GOOD PEOPLE MAKE GOOD FRIENDS: CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP AND ETHOS IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that scholarship on ethos in first-year writing courses overlooks important articulations in the relationship between teacher and student and between peer students. I apply a theory heretofore little known in the American writing studies conversation called critical friendship. In short, critical friendship is the medium in a pendulum between total friend and total critic. I apply this theory in the context of the philosophical tropes from Emanuel Levinas, whose theorizing begins in the Levitical notion: Love your neighbor as yourself. He calls for responsibility to the other in the form of a continuous response to the ongoing call of the other.

Chapter 1 defines critical friendship and offers a rationale for using such a theory. This chapter also defines and explains my use of ethos, which has layers of complexity and competing histories. The chapter concludes with an introduction to my understanding and use of Levinasian theory as a matter of critical friendship.

Chapter 2 examines how teachers respond to student writing. I argue against a historical preference for agonistic practices, suggesting instead that teachers should be reflexive about their understanding and application of critical distance by offering in equal measures thoughtful critique and friendly mentoring.

After Chapter 2 asks, “how should teachers respond to student writing?” Chapter 3 asks the question, what should students write? Here I turn to Michel de Montaigne to mitigate the contemporary discussion in writing studies about personal writing and

academic writing, often identified in opposition to one another. I propose Montaigne's practice of essaying as an example for first-year writing students as a useful way of looking and observing in order to experiment with thinking, reading and writing the world.

Like Chapters 2 and 3, Chapter 4 examines proximity, but this time in relation to technology. Here I argue that students can benefit from an historical perspective on what counts as technology in order to understand their own performance of ethos in highly mediated environments.

For Sara

(who may never read this dissertation, but remains my best critical friend)

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CHAPTER 1

CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP: ALERITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Introduction

This dissertation analyzes the economy of power and influence in the writing classroom by showing why and how writing studies can consider the classical and profound intellectual history of friendship. Against the grain of any objections to pedagogical friendship (however rational), my research shows that friendship provides a useful metaphor for the teacher/student relationship, especially in the writing classroom where teachers call into question the student's ontological and epistemological identity. Writing classrooms are not the only academic space where teachers ask students to consider who they are and what they know, but the writing classroom plays a unique lower division gate-keeping role where we introduce students to the academy along with our focus on student aptitude in learning the conventions of writing. Coupled with rhetoric, writing conventions require students to think carefully about how they are situated within their own linguistic and cultural discourse and how they will situate themselves in relation to the discourse of the academy. In other words, Bartholomae's renowned elaboration on the student's "invention" (of the university) emphasizes the student's personal investigation and performance of ethos. Only when writing students begin to understand their own arguments (rhetorical purposes) in the context of the ongoing circulation of other arguments will they begin to make ethical judgments about

positioning their own in relation to other ones. As this realization gradually registers, students are able to recognize their own ethos as credibility, as character, and as a dwelling place relative to the ethos of others. Unfortunately, some teachers mistake the cultivation of rigorous academic ethos with a defensive stance of agonistic opposition toward all interlocutors. I will show that the performance of ethos will be more effective and more appealing (to the student as well as the student's audience) if the student finds in his or her teachers a mentor rather than a tormentor. One way to clarify a workable definition and emphasis on ethos is to focus on the success of student interaction with texts—their encounter with academic texts and the production of their own texts. This way of viewing ethos promises a performance of ethos that is not about who students are, but rather about what they do.

Although I will carefully explore various definitions of ethos, the most familiar way first-year writing students encounter the term is from Aristotle's appeals, which teachers introduce to help students understand their writing as a relationship between purpose and audience. We instruct students to manage appeals to their audience using logos, ethos, and pathos in order to be as persuasive as possible. Aristotle reminds us that the speaker/writer's persuasiveness results from the audience's perception of the speaker/writer's character: "whenever speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent more quickly than we do others on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt" (On Rhetoric 38). Thus the speaker must not only anticipate the good character of the audience, but must also communicate his own credible license. As I explain in more detail later, Aristotle's view of ethos

should never be interpreted as somehow personal. That is, because there was no concept of "personal" in his worldview, the development of ethos followed from the signifiers of public discourse; one's credibility or character was never viewed in the context of life activities anterior to the discursive moment. This means that in his situation, a person generated that character toward specifically situated rhetorical purposes, but in order to persuade his audience (generate ethos) his purpose would need to fulfill the demands of the audience. Similarly today, we can view the trust between teacher and student as one built upon reciprocating discursive interaction. However, these exchanges are not always neutral, but often dialectical. They are negotiations for power.

Composition theorists have characterized the relationship between teacher and student a variety of ways. Wendy Bishop and JoAnn Campbell each separately compare the role of the composition teacher to that of therapist.[1] Susan Miller characterizes the teacher as nurse, maid and mother.[2] And scholars like John Trimbur and Joanne and Leonard Podis agree with Miller that the composition teacher assumes authority *in loco parentis*.[3] Seldom if ever do we think about the student/teacher relationship as one of friendship. Perhaps for a variety of valid reasons, few college instructors are looking to make friends with their students. For one thing, they do not have time to cultivate relationships outside the classroom, given their responsibilities for scholarship and departmental service, not to mention class preparation. Coincidentally, Aristotle and in our own time Derrida also worry about having too many friends generally because of the imposition close friendship places on one's work.

Pedagogical theories also overlook friendship because teachers and students need to maintain professional distance to avoid complicating their relationship in ways deemed

socially inappropriate and legally suspect. In his essay, "Audience and Intimacy," Thom Hawkins explains that academic language is not "a neutral tool accessible to all. Rather, it becomes the instrument teachers sometimes use to intimidate students and to keep them at a distance; it is also the weapon students use against each other in the battle for grades" (65). Thus, teachers and students may not view each other as friends because of the tacit agreement toward suitable intellectual and emotional distance that allows for objective appraisal of student performance.[4] These valid reasons do not yet account for other significant factors that might complicate the spontaneous development of teacher and student friendships like race, class, gender, age, socio-economic status, sexual politics, and religious views, not to mention one's basic motives for education. In other words, despite ongoing research that challenges the common categories of "teacher" and "student" to better understand agency and power, scholars do not turn to friendship to understand the pedagogical moment.

In theory, friendship provides a solution to the power struggle between student power and teacher power; however, the historical signifiers from friendship tend toward philosophical, aesthetic, and even esoteric theories, whereas my use for friendship in first-year writing pedagogy requires a more pragmatic way of characterizing friendship. I turn, therefore, to European education scholarship and their concept of "critical friendship" as a possible resolution for the shortage of terms that aptly describe the negotiation of student power and teacher power, power that we often think of as part of ethos. With this particular point in mind, this dissertation will answer two questions: what is the role of ethos in the writing classroom? And how does a framework (or lens) of critical friendship enlarge our understanding and application of ethos? But these two

questions are in the service of a larger question about how critical friendship helps us rethink the role of the writing professor and his or her pedagogical goals relative to the student's academic objectives.

The first chapter begins with a review of ethos; it shows how previous definitions and framework surrounding this crucial Aristotelian appeal overlap and expand ethos. In the end, I provide a definition that acknowledges previous ones but also adds to them. The chapter continues by connecting ethos and critical friendship with an overview of the problem and the proposed solution: how and why critical friendship refines our understanding, instruction, and performance of ethos in writing pedagogy. The chapter elaborates this connection by defining critical friendship as a way to see ethos more clearly. Along the way I provide a literature review on each term. For example, both friendship and ethos originate (primarily) in Aristotle, but develop complexity over time with attention from others. On one hand, friendship's legacy includes Plato's *Lysis*, Cicero's *De Amicitia*, Seneca's letters, and later Montaigne, Bacon, and Kant along with contemporary luminaries like C.S. Lewis and Derrida. On the other hand we find philosophers and rhetoricians who privilege the speaker/writer's development of ethos. In *Antidosis,* Isocrates, Aristotle's older peer, emphasizes the importance of ethos in persuasive speaking. According to William Benoit, Isocrates saw ethos as "the most persuasive tool of the rhetor—more effective than probabilities and proofs—and he construes ethos to be the reputation a speaker develops throughout life and brings to the speech situation" (257). Cicero and Quintilian both focus on the role ethos plays in speaking well. Cicero sees ethos as "the image of the speaker," but where Aristotle viewed ethos as "rational" (a nonemotional evaluation of the "reliability" of the speaker),

Cicero's concept of ethos is "concerned with (an image) of the whole of the speaker's character, and with making the audience feel good toward him" (On the Ideal Orator 34-35). Quintilian makes overt the connection between ethical and ethos, preparing the way for Kant's "moral ought." Quintilian writes about the speaker's power to regard things ethically: "we may apply the word ethos whenever he speaks of what is honourable and expedient or of what ought or ought not to be done" (VI,2,11). He goes on to suggest a closer relationship between pathos and ethos than Aristotle warrants, but this only thickens our sense of ethos rather than thinning it. In the literature review, I will also include important contemporary students of ethos like James Baumlin, Michael Halloran, Michael Hyde, and Amelie Rorty, among many others.

Given his general disdain for "rhetoric," it would be surprising to see Emanuel Levinas use the term ethos; nevertheless, his work adds to the intersection of critical friendship and ethos. The first chapter ends with a rationale for my use of Levinas with a close analysis of particular sites in his work. This justification will include some of the scholarship in rhetorical theory that sees how Levinasian tropes like responsibility and alterity help us question the construction of the self and its relationship to the other. Levinas uses terms like proximity and response/responsibility interchangeably as the ethical circulation between the self and the other. This view applies directly to the college writing classroom because the call and response between teacher and student show how the construction of the self is always about the other, the addressee, the audience, the friend. However, in the spirit of Levinas, these solicitations always go unanswered because of the impossibility for the self to adequately anticipate and respond to the ideals of the other; we might say that for Levinas, totality (the fully encompassed response) is

always vexed by infinity (in the context of the writing conversation the indefinite call and response between interlocutors).

Ethos

Amidst a variety of definitions for ethos, including several that I review in this section, Quintilian points specifically to the way we talk to our audience. Like most others, he ties ethos to our character and credibility, but he also believes that the tone in our speech and the timeliness of it makes a difference. In agreement with others who characterize ethos as a way of winning over one's audience through the portrayal of good character, Quintilian adds that "this kind of ethos should be especially displayed in cases where the persons concerned are intimately connected, whenever we pardon any act or offer satisfaction or admonition, in all of which cases there should be no trace of anger or hatred" (VI,2,14). Quintilian's ethos derives specifically from a tradition that began with Aristotle, who sees ethos inscribed by the enactment of good will, an enactment that ties ethos to the ethical. As Craig Smith puts it, Aristotle has a laundry list of "prior attributes that audiences tend to admire, including good character, good fortune, health, beauty, good friends, good children, fame, honor, money and the like" (6). As one of the best readers of Aristotle, Quintilian agrees that ethos does not result in the automatic acquisition of good character, credibility, health, beauty, good friends, and so forth, but that the production of ethos will be simultaneous with the cultivation of good will. He writes, "There is good reason for giving the name of ethos to those scholastic exercises in which we portray rustics, misers, cowards and superstitious persons according as our theme may require. For if ethos denotes moral character, our speech must necessarily be

based on ethos when it is engaged in portraying such character" (Book VI, Chapter 2, 17). Quintilian sees an intimate connection between those who foster ethos as good will in speaking and, by extension, writing.

However, to characterize Aristotle's ethos as personalized trust between two or more individuals—between speaker and audience—would be to misunderstand the ancient perceptions of self. As noted in the introduction, many have pointed out that the idea of "individual" as we think of it today comes along much later in history. Aristotle did not imagine psychologized confidence in a speaker's personal character, but rather in the character or persona the speaker persuaded the audience to accept—like a persuasive act, but not in the disingenuous sense of Socrates' accusations toward Gorgias et al., rather in the sense that we think of now with situated persuasive discourse that acts (or plays) a particular part in order to be persuasive. We find the key to "authentic" rhetorical acting in the appropriate and relevant ways in which it is situated within a given conversation, culture, and discourse, not in some lofty way—essentialized and always true everywhere for all. Our contemporary ad hominem suspicions about a speaker's character frequently draw our attention toward the individual's "personal life" and away from the speaker's situated rhetorical purpose. Amelie Rorty clarifies this distinction between personal versus constructed character in her perception of Aristotle's ethos where the promotion of a particular kind of self is not strictly a political fabrication but instead a textual impression that we foster in and through layered forms of communication. In Rorty's words, "the ends and practices of [the speaker's] polis not only set the frame for his deliberations, but also partially constitute his preferences. The phronimos is an historical and politically located person. . . The ends of his polis figure in

the deliberations of the phronimos because they provide substantive objective directions and constraints on his practical reasoning, rather than because they formed his character" (Essays 14). But the formulation of this character, whether contemporary or ancient, cannot be misunderstood as fixed within some ideal. There is no static "good man speaking there," but rather a speaker who conveys a level proficiency within the relevant situated discourse for a particular speaking moment. Even though Aristotle sees ethos ontologically located in an individual being, that life always gets construed within a framework of cultural circumstance; his "good man/phronimos" is one successfully situated within his customs and traditions, hermeneutically sensitive toward all that constitutes the eudemonia of the day.

Plato mistakenly essentializes the character of the rhetorician not only by seeing his[5] craft as artifice but also by discounting memorized speech as inauthentic. He believes that dialectic more closely approximates reality than does the performance of speeches. Craig Smith points out that although Aristotle approximated Plato's form and content in his earliest writings, his political theory was more practical than "Plato's 'ideal state' because it was empirically based on a study of existing constitutions in their historical development" (4). Nan Johnson believes that Plato and Aristotle disagree on a key point: the moral status of rhetoric. She writes that "unlike Plato, who sees virtue in the speaker to be a prerequisite to the kind of rhetoric that contributes to an orderly world, Aristotle's concern with the speaker derives from his view of rhetoric as a means of bringing about decisions in matters affecting civil life." She further paraphrases Aristotle's definition of ethos as something that inspires the "audience's confidence in the speaker's good sense, moral character and good will. . . [it is] used to offset mistrust and any suspicion that the

speaker is not in command of the facts" (243). Johnson notices a crucial difference between "Plato's essentialist view of the speaker's character and Aristotle's more pragmatic and relativistic attitude toward ethos," although Aristotle's view maintains (from our current perspective) incriminating essentialisms too, it is to Aristotle, rather than Plato, that rhetorical theorists turn to understand and make ethical theory that accounts for historically situated contingencies (243-244).

To extend this unpersonalized notion of the Ancient Greek self, James Baumlin argues that Aristotle emphasized rhetoric's amorality, that he validated the speaker's commitment to "seeming good." According to Baumlin, in Aristotle's version of ethos, "discourse becomes an active construction of character—or, rather, of an image, a representation of character…'persuasion' Aristotle suggests, 'is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible" (xv). If rhetoric is morally neutral as Aristotle suggests, how does his work on ethics inform his conception of rhetoric? In other words, how does Aristotle's view on arete, or virtuous action, impact ethos or the transmission of the speaker's character or habits? In short, what is the relationship between ethics and ethos?

In the first two books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle advocates individual and communal happiness as the end toward which all healthy people strive. We gather from the *Ethics* that Aristotle uses different terms to arrive at "healthy" or "happy," but he maintains a focus on balance (the golden mean between extremes). As early as Book I he recommends politics as the most important science because it adjudicates between the good of the individual and the good of the state: "For even if the good of an individual is identical with the good of a state, yet the good of the state is evidently greater and more

perfect to attain or preserve. For though the good of an individual by himself is something worth working for, to ensure the good of a nation or a state is nobler and more divine" (87). From these motives for the *Ethics*, we might derive a definition for ethical as the way that actions of an individual or groups of individuals impact the happiness of others (individually and as groups), whether intended or unintended, which is to say that we often generalize ethics to mean something like "how individuals treat each other." Individuals are microcosms of the state. In *The Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition*, Richard L. Johannesen defines Ethics as "degrees of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, and of obligation in human conduct" (237). Johannesen's phrase "degrees . . . of obligation in human conduct" acknowledges some sense of the sweep of philosophy's deontological and consequentialist traditions in Ethics. In the rhetorical tradition we usually encounter the term ethical in the language of Aristotle's appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos where we anticipate civility, reason, and fairness in our written and spoken communications. This means that from colleague to colleague and between student and teacher as well as between students themselves, we expect interlocutors to pay attention to what they say and write, and we expect that attention to promote civility and dignity. When I write as an academic or when I talk as a teacher, I take my audience into account, but if I critique my audience, whether colleague or student, it is not out of personal emotional desire to understand and be understood, it is out of respect for the expectations and conventions of my professional discipline. The critique is the purpose, but appeals to pathos and ethos will help me shape that critique ethically.

I argue that as a critical friend, the composition teacher's ethos hinges on the ethicality of his or her correspondence with students and peers; in other words, I suggest

that we locate ethos in our responses—in our textual exchange. James E. Porter maintains that action ties rhetoric and ethics together:

> It is not unusual to see ethics discussed in terms of moral action and moral decision making, but rhetoric is usually thought of as the art of producing an oral or written artifact, a piece of writing, or a speech. Rhetoric is typically viewed as the productive art of making something instead of doing something . . . However there is a sense in which rhetoric (and writing) is also a doing. It is an action in the sense that it establishes a relationship with an assumed audience and pushes forward a 'should,' a picture of how things ought to be for 'us.'(xiv)

Porter's Kantian emphasis on the implicit and explicit "shoulds" and "oughts" of rhetorical argument constitutes the symbolic action that we often associate with an ethical stance; as we help students develop control over their writing we emphasize conventions associated with invention, arrangement, and style. We focus student attention on purpose and audience and introduce Aristotle's principle appeals. In this process we never focus on any of these touchstones independent of the others. The purpose is always tied to the kairotic moment that must develop with our audience in mind. Because of the variables associated with purpose and audience, we also remind, explain, and show students how neither purpose nor audience can exist outside politicized and contested interests and as we construct arguments that reveal our consciousness about these contingencies, we cultivate ethos, an ethos of action, of doing.

Michael Halloran and Michael J. Hyde arrive separately at definitions of ethos as a dwelling place. Halloran describes its focus as

> the conventional rather than the idiosyncratic, the public rather than the private. The most concrete meaning given for the term in the Greek lexicon is 'a habitual gathering place,' and I suspect that it is upon this image of people gathering together in a public place, sharing experiences and ideas, verifying the habits of the 'good person' that its meaning as character rests. To have ethos is to manifest the virtues most valued by the culture to and for which one speaks in Athens: justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, wisdom. (60)

Halloran combines his reading of *Nicomachean Ethics* with his reading of *On Rhetoric* to develop his sense that for Aristotle, ethos grows from the soil of shared customs and habits, and it is in that same soil that we build the foundations for our rhetorical character.

Similarly, in *The Ethos of Rhetoric,* Michael J. Hyde compares many definitions of ethos but privileges one that is, according to him, a more "primordial" connotation where one "can understand the phrase 'the ethos of rhetoric' to refer to the way discourse is used to transform space and time into 'dwelling places' (*ethos*; pl. *ethea*) where people can deliberate about and 'know together' (con-scientia) some matter of interest. Such dwelling places define grounds, the abodes or habitats where a person's ethics and moral character take form and develop" (xiii). According to Hyde, Heidegger believed that the earliest definition of the ethos "means abode, dwelling place. The word names the open region in which man dwells" (xix). Halloran and Hyde expand traditional descriptions of ethos by tying persuasive rhetorical habits to persuasive habitats that reinforce good will. They extend our commonplace understanding of ethos by recognizing its structural influence—its influence on our professional habits and the habitats, like our classrooms, curricula, and discourses. Thomas Rickert, whose meditation on Heidegger takes Hyde's application of Heidegger on ethos even further, mainly agrees with Heidegger insofar as the being who will act ethically or perform ethos will always do so in the a priori, preexisting conditions of the world into which he or she is thrown: "Rhetoric never escapes from the world into the social or the symbolic, it is always worldly, a dynamic, emergent composite of meaning and matter. To focus on discourse is not wrong, but it subtly obscures rhetoric's profoundly worldly character, in which all that is already shares in any rhetoricity achieved through human beings" (222-223). From this position

Rickert then acknowledges a social caveat for rhetoric, but only insofar as the 'social' is viewed as "abstracted from the ecological." Rickert's devotion to Heidegger here may simply demonstrate a chicken and egg disagreement between Levinas and Heidegger (which came first, the worldly conditions or human inquiry about it and to what degree is either actually possible without the other?). However, my disagreement with Rickert will ultimately manifest in my definition of ethos as more importantly performing or doing as opposed to being—in the world.

When we think about the way that our character and credibility (our good will) shape the world we live in, we are called to account for the comfort, felicity, and hospitality of that space, both for ourselves and those we house. Critical friendship reminds us that this space is not some Pollyanna utopia; it remains a contested place where participants wrestle for clearer avenues toward the acquisition of the best available means of persuasion. Rickert only accepts that commonplace definition of rhetoric "as long as we understand this to invoke less a subjective change of mind or emotional state than a transformation in our worldly situation" (221). Again I would emphasize (particularly for the "world" I am studying—the writing classroom) how the world shaping activities that unfold in that classroom control the shaping of that world more than the world of the classroom necessarily shapes those activities.[6]

Since teaching rhetoric and composition requires the constant practice of persuasive discourse, we are always exposed to the potential hypocrisy of forgetting our audience and overlooking the very principles of ethos that we demand from student writing and speaking. How do we cultivate timely sensitivity that takes student circumstance into account? When I read student writing I also have to be able to read the

student because differing student preparations oblige me to adjust my expectations for their acquisition of writing conventions. My credibility is on the line with every communication, as I instruct, ask questions and discuss ideas, put students on the spot, and especially as I read student writing. I am mistaken if I limit my perception of my own credibility to my logos-centered credentials, those grounded by measurable success like academic rank and scholarly publication (both essential if my habits are to complement my readerly and writerly character). That is, I can come to class with a carefully prepared lecture or tried-and-true discussion questions that evoke engaged conversation, but I might still jeopardize my performance ethos by being unfair in my expectations of student learning, impatient with what I perceive to be intellectual deficits or uncompromising toward personal student crises, but the way that I will actually compromise my performance of ethos as a reader of student writing will be in my inadequate way of negotiating those personal student needs and my interpretation of their reading and writing practices.

Although many scholars explore the nuances of ethos with precision, no one has theorized about its role in the rhetorical space of the contemporary college writing classroom, a point with which Mary Leonard agrees in her discussion of ethos in an online classroom environment.[7] Even in Hyde's collection of essays that frame ethos in terms of a dwelling space, no one takes up the issue of the writing teacher's cultivation of on-the-job ethos—how we inhabit that space and work on our varied rhetorical habits. By extension to Hyde's collection, Rickert's chapters 6 and 7 also focus deeply on the correlation of ethos as dwelling, but Rickert focuses more on Heidegger's philosophical instantiation of the relation of the self to the world, than on the way this instantiation

applies specifically to students.[8] Critical friendship's relationship with ethos as informed by the foregoing scholarship calls for an interpretation of ethos that binds teachers and students to a contract of good will in order to construct a viable space for practicing and developing the habits and conventions important in the academy; specific to this enterprise, ethical critique becomes more plausible because of the pathos of friendship.

Since Aristotle we see ethos as a central part of the practice of rhetoric that develops in harmony with language that is conditioned by circumstance. As we think about the relationship between rhetoric: finding the best available means of persuasion and the ethical contingencies of language, we might consider the implications of the actions that follow from our use of language. We often consider the meaning of rhetoric in Aristotle's terms as the best available means of persuasion. However, part of its value requires a level of conscious recognition about the persuasive effects of language. As part of this consciousness, writing teachers (rhetoricians) should think more carefully about what kind of character we warrant, what kinds of habits we affirm, and what kinds of dwelling places we advocate. Though some people will argue that higher expectations in the college classroom require an agonistic approach, cooperation and civility in our communication will foster a more commodious learning environment wherein our students might dwell more thoughtfully upon their task to write about topics like "justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, [and] wisdom" (Halloran 60).

Not coincidentally, Gregory Clark, a scholar who aligns philosophically and who works directly with Halloran on articulating ethos as a space of communal and civil discourse, asks these very relevant questions: "What kind of place is the [writing]

classroom and what kinds of activities are appropriate for that place?" ("What kind of Place" 386). These questions come in response to an earlier article where Clark outlines his vision for classroom ethos in his essay, "Rescuing the Discourse of the Classroom." Similarly to my argument in this dissertation, Clark resists a discourse of polarization and antagonism in favor of a democratic classroom where difference is not just accommodated, but rather understood as both inevitable and vital to a thriving cosmopolitan environment. Clark's clearest point of contact with my definition for ethos comes in his description of a composition classroom that situates "the development of expertise in the pragmatic practices of writing and reading within the relational and, ultimately, political practice of discursive exchange of equals" (71). Clark then borrows from Carolyn R. Miller and Stephen Doheny-Farina to discuss his classroom discourse of community by comparing *techne* to *praxis*. Quoting from Doheny-Farina: "Writing as techne is the production of texts; writing as praxis is the process of taking part in the discourse of a community. Courses on writing as techne teach students how to write particular kinds of documents. Courses on writing as praxis try to socialize students to a community so that they may engage in the ongoing conversations of that community, and eventually contribute to the evolution or change of a community" (72). These distinctions thicken our comprehension of ethos. Although I might argue that techne and praxis are never going to be pedagogically mutually exclusive, like Clark, I see the classroom of praxis as described by Doheny-Farina as a more complementary place to perform ethos.

Ethos offers a rhetorical backdrop against which to theorize and apply critical friendship and as I will define critical friendship below, we will see how it requires interlocutors to engage critically and considerately, with scrutiny and care. A definition

of ethos that properly articulates with critical friendship then will be found in a notion that weaves in and out of this foregoing list of definitions: ethos as the good will of the speaker intersecting with the good will of the listener, fostering a hospitable work space. According to Craig Smith, James McCroskey was converted from a position that ethos could be understood empirically, to a position closer to Aristotle's (and later Quintilian's), who saw ethos as the communication of good will. In fact, McCroskey, refers to ethos as "perceived care giving"[9] (2). By interpreting ethos as "perceived care giving" we open ourselves to the possibility of what Emmanuel Levinas means by alterity. Levinasian alterity imagines a responsibility that transcends the ethical. In his eulogy to Levinas, Derrida recalls a conversation with Levinas in which he said to Derrida, "You know, one often speaks of ethics to describe what I do, but what really interests me in the end is not ethics, not ethics alone but the holy, the holiness of the holy" (*Adieu* 4). What does Levinas mean by "holy"? How does his comprehension of his own project as something that exceeds ethics matter for the contexts of writing studies and rhetoric? Levinas' invitation to reconsider our disposition toward the other as an extra-ethical stance has powerful implications for critical friendship because his ontological imperatives—what he sees as important for human relations gets measured in communication or in the reciprocity of conversation and interaction. For my definition of ethos, I want to emphasize interaction. Critical friendship, as I will define it, is not identical with ethos, but offers instead a model of ethos. Rather than locating the success of this model in the person(al)—or in the world—I see critical friendship steering the question away from who students are (and teachers for that matter) by focusing ethos on what they do—what and how they perform their interactions with texts.

Critical Friendship

In recent decades, British friendship theorists in Education Studies have applied friendship to the college classroom using the term, "critical friendship," a term defined in research by Sue Swaffield as "the point of balance along a continuum from 'total friend' to 'total critic.'"[10] We can apply this succinct definition to the writing classroom because in all of our interaction with students, we volley back and forth between critical teacherly interventions (literally critiquing invention, arrangement, and style), but by doing so hospitably. To define critical friendship as the golden mean between extremes of "critical" and "friendship" is not just to acknowledge that the ideal teacher is both rigorous and supportive but rather it is to teach about ethos and to apply ethos to our teaching (to demonstrate it).[11] Most friendship theory traces back to Aristotle who advocates three kinds of friendship: one based on pleasure, one based on utility, and one based on a common desire for the good, where the Greek explanation is often interpreted as "complete friendship," or "agape."[12] Aristotle views the first two as "secondary friendship." If I have a friendship in the third "primary" category, I might refer to my friend in Aristotle's words as "another self" (Nicomachean Ethics 1161b, 26-27). In familiar contemporary terms this primary friendship is shared by those with a similar worldview, as in the case of C.S. Lewis' description of a friendship between those who "share their vision" and "instantly . . . stand together in an immense solitude" (Lewis 65). But what really defines this third category for Aristotle is a shared value of good will. "It is the friendship of good people," writes Aristotle, "that is friendship most of all" (NE 1157b, line 25). While some scholars have implied that ancient friendship in classical

paideia could inform the contemporary learning situation, no one has formulated a precise account of how our current perception of friendship, that is, a perception awash in prosaic definitions of friendship but also combined with carefully historicized analytical ones, might apply to theories about ethos in the writing class: critical friendship answers such a call.

There are no neat lines around categories of critical friendship, but it matches Aristotle's secondary friendship based on utility — with theoretical aim toward the third category of primary friendship. This means that while there is always a longing for the ideal learning relationship (and Levinas teaches more about this longing), the word "critical" focuses our attention on the productivity of friendship, its uses and advantages as critical intervention in a friend's work, its utility. In an article that extends Swaffield's work, Paul Gibbs and Panayiotis Angelides elaborate on her definition by noting (along with most other critical friendship scholars) that "linking the positive notion of friendship with the potentially negative connotation of the term 'critique' often poses a contradiction for critical friends" (214-216). [13] However, "unlike peers, critical friends not only draw attention to weaknesses but are eager to encourage the strong aspects of their friend's work. Therefore, critique given by a friend is, in its deepest meaning, positive and edifying" (217). In other words, if teachers are to conceive of their relationship to students as critical friendship they need to sell students on the idea that critique is not just beneficial, it is critical, it is mandated.

Notice how Gibbs and Angelides contrast a peer with a critical friend. College writing instructors commonly use the term "peer" in relation to critical work in the classroom, as in "peer review" or "peer group work." One of the many stumbling blocks

for a successful peer review workshop has precisely to do with ethos. While students typically trust each other at a social level (in terms of pathos) enough to break into small groups to discuss writing issues and topics, some have a more difficult time accepting opinions from their peers when they are critical of their work, and part of the reason for this comes from the fact that many students have very little to say to their peers about their writing since their opinions are as yet unformed.[14] I have noticed a trend in my own student's feedback about the value peer review workshops wherein they mistrust their own expertise and/or that of their peers. At the same time, they like peer review because they value hearing from peers in language that they relate to and with attention to issues that might be more visible to someone working toward the same goals, peers with similar backgrounds and academic preparation. Critical friendship gives a name to peer review that might, among other things, provide a philosophical rationale for student to student discussion and critique, as well as teacher-to-student critique, not to mention the critique between professional peer scholars. If I see my "peer" as a critical friend, I will trust him or her to try to strike that medium between critic and friend. As it stands, a first-year composition student might not correlate in-class peer review workshops to the practices of professionals in composition who participate and publish in a peer review process of their own. There can be no question that if professional scholars resist the value of peer review in the development of their writing, it will likely come at the peril of their success in their chosen profession. In peer review, the critique is never personal, and again, the writer and the critic must communicate clearly in order to define their shared purpose. Nevertheless, I argue that whether at the undergraduate level of peer review or the professional level, students and scholars will seek out peer readers who establish an ethos

in the mean between extremes of critique and friendship.

Appreciation of critical friendship requires from us a closer examination of the term "critical." In some ways, the link between "critical" and "friendship" presents an immediate paradox since critical requires emotional distance while friendship calls for emotional closeness. The notion of critical friendship addresses this contradiction, not by revising the meaning of critical, but by reframing our perception of it. Academics use the words "critical" and "criticism" so often that we might easily miss the irony that comes from passing over any word used too often. In this case, where the meaning of critical requires one to slow down, to look closely, to acknowledge the importance, immediacy and particulars of the thing under investigation while at the same time offering up some new way of seeing, it makes sense to observe this word with care. Perhaps we apply our uses of "critical" too broadly and too loosely when we think of our work as the production of critical thinking. Academics writing journal articles and teaching classes in the humanities often regard critical thinking as the foundation of their research and pedagogy. To varying degrees we teach and write and read literary criticism, critical communication, critical philosophy, critical literacy, and critical discourse analysis. If we do not think of ourselves as teachers of some form of critical pedagogy then, at the very least, we see ourselves as managers, stewards, and practitioners of critical distance.

To illustrate this point about the way the term "critical" gets used too casually, it is not too difficult to open a book with the word "critical" in the title, only to find the author assuming agreement about the term's meaning. In his book, *Critical Pedagogy*, Barry Kanpol explains the connection between critical pedagogy and critical theory: "the doing of critical theory has been called in the educational literature critical pedagogy"

(27). But Kanpol never really takes the time to examine the particular nuances of one term relative to the other terms. What is it about the term "critical" that makes theory or pedagogy more invested in "unoppress[ing] the oppressed" as he puts it? Of course, some take the time to scrutinize this term. In her book, *Critical Literacy*, Cynthia A. McDaniel traces our use of the term to the Frankfurt School where luminaries like Adorno, Benjamin, Habermas et al. apply Kant and Marx to "uncover and explain fundamental inequalities and hypocrisy within society. They utilized two techniques: (1) immanent critique, which involves questioning a view from within, exposing contradictions between our claims . . . (2) dialectical thought, which 'attempted to trace out the historical formation of facts and their mediation by social forces' (19). But she goes on (drawing upon other scholarship) to underscore the problem I am highlighting here, by accounting for the "nebulous quality of critical theory, explaining that there are many critical theories, they are always changing and evolving, and they purposely avoid too much specificity" (19). It is precisely this last note that seems ironic—that these theories "purposely avoid too much specificity" when specificity seems integral to criticality.

The first definition of "critical" in the OED matches the negative implications we usually associate with critique as a form of interrogation: "Given to judging; *esp.* given to adverse or unfavourable criticism; fault-finding, censorious." The second-level rendering produces different connotations: "Involving or exercising careful judgment or observation; nice, exact, accurate, precise, punctual." Both definitions suggest scrutiny, but the latter definition seems especially instructive about the role of distance in our uses of critique. Each of these cousins to critical helps us see different latitudes of proximity:

"exercising careful judgment or observation" as well as the terms, "exact, accurate, and precise," pull us away from the subject to look from a new angle.[15] Like the concept of critical, friendship is also fittingly about distance. Aristotle's famous coupling, "my friends there are no friends," reminds us that friendship is simultaneously possible and existentially impossible in terms of our embodied and metaphysical proximity[16] to the other. Similarly, critical friendship seems paradoxical in its attempt to bring careful judgment together with the accommodation and acceptance we usually associate with friendship. When I ask a friend to help me make an important decision, naturally I want him or her to exercise careful judgment; indeed these critical interventions require from us the utmost care. I want my critical friend to consider with exactness, accuracy, and precision; I want my friend to help me see more clearly and expect the highest good. At the same time, I may not always be emotionally prepared for the candid truth. But perhaps it is possible to accept criticism if I can trust that my critical friend has my best interest in mind.

We see the way that critical friendship addresses the mean between extremes in the description Gibbs and Angelides use to categorize different aspects of critical friendship using three slightly different criteria. Informed by Aristotle's three categories, their breakdown starts hierarchically with "critical friendship" (as the most idealistic, based in reciprocity and acknowledgement of the other friend), then "critical companionship" (which has the appeal of purposeful and conscious exchange based in utility), and finally "critical acquaintance" (which cares more about utility and keeps the critical interaction at the level of distance and austerity). They define these levels of critical friendship based on the motives of the participants and here writing teachers

should not forget the writerly correlation between motive and purpose because when we are mediating tasks like invention, arrangement and style with a model of critical friendship, we want our instruction and critique to complement the student's own perceived purpose.

Gibbs and Angelides' three levels of critical friendship are not perfectly aligned with the work teachers perform in the writing classroom, but they can raise our awareness about how we interact with students. Their second category makes the best fit for the work writing teachers do. They define Critical Companionship as

> a relationship where friendship is based on advantage. It retains the form of a friendship but is recognized by both parties as a friendship of advantage or utility. This critique occurs in functional terms where trust has been established but where the power structure of the community developed for the purpose is recognized in the critical transaction. The relationship has an externally defined time span and the purpose of the critique relates to the functions being performed, recognizing the ontological perceptive but only as a secondary condition. It is characterized by the notion of collaborative research. (222)

This definition adds one especially crucial distinction to the general definition of critical friendship by validating the politicized nature of most friendships.[17] Their first category (critical friendship) adds to preceding definitions of critical friendship: participants who "mutually critique [each other's] practice…[wherein the] worthiness of the critical intervention is based on trust and respect for the vulnerability and well being of both partners who have mutual concern, status and regard" (220). This reminder of common purpose and interdependent respect adds value to the ideals of critical friendship. Gibbs and Angelides' third category, (critical acquaintance) introduces the element of the agonistic perspective in teaching that I highlighted earlier. According to Gibbs and Angelides, this "status applies to the proponents of expert, authoritarian and unjustified advice, albeit given in a friendly manner. In its extreme, it is as an expert to a novice. The

relationship is transactional; no trust is developed; and its intent is the achievement of the organizational goal towards which the critiqued skills are aimed . . . it is also temporary, vulnerable and fragile" (222). Of course, elements of each kind of critical friendship as defined here overlap with every pedagogical approach. However, the second category, *critical companionship*, seems best suited to describe a realistic approach for the writing classroom because the relationship with students in a writing class is ephemeral and purposefully focused on learning more about writing, which everyone should understand as a "critical transaction." If writing instructors view their students as collaborators, as allies, the dysfunctional interpretations and manifestations of power in the classroom might be mitigated.

Unfortunately, the pedagogical relationship often gets compromised for reasons outlined under "critical acquaintance"; we offer our expert advice in authoritarian ways that amplify the hegemonic differences in our interpretation of teacher/student power. Hence, "no trust is developed" and the perceived goals of the institution (but just as often individual teacherly agendas) supersede our rhetorical sensitivity to audience and context. When our perception of institutional goals leads to authoritarian pedagogies in the name of critical distance and academic rigor in the writing classroom it translates into writing anxiety and worse, ambivalence towards learning and cynicism toward higher education. Therefore, critical acquaintance as defined by Gibbs and Angelides provides a framework for a kind of teaching philosophy (a kind of ethos) that this dissertation challenges.

Although most critical friendship literature emerges out the European school-improvement literature, the central values remain consistent and have a plausible overlap with European and American college writing pedagogy, central values based in

Aristotelian good will. Gibbs and Angelides note that at "the core of the notion of friendship is something which is essential and based on the necessary conditions of reciprocated goodwill; awareness of this by both parties; and a perception that the other will be good for oneself" (215). In his article on school reform, Brian Carlson points out that the role of the critical friend is "not so much to provide the answers as to ask the appropriate questions, to gather and present relevant information and evidence, and to challenge people to explore different perspectives and formulate effective responses" (82). He continues by interpreting critical friendship as a tool that we can use to accentuate the positive as well as to challenge moves students make that are not as effective. He notices that supporters of the idea of critical friendship point to the quality and nature of "the relationship as one built on trust (83). He later elaborates this point by emphasizing the reciprocity of trust between interlocutors by explaining that the one doing the evaluation needs the credentials of trust to play the part of a critical friend, "a person with expertise but not someone who embraces the role of expert" (83). Carlson's focus on best practices for best results are not quantifiable formulas, but emerge from intangibles that writing teachers might otherwise not notice. Most notably, his acknowledgement of the connection between trust and credibility reminds us that there is more room for critical work on ethos. As noted above, this pairing of critical with friendship prepares students for critique and good will. Carlson confirms this emphasis of critical friendship; he writes, "the concept of a 'friend' defines this relationship: it starts with caring, listening, understanding and integrity and moves to questioning, challenging and providing feedback, not on the basis of finding fault but rather as an advocate of the continued growth, success and fulfillment of all the stakeholders" (83). If students and

teachers all buy into this formulation of their relationship, their friendship will always make room for academic criticism.

Concomitantly, we find lots of published writing in our field that shares values that are crucial to critical friendship, but those values get defined across a spectrum of methodologies and ideologies that do not necessarily acknowledge one another. Take, for example, three well known thinkers in composition theory: Peter Elbow, Kenneth Bruffee, and bell hooks. Each of these teachers formulates a different theory around compromised student agency, and each comes up with strategies to help teachers and students think about their agency and power differently. Clearly all three are responding to Freire—hooks and Bruffee most transparently, but the avenues out of oppressive pedagogies are not consciously interconnected, not interdependent. Yet, I would argue that all three advocate an as yet unnamed ethos of critical friendship. Each subscribes in his or her own way to Freire's resistance to a banking model for teaching, which pushes against agonistic methods. Freire reminds us that "every human being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence' he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others" (*Pedagogy* 12). Freire points to something that Elbow, Bruffee, and hooks also advocate: resisting pedagogies of silence and opacity. Their publications on dialogical teaching practices announce their methods to their peers, and these methods open dialogue with students. By transparently questioning the solipsistic banking model for teaching, these three offer viable alternatives wherein critical friendship could flourish.

Peter Elbow is in some ways the most radical in terms of the teacher/student relationship; at the heart of his teacherless classroom he registers profound skepticism

about writing improvement based on teacher intervention. In the preface to his most famous book, *Writing Without Teachers,* a book whose title announces his strained belief in teacher authority, he explains that he does not deny the existence of good writing teachers, but he does think they are very rare. He then articulates a deeper skepticism: "I am trying to deny something—something that is often assumed: the necessary connection between learning and teaching" (viii). In some ways he anticipates findings that question success in the composition classroom, findings that I take up in the next chapter where I reference scholars like Nancy Sommars, Cy Knoblauch, and Lil Brannon who investigate the success of response to student writing (the main teacherly intervention in writing classes) and its effects on writing improvement. But the immediate irony of Elbow's premise comes from the easily overlooked fact that by adopting the heuristics he advocates in his book, HE becomes the reader's sovereign writing teacher. Nevertheless, his primary urge to question the top down "banking model" of learning fosters a teaching milieu well suited to critical friendship. He writes, "The teacherless writing class has helped me as a teacher because it is an ideal laboratory for learning along with students and being useful to them in that way. I think I can help teachers in the same way" (viii). Obviously Elbow advocates a redistribution of power in the classroom where the student determines his or her own success and the teacher functions in the role of mentor and coach. Additionally he shifts the focus of ethos in writing away from the teacher's influence on student writing to the credibility of the writing itself.

Kenneth Bruffee situates himself more openly within the Freirian tradition of critical pedagogy than Elbow, but like Elbow, Bruffee places more ownership for learning onto the conversation between novices (students). Bruffee's theories about

collaborative learning develop over a long period of time, but result in his insistence that collaborative learning creates an ideal situation for learning where the teacher's expertise frames the conversation, but student discovery in peer to peer conversation determines the directions of those conversations. In his book *Collaborative Learning,* Bruffee insists that teachers take a back seat during peer-to-peer conversations that he organizes in his collaborative classroom: "As the small-group work starts, the teacher backs off. Emphatically, the teacher does not sit in on consensus groups, hover over them, or otherwise monitor them. Doing that inevitably destroys peer relations among students and encourages the tendency of well-schooled students to focus on the teacher's authority and interests" (29). One might assume that a pedagogy like Bruffee's negates critical friendship because the collaborative approach hands over so much of the critical role to students; however, critical friendship between teacher and student becomes even more necessary in a circumstance where the teacher's primary function becomes that of guide and mentor; the teacher must help shape the nature of the exchange between students so that students are doing their best to be critical of each other's work while doing so in a supportive way. What little direct input students receive from their teacher in a collaborative environment must also draw upon friendship and critique equally.

Without using the word "ethos," the writing that bell hooks does in conversation with Freire[18] focuses our attention precisely upon the character and credibility of teacher/student conversation about how we inhabit what hooks considers the sacred space of the classroom. In *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, hooks adamantly questions traditional top-down competitive pedagogies found in most college curricula. Her writing consistently resists ideologies that she connects to patriarchal systems of

appropriation that perpetuate fear rather than openness. She contrasts the objectivity so important in academic communication with critical thinking and critical discussion, arguing that the former precipitates the culture of colonizing control, whereas a teacher's openness to close relationships with students fosters a milieu of trust and critical care. She writes, "Teachers who extend the care and respect that is a component of love make it possible for students to address their fears openly and to receive affirmation and support" (133). Critical friendship acknowledges the Freirean teaching philosophy that hooks admonishes because her perspective validates the realistic scale of emotion that students and teachers bring to their purposes in the classroom. That is, hooks privileges the emotions that are often elided in the classroom in the name of the academic commitment to critical distance. Her project ties ethos to pathos because students and teachers create and reveal their character and credibility (their development of a teaching environment where habits of goodwill abound) in spaces that allow for vulnerabilities or compromised histories of difference to be lived, validated, and acknowledged. Critical friendship wants to balance the important dimensions of the human relationship so crucial to good teaching with the relevant and rigorous demands of learning. By privileging pathos in her pedagogy, there is no doubt that hooks opens herself up to academic suspicion by the very scholars whose teaching styles she questions; however, her ethos develops as she balances her politically charged activism with her passion for her classroom topics and the alterity she advocates.

These are only three examples of teachers who open themselves toward relationships with students that welcome an understanding of ethos suitable to critical friendship. We can find myriad teaching styles and multiple individual teachers

constantly working to make themselves critically and emotionally available to students. A recent Hollywood production fosters a vivid depiction of this kind of pedagogical openness in the 2010 movie, *The King's Speech*.

The King's Speech uses the negotiation for ethos between teacher and student to generate much of the tension in the story, and this back and forth also shows the way ethos as good will, as a commitment to habits that cultivate character, add credibility to the rhetorical practices of teacher and student. Prince Albert's teacher, Lionel Logue must tell Albert the truth. He does so as quasi-therapist, uncovering the truth about Albert's childhood, which proves to be more common, more painful with memories of abuse than the veil of his celebrity would have the Kingdom believe. But it is only by confronting his private truths that the prince can address the anxieties associated with his impediment of stuttering. On the other hand, Logue knows himself to be a charlatan of sorts and he finds in his unusual student the cultural capital to either ruin him or to bring him the recognition he so desires. Their exchange of grace makes possible their mutual approbation. In one scene, Lionel suggests that perhaps Bertie will make a better king than his reckless brother, to which Bertie responds, "impertinence by a nobody" — a biting cut to someone like Lionel, who longs for validation and notoriety, but perhaps Lionel also recognizes the necessity of social distance.

This example is the reverse of most pedagogical relationships because in this case the teacher lacks institutional backing (credentials), whereas the student could not have more institutional endorsement, and so it is in fact the teacher who risks everything by speaking truth to power. Our perception of our own power as instructors, as "the haves" at the university may keep us from taking the time to teach students how to interpret our

writing instruction and our evaluation of their writing. Our misinterpretation of our power may discourage us from reading student writing carefully or may allow us to justify authoritarian practices in our classrooms, rather than advocating the open communication established by Lionel Logue and advocated by Carl Leggo and Kevin J. Porter, among others.

The King's Speech presents a complex interrogation of power and makes a vivid pedagogical case for critical friendship. Who holds the power in the relationship between Prince Albert and his teacher? For his royal status the Prince seems like an obvious choice. But the rhetorical complexity in this case presents us with a Prince whose communicative ethos hangs in the balance. It is one thing to second-guess a Prince's credibility because he is a playboy with no respect for the conventions of his office, as in the case of Edward (Albert's brother and heir to the throne), but it is quite another problem for a Prince to be tongue-tied, making it difficult to receive the respect of his subjects. Of the five canons of rhetoric, most can be mastered with the help of professionals; but the fifth one, *delivery*, poses a problem for anyone with a persistent stammer. Although the tension in Edward's abdication of the throne is not lost on the average viewer, we locate the primary rhetorical tension in the narrative of this film in Prince Albert's insurmountable vulnerability before a national listening audience. However, the most elegant rhetorical tension unfolds between a man with no formal credentials as a teacher or speech therapist and a man whose imperial credentials risk being exposed as nothing more than ceremony. Not only do his eccentricities help Bertie transcend his stammer, they make possible the unlikeliest of friendships, make possible, in fact, a critical friendship. As with most binaries, *The King's Speech* reminds us that

power between teacher and student is never one sided, but circulates through the relationship in an ongoing negotiation. While the story privileges a melodramatic narrative of the teacher's power to "light a fire" in the student, it should not be overlooked that the student's power in this case lends credibility to a teacher with no credentials.

Why Critical Friendship?

So much of the motivation in bell hooks' classroom seems personal. She ties pathos and ethos together to explore the emotional impact of the twists and turns that affect one's academic development, one's credibility and character. That is, she embraces and encourages the personal because she wants to challenge barriers that allow people to hide behind prejudices, biases, and preconceived judgment, both in their writing and in the classroom. She advocates a transparent, open relationship between students and between students and teachers. My own interest in ethos comes from personal experiences in the classroom that created alienation and anxiety about my own character and credibility as a student and as a writer. From my first writing class as a college freshman through the end of my doctoral coursework, I encountered teachers whose classroom instruction and response to student writing exacerbated writing anxiety rather than alleviating it. First-year writing courses offer an especially opportune occasion to introduce students to the rigors and high expectations that they will inevitably face in other college courses, but it is an equally fitting place to demonstrate an ethic of friendship because writing courses built around regular exchanges of communication (usually through writing) create an intimate space susceptible to abuse, but also

conducive to support, encouragement, and validation. Too many teachers confuse rigorous standards and expectations with severe and impatient feedback, whether written or audible.[19] One point to keep in mind in defense of the defensive teacher is that teacher's may have very legitimate reasons for meting out their expectations with severity. My argument here is that critical friendship can help teachers refocus their critique onto writing-specific questions and problems while remembering that those problems are extensions of complex flesh and blood people who deserve to be treated with dignity and care. Carl Leggo refers to himself as a "wounded writer" still recovering in middle age from writing teachers of his youth continually reminding him that his writing is "mediocre, awkward, incoherent, faulty, loose and fragmented" (Leggo 16). As a writing teacher he seeks to compensate for the pain that students associate with writing critique by nurturing writers and by "acknowledging the value in their writing." He focuses on "value" as the root of "evaluate" (16). At the same time he wants to challenge his students. He describes his response to student writing as "evaluation" or "a process of valuing the writer and the writing, acknowledging the value in both" (16). This emphasis on valuing students is another way of trusting them. Inscribing the communication between student and teacher with the perspective that evaluate and value go hand in hand is another way of being a critical friend; it is a way to conceptualize ethos.

Like Leggo, Kevin J. Porter worries about the way teachers develop ethos in their interactions with students. He targets what he calls a "pedagogy of severity." After noticing that his students share a history of authoritarian writing instruction, he uses peer response to see if he can identify the motives behind student's responses to each other. He points out that a pedagogy of severity "often transforms students into the kind of

harsh, antagonistic readers they would otherwise resent" (577). After analyzing a variety of ways that students encounter contradictions between the instruction they receive and the professional examples of writing they read, Porter turns to Donald Davidson to advance a recommendation for a more charitable exchange between teachers and students. In Davidson, Porter finds a poignant contrast between pedagogical practices of charity, where teachers go to great effort to communicate with students in productive and empathic ways as opposed to policing measures that micromanage student behavior and follow Porter's pedagogy of severity. He questions teacher's uses of "Multiple-choice exams; assignments that demand only rote memorization or summary over analysis; constant surveillance; constant assessment, evaluation, and correction of work; teacher-initiated prefabricated discussion topics; teacher-question and student-answer 'discussions.'" Porter questions whether such teaching habits fashion teachers who trust their students. He asks if these micromanagerial methods "are the features of a pedagogy that envisions students to be rational beings with mostly true beliefs? Or is this a pedagogy that distrusts its students, who must be force-fed information and constantly watched to ensure that the information is retained—and punished if it is not? This is surely an uncharitable pedagogy, a pedagogy of severity that treats students as error-prone, incoherent and irrational" (586-587).

Porter's extensive list may exaggerate the pervasiveness of such teaching practices, or itself seem too severe an indictment. However, like Leggo, his descriptions should alert every teacher about possible oversights and cut corners that occur in the everyday pressures of managing complex verbal and textual interactions. Of course it is not only the communication of agonistic teachers that undermines student confidence, it

is also rigorous academic writing that students read with too little contextual framework from instructors, a framework that might help students persevere through challenging texts. Deborah Tannen characterizes this kind of pedagogical ethos in her essay, "Agonism in the Academy: Surviving the Argument Culture." Tannen suggests that too much of our academic identity comes from our "ideological assumption that intellectual inquiry is a metaphorical battle. Following from that is a second assumption, that the best way to demonstrate intellectual prowess is to criticize, find fault, and attack. Many aspects of our academic lives can be described as agonistic." Tannen focuses on how competitive ways of communicating reinforce out-dated, masculanized metaphors and modes of instruction. She uses examples like scholarly papers, which, in her words, ". . . follow a conventional framework that requires us to position our work in opposition to someone else's, which we prove wrong. The framework tempts—almost requires—us to oversimplify or even misrepresent others' positions; cite the weakest example to make a generally reasonable work appear less so; and ignore facts that support others' views, citing only evidence that supports our own positions" (216). Gerald Graff questions Tannen's argument against agonism because he sees her caught in binary language that dismisses argument too generally and too hastily. In his chapter "Two Cheers for the Argument Culture" he defends argument not just as acceptable but as inevitable and necessary to academic work, in fact as the defining characteristic of it. While he sympathizes with the pathos of Tannen's argument-against-argument, noting, "it is hard to disagree with her objections to the incivility, abusiveness and bullying that pass for public disagreement today" he suggests that Tannen more carefully qualify "bad versions of argument culture" from good ones: "For debate is unavoidably central to the life of

democratic educational institutions and democratic societies" (Graff 85). Graff's language here makes it seem like debate and argument are necessarily agonistic because he places them at the center of democratic experience, but in response to Tannen's characterizations of agonistic communication. In addition to the conflation of academic rigor and severe communication, teachers have other legitimate reasons for coming across to students as hassled, distant, or unfriendly; the exigencies of teaching are complicated. Not only does the writing teacher negotiate complex variables in teaching and responding to student writing, but he or she also does so from a place of deep care for teaching and for the topics he or she teaches. This care is seldom matched by genuine student interest. Unfortunately, moreover, some very earnest students still struggle to develop understanding and vocabulary for writing within one semester, despite concentrated effort, which introduces additional emotional and rational complexity. Critical friendship can play a crucial role if the teacher is willing to coach students on the equally valuable roles of critique and friendship. When students see critique as part of that pedagogical friendship, they may dwell more carefully on developing ethos (as credible habits and habitations—dwellings)[20] than on personal deficits otherwise reflected in a more calculating, less compassionate teacher critique.

Although both authors appear to sympathize with a middle ground, they also tend to conflate academic debate and argument as necessarily agonistic. Graff locates his assessment of Tannen's position in conflicting semantic interpretations of what passes for agonistic communication. But his objections take for granted the evolution that has occurred historically in the negotiation between students and teachers over power; his view seems to ignore its own privileged, patriarchal assumptions. In *Campus Life*, Helen

Horwitz reviews the relatively more recent part of this history in her chapter, "College Men: The War between Students and Faculty." Much of that struggle has to do with the difficulty for colleges to define themselves as secular institutions with actualized academic freedom. After delineating the history during the first half of the nineteenth-century of literal riots between students and teachers/administrators, she explains how the social clubs (fraternities) at colleges and universities grew out of the need for solidarity against the whims of faculty and administration: "The fraternity appealed because it captured and preserved the spirit of the revolts. Unlike the eighteenth-century literary society, the fraternity consisted of a small, select band pledged to secrecy. Although rhetoric paid tribute to serious, high-minded purpose, the real concern of each fraternity was to create within the larger college a small group of compatible fellows for friendship, mutual protection and good times" (28). Horowitz argues that students had little desire for communication with teachers outside of class and that students who complied completely with expectations of their instructors were ostracized by their classmates. However, by the close of the nineteenth-century, the acrimony between students and teachers softened. As the students themselves "became professors, they brought their memories into their new positions and saw themselves, not as their student's adversaries, but as their supporters" (53). Robert Connors emphasizes that such a transition resulted from the feminizing of expectations and discourse in the academy. His description of irenic discourse complements critical friendship because both rely simultaneously on demanding and generous approaches to teaching.

Picking up on some of the strains in Walter Ong's *The Presence of the Word*, Connors shows how the advent of the female entrance into the academy led to an

eventual rejection of the long held Greek agonistic approach to teacher/student interaction. He also explains how the Greek irenic strategy to include objective but compassionate encouragement challenged and in most ways replaced the agonistic ideals of combative confrontation. Connors reveals that after two thousand years, the defining feature of public education: "public verbal combat," nearly disappeared completely. "Instead of the oral, argument-based, male dominated education of the pre-1870 period, education post 1870 was much more interiorized, irenic, negotiative, explanatory. . . A man could attack another man verbally, and was expected to do so, but to attack a woman, either physically or intellectually was thought ignoble." Connors explains that as female enrolment in colleges rose, they effected subtle and obvious changes that led to the demise of the agonistic tradition in favor of personalized, polite discourse. "Thus [we see in the] educational structure we inherit, an amalgam of newer irenic values and half-understood survivals from a more agonistic time in education" (26-27). Unfortunately, Connors is not completely accurate in his assumption that all agonistic approaches disappeared. We know from the current literature on agonistic communication that it persists as a kind of identity as well as a pedagogical practice in academic publication and classroom instruction, but Connors correctly identifies a trend toward this irenic ethos.[21] Few college writing instructors encounter peers who might purposefully cultivate and encourage a combative ethos, including Graff, despite his concerted support of academic inquiry as argument. His definition of argument and Tannen's concern about our agonistic tendencies are not mutually exclusive. Graff merely wants Tannen to acknowledge the crucial role of argument in our discourse, her own writing about argument especially. But it seems implicit in Graff's argument that cultural capital is at

stake. As noted by Connors, the tradition for agonistic pressure in academic settings grows from the soil of ancient education. People have always carefully guarded the gates of access to this cultural power endowed by knowledge and education. This historically documented challenge to power in the classroom informs my thesis because just as agonistic tensions in the classroom date back through time, so does the important role of mentoring critical friendships.

In *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity*, Peter Brown notes that the social background of paideia has a long history that tends toward violence. He insists that ancient culture operated in a way that set the elite individual in contrast to the masses. Brown records how only sons of royalty had the means and privilege to travel long distances throughout Eastern parts of Greece and to "linger in the classrooms of a teacher such as Libanius, at Antioch, or Prohaeresius, at Athens." The result was that they graduated from this experience with the kind of entitlement that would warrant their prosperity and success in the future. "They were convinced that 'the square-set soundness of [their] speech and its polished brilliance produced by skill' made them compare to uneducated men the same way ordinary humans compared to cattle. "Paideia was a means of expressing social distance. Its skills were difficult to acquire and, once acquired, could only be displayed within rigid, traditional conventions. Education, therefore, controlled 'unstructured' social mobility" (39). We may still wonder whether or not these machinations of power have changed in contemporary education. Clearly, we still negotiate over the expression of social distance, inside and outside the academy, but we do it better when we allow the conventions of friendship to fund our practices of critique.

Although thinkers before Mina Shaughnessy called attention to the power struggles inherent to teaching, it is fair to say that most contemporary writing teachers develop pedagogies with more compassion and that purposefully resist the kinds of elitism found in ancient paideia because of her work in *Errors and Expectations*. One might at least hope that today's teacher takes diverse learner readiness into account, realizing, that is, that we teach more than persuasive speech or invention, arrangement, and style. Unlike ancient paideia, most composition instructors openly resist racism, sexism, classism, and so forth, but like ancient paideia, we want our coursework to advance students toward good citizenship in the academy, as well as in their larger communities. We continue to measure and sort students to figure out how to help them recognize and acquire tools they can use in their respective discourse communities. As Lynn Bloom points out in her essay "Freshman Composition as a Middle-Class Enterprise," teaching composition aims to enable "students to think and write in ways that will make them good citizens of the academic (and larger) community, and viable candidates for good jobs upon graduation" (655). Bloom explicitly connects our pragmatic academic values to those of Benjamin Franklin. She argues that college composition programmatically endorses values that have shaped American consciousness: values like temperance, order, resolution, frugality, and industry. Nevertheless, despite our loftiest ambitions to foster and reinforce egalitarian values in our classrooms today, teachers inadvertently leave too many students guessing about how to negotiate the challenges of invention, arrangement, and style. Writing instructors want students to understand the reasons for critically distant proximities, we want students to learn how to control their sentences, and we do not want to create illusions about the

rigors of academic work. But we have to achieve these goals in the service of student success and confidence not at their expense. Critical friendship fulfills this promise by insisting upon useful and necessary critical practices in reading, writing, and speaking while at the same time considering our ethical obligations[22] to our students.

Critical friendship requires interlocutors to temper their critique with the values and aspirations of friendship and to moderate the values of friendship with the demands of critical distance and perspicuity. Although critical friendship theorists never explicitly refer to critical friendship in the context of ethos or ethics per se, it belongs to this realm of rhetoric because the act of critic, mitigated by the aspirations of friendship is an ethical negotiation, a negotiation that suggests that I should always consider the ethical implications of my instruction, critique, and analyses. Moreover, critical friendship naturally converges with an appeal to ethos because critical friendship simultaneously acknowledges a mandate to hold interlocutors accountable for careful scholarship while also taking into account the ethical exigencies of power relations inherent to teaching and learning.

Levinas: A Critical Friend

Like other post modern thinkers, Emanuel Levinas is easily misappropriated and misinterpreted. In fact, it may not be possible to interpret him accurately. Perspicuous interpretations run counter to his project, which dwells upon and within the infinitude of abstractions. Like Sören Kierkegaard (a.k.a. Johannes De Silentio), Levinas is not exploring the machinations of the ordinary self, but rather some version of Kierkegaard's self as "a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation [which

accounts for it] that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but [consists in the fact] that the relation relates itself to its own self" (Sickness 9). In the case of Levinas, however, the self is not a relation that relates itself to itself but instead a relation that relates itself to itself through and because of its relation to the other selves, in fact, infinite selves (or to the construct of the wholly other, which is constituted by the infinitude of other selves). To this end Levinas insists that absolute freedom is required for beings to be strangers to each other: "Their freedom which is 'common' to them is precisely what separates them…language consists in…a relationship with me only inasmuch as he is wholly by relation to himself, a being that stands beyond every attribute, which would precisely have its effect to qualify him, that is, to reduce him to what is common to him and other beings—a being, consequently, completely naked" (Totality 73-74).

Levinas' exploration of the relation between the self and the other echoes again as Kierkegaard continues his own description of self-relation in *Sickness unto Death:* "Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis" (9). The synthesis inscribed by Levinas' version of reality views the other, the stranger, the neighbor as the physical composite but also as a metaphor or symbol (perhaps signifier) of both finitude and infinity, temporal and eternal. Because of his expansive theorizing between the poles of the finite and the infinite, the physical and the metaphysical, Levinas is not just easy to misunderstand, he is nearly impossible to pin down. It is difficult to decide what he means and how to apply what I cannot decide about him to other contexts, to myself, to writing studies. C. Fred Alford sees Levinas using "the language of prophecy," worrying too that he has become

"everything to everyone" (146). Alford's introduction to Levinasian political theory begins with a characterization of "The Levinas Effect," which cautions the reader about the chance that anyone to see in Levinas anything they want to see (146). Applying Levinas to rhetoric and writing studies becomes a problem then because of the tendency to see him making material arguments when he is not, to interpret his conceptual and unembodied theses as somehow manifest in flesh and blood, (hu)man to (hu)man interactions. My application of Levinas to critical friendship, moreover, becomes all the more vulnerable to such pitfalls because critical friendship is specifically about pragmatic human relations, the intimacies of teaching and the literalness of responses between actual embodied selves.

Levinasian alterity (the key to his theory), understood as the dream of pure nonviolence, requires the subject (sometimes called by Levinas, the Ego) to take responsibility by responding to the other: "The challenge to self is precisely the reception of the absolutely other. The epiphany of the absolutely other is to face where the other hails me and signifies to me, by its nakedness, by its destitution, an order. Its presence is this summons to respond. The Ego does not only become conscious of this necessity to respond as if it were a demand or a particular duty it must decide on. The Ego is through and through, in its very position, responsibility" (Humanism 33). Levinas sees the self as a responsibility to respond to the other; his view goes beyond the belief that the self has an ethical duty to respond to the other. He sees the self-constituted (ontologically and teleologically) as and by the construct of this responsibility, as though the subject who fails to see his responsibility, who fails to respond, is not a conscious self. Responsibility does not elide the self, but rather makes the self into a self, as manifested by the

response—like a Born Again Christian who knows he or she is born again by the fact of his or her conversion and subsequent identification as one who is converted or "saved" (though Levinas wants to drop the egoism of "being saved"); when I respond to the other, I am conscious of my self as a conscious responsible self. In Levinas' words: "To be Me/Ego thenceforth signifies being unable to escape from responsibility, as if the whole edifice of creation stood on my shoulders. But the responsibility empties the Ego of its imperialism and egoism—be it egoism of salvation—does not transform it into a moment of universal order; it confirms the uniqueness of the Ego. The uniqueness of the Ego is the fact that no one can answer in my stead" (33). Levinas' ethical theory is well suited to my definition of ethos as a habitat for goodwill, a place to cultivate the habits of critical friendship because the teacher, particularly caught up in the kind of consciousness Levinas advocates, gets made by his or her relation to the student: no student, no teacher.

Whether the teacher reads, writes, sits in committee meetings, or responds directly to students, the solicitation of the student is always at the door, always knocking. Everything else is a means to this end of responding to the knock. Jeffery Nealon characterizes a postmodern Levinasian/Bakhtinian ethics as dialogic; he summarizes this position by suggesting that an informed postmodern ethics would return to the idea of the other as a neighbor because it is through the relationship to the other that "the moral self comes into its own" (34). In this spirit, critical friendship advocates a response that aims toward the Levinasian dream of pure nonviolence (alterity) while always preserving candor. Levinas views response to the other as a version of the Levitical dictum: "love your neighbor *as yourself*";[23] in so doing, the self performs what Levinas calls "substitution" in order to become the other:

> Substitution frees the subject from ennui, that is, from the enchainment to itself, where the ego suffocates in itself due to the tautological way of identity, and ceaselessly seeks after the distraction of games and sleep in a movement that never wears out. This liberation is not an action, a commencement, nor any vicissitude of essence and of ontology, where the equality with oneself would be established in the form of self-consciousness. . . This describes the suffering and vulnerability of the sensible as the other in me. The other is in me and in the midst of my very identification. (*Otherwise* 124-125)

Levinas' word "liberation" refers to the realization that one's responsibility for the other precedes what he earlier calls guilt (for not responding) on one hand or benevolence (for responding) on the other. If I am conscious of my responsibility, I will see how my "here I am" (my answer) is constituted by the call of the other. The call reveals to me my presence as one with the responsibility to respond. The call is made in an unknowable, untraceable, unconscious way because it is constituted by the mere fact of the other's existence, recognizable in the moment of acknowledgement between selves.

As I try to imagine how to apply Levinas to the classroom, to real life situations, I am frustrated by his most profound dichotomy. Since the other represents the abstraction of all others and therefore, the wholly other, and thus infinity, how do I apply the concepts to a material circumstance, to the classroom, to actual teachers responding to materially situated students? It is worth recounting how Levinas frames this dichotomy in an anecdote summarized here by Alford:

> Sitting in your apartment, suddenly the doorbell rings. What could that portend? As you walk to the door you are distracted, still thinking about your latest project. It takes you a moment to recognize your neighbor at the door, the one who lives upstairs; as soon as you recognize his face you invite him in. You talk for a while. He tells you his problem, you tell him what you might do to help him. You share some pleasant conversation, and soon enough your neighbor leaves. What you originally experienced as an interruption you now experience as a pleasant interlude, in which some understanding has passed between you and your neighbor. Or so it seems to you.
>
> Instead of returning to your work, or allowing the memory of a pleasant

> interlude to linger, Levinas asks that you try to recapture the shock of the other's intrusion, the moment when you were confronted with the other person's face, but before you recognized him. What did you experience in that fraction of a second? You experienced, says Levinas, an encounter with the other in all his or her immediacy, but with none of his or her particularity. (150)

According to Alford, this naked, vulnerable face shatters your ego, interrupts your life, and your world, as you open a door, not into the hallway but into infinity (150). The richness of this moment captures the political volatility of the teacher's encounter with the student. Reminiscent of Aristotle's gnomic greeting to his would-be (so called) friends: "my friends, there are no friends," Levinas paints a picture of the paradigmatic neighbor or stranger who simultaneously obligates the self to respond to the call while realizing the impossibility of responding. Diane Davis, among others, points out how this kind of double bind between the self and the other here echoes in the meanings of the words host and hostage (Davis 604). For the teacher, the student materializes in the classroom as inevitably as the knock of the neighbor and one must respond. But how can Levinas' impossible question about that moment of unrecognition ever be reduced to a physical encounter? In order to use his theory in the classroom, we must somehow deny the weight of infinity (which is to essentially abandon his theory altogether). We must privilege the temporal in willful ignorance to the eternal. At the same time, the recognition of a particular face inevitably comes to the meaningful dialogical encounter. That is, whether a pleasant interlude or violent interruption, we cannot indefinitely suspend that moment so crucial for Levinas. As a reader of Levinas, I must find a way to put alterity to use in the moment of inevitable recognition—is this not when it will actually count, to see my student and respond to him or her—the no longer naked face?

Grant Matthew Jenkins points to crucial sentences in Levinas that may not

completely resolve the paradox of Levinas' impossible encounter between the self and the other, but his emphases do validate the actual human to human component of Levinas' work. These sentences in Levinas support the important dialogic transactions in teaching. According to Jenkins,

> Levinas objects to the rhetorical situation—with its triangulation of the sender, message, receiver—as an ethical model because it places the subject on the same footing as the Other and erases the 'height' and 'respect of the face-to-face. Although theorists like Jakobson, Sausure, Austin and others see language as an act, what they overlook is really in plain sight: teaching always has a face, even in virtual realms where an inter-face stands in for a face. Levinas writes, 'The height from which language comes we designate with the term teaching.' (567)

Ironically, Levinas' very problem with rhetoric, as Darren Ambrose and others point out, has to do with its erasure of the other in its violent demand for the same (Ambrose 634). However, Jenkins pursues a viable thesis that promotes Levinasian advocacy for teaching. He sees Levinas' alterity as an important and achievable reality in classroom relations even if we can only use Levinas on a thematic or metaphorical plane. Jenkins seems to allow that Levinasian tropes are strong enough and applicable enough to inform teaching practices despite the problem of denying the inextricable relationship in Levinas between the finite and the infinite. Jenkins shows how Levinas is clearly devoted to teaching as a part of alterity, proximity, and response. Levinas refers to conversation as one of the crucial mediums in teaching. The stranger at the door only wears the face of everyone, of the wholly other, in that suspended moment of unrecognition, but conversation breaks through the ambiguity and obligates the self to the interruption of the other who moves across the Buberian spectrum from an "it" to a "thou." In the classroom, we rely on the varied iterations of conversation to guide our response to those knocks, not from arbitrary others, but from proximate, familiar ones who at least always

already wear the face of student. Although, according to Alford, Levinas finds the compounded value of the other (the wholly other) in that liminal moment of suspended interruption, the real work of alterity must occur in our live response to denuded, actual faces. Or perhaps, in order to be truer to Levinas, we must enter the classroom always already responding to the yet unrecognizable student as other. Critical friendship is well suited to bear the weight of this duality because the critical disposition awaits the distanced proximity to students, and the friendship anticipates the moment of recognition.

Levinas is not without his critics. Simon Critchley argues that Levinasian ethics suffer from five particular blind spots related to Levinas' restricted definitions of Fraternity, Monothesim, Androcentrism, Family, and Israel. For Critchley, Levinasian alterity writ large becomes as ethnocentric, chauvinistic, and tribal as some of the anti-Semitism that Levinas protests throughout his career. Critchley is especially nervous about Levinas' dedication to Israel as either a literal space or a figurative one because such devotions have their own potential for violence (175). John Caputo likewise sees a certain level of failure in Levinas, siding instead with Derrida for a more realistic version of the impossible (which sounds like he advocates the most plausible version of implausibility, but Caputo believes that Derrida offers the best solution in his language game among other language game choices). According to Caputo, Derrida sees Levinas' position against Husserl and Heidegger "'unthinkable, impossible, unutterable" because "that is not something one would be able either to say or think, as we have just done. This difficulty—saying something it cannot say—is one in which Levinas and negative theology find themselves. But Levinas will not avail himself of the classical recourse . . . which is to renounce language as a foreign medium. 'He has already given up the best

weapon, disdain of discourse.' Levinas holds that language is the very point of encounter— '*Bonjour'*—with infinity, with the wholly other" (Caputo, *Prayers and Tears* 20-21). Caputo's critique of Levinas, shall I say his characterization of Derrida's critique, finds Levinas resisting the Platonic ideal, resisting Hegel and the essentialism built into the philosophical aspiration toward orthodox resolutions, only to settle upon such a dream himself. Caputo calls Levinas' dream the dream of pure nonviolence in the world's encounter with the tout autre, the wholly other.

Diane Davis makes the strong claim that "Levinas has an anthropocentric blind spot the size of a Mack Truck" (597). She locates this blind spot in the quandary of material versus immaterial in Levinas' descriptions and definitions of face. She sees the problem in these descriptions as interruptions "coming in from the irreparable exposedness of corporeal existence, from a 'materiality more material than all matter,' and therefore that 'the face' could not be restricted to whatever it is that Levinas calls 'the human,' itself based, top to bottom, on a simple opposition to 'the animal'" (614). Davis metes out her specific argument in the microcontext of Levinas' regard for animals, as something valued differently than human selves and therefore not quite other in that "holy" sense that Levinas regards the human self. That is, she wonders if Levinasian ethical responsiveness might "accommodate non-human alterity" (597). But her more general investigation focuses on the way that Levinas invites us to think about agency and language, about whether the responsibility to respond really does precede consciousness. "If the rhetorical imperative, the obligation to respond, and so to assume response-ability, is situated, as Levinas says (without calling it rhetorical), prior to consciousness—prior to commitment . . . then how is it possible to distinguish this

response . . . from instinct or mere reaction?" (618). Davis uses Levinas' example of communications with a dog that he encounters (and names) while imprisoned during World War II (a dog that he writes about) to ask about the nature of Levinasian response—where it begins and ends. Like Kierkegaard's interest in the self's relation of itself to itself, Davis wants to know how far the relation of the rhetorical, linguistic self goes, and how far the responsibility to respond to the other extends toward preventing violence.

Levinas resists the categories of philosophy and rhetoric for similar reasons. Robert Bernasconi explains that Levinas resists philosophy because "philosophy is the assimilation of Otherness into Sameness, where the other is digested like food and drink. Levinas finds in the face of the other (autrui) a point of irreducible alterity which resists the philosophical logos" (xi). He contends further that the obligation to respond cannot be avoided, overlooked, or taken for granted but that such an obligation has been ignored in philosophy (xi). Similarly, rhetoric always advocates a direct connection between the speaker's (or writer's) purpose and audience. That is, the speaker or writer always participates in a call and response communication loop. This obligation to respond becomes the crucial touchstone between Levinas and critical friendship because of the interdependence of the interlocutors. Jeffrey Nealon agrees that Levinas resists philosophy. He emphasizes Levinas' challenge that we consider the primacy of "nonphilosophical experience" where one understands that response to otherness or proximity to the other precedes any philosophical understanding, where the "most famous trope for this experience is the dialogic face-to-face encounter with the other" (34). Given this emphasis in Levinas, we are reminded of something not always clear in the minds of

the college composition teacher: the primacy of the writing student. Of course the teacher knows rationally: no student, no teacher. But there has always been a dialectical tension in the distribution and management of labor for college instructors, a tension between publication, service, and teaching. Levinas ties being (the subject's reason for being) to the response(ibility) of the self to the other. Whereas an agonistic pedagogy might privilege the role of the teacher over the role of the student, critical friendship, informed by the spirit of Levinas, recognizes the significant power that rests with the student. According to Levinas, the alterity of the other "is manifested in a mastery that does not conquer but teaches. Teaching is not a species of a genus called domination, a hegemony at work within a totality, but is the presence of infinity breaking the closed circle of totality" (Totality 171). In these lines we understand that when one's critical intervention with the other (the teacher with the student or vice versa) interrupts the tautologies of sameness that are the life blood of authoritarian certitude (or "closed circles of totality"), we open things up and we break things down in order to allow for something new, alternatives ushered in by the surprise of the other (or alterity).

Does Levinas overlook the fact that the ego remains unable to fulfill the expectation in the call of the other, that the other can never really be satisfied by my response? When Aristotle says, "my friends, there are no friends" he suggests awareness of the profound existential impasse between would-be friends. Critchley lists friendship's impossibility as one of his five complaints against Levinas' ethics. Where Levinas sees fraternity, Crtichley sees the obvious risk for failure. Quoting Levinas, he writes, "the other is from the first the brother to all the other men" ("Autrui est d'emblée le frère àtous les autres hommes" 201). That is, he Critchley suggests, "at the level of politics, the

ethical relation is translated into what I would see as a classical conception of political friendship as fraternity, as a relation between brothers, between free equals who also happen to be male" (173). Critchley is not just uncomfortable with a problem found in the Judeo-Christian idea of fraternity: that if one is a friend to all, one is a friend to none, but he also takes exception to Levinas' very patriarchal world view. The writing teacher faces a similar challenge to extend critical friendship equally and equitably and rather than making one's response (to an in-class question or to student writing) personal, to offer one's mentoring response to the important question at hand with focus on alternative ways of proposing and fulfilling a clear thesis going forward. The writing instructor committed to critical friendship will find a balance between praise and blame with the humility to favor a vision of infinity more than one of totality.

The following personal example illustrates the challenge to recognize the call of the other and the impossibility of fulfilment. A few years ago, sitting in the Airport in Portland, Oregon, on my way home from an academic conference, I noticed that people all around me were doing those things people do in airports, running to catch flights, eating, sleeping, reading, shuffling around from one kiosk to the next, etc… But on this occasion, the conventional airport lull was interrupted by two young teenage girls crying hysterically as they rushed quickly away from the terminals toward the exit. As they passed me, they stopped and hugged each other in uncontrollable sobs. It was evident that they had just received some bad news. All onlookers were arrested and held captive by our inability to break into this communication. They appeared to be in desperate need of help or assistance, but we were in no position (no proximity) to help them. None of these strangers could join in this public display of grief—we could not share their problem.

Even if someone had extended an arm of comfort or offered help, the felicity conditions prevented any actual communion. Even in their private embrace, each of these girls, sisters perhaps, was alone in her primordial grief. Would our linguistic relationship (what Judith Butler calls, our linguistic performative) change, were they to yell out, "Help, please, anyone, help us!"? Our barrier of proximity, would, it seems, be altered and all within ear-shot would experience a different kind of interpellation than that of abstract observer. Kant's moral imperative to do the right thing hinges on the shifting signifiers at stake in the actual scene that unfolded and my imagined one—where they cried for help. But as long as the individuals asked only for privacy, by asking for nothing, our "responsibility" was to leave them alone, and they remained alone in their grief and onlookers alone in their subjective worlds to wonder how to respond. But they had each other and they would presumably encounter others waiting to help, others more qualified by virtue of relation. But to Aristotle's point, even for those girls hugging each other, sharing pain, there is no way to enact what Levinas calls substitution. Empathy only goes so far. This emotional void warrants Caputo's and perhaps Derrida's dissatisfaction with Levinas' argument. According to Caputo, Levinas' dream recycles the Platonic orthodoxies.

It is for these reasons that Critchley makes the helpful point that one of the concessions Levinas fails to make, but must in order to see alterity work, requires that we recognize what Chritchley calls a gap or a hiatus between ethics and politics. This gap fosters a self who is not prepared for all others all the time, but rather that one other situated in geography and time with whom you come face-to-face right now. That is, alterity must accept its responsibility one case at a time, otherwise the politics of the

individual self will forever disappoint the material ethics of the self (179-180). Davis corroborates this view when she isolates Levinas' sole "Saying of the face," which she explains as his emphatic "No" as an interdiction to murder:

> So it is at the very instant when my powers of comprehension are interrupted that I am also commanded not to kill, neither in the figural nor the physical senses of the word (and the former is the condition of the latter). This 'No' that comes through loud and clear is an interdiction first of all against murder-by-identification, against the appropriation of the Other in the other; it is in that sense also an invitation to respond and so to remain in relation with what one can neither appropriate nor abdicate. (Davis 618)

The politicized environment of the writing classroom pits the power of the teacher against the power of the student and separates them interminably. But clarity about their common writerly purpose draws them together in the fellowship of critical learning.

One might contend that these criticisms of Levinas exaggerate their focus on the quantitative impossibilities in Levinas at the expense of his desire for a transcendent ethos. When my response honors the agency of the other, which means that when my ethos as respons(ibility) prepares me for the hailing of the other, I acknowledge that responsibility when I respond. Levinasian ethics complements critical friendship because it sees this proximity between teacher and student in terms of dialogic altertity. Nealon suggests that "if social space is understood as a rich dialogue of voices rather than a fight for recognition and domination, then the other is not necessarily a menacing or hostile force." He continues by reiterating the imperative of dialogue for the ideal middle ground in the "non appropriative ethical subject position" (33). By definition, critical friendship aims directly for that middle ground, that medium in the pendulum between total friend and total critic, wherein response to the other is its primary undying interest.

CHAPTER 2

CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY: RESPONDING TO STUDENT(S) (WRITING)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the contemporary writing class, particularly on teacher response to student writing. As Nancy Sommers notes in the first sentences of her 1982 article, “Responding to Student Writing,” teachers expend enormous energies responding to student writing. In that early article, Sommers asks important questions and also wonders why we invest so much. She then offers important reasons: “we comment on student writing to dramatize the presence of the reader, to help students to become that questioning reader themselves, because, ultimately, we believe that becoming such a reader will help them to evaluate what they have written and develop control over their writing (148). But her purpose seems tied to a call for more research to answer her questions than to presenting those answers herself—it is a call for attention to the response conversation. Since her call, many have answered, but so much of that answer focuses on tracking longitudinal improvement in writing. I propose that instead we look at our response to student writing as an interaction focused on ethos, an interaction that privileges conversation that is itself the enactment of critical friendship. As noted in the previous chapter, critical friendship is not a new name I am giving to established

practices, but rather a useful term that accentuates the responses and responsibilities of devoted interlocutors: critical friendship is a practice in Levinasian alterity. Friendship was always a rhetorical model for learning. Ancient pedagogical friendships form the basis for rhetorical life lessons. For example, Socrates asks Lysis, "are we going to be anyone's friend, or is anyone going to love us as a friend in those areas in which we are good for nothing?" Socrates then instructs, "But if you become wise, my boy, then everybody will be your friend, everybody will feel close to you, because you will be useful and good. If you don't become wise, though, nobody will be your friend, not even your father or mother or your close relatives" (Plato, *Lysis* 11). Socrates is not making an observation about family loyalty, but instead one about the correlation between friendship and utility where what is useful and good becomes the material fodder for friendship.

Following Sommers, Cy Knoblauch, and Lil Brannon, among others, I argue that when we respond thoughtfully to student writing, we may not immediately change writing habits, but we model and encourage rhetorical competencies in invention, arrangement, and style. Moreover, we mitigate rather than exacerbate anxieties so common to writing. Critical friendship resolves the rigorous scholar's understandable pedagogical concern when he or she worries that the idea of classroom friendship erases important boundaries between students and teachers, undercutting the hierarchical structure of useful critical distance. I rely on Levinas's concepts of alterity, responsibility, and proximity to articulate the benefits of critical friendship in the context of responding to student writing. When I interpret the utility of my relationship with students as a critical friendship, my response to their writing potentially serves important emotional and ethical needs relevant to their academic development, regardless of direct impact on

literacy. Following a literature review on response to student writing, I argue that we expand both our understanding and application of ethos in qualitatively thoughtful responses to students when we see critical friendship in two especially important theoretical manifestations: acknowledgment and care. Each of these categories constitutes both an ethic and a mode of action in line with Levinas' anti-epistemological approach to alterity because each emphasizes the imperative of things like proximity and response.[24] Acknowledgment produces and results from a commitment to ethos made plain by my good will toward my interlocutor; for example, if I want what is best for my student, my acknowledgment of his or her good habits perpetuates intellectual confidence and trust, which in turn warrants character and credibility. This section on acknowledgment reinterprets the work of Lewis Hyde in order to turn his rather psychologized emphasis on acknowledgment toward a definition that allows for more balance between the logos of "critical" and the pathos of "friendship." The hard work of ethos complements an intellectual tradition of care because care ethics emphasizes alterity in response to the other. Finally, the conclusion of the chapter summarizes the way critical friendship and Levinasian response overlap and extend the role of ethos in college writing pedagogy.

Response in First-Year Composition

The historical conversation in writing studies has long been interested in the consequences of teacher response to students—particularly our response to student writing. Much of that research, however, applies empirical methods in order to quantify the success of response. For example, in Richard Straub's anthology, *Key Works on Teacher Response*, most of the studies follow clinical hypotheses that measure outcomes,

while very few scholars theorize about the ethical motives for response. In *Response to Student Writing: Implications for Second Language Students*, Ferris reviews response strategies from the 1980s through the early part of the twenty-first Century, but her thorough assessment of contemporary strategies bypasses the role of ethos in the teacher's response to students (not out of neglect, but because it is not important to her strategy). This is not to say that no one takes up ethos-related issues. In Straub's anthology, Paul Diederich argues for the value of praise in teacher response and in his own essay, Straub privileges feedback that complements the structure of give-and-take conversation. So, while I am not suggesting that scholars always fail to evaluate their own stance in responding to student writing, I am offering critical friendship as a pronounced theoretical description of the writing instructor's intellectual and ethical responsibilities to students. Critical friendship is a useful name for the teacher's stance toward students because the structure of friendship encourages the emotional trust necessary for the free exchange of critical recommendations.

As noted in Chapter 1 in the discussion on agonistic instruction, teacher response has in it the seeds of violence and destruction that Levinas fears—this violence comes with the appropriation of the other by the subject, in Levinasian terms, as a form of anti-alterity or denial of difference in favor of the same. If teachers do not temper their criticism of student writing as well as their response to students generally, it can do what Levinas would consider violence.[25] This is not to suggest that teachers need to refrain from critique, but that the contingencies of critique should be conveyed transparently. By "contingencies" I merely refer to the need for teachers to clarify for students the rules of engagement when offering and interpreting feedback. Just as student writing requires a

clear thesis followed by evidence for claims, response to student writing should be similarly obvious about the purpose of the interaction between teacher and student. Instructors at the highest levels of education often have difficulty telling students what they expect and how those expectations succeed or fail in student drafts. Since this situation calls for dispassionate or critical proximity, I argue that friendship offers the necessary restraint to that "critical" distance in order to mitigate the potential for violence. This concern is not new to writing studies. Geneva Smitherman's 1995 retrospective on the "Student's Right to their Own Language" (SRTOL) movement reflects upon the effects of SRTOL twenty years after it began. She reminds her readers about the crucial turn toward cultural awareness and practice of a culturally stipulated form of empathy. In Smitherman's words, she argues that we still need increased awareness about "what . . . the schools [should] do about the language habits of students who come from a wide variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds" (24). Without acknowledging a student's right to his or her own language, writing instructors will commit a kind of violence of appropriation that not only rejects student agency but that also denies the student's cultural history and ontology. Cotemporaneous with SRTOL, Shaughnessy's investigation into how well students in writing classrooms are understood in their own life-contexts offers another example that helps writing teachers understand the impact of their response to students. In order to interpret the motives behind response as somehow part of critical friendship, one must ultimately be able to frame the critical component of response as a necessary part of friendship. If we see critique as an important variable of friendship, we might look to Levinasian substitution[26] as a way to better answer the concerns voiced by Shaughnessy and later echoed by

Smitherman and the many scholars who participated in and responded to SRTOL.

However, some scholars are dubious about this so-called violence of appropriation. Joy Reid argues that composition scholars spent the 80s and 90s exaggerating the tyranny of teacher's intervention with student writing. As an ESL instructor, she explains that her teaching philosophy requires her to a) help students change their academic habits and aptitude and b) to create a collaborative learning community wherein students feel comfortable enough to make mistakes and to work on changing them. She writes, "In light of this philosophy, I now believe that many of the appropriation arguments are myths and that these myths of appropriation grew out of teachers' good intentions to withdraw from student texts in order to provide better learning experiences for their students" (277). I agree with Reid that the paradox of allowing student agency can easily come at the expense of necessary instruction from the expert in the classroom. The teacher's calling is to utilize his or her expertise to promote learning. At the same time, one must continuously acknowledge, as Reid points out, the risk of responding to student writing according to a standard idealized and imagined by the teacher, but not necessarily accessible or obvious to students. This disparity of proximity between the expertise of the teacher versus the inexperience of the student can be misinterpreted by both parties. Critical friendship calls our attention to the need to teach and the need to nurture students in this process.

The teacher helps students value feedback, not as a necessary evil, but as a productive good. Rather than viewing response to their writing as personally critical of themselves as writers, students can see feedback as a sign of validation within a larger conversation and as a compliment from the interlocutor. Although the term

"conversation" risks being trivialized by overuse in composition discussion, the activity and trope of conversation remains paramount in how we understand ethos. It is also integral to Levinasian alterity.[27] Ethos becomes unfeasible when either the teacher or student believes critique to be personal, that is, reflective of unassailable character deficits in the writer. If we accept ethos as the cultivation of space (a dwelling) wherein one advances good will toward the development of character and credibility, then the student's correspondent (the teacher) can encourage their conversation or close it down with dogmatic, inflexible language, thus stifling ethos. The student's right to his or her own language is not only about the ethicality of "correcting" unique dialects, cultural perspectives, or second language syntax, it is also about a teacher's disagreement about "what" the student has to say. For this reason, the voice of the student is always under the duress of appropriation and erasure by the voice of the teacher, and the teacher is always on call to respond ethically—to construct ethos. As Dana Ferris notes, "because the teacher is the teacher, any feedback is likely to influence what students do subsequently—and experts disagree as to whether this influence is ultimately helpful or harmful" (14). The agency of the other is always exposed to the violence of appropriation, but this can be mitigated when I respond to the other responsibly with the pathos of friendship.

The question response literature asks most often has more to do with how to respond in order to improve student writing on the page, rather than how to respond as an effect of ethos. In their chapter, "The Emperor (Still) Has no Clothes," Lil Brannon and Cy Knoblauch revisit questions they asked twenty-five years ago about the success of teacher response research. Teachers continue to believe that critique helps student writing

improve, but Brannon and Knoblauch argue that this assumption is a myth. They contend that the response scholarship has never acknowledged the way that "the myth of improvement" justifies the attention writing teachers give to response. In their words, "The empirical research has been unable to identify meaningful development, falling back on the 'significance' of error correction, while the advocacy scholarship has been disinclined even to try, preferring instead to offer vague and unexamined assurances that a preferred method will produce results. Neither has directly confronted the myth as a myth" (11). Nevertheless, even if we agree with these conclusions, teachers will continue to correct mechanical errors, some will respond to students using argument to model the importance and forms of argument, and some writing instructors will praise student writing with the hope that improvement will follow positive reinforcement, as scholars such as Diedrich and Carl Leggo recommend. Others will continue to respond generously and exhaustively because after a few assignments, students adjust their writing to fit the teacher's expectations, and the adjustments seem like progress. Knoblauch and Brannon do not see teacher response as futile despite evidence that calls these purposes, modes, and motives into question, nor do they characterize the research on response as naïve or simplistic or suggest that teachers give it up because they, like so many others involved in researching response believe that there are varying benefits to response. In short, the way we frame our response to student writing and the tone we use in our delivery of that response, whether in person (in classes and conferences with students) or in writing, constructs an ethos between the student and teacher; it is an ethical space, a dwelling where we extend our readerly and writerly credibility, character, and good will.

Alterity and Levinas

Chapter 1 foregrounds some of the conversation in rhetoric and composition around the dialectic between agonistic pedagogy and what might be best described as dialogic pedagogy. In this conversation, agency and ethos develop and manifest themselves along the lines of communication between teacher and student, especially as the student negotiates invention, arrangement, and style. The teacher's own performance of ethos appeals to the minds of his or her audience as the instruction given displays good will and sound (trustworthy) habits. Likewise, the student's ethos develops alongside his or her good will and the student's acquisition of relevant disciplinary habits and conventions. While Emmanuel Levinas is not thinking of the writing student per se, his theory identifies important traces of sincerity between selves in the overtures of communication that he defines as "responsibility." The response of the responsible self is always, "here I am"; this sign of availability witnesses to the other that the response is sincere (Otherwise 144-145). Levinasian response makes an ideal trope for the writing classroom because his theory on responsibility relies wholly upon agency (what Levinas might call "absolute freedom"): as soon as agency begins, the ethos of the self and the other come into play because of convening communications between them. For Levinas, alterity is always the goal of response. In *Alterity and Transcendence* he defines the alterity of the other as "the extreme point of 'Thou shalt not commit homicide,' and in me, fear for all the violence and usurpation my existence, despite its intentional innocence, risks committing" (30). Levinas keeps his reader on constant alert for violence because for him language tends toward separation, alienation, and violence.[28] Accordingly, the self assumes responsibility not only by purposefully not hurting others,

but also by overtly responding to the other. As noted in Chapter 1, the material or physical response to particular identifiable, situated students, for example, compromises the complexity of Levinas' theory because Levinas is constantly aware of the infinite faces that he or she encounters in the singular, physical face of the other. The full scope of his work investigates a spectrum of human discourse and activity along an arc between imminence and transcendence. By allowing his concepts like Alterity, Responsibility, and Proximity to inform the material circumstance of the classroom, I wish to honor the transcendent scope of Levinas' work, but also rely on scholarship that uses Levinas toward practical immanent and metaphorical applications.

Levinas insists that the other is always vulnerable to usurpation by the sovereign "hateful" *I*. He sees the sameness of the "I" as a constant threat to the difference or the strangeness of the other (*Alterity* 27-29). The central question for Levinas is always about the proximity of the "I" to the "Other." Furthermore, his use of proximity is ethically qualitative more than it is materially quantitative, which means that Levinas uses the concept to consider the emotional and intellectual disposition of the "I" toward the "Other." Jeffery Nealon notes that if we interpret the other to be "simply 'like the self,' [we] will be unable to respond adequately to the other's uniqueness and singularity. Indeed, such a reduction amounts to a kind of subjective colonialism, where all other desires are reduced to the desires of the 'home country,' the self" (32). Nealon uses Levinas here as one example of only a few postmodern thinkers who are willing to take on the "appropriating instrumental rationality of the bourgeois subject" (31). Levinas focuses specifically on the material and political tension between the self and the other even though he sees infinite variability in the equation between self and other. That

means that he sees real violence as the outcome of communication between those who lack a capacity for what he calls substitution, or “putting oneself in the place of another” (Otherwise 146). I frame the tension between empathic substitution and emotional violence within the realm of verbal and written communication as a matter of ethos. In the college writing classroom, we locate the circulation of ethos between teacher and student in their solicitations and responses. Recall that my definition of ethos combines the idea of Aristotelian good will with rhetorical habits that foster ethical character and credibility between interlocutors. Moreover, attention to ethos makes one conscious of the connection between habits and habitat. As teachers, Halloran and Hyde remind us to ask ourselves, what kind of learning space (dwelling) are we creating by virtue our solicitations and responses? In the words of Gregory Clark, "What kind of place is the [writing] classroom and what kinds of activities are appropriate for that place?” (386).

A Response to Response

Based on casual conversation between teachers who respond to student writing as well as the literature on response to student writing, it would seem that most instructors want the very best for their students. However, Sommers’ 1982 study with Brannon and Knoblach led her to conclude that teachers comments are often arbitrary, idiosyncratic, hostile and mean-spirited (Response 149). In their important empirical analysis of rhetorical response to student writing, Andrea Lundsford and Robert Connors found that 24% of all teacher comments in their study are totally negative and 42% begin with one or two positive phrases, but then go negative. That leaves 58% above the line on a scale of negative feedback, which allows room for hope, but it also leaves room for

improvement in terms of the way we frame response. In fact, their conclusions seem like a mandate for critical friendship as a frame for student and teacher communication. There is no real way to measure for some variables that negatively affect our analysis of response, like the impact of teacher personality, institutional cynicism, or shifting pressures related to workload. Research by Chris Anson suggests that teacher response varies dramatically depending on timing and purpose of a given assignment as well as multiple factors related to both student and teacher circumstance.[29] In other words, there is no way to see the practices of response as static indications of a given teachers' motives—these rhetorical interactions are always in flux and always rhetorically contingent. But these studies and others that appear throughout this chapter invite us to see the way we respond to students as an intervention of critical friendship.

At the same time, we can keep Levinas in mind because his exploration of responsibility teaches the one responding to students (and for this chapter, especially student writing) that the degree of one's attention in a given response amounts to the performance of an ethical act. According to Kajornpat Tangyin, Levinas quotes Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamazov in an interview with Richard Kearney: "'We are all responsible for everyone else—but I am more responsible than all the others.' And he does not mean that every 'I' is more responsible than all the others, for that would be to generalize the law for everyone else—to demand as much from the other as I do from myself. This essential asymmetry is the very basis of ethics: not only am I more responsible than the other but I am even responsible for everyone else's responsibility!" (Tangyin 67). One way to imagine the built-in infinity in Dostoevsky's equation is to concentrate on how we respond to student writing—do we accept each intervention as a

chance to assume responsibility for the success of the other? If yes, then we must also ask what we mean by success. In this chapter I argue for a new interpretation of success relative to responding to student writing based on the qualitative value of our attention, based on critical friendship; the terms I use for this measurement are acknowledgment and care.

It is crucial to ask how response has been characterized since the early work of Sommers et al. And why should we feel to give another name to the development of ethos between students and teachers, a name like critical friendship? Ode Ogede points to a problem in American classrooms that she notices especially in contrast to her teaching experience in Britain where students are generally more respectful of teachers, not for personal reasons, but out of deference toward higher education as well as a more widely accepted formality in public life than one might find in the United States. According to Ogede, students show their respect by working hard in their university classes. In her introduction to a collection titled, *Teacher Commentary and Student Papers*, and in her own concluding chapter, fittingly titled, "Rigor, Rigor, Rigor, the Rigor of Death," Ogede highlights American cynicism toward higher education as manifest by "lazy students . . . far more consumed about their grade than in the qualitative work that will justify that grade" (108). Yet amidst her harsh, if accurate, characterization of complacency and grade inflation in the American composition classroom, and perhaps because of these factors, Ogede admits that "there is no other area in the American college or school classroom at the moment as potentially explosive as that of assessment of student papers and projects" (5).

While admitting her frustration with the malaise of academic expectations, she

empathizes with teachers who must be the bearers of bad news when holding student performance to a rigorous standard. This appropriate observation underscores the very tension I am interested in. Ogede asks, “How can teachers help students see the bitter truth without causing psychological trauma; be direct without being brutal, explicit without being wounding, critical without being intimidating?” (6). In posing these questions she accepts this American-style familiarity and casualness, a certain congeniality or political correctness in our culture, but she appropriately wonders if it must be at the expense of academic rigor, and her question reiterates the dialectic that makes a space for critical friendship. Many of the essays in her collection reinforce the timeliness of critical friendship — without identifying it as such. One such chapter by Bonnie Beedles and Robert Samuels suggests that a careful review of the response literature reveals that students do in fact use the commentary from instructors and that students are most responsive when teachers play the roles of “mentors, coaches, readers, and fellow inquirers, rather than the traditional “examiner, critic and judge” (12). While these first four labels allow for some level of critique, the pairing of “critical friend” seems more direct about the role of critique as integral to the obligations of friendship, especially for the kind with pedagogical motives. This section provides evidence that teachers and students prefer a transparent, egalitarian relationship like friendship to a paternalistic or agonistic one. At the same time, scholars like Ogede recognize that contemporary culture should not abandon its commitment to rigor. Instructors who understand the difference focus their critique on student work while also encouraging students to keep practicing their invention, arrangement, and style.

Levinas addresses this paradox between rigor and sympathy for students with

more general terms, "justice and charity." Concomitantly, Kajornpat Tangyin theorizes about the impasse between Levinas and Derrida by suggesting that Derrida wants to see Levinasian ethics graduate toward a Levinasian politics. Tangyin writes, "If we do not transfer ethics into politics, is it possible to achieve a peaceful and just society? Levinas is absolutely correct when he says: 'Justice comes from love [...]. Love must always watch over justice' (EN, 108), and also: 'Charity is impossible without justice, and that justice is warped without charity' (EN, 121). How could society achieve justice without laws?" (168). Here Tangyin notices the interdependence of terms like justice and charity, and he goes further by suggesting that, according to Levinas, they are so intertwined as to become the same thing. In the teacher's response to student writing, rigor and sympathy, justice and charity could easily be translated into the practice and application of critical friendship. For Levinas, the only way to respond to the other, to take responsibility for the other is by simultaneously extending judgment (which means continuous fairness and a call for introspective self-review) as well as compassion and charity. Writing instructors always balance these exigencies in their response because by leaning too far in one direction or the other, we undermine the beneficial force of the neglected virtue.

Notwithstanding a long history of punitive discipline in teaching, whether physical, emotional, or intellectual,[30] Ogede makes it clear that rigorous expectations and a discourse of severity are not necessary bedfellows, an observation not always clear for those who seem to prefer both. Aristotle's writing on ethics likewise proves that he knows the difference between rigor and severity. From Aristotle's perspective, we will not be able to see that person as a friend who overwhelms us with intimidation. In the *Rhetoric,* he writes that friendship is likeliest in "those whom we do not find frightening

and those who give us confidence, for no one is friendly to someone he is afraid of" (137). Not only does Aristotle imply the importance of tone in the performance of ethos in discourse between friends, but he also reinforces the vital reciprocity between interlocutors. In our time, Marilyn Button argues that if teachers do not develop a personal relationship with students using conferences, classroom discussion, online discussion and "even extend a home cooked meal or an evening of basketball" they will not really establish trust (Button 58). While some will find the casual and intimate nature of Button's hypothetical relationships with students problematic (Ogede for one), they will be relieved to know that she also believes critique is crucial to the student/teacher relationship. In fact, she writes, "the tougher the criticism the better. Students consistently identified their best learning experiences as those that challenged them beyond their current abilities" (58). She summarizes her theory on relationships by insisting that the best teaching occurs only when a student and a good teacher establish a direct relationship (59). Greg Giberson hinges his philosophy for response on a "classic" response essay by Brannon and Knoblauch titled, "Students Rights to Their Own Texts." In Giberson's view, teacher response should be democratic, and teachers should think of themselves as collaborators with students (412). His argument never elides the teacher's power of expertise in comparison to the student's developing knowledge, but he believes that teachers have all the more *responsibility* (in the Levinasian sense) to encourage a dialogic collaboration with students. As noted, critical pedagogues like Freire and hooks advocate personal nurturing intervention with students.

Concerned that our softer, more compassionate approach has gone too far, Dennis Lynch, along with a team of colleagues, takes up position against a "nurturing,

nonconflictual, composition classroom." In their essay, "Moments of Argument: Agonistic Inquiry and Confrontational Cooperation," they demonstrate little patience for the kinds of binary, polarizing, two-dimensional debates popularized on political talk radio and television, but they also question a wholesale reversal that leads students toward a place governed by PC sensitivity and away from what they call "serious deliberation." No doubt this dialectic over our own invention, arrangement, style, and delivery matters a great deal, especially in our response to student writing. We are right to ask ourselves how to balance our appeals to logos and pathos in our communication with students just as we ask them to consider these appeals in their writing. Lynch et al. propose to clarify a way of teaching argument that prepares students to participate in serious deliberations on familiar everyday issues.

While I favor their goal to intensify the rigor of the writing classroom, I remain unconvinced about the outcome of "reconceiving argument [to] include both confrontational and cooperative perspectives," which they argue will offer "a multifaceted process that includes moments of conflict and agonistic positioning as well as moments of understanding and communication." Specifically, they believe in "argument as agonistic inquiry or as confrontational cooperation, a process in which people struggle over interpretations together, deliberate on the nature of the issues that face them, and articulate and rearticulate their positions in history, culture, and circumstance" (63). I fail to see how agonistic inquiry exceeds what already happens when student writers thoughtfully engage in the kinds of academic writing instructors read and have students read and write. Lynch et al. seem to offer a solution in search of a problem when they insist that writing instructors who favor a pathos-based pedagogy,

like those recommended by Kevin Porter, compromise their credibility and more importantly the student's chances to learn how to argue convincingly. They also imply a frustration with the slackening rigor in the college writing classroom. While these interests have merit, I contend that the values they espouse are already built into the straightforward attempt to write an academic argument as recommended by many of the high circulation composition text books like Ballenger's *The Curious Researcher*, Ramage, Bean, and Johnson's *Writing Arguments,* or Kizner and Mandell's recent *Practical Argument*. These texts among many others take students step by step through moves that help them clarify (for themselves and their audience) meaningful positions backed by evidence. Moreover, if students understand and accept their role as critical friends, they will view the deliberation between themselves and their interlocutors as a manifestation of friendship—a critical friendship grounded equally in empathy, concern, and analytical candor.

We find an extension of this desire for increased classroom rigor in the continuous criticism written against American institutions of higher learning where scholars and journalists question the validity of the relationship between teaching and research. Coincident with increased financial pressure on state funded institutions to prove their legitimacy, especially for supposed "luxuries" like tenure and sabbaticals, two recent books that made their way into mainstream media conversation revisit contemporary cynicism toward the academy. However, both follow a long tradition of concern about the value of higher education. A review of Stanley Aronwitz's "The Knowledge Factory" by Morris B. Holbrook and James M. Hulbert offers a useful literature review of the kind of criticism that precedes Aronwitz's criticism, which vexes

over the consumer-oriented direction of higher education as opposed to a direction more devoted to learning for learning's sake. Another helpful history of such literature comes from John Searle's 1990 review of three books, where Searle begins: "I cannot remember when the American university was not in crisis." These latest whistle blowers seem to disregard the tradition of rebuttal to their resistance movement highlighted by Searle.

In their book, *Higher Education: How Colleges are Wasting our Money and Failing Our Kids—And What We Can Do About It*, Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus make the extended argument that teachers from Harvard to Oregon State University are not making the grade. They interview one Harvard senior who recalls that even in his small history class, the professor had a teaching fellow to assist with twenty students. "'I assumed, I hoped, that the professor read the papers at the end of the year, but it was the teaching fellow.' We weren't sure we had heard him right, paper readers for twenty or fewer students? But we had. 'The same is true in all the history department tutorials I've taken' he added" (78). The authors explain that research and publication agendas are to blame—that even schools with a history of strong teaching ethos push their faculty hard for publication success, often at the expense of teaching. Dreifus and Hacker demonstrate that there are examples on every college campus where students may not be getting their money's worth and not just because the student is not willing to work hard; they advance their thesis persuasively, suggesting that "[s]ince the purpose of higher education is—yes—education, all other activities should be made to justify why they exist on campuses at all" (237). The authors paint with a broad brush, mainly emphasizing in their study the evidence that supports their case at the occlusion of viable counterevidence; they avoid balancing their claims with what Gerald Graff and Cathy Berkenstein refer to as the

"naysayer," by which they mean, counterclaims that allow writers to anticipate and respond to potential objections to their arguments (76-84). And it is not true that Hacker and Dreyfus predict and advocate the demise of universities as we know them. In fact, they offer a list of colleges and universities that seem to be doing it right, but their central argument is that successful colleges are rare.

Similar blame arises from a more academic sociological study, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. In this study too, authors Richard Arum and Sosipa Roksa question the trends in higher education that seem to separate the most highly trained teachers from students rather than bring them closer together. In agreement with Hacker and Dreifus, they too worry that research agendas displace the needs of undergraduate students. Arum and Rokas explain that access to a college degree has never been so expensive, but graduation rates do not justify these rate increases (54). They provide statistics that seem to warrant their claims, but in a recent review in *College Composition and Communication*, Richard Haswell points out a long list of deficits in what he sees as their one-sided methodology. In agreement with Searle's observation that the public has always questioned the value and success of higher education, Haswell begins his review with an anecdote where Harvard president, Derek Bok, recruits his director of the "office of students" to "verify the widespread belief that undergraduates were leaving Harvard-Radcliffe as writers no better than when they entered" (Haswell 487). Haswell uses this story to remind readers about a tradition of alarm toward the real versus perceived value of a college education, and it contrasts nicely to the holes he finds in the logic of Arum and Sosipa's methodology. Concerned that the credibility deficits might spread, Haswell warns his readers not to cite this study (448).

The very impulse of these kinds of studies, credible or not, suggests a concern that is equally on the minds of those paying to be in the college classroom and those paid; it is a concern about the distance between instructors and students, or in the language of Levinas, the proximity between them, a proximity that affects the quality of their response. No matter the reasons or motives that determine this distance, the sentiment of the Harvard student concerned about access to his professor should give us pause. Clearly, a professor's critical knowledge develops from the rigorous knowledge-making process of research. And perhaps the more qualified that knowledge, the less inclined a teacher might feel to associate with fledgling students. However, it is difficult to imagine that scholars within composition see too much mutually exclusive tension between research and pedagogy since they go hand in hand, a fact which plays out, in my experience with the faculty in the University of Utah writing program, where senior professors with strong publication records and objectives along with less experienced professors also regularly teach first-year writing classes, and not under duress. But the common critique of university pedagogy remains focused on the power distribution between students, faculty, and administration, a conception that may skew the outcome of response to student writing. At the very least, our perception of our own power as instructors, as "the haves" at the university, may keep us from taking the time to teach students how to evaluate and value our evaluation of their writing. A misinterpretation of our own power may discourage us from reading student writing carefully or may allow us to justify authoritarian practices in our classrooms, rather than establishing the democratic milieu recommended by Giberson and others mentioned in this chapter.

When teachers mentor students, they help them approximate the habits, language,

and conventions of the discipline. When students read my careful commentary on their fourth paper in a given semester, it is not my acknowledgement of their growth over the course of the semester that counts long term (even though it will likely count for them psychically), but rather my affirmation of them as part of the discourse community. That is, my recognition of the way a student's writing process has improved should focus on the way I see students using discursive tools more appropriately and more comfortably. When I connect things students do in their writing at the end of a semester to things they did earlier, I communicate the kind of care that one expects from a professional colleague in collaboration, that is, from a critically friendly reader. Michael Robertson notices the way response functions as a kind of initiation to disciplinary discourse. He writes, "We can respond to student writing in the same way that we respond to a friend's story about his vacation or our spouse's comments on current events, commenting first of all on what was said. To do otherwise, to respond to technique alone, is not only bad pedagogy, it is bad manners." After revisiting his motives in response to students, Robertson then wonders if he wants to change what he wrote, but he claims, "I would not cut anything I wrote; my praise and criticism of their technique still seem accurate and useful. But I would begin each end-comment differently. I would try . . . to respond to each as we respond to a friend in conversation—with confirmation or dispute, an acknowledgment that we have heard and understood the message" (89-90). On the surface, it would seem that Robertson's reflexivity is merely in the service of his student's feelings. However, his trust in his student's purpose and the evidence of his student's acquisition of the necessary character and credibility to participate responsibly in academic conversation generate reliable ethos.

Typically, students welcome critical response to their writing, not only because they hope to improve their craft, but also because they understand the function of review as part of university instruction. In her recent article, “Feedback on Feedback,” Maria Ornella Treglia reminds us that we teachers shoulder a built-in dialectic where we are obligated, on one hand, to represent the university as teachers, to instruct, to measure; we work with our students in the role of editor and as such, we call their attention to their own language; we make them aware of a conscious audience (107). On the other hand, it seems only practical and, I might add, typical of writing teachers to provide humane and encouraging feedback. Robert Samuels conducted a survey on his campus where students across the curriculum identified five attributes they favor in an effective teacher: “1. open mindedness; 2. entertaining; 3. friendly; 4. interesting; 5. knowledgeable. . . Furthermore, they added that the best way for teachers to respond to student writing is to respect their ideas and give them friendly advice. They also agreed that the worst kind of teacher’s commentaries were those that seemed like a criticism of the student’s belief system” (Samuels 44); of course, many of those attributes that students value reflect the beliefs of students in a matrix of consumerism rather than one of liberal education. Nevertheless, their chosen values are not mutually exclusive: rigor and careful critique can coexist with compassion and alterity. Both Robertson and Samuels coincidentally use the word friendly or friend in their descriptions of things students value in teacher feedback. Students do not oppose helpful critique, but they universally accept it more readily if they sense some level of humanity from the critic.

As we cultivate such an ethos, we can listen with empathy, as Jim Corder suggests in his essay, “Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love.” He writes, “Rhetoric is love,

and it must speak a commodious language, creating a world full of space and time that will hold our diversities." He believes that most gaps in communication occur when teachers purposely or accidentally violate the agency of students. He holds that much of our language is tribal, but that we "can learn to speak a commodious language, and we can learn to hear a commodious language" (Corder 32). Corder helps us bring critique of student writing back to Levinas and to the goals of critical friendship. To point to a pedagogical space and language that can hold all of our diversities is to point to alterity. He helps us think about ethos as the dwelling place[31] where teachers have a chance to rethink the proximity between themselves and their students. If we tend to talk down to our students or respond to them paternalistically, we run the risk of undermining their confidence as they work to acquire the practices and habits, not just of composition, but of academic work generally. Ever suspicious of his own quick answers to difficult response questions, Kevin Porter's essay "A Pedagogy of Charity" suggests that when we close down "dialogic possibilities" and use instead the kinds of strategies that diminish the open flow of communication with response that Porter labels a "pedagogy of severity," we undermine the trust that might otherwise help us see our students as "rational beings with mostly true and coherent beliefs" (576). If our responses to student writing are jaded by cynicism or smugness, or most realistically impatience from reading too many papers that duplicate the same kinds of problems, we may fail to imagine our students as potential peers, much less as critical friends.

Acknowledgement

When I respond to students in class, in face-to-face conferences, and in writing (in an online class structure, for example, but also in direct response to their writing), I perform a crucial pedagogical function by acknowledging them as participants in the academic conversation and by encouraging them to recognize the habits and tools used in a particular discourse community. This acknowledgment is not just a gate-keeping measure, but also one of publicity. What I mean by “publicity” is that since most assigned writing in undergraduate courses has little life beyond the fulfillment of a given assignment, the important currency writing teachers exchange with students includes acknowledgement of them as fellow writers; this acknowledgement makes them more aware of the conventions we look for in rhetoric and composition conversation, and this increased awareness publicizes, or publishes, their work. Of course, we must remember Levinas’ concern about the teacher interfering with student agency by means of appropriation or by remaking the student in the image of the teacher. The power of acknowledgment cannot come from the sense of psychic validation, but rather in the acknowledgement of student agency, difference, or alterity. At the same time, the teacher’s authority on his or her topic cannot be disavowed in the name of the student’s right to his or her own language. That is, teachers must also be acknowledged as experts on a given subject. In *The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgement,* Michael J. Hyde examines different degrees of acknowledgement. His research relies heavily upon Levinas (among others) with particular interest in the way that acknowledgement depends upon alterity. Although Hyde is thoughtful about the ontological necessity of acknowledgement and he applies it usefully to concepts like “home” and the Levinassian

"caress," his general perspective on acknowledgement depends too much on the psychic benefits of personalized validation and therefore, his justifications for acknowledgment seem overpsychologized.

Teaching and composition theorists frequently emphasize the role of acknowledgment. Citing Rabbi Abraham Heschel, Hyde writes, "'what we need more than anything else is not *textbooks* but *textpeople*. It is the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils read; the text that they will never forget'" (162). Heschel, via Hyde, then observes that nothing could stress the importance of the text like the Jewish Biblical tradition (162). Following Levinas, Hyde borrows heavily from the Biblical tradition where he regards the Biblical hailing as a crucial solicitation for teaching and for his construction of acknowledgement. Like Levinas, he bases the premise of his argument on the Biblical call from YHWH, "where art thou?" and its conciliatory response, "here am I." One can easily see how this call matters in the classroom as the principle model for teacher/student interaction. The teacher who extends a call to the student, "where art thou?" stands a much better chance to receive the reply, "here am I" than the teacher whose pedagogy denies the agency of the student and never calls. That is, although not always practical, the teacher who always lectures and never takes questions and/or the teacher who provides little detailed response to student writing stands less chance to connect teacher textuality with student textuality using appeals to logos, ethos, pathos, and kairos versus the teacher who formally acknowledges student agency through a more interactive (dialogic) teaching style, with acknowledgment and response that is substantive and clear about the expectations of the discipline. This is not to assume that pedagogical method alone promises the appropriate measure of

acknowledgment, but the teacher cannot assume unreflexively that his or her qualified knowledge is enough, pedagogical method be damned.

Maria Treglia draws upon the response strategies of Knoblauch and Brannon to recommend that teachers take student writing at face value, as though it says what it intended to say, and that teachers acknowledge that even “inexperienced writers possess a sense of logic and purpose that guides their choices” (109). She then explains that “teachers may need to reconceptualize their roles as responders, reassess their sense of authority, and focus on process of negotiation of meaning” (109). Robert Samuels makes a similar claim when he recommends that teachers develop dialogic relationships with students because for him, conversational interaction with students carries the seeds of acknowledgment (47). However, individual personalities and circumstances may point teachers and students in other directions equally capable of acknowledgment. The key here is that the qualified instructor who practices critical friendship will take both the conventions of his or her discipline seriously and will also take the student seriously—this recognition will perform the requisite acknowledgment.

Critical friendship performs acknowledgment in many different ways. Teachers who make their good will known to their students ensure a learning space (an ethos) where students can take risks and practice the conventions of writing. Practicing entails making mistakes, so students who feel intimidated or overwhelmed by the learning space (the gap between their performance of ethos and that of the teacher or other students) will not open themselves up to such risks. Hyde recommends that we frame our acknowledgment in the language of gift-giving. Influenced by Calvin Schrag, he invokes the gift giving trope as a way to understand good teaching. According to Hyde, however,

Schrag sees the most profound level of gift giving as a one-way street, where the giver gives with no expectation of return. Hyde disagrees with this notion, arguing that reciprocity lies at the heart of gift giving.[32] Hyde writes, "I must take exception with my 'teacher's' postion. Schrag speaks to us of a gift that ought to be given without expectation of return . . . From the very beginning, if you will, the loving gift of acknowledgement was given with an expectation of return. The gift thus brings with it an obligation to reciprocate" 166). Within the context of teaching writing where students present written assignments with care and the teacher responds in kind, I tend to agree with Hyde. However, Schrag's point resonates more with the way that Levinas characterizes the response of alterity. Moreover, Hyde makes at least two interdependent mistakes in his theoretical concept of acknowledgement, and the most profound one becomes noticeable from his notion of gift giving. Hyde claims that the teacher should both give and receive the gift of acknowledgment: "Students and colleagues who seek this life-giving gift from a teacher have an obligation to at least try to return the favor as a way of contributing to the dynamics and instructive potential of the classroom, thereby adding to the confidence, passion, and feeling of self worth of the teacher. . . Human beings need acknowledgment; and those with academic egos, perhaps, need it more than most." He continues this line of argument by pointing to the professional academic peer review process (with immediate analogy to student peer review) as a way of sustaining recognition within the academic arena—as a source of acknowledgment (166-167).

While Hyde's notion of reciprocity seems appropriate, his conception of motives for reciprocity is narrowly theorized. Although he admits the need for a textual self, ultimately his idea of the self imagines a psychologized, hyperindividualized self. While

reciprocal acknowledgement may offer psychological rewards for students and teachers, this is not the primary reason for it. We acknowledge each other because we are committed to the conversation—we respond to each other because to do otherwise leads us away from our rhetorical purpose. I agree that responding to student writing, for example, performs a crucial kind of validation, but not to make students feel good per se. Rather, we respond to student writing to help them practice the conventions of writing and to introduce them to the academic conversation, just as in business transactions, where the exchange can be friendly or unfriendly and the purpose is always focused on the outcome of the agreement, or more crassly, on profit; thus, the currency exchanged in our pedagogical endeavors is not to help people feel good, it is to help people acquire the necessary skills to participate in the conversation, to extend, expand, complicate or enrich it. The more a teacher sees this acquisition of writing acumen to be the primary focus of acknowledgment, the more likely he or she will apply that response to writing practices and the less likely the side benefits of emotional validation will surreptitiously lead the teacher toward grade inflation—which obviously occurs in teacher student relationships where their emotional bond overwhelms their critical one.

As noted, Levinas and Schrag align coincidentally on this notion of reciprocal response. In Levinas' *Alterity and Transcendence*, he is asked how alterity maps onto Martin Buber's construction of "I/thou." Levinas sees a direct correlation; however, he questions the way Buber interprets reciprocity. He admits Buber as one of the first thinkers to carefully theorize the relation of the self and the other with his "I-thou relation/ I-it relation," but, he writes, his "concept of reciprocity bothered me, because the moment one is generous in hopes of reciprocity, that relation no longer involves

generosity but the commercial relation, the exchange of good behavior" (101).[33] In alterity, the responsibility to the other precedes the call of the other; it is a-priori to one's response. Again, I favor Levinas' take here in the context of the writing classroom because the teacher's response to the student comes with the conceptual contract of the teacher/student relation. I am only the teacher when I am in relation to the student, always already in response to the student. Just as in the case of friendship, Hyde seems content to respond (acknowledge) always in anticipation of reciprocity. Unfortunately, the teacher who accepts this position is in for disappointment. The critical friend balances the call to be critical with the call to be the friend, which should encourage the teacher's reflexive awareness that his or her acknowledgement of the student is an end in itself.

Hyde misses an additional opportunity to expand his concept of acknowledgment. At the beginning of his introduction, he quotes Wittgenstein, who highlights the root of the word *acknowledge*: "Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgement" (4). Unfortunately, this is the only time Hyde connects the word *knowledge* to *acknowledge* even though his whole project tries to highlight the importance of acknowledgement to the inherent anxieties of being-in-the-world, and we see from Wittgenstein's observation that without a clear sense of our epistemology, we get little clarity regarding our ontology. By pointing to the relationship of knowledge and acknowledge, Wittgenstein inadvertently reminds us that the rhetorical appeal to logos in persuasive language always clarifies rhetorical purpose, thus fostering ethos as well. Hyde's focus on the personal and emotional implications of acknowledgement obfuscates the professional and intellectual ones. While I agree that being-in-the-world comes with attendant existential anxieties, (or, in the writing classroom, writerly anxieties), perhaps even immobilizing self-loathing

(what Hyde calls "social death"), it is the acquisition of knowledge and the application of that knowledge that will lead to a more enduring circulation of acknowledgement. Additionally, the cultivation of one's epistemology also leads to a less psychologized interpretation of one's ontology if I see that my being, my self, my ego, amounts to the culmination of relations between texts and contexts that respond to other texts in context. As a student I am able to see this only after the critical intervention of my critical friend shows me what it is I am trying to see, how to see it, and how to find it on my own. Hyde's basic premise that human beings need acknowledgment fills a void in our critical conversations; however, the foundation he relies on begins from the premise of the psychologized self, which then negates the real power of acknowledgment as a way to foster ethos in our academic knowledge-making endeavors. Critical friendship only works as a theoretical lens through which we might better understand our own pedagogy if we tie our tent to the emotional dividends of friendship on one side but balance them with the stakes of critical response on the other side.

Care

Across the disciplines we encounter literature on care as the embodied practice of ethics. We find evidence of this academic conversation in medical and scientific journals,[34] across social sciences like psychology and social work, but also prominently in the humanities in feminist discourse and its influence in education literature, political science, philosophy, and communication. Any discipline that begins with Aristotle shares in a concern about care.[35] Care provides an elegant intersection for critical friendship, ethos, and Levinasian response (to student writing). It also privileges the feminist perspective amidst so much masculanized, patriarchal theory and discourse discussed in

this dissertation, e.g. Aristotle and Levinas (or Western Philosophy and the Judeo Christian tradition). In this final section of Chapter 2, I argue that the discourse of care ethics should inform all teaching pedagogy, but it seems especially useful in teacher response to student writing because awareness of care, as an ethical frame, adds value to the understanding and practice of critical friendship. Responding to student writing with care in mind will focus teacher and student ethos on dimensions of human relationships affecting and affected by the writing process.

Care ethics usually get defined within meta-ethics along with deontological and consequentialist ethics. Deontological ethics ties one's actions to choices made out of obligation or duty (think Kant's moral imperative). Consequentialist ethics ties the virtue of one's actions to the consequences that predictably result (we might call these outcomes utilitarian probabilities). Care ethics works within the framework of rhetorical argument because it focuses on relationships, which enables a hermeneutical approach to understanding ethical choices. Like our rhetorical assessment of the linguistic conditions that determine interpretations of meaning, the ethics of care assesses all possible contingencies and contexts that might influence motives within relationships. Like the word critical, care implies special focus and concentration. We offer care to someone or something with particular focus and attention. Although care does not necessarily entail friendship, friendship entails care. Thus the critical friend will be doubly conscious of an ethics of care in his or her critique of the other. The critical friend reading a student's writing, for example, will manifest care by balancing critique and friendship. Noddings believes the "one-caring as teacher" has two primary tasks, one: to help students expand their view of the topic (topoi) at hand as derived from teacher expertise with that topic

and two: to work alongside the student in his or her struggle toward aptitude in that topic. But, according to Noddings, the teacher's task as one-caring has a higher call than these. "First and foremost she must nurture the student's ethical ideal" (Caring 178). We see in Noddings' philosophy not only the justification of what I am calling critical friendship, but also this relationship-sensitive practice with particular attention to ethos. If the teacher (as the one-caring) focuses on helping students acquire competence and confidence within particular discourse communities with the student's ethical ideal in mind, we can translate those priorities as the cultivation of ethos. In short, the definition of care to keep in mind here highlights the teacher's interest in the student's ideal ethos as revealed by the student's comfort and control of particular discursive conventions and practices; this comfort helps the student feel at home in the professional language practices. This sense of competent habitation adds credibility and trust between the student and his or her audience. We see a relationship between competent habitation within a set of conventions as a habituation. As students become habituated within a given discourse, they cultivate an ethos that helps them feel at home in the discourse.

In Chapter 1, I used Hyde's Heideggerian definition of ethos as a dwelling. Similarly, Levinas takes up this concept of dwelling to question and reverse its ontological leanings toward a definition less contained and monistic, preferring a definition more open to alterity. The double meaning of dwelling lends itself to Levinas because one sense of it conjures up the physical, embodied action and containment of one's existence (daily living), not to mention a physical home as a dwelling, but the other sense of it refers to the metaphysical action of contemplation, rumination, and living inside an idea, imagination, or train of thought. Paul Harrison interprets Levinas' version

of dwelling as an issue of the spacing of relation where we reckon, understand, and represent the space between us (643). He suggests that "the concept of dwelling indicates an attempt to think 'the event of space.' To invoke the concept of dwelling is always to attempt to re-call, to restate or to rephrase, an . . . originary and thus potentially immemorial spacing in that the knowing, conscious subject will always constitute distances, perspective, gaze, or narrative from the intimacy of dwelling" (627). He thus refers to it as the "event of dwelling." Though neither Heidegger nor Levinas foreground dwelling as central to their respective projects, the event of dwelling remains interesting for critical friendship, especially as one considers the conditions and performance of care. If we accept Levinas' sense of dwelling as a matter of understanding the spacing of relation (as Harrison puts it), we can tie the idea together with care based on their shared requirement of empathic anticipation of the other. This anticipation requires a sensitivity of space. I cannot care for the other too much or too little, but must instead find a balance between smothering and disregarding. Harrison explains that one must recognize the potential for violence and inevitable failure in order for the experiences of "friendship, hospitality, generosity, responsibility, and indeed solidarity to make and take on any sense" (643). Critical friendship also lives within this centrifuge of proximity, balancing critique (distance), and friendship (intimacy), and no place more than in the writing classroom.

Few composition scholars have noticed a possible role for the ethics of care. One significant exception comes in an essay titled, *On Authority in the Study of Writing*. I find it surprising that this essay on authority in writing never mentions the term "ethos," but Peter Mortensen and Gesa Kirsch argue convincingly that "care" should dominate any

dialogical approach to teaching writing. They validate concerns of others who worry that a care ethos might inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes of dominance and subordination (565). However, they (unwittingly) suggest a Levinasian approach: "Caring can be imagined not as nurturing, then, but as more literally 'taking care of an obligation to another'. . . the teacherly obligation centers instead on taking care that the diffusion of authority in the writing classroom promotes learning for all of the competing constituencies represented there" (565). This caring approach to writing and situated writing students clearly champions a kind of critical friendship because it calls for a feminization of the agonistic power dynamic in the classroom while recognizing the ongoing importance of critique: reflexive self-critique as well as careful feedback to others. The binary Mortensen and Kirsch pursue pits paternalistic pedagogies against a dialogic relation to students. They view paternalism as the appropriation of student agency that runs the risk of dismissing the importance for students to participate in the communal academic conversation, which is more clearly advocated in a dialogical approach. The point of a meta-ethic like care always circles back to interrelations of community so that under the care of a critical friend, autonomous student inquiries never settle into self satisfaction or solipsistic complacency because the careful and caring interlocutor stands ready, not to guard the door, the traditions or the conversation, but to point in the direction of these moves and habits and to question the student's qualitative participation in those critical spaces. We locate the principles of care in relationships, and relationships require consciousness about context and situated discourse. Therefore, pedagogical care could be practiced nowhere better than in response to student writing.

Although it is easy enough to suggest that writing instructors take care in their

response to student writing, care can come across as an ambiguous construct that may seem difficult to apply because it is difficult to know what counts for care and what does not. Vrinda Dalmia recapitulates Noddings' characterization of care with three main criteria. First, she lists motivational displacement from the one caring-for toward the one cared-for. Motivational displacement looks something like empathy and is sometimes called simulation.[36] The second criteria, linked to the first, requires the one caring-for to champion the best interest of the one cared-for. Finally, in order to maximize care, the one cared-for must acknowledge the care as such (35). Dalmiya qualifies these criteria by describing the "diversity of care locutions in ordinary language—for example, x cares about y, x cares for y, x takes care of y, and apparently unrelated cluster of uses as in x has cares and x is careful" (35). Evidence of some of these nuances of care appear in the following example from Josh, a college senior studying English Literature, who, after receiving an assignment to write a literacy narrative about his own experience with teacher response to his writing, provides an example from a senior seminar on Shakespeare:

> This was my fourth class on Shakespeare. I had two courses from a very amiable teacher who made these plays so interesting; but even better, he helped me see how to look closely at the language, to extract hidden layers, I was a sophomore and they were some of my first upper division literature classes. The third class I took was also engaging, but less rigorous. By the time I was a senior, I never had a literature class where the instructor focused on how I wrote—my professors were always looking at my ideas, at 'what' I wrote. Of course, they pointed to my punctuation mistakes and made word-choice suggestions, but they really wanted to see if I could read Shakespeare in a critical way. Then I took this class as a senior and I knew I would do well because I felt so comfortable writing about what I read—even Shakespeare. The teacher gave no hints as to how we might be graded; I assumed it was business as usual. For my first paper I wrote on Henry V and I made what I thought was a strong argument about Shakespeare's religious agenda—how Prince Hal of Henry IV was "born again" when he became King and how he achieves sainthood through his victory over the French at Agincourt. I was surprised to receive my paper back with a "C" grade. More ridiculous though

> was the absence of any attention to my argument. The grade was completely focused on my punctuation and grammar. I went to discuss it with him and he was sort of defensive and smug, like, if you can't conjugate your verbs and you don't understand commas and semi-colons, why would I care about your ideas? Of course, for the next paper I was more thorough with that stuff, but then he gave me a "C" based on a disagreement with my thesis.
>
> I am okay to earn a "C" if I think I know what the teacher wants and I just can't figure out how to do it, but it seems that with teachers like him, the grading varies randomly—almost like it is personal. I remember that the only other "C" I earned in an upper division literature course came in a class where I did not do the requisite reading in order to learn the material; when I was tested for specific knowledge about the characters and events in the books we read, I did very poorly. I feel like that grade was justified, but to this day I get angry when I think of Shakespeare teacher's manipulative tactics. [37]

Based on this account, and perhaps in the name of academic rigor, Josh's Professor appears, at the very least, to overlook the need to clarify his response rubric. Josh seems confused by what it is that his professor cares about when he reads student writing. Clearly, the instructor cares about writing, but the inability of the student to access the nature of that care presents a crisis of communication between them. It would be fair to say that the professor wants what is best for Josh, but this does not seem clear to Josh—there is a failure of motivational displacement from caring-for to cared-for. Chris Anson recommends that we "begin to think of response as part of the social and interpersonal dynamics of the classroom community. Our focus must therefore widen to include all that surrounds the texts we read, write, and discuss, not just in the methods we use to create a context for response, but also in how we think about literacy more generally" (Writing and Response 333). Unfortunately, the teacher who responds to student writing without consideration of the "social and interpersonal dynamics of the classroom," but rather in the fashion of Josh's professor, reveals an authoritarian dynamic of care focused on power rather than all that surrounds "the texts we read, write and

discuss." This example demonstrates a teacher's apparent confusion between rigor and agonistic pedagogy. Furthermore, it begs a larger question about what difference it makes when teachers communicate clearly about their primary cares.

To return to Dalmiya's example of the diversity of care locutions, and provided we can trust Josh's (one sided) analysis, it is clear that Josh's professor "has *cares"* and that he is "*care*-ful." However, it is less apparent that he cares about Josh or that he wants to take care of Josh's particular writing issues. In fact, it seems more like the professor cares about risks of grade inflation, also that he cares about keeping students at a distance and that he could care more about the transparency of his grading methods. In light of Noddings' third criteria (that the one cared-for must acknowledge the care as such), Josh seems conscious of his teacher's care when he writes, "Of course, for the next paper I was more thorough with that stuff, but then he gave me a "C" based on a disagreement with my thesis. I am okay to earn a "C" if I think I know what the teacher wants and I just can't figure out how to do it, but it seems that with teachers like him, the grading varies randomly." It appears that the professor shows a level of care since Josh had a conference with the teacher to try to understand grading criteria for the assignments, but was again stymied without any recourse or revision process. In the language of critical friendship, Josh's professor seems comfortable in his role as "critic" but at the neglect of or ambivalence to his potential as "critical friend." Pedagogical care has a direct relationship to our use of "critical" because both imply close attention. But care brings with it a host of additional meanings that dovetail with acknowledgment and with ontological maintenance or the care of the self.[38] Tied into my advocacy for critical friendship, Dalmiya points out five features of care that contrast with what she calls "indifference" or

the absence of care in the "indifferent shrugger" (35). She categorizes these five points of care as: "liking, desiring, sympathy, dutiful altruism, benevolence and indulgence" (35). Although Josh's professor cannot be classified as an indifferent shrugger, he or she seems indifferent to Josh as a situated writer. Students seem better served by instructors who offer friendship-like qualities such as liking, dutiful altruism, empathy, and even benevolence because these qualities create more responsive circulation.[39]

One of the reasons care makes such an interesting site for the composition class comes from the built in bias that students have against required courses. In Josh's case, his frustration results from his inability to identify the conventions necessary for success in a class he believes he should be able to handle. FYC courses typically present the challenge of selling a product the consumer may not know he or she wants or needs. The composition teacher is always under pressure to generate incentives for caring.

Nel Noddings, among other scholars, makes it clear that although care does not necessarily require that the care-giver (caring-for) and the care-receiver (cared-for) care equally, any educational situation is improved by mutual or reciprocal care. However, like Calvin Schrag and Levinas, reciprocity in teaching places unrealistic expectations on the learner. The teacher's care for her specialized expertise will rarely be matched by students. When teachers encounter indifference from students who enroll in a class in order to move on to achieve his or her educational goals, the response of the teacher is always to keep caring about the student's concern about writing. The differences in care between teacher and student are more complicated than a teacher caring about the academic topic and the student not necessarily caring since the teacher also cares about the student's care. Teachers who read student writing must develop a concern about the

cares of the cared-for, and they must do it in a productive (caring) way (Noddings 30). Dalmiya explains this empathy as the responsibility of the one caring-for to simulate the needs of the cared-for in order to view things from his or her point of view: “The whole point of simulation is to break out of our egocentric perspective and imagine the world of another—to adopt a point of view different from our own” (40). Of course, when the writing teacher tries to simulate the student’s care, the variables run wild. There is no viable way to see the world from the personalized point of view of students who bring to the situation complex histories that necessarily inform their way of caring about writing, about school, and about care itself. At the same time though, the writing teacher is at an advantage because he or she can have students address how they care and what they care about in their writing.

In this circumstance the writing teacher can become a critical friend who invites students to put their care about writing to the test. As Warren Liew observes in his article on student resistance in blogs, “Teachers venturing into zones of contact are called upon to exercise an ‘ethic of care’ premised on the reconstruction of educational experience through relational reciprocity.” As Nel Noddings (1986) asserts, “Teaching is a ‘moral type of friendship’ in which teachers and students work together to construct and achieve common ends’” (314). Even though students might appear to be indifferent toward writing, none of them are really indifferent toward all topics, and often their resistance is a sign of writing anxiety or a lack of confidence in their understanding of the conventions and practices called for in the various writing circumstances.

Composition teachers can overcome some student indifference by creating assignments which align with individual student interests. In my own writing classes

where I have had upper division undergraduate students from a variety of majors, I assign students different kinds of assignments that lead toward their own choice about their research topic upon which they will spend most of their time reading and writing. At the beginning of the course they interview a scholar or graduate student in their own field, later they conduct an academic review of a professional journal in their chosen major. Eventually they choose a research topic within their own field of interest. By introducing students to the economy of labor performed by scholars, they can acquire an appreciation for the work their professors do, but by having them make their own choices about how to focus within their own chosen field of study, they assume responsibility for their topic and in so doing become more caring about their research. Writing teachers bring a mutual care with students into focus when they take interest in a student's chosen field of study by responding carefully to writing and by engaging in discussion about how to decide upon a research topic. The teacher diffuses any struggle over power when he or she actively participates in the negotiation for the topic the student writes about, especially when he or she ultimately respects the student's agency to choose the topic. This, in turn, promotes the practices of critical friendship where the teacher's role is not psychologized into a position of caring about the student's personal affairs (as traditional friendship might require), but rather focuses on a topic for which the student has ownership and seeks out the critical expertise of the teacher. On the other hand, any first-year writing teacher knows that students will inevitably write about emotional, personal topics as they develop their own sense of academic conversations. Therefore, the teacher must rely on something like the pathos found in critical friendship in order to steer the student in a direction where he or she can identify the difference between the personal, psychologized

understanding of a topic as opposed to one that gets vetted by critical academic peer reviewed conversation. It is not necessarily the job of the writing teacher to disabuse the student of all uses of the personal, but perhaps instead to call their attention to the difference between evidence that relies on emotionalized, personalized conclusions versus those that can withstand broader academic generalization. This kind of teaching is yet another example of alterity, and Levinas locates it in the conversation between interlocutors. By channeling the negotiation for power toward a care for the object of study instead of a genuflection for the teacher's authority over the student, most of the energy from both parties gets used up working on student writing, which then creates an equilibrium of care.

Some feminist critics see the care-discourse of Noddings and others weaving in and out of language that risks collapse toward feminine stereotypes of traditional roles (types sometimes used with writing teachers) like nurse and mother. Kirsch and Mortensen present a list of feminist reactions to the ethics of care in order to acknowledge the rather understandable reaction that calls into question the ethos of care advocates. Accordingly, Sarah Hoagland worries about reification of oppressive language that can "only be successful if it includes a critique of 'dominance and subordination' and consequently encourages change of existing hegemonic relations in society" (Hoagland 105). My argument that favors the ancient irenic teaching emphasis, favors of a kind of caring, if critical, friendship, versus an agonistic pedagogy, clearly goes against the institutional grain of impersonal objectivity and critical distance. In fact, the discourse of care walks a fine line (as Kirsch and Mortensen point out) between paternalistic authority and feminized dialogic negotiation of power (566). Many of these same tensions arise in

Levinasian alterity. I have noted that Levinas is famously held to account for his patriarchal language and Biblical (paternalistic) world view. Luce Irigaray critiques Levinas' notion of the "caress" by claiming that Levinas drastically oversimplifies the subjectivity of the eroticized self as a monistic, masculanized self and that he fails to account for a history of varied gender identifications, particularly from the perspective of the feminine.[40] Of course, she never comes right out with such an argument in plain language, but responds poetically and playfully to his sometimes equally elaborate and elusive constructions. Ironically, the tension in the critique of Levinas as overtly paternalistic comes in response to an agenda of nurturing, of alterity, and his core protest against hegemonic violence. This is ironic because his Biblical language is viewed to be too patriarchal (and Biblical language is always couched in a history of violence that coincides with a history of "love thy neighbor"); nevertheless, his desire for no violence is a feminized desire.

In conversation with Philippe Nemo, Levinas explains that he "is not afraid to use the word God," he then explains that the "Infinite comes in the signifyingness of the face. The face signifies the Infinite." Nemo then asks, is there "infinity in the ethical exigency in that it is insatiable?" Levinas responds, "Yes. It is the exigency of holiness. At no time can one say: I have done all my duty, [e]xcept the hypocrite" (Ethics and Infinity 105-106). From here Levinas continues to frame his position in masculanized Old Testament language, but his concept of incorrigible availability or of asymmetrical care is born of a kind of feminized desire that always ultimately resists violence.

Scholars also second guess the marriage between the feminist ethics of care with the ethical agenda of Aristotle. Howard Curzer argues that although Aristotle's regular

use of the Greek terms "*Philesis* and its infinitive version, *philein* are usually translated as love, or '*friendly feeling*,' or '*friendly affection*' by Aristotle's translators, Aristotle uses *philesis* and *philein* to mean approximately what advocates of the ethics of care mean by 'caring' and 'care.'" Curzer then explains how Aristotle's use of goodwill gestures to a more casual virtue toward the other, whereas *philesis* and *philein* involve a "deep desire for the wellbeing of another person for the sake of the other person. The interests are sought because of the character of the person" (caring-for) (221). In other words the robust ethos of the one caring-for will, according to Curzer, employ compassion and sympathy as core components of care. Levinas' side comment to Derrida about his desire to exceed the boundaries of ethics toward holiness (noted earlier in this chapter in Derrida's funeral address), a notion he clarified in the above quotation from *Ethics and Infinity*, this idea that he desires to see infinity in the face of the other seems like a fair ethical virtue, but in the push and pull of reality, it is a quixotic desire. Care ethics scholars unanimously disagree. To see the face of God in the other seems like precisely the place where the Judeo-Christian tradition and the ongoing battles for liberal social justice come together. Dalmiya argues that care-based epistemology relies wholly upon a premise of what she calls the virtue of responsibilism (46). "Responsibilism amounts to the deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end" (46). Although neither Aristotle, nor Levinas appear anywhere in Dalmiya's works cited, their influence, whether tacit or overt, looms large. Levinas' holy self, the self who hears the call of the other and responds out of alterity otherwise identified as responsibility, the "here I am," can remind of Aristotle's ethical friend, even

though the Aristotelian model for friendship differs in crucial ways from Levinas' notions of responsibility for the other.[41] This person who each of these writers has in mind, and characterized in this chapter as the teacher, operates from a care-based epistemology of repsonsibilism that wants to use critical friendship to help students develop "deep and enduring excellence" that we might otherwise call professional arete.

Like Nel Noddings, who sees teaching as a holy calling of sorts and as the ideal kind of engagement wherein we can practice care, bell hooks interprets her responsibility to teach as a spiritual mandate. As a feminist committed to social justice, she unabashedly embraces the caring components of teaching. In a chapter called "Heart to Heart: Teaching with Love," she begins in protest against her academic peers and administrators who caution her not to get "too close" to her students. "Emotional connections tend to be suspect in a world where the mind is valued above all else, where an idea that one should be and can be objective is paramount" (Teaching Community 127). She then reveals that she has always been accused of having too much passion and being too emotional. Her transgressive reaction to that caution (which seems like prudent caution to guard her credentials and to guard against disconcerting allegations that might attend intimate relationships with students) is to confront it head on. She writes plainly about her feminist/feminine ethos—how she feels about academic standards, sexual identity, and complexities that might arise in emotionally close relationships with students: "Denying the emotional presence and wholeness of students may help professors who are unable to connect focus more on the task of sharing information, facts, data, their interpretations, with no regard for listening to and hearing from students. It makes the classroom a setting where optimal learning cannot and will not occur" (129). Of course these important

emotional connections to students are tied directly to her passion for their shared academic subject, and she (lovingly) defies anyone to duplicate her pedagogical effectiveness using a model of competition in the classroom (130). Her ethos is defined by her care-ethic, which funds her agenda for social justice, an agenda grounded in the complexities of race, class, and gender. She is a critical friend whose work focuses on critiquing the false identities that students cling to out of insecurity, whether those false identities amount to white supremacy or self doubt about one's right to succeed in school (80-81).

My sense of hooks as a teacher is entirely textual. I know her only through her own writing, much of which feels like literacy narrative or familiar essay rather than densely footnoted academic argument. Thus, in holding her up as a model for critical friendship, as a model for the ethic of care or as a writerly sample of alterity in action (which I am doing), I risk positioning my argument in the camp of Friere's critical pedagogy, which seems closely aligned with Peter Elbow's advocacy for personal writing as opposed to David Bartholomae's preference for academic writing.[42] But my argument throughout these first two chapters holds critical and friendship in equal esteem. Like the false dichotomy of this famous composition debate that far exceeds the articulations of these two luminary scholars, it would be unfair to see in my critically friendly teacher (as it would be unfair to see in hooks or any other rhetorically situated thinker) partitioned into one binary slipstream. The critical friend who responds to student writing in order to acknowledge students as individuals, or who does so to practice ethical care, crosses the terrain of the personal willingly and sensitively. But he or she also responds to students and to student writing in order to teach the conventions and professional expectations of

the field. We do not develop an aptitude for ethos in a vacuum of isolated personal character or credibility, nor do we do so in a greenhouse of facts and (rhetorical) figures. We develop ethos in situated discourses, ongoing conversations, and the messy attempts and revisions of invention, arrangement, style, and delivery.

Conclusion

In agreement with David Bartholomae, I want students to acquire the language, habits, and discourse of the academy.[43] I respond to student writing in order to acknowledge where students stand in relation to professional standards and even though I am arguing that this kind of response to students can be viewed within the construct of critical friendship—as a manifestation of critical friendship —it is not to say that critique is ever personal, rather, it is about approximating standards, expectations, and conventions of a given discipline. Moreover, we are all familiar by now with the solipsistic nature of writing—of not seeing our own writing deficits.[44] In the Aristotelian tradition of training speakers toward excellence, Cicero believes that the good will of friendship relies upon critique to help us see clearly, even if the burden of truth in that critique portends offense: "truth is offensive . . . but much more offensive is complacency, when its indulgence for wrong doing suffers a friend to go headlong into ruin" (De Amicitia XXIV, 85). The desire to tell our friends the truth either pushes our relationships over the brink or into more binding emotional contracts, and when we tell and hear the truth from critical friends we accept that contract because besides being helpful, we trust the good will of its source. One of the ambitions of critical friendship requires the responder to frame the conditions of response (critique) as part of their

general educational good; the better both parties understand this framework, the easier and more beneficial the reciprocating flow of feedback.

In that same tradition, though much later, Bacon defines "faithful counsel from a friend," with the noted emphasis that "there is as much difference, between the counsel, that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend, and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer, as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy, against flattery of a man's self, as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts; the one concerning manners, the other concerning business" (Bacon 206). We might apply this second sort of counsel "concerning business" to the critique that writing instructors offer to students because our business to train students to understand the conventions of writing at the university entails revealing student habits back to themselves in order to help them see where they could be more persuasive and concise, as well as clearer and more graceful.

Critical friendship faces the challenge of maintaining the professional boundary of critical distance; however, when both parties interpret critique as vital to critical friendship, instructors validate students by taking them seriously, and students also learn to separate their acquisition of writing conventions from a view of their writing that is somehow personal. Bacon puts it this way, "The calling of a man's self, to a strict account is a medicine, sometime too piercing and corrosive. . . Observing our faults in others, is sometimes unproper for our case. But the best receipt (best (I say) to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend" (207). What is response to student writing if not "the calling of a man's self, to a strict account?" We are asking students to rethink their purpose and sense of audience in order to persuade us, their primary interlocutor.

Whether we look to the Biblical tradition with Levinas or to the Greek tradition from Aristotle forward, the model of friendship, of caring for the neighbor, the tradition of alterity can help the teacher position him or herself in a stance of openness to the student that invites robust, critical response. If these interlocutors work out an ethos of care and invested interest in each other's work, each participant in the conversation will be better prepared to respond to the other and to others, which will, at the very least, locate them as better critical friends looking outward for new spaces to offer and receive response.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP AND THE ESSAY

Introduction

What should students in first-year writing courses write? This question remains central to the conversation in composition theory and writing studies. In his 2007 article in *Rhetoric Review*, Brian Schwartz argues that the Bartholomae-Elbow discussion of the late 80s and early 90s "is still a text of central importance to the field of composition studies, one that speaks to timeless questions of narrative and pedagogy in the writing classroom" (431). The year previous to Schwartz's publication, Rebecca Mlynarczyk raises a similar issue in "The Journal of Basic Writing." She uses the context of the Elbow-Bartholomae discussion to ask, "Long after it seemed that Bartholomae, with his emphasis on academic writing, had 'won' the debate, teachers are still facing the question . . . [they] considered in the 1990s: What types of writing (and reading) to assign in the first-year composition or basic writing course?" (5). Sherry Rankins-Robertson et al. propose more recently that what first-year writing classes write remains a crucial question for professional discussion. They argue that the basic writing classroom should include training in writing that will more likely be part of a student's future writing life, writing that relates to personal, professional, and civic situations, with an emphasis, in the author's case, on family history writing. Don Bialostosky observes that the disagreement

between Bartholomae and Elbow does not begin over issues in writing studies from the 1970s, nor does it evolve solely from the New Criticism of the 1950s, but rather, in Bialostoksy's words, "the Bartholomae-Elbow exchange may thus be read as part of the two-hundred-year debate opened by romanticism over writing, education, selfhood, pleasure, power and knowledge" (93). Bilostolsky then traces the resonances of a similar conversation among the Romantics, with particular interest in Wordsworth. He compares Bartholomae's characterization of Elbow's sentimental realism to Wordsworth's romanticism and asks, appropriately I think, whether Bartholomae properly accounts for the antecedents of his own argument (92). Similarly, I am interested in the confusion in writing studies about the difference between academic and personal writing and how some of this confusion might be mitigated by accounting for the influence of the familiar essay on both. This particular confusion gets compounded, not clarified by responses to the Bartholomae/Elbow debate.

On the whole, this dissertation argues that critical friendship addresses specific and necessary questions about the role of ethos[45] in first-year writing.[46] To do this, the first two chapters define critical friendship as a rhetorical practice of ethos. Using Levinasian concepts like responsibility, response, proximity, and alterity, I examine how critical friendship can help college writing teachers balance their critical guidance with friendly mentoring. This chapter locates the question of "what" students should write within the framework of the Bartholomae/Elbow debate. Here I argue that although people keep returning to this framework, the poles of their debate do not represent the range of ideas about what students should write in first-year writing classes—the poles are neither mutually exclusive, nor justly representative of the spectrum of the

experimenting that students do. Arguments surrounding the Elbow/Bartholomae debate often leave the impression that there are only two approaches to first-year writing: expressive or academic, but both Bartholomae and Elbow see this as a false dichotomy, though the heart of Bartholomae's argument veers closer to a binary position. While I fundamentally agree with Bartholomae's camp that students should eventually learn how to construct academic arguments (in fact, moving students toward academic arguments should be the main goal of first-year writing classes), Elbow makes an important observation about the timing of this intellectual development. He suggests that students are not prepared for academic argument immediately, nor do they need to be; what they do need is time to experiment. However, the expressivists' position between the poles of the personal and academic generates confusion about the clear goals of first-year writing.

Part of the confusion in writing studies' pedagogical aims, especially aims that vacillate between personal/expressive writing and academic writing, can be traced to the difference between the personal essay and the familiar essay. In the familiar essay, we find some of the roots of academic writing where essayists experiment with rhetorical conventions like invention, arrangement, and style, as well as with two fundamental rhetorical concerns, purpose, and audience. In fact, the central difference (between the personal and familiar essay) to keep in mind has to do with the writer's purpose. In the familiar essay, writers like Montaigne concentrate on a question, an object, or a problem; they are essays "on" or "of" something. By contrast, we locate the primary concern of the personal essay in the isolated experience of the person doing the writing. To point to an example of this tension in a familiar essay, we can consider Montaigne's reflections on rhetoric itself. The title to his essay on "words" first alerts us to the writer's personal bias

against rhetoric: “Of the Vanity of Words.” In the first sentence, “A rhetorician of times past said that his trade was to make little things appear and be thought great,” we see that Montaigne favors Socrates’ argument that rhetoric is a deceitful art (a vanity), one that manipulates language in order to sell something to the reader/listener, as opposed to Aristotle’s argument that rhetoric has more to do with a speaker’s mastery of appeals and control over conventions in order to be persuasive. Montaigne’s next sentences, “That’s a shoemaker who can make big shoes for a small foot. They would have had him whipped in Sparta for professing a deceitful and lying art,” suggest a low tolerance for manipulative language (296). His words, “deceitful and lying art” not only match, but perpetuate some of the most familiar stereotypes for the term “rhetoric.” Of course, many theorists since Montaigne have tried for an alternative, broader understanding of rhetoric. But no one interested in rhetoric denies the power and persuasiveness of artful language, nor does any rhetorician excuse manipulative propaganda as anything less than vanity. One of the significant charms of the familiar essay comes from its exercise in plain language, in fact, this name, “familiar essay” suggests straightforward, kind words and ideas (I am thinking of the word “kind” here for its etymology to kindred, just as “familiar” is derivative of family). Montaigne wants his writing to look like a coherent train of thought, if not necessarily a cohesive one. In “Of the Vanity of Words,” Montaigne does not write a formal argument, but his musings on language and words (rhetoric—whether Plato’s or Aristotle’s), opens up a conversation and solicits further topical exercises in thinking and consideration about some object, event or question, in this case, the vanity of words.

I begin this chapter by revisiting the Bartholomae/Elbow debate including a

literature review of interlocutors responding to the debate. I then offer a detailed clarification of the personal and familiar essay, followed by a close look at examples of Montaigne's familiar essays. Here I ask questions like, how does the historical practice of the familiar essay inform contemporary academic writing? How does Montaigne's way of using writing as thinking inform today's writing classroom? Finally, how does the familiar essay fit into the framework of critical friendship—and thus mediate questions articulated in the Bartholomae/Elbow debate? By creating a narrative that joins the familiar essay and first-year writing, I argue that students should be experimenting with particular topics (as opposed to personal cares or concerns. Of course, commonplace topics can easily be numbered among one's personal cares and concerns, but in the familiar essay these topics are not psychologized into isolated, solipsistic experiences); generally, the familiar essay should balance pathos with critical thinking in order to weigh germane rhetorical topics and issues with dispassionate objectivity as well as sensitivity and grace. I am not necessarily invested in having students read or try to write the familiar essay, but I use the example of the familiar essay to theorize what students should write. It is my contention that this exercise in reflexive critical thinking teaches us about the history and evolution of essay writing and that it also warrants particular practices that we should consider implementing in first-year writing. That is, acquaintance with the familiar essay demonstrates some of the intellectual activities one can and should expect from first-year writers.

Bartholomae and Elbow

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, in professional journals, as well as in academic conferences, Peter Elbow and David Bartholomae wrangled over what first-year writing teachers want students to write. Under the surface, though, they also asked each other and their audience to consider important questions about distance in composition. Bartholomae famously privileges academic writing, which he characterizes as critical inquiry that objectively analyzes texts—writing that situates the writer's purpose within the institutional conversation.[47] Conversely, Elbow values expressive, personable, student-motivated writing; he wants students to care personally about what they write and to write on topics they care about. The Elbow/Bartholomae conversation underscores a fundamental identity problem for first-year writing teachers, especially when it comes to what students should write. Although there is no way to unify a field of diverse thinkers forever and in all contexts, we should try for some consensus about invention, arrangement, and style. It would seem that having first-year writers practice writing and support a clear thesis could be a shared ambition, but Elbow obviously disagrees with this goal for his students. Elbow never refers to the writing that he advocates as "sentimental realism" (that is Bartholomae's phrase for the writing he sees Elbow advocating), rather Elbow wants students to be aware of and practice being writers and eventually, after they find their own academic focus, to also be academics. In his language, ". . . damn it, I want my first-year students to be saying in their writing, 'Listen to me, I have something to tell you' not 'Is this okay? Will you accept this?'" (Elbow, *Being a Writer* 82). These differences in philosophical motive come down to questions about ethos and audience. Bartholomae wants students to become acquainted with the circulation of ideas and

positions within the professional writing conversation, whereas Elbow values a safe writing environment where students feel as comfortable using personal expression as they do experimenting with institutional discourse.

The Bartholomae/Elbow debate is compelling because it requires writing teachers to consider how they perceive distance between the writer and the reader. Where Bartholomae's argument suggests that the student writer should acquire suspicion and dispassionate critical distance in order to manage the kinds of writing he or she will regularly need to produce in college, Elbow advocates intimacy and trust for the kinds of writing one will do in everyday life. Elbow and Bartholomae infer openness to the other's point of view, but as I suggest above, if either concedes a middle ground, it is Elbow when he argues that students are already "writers" and they can become academics. Yet, both poles of critical/distant and personal/intimate seem necessary for a college essay since the ethos we cultivate in and because of our writing never comes from a mutually exclusive division between logos and pathos. Critical friendship can be useful here. As detailed in Chapter 1, critical friendship is the point of balance along a continuum from "total friend" to "total critic." How does the writing instructor teach the student to write with the requisite caution (humility) entailed in Bartholomae's hypothesis, while also nurturing the student's confidence, as implied by Elbow? Elbow strikes a nerve when he contrasts the student's skittishness, "is this okay?" with the conviction we would like him or her to discover and produce: "listen to me, I have something to say!" We locate an important confusion in this characterization made by Elbow. Bartholomae is not suggesting that the student cannot personally have something to say, just the opposite. However, he wants the student to acknowledge the larger context that makes his or her

argument possible, that every argument has a history and comes in response to other texts. Elbow believes that both the person writing and the text she produces can somehow enjoy sovereignty from preceding texts—he wants to deny the importance of the conversation so privileged by Bartholomae, the conversation that Bartholomae believes the first-year student might hope to understand and eventually enter. Their disagreement, in other words, comes not from the response the teacher gives to the student's writing, but from what the student will write in the first place; alas, their disagreement comes down to the writer's rhetorical purpose: what I will write and why I will write it.

From among a variety of responses to the Bartholomae/Elbow debate, Rebecca Williams Mlynarckzyk uses psycholinguistic theory to decide the difference between personal and academic writing. Acknowledging a need for both, she believes "most composition teachers would agree that there is a fundamental difference between a personal account of living through one's parents' divorce and an academic essay arguing to end the system of no-fault divorce in the United States"[48] (5). Mlynarckzyk lays out a very academic (linear) overview, not only of the Bartholomae-Elbow debate but of definitions for personal and academic writing. But, like many others, she focuses on descriptions of the personal as expressive language that, quoting James Britton, "'provides an essential starting point [for first-year composition students] because it is language close to the self of the writer: and progress towards the transactional should be gradual enough to ensure that 'the self' is not lost on the way: that on arrival 'the self,' though hidden, is still there'" Mlynarckzyk concludes, "I agree with Britton on this point. If students—especially basic writing students—are to acquire academic language in a meaningful and powerful way, the emphasis on exploring ideas in personal, expressive

language cannot be neglected" (12). In emphasizing her agreement, she expresses surprise that the field of composition generally favors Bartholomae's position rather than Elbow's. She believes that teachers should encourage use of the personal as students develop toward the academic, "[d]espite the undisputed significance of Bartholomae's work" (Mlynarckzyk 13). However, she fails to recognize that student writing is specially qualified as academic when it focuses on a topic of shared, commonplace interest, especially when it does so with at least some recognition of existing conversations. As I will explain more fully in the next section, my argument uses the example of the familiar essay which is marked by its focus on topics of public concern and discussion. I see no need to appeal to student's personal interests or feelings when their personal expression can be more objectively manifested in their acquisition and mastery of invention, arrangement, and style. Mlynarckzyk seems to advocate something more like the personal essay, which, in my view, takes a solipsistic approach, focusing on the interior musings of the self, which, as Bartholomae contends, separates the knowledge making activity from the shared academic conversation, isolating it instead to a solitary individual experience, as if such a thing were even possible, which Bartholomae doubts.

Two other theorists who respond to Bartholomae and Elbow share a coincidental interest in "narrative" as that missing piece of the puzzle that divides the personal from the academic. In both cases, they seem to believe that Bartholomae's fundamental objection to sentimental realism centers on a rejection of storytelling. Brian Schwartz asks, "What do we teach when we teach writing? And how can we teach in a way that engages students and makes them interested in and responsible for their own growth as writers. In order to answer such questions, we must examine the role of narrative in

writing instruction, paying particular attention to a genre David Bartholomae has referred to—somewhat warily—as 'sentimental realism.'" (426-427). Here Schwartz asks timely questions but the answer is not clarified by his use of "narrative." Like many advocates for expressive writing, perhaps Schwartz sees "narrative" as a plausible way to help composition teachers "teach in a way that engages students," but this assumes that writing students are more interested in literature than they are in learning straightforward conventions of academic writing (Schwartz 427).

Candice Spigelman likewise brings up the role of narrative as an intervention of the personal in academic writing. Turning to Aristotle, she presents examples of what she calls narrative from *The Rhetoric*. She writes, "For the epideictic rhetoric of praise and blame, Aristotle recommends brief stories scattered throughout a speech that serve to back up specific features or qualities of the individual being described. Aristotle sees a place for narrative in judicial rhetoric as well. In the hands of the prosecution, narrative functions to clarify the events under consideration or to persuade the audience that harm or injustice has occurred. For the defense, narrative offers a means of building ethos or justifying actions" (Spigelman 72). Spigelman makes it clear that Aristotle's use of narrative complements "arguments" as a form of illustrations and examples, but never in the framework of personal confession, which underscores her thesis that story, example, and narrative illustrations, sometimes personal, sometimes neutral (for the sake of adding emphasis) have a legitimate rhetorical place in academic writing. Ultimately her thesis prepares the way for Mlynarckzyk, who also advocates a space for expressivity as a complement to otherwise turgid academic writing expectations.

All of these responses to the Bartholomae/Elbow debate address the ongoing

interest within writing studies to balance logos with pathos while also maintaining an appeal to the performance of ethos, to balance academic-analytical writing using reader-friendly writing. These arguments from Bialostosky (in the introduction), Mlynarckzyk, Schwartz, and Spigelman present a consensus that when academic writing becomes too clinical or too technical, the reader, especially first-year composition readers, have difficulty maintaining interest, primarily because they have difficulty understanding what they are reading, and this confusion then transfers to their own writing. Accordingly, these authors collectively believe that students need to read examples of writing informed by appeals to pathos, but which also pass academic muster; when students can relate to what they read, they can better imitate the conventions they encounter. In his chapter, "Saving a Place for Essayistic Literacy," Douglas Hesse locates his contribution to what we might call the Bartholomae-Elbow tension in the classical essay, or as he refers to it: essayistic literacy. One reason I bring up the role of narrative in the confluence of this discussion comes, not only from the coincidence of Schwartz and Spigelman using the term, but also because Hesse sees essayistic literacy as a noteworthy rhetorical topic and a legitimate form of "narrativizing" that writing studies needs to take seriously. He sees narrativizing of experience, information, and ideas as "the imposition and making plausible of a certain sequence of textual moves—that characterizes the essay." He then explains, "My term, 'narrativizing' may seem an odd one, especially when so many essays don't consist of what we traditionally call narratives, the representation of events as they happened or might happen in the world. Yet, as I've argued previously . . . essays are emplotments of their author's experiences, ideas, readings and so on. A venerable way of talking about essays is to say that they render the shape of thinking, not of

thought" (37). But Hesse's assumption that composition should "save a place for essayistic literacy" challenges one of Bartholomae's primary concerns.

In the last section of his argument, Bartholomae expresses direct suspicions about the different kinds of writing he places under the sentimental realism umbrella. He asks, "should all students be required to participate in a first person, narrative or expressive genre whose goal it is to reproduce the ideology of sentimental realism—where a world is made in the image of single, authorizing point of view? a narrative that celebrates a world made up of the details of private life and whose hero is sincere? (Writing with Teachers 69). Finally he turns this question specifically to the "traditional essay" asking if our first-year writers should move gradually through sentimental realism toward argument, as Mlynarckzyk specifically suggests, "People used to say something like this about the traditional forms of order in the essay: You have to learn to write like E.B. White before you can learn to write like Gertrude Stein" (70). But Bartholomae unfairly generalizes sentimental realism as a garage large enough to house all first person nonfiction: "I don't think I need to teach sentimental realism, even though I know my students could be better at it than they are. I don't think I need to because I don't think I should. I find it a corrupt, if extraordinarily tempting genre. I don't want my students to celebrate what would then become the natural and inevitable details of their lives" (71). It is one thing to argue that you do not need to do something because you do not think you should because the thing you do not want to do is corrupt (two very thin reasons), but it is a larger oversight for Bartholomae to call every kind of first person nonfiction "sentimental realism." This mistake has been repeated so regularly we take it to be true for its repetition alone.

Hesse acknowledges this historical confusion about essayistic literacy, expressing

"a desire to wrestle back for the 'essay' its history." He writes, further, "I sympathize with Carl Klaus's quite serious proposal . . . that we agree to use Montaigne's original French, essai, and forfeit the corrupted 'essay'" (34). In his "attempt" to define the essay, Hesse recognizes a conflation in our use of the word over time; he explains that the essays of Montaigne, for example, cannot be compared to a contemporary standard of the academic essay: "[Montaigne's] explorations of smells and cannibalism would fail undergraduate biology or anthropology courses…within the academy the term essay has evolved into a generic term for all works of prose nonfiction short enough to be read in a single sitting" (35). The definition he settles on, after reviewing names of those he thinks of as essayists after Montaigne, including Bacon, Cowley, Lamb, Hazlitt, E.B. White, Didion, and Dillard et al., is a definition where authors reveal, not their thought, but their thinking. They share experience and consciousness, not solipsistically self indulgent experience, not self-consumed consciousness, rather, as a "sub-genre of short prose, modest and self-limiting in its truth claims, contingent in the perspective of its author, wearing its contingency on its sleeve, constrained not by topic but by the author's thought process and by conventions of satisfying form . . . associative, exploratory, essentially narrative rather than hierarchical in its logic" (35-36). But even in Hesse's illuminating genre classification he stops short of separating the personal essay and the familiar essay, a distinction worth making, according to Douglas Atkins' argument in *The Familiar Essay*. The familiar essay as historicized and examined by Atkins creates a crucial portal along the bridge between Elbow and Bartholomae. This portal accommodates expressivism by encouraging topical latitude and experimentation and it advocates academic analysis by way of deep attention to context and content. The primary

difference between the personal essay and the familiar essay then is that the personal essay sees its rhetorical purpose as a response to one's own questions and creativity whereas the familiar essay comes in response to the other. To be clear, this response to the other is not my psychologized response to the other's psychologized concern(s), but instead my intellectual response to topoi of shared concerns. This history of the essay should motivate teachers to set students up to respond, for example, to what Frederick Douglass teaches us about literacy (in the context of what others have said about literacy) more than it should get students to explain how Douglass helps them appreciate their fortunate personal material circumstance, or helps them deal with their personal history of abusive authority figures (important though these personal revelations inevitably must be for students). The familiar essay shows us how to spot the topics that matter to the academic conversation, topics that can also matter to the reader and writer.

The Familiar Essay and Montaigne

From the time of Montaigne forward, the familiar essay has played a part in the rhetorical tradition and a close look at the genre helps us understand why.[49] This section looks to the familiar essay, not as a generic model for first-year composition writing, but as a crucial part of the history of essays that students and academics write. Essay theorists almost always think about the essay generically—they usually ask, what it is exactly? This temptation is understandable because the nature of the familiar essay resists definition. So, naturally, we want to know why and how so. Some suggest that it refuses to be defined, not just because it resists classification as a tidy genre but because it is primarily conceived of as action. Several of these theorists tie its purpose to the action of

weighing and measuring. In his book *Of Essays and Reading in Early Modern Britain,* Scott Black reminds us of the pivotal way the essay, currently conceived as a noun, in fact, began its life as an activity, as a verb. He writes, "Essays shift from 'strict collection'—what scholars do—to gentlemanly 'use,' from stocking up to taking a profit and fully absorbing such classroom practice into praxis" (29). He later amplifies the thesis: "Rather than a social technology of gentlemanly identity that guarantees facts secured by a literary technology of representation, the essay enables a gentlemanly practice of reading—a particular tool of literacy…In essays you must do it for yourself, if not by yourself, and this skill of participatory reading and collaborative exploration was as integral to Boyle's project as the reporting and witnessing of experiments…" (75). Black uses words like *practice* and *praxis*, *tool*, *use*, *motor, reading, reflection, experiments, collaborative exploration, reporting, and witnessing* to underscore his claim about the essay as a genre of action, as an activity of literacy used along with reading—never a mere collection of facts or static representation. Essaying is something I do as I live in the world and perform the hermeneutic work of reading varying kinds of texts. In agreement with Black and according the OED, the noun "essay" started as a verb. The Old French verb, essai, meant to make an attempt, trial, or to put to proof, test the mettle of a thing. The French likely comes from the vulgar Latin, exagiāre, to weigh out, or from Late Latin, exagium, a weighing. Of course we see as well the relationship to "examine," as well as to "exaggerate," which we could interpret as something like "dramatize." Black makes the comparison elsewhere to essays as "tools of reading" and "models of response," (33) or opposed to other kinds of texts typically viewed as "engines of production" (2).

Phillip Lopate chronicles the history of the essay beginning with writers he categorizes as forerunners to Montaigne, like Seneca and Plutarch, and he rounds out his collection with contemporary writers like Richard Rodriguez and Wendell Berry. But he categorizes all of the essayists in his collection as personal essayists. Lopate grapples with the distinction at the beginning of his introduction: “This book attempts to put forward and interpret a tradition: the personal essay. Though long spoken of as a subcategory of the essay, the personal essay has rarely been isolated and studied as such” (Lopate xxiii). He continues by noting characteristics specific to the personal essay, characteristics that read like Harris’ interest in presence:

> The hallmark of the personal essay is its intimacy. The writer seems to be speaking directly into your ear, confiding everything from gossip to wisdom. Through sharing thoughts, memories, desires, complaints, and whimsies, the personal essayist sets up a relationship with the reader, as dialogue—a friendship, if you will, based on identification, understanding, testiness, and companionship.
>
> At the core of the personal essay is the supposition that there is a certain unity to human experience. As Michel de Montaigne, the great innovator and patron saint of personal essayists, put it, ‘Every man has within himself the entire human condition.’ (xxiii-xxiv)

Lopate isolates other features of the personal essay by its “conversational element, honesty, confession, privacy,” and its “contractions and expansions of the self” (xxiii). He also recognizes the personal essay as mode of thinking and being. He even acknowledges the risk of what he calls egotism, cheek, and irony. But Lopate underestimates the problem of solipsism in the personal essay. He does not seem reflexive enough in acknowledging the degree to which one might write the essay from an uncritical point of view. That is, absent from his discussion is the fact that the personal essay seems nearly impossible from a prereformation self. Clearly, the presence of Seneca, Plutarch, and other precursors to Montaigne in Lopate’s collection suggest

otherwise. But their writings only underscore the point. Something happens to the self in modernity that did not seem possible earlier. Even though Seneca's letters flirt with a sense of the personal, they remain, well, Stoic. The pervasiveness of Stoicism in Seneca connects just as closely to our contemporary sense of critical distance, objectivity, and reason—the necessary a priori in academic writing—as it might to a case for the personal. Again, it is not that there is not a possibility for overlap between these genres, but by Lopate's description, our postenlightenment, post-Cartesian, highly situated, culturally bound self who never writes his or her own beliefs without also writing a host of culturally inscribed beliefs, seems largely taken for granted.

Lopate does suggest that "the trick is to realize that one is not important, except insofar as one's example can serve to elucidate a more widespread human trait and make readers feel a little less lonely and freakish" (19). But this gesture toward the balancing act between what he calls modesty and egotism does not quite go far enough. Wendell Harris articulates a lengthy, meticulous argument for clearer characterization of the personal essay.[50] He also recognizes the risk of essentializing the self in personal essay writing: the risk of assuming that each individual has an essential ontology. To this concern he writes, "even if we accept for the moment that there is no core individuality, that each individual mind is indeed a thing of shreds and patches, the specific collocations of culturally induced thought and responses will vary with the elements of that culture to which persons are exposed, the order in which they are exposed to them, the number and intensity of the conflicting cultural attitudes and beliefs they encounter. The result is the individual" (Harris 943). Harris implies that no matter how we conceptualize the self, whether as an unessentializable cultural composite or as an

essentialized site of autonymous (natural) characteristics, we end up with writing that successfully relies on a kind of charm or draw unique to that writer in that moment while simultaneously beckoning universal appeal. I agree with this characterization, but I emphasize the key feature of the essay as response.

The best essays are therefore simultaneously self-effacing and self-conscious. But in both cases the manifestations of the self are subtle. Again, Harris writes, "while most readers of personal essays cherish the belief that the personal qualities conveyed by the essay do not seriously contradict those of the actual author, it matters little whether they do or not. The actual author is not someone we are considering asking to dinner. Although what the reader meets in the personal essay—as in all writing—is persona, one does not encounter a lively, stimulating mind every day. Nor is it credible that a dull mind can create an intriguing persona, a stimulating presence. It is for its intellectual liveliness and unexpected insights that we read the personal essay, not to indulge in solemnity or sociology" (943). As noted, Harris believes that "presence" is the defining characteristic of the personal essay, a word that reverberates in Levinas' language and conceptions on proximity. Obviously, Harris is thinking of presence when he argues here for persona, intellectual liveliness, and unexpected insights, but these would be the aspirations of all writers, no matter the genre. We cannot fully embrace his notion here without acknowledging that it is actually according to the reader's needs that these qualities find purchase. Moreover, it is precisely the marriage of logos and pathos that bring together persona, intellectual liveliness, and unexpected insights, whether in the familiar essay or in academic writing.

Like Harris and others, Hesse also expresses concern over the scarcity of

scholarship on the essay. Hesse argues not so much for a distinction between the familiar essay and derivations of it, but instead for the validation of the essay in the academy. Hesse's definition of the essay is couched

> in opposition to more formal and explicitly conventional genres—the scientific article or report, for example, or the history, or the philosophical argument. Whereas these latter genres have aspired to objective truths through the constraints of method, enacting the Lockean dream of language beyond the idols of language, essayists have pursued conditional representations of the world as the essayist experiences it. Some might critique this stance as solipsistic romanticism. But it can alternatively be viewed as an ultimate rejection of knowledge as objective and truth as independent of context and experience. (Hesse 36)

Hesse goes on to suggest what the essay is by listing those who, as Black might argue, do it—those who essai; and like so many other scholars trying to define the essay, Hesse starts his list with Montaigne. His precise audience is comprised of his peers: professors of rhetoric and composition, so his questions always circle back to the classroom and his underlying interest is, like Black's, centered in the work an essay does. What is its purpose? What literacies are required for the intended audience? Hesse views the essay as a form of resistance against convention and tradition—against the discourse of the academy and, to be sure, as a genre that sees itself weighing things out or attempting and experimenting, the essay should be seen as a kind of protest against the formulaic.

In a similar vein, Douglas Atkins cites W. Wolfgang Holdheim who observes Montaigne's essay as "less a genre than quite deliberately an anti-genre, designed to flaunt the perscriptiveness in literary matters which had been inherited from rationalistic rhetorical tradition" (14). So we can look to the familiar essay, not as a static model to emulate in the composition classroom, but as an activity, a way of reading and responding, one that continues to teach us about the writing process that is so important to contemporary academic argument. As a mechanism for response, the familiar essay

has relevant historical influence on the central question of this chapter: what shall composition students write? The familiar essay helps us historicize the proximity between the writer and the reader, an observation I have already attributed to Harris, who sees "presence" as the defining characteristic of the essay (934). Although Harris (like many essay theorists) seems to conflate the personal and familiar essay (or at least he does not go to the trouble of distinguishing them), his point is well taken. If we understand presence, we understand both the personal and the familiar essays respectively. But presence functions differently in each.

By "historicize proximity," I mean that the familiar essay points us to a moment in history where the writer (Montaigne) began to ask himself, what is my understanding on sadness, what is my response to liars, what is my best intellectual sense of smells, or prayers or age or books? Montaigne claims that he is writing about one individual, Michel de Montaigne, "The world always looks straight ahead; as for me, I turn my gaze inward, I fix it there and keep it busy. Everyone looks in front of him; as for me, I look inside of me; I have no business but myself; I continually observe myself, I take stock of myself, I taste myself" (Montaigne xvii). But Montaigne's form of self analysis is not the same manifestation of presence as a student who encounters a text and then selects something from his or her personal history and views that text through his or her own solipsistic view-finder. Rather, Montaigne asks, what do I know from my reading (and he thinks of everything as a text he is reading) about this topic or that one? So it is personal in the sense that it is a response to a question that interests me personally, but this response is not isolated within my experience, but instead takes into account everything that has been said, everything I can possibly find out and consider within the time and

space I am allowed to write about it (which, for the average college student is often a very limited time). The familiar essay teaches its reader about proximity between writer and text, not as an interiorized response from the self, to the self and about the self, but rather in response to other intertextualized responses.

Like Hesse, Atkins condemns critique of the familiar essay as the most self-centered literary form, but again he locates this confusion in the difference between personal and familiar. We see Atkins working toward a distinction between the familiar and personal essay in the book that precedes *The Familiar Essay*; in *Tracing the Essay* he writes, “Self conscious and self-aware, yes, but these qualities represent health, unlike self-centeredness. In more than one manner, the essay moves outward, the essay and its writer connect with the world, with otherness” (50). This “otherness” of essaying, this concern over presence, especially the presence of the reader in relation to the writer gets us closer to the distinction Atkins will eventually crystallize in his book, *The Familiar Essay*. He makes this distinction clear in the title to the first chapter: “The Observing Self, or Writing Upon Something: The Character, Art and Distinctiveness of the Familiar Essay.” His title plays off of a title by Graham Good, whose work, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay,* misses an opportunity to clarify presence in the familiar essay versus the personal: “Graham Good misses the difference between ‘the self observed’ and ‘the self observing’” (*The Familiar Essay*, 5). Atkins believes that personal essays fail to become familiar essays when “the scales tip, and the focus becomes ‘the self observed,’ when the writing is primarily about the self of the writer rather than ‘on’ or ‘of’ something outside the self” (5). This distinction is no small observation for Composition studies. It brings into focus not only the crux of the debate between Elbow and

Bartholomae, but also the ontological shift in our contemporary notion of the self.

In her recent book, *How to Live, or A Life of Montaigne*, Sarah Bakewell wonders what has happened to the self and what, if anything, Montaigne has to do with it: "The Twenty-First Century is full of people who are full of themselves. A half-hour's trawl through the online ocean of blogs, tweets, tubes, spaces, faces, pages, and pods brings up thousands of individuals fascinated by their own personalities and shouting for attention. They go on about themselves; they diarize, and chat, and upload photographs of everything they do. Uninhibitedly extrovert, they also look inward as never before. Even as bloggers and networkers delve into their private experience, they communicate with their fellow humans in a shared festival of the self" (1). Discussing the self in the context of ancient friendship (an essayistic topic if ever there was one), David Konstan observes, "Never in antiquity, so far as I am aware, is the revelation of personal intimacies described as necessary to the formation of friendships.…Modern discussions often suppose that the basis of attraction between friends resides in their individual or personal qualities: 'the person who is a friend must be appreciated as a unique self rather than simply a particular instance of a general class….Ancient writers, on the contrary, tend to emphasize traits that are good (on some definition of good) rather than singular; while excellence may be rare, it is always of a kind" (15-16). This qualification of excellence suggests a cultural framework within which the Greek individual always imagines himself[51] as a self. As we now acknowledge our overdetermined contemporary consciousness then, how do we assimilate the ancient textual notion of the self with the present one? The problem with the widely accepted notion framed by Konstan as "individual or personal qualities…a unique self," comes from our naïve assumption that

we are no longer each “a particular instance of a general class.” Our contemporary perception of the self as somehow radically independent from our individual cultural moorings overlooks our interdependent and intertextually stipulated identities. Just like new ideas, everyone comes from somewhere, some conditioned terrain, some history of conversations and discursively landscaped material place. To imagine that we come into our so-called unique ontological selves from nowhere is to deny language. Wittgenstein’s late philosophical realizations suggest precisely that our selves emerge from a particular language that cannot be undone or overcome by extant denial of linguistic histories. Nor can our language be underestimated as an indication of our shared identity.

Bartholomae’s concern that personal writing is little more than ‘sentimental realism’ is a response to our new definition of the self. Academic writing separates what matters to me as an individual, observing and psychologizing things that are of primary concern to me—from outside the field of disciplinary concerns, from concerns already alive and at issue within a given disciplinary conversation. Although the familiar essay pays little heed to the conventions of argument, doing something else entirely, it honors the habit of dispassionate observation—weighing something, some idea, some topic. The familiar essay serves as a middle ground between expressivism and academic writing by allowing the writer to creatively treat topics of personal interest while expecting them to be examined carefully, objectively—to consider what others might have already said. The familiar essay holds promise for the practices of first-year composition students, not for its focus on personal experience, but because the form encourages writing experiments, tries, and attempts. For this reason, Atkins notes that “not all personal essays are familiar, although all familiar essays are personal” (5). First-year composition is an ideal place to

experiment with the conventions of invention, arrangement, and style by exploring topics that test one's curiosity against historical practices of rhetoric and writing studies.

Montaigne and the Familiar Essay

Montaigne's familiar essay mediates Bartholomae and Elbow (as a kind of critical friendship) with its combination of critical attention to its subject matter as well as its playful (friendly) curiosity for a variety of topics. Atkins believes that using the familiar essay as a model for first-year writing courses might be somewhat daunting for students. Nevertheless, he devotes much of his own professional energy there because students and teachers learn humility, antidogmatism, and historical skepticism from reading and practicing the form (*Tracing* 4-5). He argues that by introducing his students to the history of the essay they begin to value its role in the historical development of academic writing which they are routinely asked to produce in college classes. I understand the value of discussing essayistic literacy in composition courses, especially as part of a conversation about other kinds of literacy, or as part of an introduction to genre studies. I can also imagine (for the reasons Atkins lists above) having first-year writing students read familiar essays, but it seems a poor choice as a model for student writing, and using "personal" essays would be more confusing still because students are already perpetually unclear about how to use the personal persuasively in academic argument. In fact, the familiar essay's unwieldy, meandering, stream of conscious flow portends more of a stumbling block than a stepping stone for novice academic writers. Sarah Bakewell notes how a typical page of Montaigne's Essays is a "sequence of meanders, bends and divergences. You have to let yourself be carried along, hoping not

to capsize each time a change of direction throws you off balance" (35). This question of balance seems an especially useful point of caution for students in first-year writing because it is difficult enough for experienced writers to maintain equilibrium in a straightforward argument, to say nothing of less experienced ones. As Atkins notes, writing students and teachers benefit from the familiar essay by acknowledging its place in the history of essay writing. His other terms, "humility, anti-dogmatism and historical skepticism," suggest that the essay fosters the kind of critical thinking that writing teachers commonly try to reinforce in their pedagogies.

The familiar essay offers an exhibition of writing as critical friendship. Citing Anne Fadiman, who sees the essayist engaged in an actual conversation with a person, and calls the reader, "a stand-in, the vicarious representative of the essayist's flesh-and-blood friend," Atkins notes that like friendship, "essaying is not a place for self-indulgence—nor often, 'self-centeredness,' 'the stench of ego' having been purged by the writer's immersion in her subject, an effect continued by the implicit acknowledgment of engagement in conversation with an-other self" (Familiar Essay 10). Atkins' observation that egoism gets purged by "the writer's immersion into her subject," cuts straight to the difference between the personal and familiar essay. What Montaigne masters is not self indulgence, but rather self-reflexive writing; Bakewell calls it "paying attention," not to his own concerns, but to his own thinking and thought process. And it is to this way of looking, this kind of attention paying that writing pedagogy can turn for inspiration from Montaigne.

If we see Montaigne's writing as an activity where he interprets the world around him, using the essay to weigh and measure, we must ask how this figures into the rituals

of contemporary academic research. Of course, the sooner one understands reading as the hunting and gathering, the better. As Stuart Greene notes in his chapter "Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument," reading is a form of inquiry rather than a search for information and that when that difference in motivation merges with one's rhetorical purpose, reading and writing become easier and more enjoyable (150). Green expands this idea in a different article, "Mining Sources, Reading to Write." Here he articulates a form of purposeful reading that helps researchers target their reading energies in places where they might successfully glean evidence particularly relevant to their work (155-156). The purposes of academic writing may vary, but most articles, chapters, and monograms get written with the intention of making new knowledge, which amounts to scholars inventing new ways of seeing both technical and commonplace ideas crucial to their respective disciplines and specializations within those disciplines. But again, academics were not the first thinkers to perform this labor, nor do they remain the only ones who advance knowledge about their topical interests. While it is true that Montaigne concerned himself with personalized philosophical topics like smells, prayers, and friendship, he also wrote essays like "A Consideration upon Cicero" and "Of Books." All of his essays contemplate important issues of his day in a rhetorically critical way, regardless of topic. In "Of Books" he begins with a reflexive confession of only providing a personal opinion about books, not one born of trained knowledge; he tells his reader not to look to him for certainty, privileging instead his own forgetfulness: "Whoever is in search of knowledge, let him fish for it where it dwells; there is nothing I profess less…if I am a man of some reading, I am a man of no retentiveness" (359). Here Montaigne admonishes reading in order to write, in order to

retain. But in "Of Books," Montaigne produces carefully weighed meditations on the difference between reading produced in his day and that written by ancient authors, and also between ancient authors and the Greek philosophers. His analysis cultivates the kind of ethos we might expect from a serious thinker in any age, drawing extensively on the likes of Horace, Ovid, and Virgil as well as Seneca, Cicero, and Lucretius. Although it is clear that his writing was the practice he used to interpret and understand his reading, we cannot draw straight lines between the familiar essay and today's academic writing; Montaigne was not after an argument. He was not really out to prove anything, except perhaps that his thinking exercises had their own merit as exercises. Nevertheless, we can see how academic writing borrows from the tradition of the essay, not only as an extension of close reading but also as a disciplined inquiry that addresses Montaigne's main concern, as Bakewell terms it: how to live.

In his essay, "Of Virtue" he contends that a virtuous person may be difficult to find since final definitions of virtue are subject to circumstance. He seems to favor a Greek ideal for virtue (as excellence), but he provides myriad examples of conflicting accounts of virtue based on confusing varieties of religious piety, certitude, and self-sacrifice. Montaigne presents several anecdotal narratives that attest to this confusion, but he also offers a metanarrative that the reader must interpret from the logic of his collection of stories. He tells stories of Oriental wives who offer themselves up to be burned to honor the virtue of their dead husbands, of Christians who believe that they have no say whatsoever in their inevitable deaths and therefore take little thought for their own safety in battle, some of whom carried only a sword and girded themselves in nothing but a linen sheet, as well as of "The Assassins" who were praised for the

"supreme devoutness and purity of morals" because they believed the most certain way to paradise was to "kill someone of a different religion" (653). Montaigne uses a rhetorical strategy of presenting narratives of these extreme actions, committed in the name of virtue, to nudge the reader to make up his or her own mind about virtue. His method is subtle and he never decides what is, after all, virtuous, for this would deny the reader the privilege of hermeneutical parsing set up by his intentional ambiguity.

In light of my overarching thesis that contemporary writing classes will benefit from an understanding and application of critical friendship, it makes sense to consider Montaigne's essay "Of Friendship." Like all of his essays, "Of Friendship" unfolds in the context of an ongoing rhetorical conversation about friendship—one formally started by Aristotle, as Montaigne eagerly acknowledges. This essay is personal insofar as it eulogizes his "perfect friendship" with La Boétie. Montaigne seems to convey the message: I know real friendship philosophically and intellectually, and I know friendship to be most rare. He uses personal experience as evidence: I have experienced the highest level of friendship in La Boétie. But if there is a cohesive line of reasoning in "Of Friendship," it comes from his turn to the Greek tradition of friendship to distinguish friendship from the relationship between father and son or between siblings. As we later learn distinctly from C.S. Lewis in *The Four Loves*, Montaigne seems to be implicitly separating his ideal of friendship from what the Greeks call storge (that love between family members). Nor should the reader mis-take Montaigne's version of friendship for eros—that affection one feels for a lover. Montaigne makes it clear that his love for La Boétie is not the kind of love shared between men in ancient Athens: "And that other, licentious Greek love is justly abhorred by our morality. Since it involved, moreover,

according to their practice, such a necessary disparity in age and such a difference in the lovers' functions, it did not correspond closely enough with the perfect union and harmony we require here" (Montaigne 168). He uses Aristotle to distinguish his ideal of friendship from "acquaintances and familiarities." He begins with a description of his relationship to La Boétie as evidence for his claim to perfect friendship. As a deliberate extension of Aristotle's friendship calculus, Montaigne agrees that perfect friendship can only happen once. He validates Aristotle's description of secondary friendships, and he supports Aristotle's claim that a person may have very few primary friendships in a lifetime. But Montaigne takes that number to its extreme and suggests that there is only room for one. Aristotle argues that

> It is impossible to be friends with a great number of people in the perfect sense of friendship as it is to be in love with a great number of people at once. For perfect friendship is in some sense an excess, and such excess of feeling is natural toward one individual, but it is not easy for a great number of people to give intense pleasure to the same person at the same time, or, I may say, to seem even good to him at all…But it is possible to find a great number of acquaintances who are simply useful or pleasant or agreeable; for people of this kind are numerous. (NE 200-201)

The words "simply useful, pleasant or agreeable" call Aristotle's categories to mind: friendships of utility, pleasure, and finally that rare and perfect one. Montaigne capitalizes on the sense of excess found in the singular friend. He writes, "For this perfect friendship I speak of is indivisible; each one gives himself so wholly to his friend that he has nothing left to distribute elsewhere; on the contrary he is sorry that he is not double, triple or quadruple, and that he has not several souls and several wills, to confer them all on this one object" (Montaigne 171). This correspondence between Montaigne and Aristotle confirms Black's notion that essays are responses rather than "engine[s] of production" (Black 2). Extending this conversational reciprocity, Derrida responds to

Aristotle and Montaigne on this topic of few true friends in *The Politics of Friendship*, where he notes

> The test of friendship remains, for a finite being, an endurance of arithmetic. Indeed, the friend must not only be good in himself, in a simple or absolute manner, he must be good for you, in relation to you who are his friend. . . It is not possible to love while one is simultaneously, at the same time (áma), the friend of numerous others . . . the numerous ones, the numerous others—this means neither number nor multiplicity in general but too great a number, a certain excess of units. It is possible to love more than one person, Aristotle seems to concede; to love in number, but not too much so—not too many. It is not the number that is forbidden, nor the more than one, but the numerous, if not the crowd. (21)

For Derrida there is no mathematical way to circumscribe one's worlds onto the worlds of the other; at the very least we must agree that there is no way to truly be at one with very many others. But Montaigne holds to his monistic argument single-mindedly. His devotion to the Platonic ideal of the friend as an "other self" resists equivocation: "A single dominant friendship dissolves all other obligations. The secret I have sworn to reveal to no other man, I can impart without perjury to the one who is not another man: he is myself. It is a great enough miracle to be doubled, and those who talk of tripling themselves do not realize the loftiness of the thing" (Montaigne 172). If Montaigne imagines a once in a lifetime phenomenon of friendship, if he rejects the possibility of multiple close friends, and if he sees this calculus to be important to his essayistic musings on friendship, there is no evident analogy to his reader as this kind of friend. It does seem clear that he imagines his reader as some kind of friend, but clearer still that he imagines La Boétie as his main reader. The essay seems more intent on sharing his friendship with his reader in order to show what close friendship looks like than to recruit new loyalties from readers. This has the effect of simultaneously bringing his reader in close while also keeping him or her at a critical distance, perhaps the way a writing

teacher wants students to come close enough to trust the response from the teacher, but not so close, that the critical response gets eclipsed by the personalized interior of either student or teacher.

Montaigne's "Of Friendship" begins with a peculiar anecdote about a painter he employs who "chooses the best spot in the middle of each wall, to put a picture labored over with all his skill, and the empty space all around it he fills with grotesques, which are fantastic paintings whose only charm lies in their variety and strangeness." He then compares these grotesques to what he calls "these things of mine," about which the reader might only wonder as to his meaning. But why choose this anecdote to lead his essay on friendship? How does the anecdote bring the reader closer to Montaigne's view of friendship? Perhaps we can take "these things" as a reference to friends outside his perfect friendship with La Boétie, the fantastic others whose only charms lie in their variety and strangeness contrasted with the focal one center of Montaigne's attention. Taken as such, Montaigne acknowledges his many friends while not diminishing his affection for his one true friend. Rhetorically speaking, then, Montaigne's "Of Friendship" works as an encomium to La Boétie, it is epideictic in memory of his friend and of friendship generally. "I only drag on a weary life," he writes. "[A]nd the very pleasures that come my way instead of consoling me, redouble my grief for his loss. We went halves in everything it seems to me that I am robbing him of his share." Montaigne then quotes a passage from Terence: "Nor may I rightly taste of pleasures here alone—so I resolved—when he who shared my life is gone" (174). The intertextuality of Montaigne's essay, with flurries of quotations, introspective observations, and philosophical inquiry demonstrates a way of seeing, looking, and thinking, rather than a

generic formula for writing. Writing pedagogy, if not writing students, can look to the familiar essay to see a writer at work on ideas, looking for problems and solutions to problems. He ends his essay on friendship: “Now, in exchange for this serious work, I shall substitute another produced in that same season of his life, gayer and more lusty” (176), and he ends with a sonnet from La Boétie, to bring him into the conversation, to resuscitate him.

One pronounced effect of Montaigne’s weighing friendship advances the mystery of friendship. He presumably borrows from Cicero’s *De amicitia* to recount the story of Caius Blossius’ inquisition before the Roman counsuls regarding his best friend, Tiberius Gracchus, a dissident being prosecuted by Gaius Laelius. Montaigne writes of this friendship

> They were friends more than citizens, friends more than friends or enemies of their country or friends of ambition and disturbance. Having committed themselves absolutely to each other, they held absolutely the reins of each other’s inclination; and if you assume that this team was guided by strength and leadership of reason, as indeed it is quite impossible to harness it without that, Blossius’ answer is as it should have been. If their actions went astray, they were by measure neither friends to each other, nor friends to themselves. (170)

Here Montaigne uses an ancient narrative to capture the metaphysical idea of friendship that transcends any mundane or conventional description; the confluence of shared identity within the friendship functions a priori to conditions external to it. As Montaigne elaborates on this point he again gestures to the implicit trust in the motives of his beloved friend. This matter of trust illuminates Montaigne’s consciousness of ethos in his writing—he consistently reassures his reader of the veracity and authenticity of his connection to La Boétie. In this reassurance and covenant of trust he reiterates Aristotle’s description of the friend as “another self” with expressions like, “Our souls pulled

together in such unison, they regarded each other with such ardent affection, and with a like affection revealed themselves to each other to the very depth of our hearts, that not only did I know his soul as well as mine, but I should certainly have trusted myself to him more readily than to myself"; he further insists that friends have everything in common between them: "wills, thoughts, judgments, goods, wives, children, honor, and life—and their relationship being that of one soul in two bodies," reiterating Aristotle's very apt definition, "they can neither lend nor give anything to each other" (170-171). The important point of this higher friendship for Montaigne involves the sharing of a life, but the sharing unfolds spontaneously and naturally rather than artificially.

"Of Friendship" leads with a vivid, albeit abstract allusion, followed by specific framework from the friendship literature of ancient Greece and Rome, with specific reference to Aristotle and Cicero along with anecdotes from other writers like Terence, Horace, and Virgil. But what seems especially vivid in this essay, like all of his work, is Montaigne's participation in an exercise, externalizing his intertextualized thought process on a familiar topic, friendship. As the reader reads Montaigne, he or she sees him reading. Nevertheless, his essay plainly asserts a familiarity previously uncommon in other forms of writing (with the possible exception of the familiar letter and perhaps overtones from St. Augustine's Confessions, as noted by Frame's Introduction to Montaigne, by Stuart Hampshire (Montaigne xvii). Montaigne's essay "Of Friendship" carries a confessional tone with expressions of dramatic personalized deference to La Boétie. But he also uses very casual, self-referential language, second guessing his own writing decisions about what to include and exclude; we see him in dialogue with himself and in the case of "Of Friendship," with La Boétie.[52] The circulation between these

friends reiterates my argument that Montaigne's essay unites the critical role of rigorous intertextualized examination (close reading) with a tradition of pathos driven "reader-friendly" self-reflection.

Thus, we credit Montaigne for the distinct discursive intervention of the essay which moves writing in the direction of the personal, though not necessarily toward the psychologized, egoistic personal. His practice of familiar writing signals a move away from scholastic rigidity and toward something less formal and less severe. In his essay "On the Education of Little Children," he makes a case to overturn the corporally punitive kind of learning common in his day, in exchange for one more humane, more critically friendly. He writes,

> Instead of tempting and alluring children to letters by apt and gentle ways, our pedants do in truth present nothing before them but rods and ferules, horror and cruelty. Away with this violence! away with this compulsion!...this strict government of most of our colleges has evermore displeased me…'Tis the true house of correction of imprisoned youth…were it left to my ordering, I would paint the school with pictures of Joy and Gladness, Flora and Graces…that where their profit is, they might have their pleasure too. (102-103)

Montaigne's influence on a philosophical disposition toward education matches his disposition toward writing itself and not just the teaching of it; he wants something friendlier. Montaigne's resistance to punitive teaching methods parallels the experimental nature of his prose where he seems bent on accessibility and affability as opposed to austerity and detachment. The mix of references and the concomitant response to his own reading experiences generates this affability that stands out in his essaying. It is this affability or familiarity that reinvents the way we perceive the proximity between the writing, the writer, and the reader, a proximity that helps readers assimilate information in a cognitive and emotional balance and that prepares the way for critical friendship.

Conclusion: What Students Should Write

The historical development of the academic essay takes many twists and turns and is, even now, as varied as its author's purposes and audiences. But academic writing bears some recognizable identifying trademarks. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein famously argue that in order to learn to write academic essays students must make particular moves. Most contemporary writing guides (including Graff and Birkenstein) apply Kenneth Burke's anecdote of the ongoing conversation at a party, which compares scholars to newcomers who have just arrived at the party and want to enter and participate in the conversation. Additionally, many teachers (and writing guides) refer to academic writing as argumentative writing, with the desire for students to learn how to articulate a clear thesis and support it with evidence. Others frame their vision of the scholarly essay in terms of research writing. None of these names for the activities under David Bartholomae's "academic writing" umbrella is mutually exclusive from the others; they are, rather, varied attempts to put academic oars in the water.

Tying the history of these narratives to the familiar essay does not solve the riddles of academic writing (it remains difficult to say precisely what it is), and this particular history of tracing academic writing back to the familiar essay does not offer final solutions for best classroom practices in first-year writing. However, the familiar essay does remind its readers about a variety of habits that have remained imperative to writing for centuries. More important, by distinguishing the personal essay from the familiar essay, this essayistic history provides a more robust moderator between expressive and academic writing. Where the personal essay veers too much to the side of expressive habits, hung up on the psychologized personal, the familiar essay draws on a

mixture of practices one might describe as both expressive and academic.

Peter Elbow's most recognized work, *Writing Without Teachers*, may call into question the very premise of Bartholomae's argument, by calling into question the authority of teachers[53]—but his questions about ethos are necessary questions, and his recommendations for writing seem like recommendations that Montaigne himself would advocate as crucial to essayistic literacy. Moreover, Elbow recommends exercises that most academic writing pedagogies reinterpret and practice in first-year writing classes, no matter where they see their own pedagogies on the spectrum between expressive and academic writing. Elbow's recommended activities include free writing in diaries, free writing as a method to find topics, producing finished pieces of writing, just to name the first few. Elbow's approach to writing in *Writing Without Teachers* is a clarion call for fewer guidelines and strictures, less discipline, and more experimenting. If there is any word that captures the spirit of the familiar essay, a word that I have used repeatedly throughout this chapter, it is some form of the word experiment. Montaigne's writing activity is a work in experimentation. But experimenting also connects expressive writing to academic writing. It carries within it simultaneously the seeds of boundless creativity and scientific empiricism. Whether first-year writing students focus on Genre, Literacy, Writing about Writing, Social or Civic questions, whether they read *They Say, I Say, The Craft of Research, Everything's an Argument, The Curious Researcher,* or *The New Century Handbook*, what they write should feel experimental to them and be read as experimental by their teachers. The call and response that comes so naturally to the conversation between a student and teacher about student writing is never about finding a final answer. Instead, students ask experimental questions that lead to further questions,

they explore new territories and in response, the teacher perpetuates the experimental researching process by asking new questions and broadening the perspective of student curiosity.

If we consider the example of the trajectory of graduate student writing as a case in point, graduate students write papers with a view toward presentations at conferences; they present papers at conferences with a view to publishing articles or chapters. Even final projects like theses and dissertations are not end products, but instead experiments in preparation for publication. And publications themselves get revised and rewritten for as long as people continue to read, reread, and respond to them. Thus, nothing could be more experimental than academic writing. But what separates the experimentation of academic writing from the experimentation of creative or expressive writing comes down, once again, to purpose. Writing that flows from personal experience remains experimental, but it closes down some of the channels of the conversation by relying on evidence that is not always shared by the constituents of the conversation and cannot really be reviewed in the way that academic writing receives peer review.

This chapter shows how the familiar essay prepares the way for the academic essay by initiating a conversation about a given topic. It shows how the familiar essay (as a sample of critical friendship) balances pathos and critical thinking by carefully weighing important rhetorical topics, which can translate to critical reading and thinking exercises in the writing classroom where students are invited to enter a real academic conversation and begin weighing in, examining, and experimenting with responses to it. Montaigne demonstrates how to use writing to think; such an activity informs Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*, but it also governs Bartholomae's chapter "What is

Composition?," where, in his conclusion, he imagines a writing pedagogy that "investigates the problems of writing at the point of production and that investigates representations of writing as a mode of learning" (28). The familiar essay clarifies the difference between proximity of the self in relation to other reading and writing selves as opposed to the proximity of the self in relation to itself; this difference points to a break that occurs later in essayistic history, a break from dispassionate observation of a topic in preference for a passionate, if personal, fixation with the psychologized self as topic. Moreover, Sarah Bakewell highlights Montaigne's essay as a particular way to pay attention. She writes about Montaigne's advice for anyone who becomes bored or depressed during retirement: "Just look around you and interest yourself in the variety and sublimity of things. Salvation lies in paying full attention to nature. Montaigne tried to do this, but he took 'nature' primarily to mean the natural phenomenon that lay closest to hand: himself. He began watching and questioning his own experience, and writing down what he observed" (31). In a postmodern age of severely fragmented attention, Bakewell's observation seems especially resonant for contemporary times. We want writing students to experiment by paying deep intellectual attention to topics about which they can come to care deeply. The actions built into the structure and activities of the essay require students to pay a particular kind of attention that may be unfamiliar to them and often even uncomfortable.

Finally, and perhaps most usefully, the familiar essay underscores the work and exercise of writing as exercise. In first-year writing pedagogy, we can borrow from Montaigne the inclination to experiment, to write about stuff that we care about, to look at something long and hard and try to discover its generalizable concern, not to find its

truth, but to find in it something we can prove. To prove something means to test, to examine, to weigh, or to experiment with long enough to solicit a response. Furthermore, in contemporary French, the word “essayer” means to try. Thus, these practices that flow from acquaintance with the familiar essay ameliorate the divisions between expressive and academic writing.

CHAPTER 4

MEDIATING PROXIMITY IN CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP: ETHOS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Introduction

At the end of Chapter 3 I show how Montaigne sees his essay writing as a specific way of paying attention. Accordingly, essaying focuses his attention to the world around him as a world of textuality, a world filled with hermeneutic possibility. In college composition, writing teachers want students to pay attention to their own invention, arrangement, style, and delivery in the context of larger academic conversations. We view their development of critical attention as a matter of ethos. Moreover, we invite students to think about writing as a significant step in the evolution of technologies that humans use to communicate. In composition studies, old technologies always become the focus for new academic conversation, and it is already cliché to rehearse the degree to which we are now at sea in an ocean of digital technologies. Humans of even modest privilege will never connect with each other the same way because communication once mediated mainly by speech or written words will, for the foreseeable future, happen through a wide variety of digitally mediated channels. In the language of Levinas, our relationship to new technologies invites questions about response and responsibility, as well as proximity to the other. Given the reality of teaching writing in what William Wolf

calls “the age of Web 2.0,” I argue that digital technologies impact our understanding of proximity between student and teacher differently than previous technologies, especially in the work of academic writing instruction in first-year composition. This is not necessarily a negative difference, but one which requires critical consideration nonetheless.

I frame this chapter in the context of the computers and writing conversation, which focuses on the complexities of contemporary technologies and their impact in all aspects of writing studies. When people say “technology” these days they often seem to refer to digital technologies without acknowledging a deep sense of the history and evolution of other familiar technologies, like the invention of writing as an actual invention, or the legacy of the invention of writing tools so easily taken for granted. Similar to the effect of other technological revolutions, the digital revolution has notably influenced our sense of proximity to each other, which in turn impacts our understanding of presence. In this chapter, I focus primarily on the advent of digital technologies, fully aware that handheld tablets and smart phones did not just materialize out of nowhere, but are the descendents of the personal computer, which Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher have evaluated in the context of the writing classroom over the past three decades; that the personal computer traces back to the typewriter, as Shawn Fullmer shows in his chapter “Typewriter Technology and the Transformation of Teaching;” and the typewriter seems like an improvement on the invention of the ball point pen, whose history György Moldova traces in his book *Ballpoint*; that the ballpoint pen seems to improve upon our previous reliance on the trusty pencil, whose historical narrative Dennis Baron evaluates in his chapter “From Pencils to Pixels”;[54] it is not only writing

implements that count as technologies, Kathleen Yanncey argues that handwriting itself is a technology, in her chapter "Handwriting, Literacy and Technology." As observed by many, (including the opening sentences of Baron's *A Better Pencil* as well as in Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy)*, there is the technology of writing itself, a technology that Plato famously mistrusts in the Phaedrus. And if writing is a technology signaling an advance in communication, we must also accept the possibility of language itself as a technology, one that revolutionizes the relay of human desire and transmission of thought.

However, much of the current focus of technology-based inquiries in the computers and writing conversation evaluates how we use digital technologies in the classroom; many ask how writing pedagogies can engage student interest by integrating multimodal learning platforms with alphabetic models? In a recent publication of *Computers and Composition*, Jennifer Bowie and Heather McGovern evaluate just what kinds of things scholars are publishing in the leading journals of computers and writing. They agree that "much of what the research scholars in the field have published has focused on critically examining new technologies and reporting new pedagogical practices" (242). My question echoes one that Carolyn Miller asks in the late 70s (a time when usable writing technologies remain closer to the typewriter than to the word processor): what are the current technologies doing to the performance of ethos? (Miller 235). In other words, how is technology affecting the proximity between students and teachers and between students and their peers? Bridging Montaigne and Cynthia Selfe, I also ask, how does technology impact the way we pay attention? And how can we rely upon the convenience and efficiency of our finest technological resources and at the same

time question their existence as the central reason for our discourse? (Hawisher and Selfe, "Rhetoric of Technology" 56). In addition to these questions about proximity in computers and writing, current research analyzes proximities of time and space with the shifting idea of the classroom as a material location, enabled by the advent of the internet, as in the case of online classes, hybrid classes, and most recently massive open online courses, or MOOCs.[55] As a technological innovation itself, writing calls attention to issues of ontological proximity by facilitating sustained relationships across time and space.

The first section of this chapter reviews some of the literature on computers and writing that proves important and relevant to my considerations of presence and proximity. I turn to sources especially resonant with my larger framework of critical friendship as a pedagogical model. Following this brief review I examine proximity as a germane Levinasian trope for critical friendship in an era of Web 2.0 learning, with particular emphasis on the notion of virtual proximity; does the virtuality of digital communication impact teachers and students differently than previous eras of face-to-face pedagogy? Does student performance of ethos change when communication between teacher and student is more frequent, when students can email their professors at anytime with the expectation of immediate reply, or when students can monitor their grades online, does performance of ethos change when most secondary research can be conducted without physically going to the library? The last three sections of this chapter deal with these kinds of questions, first with focus on a central metaphor in Cynthia Selfe's work over the past three decades: "paying attention" as a different kind of challenge in a digital age, but also as a crucial element of critical friendship; second I

respond to a practical question: how do computers affect ethos in the composition classroom? Here I argue that classroom use of technologies should be measured by very clear expectations and purpose driven reasons in order to understand individual performances of ethos; finally, I address proximity as a matter of paying attention in the context of the current trend of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS). Although still too new a phenomenon to judge using the kind of deep empirical research called for by Bowie and McGovern, I theorize that MOOCs pose a particular problem for composition courses, a problem that is likely obvious to writing teachers who care about response to student writing, but also a problem that can be clarified by the framework of critical friendship.

Literature Review

A broad spectrum of research supports my conclusions in this chapter. While there is a popular appeal in the reasoning of humanists like Neil Postman and Wendell Berry as two examples of a Luddite resistance to the promises of technology, there are problems in taking some of their arguments to their logical conclusion. Wayne Booth also qualifies as a kind of public intellectual, but he makes his intellectual home in rhetorical studies and as such provides a relevant rubric for thinking about virtual friendship and trust as necessary components of ethos. As cofounders of the international journal *Computers and Composition*, Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe contribute a large corpus on technology and writing, authoring many essays, chapters, and books independently and together, not to mention their edited collections and the journal itself as a repository for computers and writing students. Much of this chapter forms around their ideas with

special concentration on Selfe's emphasis on paying attention. This trope adds so much value to a conversation about whether or not attention gets compromised or complemented by machines. From their work, the conversation on computers and writing spans more than three decades, and a few luminaries from that conversation provide wonderful rubrics against which I can test my own theories. Stuart Selber, Mary Leonard, Jason Palmeri, and Carrie Fried each add value to the ways teachers and students see themselves in relation to computers including how teachers and students might continue to inhabit humanizing spaces in virtual relation to one another. I also turn somewhat counter intuitively to an invaluable essay by Min Zhan Lu, even though she is only working on the margins of a conversation about computers and composition. Lu uses her interest in international language studies to address the teacher's responsibility in composition classes to students who are othered by language, ethnicity, and other differences, like class and gender. I argue that this particular essay connects importantly, if not directly to my thesis by meditating upon concepts similarly vital to Levinas, specifically response and responsibility as well as proximity. Chris Anson's published chair's address at the College Composition and Communication Conference (CCCC), 2013, provides lots of critical links to my questions about digitally mediated proximity. I draw upon and question a variety of other arguments to help me narrate the way we might proceed in our multifaceted mediums as teachers and students of composition.

Proximity

When we encounter the person behind the rhetorical voice, the person writing the argument, we cannot regard writerly presence as somehow separated from the writer's

embodied humanity. In other words, the critical distance of a written argument separates people from their arguments, but the people remain. This relationship between the virtuality of the argument in time and space and the actual person making it demands that the writer balance the logos (reasons for and logic of) the argument with pathos (the account of the context of human emotion involved) in order to achieve the kinds of ethos that makes arguments convincing in terms of believability and persuasiveness. Although Levinas never links his questions on proximity or alterity to technology per se, his theorizing on presence and proximity extends our grasp of these problems and also enhances possible solutions as Desmond Manderson demonstrates in his essay "The Ethics of Proximity," an essay that provides an accessible summary of Levinas' theory of proximity and responsibility, especially because of Manderson's way of connecting ethos to matters of proximity:

> Proximity stands for this intimate but unassailable distance and the ethical obligations it places upon us: 'a rapport produced by a lack of relation'. On the other hand, relationships of proximity constitute *us:* they do not 'collide with freedom, but invest it', the approach of another awakens us from the deep sleep of introspection: it gives us an intensity, a feeling of existence, and, by the very fact of becoming aware that we are not alone and find ourselves implicated in this non-indifference, we are aroused to consciousness. By 'calling us into question'—by singling us out as responsible for others—we are made better aware of ourselves. (297)

Manderson suggests further that Levinas speaks of responsibility in infinite terms, as something beyond choice, as "unexceptionable…preceding every free consent, every pact, every contract." Our responsibility is not something we choose, and we may even feel duress from the tyranny of responsibility to the other. According to Manderson's interpretation, responsibility is not born of "consent or intent," but is rather, conditioned by "circumstance of vulnerability" not necessarily of our own doing. Levinas claims that

we are "chosen without assuming the choice!" The inextricability of proximity as a kind of contract funds Levinasian ethics (Manderson 297-298). Levinas sees the distance between the self and the other as a proximity, not of consciousness, but of obsession, by which he seems to mean the incorrigible necessity brought on by the fact of the other, the presence and existence of the other (Otherwise 87). Clearly writing allows for us to endeavor the proximity of alterity in virtual relation to the other, but this must be true of all communication which attempts to approximate, at the very least to understand and respond to the epistemology and ontology (the performance of ethos) of the other. We can connect through space and time because of writing (and other technologies). In the writing classroom, the teacher assumes this responsibility by connecting with students and by helping students connect with the other (arguments) through writing. I use this word "connect" on purpose because it offers useful resonance for critical friendship as well as in terms of interfacing by virtual, technological mediums of communication. For modern students and teachers, digital technologies generate uncertainties about the presence of presence, a vulnerability or fragility of being, which increases as proximity gets translated through multiple levels of virtual mediation, and which in turn (one might hope) encourages epistemological modesty about what Levinas calls "otherwise than being."

As I argue in Chapter 3, connecting with others pedagogically (that is, in the context of academic work) is not solely or first and foremost a matter of connecting emotionally or in a personal way, but rather a matter of connecting one's ideas with the ideas already in circulation in academic arguments. On the other hand, one of the questions of this chapter has precisely to do with the intellectual and emotional exchange

between embodied interlocutors whether in a physical classroom or a virtual alternative. But this is not a zero sum equation where we must choose either a face-to-face classroom or an online class. Each kind of learning platform has advantages mutually exclusive from the others. Some contend that the online classroom lends itself to a more democratic response, less encumbered by judgments that might occur because of visible differences in race, class, gender, and so on. Not surprisingly, the opposite is also true because students feel less inhibited and perhaps because of proximity they do not calculate the recourse of expressing hate or prejudice.[56] The physical classroom allows for connection through gesture, eye contact, and peer fellowship along with other nuances difficult to replicate online, as June Griffin and Deborah Minter point out in a recent essay: "The Rise of the Online Classroom" (146). My larger argument is not interested in privileging one technology over another, or recommending a low-tech approach over a high-tech one. Rather, I am interested in the impact of digital technologies on the proximities in the classroom and in and around writing and between people.

Plato-Socrates favored the connection between embodied individuals over virtual ones. Many theorists such as Postman, Ong, Churchill, Susan Miller, among others, call attention to the event in the *Phaedrus* where Socrates questions the invention of writing. To begin his book, *A Better Pencil*, Dennis Baron also recounts the dialogue between Socrates and Phadaeus, where Socrates retells the story of Theuth who reports his successful invention to Thamus, the chief of all the gods. In Socrates' account, Theuth promises that writing will improve memory and wisdom, to which Thamus insists that writing is an altogether bad idea for both memory and wisdom and so goes the dialectic between Socrates and Phaedrus: Dialogue (dialectic) is real, writing is a cheap imitation

of the real because writing creates distance between the embodied speakers. These contemporary theorists, including Baron, go to this account in the service of an argument about writing and technology, or writing as technology. Postman's argument in *Technopoly* tends toward those who see a corrosive future with technology's overwhelming imposition. Specifically, Postman worries about the way innovations and technologies invent new words and change the meaning of old ones and that these changes alter our perception of reality. But Postman's anxiety, perhaps along with that of Thamus and Socrates, has more to do with ontological changes brought about by the virtual. Susan Miller makes a slightly different point clear in her analysis of the *Phaedrus*:

> In the *Phaedrus* writing itself is questioned as a specific concern. But the issue is not technological. More explicitly than in the Gorgias, the Phaedrus implicitly and explicitly compares rhetoric to a systematized writing. It philosophically raises this comparison to explore metonymically the central problem in traditional Western thought, artificiality versus reality, form versus substance, body versus spirit. (*Rescuing* 114)

In the context of her argument Miller is not claiming that writing is not a technology, but rather that as a technology the issue of concern to Socrates has to do with proximity between interlocutors. Just as the rhetor's speech is self-contained and not open to interlocutionary discussion, writing also carries with it, according to Socrates, a dogmatism that resists dynamic dialectic. This quality of writing (and speeches) seems superficial to Socrates because he perceives it to be something that closes down dialectical conversation. Once writing becomes the cultural norm, people frame the tension between virtual and real differently, even though the instability of the signifiers remains. Thus, the writing teacher always negotiates the tension between the ontological and epistemological realities of his or her relationship to students and to their combined

relationship to their own material conditions and to the material they study. In other words, my significance as a composition student, my relationship to ethos as the test of my character, as the manifestation of my academic credibility gets decided, not based on arbitrary personal qualities, but instead upon the persuasiveness of my arguments and the viability of my encounter with and production of texts. Do relationships between writing teachers and their students change because of technology? Does critical friendship have a chance in a world mediated by hyperlinks, hypertext, and disembodied telepresence? Does technology inevitably link us to a new culture of openness and closeness (as in proximity) or to alienation and separation? The answer must be “yes,” or both.

As a reminder, critical friendship is a pedagogical theory about paying attention—how do we pay attention as a critical friend, to whom and how much? As noted in Chapter 1, the words ‘critical’ and “friendship” are words grounded by qualified attention. Critical friendship helps students and teachers think about ethos in relation to new technologies by paying closer attention to the ethical obligation of the teaching moment. Both teacher and student share the ethical obligations of critical friendship, the obligation to show friendship by being critical.[57]

Paying Attention

It is not uncommon for people to see new technologies as a threat. Well respected cultural critics like Neil Postman[58] and Wendell Berry assume digital technologies lend themselves to uncritical, superficial ethos. They are not alone in viewing digital technologies in terms of alienation and estrangement, as part of an inevitable binary. Wendell Berry’s somewhat well known essay, “why I am not going to buy a computer,”

does more than pay homage to the pencil or ballpoint pen, to the physical ritual of writing out words with low-tech, self-propelled instruments. He states very plainly that he cannot write against the "rape of nature" if his writing process depends on strip mining coal. He also makes the claim that computers and the (now nearly obsolete) tv set do nothing to advance what he cares about: "peace, economic justice, ecological health, political honesty, family and community stability, good work" (171). There are a host of reasons to question Berry's argument and in his book, *What Are People For?*, he publishes his essay along with angry letters from people who ask many of the obvious ones. In any conversation about technology, there is always an underlying struggle between old ways and new ones. For Berry, the computer age gives rise to an ontological struggle about what kind of people we are. Similar fears persist inside the field of rhetoric and writing studies where teachers have worried about how to navigate the pervasively interdependent relationship between technology and writing.[59] And while this trend of anxiety continues to dissipate with increasing technological literacy, we must continue to pay attention to our own practices.

Cynthia Selfe's well-known work over the past three decades focuses on literacy and technology. She began prodding composition instructors in the early 1990s to align their pedagogies with the rising tides of computer technology; in fact, her clarion call resonates with Montaigne: pay attention, pay critical attention. Her main concern in *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-first Century* centers on two different reactions to computers from teachers. Selfe worries in 1999 that teachers using computers in class do not always remind students to pay critical attention to the issues surrounding technology. Teachers who avoid computer use distance themselves from responsibility to

acknowledge the impact of digital technologies. Selfe has argued through the years that the field of composition must pay more attention to technological literacy.

When teaching a composition class in 2001 at an extension for our local community college, where the satellite campus was converted from a Strip Mall into college classrooms, I remember evaluating the problem of proximity as my students hid themselves behind large computer monitors. Most teachers at the time were accustomed to the fact to face classroom of previous decades. But the tension from the imposing physical presence of large computer monitors from those times has disappeared with much smaller, faster, more useful, in fact increasingly indispensible technologies, as predicted by Selfe and Hawisher:

> Computers are becoming increasingly important in educational settings—not simply because they are tools for writing (they are not simply tools; they are, indeed, complex technological assumptions of an entire culture), but rather because these machines serve as powerful cultural and catalytic forces in the lives of teachers and students. Although the machines themselves mean little to us…the work they support and the connections they make possible mean a great deal. (*Passions* 2)

By anticipating the interdependent relationship between technology and teaching writing, Selfe and Hawisher emerge as clairvoyants, and since their early predictions these two scholars have collaborated on and independently written multiple chapters and articles that advocate new ways our pedagogies must respond to the variety of multimodal options. This research includes an article from 2006 wherein they decry, among other things, the slow pace of worldwide access to computers and online sources. In this more recent case, their argument focuses on the colonizing force of the English language and the futility of computer literacy apart from English literacy.[60] Selfe and Hawisher highlight a pair of literacy narratives from two graduate students, one from Nigeria and

the other from Northeast China. They see these students as representatives of the digital divide, each having grown up in an era "essentially coincident with the invention of the microcomputer," but they also see them as representatives of the digital age, as users of world Englishes (1503). They acknowledge the interdependent relationship between what they call digital literacy and acquisition of English: "one must have knowledge of English to negotiate a basically Anglophone Internet and to learn the many software programs that contribute to this negotiation" (1527). Selfe and Hawisher recognize that their subjects from disparate cultures succeed largely because of their individual desires to acquire both English and computer literacy; they conclude their study with a series of questions we in composition face in relation to the role English will play in the future expansion of digital literacy worldwide, noting that the days of an "English-centric Internet may be numbered or at least shifting" so that many who rely on the Web in the future will not be held back by the dual challenge of English literacy as well as digital literacy.

Their chapter resonates with a compelling study by Min-Zahn Lu that focuses on the complexities of language acquisition and literacy generally, but especially on the colonizing way that English circulates world wide as an extension of American exceptionalism. My turn to Lu may seem tangential here. However, I find her argument interesting and relevant because of her examination of pedagogical distance. Lu's study focuses on the role of composition teacher and student, and she argues in terms of responsible and responsive users of English, terms that reverberate with an implicit correlation to Levinas. At the center of this resonating language of responsiveness and responsibility is a call by Lu for composition teachers to actively pay attention to

students, to their diverse language needs, to their fears about their uses of language, which can be interpreted as their performance of ethos, and to their ways of learning in relation to fast capitalism, which Lu sees as an ongoing mechanism for othering (43-44). She argues that composition should take up the responsibility for all different kinds of users of English to actively participate in redesigning standardized English because “a course in composition is one of the few courses required of a majority of college students, a social domain through which the future Working Persons, Tourists, Consumers, Teachers, CEO’s, Portfolio Men, Consultants, Politicians, Leaders of institutions or life worlds and the parents and teachers of the generation of these certified U.S. patrols of the boundaries of English will pass through” (44). Yes, Lu focuses first and foremost upon the status of Englishes and the layers of othering that result from the political machinations involved in teaching and learning diverse language populations, but her advocacy looks like critical friendship because she believes composition instructors should actively show critical concern and care for diverse individual language learners.

While Lu’s central critique highlights the absurdity of a platonically ideal English language that some English speakers imagine recovering and nurturing somewhere and somehow in the future, her argument also implicates the role of technology as it relates to English, the spread of which happens by the force of “fast capitalism.” When she asks, “what could being responsible possibly mean for each of us in Composition?” Her answer is that we compositionists “rework our relations to users [of English] worldwide” (18). She sees this reworking as a concerted effort inside the academic profession of rhetoric and composition to not just make room for world Englishes, but to promote and encourage them. Her more specific solution to responsively and responsibly distance

ourselves from what she calls “monolithic English—standardized U.S. English—is to regard our literacy practices as a matter of design.” Responding to scholars like Suresh Canagarajah and Gunther Kress, as well as the New London Group et al., Lu sees the promotion of discursive design as a matter of accepting, in fact, encouraging local linguistic exigencies to determine how texts get designed.

Although she does not clarify English’s rise in the world as the direct result of technological innovation, Lu’s argument connects to technology in a variety of ways. Her views on fast capitalism as a central vehicle for English transmission seem evermore possible in the context of fast information exchange. Furthermore, there can be no doubt that the idea of designing one’s own texts in localized dialects and varied Englishes means something different today than ever before because our students design their actual texts, and also their virtual personae, indeed their identity in digitally mediated and socially politicized spaces. Today’s immediate, hypervirtual information exchanges along with multimodal presentations of the self call all the louder for responses grounded in critical friendship because critical friendship looks at individuals in context and practices its critique with intellectual ardor as well as circumstantial, contextualized empathy, care, and concern; Lu’s argument crescendos toward the realization of this kind of individual attention. At its best, however, critical friendship is not hung up on a search for some kind of essential personalized self, but rather, on the individualized argument, how it is situated, the clarity of its purposes, how it envisions its audience, and how it responds responsibly and responsively to the ongoing conversation, in fact, how it is designed. Ultimately, this study from Lu invites germane questions about the nature and importance of proximity in the shifting and developing definition of the composition classroom. In

her essay, Lu emphasizes ethos by emphasizing trust, not trust between individuals precisely; instead she calls upon composition gate keepers to trust in the design of texts even when those texts subscribe to difference instead of Standard English. She wants to expand the circumference of trustworthy texts.

In the computers and writing conversation more directly, Dennis Baron also emphasizes trustworthiness as something readers should consider carefully. He sees how people view technologies as something that threatens trust by introducing layers of distance between the speaker and the hearer (reader and writer). From the first pages of his book, he makes it clear that Socrates was wrong in his concerns about writing as an unreliable source of information; people might have believed that "at least with the spoken word, they knew who they were talking to, friend, foe, or total stranger. Friends could be trusted. With enemies, you knew where you stood. Strangers had to prove themselves. But words scrawled on a piece of paper, or a sheepskin, or a lump of clay, those were always strangers, always worthy of suspicion. . . Things have changed" (5). Today, even after accepting Roland Barthe's argument for the death of the author, we find ourselves trusting texts and, in fact, finding in them a possible friend, as Baron examines trust as it relates to writing technologies in all their variety. Similarly, in his chapter "Implied Authors as Friends or Pretenders," Wayne Booth addresses the idea of virtual friendship in texts. Booth's argument is important here for two reasons. First, he thinks of the relationship between the implied author and the reader as one of friendship; it is not too far a leap to frame this particular kind of friendship as a critical friendship, especially if the texts in question get read toward a critical purpose. Second, Booth's analysis is a meditation on distance, proximity, and textual alterity. Booth presents cases

from Plato's *Lysis*, Aristotle's ongoing attention to friendship in his writing on ethics and Cicero's "On Friendship," as well as writing from Montaigne, Bacon, and Emerson to recommend a literary analogy between the ancient idea of friendship and the event of reading "friendly" texts. In his ideal reading experience, Booth believes that just like an embodied other, a text can bring the qualities of friendship close, that we can experience the give and take of friendship textually. Quoting from Malcolm Bradbury's "Rates of Exchange," Booth provides the following example from an "Eastern European character . . . speaking of books as friends [who replies]: 'Yes, every day I read them and I become some more a person" (Booth, The Company We Keep 173). Booth frames his own definition of friendship in Aristotle's Ethics, and his examination of friendship comes to us in Booth's own book on ethics. As a rhetorician himself, it makes sense that he sees trust as the cornerstone of friendship and that it is by learning to trust texts that we somehow make them into friends.

Likewise, after Baron defines friends as those who can be trusted, he follows this qualification with a chapter on the historical development of trust toward texts. This trust of written texts, like the trust one might expect rom a friend, becomes part of our training as professional readers, writers, and teachers of writing. We are always thinking about signifiers of trustworthiness in the texts we encounter, and we train students to be critical about the texts they read and see too. Baron observes how the binding of oral oaths eventually gets transferred to written texts, oaths which were for a long time mistrusted. As a handwritten signature established itself as the reliable seal on a vow, the oral oath lost its previous trustworthy status. In our current digital exchanges, we now see the age-old authentication of a written signature tested again by the computer, which makes it

possible to sign contracts by inserting a typed name or indeed by checking a box (Baron 125-126, 134). Baron believes that just as the handwritten word displaced oral agreements, the digital, word-processed text generates today's trusted currency. The question at stake for this chapter has everything to do with this relationship of trust between writer and reader, whether that writer is signing a promissory note to secure financial support or submitting an essay for a first-year writing course. The writer does not secure trust by the written word alone, but by entering into a contract of attention to logos, pathos, and kairos for the student essay, and these demands on students are significant. The student essay will petition for trust by paying attention to rhetorical exigencies called for by the given assignment. These petitions for trust in the written word achieve success when they traverse the appropriate distance between interlocutors. Closing this distance between strangers promotes mutual agreements, or what Wayne Booth calls "rhetorical assent" (*Rhetoric of Assent* 106). In her book *Trust in Texts*, Susan Miller suggests that the "writer and reader share values about the proper response, paying what is due" (23). Like Booth, she employs the metaphor of friendship to characterize interlocutors who enter a kind of stipulated agreement. They come together to make good on conventionally formal and informal contracts, and they see "friendship as a social exchange, not as interpersonal goodwill, follows Aristotle's philia of 'utility'…Thus, trust, gifting, expectations of friendship, and biological relationships all make primarily rhetorical statements" (25). As a pedagogical strategy, critical friendship values the potential for trust in transactions between teachers and students that make room for critical exchange, always hoping that this trust and critical attention will inform written argument as well. Baron comes to the conclusion that whether by pencil, paint, or

computer pixel, writers' attempts to solicit trust from their readers has everything to do with approximating the conventions of the discipline. This word approximation proves useful as we think about transcending time and space in the performance of ethos in the writing classroom, whether our negotiations happen remotely or up close. Students and teachers are always left to themselves to do the difficult work of learning; most of the learning students experience happens through trial and error, working out problems that we encounter in texts. That is, we are usually separated by time and space, but also intellectually. The teacher is always left to say to the student, "I cannot do the work for you." The proximate separation of students and teachers allows a learner to match his or her "attempt" with the expectations of the institutional standards, or to close the gap between the novice and the expert to generate ethos.

Cynthia Selfe's advocacy for composition instructors to integrate their pedagogies with technology is not because she sees technology itself as the answer to all or any particular pedagogical problem, but rather that she recognizes the reach of digital technology, arguing that teachers need to adjust traditional pedagogies to interface with new ones. A relatively recent report in the Chronicle for Higher Education suggests that colleges are not keeping up with student demand for hybrid courses. Marc Parry cites a survey done by Eduventures where 20,000 students indicate "a gap between supply and demand: 19 percent of respondents said they were enrolled in blended programs, while 33 % of prospective students listed that format as their preference." As one responder, online name, *"grandeped,"* points out, "Maybe I am just not into this new math, but since when does 33% constitute 'many'? Take away the 19% that wanted it and already have it, and you only have 14% that want hybrid but aren't getting it." This same responder ironically

turns around to sing the praises of online courses that made it possible for him or her to earn a Master's degree. He/she argues in favor of online work as more rigorous and less boring than face-to-face class. Despite the confusion in this responder's position regarding distance learning, the report raises a relevant question about the future of education, advocating the hybrid course as a happy medium between online and face-to-face choices. Sociologists Carol Hostetter and Monique Busch argue that online teaching offers particular advantages in terms of proximity by generating a statistically higher sense of what they call social presence than a tradition face-to-face class (2). They suggest that when teachers rely on a sociological concept of immediacy, which gives students the sense that the teacher cares about their progress and individual success, then students admit more academic satisfaction (1-2).

Over the course of four consecutive semesters I conducted informal surveys of my hybrid writing classes toward the end of each semester. Student answers suggest that motives might be slower in transitioning toward full acceptance of technology-based learning than one might expect. This hybrid course meets once each week face-to-face for 90 minutes. The students are also required to participate in an online discussion that is organized around their majors/interests, which means that in a class of twenty students there are typically five groups of four. The standard assignment requires them to ask questions about and make arguments from course readings. They also turn in regular assignments and read each other's writing online. While my survey sample is too small to provide any conclusions, their answers to two particular questions suggest that technology has its place but should only complement the purpose of the class and not become the focus. First: "How important is the use of digital resources in the classroom?

Does your ideal humanities class include constant, moderate, or light use of digital means, like online communication during non-class time, coursework done on Canvas or via email or using in class presentations like power-point?"; second, "Describe your preferred teaching style for humanities classes: discussion based, lecture based, collaborative learning based, online discussion, digital presentation, or some blend of all choices."

While the small number of students who insist on a strong online presence in the course nearly equals the number of those strongly opposed to any computer use beyond word processing, the majority advocate light to moderate use of electronic communication and presentation because these electronic resources should never compromise quality or frequency of face-to-face instruction. If my modest survey is any indication, the majority of students favor a balanced instruction methodology based on lecture and discussion. Some like clean, well-organized electronic presentations to go along with lectures and some are adamant against class discussion, questioning the authority of peer knowledge. But it appears that students appreciate authoritative lectures when the instructor is both passionate about her subject-matter and very knowledgeable. Those who pine for more online presence or more collaboration are a surprisingly small number. This interests me because we know that our students spend lots of free time online, on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, and especially video games (among other options). Yet they remain committed to the appeal of traditional instructional methods. Their preference for face-to-face contact (or at least person to person) suggests that students value some form of critical friendship with each other and with the teacher. I do not believe that the nuances of critical friendship that students

respond to are restricted to face-to-face interaction, but rather to situations where their texts are read with care and where they feel free to experiment with invention, arrangement and style. For example, the informal survey does not take online classes into account. That is, I did not ask students how effective face-to-face methodologies compare to effective online courses they had taken. Had I done so, I would very likely have been reminded that many of the effective elements in a face-to-face class can be duplicated by a well prepared teacher online (Warnock 2-8).

Based on my limited survey, one could argue that students prefer a good lecture because they can pretend to be taking notes while multitasking. However this does not match their reactions to the influence of digitally mediated and enhanced classroom experience. Students make comments like "No online instruction please! Any online work has been a negative experience for me—it is very impersonal and does not work well for me"; "I prefer discussion and lecture—no online—too much distance between students, teacher and material"; "I like discussion and lecture with little or no collaboration and no online exchanges—pointless." Perhaps this mistrust of digitally enhanced instruction suggests something ominous about our enthusiasm for electronic communication. But negativity from students about digitally mediated teaching likely comes from ill prepared instruction. It is now very obvious that teachers who are professionally trained in a digital environment are creating dynamic alternatives to traditional classroom methods.[61]

Selfe and Hawisher suggest that poor preparation for computer-supported lessons might provoke negative reactions from students toward computer use in favor of standard pedagogical modes: "In many English composition classes, computer use simply

reinforces those traditional notions of education that permeate our culture at its most basic level: teachers talk, students listen; teachers' contributions are privileged; students respond in predictable, teacher-pleasing ways" (*The Rhetoric of Technology* 55). More recently, Griffin and Minter call for the ongoing pressure for the profession to generate better instructional support for teachers working in online mediums (151). The common strain between Selfe and Hawisher's concern in 1999 and Griffin and Minter's concern fourteen years later suggests that part of the teaching workforce still faces serious challenges acclimating to contemporary digital demands. Since many instructors may lack the necessary resources and training to feel equally comfortable with technology to their students, issues of proximity and reciprocity become all the more complex. One example that amplifies the digital divide in the face-to-face classroom arises in the negotiation of how much students are allowed to use personal technologies in class. Although it is not clear that a successful prohibition on electronic devices can help students pay closer attention, some instructors have difficulty granting full agency with smart phones and laptops, particularly in small classes—like writing classes. In face-to-face situations writing instructors confront a daily challenge in their attempt to help students pay attention.

Computers in the Composition Classroom

Mary Leonard asks specifically how student ethos is influenced in an online composition classroom, where she focuses primarily on the ways that her students understand their identity and agency in online exchanges. She is alert to the ways that students misinterpret their relationship to their peers and at times the teacher; she shows

how this misinterpretation results in interesting, sometimes awkward, sometimes alarming exaggerations about one's own "character" or about the character of other students. She also points out how students continue to explore how to present themselves in writing online and how their ability to discern the appropriate ethos remains a matter of experimentation. Looking beyond what he calls alphabetic literacy, Jason Palmeri focuses his research on inevitable and more relevant multimodal literacies. Palmeri believes that invention, arrangement, and style take on much more exigency and complexity in the multimodal classroom than they can ever achieve in the alphabetic one, but he also argues early on in his book *Remixing Composition* that writing instruction has always been multimodal and that "even when we are composing solely alphabetic product, we often are thinking with multiple symbol systems (visual, auditory, gestural) (44). So Palmeri sees writing as multimodal regardless of the infusion of current technologies, but because these technologies make varied approaches to invention, arrangement, and especially delivery increasingly complex and interesting, he believes that writing instructors should increase awareness and use of multimodal options. Stuart Selber focuses on literacy in the context of technological innovation, arguing that teachers need to relearn functional literacy, critical literacy, and rhetorical literacy alongside the exigencies of the digital age so that our instruction of these literacy approaches asserts itself in a suitably relevant digital context.

Along with these other scholars, Catherine Gouge offers a useful literature review of composition scholars who have been asking important questions about how to proceed in our sophisticated technological environment. She believes our first obligation in redesigning writing programs "should be to make the programs support our goals for

student learning ideologically . . . and structurally" (343). She offers a list of ten specific ways to manage these two goals while also acknowledging the significance of the current digital situation, privileging people over machines and institutions. She focuses on alternative learning environments made possible by technology, arguing a specific case for the hybrid course that incorporates online learning with regular face-to-face mediation.

In the introduction to their book *Computers in the Composition Classroom*, Michelle Sidler et al. ask a vital question followed by a useful observation: "How do we begin to assess the impact of this technological revolution? From our experience, when writing instructors first teach in computer classrooms, one point becomes abundantly clear: computer technology changes the environment in which learning and writing occur" (3). They elaborate on this by echoing a claim similar to Carolyn Miller's predictions about the complexity of the computer and its impact on our classroom environment and on our pedagogies. They acknowledge that this impact is both promising and challenging. Times have changed a lot since I taught my course in a classroom with students hiding behind mammoth computer monitors. Students now bring their computers into class in a variety of shapes and sizes and most students have more than one.

In his recent book, *Teaching Naked*, José Antonio Bowen argues that traditional college instructors need to be absolutely current with technologies and social media in order to compete in a market place of alternative educational opportunities as well as in the contemporary market of ideas in play for students. According to Bowen, the responsibility to keep up in this way is not going to go backwards—the traditional

teaching and learning models are no longer enough. At the same time, Bowen believes in traditional methods like lecture and class discussion when understood and applied with self-awareness about the technological moment. In fact, his term, "the naked classroom" refers to the promise that the low-tech classroom still holds. However, he maintains that teachers need to prove to students during every class session that they will receive or hear or do something different than anything available for download or podcast. In agreement with Bowen, whose audience is a more general college classroom, I submit that the writing classroom can benefit most from clear expectations about how technology will be used in class. I agree with Bowen and with Jason Palmeri that most students are no longer content to sit through hour-long lectures; in fact, they may not sit through anything day after day without some pedagogical variety—that is, (as every instructor knows) they may not pay attention without resorting to the variety of distractions so close at hand. For example, in a recent video posted by "The Chronicle of Higher Education, Wired Campus," Megan O'Neil interviews students about the technologies that they want with them at all times to navigate their classes and their list is long and varied; none of them say, I just take a pen and paper. Along with Palmeri, however, multimodal invention and design practices can coincide with and even complement the practices of alphabetic writing. He writes that one goal in his book is to invite composition instructors to develop and demonstrate disciplinary expertise, but also to "demonstrate ways that multimodal composing can enhance the teaching of alphabetic writing." Along with Patricia Dunn, Palmeri suggests further that "multimodal activities can in fact help many students come to write stronger alphabetic prose" (8-9).

It only makes sense for students and teachers to rely on digital resources in their

research; in fact, it makes little sense not to take advantage of the convenience and volume of information at our fingertips. Moreover, when it comes to arrangement and design, our student's have rich resources available to them; they will not and should not ignore the obvious ways computers add value to the writing process. But these technological advantages do not always improve classroom instruction and with the challenge to introduce content and praxis that is available from the history of composition along with the basic principles from the five canons of rhetoric to first-year writing students, it is difficult to see how digital enhancements in the classroom improve invention, arrangement, and style. I am not arguing that using computers undermines teaching or that multimodal approaches compromise a longstanding tradition of one pedagogy or another. I am suggesting instead that if first-order proximity, comprised by the face-to-face encounter, cannot be duplicated or extended (enhanced) by technological modalities (and it is clear that writing—as an effective extension of first-order proximity—can and does very persuasively) then students and teachers should use them with prudence. When teachers rely on technologies that introduce unnecessary distances into that critical friendship encounter, such interference might slow student understanding that it meant to speed up or might complicate the understanding of students who could be better served by simpler models of explanation or experimentation. As Palmeri points out (acknowledging Baron's work in *A Better Pencil*) writing instructors have been known to exaggerate the revolution new technologies might promise (12). Moreover, I propose that first-year composition teachers have enough to do by introducing vigorous dialectical reading and thinking exercises, exercises that extend all the way back to the first university topoi in ancient Athens.[62]

George A. Kennedy observes that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* very likely comes to us in very much the same form he intended it to come, and it seems that even a gloss of the basic principles in Aristotle's text provide an overwhelming amount of information to teach and learn in a writing course (Kennedy 416). Jay Jordan demonstrates precisely this point in his open source text book currently in use at the University of Utah, *Open 2010: a composition textbook for writing 2010*. Jordan's textbook embraces the future of open access materials under a Creative Commons-Noncommercial-ShareAlike license that not only allows students to access their writing textbook for free online, but it also encourages them to contribute to the success and effectiveness of the text by sending critical commentary to the author in an ongoing continuum of updating. More to my precise point, however, Jordan's text demonstrates the continuing relevance and richness of some of Aristotle's key terms and rhetorical principles by conducting what we might consider a gloss of Aristotle's appeals, but also by using the classical cannons of rhetoric as the organizing principle for the chapters—namely, invention, memory, arrangement, style, and delivery. At the same time Jordan validates the move toward more convenient, progressive, albeit technologically dependent ways of accessing, using, and sharing information.

Richard Enos elaborates on the important shift facilitated by the *Rhetoric* that moves writing instruction from its disparaged status in the opinions of Socrates and Plato, as well as its supposedly bastardized function at the hands of the Sophists. According to Enos, Aristotle "believed that the Sophists did not fully realize the potential (*dunamis*) for writing as a heuristic for complex discourse." Enos states further that it appears as though Aristotle includes Isocrates among the misguided Sophists (30). Yes, writing instructors

can introduce the complexities of literacy or genre theory or Aristotle's appeals in digitally enhanced ways, and our own multimodal literacy and confidence will pay off in the presentation of complex ideas (as Palmeri argues persuasively), but all too often our tools (and especially student's digital devices) interfere with student attention rather than capture it or provoke it or require it. Face-to-face interaction between students and between teacher and student allows for an intangible pedagogical reciprocity that best facilitates what I call critical friendship. However, when I say face-to-face, I do not mean literal face-to-face, but rather intellect to intellect—which can also be achieved through writing in an online class or by other methods of delivery.

Do computers in the classroom figure into our understanding and performance of ethos? As one of the few disciplines that introduces students to the university in mandatory core classes, writing instructors play a unique role not only in helping students understand how to succeed in college writing, but in terms of how to succeed in college. Moreover, college writing instructors can help students cultivate decorum that can make a difference in college classes, but also toward a professional ethos. And while online access provides boundless opportunities, students and teachers and public professionals face an ongoing crisis of diminished attention in class and on the job. Not only are students more inclined to carry more than one digital device into the classroom, they are also growing more and more dependent upon them. Referring to lots of research on multitasking in the college classroom, and after conducting her own serious study, psychology scholar Carrie Fried expresses "serious concerns about the use of laptops in the classroom. Students admit to spending considerable time during lectures using their laptops for things other than taking notes. More importantly, the use of laptops was

negatively related to several measures of learning" (911). She elaborates on these measures by noting that laptops consistently ran interference with student learning, rather than enhancing it. The goal of her study was to investigate the advocacy and investment by some universities that insist that each student receive (by grants, leases or personal acquisition) a laptop for their college education.

More recently, Faria Sana et al. review the multitasking literature linked to in-class concentration amidst digital distractions and additionally they conduct their own controlled study for their article, "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for both Users and Nearby Peers," Sana et al. show how student learning and attention diminishes significantly in the presence of laptops and handheld devices: Students who multitask on laptops during class time have impaired comprehension of the course material and poorer overall course performance (25). As their title suggests, the personal use of electronic devices in the classroom also negatively impacts learning for students sitting in eyeshot of other student's laptop computers. Students affected by this second-hand computer use during a lecture scored 17% lower on a postlecture comprehension test (29). Neither of these studies acknowledges the additional way that instructors might be distracted by policing whether or not students are paying attention to the topic at hand; my attention is diminished if I am distracted by the degree to which my students are also distracted. This shared confusion makes a difference in classroom ethos, especially in view of the expanded definition of ethos in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, which extends the term beyond questions of character and ethical trust and into the realm of classroom culture, as in milieu, habit, habitus, dwelling place (39). And the dilemma here is elegantly presented in the fact of Jordan's open textbook because it appeals to our

desire for technologically related convenience, fair and open flow of information, and a green paper-free environment among other benefits, but it also encourages the need for personal computers in the writing classroom in order to look at the text during class (of course they are able to print the text book as well). For all of its benefits for the disciplined student, having a computer in class always comes with the risk of distracting the computer using student and those in his or her vicinity.

These studies do not cover all the pros and cons of a digital learning environment. Sana et al. point to positive exceptions of laptops in the classroom for students with special needs, where learning is not only enhanced but actually made possible. We all understand the democratizing effect of online work, where students can receive a certain kind of blind refereeing that scholars have come to expect from their peer's critical assessment of their work. And computers should be viewed as tools that have particular uses in class one day, but not the next. It makes sense that these tools seem more hospitable in a writing class where students might use them…to write. However, a laissez-faire approach to their presence in a first-year writing classroom will inevitably undermine the overall purpose of the course if their visible presence is not managed by clearly communicated purposes and expectations.

In a recent first-year writing course, I decided to allow complete agency with electronics in class, telling students that their grade would be affected by the way that they participated in class discussion. The result was that while some students used appropriate manners, several out of twenty-three students did not. In fact, three students were deliberately confrontational about their right to look at their phones and multitask with laptops during class discussion, even after I reviewed the problem with them

directly. By contrast, in another recent class I tied daily attention and appropriate technology use directly to a daily point rubric in the class. Each day, students received points for using their computers and phones appropriately, and for participating actively, either by speaking in class discussion or by posting their reactions to readings and class assignments online. The difference in student engagement is striking. In this second class where expectations had been clearly communicated and where there were obvious boundaries, there was very little disruption in class and student investment was markedly improved. Viable data that prove how my communication of clear expectations makes the difference would require a longer and broader longitudinal study. Theoretically, this one lesson from my own teaching experience suggests that even Millennials, who might feel entitled to use their own phones and iPads freely, also appreciate how restrictions on their use of these tools helps them concentrate and extends their learning.

For me, this is not just an issue of classroom discipline, it is not just an attempt to micromanage student attention, but it is also a matter of instructors fostering an environment where critical friendship becomes easier. In order for critical friendship to happen—whether between students or between teacher and student, people need to experience personal engagement with situated academic arguments. This engagement can happen online as well, where students enjoy perks that a face-to-face classes lack, but one-on-one conversation about student writing (whether face-to-face or online) creates a fusion of logos and pathos that seems less available for people who are not paying close attention to each other.

Antonio Bowen dedicates one of his chapters in *Teaching Naked* to distance between students and between students and teachers. He begins his chapter "Proximity

and the Virtual Classroom" with an observation about the difference in contemporary communication versus that of previous generations. In particular he recognizes how instant and constant access to knowledge fosters new kinds of connections. "Today, human beings are experimenting with new definitions of social proximity. Online social networking means that relationships and communication no longer depend on physical contact…Instant access to knowledge and to each other has changed the nature of community and the speed of work, life, and, most importantly, thought." He points to the paradox of the computer as a device that simultaneously separates humans from each other, but also makes them more available, reachable at all times (27-28). Although Bowen addresses issues for the college classroom generally, there is no doubt that college writing teachers and writing programs share his concerns. In fact, in his 2013 CCCC keynote address "Climate Change," CCCC Chair, Chris Anson begins his creative meditation on the very problems that Bowen addresses (the survival of higher education). Anson begins with a general lay of the land, "Whatever bar graphs, statistics, or predictions you consider, the university of the future won't look at all like the university of today…a lot of learning will be online, more teachers will not have permanent positions, and faculty may be less free to do whatever work they want" (324). These words that front Anson's narrative, come from a fictionalized student paper (written by Whitney) and read by Anson's protagonist, Professor Nathan Shield. Anson's narrative gravitates from the problems facing higher education toward the microcosmic status of writing programs and how they plan to deal with those problems. He presents his narrative as a dialectical inquiry that his protagonist (Professor Nathan Shield) has with himself and with his student as he reads her writing (a think piece), which might be a nice

generic description of Anson's presentation; it is a think piece about a world well lost and how to succeed in the new one. The last half of his talk places Nathan in conversation about his student's concerns with the director of the first-year writing program, Sylvia. Together they wonder precisely what advantages the bricks-and-mortar university might offer over futuristic online versions. They ask, "How do student benefit from being here?" Sylvia's answers include first: "we have to demonstrate that what students experience here can't be outsourced, can't be reduced to packets of information and tests…we have to get far more creative about what we do. We expect imagination every day from our students, but we don't practice it ourselves…Second, action…instead of ignoring the access students have to limitless information, to new forms of online interaction, those in higher education need to bring it all in and repurpose it in new and creative ways. We also need to change the narrative" (339). I agree with Sylvia. Students need to experience something revolutionary in class. However, with the requisite creativity and passion about one's pedagogy, I believe the old fashioned discussion, where students are expected to take and defend positions on dialectical issues that come up in the critical, careful reading of germane texts can still appeal to students. In fact, when done well, the conventional, ordinary way of looking closely at texts and writing about the questions those texts raise may, in our hyperdigitized social environment, just be old fashioned enough to seem new.

MOOCS — A Problem of Proximity

Everywhere we turn these days, people are at least curious about the massive online open classroom (MOOC) revolution. Although never offered for college credit,

Massive Open Online Courses present an interesting attempt to reconsider college learning in a new digital age. However, as Griffin and Minter propose, it is probably too soon to do more than what digital interventions like MOOCs might mean for the profession, “those who hope to learn more about learning, writing, revision, and peer assessment practice might be outnumbered by those who worry about how credit-bearing MOOCs could impact already beleaguered humanities programs” (149). One convenient case in point arises in Anson’s Address: his imaginative dialogue wherein the fictional Professor Shield breaks off from reading his student, Whitney’s paper to explore online avenues brought to his attention because of her investigation into the future of education takes him to unexpected places. Anson writes, “throughout these documents and sites, he sees frequent mention of the MOOC. At first MOOC’s intrigue him in the way they democratize educational access. Free learning for all. For the tuition poor. For the people in remote areas around the world. For the elderly, staving off mental atrophy. For bright kids scaling the intellectual walls of their grade levels. But another side to MOOCs gives him pause” (333-334). Anson explains the down side of MOOCs as a program that might give politicians, already skeptical of the benefits of an expensive liberal education, excuses to cut funding from traditional programs. Anson’s deliberation on the MOOC debate raises most of the questions others have raised elsewhere. And his skepticism (as discovered by Dr. Shield in his research inquiry) about successfully pioneered programs with free courses for the masses at least implies my own central question: how are the masses properly served by the one? The promises seem grandiose. Tomas Rollins, founder of the successful prepodcast era Teaching Company, recently addresses this question in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. As someone personally responsible for

trying to deliver first rate college lectures to average citizens, he provides instructive insight into MOOCs. He predicts their failure as nothing but a short-lived version of what he tried to do for profit with a spin-off online university under the financial and credentialed umbrella of the Teaching Company. “History and economics strongly suggest that this scenario is likely to be utter nonsense. Consider one historical fact: This has all been tried, and it has failed (Rollins par. 2).” Rollins provides a history of similarly ambitious attempts to deliver education more effectively, as in the case of MOOCs. “For a time, we also ran an online university. With a few exceptions, however, the dot-com-era ventures went bust. Including ours. NYUonline, began in 1998 with $21.5-Million, folded in three years. Columbia University’s $25-million for-profit venture, Fathom.com begun in 2000, folded in 2003” (par. 4-5). His grim assessment continues with the certainty of an experienced education entrepreneur who has done the math and watched too many experimental variations on MOOCs collapse. And his argument is an economic one; his conclusions are the result of running the numbers. But his most salient insight comes in an observation more familiar to us in the humanities: “We could probably regard a college degree based on no more than reading a pile of books as a swindle. We expect faculty members to guide students” (par. 12).

Rollins’ point that the consumer of higher education expects faculty to guide students matches the central critique for MOOCs, particularly from those in the humanities. In an article in the “Chronicle of Higher Education” titled, “How the Embrace of MOOC's Could Hurt Middle America” Greg Graham sees the trajectory of MOOC’s potentially depriving average students of face-to-face education, making traditional classroom instruction something available only for the elite. He writes of those

potentially left without personalized educational attention, "What those students need most is not to hear amazing ideas from brilliant teachers—those students need immediacy. Teachers who practice immediacy call students by name, get to know them personally, and give the occasional pat on the back…Immediacy also means that students receive customized instruction" (Graham par. 10). Graham's position may be unique to college courses that are not built around correct answers, but rather around the academic conversation. His notion of immediacy echoes some of the criteria for critical friendship that approaches students as individuals who have particular concerns. This notion of friendship in critical friendship values individual mentoring that seems very farfetched under MOOC conditions. As noted in Chapter 3, Aristotle applies practical mathematical addition to friendship:

> It is impossible to be friends with a great number of people in the perfect sense of friendship as it is to be in love with a great number of people at once. For perfect friendship is in some sense an excess, and such excess of feeling is natural toward one individual, but it is not easy for a great number of people to give intense pleasure to the same person at the same time, or, I may say, to seem even good to him at all. (NE 200-201)

In Chapter 3, I add further verification from Derrida to this equation, who interprets Aristotle's limitations on friendship in his *Politics of Friendship* with this insight: "the test of friendship remains, for a finite being, an endurance of arithmetic"[63] (21). Just as it is not possible to divide one's dedicated attention between too many friends, teachers will never provide the critical mentoring necessary to respond responsibly to the individual student in Massive Open Online Courses. While there are topics that can be taught en masse, writing is not one of them. As I prove in Chapter 2, writers need personal guidance with ongoing response to sentence-level concerns as small as conjunctions, periods, and semicolons, as well as to individual tendencies that

only occasionally repeat themselves, like misplaced articles for L1 and L2 learners, or one of several mistakes in using in-text citation methods in such a way that render "EasyBib" or "Zotero," useless, problems Kyle Stedman titles "Annoying Ways People Use Sources." It is true that computer programs for grammar, spelling, and other issues in sentence mechanics continue to develop in nuance and sophistication, but we are still some distance from algorithms that can read facial expressions or respond to student body language, not to mention the writing teacher's need to interpret problems that students themselves sense, but cannot fully explain.

Whether I am teaching writing face-to-face or online, I can only provide measured critique to so many students during a given period of time. But the critical friendship that unfolds in a college writing class is more than a matter of my close reading of student writing. Consider the overplayed, but ever-useful Birkean analogy of the cocktail party. We are inviting students to participate in a conversation, even if only for the short period of time they are enrolled in our classes. Guiding students on how to observe and enter an academic conversation might be as simple as an invitation to read *They Say, I Say*. However, I propose that nothing can replace the dynamic modeling of academic conversation that happens in the classroom—where we show what this cocktail conversation looks like; it is a place where students practice putting an oar in the water while reading challenging academic texts together.

Online classes are obviously more like face-to-face classes than they are like MOOCs because class size limitations apply to online classes just like they do to face-to-face ones and because teachers are available to answer questions and respond to confusion in real time, in fact, to a fault, they are more available in some ways (always

being on call, as it were). And all of the virtues of MOOCs, in terms of convenience for students with online lectures and even live Skype sessions, can be duplicated in the online class. The strongest case for MOOC's is about costs related to mass production, but as Graham points out, the issue of quantity over quality may be fooling the strongest advocates who seem to have forgotten that you get what you pay for: "Those huge numbers on their screens are clouding their judgment about what is wrong with our education system and what it will take to fix it. Like Wal-Mart…[MOOCs] promise greater numbers: To hell with customer service and quality; we've got discounts!"

If receiving the critical attention of a teacher is not enough, where students can ask questions as they arise in the natural course of conversation, there are other proximity-related intangibles to consider about the bricks-and-mortar education. As Anson's Nathan puts it, "It's the whole cumulative experience [of college]…they're thinking, talking, writing, reading, working with teachers, investigating things, researching things. And it's all happening in a vibrant social context, with lots of other students. They're surrounded by it. They're immersed in it. All of that builds capacities for reflection, tolerance, imagination, an interest in ideas outside their own specializations that come back in to change their thinking" (336). Anson wisely pits his Sylvia against his Nathan for realistic checks and balances on idealistic assumptions about what they both hope to see happening in writing class versus what actually, all too often happens. But Anson animates some of the very best reasons for hanging onto as much of the academic tradition as possible. The rising costs of college will continue to force competition in the free market for workable alternatives to the traditional methods, and if MOOCs fail to permanently alter the epistemic academic landscape, as the naysayers I

have cited here contend, they will still send a strong signal that the public is ready for an affordable alternative to the direction higher education is headed. And who knows but that the solution will not include a more dynamic reliance upon our heady technologies?

Conclusion

Students enrolled in first-year writing courses come to class with a variety of writing related experience and needs. We cannot wave the magical technology wand to make literacies equally accessible to all. The tools we see as technologies provide convenience and provoke curiosity in revolutionary ways and college writing instructors have immense challenges ahead of them in order to stay relevant and in order to connect with students on their terms. But students will write better academic arguments if they develop confidence in their own ability to control sentence structure and mechanics, and (to paraphrase our university's shared syllabus for introductory writing) as they learn to listen to the conversation that other people are already having, identify the various perspectives and voices contributing to that conversation, articulate the conversation in their own words, synthesize the various voices in the conversation, identify a gap in the conversation—an argument that has not been made or is weak, or an approach that is missing, and by doing research that helps fill the gap, and contributing an argument of their own that is based on research (rather than opinion). These are not just random aims to fill up space on a syllabus; they are practical and achievable steps students can take to develop confidence in themselves as writers and therefore as students. I believe that these goals require critical, personalized feedback over a sustained period of time. There are no miraculous, cost-saving replacements for the mentoring of an engaged, engaging, and

demanding teacher. At the same time, rather than compromising our pedagogies, digital technologies are clearly adding to our learning and instruction in ways we are only just beginning to realize.

In a recent *Kairos* article, Mark Pepper presents an argument on the historical use of the word "cool," which has a particularly layered cultural cache. In keeping with his dynamic multimodal publication, Pepper shows how cool has survived one cultural revolution after another. In his section on cool ethos, after examining the term from dozens of perspectives through time and thinking about its persuasive role in everyday life, Pepper asks,

> How would cool persuasion operate and what is its relation to digital *ethos*? Is persuasion through cool even possible, or is it doomed to backfire on itself for bothering to care? Does persuasion through cool imply a tacit acceptance of information's failure to persuade people into action and a simultaneous rejection of persuasion's need for extended logic and reasoning? If so, what are the ramifications of this fallout for digital texts?

These questions make me wonder if our marriage to the digital moment does not rely too much on technology's cool factor. At the beginning of this chapter I ask how digital technologies help us perform ethos. Is our commitment to cool presentations, our commitment to prove ourselves technologically capable and therefore worthy to capture our student's attention, our awe of Ivy League lectures for mass consumption, or our acceptance of ambiguous proximities to students help students make relevant and meaningful academic arguments? Is there a way for us to continue to rely on received ideas in full appreciation of the value technological innovation adds to our rhetorical appeals and to our attentive ways of teaching invention, arrangement, style, and delivery? I urge that a self-aware trust in our own best practices of critical friendship will help

students cultivate literacies and develop control over their writing and that these practices should include ongoing curiosity about how technologies can add value to those aims.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Ancient philosophy and our intellectual tradition really focuses on friendship in the usual sense of it—with Aristotle's familiar quotations like, "No one would choose to live without friends, though he had all other goods." Or this one that informs the title of my dissertation, "Complete friendship is the friendship of good people similar in virtue; for they wish goods in the same way to each other insofar as they are good, and they are good in themselves. . . Hence these people's friendship lasts as long as they are good; their virtue is enduring" (NE viiii 1156). But if we look closely at Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, it is really for their pedagogical relationship that we remember them. It is in their reciprocity of critical thinking toward the ideas of each that they hold such a place in Western thought. We remember Socrates as the teacher of Plato and we only know of Socrates because of his attentive student. Likewise, we think of Aristotle in symbioticcorrelation to Plato. To the extent that the intellectual tradition more or less begins with these three, we see from the beginning of universities and philosophy the resonance and import of the conversation between critical friends.

Once again, according to critical friendship scholar, Sue Swaffield, critical friendship is "the point of balance along a continuum from 'total friend' to 'total critic.'" We can apply this succinct definition to the writing classroom because in all of our

interaction with students, we volley back and forth between critical teacherly interventions (literally critiquing and challenging their invention, arrangement, and style), but doing so hospitably. To define critical friendship asthe golden mean between extremes of “critical” and “friendship” is not just to acknowledge that the ideal teacher is both rigorous and supportive, but rather it is to teach about ethos (to teach students about their own performance of ethos) and to apply ethos to my teaching (to demonstrate it by performing the appropriate ethos in class and to do so in all of my responses to students).

Paul Gibbs and Pana-yi-otis Angelides add to Swaffield’s definition that “linking the positive notion of friendship with the potentially negative connotation of the term ‘critique’ often poses a contradiction for ‘critical friends’” (214-216). However, “unlike peers, critical friends not only draw attention to weaknesses but are eager to encourage the strong aspects of their friend’s work. Therefore, critique given by a friend is, in its deepest meaning, positive and edifying” (217). In other words, if teachers are to conceive of their relationship to students in terms of critical friendship they need to sell students on the idea that critique is not just beneficial, it is critical. It is mandatory.

I do not turn to critical friendship arbitrarily. My argument for a specific lens on teaching practices, on power relations in the classroom comes in resistance to a tradition of agonistic teaching that is as old as education. I provide evidence of scholarship for a tradition of violence in the pedagogical tradition that at its worse manifests as corporeal punishment (As Peter Brown shows) and at its most veiled passes as something more like emotional abuse or competitive intellectual jousting (as Deborah Tannen argues). Again, in such practices, emerging perhaps from the stoical tradition, teachers strive for critical distance in pedagogical methodology as well as in their own scholarship. Robert Connors

pinpoints a turn in the history of writing pedagogy wherein the discourse becomes feminized. Although somewhat stuck in oversimplified male/female binaries himself, Connors uses Greek terminology to oppose agonistic against irenic discourse. I propose that Critical Friendship brings this pendulum between civil, nurturing discourse and critical, emotionally objective discourse into our consciousness and discursive practices.

Part of the work along this pendulum then is to alert students to the challenge of performing ethos by balancing logos and pathos. My definition of ethos comes from a careful study of the history of its use in the rhetorical tradition wherein dozens of philosophers and scholars contribute depth and breadth. One definition that complements my use of the pendulum comes from *The Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition*, where Richard Johannesen defines Ethics as "degrees of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, and of obligation in human conduct" (237). I argue that critical friendship offers a model for ethos, which rather than locating the success of this model in the person(al), steers our attention away from who students and teachers by focusing ethos on what they do—what and how they perform their interactions with texts. Moreover, it should be noted that critical friendship as a model for performing ethos should never be viewed as a one-way authoritarian pedagogy. Rather, as I point out multiple times, critical friendship should reciprocate between teacher and student in a meaning-driven and care-filled exchange.

This dissertation asks all of its questions in the context of the writing classroom, and I ground the theory of critical friendship in a few of Emmanuel Levinas' most familiar tropes. Where much of the philosophical tradition locates its concerns in the

ontological examination of the self in relation to the world, Levinas sees the self inexorably tied and only understood in relation to the other. His "negative theology," as it is sometimes called, views the self in continuous obligation to the call of the other. This beckoning of the other, this hailing that Levinas characterizes as ongoing works nicely at least as a kind of philosophical metaphor for the first-year college writing classroom where the teacher is forever on call (particularly in the age of electronic communication) to respond to his or her students. However, as I try to imagine how to apply Levinas to the classroom, to real life situations, I am frustrated by his most profound dichotomy. Since the other represents the abstraction of all others and therefore, the wholly other, and thus infinity, how do I apply the concepts to a material circumstance, to the classroom, to actual teachers responding to materially situated students? It is worth recalling Fred C. Alford's anecdote about answering the knock of the neighbor at the door, only to be interrupted with a request. According to Alford, "this naked, vulnerable face shatters your ego, interrupts your life, and your world, as you open a door, not into the hallway but into infinity" (150). The richness of this moment captures the political volatility of the teacher's encounter with the student. Reminiscent of Aristotle's gnomic greeting to his would-be (so-called) friends, "my friends, there are no friends," Levinas paints a picture of the paradigmatic neighbor or stranger who simultaneously obligates the self to respond to the call while realizing the impossibility of responding. Perhaps Levinas sees in a person's attempt to have an exchange with the other how totality is shattered by infinity, that it is never possible to adequately respond to the other since I can never fully realize the difference of the other.

In what follows from my first chapter, I argue first that the teacher has a primary

obligation to respond to student writing in a way that both models responsible uses of invention, arrangement, and style, but that also empathizes with the place from which the student begins to write. Chapter 2 reviews Levinasian alterity, which adds value to my own examination of ethos because it is against the backdrop of Levinas' dream of absolute nonviolence that I examine the literature on responding to student writing. While Emmanuel Levinas is not thinking of the writing student per se, his theory identifies important traces of sincerity between selves in the overtures of communication that he defines as "responsibility." The response of the responsible self is always, "here I am"; this sign of availability witnesses to the other that the response is sincere (Otherwise 144-145). Levinasian response makes an ideal trope for the writing classroom because his theory on responsibility relies wholly upon agency (what Levinas might call "absolute freedom"): as soon as agency begins the ethos of the self and the other come into play because of convening communications between them. For Levinas, alterity is always the goal of response. The dialectic in the literature hinges upon the tension between responding too critically versus too personally (emotionally). I illustrate the extent to which some of this literature continues agonistic practices in an attempt to hold students accountable and to help them learn academic argument. But I then provide scholarship that favors balancing friendly encouragement and praise with objective critical expectations. It is striking this balance between pathos and logos that I interpret as critical friendship. The chapter closes by applying two theoretical attitudes to the teacher's response to student writing: acknowledgment and care. Michael J. Hyde has written extensively on acknowledgment, and I apply some of his argument and challenge part of it in order to think about the way acknowledgment helps writing students. Regarding

care, I argue that the discourse of care ethics should inform all teaching pedagogy, but it seems especially useful in teacher response to student writing because awareness of care, as an ethical frame, enhances the understanding and practice of critical friendship. Responding to student writing with care in mind will focus teacher and student ethos on dimensions of human relationships affecting and affected by the writing process. Moreover, as a practice focused on nurturing, care advances an irenic or feminized framework to a discourse too often dominated by masculanized, patriarchal language and ideas. This idea of feminization is not meant to perpetuate stereotypes for the writing teacher as nurse, maid, or mother, but rather to highlight the importance of care that cuts across all fields and functions best when taken seriously as a practice on its own terms of seriousness, rather than as a politicized caricature of particular kinds of care.

Chapter 2 argues that responding to student writing helps students concentrate more attention on audience and purpose, in other words, on the familiar questions, who cares and so what? Chapter 3, then, addresses the question what should students write? More specifically, this chapter looks at what kinds of writing practices and habits students should develop in first-year writing courses. This chapter maintains an interest in critical friendship, but turns to Montaigne's essay as a model, not for the genre of essays they should write, but for the exercises students should learn and the kinds of experimenting they should endeavor as they enter the academic writing conversation.

This chapter investigates the Bartholomae/Elbow debates of the early 90s in order to understand the contingencies of personal writing versus academic writing. While Levinas does not play a primary role here, I continue to rely on his idea of proximity and presence because personal writing and academic writing concentrate on managing

distance. Arguments surrounding the Elbow/Bartholomae debate often leave the impression that there are only two approaches to first-year writing: expressive/personal or academic, but both Bartholomae and Elbow see this as a false dichotomy, even though the heart of Bartholomae's argument veers closer to a binary position. While I fundamentally agree with Bartholomae's camp that students should eventually learn how to construct academic arguments (in fact, moving students toward academic arguments should be the main goal of first-year writing classes), Elbow makes an important observation about the timing of this intellectual development. He suggests that students are not prepared for academic argument immediately, nor do they need to be; what they do need is time to experiment. However, the expressivists' position between the poles of the personal and academic too often generates confusion about the clear goals of first-year writing.

Part of the confusion in writing studies' pedagogical aims, especially aims that vacillate between personal/expressive writing and academic writing, can be traced to the difference between the personal essay and the familiar essay. In the familiar essay, we find some of the roots of academic writing where essayists experiment with rhetorical conventions like invention, arrangement, and style, as well as with two fundamental rhetorical concerns, purpose and audience. In fact, the central difference (between the personal and familiar essay) to keep in mind has to do with the writer's purpose. In the familiar essay, writers like Montaigne concentrate on a question, an object, or a problem; they are essays "on" or "of" something. By contrast, we locate the primary concern of the personal essay in the isolated experience of the person doing the writing.

This chapter shows how the familiar essay prepares the way for the academic

essay by initiating a conversation about a given topic. It shows how the familiar essay (as a sample of critical friendship) balances pathos and critical thinking by carefully weighing important rhetorical topics that can translate to critical reading and thinking exercises in the writing classroom where students are invited to enter a real academic conversation and begin weighing in, examining, and experimenting with responses to it. Montaigne demonstrates how to use writing to think; such an activity informs Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*, but it also governs Bartholomae's chapter "What is Composition?," where, in his conclusion, he imagines a writing pedagogy that "investigates the problems of writing at the point of production and that investigates representations of writing as a mode of learning" (28). The familiar essay clarifies the difference between proximity of the self in relation to other reading and writing selves as opposed to the proximity of the self in relation to itself; this difference points to a break that occurs later in essayistic history, a break from dispassionate observation of a topic in preference for a passionate, if personal, fixation with the psychologized self as topic . . . Finally, and perhaps most usefully, the familiar essay underscores the work and exercise of writing as exercise. In first-year writing pedagogy, we can borrow from Montaigne the inclination to experiment, to write about stuff that we care about, to look at something long and hard and try to discover its generalizable concern, not to find its truth, but to find in it something we can prove. To prove something means to test, to examine, to weigh, or to experiment with long enough to solicit a response. Furthermore, in contemporary French, the word "essayer" means to try. Thus, people who look to the familiar essay can see how it addresses perceived divisions between expressive and academic writing.

To borrow some words from a recent conversation with Scott Black, this final chapter locates itself in the predicament of our uncertainty about the "presence of presence," the fragility of being, which fragility increases as proximity gets translated through levels of virtual mediation. I frame this chapter in the context of the computers and writing conversation, which focuses on the complexities of contemporary technologies and their impact in all aspects of writing studies. When people say "technology" these days they often seem to refer to digital technologies without acknowledging a deep sense of the history and evolution of other familiar technologies, like the invention of writing as an actual invention, or the legacy of the invention of writing tools so easily taken for granted.

Following a literature review of the "computers and composition" conversation, the chapter examines proximity as a germane Levinasian trope for critical friendship in an era of Web 2.0 learning, with particular emphasis on the notion of virtual proximity; does the virtuality of digital communication impact teachers and students differently than previous eras of face-to-face pedagogy? Does student performance of ethos change when communication between teacher and student is more frequent, when students can email their professors at any time with the expectation of immediate reply, or when students can monitor their grades online. Does performance of ethos change when most secondary research can be conducted without physically going to the library? The last three sections of this chapter deal with these kinds of questions, first with focus on a central metaphor in Cynthia Selfe's work over the past three decades: "paying attention" as an increasingly complex challenge in a digital age, but also as a crucial element of critical friendship; second I respond to a practical question: how do computers affect everyday performance

of ethos in the composition classroom? Here I argue that classroom use of technologies should be measured by very clear expectations and purpose-driven reasons in order to understand individual performances of ethos; finally, I address proximity as a matter of paying attention in the context of the current trend of Massive Open Online Courses. I theorize that MOOCs pose a particular problem for composition courses, a problem that is likely obvious to writing teachers who care about response to student writing (since there is no technology that can respond to student writing with humane acknowledgment and care, but it is also a problem that can be clarified by the framework of critical friendship through an analysis of the MOOC's natural proximity problems.

The tools we see as technologies provide convenience and provoke curiosity in revolutionary ways, and college writing instructors have immense challenges ahead of them in order to stay relevant and in order to connect with students on their terms. But students will write better academic arguments if they develop confidence in their own ability to control sentence structure and mechanics and (to paraphrase our university's shared syllabus for introductory writing) as they learn to listen to the conversation that other people are already having, identify the various perspectives and voices contributing to that conversation, articulate the conversation in their own words, synthesize the various voices in the conversation, identify a gap in the conversation—an argument that has not been made or is weak, or an approach that is missing, and by doing research that helps fill the gap and contributing an argument of their own that is based on research (rather than opinion). These are not just random aims to fill up space on a syllabus; they are practical and achievable steps students can take to develop confidence in themselves as writers and therefore as students. I believe that these goals require critical,

personalized feedback over a sustained period of time. There are no miraculous, cost-saving replacements for the mentoring of an engaged, engaging, and demanding teacher. At the same time, rather than compromising our pedagogies, digital technologies are clearly adding to our learning and instruction in ways we are only just beginning to realize.

As I explain in detail in the dissertation, Aristotle's view of ethos should never be interpreted as somehow personal. That is, because there was no concept of "personal" in his worldview, the development of ethos followed from the signifiers of public discourse; one's credibility or character was never viewed in the context of life activities anterior to the discursive moment. This means that in his situation, a person generated that character toward specifically situated rhetorical purposes, but in order to persuade his audience (generate ethos) his purpose would need to fulfill the demands of the audience. In the familiar painting by Raphael Sanzio, where Aristotle points to the ground and Plato to the sky, we are not encountering a personal disagreement but rather two worlds of philosophical understanding simultaneously interdependent and at odds. Similarly today, we can view the trust between teacher and student as one built upon reciprocating discursive interaction that volleys back and forth between agreement and disagreement, but always in the emotional context of respect for what we do not know for sure. These interactions are always negotiations over power. But the counterintuitive realization might be that we can only really invite our students to have experiences like the one that I have had in writing this dissertation, the experience of running up against the limits of their own knowledge, which might (if we are lucky) encourage them to join the conversation with the appropriate appreciation for its complex history and its inspiring, if

sometimes overwhelming intellectual expanse.

Limitations of the Study

Alas, the discovery of my own limitations highlights some work that can still be done toward a more solid foundation for critical friendship. As noted in the beginning, this study would benefit from a more detailed look at the ways race, class, gender, multilingual speaking, and intellectual challenges might complicate critical friendship and thereby require further clarification on an ethos that relies on the production of reading and writing. There are some gestures throughout the dissertation in the direction of some of these important acknowledgments of difference, but direct concerted efforts might really amplify the need for or perhaps the limitations of critical friendship. The final chapter would be well served by longitudinal studies into effective uses of digital technologies in the face-to-face classroom as well as studies focused on different ways that MOOCs or MOOC-like platforms do succeed in teaching certain writing practices. Inevitably, digital communication promises new solutions to the costs of higher education versus the need for student/teacher interaction. Empirical studies that focus on aspects of current classes on writing for large student populations might reveal that parts of writing pedagogy are better to teach on a large scale. Additionally, a more careful investigation of the rising multimodal classroom strategies could complicate and perhaps facilitate the modeling of critical friendship.

In footnote number 4 I gesture to an additional limitation that could be further explored, which expands my view on the classroom to power structures that exceed the classroom but at the same time greatly influence the exchanges of power relations inside

the classroom. In his popular article "On the Uses of a Liberal Education," Mark Edmundson interrogates some of these outside pressures that tremendously influence student/teacher relationships. Edmundson reminisces about a time when student evaluations and student grades might not have been so obvious in their impact on a teacher's appeals to students. He blames some of the malaise toward liberal education on grade inflation and upon the teacher's need to entertain bored students rather than make high demands on them in order to earn their grades. He connects grade inflation to student evaluations of teacher performance, evaluations that make a significant difference on a teacher's success and promotion. Although the dissertation does bring grades into the conversation several times, especially regarding student motives, this discussion on outside forces influencing student/teacher relations could enhance Chapter 2's discussion on responding to student writing since an instructor's response to student writing functions in some subtle ways to justify the grade the student earns on a given assignment and as an appeal to the student to be equally fair minded and thoughtful in student evaluations. This study would benefit from a sustained look at the relationship between grades and student evaluations and their impact on critical friendship.

Additionally, although I mention this in passing in the conclusion, the dissertation could also take up a more careful review of how students and teachers might interpret their individual responsibilities for critical friendship. Is the exchange between students and teachers truly dialogical or are there built-in biases toward teacher expertise that perpetuate monological or authoritarian habits that ultimately compromise student agency? At best the dissertation will raise student and teacher consciousness toward more equitable practices with invention, arrangement, style, and delivery. In turn, both

teachers and students might increase in confidence and competence in their respective performances of ethos.

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[1] See Bishop's *Writing as Therapy* or JoAnn Campbell's *Writing to Heal*.
[2] See Miller's chapter in Gallop's *Pedagogy*: "In Loco Parentis: Addressing the Class," see also her chapter in *Textual Carnivals*, titled, "The Sad Woman in the Basement."
[3] See Trimbur, "College Composition and the Circulation of Writing" 194-197. See also Podis and Podis, "Pedagogical 'In Loco Parentis': Reflecting on Power and Parental Authority in the Writing Classroom."
[4] Barbara Warnick offers an excellent review of the role critical distance plays in academic writing in her chapter, "The Ethos of Rhetorical Criticism: Enlarging the Dwelling Place of Critical Praxis." She is concerned that our commitment to critically distant ethos in academic writing limits the scholar's participation in public discourse. Ultimately, she believes that the future of rhetorical criticism should embrace a more "critic-originated, multivoiced, authentic rhetorical criticism that considers the substance of what it studies as well as the manner of its expression" (70). She offers several examples of rhetorical scholars already providing just this kind of criticism (See 58-59 and 63-70).
[5] I use the male pronoun here on purpose to be consistent with the particular audience of Plato and Aristotle.
[6] This is an appropriate place to acknowledge that this world of the college classroom is not a world unto itself, in a vacuum as it were, but is rather conditioned by immeasurable institutional forces that exceed even the material constraints and presence of the university or college itself. The levels of bureaucratic and historical institutional power structures place demands on instructors and students that complicate any theory about one on one relations of power inside the classroom. We might begin with Foucault to more fully respond to these extensive pressures on all agents who attempt a balanced performance of ethos. See my discussion of this in "Limitations of the Study" in the Conclusion of the dissertation.
[7] See especially pages 79-81.
[8] For an excellent discussion on Heidegger and Levinas' central disagreement see Cecil L. Eubanks and David J. Gauthier's "The Politics Of The Homeless Spirit: Heidegger and Levinas On Dwelling And Hospitality." Additionally, Richard Cohen provides saliency in his chapter "Buber and Levinas–and Heidegger."
[9] Thereason I frame McCroskey within the context of Smith's argument is because Smith is the one using McCroskey to establish a definition of ethos, and it is Smith's way of positioning McCroskey that complements my argument. I like the way Smith reveals McCroskey's intellectual evolution from a postion of ethos as empiricism by which he means verifiable, repeatable actions toward a definition of ethos as a measure of good will and "perceived care giving."

[10] See Sue Swaffield's "Contextualising the work of critical friends."
[11] My definition of ethos that comes later in the chapter can here be understood as the application of Aristotelian "good will" to the habits of writing and speaking. By habits I take in the full scope of that word as it gets explained later: habit, habitat, habitus, dwelling space.
[12] In *Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis compares the agape to Christian love, but of course this would not be how the ancient Greeks conceived of it. Levinas might compare it through his lens to the Levitical law: love thy neighbor.
[13] See "Contextualising the work of critical friends" and "Exploring Critical Friendship through Leadership for Learning & School Self evaluation and the role of a Critical Friend," Swaffield & MacBeath.
[14] See Eric Pulson, Jonathan Alexander, and Sonya Armstrong's article "Peer Review – Re Viewed*:* Investigating the Juxtaposition of Student's Eye Movements and Peer-Review Process," which provides a noteworthy literature review of deficits and benefits of peer review. See especially 306-309.
[15] The *Online Etymology Dicitonary* views the trajectory of "critical" to evolve as follows: "1580s, 'censorious,' from critic + -al (1). Meaning 'pertaining to criticism' is from 1741; medical sense is from c.1600; meaning of the nature of a crisis is from 1640s; that of 'crucial' is from 1841, from the 'decisive' sense in L. criticus. Related: Criticality (1756; in the nuclear sense, 1950); critically (1650s, 'accurately;' 1815, 'in a critical situation'). In nuclear science, critical mass is attested from 1940."
[16] At the end of this chapter, we will see how Levinas makes use of proximity
[17] Derrida takes particular interest in the politicized nature of friendship. In *The Politics Of Friendship*, often in conversation with Aristotle, Derrida pursues those politicized exigencies that affect different kinds of friendship; Derrida seems especially enamored by the impossibility of friendship that results from those politicized exigencies.
[18] See *Teaching to Transgress* 45-58
[19] In Chapter 2 I elaborate on this confusion by referencing the writing of Ode Ogede, who examines rigor versus severity at length, both in her introduction to her text *Teacher Commentary on Student Papers* and in her own chapter "Rigor, Rigor, Rigor, the Rigor of Death: A Dose of Discipline Shot through Teacher Response to Student Writing."
[20] See the section on Ethos beginning on page 31for the relevant nuances of the term ethos.
[21] See Habermas*' "*Varieties of Communicative Action: Controversy without combat*"* in Patricia Roberts; Linda Flower, Elenore Long, and Lorraine Higgins *Learning to rival: A Literate Practice for Intercultural Inquiry*. 2000. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. *Theory and Research on Teaching as Dialogue*. Nicholas C. Burbules and Bertram C. Bruce. University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign. Virginia Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching, 4th Edition.* 1102-1121. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 2001. Also see *Response to Student Writing: Implications for Second Language Students*. Dana R. Ferris 2003, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers; pages 13-14.
[22] My reference to obligations here becomes increasingly important toward the end of the chapter with my theorizing on Levinas. In the tradition of the Kantian "ought," Levinas stresses the realistic expectation that the call of the other always already places the self under obligation to respond (Totality 207).

[23] See Leviticus 19:18, NIV
[24] Toward the end of Chapter 2, I discuss Levinas' resistance to the philosophical tradition. (94-98).
[25] I realize that the word "violence," as it is used here, may be somewhat inflammatory or hyperbolic, since few students are ever actually harmed by severe pedagogy, however, the word violence is precisely the word Levinas uses in his definition of alterity – alterity is the "fear for all violence" (Levinas, Alterity 30). One gets the strong impression from this section on alterity that our denial of the difference of the other has in it the potential for violence. Peter Brown points to a long tradition of violence in ancient paideia where the power of pedagogues over students was recognized in the teacher's ability and willingness to manifest that power using violent means (44-58).
[26] Anthony Beavers explains substitution clearly, "While it is true that Levinas is vague on the essence of substitution, the suggestion seems to be that in being persecuted by another person, I am made to consider the person as an other. However, since such consideration cannot be made on the conceptual level, this consideration becomes manifest in a comportment of the self to the other person. Consideration for the other means being-considerate-for-the-other. Substitution then is recognizing myself in the place of the other, not with the force of a conceptual recognition, but in the sense of finding myself in the place of the other as a hostage for the other. Substitution is the conversion of my being as a subjection *by* the other into a subjection *for* the other" (7).
[27] Levinas writes, "The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching [enseignement]. Teaching is not reducible to maieutics, it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I can contain. In its non-violent transitivity the very epiphany of the face is produced" (Levinas, Infinity 51).
[28] See Levinas' *Alterity* (169-172).
[29] See Anson's "Reflective Reading" (370-372) and "Response Styles and Ways of Knowing" (333-334)
[30] See, for example, Foucalt's examination of this history toward the end of his chapter on the *Panopticism* in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (226-227). See also bell hooks preface in *Teaching Community* (ix-xvi).
[31] The word "Dwelling" gets explored more fully later in the dissertation as an important term for Levinas.
[32] One might refer to Lewis Hyde's *The Gift* to more fully appreciate Michael Hyde's position here, particularly Chapter 1 where Lewis Hyde lays out various nuances of gift exchange.
[33] Levinas later revisits and elaborates on this exploration of Buber's I-thou construction in *Of God Who Comes to Mind*. See (144-149).
[34] See, for example, "Levinas and Managed Care: The (A)Proximal, Faceless Third-Party and Psychotherapeautic Dyad," by David M. Goodman and Steven D. Huett.
[35] Howard J. Curzer argues that Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics funds the projects of both Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings (the founders of care ethics). Important for this dissertation, he ties care into Aristotle's characterizations of friendship as a crucial component despite Aristotle never using the term "care." See Howard J. Curzer's "Aristotle: Founder of the Ethics of Care." Similarly, Marideth Schwartz traces the conversation of care ethics to advance a thesis that places Aristotle at the forefront of care

ethics. See her essay "The Virtue of Caring: Care Ethics as Part of Aristotelian Ethics."
[36] I have suggested earlier that Levinas uses the word substitution to get at a similar point (44).
[37] Used with permission. The name was changed at the request of the author.
[38] Although I will not explore Foucault's notion of the Care of the Self in this section, it should be noted that he covers many crucial dimensions of caring for the self that are relevant to my study and important for the notion of care generally (as found in *The History of Sexuality Volume 3* and in *Ethics Subjectivity and Truth)*.
[39] The real world example I use is not meant to provide empirical evidence for or against a particular teacher, but rather to illustrate some of the contingencies of care and to generalize about carelessness found in some styles of teaching.
[40] See Luce Irigaray's "The Fecundity of the Caress: A Reading of Levinas*"; Totality and Infinity section B,* "The Phenomenology of Eros." See Richard Cohen's, *Face to Face with Levinas*.
[41] Aristotle and Levinas are not easy philosophical partners. Where Aristotle grounds lofty ideas into meaningful human action, Levinas is more ethereal. However, they share a commitment to ethics as a priori, if for different reasons. I am interested in a historical precedent for the role of the critical as part of friendship. In the scope of human communication, Aristotle agrees with Socrates and others about the centrality of friendship, (interestingly, the importance of friendship is not lost on Levinas, but he refers to it as "fraternity"). In his writing on ethics, Aristotle sees friendship along a spectrum of motives where utility is central: "Base people will be friends for pleasure or utility, since they are similar in that way. But good people will be friends because of themselves, since they are friends insofar as they are good. These, then, are friends unconditionally; the others are friends coincidentally and by being similar to these. . . It is the friendship of good people that is friendship most of all" (Nicomachean Ethics 35-36). Aristotle shows how good people maximize their utility for their friends because "they want what is good both for themselves and for their friends" (37). He makes it clear that friendship begins with good will. How then do we match the need for critique (especially in a contemporary classroom) with the interests of friendship? Although Levinas privileges the Levitical narrative over the Greek one, there is no doubt that Aristotle's ethics informs what some refer to as Levinas' neo-Kantian ethics of proximity and responsibility toward alterity. If Levinasian ethics remain aloof from material circumstance, without purchase in embodied, lived situations, how could his project transcend the "ethical platitudes" about which Nealon seems concerned? Though primarily metaphysical in scope, Levinasian alterity can be applied to earth-bound verbal and written (rhetorical) practices and the acquisition of ethos.
[42] See: Elbow's "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals," or Bartholomae's "Writing with Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow," or Rebecca Mlynarczyk's "Personal and Academic Writing: Revisiting the Debate."
[43] See Bartholomae's "Inventing the University*"*
[44] Joseph Williams points out this very familiar writing problem on page 5 of his very useful textbook, *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*: "But the biggest reason most of us write unclearly is that we don't know when we do, much less why. Our own writing seems clearer to us than it does to our readers because we read into it what we want them to get out of it. And so instead of revising our writing to meet their needs, we send it off

the moment it meets ours."
[45] For a detailed examination and definition of ethos, see 31-40 of this dissertation
[46] I will use the term, "first-year writing" (rather than FYC or "first-year composition") because my theorizing applies to basic writing courses as well as the required writing courses and even more advanced undergraduate courses within writing studies. However, the focus is generally on the required courses.
[47] See Bartholomae's essays "Writing with Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow," "Responses to Bartholomae and Elbow," and "Inventing the University."
[48] Mlynarckzyk refers here to an example of personal writing that Bartholomae uses in his essay "Writing with Teachers."
[49] We can see the importance of Montaigne's essay in the context of renaissance humanism as innovative push back against the scholastic tradition, but we can more fully see its application to writing studies by considering where it fits in the rhetorical tradition. Eric MacPhail sees Montaigne's essay as an epideictic text; even though Montaigne made personal effort to criticize rhetoric, MacPhail sees Montaigne in the tradition of sophistic epideictic, also known as adoxography. See "Philosophers in the New World: Montaigne and the Tradition of Epideictic Rhetoric" (McPhail 23).
[50] Wendell Harris explains at the outset of his essay that "familiar" and "personal" are interchangeable terms for the essay.
[51] My use of the male pronoun aligns with the historical conception of Greek self identification where their idea of citizen is always seen as an adult male.
[52] At the end of "Of Friendship," Montaigne explains his temptation to include some of La Boétie's writings, but then thinks better of it, suggesting that, according to Donald Frame's footnote, Protestant revolutionaries mixed some of their own writing with with La Boétie's published essay "because they have mixed his work up with some of their own concoctions, I have changed my mind about putting it in here" (175).
[53] Bartholomae begins his challenge to Elbow in "Writing with Teachers" by attacking Elbow's premise of the teacherless classroom. He see's Elbow's recalcitrance on this issue as fundamentally flawed, arguing that with the teacher goes the institution and eventually the entire conversation. Of course, one irony built into Elbow's argument is that Elbow is writing to teachers–not advocating their dismissal or demise, which might entail his own undoing. In fact he is never so "teacherly" (in that paternalistic sense) as when he is calling for the teacher to take a back seat; he is asking the reader to be his student, to take him on as teacher. However, Elbow's impulse to question the authority of the teacher fits directly into the framework of critical pedagogy.
[54] Baron elaborates on this chapter in his book, *A Better Pencil*, a book with relevant insights for different turns in this chapter.
[55] Open any writing studies text on technology and you will see examples such as I have mentioned. In their book *Computers in the Composition Classroom*, Michelle Sidler et al. show how many landmark essays in our field focus on the application of technology to the classroom. Or in a more recent publication like Shane Borrowman's *On the Blunt Edge*, the chapter titles reveal similar evidence of interest in pragmatic classroom/technology issues. Additional examples can be seen in an annotated bibliography by Marcia Kmetz et al. "Disciplining Technology: A Selective Annotated Bibliography."
[56] See Hawisher and Selfe, (Rhetoric of Technology 64), Leonard (77-79), Hostetter and

Busch (2).

[57] It bears repeating my analysis of "critical" from Chapter 1 to say that critical in its largest sense means to look closely, to take seriously, to question and complicate assumptions, and to weigh all the evidence in order to arrive at objective conclusions. However, critical friendship takes pathos into account along with logos, or in other words, the critical friend practices being critical with alterity, or with the other in mind. See also Mauk, Pepper, and Griffin and Minter.

[58] See Neil Postman's *Technopoly*, *A Bridge to the 18th Century* and *Amusing Ourselves to Death.*

[59] See Selber 1, Anson, (Distant Voices 47-48), Selfe (*Literacy and Access* 94)

[60] See Selfe and Hawisher's "Literacies and the Complexities of the Global Digital Divide."

[61] See Selber, Palmeri, Warnock, and Gough.

[62] This is not to imply that multimodal technologies and ancient traditional practices are by any means mutually exclusive. Nor is it to necessarily insist that couching an introduction to writing in the ancient rhetorical tradition is the only way to teach first-year composition.

[63] For an elaboration of the context of these citations see this dissertation (171-173).

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