting to reader response (since there had been readings on gender roles and stereotyping), this writer manages to telegraph an academic, analytical awareness in his preference for a more personal narrative approach.

It seems to me that both an expressivist and a constructivist teacher would be interested in the potential this text offers to their pedagogical beliefs about what makes for authentic and authoritative composition. The voice is reflective on the subject of gender identity. The voice does not, however, reflect, necessarily, an anonymous function. What is being impersonated here? Is there any hint of code or content transgression? What is significant about the disclosures made by this writer who could very easily have signed his/her name to this writing? Why should this piece of writing be/remain unsigned? How does it foster Forster's sense of an anonymous "atmosphere"?

As for my sense of the "impersonal/impersonating power of the anonymous function, there's no assurance that I correctly identified the gender/sex of the writers in the first five documents (except for #1.) But let's assume that their writers were female, and these last two writings were of male origin. The question remains: *What matters who's speaking in matters of gender identity?* I will now entertain an answer.

> *What matters is what the community of writers, face to face, will make of these voices, views and visions. What really matters is how these communal expressions of gender identity and identification will be socially re-constructed for the use by the community created by a required course in composition. What matters is not the who but the what of the writing—what it teaches us about our sense of Selfishness, of Otherness, and their communal expressiveness—constructive and destructive.*

In trying to establish an equivocal sense of, and foundation for, the provocative possibilities of anonymous writing about gender identity, I suspect that the contact zone wherein my theoretical sightings and my documentary findings have long since transgressed the clear, pragmatic lines (if there any worth redrawing and defending) between a necessary/unnecessary, and even perhaps, an appropriate/inappropriate use of anonymity.

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Document #6: Androgyny meets Anonymity as Threat to Identity

The final document in this section on Gender Roles and Rules is interesting as a borderline heteroglossic discourse because it responds to several different senses of authority--class readings, a female classmate's talking points in class, and to his girlfriend's views of what she wants in a man. Taken together, there is a sense of responsive understanding in this anonymous document that points to, even if it cannot precisely locate, a sense of community "in this day and age with all of the mixed signals that men are receiving from both the females and the society in general?"

> What does it mean to me, a male, in this day and age...? Does being male mean that one is still supposed to be provider for the relationship, acting as the warrior for women, but being chivalrous also? As we discussed in class, do women even know what they want from their men? My girlfriend says she wants a man with good hands, teeth, eyes, and he must be bigger than she is so she doesn't look like a whale. But, he also must be patient, understanding, sensitive to her needs, and be able compromise so that the relationship will work, be fun, spontaneous, compassionate, romantic, be one who will thrown in the sweet little things, talk with her and share his thoughts and feelings, be honest and open with her so that she knows that she is special. Yet, she does not need a male who is demanding or selfish, but give her the respect she serves. Needless to say she has a pretty good idea of what she wants. I had to stop her so I might be able to write about it some.
> So for the modern male, what is the boundary between being the chivalrous male, doing the "old-fashioned" things, and being a male that is insensitive to her and her feelings...This is very frustrating from a male's point of view since their roles are changing. Maybe we are in the transition into being the Androgynous Male. I think so. After reading that article, I connected many personal thought into what the author was saying about how males should be acting to make the world better. I agree that overall males need to be less aggressive than they are at present, but I also strongly agree with the woman in class who said that isn't the whole issue of androgyny based on common courtesy. Maybe both sides need to relax, and stop blaming each other for everything that has happened in the past. It is time to move on and look to the future.

Most remarkable here, I think, is the anonymous reference to "a woman" in the class who spoke of the androgyny of being polite to one another. This begins to suggest the possible "androgynous" function of anonymity. Or is anonymous androgyny a fiction? Despite the sense of cyberspace and digital discourse being "sexless" (so to speak!) it seems pretty clear thus far that the gender identity of those writing anonymously is rather trans-apparent. Conversely, the tenacity of gender identity is *opaque* to the function of anonymity—resistant to its rhetorical possibilities. Whatever the reality, it seems indisputable that the reality of anonymity's impersonal structure/function in theoretical, historical, and rhetorical terms is becoming a possibility in writing that would otherwise not be unexpected under normal nominative conditions. But that's the question: Is the anonymity thus provided *functioning* in light of what has been

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established in the previous chapters? *No...not yet.* But the underlife of composition is coming to the surface, is my sense—a sense I can't imagine my reader doesn't share.

Toward An Unavowable Anonymity

The *necessity* of teaching composition as a call/response to an unavowable community of writing, not of writers, is clear if anonymity does in fact function as *dialogized heteroglossia.* If it doesn't then it is utterly unnecessary to both composition pedagogy and to any sense of an educative effect. Once we begin to reflect on the collective information and communicative rationality represented in these 6 documents, however, we see the countenance of the kind of community problematized by Mason and Stamm. The anonymous sense of community suggested in these writings—and given their use in face-to-face discussion—is more empancipatory than Mason and Stamm have found in the world. In other words, we begin to see where and how Blanchot's sense of community and Lunsford's sense of ownership is collected, copied and redistributed to each absent writer/present reader so that they can read, respond, and have a sense of common ownership of these texts.

Because they are anonymous, each text is written by some one of them, but in a real sense, each is written by any one of them for all of them. No one person stands out in these nominally unidentified attempts at gender identity. This possibility of anonymous composition as community property—and as the communication of identity—is no mere conjecture. Its possibility is very real pedagogically. The reality of anonymous composition as an act of community becomes available to both the expressivist and the constructivist. Imagine these documents not as pinned up on these sheets undergoing what amounts to a variation of the old New Critical approach to literary interpretation. Imagine instead them in the common possession and discussion of those who wrote them, and then you will begin to see what *really* happens when anonymity meets community in the composition of gender.

I chose these documents to close out this first section of document analysis to point up what seems to suggest a trajectory of "masculine" versus "feminine" identification under cover of anonymity. That is, the men writing in this first round of assignments were either drawn toward expressing the quintessence of male identity through descriptions of various defining rituals and codes of masculinity. The women writing

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on condition of anonymity seem to suggest a pattern of desire for communication/ communion/ community beyond the definitions of their gender identities.

Anonymous Sexual Identity

The Emergence of Anonymous Impersonation and Transgression

In this section I will be presenting and analyzing documents that cross the assignment and border line from issues of gender identity and identification to those of sexual identity and identification. This does not mean that these writings deal exclusively with sex, as in sexual intercourse. On the contrary, the concept I have of "Heterosex-Relations" has little to do with sexual activity, and everything to do with its *re-activity*. These documents were written in response to a very general prompting that replaced "significant issues of gender identity and identification" with "significant issues of sexual identity and identification." As with the first set of documents, I took fairly detailed notes on each class session involving response to students' anonymous writing. For this round of documents and discussion, I also had an audio tape player in the middle of the table to record these discussions. The sound quality of these recording is often muddied to the point of being untranscribable. Many voices projected well, (mine, most audible, ironically), while others were whispers eddying in a larger white and anonymous noise. The specificity of my recall on what I asked and lectured on in connection to the issues brought up in students' anonymous writing can be credited or discredited by these tapes. But the documents, I believe, generally speak for themselves, in answer to general questions of anonymity's necessity, hybridity, authenticity, etc.

As with the first group of assignments, there was a variety of modes and dominant nodes of reference. Some used reader response as a pretext for venting personal feelings and views that might not always get a public airing; others used the platform of textual reference in order to launch into personal narratives. Some locate themselves in the family unit, some in the college community, some in that "contact zone" that Bakhtin refers to when trying to explain a writer's "dialogized heteroglossia" of voices and their utterances across "character zones." Thus, in my interpretive scheme, heterosex-relations and heteroglossia are complementary ways of reading and thinking about the personal plus textual bridges that I believe get built under cover of anonymity.

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As we saw in the anonymous documents of gender identity, there was a questionable, equivocal sense of anonymity genuine necessity. I will no longer second-guess and belabor this question in this section of document analysis. I have several reasons for doing so.

First, students did what they were told to do and wrote anonymously. If their documents did not meet some optimum or otherwise expected measure of what might be thought of as anonymity's "standards and practices" they are nonetheless examples of anonymous writing and some clear, even if ambiguous, patterns and themes did appear to emerge. Second, no matter how open and liberated our culture has become with regard to sex and sexuality, the openness is largely foreclosed to those who would continue to tell the truth about its private/public identifications. That sex and sexuality research enjoyed a remarkable opening that is only a half-century young—born with the researches of Kinsey, and Masters and Johnson in the late forties and early fifties—is indisputable. Whether or not it has been allowed to grow up and become authentically adult in that openness is another matter entirely.

During the months of late 1994-1995, the time I taught this course, the almost instant dismissal of Jocelyn Elders, Surgeon General under President Clinton, severely stunted the mature growth of sex education. Dr. Elders resigned "in disgrace," for in effect, "prescribing" masturbation as a public health aid in addressing our culture's repressive attitudes toward sexual desire and in drawing off sexual energy that would otherwise find outlets in teen sex, disease transmission, pregnancy, and date rape. Given Elders' fate, *why the very idea* of sexual intercourse, never mind its status as an academically appropriate discourse, is still very much "taboo." It remains, remarkably, a prohibited discourse, with a gaping double standard even in academic sectors.

Thus, scientific and humanistic "sex researchers" explore every area and nuance of the sexual, with their findings open to the winds in terms of being a discourse community and community discourse. Yet, in pedagogical activity, the determination to read and write about sex and sexuality remains a remarkably reactionary, inflammatory undertaking, as my own experience--not with my students, but with colleagues-- will attest. The coupling (so to speak) of anonymity and sexuality is no accident or mistake, of course, since the revelation of, and traffic in, anything considered taboo, sacrilegious, or even slightly deviant from certain norms, has and will require anonymity--for better and for worse.

The final reason for ceasing my equivocations about the equivocal necessity of anonymity in these students' writings is that its *equivocative* function (literally, equally necessary and unnecessary) is

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ultimately exceeded by its *provocative* possibilities. The anonymous functions, that is, by literally "calling forth" an otherwise unnamed range of voices and visions which, in my standard Civil Liberties Union view of free speech rights, can—and should—be disclosed and deconstructed by whatever discourse community arises or exists to respond to them. So no more equivocations, if you please. Composition-rhetoric—both expressivist and constructivist—exists, in large part, as a provocation to more traditional areas of English Studies, and should therefore carry its provocative mandate as far as our students can understand and respond within distinct, if untested, limits of free speech rights and standards of communicative rationality.

Document #7: Reader Response to Feminism's Homosexual (M)Other

The following would seem to be a straight-ahead reader response to the authority of an author and her text. Like most of the documents that feature reader response as either a nudge toward more personal connections, or in order to express various levels of indignation (primarily against feminist discourse), this student seriously (but not, I think, deliberately) misreads the author's (Constance Penley) analytical intentions in an essay titled "Cultural Studies, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis." Penley analyzes the work of certain feminist cartoon "slashers" who reverse the compulsory heterosexual roles of the original *Star Trek* characters—Kirk, Spock, and Bones—and depict them as homosexual comrades in explicit sex play on the planets they visit in a nod to the work of William Burroughs.

Penley is also careful to protect the identities of these illustrators; their anonymity prevents identification by those in our popular culture whose homophobia might take a threatening turn against them. The writer ignores or misses this irony in making his/her? own anonymous case. The illustrations are provocative, to say the least, and fascinating, if one can appreciate and apply the lesson of such a reversal in heterosexual identity and hero identification.

The very idea that such strong men, exploring outer space, could be homosexual is not only transgressive, but cognitively and emotionally dissonant: the double identification and indemnification of Rock Hudson being precisely the sort of exception that proves our compulsory heterosexual rule. Presumably, if these slashers were male and depicted *Star Trek's heroic* trio having sexual intercourse with some of the ship's female personnel (the ship's Communication's officer, Ahoura, comes to mind; has anyone ever noted that her name is rather homynymically too close to "a whore ah"?) or with some alien courtesans, the anonymous writer might have to consider the double-standard involved.

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"Kirk to Spock. Kirk to Spock, do you read me?" "Yes, captain, in fact, I am presently directly behind you guiding my starship into your base."

Hello!!! Hmmm, let's see, today I could write about my garden, that book I just read, life, or even death. Naw, on second thought, I'll just write about Kirk and Spock's intergalactic love affair. Is this the thought process behind the Star Trek slash magazines as were talked about in Constance Penley's piece?

First, anyone who is such a huge Star Trek fan, or "Trekky", has problems. These people are social outcasts, people who hide in fantasy....They dress like their favorite characters, attend conventions, all because of a television show. Let's face it, there's fandom, and then there is fanaticism....It is this group that must be the writers of the Star Trek slash mags. So, to sum up, these people have problems. Taking it even further, picture these people twisting the characters to meet their own wants and desires, serious problems!

To use the title of Star Trek is misleading, instead something like, "Star Trek the Homosexual Adventures would be more appropriate. It seems inconceivable to me that anyone would sit down and start writing a Star Trek adventure, then decide, "Hey I think I'll have Kirk and Spock humping each other!"

If some feminists think this is a media that they should further explore for the benefit of women's popular culture, I shudder to think what the future of female entertainment holds. Maybe Donahue will start having sex with Geraldo. Oh Phil. Phil. Next episode let's get Oprah in on this!"

Constance Penley boldly goes where no woman has gone before, and I wish she hadn't. The in-depth descriptions of Spock's penis were humorous for a moment, but to involve his or Kirk's or Bone's genitalia in a Star Trek adventure is too much. Hey Constance, you need to get out more kid! Try looking for an intelligent, insightful, more artistic solution for women in poplar culture.

The composition teacher interested or willing to experiment with students' writing anonymously on the politics of sex and sexual identity, needs to have, I believe, a very liberal view of free speech, of ideological bias, of not only tolerating, but of accepting whatever students write. Pre-set standards of politically (in)correct views on the part of the teacher need to be reset toward the default margin of "no fault." This does not mean that the views expressed in writing, and especially in anonymous writing, should not undergo open and honest critique. On the contrary, because of the rhetorical immunity bestowed by anonymity, the writer must expect that he or she will get as good or bad as he or she gives.

The element of "backtalk" in this document shows up in many other documents, and is notable enough to qualify as a sub theme of my findings. One would expect that "backtalk" would figure even more prominently than it did. In this case, the writer is talking back to the author--Penley. The academic worth of this is (u)questionable, (given anonymous course evaluations), but since we are all interested in how writers respond to various texts--whether autobiographical or author-driven--anonymous backtalk should not be ignored or discounted.

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Because we all encounter some degree of such backtalk in students' anonymous course evaluations, in those exit documents, there is often an interesting shift in writers' sense of an addressee. Sometimes the writer is addressing an equally anonymous official or group of university authorities who are presumably waiting to read what a given student *really* thinks about a teacher and a given course. Other times the writer turns to address the teacher of the course. The anonymous function of the document enables this shift of addressivity as well as the freer use of backtalk. That is, the impersonal form of the document permits the anonymous student to get more "personal."

Although the backtalk in this document was not directed at me, or at the course, it was getting rhetorically personal with the author. I made the class to understand that as a community responding to these documents they were to feel as free as possible in responding to the good, the bad, the ugly, and the sublime. This writer's text was treated accordingly. (The attentive reader will note the implications of Miller's findings as to the fault lines emerging in the particular contact zone I created in order to provoke the very kind of rhetorical situation he finds banal and ultimately useless because of its fundamental irresponsibility.)

In our discussion, the first issue was whether the writer was male or female. It was surmised that the writer was male. This was inferred from the homophobic, and anti-feminist heat of the document. Others made the point that heterosexual women can be equally homophobic, and anti-feminist, as we had already witnessed in other documents, so it was more or less determined that the gender identity of the writer was indeterminable, and that anonymity and the writer's own work to cover his/her gender trail was successful enough, that perhaps the writer's gender identity didn't matter.

Many comments were made about the writer's homophobia and double standard about pornographic illustration. It seemed like it would be OK, two women said, if women were depicted having sex with other women, even though the writer didn't actually assert that. One male said it wasn't at all clear that all "trekies" were "social outcasts" as the writer said. Besides, he said, where's the writer's sense of fun in having imaginary relationships? Another student pointed out that the writer did seem a bit amused, at first, but like the writer, she was mostly shocked at the pictures--so much so, she was unable to read Penley's text very closely.

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I asked several questions: Why does the writer assume that Penley was writing this essay and researching this popular cultural work by feminist artists for the exclusive use of women, and of feminists in particular? What if the artists were male and/or homosexual, without any allegiance to feminism? How would that change the writer's sense of what was going on and what Penley was analyzing? Doesn't Penley's analysis have a much broader audience and serve a vast number of popular and academic purposes, especially given her title? And what about the fact that Penley maintains the anonymity of her subjects and their work in the course of her analysis?

I also was careful to praise the honesty of voice and view in this writer's text, even if I found serious fault with it. I said that the sharp, sarcastic tone, especially in the final, personal, first name basis assumed by the writer ("Hey Constance...") was effective as a dramatic or rhetorical flourish. I wondered, however, whether the writer knew anything about Penley's personal life, where she went, etc., never mind if the writer was familiar with her vast and impressive scholarship on a range of academic and social issues. For all that, the writer's right to respond as a reader in any way he felt necessary to advance what he deemed a significant issue of sexual identity could not be questioned.

This writer, and all other writers using anonymity for purposes of immunity were ultimately not immune to criticism of their writing. They can listen to and consider what is being discussed by the community formed by the class without having to be identified as the "butt" of such criticism. If Penley were at the table, it has to be assumed that if she wished to rebut the writer's positions she could do so with as much conviction and force not knowing whom in the class actually wrote the piece. She could be assured that her criticism would have an open ear and hearing even if the face-to-face nature of dialogical interaction were, in effect, closed.

I then repeated what would become an almost tedious point throughout the semester. That it is the anonymity of this writer that should protect him or her from taking any criticism personally. The "impersonal" status of the writing helps us focus on the writing, what is written, and not on who the writer is. If the writer does take anything said about his or her anonymous writing personally, then she or he has the option of revealing him or herself. I made the case that it would be better for them and for the whole class, in terms of criticism, that they not only remain concealed, but that they get into the act of either

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defending or attacking their own work, since both lines are going to get represented and crossed by the sixteen members of the class, and no one is the wiser if you are the actual writer, or an interested reader-respondent.

This line, I was to remind them many times, between the personal and the impersonal--a wavy line of *impersonation*, which comes from *persona*, meaning "mask"-- is a matter of provocation and performance. As we can see, I told them, there is a very fluid line between the personal and the social, between the private and the public. It is not so much that the feminist slogan "the personal is political" is true, which it certainly is, I said. It is more so the case, at least in the composition class, that the personal is academic (which you should've learned in writing personal narratives in first year English); that the private is both social and intellectual, personal and community property (which you will learn in this course). I said that in the two documents we have already seen, the function of the anonymous has much to do with how we are composing the politics of identity, and how that identity politics composes our anonymity, and that our anonymity as writers paradoxically names parts of our identities that we can identify with and write about as a community.

I told them I was attracted to Penley's essay not for the provocative "shock effect" of its pornographic and sexually deviant, or "taboo" subject matter, but because of Penley's decision to keep the artists anonymous. If they (the students) decided to write about these artists' work, and Penley's work on them, they would have to reappraise what audience means, since Penley's audience and those artists' audience operate in two different communities of discourse. My assignment of Penley's essay makes these students an audience of two kinds of authorship, with two very different senses of authority.

Add to this the motives for anonymity. Penley, in her research, actually discovered the identities of these artists but assured them she would maintain their anonymous cover. Whereas students come into a course fully identified as students--their nominal identities being at least as important--and arguably more important-- to the university as are their actual privately lived/felt senses of them selves. I require that they assume anonymous identities in parallel with their named identities as writers. I have a clear interest in how the motive of rhetorical immunity works itself out in a composition course. But I also wanted not so much

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to protect as to *project* the privacy of identity into yet another sense of audience--that of the class as discourse community, rather than a discrete series : of nominal identities.

Anonymous awareness, especially in college coourse, is duplicitous in, well, a double sense. There is the reader's awareness of the student not being there - (as one of 16 names vaguely identified with a particular face) and of being very much there as a writer with a voice and view. There is also the speaker/writer awareness of being simultaneously present and : absent to community recognition. What is the effect on composition when transgressing the law--or at leaast norm-- of the proper name, especially when the subject of anonymous writing--identity-- is itself doublicng as an academic exercise of textual authority, and as a personal exercise of being alive through languagee experience? Is there any use in provoking students into thinking about sexual identity as both a stable attr¬ibute and as a highly fluid performance; in showing them that what passes for academic discourse is widoer and deeper than what they might have believed and experienced in their time as college students; in Hhaving them respond in writing to identity's provocative, evocative and equivocative energies?

Needless to say, the students in my class foundH these periodic disquisitions bewildering, impossible to follow--"whoosh" as one student would exclaim eand gesture with the flat of his hand across the top of his head. I did not intend to lose them, as I have probaably lost my present audience. I wanted to convince them--as I do you-- of the rhetorical exigency of anonyrmity. My enthusiasm for the personal plus textual identity of this essay was tempered by the realization that r the writer of Document #7 might have achieved virtually the same hybridity as a named, known writer. Bunt as I have been reiterating to you, I reminded them too: there are gradations to these transgredient relationsᴤ of discourse.

Document #8: Anonymity as the Parody of Catharᴤsis

The following text takes the hybrid line betweeen author-driven reader response and self-expressive projection of that response into far more personal (yet social, and therefore political) territory than did the homophobic rant against Penley. It also containsᴤ plenty of backtalk, much of it resembling the kind an instructor would expect to hear in the anonymous course evaluations required of students. Never mind the idea of using anonymity to interrogate the privatoe and public curves of identity's binding energy as it is passed through acts of composition. It seems to mᴎe that the level of backtalk in this document should be

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continuously anonymously present in the course structure—from the very beginning of the course, and not at the end where the students' anonymous presence passes out of pedagogical existence.

As for what some might object to as an extreme form of the expressivist goal of having students write about personally significant experiences, I can only respond that the subject of self-sexuality is, as former Surgeon General Elders will attest, both a private part of our social well-being, a personally cathartic process, and a public and therefore political health crisis of immense import. With this document we have all these issues plus the issue of impersonation, and quite possibly, a parody of the cathartic process as described by Patterson and Kim, and one I attempted to import and have students take seriously in the course of composition.

> Originally, when I chose to take this course I was under the impression that it would be similar to English 401, a five-page paper every week about whatever. Evidently it's not! At first I was astounded by the idea of a gender based reading and writing course. My only impression about this course was sex, sex, and sex. I recall continuously showing friends the bizarre Kirk and Spock illustrations found in the lengthy packets assigned to me. I was humored by these pictures, at the same time confused as to how this will help me with my skills as a writer. The thought of how this is allowed to be course material continually reappeared in my head. Finally, I came to the realization that the issues will require me to think about it continuously. Already this course has taken a toll on me.
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> As I read through the packet I found similar connection with my own life. For instance, in the beginning of the Kipnis article she discusses an anti-pornography documentary by a feminist author-poet who believes that masturbation promotes political quietism., which I also find true. In today's society people tend to hide their sexuality. Masturbation is a taboo practice, most everybody does it, yet you are not supposed to talk about it or worst, get caught.
>
> However through my experience I have come to a contradiction of this belief. I was presumably alone with my only companion, a copy of Tracy Lord's "I Love You" that I found in my mother's underwear drawer while snooping for her lace bra and panties that I frequently wore. I got into uniform and inserted the movie. Moments later I found myself engulfed in a fever of cash fantasy, which at the same time my 15 year old sister, whom I have strangely attracted to, interrupted during the climax of my performance. At first I was extremely embarrassed. I feared she would think of me as an extreme pervert, or to make matters worse, tell my friends and family.

The first paragraph amounts to a very candid (conservative university workers would say "damning") appraisal of the course. Looking past its content, the writer's voice and perspective should be familiar to us as long time readers of the anonymous student evaluations of our own teaching. Looking straight at the content of this first paragraph, we can see that the writer is shocked, confused, alive to the transgressive, provocative and "taboo" nature of some of the course material, and was therefore doubtful as to its academic value, and was, in sum, amazed that such material (even though thoroughly academic in its invention and circulation) "is allowed to be course material."

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More crucial, I think, is the pedagogical question by the writer as to how such material could be helpful to his/her "skills as a writer." That question, of course, rears its head continuously in the division between expressivists and constructivists: which approach will best hone and expand students writing skills? My decision to experiment with a hybrid approach, using anonymous writing as a hypothetical catalyst to connect and refract our field's two dominant pedagogical strains or refrains would mean that Penley and Kipnis were no less mainstream academic constructivist templates than are the essays of E.B. White or George Orwell in standard composition "readers" for writing.

This first paragraph is itself a hybrid or heteroglossic discourse of student course evaluation, reader response and personal expression. It would be easy for a composition teacher of a more traditional, less experimental leanings to jump on the last sentence of this paragraph and conclude that the course is provocative to the point of harming students' psyches, their moral-aesthetic sensibilities, if not wasting time better spent in truly improving their capacities and potentialities as writers. I can imagine such a colleague asking something like: "Do we, as writing teachers--as not only skills-based instructors, but as ethical gatekeepers of certain academic norms--really want to have our courses "take a toll" on our students?"

My answer is that acquiring and performing and earning a sense of identity in all its private-public complexity always already takes a toll; that toll is part of human consciousness itself. The assumption that 18-19 year olds aren't ready or able to stop and examine the costs and benefits of being on this "toll" road that has already taken them on a journey past many entrance and exit ramps of identity and community is an impoverished pedagogical vision, and just plain insulting to these late adolescent animals who are driving in and driven by various composites of language consciousness writ large.

My colleague, still unconvinced, might point to the vague use of the impersonal pronoun reference in the sentence, "Finally, I came to the realization that the issues will require me to think about it continuously. "Think about what,? my incensed colleague will ask. "Sex, sex, sex"?

No, I will answer. The "it" refers back, I believe, to "the course material."
"But if we take the writer on his or her (we don't even know the writer's gender, isn't this important?) terms of reference, isn't "the course material" thoroughly equated with SEX?"
No, if you read closely, you will see the phrase, "At first I was astounded...." And in the next sentence: "My only impression was sex...." One of my readings is that the student is putting together a vast and confusing set of discourses and attempting to move from the

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textual to the personal and beyond: where the private and the public can *impersonate* one another.

"But for what pedagogical purpose--for what specific "help" with the student's "skills as a writer"? my colleague will ask.

And I would respond: This writer doesn't need any help. The skill this writer is helping himself or herself to is the skill of impersonation, and more intriguing, to the skill of parody." The writer, I think, is teaching me something about composition, and doing it, like he/she would do in the anonymous exit document, with the immunity of anonymity--which is, of course, excruciatingly ironic, since the writer is using anonymity to disabuse me of my illusions about anonymity's usefulness in composition.

But never mind, what other teachers might think or believe in (mis)reading this student's figuration of a "toll." We will get to the issue of this student's parodic impersonation of Patterson and Kim's idea of anonymity as a "cathartic process" in due course. We have been able to see the high profile that Penley's close reading of those feminist slash illustrators has now assumed for at least two anonymous writers. Unlike the other writer's homophobic reaction to Penley's text, this writer simply reduces its message as "sex, sex, sex" and that therefore this is what my course apparently is about.

To the writer's credit as a responsive reader, he/she also mentions another essay I assigned from the collection *Cultural Studies* (Grossberg, Nelson, Treichler,.) by Laura Kipnis titled "(Male) Desire and (Female) Disgust: Reading Hustler." That essay is a Feminist-Marxist deconstruction of *Hustler, Penthouse, and Playboy*, with each magazine correlated to our notions of "lower," "middle" and "upper" class graphed upon a spectrum of "hard" to "soft" pornographic denigrations of women. Unlike the Penley essay, Kipnis did not include illustrative examples. Instead, the anonymous writer seizes upon Kipnis' reference to a now famous 1980's Canadian documentary on the effects of pornography on its workers-- male and female.

In that film, one anti-pornography feminist speaks about the link between masturbational fanatasies and political quietism. (Interestingly, Norman Mailer, no friend of feminists, rages against male masturbation in response to pornographic images, or to any imagined other, for that matter, as a destroyer of the "imagination" in his 1970 collection of essays, *The Prisoner of Sex*. More interesting still, is the coincidence of Surgeon General Elders' 1995 battle with conservative public opinion on the question of practicing and advocating masturbation for reasons of public health--rather than any fear of political quietism or aesthetic dissolution.)

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The anonymous writer in my course does something quite interesting in terms of reader response to academic textuality. First, the Penley and Kipnis references are conflated so that sex is itself pornographic and sex with oneself is a narcissistic betrayal of our social and political responsibilities. This, the writer tells us, is "true" in his/her experience. More interesting, that experience "contradicts" what he/she is defining as "quietism" Is the writer playing with the literal and figurative tangents of "quietism" in paragraph two?

On the personal level the writer is making reference to the fact that one must keep *quiet—not speak—* about the taboo subject of masturbation, as well as be *quiet* in terms of noise lest one get caught in one's family or dormitory unit. On the political level is the writer also keyed into the contention that masturbation pacifies our revolutionary energies to struggle against the injustice and exploitation of pornography—that pornography is the greatest of opiates, and masturbation is this drug's most insidious delivery system? My sense is that the writer is unaware of Kipnis' sense of masturbation as political quietism.

The writer, however, has decided to share a personally significant experience that is "a contradiction of this belief." The writer writes that she/he came to this contradiction of what seems to be a socially—and academically—sanctioned belief about masturbation "through my experience." The question before us is, is the reference to "experience" only that which the writer then describes, or is it also standing for the writer's experience as an anonymous writer. It seems safe to conclude, on the strength of the writer's own disclosures, that the she/he would never have written this document if anonymity were not a required condition. The actual sexual experience of masturbation as described by the writer does not, in the strict terms of Kipnis' reference of political quietism, contradict it.

On the contrary, the writer's experience resoundingly confirms it. The writer is only playing off the literal meaning of being quiet, not getting caught, and keeping his/her sister quiet about what she has seen. Operating in, or underwriting, this object lesson about quietism is the more complicated issue of the private/public and personal/political lines that are, or should not be, crossed, pointing to larger moral issues of shame or lack thereof. Having implied that the writer is not canny to the multiple meanings inherent in quietism, I am also open to the idea that the writer is uncannily aware of the "personal/political"

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consequences of the sibling disclosing the writer's situation: "I feared she would think of me as an extreme pervert, or to make matters worse, tell my friends and family."

In other words, the writer is very sharply signaling to me, the instructor, and to the rest of the community, that anonymity as an imaginary stage for impersonating possible others, is both risky and necessary for overcoming quietism. However, when we look at the narrative details-- of the pornographic video belonging to the writer's mother; of the dressing up in the mother's lingerie; of the "cash fantasy" reference (a complicated phrase combing the porno industry's "money shot" and the sex worker's real desire--not getting laid but getting paid), and last, but in effect, the opposite of least, of the incestuous reference to the writer's sister--we have to conclude that the writer is also poking fun at the idea of anonymous disclosure. That perhaps, we should all really *quiet* about what passes within the private realm-- particularly in our conscious wishes or desires.

Given the traditional linkage of political disingenuousness with anonymity on one end, and of sexually taboo, or normatively shameful, activity with anonymity on the other, I think a convincing case can be made that the writer is: first, exercising the opportunity to imagine a private (and not, I think, unusual) sexual experience as someone Other than who he or she really is; and second, is performing a remarkable parody of anonymous disclosure that satirizes the entire premise of catharsis. As a knowing (or unwitting) parody of catharsis, the writer is making a point about anonymity as *kitsch*. Anonymous writing comes cheap. Its shoddy artistic, or ersatz literary, value comes at the expense, ultimately, of all composition and its pedagogical aim.

The question of this writer's gendered and genital identity is, as I said, indeterminable in the way the she/he deployed pronouns of personal reference. Still, I would hazard to guess that the writer is a man, particularly given the reference to dressing up in a mother's lingerie, and the incestuous reference to a younger sister. The real possibility of this being a parody of anonymous catharsis is increased when the writer is hypothesized as male, but if in fact the writer is female, the *composition as kitsch* category is not at all diminished, and in many ways increases in ways that Penley, Kipnis, and other feminist academicians might find as troubling as the anti-feminism running through many of the documents heretofore.

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I think I have already indicated my positions on the compositional, community, and pedagogical value of this document. I should be more explicit as we move into the territory opened by document #8.

First, I believe backtalk to and about the instructor and his/her intentions is a good and healthy discourse, with powerful pedagogical value, that is only an eleventh hour ritual at present with anonymous course evaluations, whereas students should be able to chime in "hourly," as it were.

Second, I am firmly of the opinion that Dr. Jocelyn Elders was run out on a rail for telling an important public truth about sexual hygiene. Candid talk, writing and discussion about sex and sexuality--homoerotic, autoerotic, heteroerotic--is a must in all sectors of public service, particularly in the educational trajectories of adolescents. The "composition" of sexuality is neither the be all or end all of my courses on writing identity politics, but it is *pedagogic-all*. Elders is one of my pedagogical heroines. Her courage in what bell hooks has called "teaching to transgress" was worth the loss of her position as a powerful black woman, worth even the obloquy that has followed her ever since--much of it misogynist and racialized.

Third, on the possible phenomenon of anonymous impersonation--of the mask unmasked beneath a mask; of the suspect and susceptible depth of its *provocation* of other voices and of voicing Others--I believe its potential lies less in whether writers are being more or less (dis)ingenuous or (in)authentic, and far more in how it opens up the academic discourses of personal narrative and textual analysis to a larger sense of the community of composition.

I cannot locate my notes on the class discussion of this document, but I do recall that my contention that the writer was being satirical and poking fun at the entire premise of using anonymous writing was considered quite possible. The "shock value" of this document was an attempt to outperform what the writer saw as mere shock value in Penley's essay, and presumably in my approach to composition. I also recall taking the opportunity to apply what I had learned from bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* and spoke of how a teacher's real authority sprang from being open and vulnerable; that if this or any other student felt that anonymous writing was ridiculous, or damaging, or even simply a playful waste of time, we could agree to stop it. No one took me up on the offer, nor did their anonymous course evaluations indicate this.

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<u>Document #9: Schutz, Foucault, and Blanchot--Anonymous Sex Face-to-Face</u>

Here is a straight ahead personal narrative--no reader response. When set against some of the ambiguities

of #8--the cynical/sincere, parodic presentation-- one will say: "Nothing ambiguous or disingenuous about

this. This is an authentic look at what frat parties really look, sound, smell, feel, and *are like* for many

women who venture there.

JOE COLLEGE

A bead of sweat slides down the length of my nose, clinging to the end for a moment before falling onto the beer drenched concrete floor. I pulled my baseball cap further down on my head, hoping to cover my flushed cheeks and hair which was wet from sweat and rain. Dancing in the glow of a black light, I felt free from the stress of my classes and let myself enjoy the music and the delirium of drunkenness. I felt His hands rest on my shoulder for a moment, and I turned around to look into His deep blue eyes that contrasted dramatically with His dark black hair. He is a friend of a friend, an acquaintance that demands a nod of the head or a quick hello in passing.

With a quick smile, I fulfilled my obligation and turned my attention back to my roommate, who had acquired a dancing companion while I wasn't watching. The three of us, and then four, moved in the freedom and confidence that a few drinks can give. Male laughter escalated and mingled with the softer tone of a female's as our dancing became less inhibited. Over my partner's shoulder-I saw Him dancing slowly with a tall, slender girl with long thin hair. I felt a pang of jealousy tear at my heart, but for what reason I didn't know. I pulled away from my group and walked over to the couple. He turned toward me, and I suffered the loss of words. I didn't know what compelled me to approach the two, so I laughed off a wiseass comment, punched Him on the arm like any of his other buddies would do, and returned to my group.

When I rejoined my roommate, I was handed another beer from the seemingly endless supply (the advantages of knowing a Brother at the house) and tried to forget the unexplored feelings that were creeping into my mind. The hours passed and the dark room became less crowded. The eyes of judgment and confusion had turned away from us, and He approached me. His arms wrapped around my waist as the tape began to replay for the fourth time that night. My stomach turned as I asked myself if it was wrong for me to be with Him like this, if I should forget the feelings of excitement that stirred in me, and go home. But then He laughed, and my laughter rose up to meet His. This was a game, and though we both acknowledged that, we had both decided to play.

That night has been played and replayed silently in my mind in the weeks past since then. I can barely remember the hardness of His lips on mine, His hands holding my arms down, not allowing me to push him away. I have attempted to forget the events of that night on the third floor of the fraternity, and I have hushed the longings to be with Him again. We pass one another in the corridors and sometimes manage to exchange more than the obligatory greetings, and other times a smile is barely manageable. It's strange to continue our relationship as it was before that night, but there really is no alternative. We sat across from one another at dinner tonight, our friends on either side of us. The girl he had a terrible crush on last semester captured his attention for the duration of the meal, and I managed to survive without feeling too embarassed.

Is this essay outside the normative range of personal disclosure that a mainstream "expressivist"

approach to composition can produce? Undoubtedly yes, and yet many of us who have spent much time

with students' personal narratives will recognize many of the textual features that have come to be

identified with expressivism. Expressivist as it might be, it is a fairly safe bet that this essay would not

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be passed in with the writer's proper name attached. Does that mean that if we require/permit students to write anonymously there will be an across the board increase in essays that are both revealing of difficult experiences and as powerfully written?

Given what I have presented above, there is no active correlation between anonymous writing and "better" writing, and so the answer must clearly be, No. The next question to answer is: what pedagogical value would this essay have in either an expressivist or social constructivist course? As with so many of the above documents, I believe it places a burden on both approaches to meet in the middle of their contending premises.

That is, the expressivist teacher would have to admit that all writing is laden with identity politics and ideological centers of gravity, and that much of what makes students' personal experience "significant" is precisely this level of the undisclosed. The significance of what gets concealed and revealed in students' purely "expressivist" (and, for that matter, in their purely "constructivist") performances is vast and complex. There are both legitimate and unnecessary senses of shame. There is the tyranny of internalized community standards of conformity and decency that are often minefields of hypocrisy. More moderately, there seems to be a bright line, however wavy and thin in places, between private and public discourse, with the discourse of the personal, (which expressivism depends and trades upon for its truth effects), making up the actually visible or written spectrum of that line's brightness. These and other socially constructed fields of force have to be taken into account when opening up the revealed/concealed binary that nests within the expressivist approach.

How should a social constructionist approach to composition handle the presence of such utterly *social constructs* as romantic/sexual mating games, alcoholically amplified, and other drug-infused emotional states, never mind the possibility of date rape in students' writing? It seems to me that those who would dismiss this text because it is written from an autobiographical, rather than authorial and analytical perspective, are both ignorant and arrogant as to the sources of that shibboleth--*social construction*--which is often used to silence any alternative approach as both theoretically naive and pedagogically narcissistic.

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I see this essay as a model of both compositional ideals: personally *and socially* significant. Its larger social significance--from the deleterious synergy of men's "fraternal" association with free flowing alcohol, to the necessity of providing healthy, safe sites for romantic, erotic and, like it or not, sexual mating rites, to the borderline prospect of consensual sex versus date rape--is a set of discourses that the expressivist has little justification in ignoring. The expressive poignancy and authenticity--the outright *authority*--of its voice and view would be hailed as exemplary if included by an academic author pursuing and pushing the socially constructed limits of what has come to be called *autocritique* in which a mix of the personal and textual get closely referenced and reflected upon.

My notes on the class discussion around this document divided over the question of consensual sex or date rape. The class tentatively concluded that my sense of the writer's emotional confusion and ambiguous sense of her autonomy--particularly in the sentence: "I can barely remember the hardness of His lips on mine, His hands holding my arms down, not allowing me to push him away"--was offset by what followed: her longing for him; their awkward but discreet distance, especially given the presence of the "other" woman in "His" life. There seemed to be the sense that what happened to this writer was what I grew up referring to as a drunken, lust-driven fling, not a rape.

When I tried to provoke a comparison between this and the defense of men's sexual attitudes and behavior based on an anonymous dormitory survey, there was a stunned silence. Eventually objections arose that dorm life and frat parties were very different situations. I wondered what would be the result of that survey if taken in several fraternities. Many felt the situation in the essay was "complicated," but that sex and sexual identity is always so. Plus, throw in a powerful drug like alcohol.... One woman hoped that if the writer felt she had been raped, the UNH rape crisis center is totally confidential (and I, of course chimed in that confidentiality is part and parcel of the "anonymous function."). The next week one young woman brought in the center's brochures and gave the center's location on campus-- "just in case."

<u>Document #10: Anonymous Backtalk and Transgression of Authority</u>

In this document we see more of what I have called student "backtalk" that is rhetorically aimed at me, the instructor, and at the premises of a course on the "composition" of gender and gender identity. The impudence is very direct—that is, it comes across without the performative or exhibitionist antics we saw earlier—but is also quite artful. In this sense it should be recognized in any instructor's more memorable reading encounters with students' anonymous course evaluations. As an act of resistance it is both highly playful and deadly serious. (Like those before, these issues are of the highest import for both social and pedagogical analysis.)

The writing raises a grain of voice and sharpened point of view that I was hoping for as part of my hypothesis as to anonymity's higher yield of an authenticity that might be valued by both expressivists and constructivists. Perhaps an instructor with thinner skin over his or her ego would have trouble with this writer's response to a prompt to write about a significant issue of sexual identity. I must admit, that on first reading, I was startled by the sarcasm and the incisive reduction of my overly complex presentation of sex/gender identity (most of which I learned from a book titled *Paradoxes of Gender*.)

But then I remembered hooks' principle of vulnerable authority or authoritative vulnerability. On second reading, I was amazed and amused by this essay. I deeply respect its authentic sincerity, as I do the others in this section. My respect for the "authenticity" of the masturbation fantasy turns on the "sincerity" of its performative hybridity, not of what I would call the authority of its personal experience. But these are artificial distinctions, prescribed by expressivist and social constructionist values, whereas I am interesting in transgressing the authority of both these pedagogies in the interest of forming an/other kind of (in)avowable community.

Suspicious as it seems to be of me and of my intellectual premises for the course and for the specific assignment prompt, I found it to be equally reconstructive as a hermeneutic response to its own suspicion and not, as it turns out, to me as its key suspect, but to the question of identity itself. Everything we do in terms of negotiating all questions of identity is a self-other transaction, and can therefore be considered a performance along a basic script line running from true to false sincerity. In view of this transgredience, and of the transgredience of expressivist and constructivist goals, it also a good idea to keep in mind this

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simple two part rule of all assignment heuristics: *Be careful what you ask for; don't be surprised when you get what you ask for.* SO: "Write about a significant issue of sexual identity...."

Sexual identity. If I asked Sigmund Freud where my sexual identity came from, he would say that it was determined even before my personality, around age six, and that the core of it lies in the subconscious. Sigmund Freud was a revolutionary in perceiving and constituting what we know today in the field of psychology, and I think he has much ground about the only way to really understand my sexual identity, through the subconscious.

Join with me now, then, in being hypnotized. To be hypnotized, one must trust in the hypnotist and be willing.

Sexual identity is just like that. One really has to step away from oneself to try to grasp the concept of it, yet must try to recognize the influences that made us the way we are today.

Unfortunately, I have no desire to delve into the depths of my subconscious to retrieve an inkling of truth about my sexual identity. If I had problems with my sexual identity, I would seek professional help. But for the sake of Reading Gender/*\Writing Gender....

To step away from the subject for on brief moment, which really depends on how fast you read, what is the symbol "/* \" that has been appearing on our papers? My theory: the two opposing slashes are legs and the asterisk is a variable private part. Just a thought.

Sexual identity, and what it means to me. That rhymes. Yes I do have a lot of sentence fragments, but I figured that was better than not using punctuation at all. I am saving that for my next anonymous essay.

Sexual identity is the formulation of the effects of gender on a person, therefore creating a unique perception of one's sex. The effects of gender are cultural and therefore are intensified by the parenting process, as parents are also products of the cultural arena. The cultural backgrounds pertaining to "sex" identity are important factors in one's sexuality, the quality or state of being sexual.

Essentially, gender identity and sexual identity are closely wed with slight differentiation. One differentiation is sexual preference. Sexual preference is not determined by gender or cultural suppositions as much as it is instinctive. Instinctively, all humans are heterosexual. This does not state that all humans prefer the opposite sex, but instead, states that the only way for humans to reproduce is through heterosexual relations. This puts the heterosexual preference in the unique position of being the only preference that can procreate.

The reason that sexual preferences are partially removed from the cultural issue of gender, is because many choose to go against cultural lines to protect their choice. Also, sexual preference is not a direct result of anyone's influence of any sort. The truth in this matter is shown when a heterosexual couple produces a child that is not of the same preference.

To venture further, sexual preference is the main constitution of sexual identity, since it is the purpose to which the identity serves. Identity is the form that serves the body in pursuing one's sexual preference.

I am heterosexual. That does not tell you anything about my gender or parents, yet it is the basis for my sexual identity. What makes my identity unique to other heterosexuals?. That is where the influence of parents comes in. But alas, I am where I started, trying to portray the influence of my parents on my sexual identity.

In closing, I pose the question: Is sexual identity a true replication of one's uniqueness, or is it the composition of a form to which an identity should replicate?

The hectoring/lecturing side of this voice is quite remarkable, I think. As a first attempt at an essay on

the sexual--whether it is one's physical, cultural, or psychic identifications--I thought it first rate, and said

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so. The bit about Freud's early experiments with hypnosis to access the unconscious was I said, correct, but that the writer left out the truly revolutionary part: that Freud abandoned hypnosis for a discursive and dialogical "cure." Whether psychotherapeutic talk can verbalize the contents--repressed or otherwise-- of the unconscious continues to be debated.

More important, I said, was that the point of all talk therapy was to help a client gain a distance on--to begin to mediate-- his or her immediately problematic situation. It was also a fact that many therapists encourage to write down issues that come to them between sessions. I told the class that this was the case in my experience as a client seeking psychoanalytic perspective on my problems with my father. I had also discovered that many past students had confirmed that their therapists were asking that they supplement the work of talk by keeping a journal, both for venting and for analyzing issues that emerge in therapy sessions or between them. I told them that one student in this very class had confided that writing was a part of her formal therapeutic sessions and that the therapist had encouraged cross over between the writing being done for those sessions and for the classes in this course. If talking--and increasingly, writing--are considered part of a cure for what ails and assails us in our quest for and questions about identity, I saw no reason to dismiss it as *hypnosis*, but more toward a discursive *diagnosis* and *prognosis*, and an essential part of what all three of these words share at their root: the ancient Greek word *gnosis*: literally knowledge, the process of knowing.

That the writer conveniently left this notion of talking or, in the present case/course, of writing about something of significance to the writer in terms of sexuality was interesting to me. It seemed as if the connection to be made in this document, though not made directly by the writer, was that I was trying to use anonymous writing to have or help students access their unconscious desires in sexual terms. The present writer would have none of it. That act of principled--and more or less informed-- resistance was to be congratulated, I felt. But I strongly disagreed with the writer's premises and conclusions.

This wielding of professorial power on my part, this determination to inject the full energy of my responsive understanding of students' writing using the full measure of my experience as an emotional, social, and academic creature two and half decades their senior, is a mix of vulnerability and authority that could not, I believe, work without the shield that anonymity provides between teacher of writing and

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writing student. As I have contended above, anonymous evaluation can and should travel in alternating currents between students and teacher throughout the semester, and not just at the end, when students use that shield on the final day of class. If used in this alternating way, the anonymous' function's discursive current opens up, rather than closes down, responsive understanding. Ever attuned to the contradictory status of the anonymous, I nevertheless am convinced that the absence of students' names and their presence as persons writing creates rather than dissipates the possibility for communion and discursive community.

I was also pleased to admit that the writer had used anonymity in order to speculate--correctly--about the meaning of /*\ in my course title Reading Gender/*\Writing Gender. The genital level of sexual identity is fairly telling in determining biological differences in human sexuality. I included this provocative/evocative symbol to telegraph my sense that the line between sexed and gendered identity was genital and cultural--and therefore both highly personal and decidedly impersonal or textual. I was not out to offend anyone with this symbol, but trying to defend and add to the paradoxical condition of identity in general. In responding to the document in this way, I also lauded the phrase" "variable private part" for its correspondence, in my view, to the *variable public parts"* of our presentation of self or identity performance. I then reread the following paragraph.

> To venture further, sexual preference is the main constitution of sexual identity, since it is the purpose to which the identity serves. Identity is the form that serves the body in pursuing one's sexual preference.

I said I thought this summed up the paradoxical and nearly enigmatic condition of identity politics at large, whether we focus one of its "embodied" indexes such as the genital level of sexuality, or moved progressively out of the body into the "body politic" where sexuality and gender not only move and merge discursively but cross into and over racial and class based discourses of identity. Where does consciousness end and body begin? Can we "walk" and "talk" this boundary? Where does the body of one self end and an Other body begin, and what does the "social" as opposed to the "personal" have to do with this demarcation?

I liked the confidence in this paragraph that reduced the question of identity to that of an embodied condition, and a biological one at that. Perhaps the writer was aware that Freud argued that "biology is

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destiny" and that the "ego is always a bodily ego." The idea that identity is a form that serves the body is elegant and compelling, I said, but did the writer, or anyone else in the class have the sense that this was only half the loaf--that the body is a form that serves the discourses of identity as both a personal and social performance?

I ended by wondering about the final question — "Is sexual identity a true replication of one's uniqueness, or is it the composition of a form to which an identity should replicate? Was it sarcastic or serious--sincere or cynical? I reminded the class that many readings would touch on the idea of essential versus culturally constructed and socially reinforced differences. I mentioned what Adrienne Rich has called a cultural regime of "compulsory heterosexuality" even in the wake of birth control and other reproductive technologies which create a purely "recreative" rather than solely "procreative" feature of sexual identity.

The ensuing discussion was not what I expected. Many students felt that the writer had evaded the original question, and had actually distorted it by deciding to link sexuality to one's parents, and then deciding not to "go there." The influence of parents was one possible point of departure but there were many others_ I interjected that Freud did go there--back to the mother and the father, I said, in brilliant and not so brilliant ways, a hundred years ago. All sorts of analysts have returned to the family as the site of sexual identification ever since Freud combed literature and decided--how?--to map the murder/incest themes of Greek tragedians onto the coordinates of sexuality. And, as we saw, cynically or not, the writer in the pornographic fantasy had gone there, straight into his or her mother's bed and lingerie drawer. It's all right to go there, I said--on any terms of (dis)ingenuity. It seemed to me that the writer of the final document was saying: "I will go there via strict definitional terms, as I understand them." And that was okay too, I said.

I said I found the question of sexual identity to be a tough, literally, "hidebound" one, and one that couldn't begin to be answered by a course in writing, but that that didn't mean we shouldn't try. If--as it seems to me-- the answer to the writer's final question has to do with a positivistic endorsement of heterosexuality as a procreative force left to scientific thinking, then the writer is correct in maintaining that all Identity is the result of an egg and sperm interaction and "composition"--*in vitro* or *in vivo*. This is a "significant" issue, and it pretty much consigns all my transgression theory of a gender/sexual border discourse to a dustbin. I also wondered if this part of the writer's essay needed to be anonymous? All parts featuring back talk to the instructor parts did, because no matter no matter how vulnerable I myself might be, I was still an authority,

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with power over students. I felt that the impudence or strong conviction wouldn't have shown up in a named essay. The students felt this was also true.

Anonymous Sex[ual] Identity—Dialogical or Diabolical?

Given the range of revelation and reference in the documents in between these, I felt that I had confirmed two sides of the anonymous function. One side is the reception of anonymity as socially and rhetorically suspect: a space for deviance, discontent, and demagoguery. The other side is anonymity as a space for empathically exploring, compassionately considering the problem of a gendered/sexualized self and concomitant others. In between these expected and unexpected poles, we saw the emergence--and confirmation really--of a Goffmannesque view of representation that might travel from his concern with face-to-face interactions into a nameless/faceless, but certainly not an aimless, or purely reckless, discourse of identity politics.

We saw sincere and cynical provocations in these anonymous presentations of self that should give all teachers some sense that anonymous writing is neither a reversal or a mere repetition of either expressivist notions of authenticity, or of constructivist notions of author-ity. The presence of transgressive and prohibited discourse has risen with the inclusion of the anonymous function in the composition course, but not with anything like the virulence or violence one might envision and therefore conclude that anonymous writing is too pedagogically hot to handle and too "politically" risky in terms of its "incorrectness." I have tried, all through these many pages of analysis, to err on the side of making a case against the "necessity" of anonymity by pointing to content that might very well have found its way into signed essays.

But for a document on masturbation not included here, these six documents comprise my evidence for themes of impersonation and transgression. 7 out of 33 writings doesn't exactly conform to, or confirm, one's worst expecations and connotations of anonymity. Even 3 of the 16 documents written explicitly on the topic of sex and sexuality is remarkably low. Because I did not worry about a larger statistical sample at the time of trying out my ideas, and because I have all along made the case for the performative variety and textual hybridity of anonymity's concealment/catharsis function, I am neither disappointed nor surprised by this finding. Even when we hitch the wagon of my tiny experimental course to the star of such a large study using anonymous surveys as Patterson's and Kim's *The Day America Told The Truth: What We Really Believe About Everything That Matters,* we can nevertheless begin to see that what students *really think* is worth writing about under anonymous conditions is hardly shocking.

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Anonymous Racial Identity

First Year Composition

The required first year composition course at The University of New Hampshire I taught in the spring of 1995 followed the advanced course in composition (English 501, Fall 1994) in which I first tried out the idea of anonymous writing. In the first year course I decided to try to cover four major bases of identity politics. Instead of a writing/reading course in gender/sexual identity, I titled this course "The Composition of Identity: Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality." I used a reader edited by Virginia Cyrus titled *Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*. My course outline was more or less identical to that of the advanced course. The passage from Patterson and Kim's *The Day America Told the Truth: What We Really Believe About Everything That Matters* was also a part of that outline. In addition to the named writing assignments involving reader response to the essays in Cyrus' text, and a long final essay of personal plus textual research on an issue of identity politics, I required that students produce two separate anonymous essays on issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class identity.

Ten students were enrolled in the course--8 women, 2 men. The 80 documents they produced both repeat, and in many cases, radically extend my general findings of impersonation along lines of empathy and antipathy toward the class-based and race-based position of the Other. Because all ten students in the course were from "white" middle class backgrounds, (not surprising given that New Hampshire's race/class breakdown is one of the least diversified in the country), it was relatively simple to identify and analyze the concept of "generalized otherness."

The scope of this dissertation does not permit an analysis of the 20 anonymous documents on class identity. Though these exhibit a similar "cathartic" authenticity regarding "the poor" along an empathic and antipathetic spectrum, I have chosen to focus on ten of twenty anonymous "race" documents. They are more dramatic in their transgressive and transgredient moments of self/other identification. The high degree of personal/private disclosure in terms of gendered and sexualized identity which we saw in the 501 course are, if anything, more in evidence behind the racialized mask of anonymity. But as we saw in the previous analyses of gender and sex identity, the mask of anonymity "falls" in strange and unexpected--*impersonal*-- ways when writers exercise the rhetorical immunity granted them for the exploration of race consciousness.

The first assignment prompt was as follows: "Please write an essay on any issue of race or racial identity/identification that is of private--or public-- significance to you." As with the advanced course, I let

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students choose whatever mode of response they felt would best serve the opportunity of immunity provided by anonymity. Some used reader response modes to the authors they were reading in Cyrus on Race and Racism; others looked into the depths of their ideological hearts to what they *really believed*; and others, as I have alluded to above, and throughout this study, used anonymity to explore acts of impersonation similar to what we saw in certain documents in Section Four: Anonymous Sexual Identity. I analyze the ten documents produced under this prompt in separate subsections below.

In addition to using Patterson's and Kim's passage on anonymity as a "cathartic process" to help students structure and justify the use of anonymous writing, I included one of the surveys it used in its national study: "Are You a Racist? In the second round of anonymous writing, I asked students to take this survey, reminding them that it was taken by thousands of their fellow citizens under conditions of anonymity similar to their own. I then asked them to respond anonymously to the results of this survey. My scope permits only two of those local, pedagogically anonymous responses to an anonymous survey of our national racial attitudes.

Document #1: Anonymous Reader Response to Racism

This first document uses the mode of reader response to one of the essays in *Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*. I remember being impressed by its equivocal use of the collective, communal, (and reconstructively anonymous) "We" which is most familiar to Americans in the opening words of the U.S. Constitution: "We the People, in order to form a more perfect Union...."

> "White People"-- We are what is considered to be the- "norm" according to the article entitled "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" and when you stop and think about it white people are the norm and we do have what you would call an invisible sack. Lets think about it for a minute.
> *We can speak to the public without putting any race on   trial.
> *We can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to our race.
> *We can also be pretty sure that if you ask to talk to "the person in charge" you will be facing a person of our race.
> *These are just a few points that many black people cannot count on.
> Peggy McIntosh [the author of the above essay] speaks of how white women find white men oppressive because of their unacknowledged privilege and this, on the other hand, is how black- people view white people; oppressive. They find it discomfiting to be with us, but yet we don't feel it because it is an unacknowledged privilege. A majority of our daily lives that we take for granted, black people are fighting for. It is a form of racism that most of us are not aware of. The whites were made to feel superior while the blacks made to feel inferior. As Peggy McIntosh stated, is this really a privilege?
>   Note that * means taken from text

Though I don't wish to return to the questionable theme of anonymity's necessity, it is worth noting that as an act of reader response Document #1 is act of summary and paraphrase, lacking even the

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expressivist threads of indignation or righteousness we observed in other documents in this mode. Any yet, because of the sensitive subject of historic "white privilege"--a reality that almost always manages to disappear in most debates on the need for affirmative action--I sense that the writer is relieved to have the rhetorical immunity to address the issues raised by McIntosh. The writer would rather not be nominally identified in her/his identification with the "politically correct" position of recognizing that "white" privilege transcends particular socio-economic differences of class and represents an always-already symbolic and discursive advantage over being "black."

This sense of caution, and the pointed use of "we" as standing for a particular kind of "people" originally privileged by constitutional decree (over and above an original lack of citizenship status for white women, children, and white men without property) makes for an odd poignancy in the writer's voice. Addressed to one's fellow white people, this sense of "we" is shot through with guilt, and projects an empathy for those excluded by its sense of a collective identity.

Given the "whiteness" of the class members, I continually imagined how and whether I could have run this course if a single "person of color" or if any number of "nonwhite" people were enrolled.[4] As we saw above in documents where attacks on feminist discourse were frequent enough to qualify as a theme of anonymous writing, this sense of necessary immunity with regard to issues of "political (in)correctness" should never be taken lightly when we ask students to write honestly and straightforwardly about any issue that genuinely qualifies as "academic discourse" in the hybrid sense I have of that highly contested descriptor. As we will see below, the writer's need for some sense of immunity was as justifiable as for those of his/her classmates who strongly opposed such sentiments about "white privilege.

Document #2: Forster's Empathic Imagination

Here the writer continues the mode of reader response, but chooses to look up the word "prejudice" in the dictionary. His/Her reader response to the word's two denotative fields, ideological and legal, is a connotative tour de force that is both personally and socially significant--its hybridity stylized to the point that it qualifies as a lyric "confessional" poem.

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I FELT SUPERIOR TO THAT

Prejudice: An unfavorable opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge.

I am guilty of the first and of the second. By the definition relating to law I have damaged and injured in some form and have not been punished but in essence have punished the opposite.

I saw a man in ragged jeans and a dirty coat and I said "'poor" and I stayed away because for some unknown reason I felt superior to that.
I saw a woman in the grocery store with two children buying her groceries with food stamps and I said the children will have a sad life and will have a hard life and I stayed away because for some unknown reason I felt superior to that.
I saw a women working in a broken down factory and I said I will never work in a dirty place like t-hat and I stayed away because for some unknown reason I felt superior to that.
I saw two black men with baggy jeans and shirts and I said 'Ghetto" and I stayed away because for some unknown reason I felt superior to that.
I drove down the street and saw a family living in a shack and I said I will never live in an awful place like that and I stayed away because for some unknown reason I felt superior to that.
One day I was seen by an individual and they thought unapproachable and said challenge and became my friend. And for some unknown reason she was not superior to that. She was not prejudiced and for that reason I was lucky because I gained something in which a value could not be placed.
In shame I must say, I am guilty of the first and of the second.

This writer is actually merging the complex interlocking prejudices of class and race consciousness. I chose it for the second document to be discussed because I felt it carried forth many of the feelings of Document #1. The notion of "invisibility" which Peggy McIntosh analyzed in the essay that Document #1 responded to became big topic in this class. I felt that that the repeated emphasis on seeing in Document #2 was a fine amplification of the paradoxes of white invisibility and privilege and the continuing visibility of African-American disadvantage. White people don't think of their whiteness as invisible, but often respond to the high visibility of a "black" person, especially one in their all white community. Generally, whites are most visible and "blacks" are virtually invisible in both historical and popular terms of what really matters socially, economically, politically. The lines between appearance and disappearance, between blindness and insight are taken up in Document #2 in interesting ways. The sense of "white" guilt in this document is palpable and is also part of "white privilege" part of what we carry in our invisible knapsacks.

Because I do not have space to consider the anonymous writings on class-consciousness, I thought this document might suggest some of that identity relation's borderline with race consciousness. Mainly, however, I used it to open a discussion about the sources of how and why "we" feel superior" and whether the structures of prejudice (bewilderingly complex constructs of familial, educational and mass cultural

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inculcation) can turned into the kinds of shame that often--wrongly--accompany American's feelings about sexuality. The fifth stanza is the only explicitly racial reference. The struggle to understand the reason or emotion of "white" racial and community superiority is repeated in the phrase "because for some unknown reason."

By linking up the two repeated phrases, "I saw..." with "for some unknown reason" I tried to open a discussion about the deep-seated, almost invulnerable irrationality of prejudice as an ideological apparatus--a "natural" part of being human. The final anecdote holds out something more than hope that such intractable constructions within one's sense of, and defense, of identity. The operation of the empathic imagination, of an Other's attempt to rationally communicate despite the writer's antipathetic sense of his/her self as superior, asserts a parabolic force upon the entire poem, so that the feeling of superiority curves back and collapses upon itself. The illogical nature of pre-judgment is judged through an act of passionate communication. Not only the medium of prejudice, of hate speech, we see in this document that the anonymous functions equally in favor of love and its "unknown reason."

My notes show (I had dispensed with the audiotape for technological and pedagogical reasons) that I began to praise the creativity of this writing, that it reminded me of the grand, vatic voice that Whitman made famous, with its repetition and passionate cataloguing of experience. I wondered if such a text would have appeared under signature, or if somehow the anonymous function made it possible. I still wonder. Because this course met at 8:30 in the morning, I had a difficult time getting my students to wonder with me.

Because of my own long and passionate undergraduate training in the reading and writing of poetry, I was stunned to find three writers who consistently used the rhetorical opportunity provided by anonymity to respond more "artistically" than academically. As a matter of expressivist or social constructivist identification, these "poetic" responses to the prompt to write about racial identity helped considerably to fill out what I am maintaining is the unexpected thematic finding of anonymous *impersonation*.

This practice of trying out other voices and visions--of trying to become a person other than the self of the writer--was especially evident in this 401 class. We saw its parodic extreme in the 501 class. In this class, we see it at its optimal reach as *vatic* --oracular, prophetic-- in the next two Documents. (I had stated in the introduction that I would follow the sequence I originally determined for class discussions. I make an exception here because I want to register my passionate, but unprovable, contention that anonymity, as

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much as the predilection of a given writer, stimulated these voices that could be from any one and no one.) I find them to be examples of Bahktin's "transgredient moment" where the composition's expressivist and constructivist objectives address and transgress one another across the embattled lines of academic discourse. I suppose I am going to show and fold early here, since I have always been more of a poet than a prose writer.

With these next two documents, I would wish to make a case for teaching composition as an *epidemic* -- not just academic--discourse: one that affects many persons--both internally and externally present--at not only one time, but throughout a student's lifetime. The reader will therefore need to take the subjectivity of my analyses as a barely contained assault upon the whole idea of treating student's writing as objects that I, as teacher-researcher, can dissect with the tools of my trade and training. I still "listen" to these anonymous voices in much the same way I did when I first heard them and helped to orchestrate . and conduct them with the class once they all had each other's scores in front of them.

<u>Document #3: The Vatic/Epidemic Voice</u>

Like #1 and #2, this document uses mythology to revoice white privilege, prejudice, : and the passions of their unknown reason. It suggests that the passionate sense of otherness speculated by Natanson and extended by me, could be redirected into empathy and community action in the composition course.

> My name is Daphne. If you haven't heard of me before, I am a character from Greek mythology. According to the myth, I am a nymph who is transformed into a Laurel tree to escape the pursuing Apollo who is out to rape me. If the myth were to be rewritten today, I ' would probably be the "typical" American; white, young, and moderately attractive. Instead of trying to escape from Apollo, it would be minorities that I am running from.
> As time goes on and the minority populations are rising, the white population i is leveling off. Soon, whites will be the minority in America. These are facts that scare a lot of people, myself included. The idea that minorities will take over is one that many try to ignore. Just like we shouldn't cross the street when approaching a black man, we also shouldn't run from the truth.
> Because our country is so diverse, we are faced with many problems that we can only overcome as a society. What will happen to our country? Should we have an official language? Why not an official religion while we're at it? If we dictate what language is to be used then we might as well dictate religion too, since they are intertwined. If we do this, we're taking away the freedom that we have all been fighting for. We could always do what I did in my myth and try to escape the problems by hiding. When we do this, we don't get to do what we really want and the problem is left for someone else to take care of. Our other option is to educate ourselves to be more diverse and more accepting of others. This would be the better choice. Although it would take more work and effort, the result would be a better society and a better understanding of the people we're sharing the Earth with.

Again, the writer's open and authentic use of "we" refers to "white people" such as her self. (I am assuming, which I shouldn't given the variability of anonymous transgression and transgredience, that the writer is a woman because of the choice of "Daphne." There is no overt sense of shame or guilt, as in the first two

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documents, with regard to what amounts to a mythification of an historical and hysterical *white flight* from "minorities. The rather unmitigated sense of white civilization being chased and under threat of cultural (and actual?) "rape" is of course one of the more excruciating ironies of all history, since it was a "white" European civilization and its enclaves which chased down "black" civilizations and murdered, raped, and enslaved them physically and culturally. This "white" fear of minority others ("blacks" remain the main worry, but "browns" and "yellows" are bringing up the massive rear of this privileged, irrational fear) is laughable to black Americans, of course, whose entire historical awareness is punctuated by fear of white persons--from the rape of black girls and women during slavery, to the beating and lynching of black boys and men for the crime of "raping (that is, "looking at") white females.

This document takes a curious turn, however, with the last sentence of the second paragraph. The question is whether the writer's sense of the ethical ("we *shouldn't* cross the street...we...*shouldn't run* from the truth") can overcome the open admission that she and other white people have been educated to fear "black" and other persons of color. The next two paragraphs lose the poetic imposture, and the metaphorical voicing. The expressivist tenor fades in favor of a more constructivist vehicle of analysis. "[H]iding, which drops the feminist logic of the Daphne and Apollo myth, is out of the question it would seem. White people can't be hiding from, they must be "sharing the Earth with", those they once pursued and are now fleeing. This document, though not as "vatic" in its expressive totality as in Document #2, nor as static in its constructivist mimicry as in #1, is a curious hybrid of "white" conservative fear and liberal hope. That is, the politics of its identity, as well as the identity of its politics, it is an "epidemic" reflection of "white" norms of identity, authority, and community.

I was careful not to launch into a deconstruction of the writer's reckless use of one of many Greek tales of rape. After all, anonymity not only functions as a scene for immunity but for creativity. In essence ungradeable, students sense, consciously or otherwise, an opportunity to do things with words they would not otherwise attempt under either official regime of named/graded writing. Unnamed and "trans-graded" writing is for common and communal response and evaluation. I noted the attention to an "official religion" and to an "official language" in the third paragraph. What I found interesting was the mix of languages in this essay--one experimental and expressively risky, the other much more recognizable as officially

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academic, a construction of socially sanctioned, politically correct views that had to somehow rescue the

authentic, but nevertheless racist fear of historically white self-understanding.

Document #4: White in Night's Satin

Here the idea of "white self-understanding" is taken to its poetic limit, recapitulating and concentrating the

forces of guilt and shame we saw in various densities in the previous three documents.

As I walk along the winding road
(beside me dusk has settled on wild flower and oak tree)
And think of how we came to be
Such powerful figures in society
I wonder to whom this blame is ode.

The infinite sounds of chirping crickets
And whispering winds
Knock my conscious self into the realization
That the color of my skin is all to blame.

Pinkish beige that turns to royal red under Summer's sun
Then fades to a light, regal brown
Only to be swept away with Winter's first snow.
I walk alone.
Our color is like the seasons
fading, blossoming then regressing.
Why can't we see that all colors follow that same pattern?
As I walk, the night has settled
The light has gone
And I embrace the blanket of darkness that now covers us all.
And I am as Black as can be.

Throughout all seasons,
When night tip-toes gently to each doorstep
We welcome in the darkness that allows bonfires,
City lights and a romantic mood.
Yet when the embers die,
The city sleeps
And the romantics turn out the lights
We are faceless
Bodiless
And as black as night.
All of us.

One nation.
One world.
One universe.

I see this.
I know this
And because of this

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I walk alone.

I walk alone.

The point where a course in composition must recognize both critical and "creative" writing is not always explicit, and often not expected. Certainly, a portfolio-based composition course can produce "creative" writing from students, but as a general rule, the mandate of the required course in college composition involves "non-fiction." Fiction and poetry writing are offered in an English Department's upper level courses, as are those courses devoted to the non-fiction genre of "literary analysis." Composition is traditionally confined to a rather narrow swath of writing: personal and impersonal essays and a longer cross-disciplinary paper of "academic research."

My contention that anonymity opens up the discursive lines between the personal and the textual should logically extend to the somewhat blurry genre distinctions between fiction and non-fiction, as well as creative and critical writing. In this particular class, at least, the opportunity--rather than immunity--of anonymity revealed at least three students who were most comfortable writing in a poetic mode. It might be argued that the mask provided by anonymity was not trusted enough by these students, and so they opted for a lyrical--rather than personal-- voice and vision. Anyone opposed to anonymous writing on pedagogical, never mind ethical, grounds might also point out that Document #4 could have been written under the writer's name. There is nothing remotely transgressive or shameful in its content.

Neither personal narrative nor reader response to the question of racial identity and identification, Document #4 is an "ode" meditating on and mediating the sense of "blame" all "white" people carry in the invisible knapsack of their historical privilege. The gender of the writer is indeterminable. The voice speaking to us is operatively androgynous and striving for a vatic, yet thoroughly embodied and complicit, presence as its "I" (anonymously "all of us" "faceless") walks alone, yet encompasses an ultimate constitutional sense of "We" the people in order to form a more perfect union "embrace" an existential "darkness that now covers us all." I thought it brilliant and recall celebrating its explicit insistence that "Black" is the color of human consciousness; on its call for colorblindness given the mortal darkness we all must bear.

My notes suggest that, witting or not, this text is tuned into a hermeneutics of "reconstruction" rather than one of "suspicion" about Self-Other relations. Its sincerity is so thoroughgoing it creates a powerful

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sense of an opposing cynicism about racial harmony. I believe the authenticity of its cathartic progressivism arises not in spite of but precisely because of the anonymous function, and is as palpable as that of earlier documents on sex and sexuality, whose cathartic parody was unequivocally transgressive. In preparing the order of documents for class discussion, I could not but help follow its empathic vision with another "creative" attempt, but one that operates at the sincerely antipathetic end of rhetorical pathos.

Document #5: Praying for Racism

This next document concentrates all of one's suspicions of anonymity as a haven for hateful cowards. This "prayer" acts in the same way that the white hood of the Klan has to conceal hatred under the mask of a twisted Christianity.

To the Big Man Upstairs,

I am writing this letter because I really need your help. You see, the problem is that I am sick of living in a place where everyone around me is either Black, Asian, or Puerto Rican. I don't think it is fair for them to drive me from my home. I want to know why these people are allowed to take our jobs, steal our money, and go to our schools.

Come on, why did you even create them anyway? All they do is cause trouble. They kill, steal, cheat, and lie- just to name a few. If that isn't bad enough, they stand around with their hands out begging for more. Don't they get enough?

I am so sick of all these minorities running my town. Just look at their area- it makes the whole city look like a dump. Then they have the nerve to walk out into the street without even looking. We should start giving community service awards to the people who hit the most.

Look, all I'm asking for is a little help on your part. What do you say big guy? It wouldn't be that difficult for you to think up a disease that would get rid of them and end our misery. So, can you do me a little favor?

Thanks in advance--I'll owe you one.

Sincerely,

A Devoted Believer Downstairs

I recall that the linkage of religious devotion to white supremacy in this mock letter to "God" stunned the class, particularly since we had had just marveled over the spiritual spectrum of Document #4: over its sense of "white" as a reddening, browning, and blackening toward some greater awakening of responsibility. (If I had thought of it then, I might have typed out the lyrics and played the song by Johnny Cash, "Man in Black," for comparison to the writer's sense of aloneness in service to a greater sense of community.)

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Exceeding the sexually transgressive documents we have seen, Document #5's of racial identification opens up what we commonly mean by a *taboo* subject. By combining religious praise with racial hate speech, this profane letter of prayer--anti-epistle, really--is transgressive in the sense generally used by religious believers: it "sins" against the law of love thy neighbor as thy self. Lacking only "nigger" and other ethnic slurs to drive home its emotionally and politically divisive point, it is a scary reminder that the heterodoxical discourse of such online hate groups as "The World Church of the Creator" is real, is binding, is *doctrinal*.

My notes show that my first question to the class was originally: "How should the Big Man Upstairs answer this Devoted Believer in White Supremacy"? Given the class' stunned silence, my journal shows that I extemporized, grasping at the rationale I had supplied to the class from *The Day America Told the Truth*. I asked instead: "Do you believe that the writer is *really expressing* what he/she believes about people who are "other" than "white"? Or do you think that the writer is impersonating a white supremacist in order to provoke a reaction from us?'

My notes showed an interesting mix of horror and outrage from some class members --that it didn't matter whether the writer was trying on a persona or not--and a more tempered reaction from others: we all know racism is out there; if you ask for it, you'll get it, since anonymity protects it." "This is very bad shit," one particularly outspoken female student concluded. Another woman said: "The only way this could come out is through anonymous writing. But what good does it do us, now that it's out?" That set off a discussion about keeping a lid on hate speech or letting it out. I said that not only anonymity protects this kind of speech, but the U.S. Constitution does as well. Several class members shook their heads, as if in disbelief.

I weighed in with some of the ongoing debates over free speech. Some of us take the position that such speech, and such groups should be outlawed, their ability to write and speak in public banned. This was clearly a violation of our Constitutional guarantee that loads the freedoms of religion, assembly and speech together into one very complex and dense legal decree. At the other end of the absolutist spectrum, some of us argue that corrosive as it is, such racial hate speech needs to be out and in the open, lest it fester and grow under repression.

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I told the class that I was a Civil Libertarian in this regard, and that crying out "Fire" in a crowded theater was clearly speech that could cause physical harm and that it was not so much "speech" but tantamount to an "action." The Supreme Court had ruled on such speech and found it in violation of our rights to free speech. Similarly, writing "nigger" on an African-American Church door, or scratching Nazi and its identifying swastika in a Jewish cemetery, was a violation of free speech and a punishable crime. There was a spectrum of "injurious" speech, however, that was in fact protected by the Constitution, and that "fiery speech" was different than the speech that screamed "Fire!" Like it or not, this letter to one person's sense of God was protected by our freedom of speech, and my take on it was: Now that it's out in the community of this class, what do we do with it? What can it teach us; what can we teach its writer?

I found it impossible to get down everything said and explored during the discussion of this document. My teaching journal is also of little help as I was trying to cover the entire class discussion, not just individual documents. One observation I made was that *every one*-- all ten students-- participated in the discussion. That means that the writer--whoever he or she was--was comfortable enough with the immunity provided by anonymity to discuss the document. Obviously, that writer in his/her role as face-to-face, public speaker did not reveal his/her identity by defending the sentiments in this document. I can only conclude that within the well-reasoned position of several students that emerged during the discussion-- that racists exist and that tolerating, rather than repressing, them was the ultimate "Christian" response--one could find our "Devoted Believer Downstairs."

In presenting the opportunity of anonymity on the first day of class, I had been careful about what I called standards and practices. I suggested that writers mix fonts and sizes of text from document to document. I urged them to strive for gender neutrality or androgyny, particularly since there were only two males in the class. I also underscored the importance of participation in discussion of all our reading and writing and reading--named and unnamed. 15% of their grade was based on class discussion--on talk, on being there in speech--and that covered their talk about anonymous writing that was itself, paradoxically, "ungradeable." Besides, I said, with such a small class, anyone who remains silent is liable to be identified, rightly or wrongly, with the writer of a particular document. I think all these reminders and urgings motivated and fascinated the students. Between students' invisibility as anonymous writers and their

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visibility as named writers and as speakers in class, we had a very complex circulation of disclosure and concealment, I said. It was up to them how their intertwined roles as persons--and personaes--worked out over the course of the semester.

Looking back at Document #5 now, six years later, I remain puzzled by the answer to the question I asked the class. Is this writing an act of impersonation--of performing and in some sense authorizing what the writer imagined to be the role script of a white supremacist? Or is it a true reflection of a student's ideological beliefs who took seriously the opportunity of rhetorical immunity provided by anonymity? In terms of the idea of "authenticity" is the apparent sincerity expressed by this "Devoted Believer" in "God" as some "Big" White Redeemer of a Master Race any less authentic if, in fact, the writing is an imposture? If Document #5 is a cynical performance--that is, if the writer is privately quite liberal in his/her positions on racial and religious tolerance--then what does this tell us about the writer's "expressivist" intention to get "personal" and to achieve an "authentic" voice?

It is quite possible, as we saw in Document #19 above, that the writer is responding creatively to the methodological mandate of the "cathartic process" of anonymity as described by Patterson and Kim. That writer's satirical imagination was given free reign under anonymity, free enough, we saw, that the sincere/cynical binary does not--can not--on one level of expressivist premises--hold. I had said that this hybridity of expressivist motive and constructivist effects produced a parody of anonymous catharsis in Document #19.

In the present Document #5, I am wondering whether or not the writer isn't also exercising the parodic or satiric side of the imagination, as if to say:

> Listen to this bigot. I know you recognize this voice and script of the hateful hypocrite. Remember how easily "white" religious belief and white supremacist hatred can serve one another. "I" --the writer--do not believe this; the "I" of this person speaking here is not "Me" but just between your metonymic I and mine there is an anonymous "We" the People who believe and speak this way. What matters who--you, me, anyone--is speaking? This letter, for all I know, could be written by too many of Us.

Once the trope or turn of expressivist authenticity is opened outward by the centrifugal, social force of anonymous writing, its social constructivity along lines of sincerity and cynicism, of authority and appropriation, and of mimicry and masquerade, realizes new kinds of spin. Thus, as with the performative

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hybridity we saw in some of the texts in "advanced" anonymous writing on sex and sexuality, Document #5 is difficult to identify as either a text of: personal expression, social construction, or something of both in terms of racial identification. It is this both/and quantity of private and public discourse, the density of absent identity and of community presence that is carried in anonymity's invisible knapsack.

Document #6: The Voice of the Native American (M)Other

In this document we see one more example of impersonation, as well as a return to the "vatic," yet decidedly embodied, voice of a mother keening for her child. Document #5 calls forth--"provokes"-- the vatic voice and vengeful vortex of "God" to answer a profanely racist prayer (enacting a terribly sardonic twist on the Old Testament Psalms which beseech an unpredictable God to deliver His Chosen People from their oppressors). Document #6, by contrast, is vatic in that it impersonates the sacred bond between a "red" mother and her "red" children. In the voice of an American Indian, a mother in her Mother Country keening over the loss of her son's cultural and personal identity under the anonymizing force of "white" civilization.

> They have taken my children away, the government. They say that my children will become civilized. What is this civilized, I do not know civilized (pg. 304).
> The pain hurts me so. I can't sleep, I can't eat, I can cry no more. My body is numb and I've stopped talking. People say that I am turning into a crazy woman. I think I am. They have taken my children away. I hold my son's hair in my hands, they cut his braids off, he has white man's hair now. I can't hear any voices no more, no children playing, no laughing, no singing. It is a quiet place now. It is death and I am like a dead woman. I close my eyes and I see my children boarding a train, I see their eyes., so lost, so afraid, this haunts me. Their eyes do not leave my head. The government says they will be better off. They will learn many things. They will grow to be better people--they will become white people. Who is the government to say how my children should be raised. What about, me, I am their mother. What about. their culture, who they are, where they have come from. What about the future, the Indian future? They turn my children to white people. I spit on the government for what they have done. They had no right to take my babies. There are no voices now, no laughing, no singing, no nothing. They leave me a dead woman--as dead as my husband, father, brothers--"red" men, their red blood on the snow. Red as the blood of the white man.

My love of poetry has perhaps forced the notion of a "vatic" voice into greater prominence than a literary analyst would accept. The anonymous voices we have heard are full of pathos, bathos, are ironic, sardonic, and some might say *idiotic* (and they would correct, given the literal meaning of "idiot", from idiom, meaning one's "private sense or meaning" making idiots of us all. But *vatic*? These documents don't have anything like the prophetic reach of Keats, Whitman, Dickinson or of Yeats, Eliot, Auden.... But the

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etymological density of *vatic*, comprising sight and madness, prophecy and frenzy does fit into or behind anonymity's mask.

As in Document #4's lyrical yet philosophical treatment of humanity's shared darkness, in Document #6 we see the multiple exigency of anonymity as a rhetorical function. The Indian mother is unnamed; her unnamed children are taken away by anonymous bureaucracies of white civilization who will ban their language, change their names, erase their identities; her anonymous kith and kin lie dead and bleeding in the snow; and the writer has assumed this persona under the prompt that one write anonymously about a significant issue of racial identity or identification. The rhetorical density of anonymity as an exigent situation of impersonation is both subjectively transparent and objectively opaque: we see and hear through the writer's self-concealment the disclosure of an Other's suffering. The anonymous antipathy-- and profound alienation-- of Document #5 is countered by the anonymous empathy of #6.

One might seize upon the writer's opening paragraph, and the reader response reference--"(pg.304)" -- as a howlingly false note. Quoting three sentences from an essay in Cyrus' *Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender*, when the mode and mood requires a pure "expressive" form of discourse, is a Personal plus Textual miscue, ruining the performance, one might say. The writer's provocation of what Bakhtin would call an "internally persuasive discourse" is betrayed by an amateurish and inauthentic disclosure of "authoritative discourse."

Without going into an inter- and intra-textual bender, I would castigate both the creative writing teacher and the critical writing teacher whose respective devotion to one kind of monological purity or another blinds them to this writer's attempt at *dialogical imagination*. The writer is trying to telegraph as subtly as possible a very genuine sense of performance to the reader, as if to announce:

> The following sentences are from an essay I read about concerning the fate of the Indians at Wounded knee. This essay quoted an unnamed Indian Mother's cry that was translated into English and used by another writer for her critical purposes. For my creative (and critical) purposes, I am appropriating the voice/image of that anonymous Native American Person because I "hear" and "see" what else she might have cried out to the world, or inside her head, "crazy" with anger and grief. I do not claim to have invented this Person. I am only trying to imagine--to impersonate--her suffering in continuing her speech.

This, any way, was the way I approached this document in class discussion, as I was particularly keen at the time on hybrid textuality and discursive impurity. I thus found this piece of writing to be a fascinating exemplar.

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My notes show that I was also trying to get the class to understand the "vatic" or prophetic quality of this impersonation compared to the voice of the "Devoted Believer Downstairs." The idea that the voice in that writing was also prophetic—an equally authentic way of seeing and hearing a significant issue of racial identity politics—had the students pretty much shaking their heads in disbelief, cognitive dissonance, emotional overload—it is difficult to know or to transmit to a reader outside one teacher-researcher's way of holding and beholding the students in one's class.

My motive in treating these documents this way, however, and my overall compositional goal for having students write anonymously, did seem to register more clearly. They seemed to appreciate the fact that these writings were community property over which we could all communicate, and even use—for purposes of contestation or communion— in the longer essays of personal plus textual research to which we would sign our names. Keep in mind, too, that along with these essays distributed as common property, I distributed my own written responses to these documents, so that everyone would have not only their own and everyone else's unnamed writing, but would have one named writer responding to what he saw and heard in those anonymous voices and visions.

The last four documents took up two class sessions. I might have saved Document #5 above to include it in this group, but was more interested to use it as poetic and vatic contrast to the empathic yearning evidenced in the other four documents. Document #7 resembles several documents of the first group in that it continues a yearning for a "yellow" Other, and attempts to serve as a warning about the pervasive politics of white supremacy. Documents 8-10 are less about yearning in hooks' direct sense, than they are burning in their role scripts of "white" racial identity and identification.

Given the white supremacist voice we heard in Document #5, it might be said that any positive or reconstructive sense of "yearning" in hooks' sense is sardonic and perverse. But I think she kept her definition deliberately wide open to permit identity mobility, impersonation, and transgression. I keep going back to her exhortations in *Teaching to Transgress*, wherein she writes forcefully about getting to the authority of students' experience. If anonymity does help toward the goal of teaching to transgress by getting to some of the communal sources authorizing "white" identity, (what she calls "a pervasive politic

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of white supremacy" in *Yearning*), then we can't suddenly turn away from the discovery that there is a taboo "yearning" for white supremacy.

Composition-Rhetoric has its own split pedagogical identity along these lines. Social constructivists often write with an air of "academic" supremacy over expressivists. Composition should be about constructing competencies, of learning to write using the rules and tools of the academy: authors and sources—primary and secondary. The expressivist approach believes that composition should be about *yearning to write*, of opening up innate powers of curiosity using the roles and tales from one's personal experience. That both approaches depend upon the pervasive discourse of the "social" doesn't in the least grant a superior or supreme stature to the constructivists. Both approaches also traffic in non-fictional writing. Writing as a mode of learning is going on in both approaches. But which approach best fits into hooks' definition of yearning as we move to these last four documents?

"Yearning," hooks writes, "is the word that best describes a common psychological state shared by many of us, cutting across boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice (27). Both fit, because compositionists should be devoted to putting both approaches together in the service of learning to yearn and yearning to learn through writing. This both/and, rough and ready sense of textual and performative hybridity means that identity politics cannot be ignored by the expressivists nor secured by the constructivists.

Once finished with these documents, completing our final round of anonymous writings on race consciousness, I looked around the table and realized that half of us were yearning toward white supremacy and half were yearning toward that color blinded and blended darkness of human identity itself. This was a community of writing worth learning about. What matter who was writing? Did the writers identify with each other or with their texts?

Document #7: Reader Response and Writing for Discovery

In this document we return to the mode of reader response in which a writer reminds us of just how important authors are. As a form of reminiscence, this writer represents the case for a social constructivist approach to teaching composition, with its claim to a greater sense of author-ity as a non-solipsistic, historical consciousness of claims and warrants already received and responded to by a tradition of other

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nameless readers long before and long after this particular response. And, to repeat: Given the power of

precedence which social constructivism gives to authorship, what matters, outside of grades and credit

identification, who is summarizing and reminding us of John Hershey's important work?

THE NISEI SCANDAL

John Hersey's *Behind Barbed Wire* positively shocked me. I am not proud to admit my
ignorance of this piece of World War II history, but it is the god's honest truth, I was
completely oblivious to this scandal.

It is hard to swallow that our government again allowed such barbaric treatment of
another class of the human race within our own shores. It was an outright defiance of
everything the Constitution stands for. Actually, considering the history of this country's
treatment of the black class, I don't know why I am so shocked. Perhaps it is because
our high school history books have given us so little, if any, attention to this piece of
WWII history.

Over one hundred thousand Japanese American citizens were sentenced to
concentration camps within the U.S. during WWII in a half-assed attempt to protect our
country from any further attacks or espionage aimed at the homeland. Many of the
incarcerated Japanese American citizens had family members who were part of the US
troops risking their lives overseas. Nonetheless, if an individual was from the Japanese
American class of people in selected sections of the country they were sentenced to a
concentration camp, stripped of their homes, their worldly possessions, their dignity,
and maybe, some part of their "identity."

Led by an obsessive Army Lieut. John L. DeWitt and his cronies, "The War
Relocation Authority," one of the worst crimes in American history was committed.
They actually wrote the laws as they went along to justify their actions. Furthermore,
upon releasing the evacuees, our country still remained inhumane. Absolutely
astonishing and frightening stuff.

This document returns us to the nagging question of anonymity's necessity, particularly when anonymous

response or reaction is linked to the generic academic mode of commentary. A very slender case can be

made for using the mask of namelessness in the writer's admission of ignorance of Japanese internment

camps. The writer is "not proud" of being "oblivious " of American malfeasance, yet we can not sense that

she/he is really ashamed, particularly when a legitimate case can be made, as the writer suggests, for

historical disinformation and noninformation--censorship by omission--in public school textbooks.

The fact is that many students, as we have seen, either do not trust or believe in the

immunity/opporutnity offered by anonymity. Others, it would seem, do not have anything personally

"significant" to speak about in terms of racial identity. Being "white, middle class, etc.," is an ideological

norm that is so effective, I believe, that it makes for a sense of identity--of literal self-sameness--which can

not imagine a sense of difference as a source of economic, political or psychological discontent. But the

writer needs to come up with something to write about. Having left open the anonymous reader response

option, I surmise that students can more easily avoid or evade the politics of their own identities or the

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discourses underwriting their role scripts. I respected this option now, and I did then (even though I would eliminate the reader response option in future anonymous experiments in the interest of expanding the possible instances of impersonation or transgression.)

My notes show that I commented on this writer's revelation of American evil in the form of racial identification. I complimented the writer's sense that a "white" structure of identification made it as easy to stereotype suspicion and fear of "yellow" and "slant eyed" citizens, as it did "black ones. I did point out that the writer's use of "class"--as in "another class of human being" and "the black class" was interesting and revealing. The suggestion in this use of class as in "classification" was that "the white class", of which the writer was a member, had the power and privilege of classification.

Two students made much of the writer's sense that this internment of Japanese-Americans affected their sense of identity--that part of it had been stripped. One made a connection to this writer's reference to a loss of identity loss and the writer of the Indian mother's "cry from the heart." A good discussion opened up on the subject of racial oppression as not just a "black thing," as one student phrased it. It seemed to be "a red, yellow, and brown, thing." I reminded them of the anonymous writer who wrote "I Walk Alone" and his/her attempt to displace the supremacy of whiteness and return us all into, ironically, a common sense of our darkness.

I concluded by saying that for the writer responding to Hershey's book, his/her intellectual discovery as a reader that the Unites States Government had identified a portion of its citizenry as Other, then alienated them physically and socially, was a personal plus political discovery. I said it didn't matter if the significance of this writer's identification of racial consciousness was not overtly *personal* since it was clear that the writer's *intellectual discovery* and disclosure of its significance was powerful and useful to us all. The writer states that she/he wasn't surprised to discover this sorry story as part of American history given the alienated history of "black" people. Yet it was clear to me, at least, that the writer's own whiff of alienation upon discovering that a democratic government and later, those educational authorities responsible for constructing students' sense of history, might be complicit in preempting a truly democratic sense of empathy and solidarity based not on "white" identity politics but on, ideally, *a politics of our common, genetically anonymous, humanity.*

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Given the revelations awaiting the class in the next three documents, I think I was trying to gird myself as much as them with some rather shaky and increasingly suspect liberal pieties which I pushed pretty hard in 1995: reading and writing about the "politics of identity" I exhorted them, should place a higher profile on the meaning and action of "empathy" and "compassion," of "solidarity" and "community." Six years later, I am out of work under a President elected not by a popular majority of the people, but by a conservatively appointed Supreme Court who mindlessly repeats his campaign oxymoron: "Compassionate Conservatism."

Six years later I am reading a book by George Lipsitz titled *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Any yet, despite Lipsitz's convincing expansion of McIntosh's "invisible knapsack" into an total "economy" of white privilege, including the academic commodification of "identity politics," which I so eagerly bought into as empancipatory for my "white" students, I think my pedagogical use of anonymity easily tapped into what he calls the "unconscious racism" of white people. It is unconscious, Lipsitz claims, because of the historic linkage between property and whiteness. Actually, the next three documents strongly suggest that there's no need to recapitulate Freudian dynamics for this racism. It is quite near many white people's discursive surface.

That is the lesson of the race survey in *The Day America Told the Truth*. Americans need only the guarantee of anonymity and they will tell the truth about the politics of identity. That I then had these same students take that survey and write about the results in terms of racial identification in order to compare themselves with, and *identify themselves* with, the thousands of anonymous Americans who also took that survey, was intended to experiment with the anonymous function "squared"--to square ten students' anonymous identifications of race with a much larger community of "white" America. I had no idea at the time I presented the last three documents of the first round of anonymous writing, that 50% of these white students would, by the logic of the survey, be considered "racist." My immediate challenge was to square the clear evidence in some of the previous documents of a compassionate impersonation of the Other in order to educate for empathy with these three documents.

Like the letter from a "Devoted Believer Downstairs," these three writers were either impersonating the unconscious role script of America's pervasive "White Supremacy," or they were expressing a genuinely

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personal--and "possessive investment"-- in "white" alienation and hatred. My class notebooks show that I seized upon the idea I had in response to Document #19 in my 501 Class involving a parody of anonymous sexual transgression. Perhaps these racist writings were "experimental"; the writers were trying on the persona of the white racist or supremacist. Perhaps they were playing with fiery speech, impersonating hate.

If there is no politically correct dialogical place for hate, anonymity is a monological space for its projection (as well as for the self's yearning for connection and communion.) I also reconnected the idea of McIntosh's "invisible knapsack": that white privilege was carried in it, but so was the fear and hatred of others who represented the opening of that privilege. Thus, the invisibility of the anonymous writer and the idea of white privilege being invisible to those of us who wear whiteness as easily as clothes so favored and familiar that we forget they cover our nakedness and its construction of shame enables what is otherwise an unconscious sense of supremacy (and the suspicion that accompanies all superiority) to come into view.

In other words, I did my best to "accept" these writings for what they clearly seem to be: uniformly authentic expressions of racist hatred. At the same time, I used them, if memory serves, to confront head on the socially constructed nature of racism, that it was not innate, that its underwriting by familial and communal forces could be over-written and re-written. (Or, to return to clothing and metaphors of cloaking and covering, the knapsack can be cast off, the color of mastery finally seen in its invisibility to be unsuitable, and the immunity of anonymity--its invisible nakedness paradoxically responsible for a change in one's moral wardrobe.

As a performance of identity, the racist role script could be reexamined and recomposed. Depending on how the community of the classroom handled them, the writers of these scripts could decide within the same secrecy that created them, to never replay them in any context--public or private; the last word in the composition of any one's identity was never said, written, or done until the body that mobilized it had itself decomposed. But when you read these, the first questions that will come to mind are rather more pedagogical: Would I want to teach this class? What can I do with these compositions in light of teaching writing? The subject is writing, after all, and not identity politics, right? Is it possible to hold a class in which persons of "color" are in possession of these investments in white supremacy? Let's look at the

documents and close out our analysis with some extended reflection on some possible answers to these questions.

Document #8: What "WE" *Really* Believe about Affirmative Action?

> I think that the passages we read about different races and cultures were primarily focused on minorities. Very seldom was there an article about a white man and if there was it was just about how well that he had it. Right now, statistically, white middle class males are discriminated against more than any other nationality. Now that there have been all of these minority quotas recently passed by congress, workplaces and schools need to meet these numbers and it leaves the white male population standing in the background. Workplaces should hire on the ability and efficiency of the worker, not their ethnic background or the color of their skin. I kind of think that some stuff that they do for minorities is almost unfair to white people. I feel that there are a lot of things that minorities can say or do and get away with, but if a white person does it is being racist. For example, the black Ms. America pageant. There is no way whites could get away with having a white Ms. America pageant. Also, there is no white history month to recognize the developers of this country and the people who made it what it is today.

Reader response mode turns instantly into a personal reaction of the embattled white male now familiar in a changed and highly charged landscape of diverse feminist, ethnicist, and nationalist discourses that appeared to be silent, even non-existent a generation ago. The continuing preponderance of white males in control of legislative government, industry, and media would seem to be more of last waltz to this young white (man?). Or perhaps this is a white woman defending men of her color, aware that feminism and its original impetus in affirmative action policies has both benefited her identity space and endangered her embattled counterpart?

What I find most dramatic about this text--and most useful as an expressive opening for a more complex textual construction involving academic research for the class as a whole--is the resistance to the readings. The investment in white privilege, the capaciousness of that knapsack is seen as wholly earned, achieved without any denial of access or opportunity to those bound by an other color. This resistance is deep and ingrained, almost required if we think of identity itself as purely a set of individually acquired characteristics that are now being unjustly appropriated and redistributed to those who didn't create or accumulate them. Attached to the investment in whiteness is a vast capital flow whose freshets are political and cultural as much as they are economic. No exhortation to the contrary, even when it might pry open the eyes of the invisible watcher/writer, is going to easily deactivate ideological circuitry hardwired and strapped to one's back.

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The last two examples the writer uses are genuine, if disingenuous, logical yet irrational, serving better to prove the very point she/he is trying to disprove: that whiteness is not a source of privilege or a power but one of historical grievance, one on the verge of erasure. Never mind that the Ms. America Pageant and all its local precedents were devoted to and maintained an all-white flesh parade until the 1960's. Never mind that "white history" doesn't need the sop of a month when it can tap the sap of some two millennia. (My memory is returning as I return to these documents. I was careful but ample in the historical heat and light I brought to my critique of these documents.) Whereas Document #3 uses the figure of "Daphne" to dramatize the retreat of whiteness from a molesting minority horde, but in the end rescues itself by counseling some form of solidarity through communication, Document #8 uses the desperate of trope of reversing the mythic fortunes. Daphne is chasing down Apollo, God of light and Reason, reducing him to darkness, obscurity, oppression—aiee, the rapine of reverse discrimination!

I did not become this sardonic in handling this first (and second overall) example of white supremacy coming to the fore under the cathartic process of anonymity. I was vehement but not inclement. It turned out that other members of the class took up the cause and responsibility of empathy. Class notes quote one student saying: "The writer seems to have no sense of history at all—white, black, red, brown, yellow, or green. You'd think the discovery that there's a history of everyone and everything, but some of it never gets taught, would make us humble, like that writer about the Japanese internment—amazed not angry." Silence. One long enough that it seemed best to move on to Document #9.

Document #9: The National Sickness with No Pedagogical Cure?

"ANOTHER VERSION"

I'll admit it. I am a White Supremist. My father was one, my grandfather was one, and so were my great grandfathers before them. They were good men, every one of them. They knew what an honest days' work meant. They knew what it meant to be a proud, responsible, God fearing American.
But the damn niggers and the 'Ricans and now the gooks. They are milking us dry while they are taking advantage of us. It is no small wonder why this country has such a huge deficit. Hanging around the welfare office with their eight plus babies. Whining "I can't work, I have no one to tend to my babies during the day." By the time they leave, they've perked up though, with their supplies of welfare checks and food stamps. Mind you, paid for with our hard earned money.
Then drive off in their shiny new Cadillacs. They got their tinted windows rolled up, and their air conditioners on, AND THEIR RAP MUSIC BLASTING! My pickup starts to vibrate when I pull up beside of them.

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And the black boys nowadays all belong to those gangs. They spend their time heisting drugs and gun money by breaking into our homes and our stores, and by "trying' to harrass good honest people on street corners by sliding some dirty old rag over our windshields, while poking their noses and their long fingers into our wallets.

The Cubans and the 'Ricans are hauling all the drugs into this country. They're the ones pushing them in the schoolyards on poor innocent children. Last year I had to pull my girl and boy out of one school and put them in another school on the other side of town. They told me what was really going on in that first school. Thank God, I'd taught them right. They got no help from their teachers, they said their teachers feared for their lives.

And now we got those slant-eyed gooks opening restaurants and stores in every other part of town. I'll bet they're hauling in drugs too.

We have got to put an end to all of this and soon. Wake up America! We have no time to waste, I've been noticing their attitudes are getting more uppity everyday. I just don't know where they are getting it from. We are certainly giving them everything they need.

Is this a parody of white supremacist racism? Is it another ironic impersonation that perfectly levels all the real Archie Bunker's of the world at the same time that it deftly cavils with the serious intentions of an instructor obsessed with identity politics? Is the writer using the mask of anonymity to fulfill an assignment and a rationale that headlined a methodology of catharsis, and in desperation to come up with something "authentic"--short of attempting to capture some galling, bewildering sense of the problem and its scope in "true" personally significant terms--decided to socially construct and impersonate a bigot while leaving plenty of ironic clues that it is all travesty: both the supremacist attitude and the writing requirement? Yes. I want to say yes.

The final paragraph is particularly revealing as a winking at the reader, as if to say, "Are you with me reader? *I* would not identify myself as a white supremacist. But the metonymic "I" I have created is my way of identifying the type for an interested community." This becomes all the more plausible when we review the clever equivocation of the title. If I am correct, if anonymity creates this double mask-- "Another," or even an animad-"Version" for writers, so that the goal of catharsis beyond the expected parameters of expressive significance is generally elusive and often and especially allusive not to the self but to an almost unimaginable otherness in emotional and social terms, then the satirical imagination is to be prized for its own sake. Of course the pragmatic instructor could weigh in with this suggestion: "Why go to all the trouble and risk of anonymity and simply ask students to impersonate a bigot, or a slave, or a dying native American, etc.?"

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My answer is that I wasn't after impersonation or the satirical imagination. I was after some privately held convictions or prejudices whose public consequences are clear to anyone who believes that the reason racism or sexism or classism exists and persists is because identity itself is in constant flux, a barely stable consortium of contending voices and authorities. And of course, there is always the possibility that this document is what the writer *really* believes. Either way, whatever the truth of this text's expression or social construction, its hybridity and performative fluidity should be of interest to those who weigh the benefits and drawbacks of one approach to teaching composition over an other.

It is also important to remember that these documents are community property—both for talking over and writing over in the named documents they will produce under a pedagogy of double-voiced discourse. So perhaps it doesn't matter who is speaking and why, under what degree of authenticity or performativity. What matters is who is listening and for what purpose. Anonymous writing, because it reduces the author and writer both to an other, is keen to the reality of an audience and/or a readership as totally other as well. What matters who is listening or reading? But if someone—anonymous, endlessly second person singular and plural that You are—is listening/reading then the text that "I" have become is all that matters.

Composition: putting the anonymity of You and I, of Us, together again in the image of a text.

Document #10: Admitting Racism or Opposing Race-Based Admissions?

"You have no respect for me just because I'm black." "You won't hire me because I'm black." "You won't let me get into your college just because I'm black." These are phrases which strike a strong feeling in me. I have a problem with people who blame other people, especially whites, for all of the bad things which have happened in their life. I don't see how affirmative action can right the wrongs of the past. How can it better our society today?

So you didn't get into the college that you had your heart set on. Do you blame it on the white man who is head of admissions? Maybe you blame it on the great grandson of the man who owned your great grandfather. It's probably due to the fact that your SAT scores -weren't as good as those of your peers, regardless of their color. Maybe you didn't have any extracurricular activities.

You probably wouldn't have this problem if affirmative action had placed quotas at the college of your dreams. (Unless your dream college was UNH where they'll take any minority in order to diversify the "most white college in America.") So you are now attending "Quota U." Are you proud that you got into this college? Chances are there are probably students who did not get into Quota U. who have better GPA's and SAT scores than you. They're sitting at home after their classes at a community college only because a set of numbers kept them out of their dream college. I ask you, do you think this is fair? I sure as hell don't.

Document #10: an anonymous "white" "I"--male or female--addressing an equally anonymous "You"--a "black" male or female. The "I" is angry, indignant, and despite its rabidly unfair, vulgar reduction of "affirmative action" to "Qouta U", it is attempting some kind of dialogical reality by imagining what this "black" You is thinking and saying about an *affirmative* "action" that was created in response to the *negative action against* and *reaction* to "blackness" as an identity and a legacy in history.

This text opened a discussion into how the wrongs of the past 300 hundred years can be redressed today. When will equality of opportunity be a reality and how will we do it in a colorblind way? Is affirmative action really "reverse discrimination"? Whose responsibility is it to create educational opportunity for all of us? Does the quest for diversity in a university really deny certain "white" students an opportunity they once enjoyed when there was no diversity (in other words, total discrimination and segregation, a short generation ago?)

I asked all these questions. I had scribbled them down in my class book. I exhorted the class to use this document and these questions that it is underwriting in anger and research the answers if that is where their signed essays should take them. The emotion in this writing is totally legitimate, I said, but where is the information which supports the source of its reasoning? Is there information that reduces this document to an unfair and uninformed analysis of the reality of affirmative action? I said it was my sense that blind rage rather than focused reflection controlled this writing, but that that was all right. True believers against affirmative action are as socially constructed as those who truly believe that if it is eliminated we will see the reason why it was implemented in the first place: racism is a negative action with continuing consequences. Is the writer's rage against affirmative action, I wondered, or is it against a racism that made such action finally necessary?

It did not seem to me that this writer was impersonating or parodying anyone. In this case, anonymity was unmasking and unmuffling an identifiable sense among "white" people that it is not their privileges or power being taken away by such policies as affirmative action, but their *rights*. I said I didn't see it this way and told them a story of my friend Gregory, a black man whom I shared many classes with at The University of Massachusetts in 1983-4 when we were both working toward our secondary teacher certification.

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We became very close, discussing all issues of education, and comparing our appointments as student teachers in the Boston Public School system. We gave each other encouragement and ideas. We were both aghast at some of the conditions we encountered, and amazed at how few black teachers there were—"a few pepper specks in a big old salt shaker," he said, and I couldn't but agree with both the reality and the power of the metaphor.

When we had our certificates and went out to seek the two jobs that opened in the Boston Public Schools we both got interviews. Gregory got one of the jobs. I didn't get either. One white administrator who I had interviewed called me in a clear violation of policy to tell me that I had to accept the realities of affirmative action. He said it with a half conspiratorial, half sympathetic slant in his voice for the white guy left out in the cold. I told him, with tears of indignation or dignity springing into my eyes and voice— it is still hard for me to trace out, that if he were referring to my friend Greg, or to the Hispanic woman who got the other post, then I had let him know that I was supremely happy for both of them. That perverse as it might sound, the superior candidates, the best people overall, given all things considered, got the job. "Hmmm, well. yes...good luck in your future, etc, young man." And that was it.

I told the class I still felt that way after ten years, even more so. That I was honored to lose out to those two people; that we needed them not only for their training at my—at our—institution—but they needed their identities in a school population vastly underrepresented by non-white American citizens. I didn't feel wronged at all. If I lost out on that teaching job because of my white skin, then it was nothing compared to the centuries of lost opportunity for Greg's black skinned predecessors. I felt ennobled, not negated, enraptured, not enraged.

"What do you think?" I asked them. "Is that a legitimate way to feel about affirmative action and quotas? Should my attitude be a model for how all whites should feel about the issue?" The silence was long. And I'll never forget the two responses that finally came. One student said: "No." Another student then answered: "Yes." And with that neat line drawn down the middle of our discussion, I initiated the second round of writings on race: Anonymous writings on the anonymous survey "Are You a Racist?"

Conclusion: Roads Not Taken and the Possibility of "Anonymity Squared"

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Perhaps I should have started and ended with that second round of documents, particularly given the anonymous convergence of 10 American white students at The University of New Hampshire with thousands of Americans, white and black, whose anonymity was guaranteed when they answered the same survey. The sense of community --of alienation--or something of both they felt in writing up their reactions to these results is ultimately more telling as justification for using anonymity than what I have presented above.

The doubling or squared effect of anonymity--between local student discourse and national citizen discourse; between academic and socially constructed approaches to significant issues of our American experience and what we personally, privately--*really*-- feel and believe about them; between our sense of identity and our sense of community as a text open to all--lent an impersonal, objective, and *composing* atmosphere to the class. We took it in stride that half of us were, if the survey was an accurate measure, "racists." I think this finding provoked the class into a stronger sense of what the "politics" part of identity really means.

After that round of papers, the last document I will present below showed up in the papers on gender identity. It is, I think, an attempt to come to terms with happened in that second round of race papers. I reproduce it here to suggest the use of anonymity as an ongoing evaluating tool that reveals for the class, as well as the teacher, the personal and social--the total academic- discourse underwriting a composition course throughout the semester. In this way, the exclusive exit document of anonymous evaluation, that last day of identifying what "they" *really* think about us, and more important, about "academic" writing can turn into, and turn us toward, a reasoned reconsideration of the composition of anonymity itself.

ANONYMOUS WRITING

When we talk about the readings on race, in class, all I have to go by and discuss with the group, is what I read. I do not know enough about race and racial issues to go into a big discussion on it. I have a fear and a blindness of the unknown. I live in a life where I see people of all different kinds of races wherever I go, but that is all I can go by, is what I see. I never had the chance to talk with a black person in depth, where I could ask questions about their life and culture and about other things that I am curious about. This is because I do not work with them, live with or near them, or deal with them in my everyday life. I wish I knew more information about different ethnic groups and races, and I wish I knew more people from different ethnic backgrounds.

When I came into this English class I did not know what to expect, especially when I got my book and it said, "Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States." I thought that this class was going to be very confusing to me because I did not know a whole heck of a lot about race, class, and gender. But after we read the sections in the

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book and started to discuss them, I was not confused about the subject as much and I am beginning to enjoy our discussions in class more and more. This class, to what appeared to be boring at first, is not boring at all but actually interesting and makes you think and analyze subjects and topics that you normally would not even give a second thought about because it may not even be apart of your life or our lifestyle.

When we have class discussions, it is interesting to find out what people have to say and think about on the topics that we talk about. Listening to other students views on racial issues, gets me thinking about the topic more and in depth myself. I am amazed that I never even thought about most of the racial issues that we talk about, before, until I came to class and started reading about race and started to read about things that are always happening around me and are a part of life.

But I never took notice or gave a thought about them before because I do not deal with the prejudice and hard life of acceptance that others may feel. But I do know that even after this class is over, I will never be that blind again to the racial issues and things that happen in this world that I was oblivious to before.

I don't know how much love there is in this class compared to the hatred. I guess there's a lot of both in all of us. I never thought we could write and talk about both at the same time., but I think it is best to keep on doing it.

In this document we encounter what I believe hooks means by "yearning" — a desire for the Other, a knowledge of Other. I believe this document unveils and clarifies what Natanson meant by a passion for the Other which the anonymous enclave provides. I believe we have traced this sense of yearning and passion in many of these documents, even those, and perhaps especially those, whose possessive investment in "whiteness" expresses itself as a fear and loathing of racialized Otherness. Aside from the expressive Self-Consciousness of this last document, we begin to see that anonymity is a public shelter for private reflection. Free from the law of the Proper Name and its controlling discourse of Identity, this writer is writing about, reflecting on, the politics of her identity for the first time. Anonymity augments and amplifies the distancing effect of writing, provoking or calling forth a self that might imagine others, desire others, recognizing the blindness of the self and the insight that otherness may in fact underwrite self-expression.

I have a fear and a blindness of the unknown. I live in a life where I see people of all different kinds of races wherever I go, but that is all I can go by, is what I see. I never had the chance to talk with a black person in depth.... I wish I knew more information about different ethnic groups and races, and I wish I knew more people from different ethnic backgrounds.... But I do know that even after this class is over, I will never be that blind again to the racial issues and things that happen in this world that I was oblivious to before.

This is *really* what expressivism is supposed to do—or at least, this is what *anonymous expressivism* can do. It bridges traditional expressivist writing and social constructivist writing as reconfigured and realized in what should be a continuous use of anonymous discourse in teaching composition. This document serves

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as segue to a consideration of whether the documents produced under an anonymous pedagogy fulfils the premises and promises of a "critical pedagogy." After taking stock of 20 documents across two classes, my readers may remain unconvinced that anonymous writing in a composition classroom does what I argued it would do in Section One of this chapter.

In a projected sixth Chapter, titled "Toward an Ethics of Anonymity," I would reproduce the passages from students' formally anonymous course evaluations commenting on the use of anonymity—what they *really think* about anonymous writing. These texts, functions of double voiced discourse, of anonymity squared, might lend greater "authority" to my admittedly nascent claims about the composition of anonymity as a critical pedagogy of prepossessed identity politics and a hopeful, never to be possessed, discourse of community yearning for mediation of self and other.

All that I can do at this point is to ask, once again: *What matters who is writing*? No theory, history, or pedagogy of writing can any longer ignore the composition of anonymity in forming an answer to that question. I can hear the critical, still suspicious reader begin to howl that I am running a composition class, not an anonymous survey counseling service.

My response is that composition is like no other course in the university in that it permits students to cross between the established discourses of their families and home communities, and the emerging discourse communities they encounter at college--never mind, for a moment, the academic discourse communities which certain of us are so worried about as somehow not getting their fair share of student exposure and inculcation.

Composition has the opportunity, and literal *response-ability*, to take on the social and political aspects of the personal and the private as these are re-presented in the hybrid, ever-changing intellectual act of writing. The genderist, feminist, realist, idealist, textualist, and yes, expressivist and constructivist, demands placed upon this single required course places composition instructors-- particularly those who are devoted to using the writing conference-- in a role that is part institutional archivist and part lay therapist. The former *speaks* to and *directs* a student to sources such as the library or the world wide web or to other professors and other courses; the latter *listens* to and connects a student to sources within the student and, if need be, to confidential others. I have had to do this kind of connection countless times--from admissions of homosexuality, to eating disorders, to substance abuse, to rape. Students' own unbidden confidences reveal that many are already using various therapeutic sources both on and off campus.

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I see nothing whatever problematic in students identifying with the ways I identify with and evaluate issues in their anonymous writing. Personal and private issues have clear social and public avenues and outcomes. If their therapeutic character reveals itself under textual representation, then I deal with the textual first and last as an academic matter. Students, not teachers, should be the ones to make the personal/private an academic matter --and vice versa--and they do with surprising frequency. Anonymous writing is simply one more aspect of discourse that, already a part of public interchange, can be made to operate beyond its present use as a largely ceremonial exit document.

Chapter Notes

[1] Anthologies by both Cyrus and Rothenberg are both academic in the depth, and popular in the scope, of the writers and analysts they have chosen for their presentations of identity politics. Please see my Bibliography for information on their books.

[2] 16 students, 8 female, 8 male, were enrolled in an English 501/Advanced Composition course, titled "The Composition of Gender" in the Fall of 1994. Two assignments guaranteeing anonymity, were given to these students, totaling 32 documents (1 missing).

10 students, 8 female, 2 male, were enrolled in an English 401 first year required course in Composition, titled "The Composition of Identity: Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality. Four assignments guaranteeing anonymity, were given to these students, totaling 80 documents.

Because of space limitations I have 10 documents from the 501 course to reflect Seven Emergent Themes that I believe followed directly from the anonymous condition of the writing. I chose only the first 10 of 20 documents from the Race component of the second course. The present scope of this study does not permit a full study of all documents. I have scanned the original documents into the body of this chapter's text. I then cleaned up spelling and grammar errors, but otherwise did not alter the surface features of these texts. For reasons of space and reader attention, I have excerpted passages from some of the longer writings. I have indicated this with a series of ellipses. The font for these documents (New York 10) is consistent with the rest of the dissertation. Originally, students were encouraged to mess around with fonts and sizes to strengthen anonymity's general masking effects.

[3] James Patterson and Peter Kim conducted a massive study of American attitudes and beliefs in the early 1990's titled, *The Day America Told The Truth: What People Really Believe About Everything That Really Matters*. In the foreword they ask rhetorically why they or the people who responded to their questions

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about ethics, race, sex and sexuality, class, money, and community should believed. Their answer was significant enough I felt, to reproduce for my students as way to situate and justify the use of anonymous writing in a course devoted to identity politics.

> It all started with this simple observation, a fact of research life: Most people *want* to tell someone what they really believe and what they *really* stand for. But that desire is tempered by the realistic fear that telling the truth will get them into trouble with their spouses, their bosses, their parents, their friends, or their neighbors. So, people rarely find anyone they trust enough to let all of their precious defenses down (4).

Readers will recall our extension of Foucault's discussion of the *rarity* of discourse as a "fellowship" in which there is an ambiguity between secrecy and disclosure. We will also recall his focus on Prohibited Discourse in which not anything by anyone can be said, though the *desire* may be there, particularly in the face of the *power* of truth regimes to not wish to hear the truth about how politics is actually conducted across private and public lines. For Patterson and Kim this desire to speak to the truth, however much prohibited by various sites of authority, could only be performed by what they call "the cathartic process."

> The most crucial technique we used in our testing is known as the cathartic process. We allowed people to unburden themselves with *total anonymity*. Once granted that, people were willing to truthfully answer questions of even the most intimate nature.
> We guaranteed to the people we interviewed that no one who read their replies would know their identities—no one would know their names or addresses. In these circumstances, people felt that they could tell their secrets and share true feelings (4 emphasis added.)

Although I could not guarantee "total anonymity" to students, one has to assume that they—like the adults interviewed by Patterson and Kim—*want* to tell the truth about the politics of identity and of their identifications. Their fear of teacher, peer, and the larger sense of *authority* represented by the university community has to be accounted for in the same way that these researchers accounted for it. This, anyway, was my rationale in proposing anonymous writing to students writing about their identities. To *really* get to what one *really* thinks of gender, sexual, and racial identity, identities have to become concealed as they are begin disclosed/opened to scrutiny by a given community.

In Patterson and Kim's term of 'the cathartic process" we can trace the Ancient Greek dramatic innovation of using masks or "personae" in their performances. We can also begin to understand Schutz's phenomenological sense of private provinces of meaning getting crossed and a "shock experience" arising there from. Furthermore, in the notion of cathartic process, we can see what Natanson was getting at in his notion of passion in the enclave that Otherness provides, since anonymity provides the opportunity to speak or write about issues that always present an *otherwise* capacity depending on the realm—private or public—in which it is being disclosed. And finally, in this sense of anonymity as a cathartic process, we understand Forster's sense of anonymity as an ultimate act of imagination in which author/authority disappear. Transferred to the writing process of composition –rhetoric, this sense of imagination is cathartic in ways, perhaps, that expressivism hasn't yet imagined, yet might logically encourage, but which the social constructionist will most certainly disparage.

4
At The University of Massachusetts/Boston, where I was also a composition instructor, the "racial" composition of classes was far more diverse. I was under the influence of Goffmann's "stigma theory" at the time of my final course there, and was astonished to find two students spontaneously using anonymous writing to describe the stigma of being handicapped in response to our reading of Nathaniel West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*. No one else, where 50% of the students were African-American or Latino, responded anonymously to the stigma of "race" in a course that I had titled "The Composition of Self." I have avoided the political/pedagogical mess I would encounter if one or more of UNH's rare students of "color" had shown up in the class devoted to writing anonymously on racial identity. The question of anonymity's ethics and the problems of political correctness cannot be treated in this writing.

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