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Expressive Pedagogy: Practice/Theory, Theory/Practice

C H R I S T O P H E R   B U R N H A M

✣ INTRODUCTION

In "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories," James Berlin reminds us that all pedagogy is ideological; any single approach supports an underlying set of values while questioning others. He analyzes the teaching of writing according to a set of interactions among the four separate elements that constitute a rhetorical act: writer, audience, message, and language. These are often represented as a triangle. The element placed within the triangle assumes greatest prominence, mediating the others. Expressivism places the writer in the center, articulates its theory, and develops its pedagogical system by assigning highest value to the writer and her imaginative, psychological, social, and spiritual development and how that development influences individual consciousness and social behavior. Expressivist pedagogy employs freewriting, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small-group dialogic collaborative response to foster a writer's aesthetic, cognitive, and moral development. Expressivist pedagogy encourages, even insists upon, a sense of writer presence even in research-based writing. This presence—"voice" or *ethos*—whether explicit, implicit, or absent, functions as a key evaluation criterion when expressivists examine writing.

Invoking expressivist values in conversations about teaching writing generally arouses controversy. Allies come from various, sometimes conflicting, ideological backgrounds. bell hooks, the African-American feminist and liberatory teacher, presents an arguably expressivist pedagogy in *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery* (1993) and *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994). She assigns great value and responsibility to the teacher as well as to the writer or person, insisting that education at every level and in every context attends to ethical formation. She argues that community morality depends on the ethical discrimination and consequent individual action of each of its members and implicates dominant institutions for failures in

education. She invokes Thomas Merton, Trappist monk and peace and justice activist, to challenge teachers to accept the ethical responsibility of professing. Confronted with students "desperately yearning to be touched by knowledge," many professors fail to rekindle the passion they once felt and reject the challenge and the opportunity their students offer. Her answer destabilizes the contemporary, academic sense of the term *profess*, recalling its original sense of passionate commitment in professing a vow. She raises the stakes for university teachers to a level that would surely frighten many:

> If, as Thomas Merton suggests in his essay on pedagogy "Learning to Live," the purpose of education is to show students how to define themselves "authentically and spontaneously in relation" to the world, then professors can best teach if we are self-actualized. Merton reminds us that the "original and authentic 'paradise' idea, both in the monastery and in the university, implied not simply a celestial source of theoretic ideas to which Magistri and Doctores held the key, but the inner self of the student" who would discover the ground of their being in relation to themselves, to higher powers, to community. That the "fruit of education . . . was in the activation of that utmost center." (*Teaching to Transgress* 199)

In "Learning to Live," Merton emphasizes student self-discovery and the responsibility to make informed life choices:

> The purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to the world—not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself. . . . The world is, therefore, more real in proportion as the people in it are able to be more fully and more humanly alive: that is to say, better able to make a lucid and conscious use of their freedom. Basically, this freedom must consist first of all in the capacity to choose their own lives, to find themselves on the deepest possible level. . . .
>
> The function of the university is, then, first of all to help the student discover himself: to recognize himself, and to identify who it is that chooses. (358)

Though hooks would reject Merton's masculine gender references, she endorses his aim. In her own work she accepts the responsibility to be passionate and to develop socially and morally aware citizens whose actions begin in mutual respect. Education, she asserts, is the responsibility of individual teachers and small communities connected by cultural identity or a shared experience of marginalization or alienation. *Sisters of the Yam* offers a specific program to accomplish this reclaiming of the person. She and, as I argue later, Peter Elbow offer paradigmatic examples of expressivist teachers.

Critics of expressivism range broadly across the ideological spectrum from Marxists to cultural conservatives. Depending on political orientation, opponents deride expressivism as arhetorical, atheoretical, anti-intellectual and elitist, or, conversely, standardless, antitraditional, and relativistic. Either

perspective blames expressivism for everything that is wrong in contemporary culture and education. Demonized and dismissed from both sides of the political spectrum, expressivism, however, as it has in hooks, transforms and reasserts itself.

From its inception, rhetoric has been concerned with the relationship between the writer/speaker and all the other elements of the rhetorical triangle. From a philosophical perspective, Merton, invoked in hooks, reasserts Socrates' assertion in the *Gorgias* that rhetorical training, central to all education, is a moral undertaking concerned with justice, self-control, and virtue. Even Aristotle, an arch empiricist, postpones his concern with technical rhetoric long enough to concede the centrality of *ethos* as an appeal in the *Rhetoric*. And recently, Linda Flower discusses the significant but problematic influence of the expressive in *The Construction of Negotiated Meaning: A Social-Cognitive Theory of Writing*. Present at the beginning and still present, expressivist concerns cut across subdisciplinary boundaries and methodologies. They are in us and of us as humans.

The education of the writer is a central problem. We resist the implications that grow from hooks and Merton and others, however, by placing writing, and not the writer, at our disciplinary center. I previously argued that we must teach reflection, and we must use journals in various contexts to help students develop intellectually, cognitively, and ethically. Now the best I can do is provide a context and encourage your persistence through the argument and sources that will follow. Remember, however, that bibliographic entries begin with names of persons. These are the people who have shaped my thinking about expressivist issues.

✧ BACKGROUND

For our purposes, any reference to expressivism will invoke both the theory and the pedagogy developed from that theory, as well as the contributing writers, teachers, and thinkers. The relationship between theory and practice, especially in expressivism, is complex. Practice is often based in intuition or convention and precedes theorizing. Theory can attack and thus neutralize counterarguments. Theory can defend against attack from opposing perspectives. Theory can result from synthesis; the creative act resides in bringing together ideas from various sources. Theory and practice can self-consciously merge as is the case with liberatory praxis. The strange theory/practice relationship in expressivism explains my title.

Expressivism weaves together several sources: nontraditional textbooks offering innovative practices for teaching writing, commentaries by first-generation expressivists that began to articulate theory, theorizing in reaction to scholarly and ideological attacks, and, recently, syntheses that integrate expressivism with social and liberatory rhetorics. The movement originated in the 1960s and 1970s as a set of values and practices opposing current-traditional rhetoric.

Current-traditional teaching emphasized academic writing in standard forms and "correct" grammar. It reinforced middle-class values, such as social stability and cultural homogeneity, and supported the meritocracy associated with the military-industrial complex. Male students attending universities on the GI bill were its primary audience. Current-traditional rhetoric assumed the gate-keeping role class and economics had previously played, making sure that these veterans, whether supply sergeants, tank mechanics, sailors, flyers, or infantrymen, could write easily enough to pass their courses and subsequently meet the engineering, production, and managerial needs of the prosperous postwar American society. In "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories," Berlin critiques current-traditional rhetoric for its static, empirically based epistemology that holds that all knowledge can be found in concrete reality through close observation, that language is an uncomplicated medium for communicating already existing knowledge, and that the work of teaching writing is limited to getting students to use grammar correctly, to conform to formal and stylistic conventions, and to argue exclusively from existing authority available in books. Sharon Crowley in *The Methodical Memory* (1990) completes a close analysis of current-traditional rhetoric, tracing its origin back to Ramus' splitting of logic from rhetoric. She demonstrates that current-traditional approaches to teaching writing undervalue the role of the writer and language in shaping knowledge and reflect an indefensibly reductive view of reality. Current-traditionalism, she argues, is not really a rhetoric because it does not consider the interactions between all the elements of the rhetorical triangle. These critiques are significant to expressivists because the relation among the individual, language and epistemology, and the nature of rhetoric, not accounted for in current-traditional thinking, became the unarticulated originating force for the original expressivists, as well as the central focus for the more recent syntheses of expressivism and social rhetoric.

Current-traditional pedagogy clearly dominated the teaching of writing in universities between the ends of World War II and the Vietnam War. During that same time, graduate studies in English concentrated on professionalizing literary criticism, in the process ignoring or devaluing pedagogy. Several nontraditional textbooks and commentaries date to this period and mark the emergence of expressivism as defined in this essay. Donald Murray, Ken Macrorie, Peter Elbow, and William Coles all offered counter approaches to current traditional pedagogy in anti-textbooks. They wrote for an audience of teachers as much as for students. Though radical departures for the time, many of these methods now constitute mainstream writing instruction.

✧ ANTITEXTBOOKS

Originating in and committed to classroom practice, expressivism's first coherent statements of value and methodology occur in alternative textbooks. These were antitextbooks offered as critiques of standard institutional practice. Murray's *A Writer Teaches Writing* (1968) organizes the writing course as a workshop and exemplifies the process approach. Murray's use of nondirective feed-

back from both teacher and students turns the responsibility for writing back to the student. In *Telling Writing* (1970) and elsewhere, Macrorie insists that individual writers recreate their original experience in "telling" details. He protests against the academic language of the schools, which he calls "Engfish." He instructs students to keep a journal as a reflective exercise for documenting individual experience and personal development.

Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* (1973) values the act of writing as a means for both making meaning and creating identity. The "teacherless" classroom returns the responsibility for and control over learning to students. The book attends mostly to invention. Freewriting helps students discover ideas and their significance, center of gravity exercises develop and focus these ideas, and peer response groups allow writers to test their writing on an actual audience and revise on the basis of that response. In an appendix, "The Doubting Game and the Believing Game—An Analysis of the Intellectual Enterprise," Elbow critiques conventional Western skepticism, encouraging writers to engage a dialectic of perspectives—self and others, the familiar and the strange—to make themselves better writers, thinkers, and citizens.

In *Writing with Power* (1981), Elbow shows how objective as well as subjective evaluation criteria can help writers revise for specific audiences to accomplish specific purposes. His approach becomes more rhetorical. The emphasis on process continues. The context is social and active; the writer is concerned with having an impact on an actual audience. Elbow instructs writers to maintain a productive paradoxical tension between individual and group. Equipped with well-developed personal identities, individuals can function effectively in groups or culture. Interdependence is both the source and locus of power. Voice is a central concern in *Writing with Power*. It symbolizes the expressivist value system. Elbow and the expressivists, anticipating feminist pedagogy, work to subvert teaching practices and institutional structures that oppress, appropriate, or silence an individual's voice.

In collaboration with Pat Belanoff, Elbow further elaborates the role of groups in *A Community of Writers* (1989) and a companion pamphlet developed for teachers, *Sharing and Responding*. The expressivist use of groups anticipates John Trimbur's critique of collaborative writing in "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning." Trimbur champions dissensus. Dissensus recognizes, celebrates, and explores difference to reestablish social autonomy. Dissensus concedes the power of groups and culture to shape individuals, but maintains the possibility of individual agency. Expressivism shares this belief and purpose. The proof of dissensus, for Elbow and the expressivists, is voice, the individual identity of the writer working in a community.

✧ EXPRESSIVIST COMMENTARIES
AND BACKGROUND THEORY

In 1968, Elbow offers a pedagogical commentary, "A Method for Teaching Writing," that reflects the flavor and intensity of the early expressivists. He argues that voice empowers individuals to act in the world. He recounts his own

ence counseling applicants for conscientious objector (CO) draft status during the Vietnam conflict. Elbow, a CO himself, sees writing as a means of political action. He teaches those he counsels that they must do more than just make sense when writing applications for CO status; they must communicate intense belief through voice. Writing thus becomes a form of political or social activism. The essay establishes voice as a central concern for expressivists.

However, most first-generation expressivists were not inclined to theorize. They considered themselves teachers. When necessary they provided anecdotal narrative, metadiscourse rather than theory, to rationalize their practices. Macrorie's *Uptaught* (1970) and *A Vulnerable Teacher* (1974) serve as good examples. Expressivist metadiscourse shows the influence of various disciplines, especially linguistics, cognitive and developmental psychology, phenomenology, and existential philosophy.

The theoretical background includes two major sources: Britton's expressive function in language and Kinneavy's expressive discourse. The combination creates something of an ambiguity. Expressivists do not distinguish between the expressive function of language and expressive discourse, a type of text. This eventually causes a problem for some critics, especially Jeanette Harris. She condemns the indiscriminate use of the term *expressive*, suggesting rather four separate labels for textual phenomena that describe more precisely the various forms of discourse considered expressive. However, expressivists reject dualistic thinking, viewing ambiguity as a source of productive dialectic. In "Expressive Rhetoric: A Source Study," I examine Britton, Kinneavy, and commentary by Murray, Coles, and Elbow to construct an expressivist theory of language and epistemology.

Murray attends to epistemology in "Writing as Process: How Writing Finds Its Own Meaning" in Timothy Donovan and Ben McClelland's *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition* (1980), an anthology with a strong expressivist bent. In this "speculation upon the composing process" (3), Murray proposes an instrumental relation between composing and meaning-making. He examines three related activities: rehearsing, drafting, and revising. These involve complex interactions between contrary impulses: exploring and clarifying; collecting and combining; and writing and reading. Through these interactions, meaning evolves. Murray's commentary resembles James Britton's analysis of the function of expressive language in *Language and Learning* (1970): writing is a process of discovering meaning through shifting back and forth from participant to spectator modes, and writing involves interaction between self and subject. Through several iterations, writers use language to generate, connect, shape, and then evaluate for a purpose. According to Murray, "The writer is constantly learning from the writing what it intends to say. The writer listens for evolving meaning. . . . The writing itself helps the writer see the subject" (7). Murray includes a social element in the process, insisting that his students work within a writing community. Meaning results from the interaction of teacher and students, writers and readers, process and product—all accomplished through language.

Expressivist pedagogy is systematic and purposeful, based on a theory of

relations between language, meaning making, and self-development. Elbow's freewriting, based originally on his own journal writing, requires self-conscious language processing. In "Toward a Phenomenology of Freewriting," Elbow notes that the initial "experimental form of freewriting" occurred in his own personal journal (190). He describes a process similar to the generating/structuring/evaluating movement in Murray's model of the writing process. Elbow posits an analytic urge based in writing that results in understanding leading to action. Through the process the writer gains control of his subject, either himself or an intellectual concept. He mentions Progoff, a student of Jung, whose work in depth psychology culminated in the "Journal Workshop" method, a formal journal program.

Expressive writing exercises require students, in a sense, to write a phenomenology of self. In *A Theory of Discourse*, James Kinneavy argues that the expressive aim is psychologically prior to all others. Using Sartre and the phenomenologists, Kinneavy argues that through expressive discourse the self moves from private meaning to shared meaning that results ultimately in some action. Rather than a "primal whine," expressive discourse traces a path away from solipsism toward accommodation with the world and thus accomplishes purposeful action. As a consequence, Kinneavy elevates expressive discourse to the same order as referential, persuasive, and literary discourse.

But expressive discourse is not the exclusive province of the individual; it also has a social function. Kinneavy's analysis of the *Declaration of Independence* makes this clear. Contesting the claim that the purpose of the declaration is persuasive, Kinneavy traces its evolution through several drafts to prove that its primary aim is expressive: to establish an American group identity (410). Kinneavy's analysis suggests that rather than being individualistic and otherworldly, or naive and narcissistic, expressive discourse can be ideologically empowering.

✦ BRITTON'S EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION

Though expressivism borrows freely, some would say shamelessly, from a wide variety of sources, Britton's expressive function contains its theoretical center and so requires treatment in some detail. Britton offered a developmental taxonomy of writing derived from close observation of the process through which children learn language. With origins in linguistics and cognitive and developmental psychology, the taxonomy emphasizes the expressive function of language, providing a wealth of linguistic and pedagogical insights that can be developed for a variety of purposes, from theorizing expressivist rhetoric to justifying the study of literature to providing a write-to-learn methodology for writing across the curriculum. Britton's is the only discourse theory that attends to the regulative function of language and includes a developmental matrix that considers both mature and immature uses of language. Britton's expressivism has, in a sense, become part of the tacit tradition in contemporary teaching of writing; it is at the center of the National Writing Project and Whole Language movements.

Language and Learning presents Britton in the role of theorist. He blends narrative based on his experiences as teacher, writer, and parent with then cutting-edge literary criticism, linguistics, philosophy, and psychology. He invokes Edward Sapir's distinction between the referential and expressive functions of language. Britton emphasizes the expressive function. It opposes the referential, whose purpose is to represent and transcribe material reality. For Britton, the expressive function makes language personal and idiosyncratic. It provides a means for individuals to connect abstract concepts with personal experience and to negotiate the boundaries between public and private significance. The result is concrete understanding and learning. Additional sources for Britton's theory include L. S. Vygotsky's "inner speech"; Bruner's cognitive psychology, with its emphasis on the instrumental relationship between language and learning; and Noam Chomsky's generative transformational theory of language.

The Development of Writing Abilities (11–18) (1975) presents Britton as a researcher validating the theoretical insights offered in the earlier book. It offers an observational and empirical analysis of the writing students do in school. Britton and his colleagues focus on the two primary roles writers can play when producing language: the participant role in which writers use language to get things done and the spectator role in which writers use language to relive the past. As participants, writers shape reality to an end. As spectators, writers recreate reality.

Locating participant and spectator roles at either end of a continuum, he introduces a third mediating role, the expressive, in which the writer functions as both participant and spectator. From each role he derives a category of writing. In the participant role, writers produce *transactional* writing, in which language is used to accomplish the business of the world. Transactional writing is divided further into *informative* and *conative* writing, roughly corresponding to the traditional classifications of exposition and persuasion. In material added to the second edition of *Language and Learning* (1993), Britton adjusts these categories slightly to include *informative*, *regulative*, and *persuasive* writing. Informative writing makes information available, regulative writing impels or commands action, and persuasive writing moves readers from inaction or ambivalence to specific action. In each instance the writing involves a transaction between writer and reader, hence its name.

On the other end of the continuum, writers acting in the spectator role produce *poetic* writing. Poetic writing is language used as an art medium, as a verbal icon, whose purpose is to be an object that pleases or satisfies the writer. The reader's response is to share that satisfaction. In traditional terms poetic writing is literary discourse, language that "exists for *its own sake* and not as a means of achieving something else" (Britton et al., 91).

With transactional and poetic writing constituting boundaries of the participant/spectator continuum, Britton establishes a third category, *expressive* writing, that mediates the two. As a functional category, expressive writing represents a mode rather than a form. More important than its existence as a text, expressive writing achieves its purpose through allowing the text to come to existence. Examples include "thinking out loud on paper" (89); notes and drafts intended for the personal and private use of writers and their collaborators;

journal writing documenting or exploring immediate thoughts, feelings, and moods; and personal letters.

In the expressive mode, writers shuttle back and forth between participant and spectator roles, generating ideas, then shaping them into language that can stand on its own. With its generative function, expressive writing plays an obvious role in learning to write: "Thus, in developmental terms, the expressive is a kind of matrix from which differentiated forms of mature writing are developed" (83). In addition, as a link between the private and personal and the public and social, as the language of association and connection, expressive language is the language of learning.

From its inception, Britton's taxonomy has influenced process-based approaches to teaching writing. The approaches developed by Murray and Elbow, for example, implicitly or explicitly use Britton's developmental taxonomy to help students and teachers navigate the journey through which personal and private insights and sensations become coherent, publicly accessible writing. In "Expressive Rhetoric," I argue that Britton's taxonomy creates common space that contains the seeming oppositions among expressive, cognitive, and social approaches to rhetoric, providing a coherent model for understanding writing as the result of interactions among individually and culturally defined forces.

Returning to alternative textbooks for a moment, William Coles uses the realization that expressive discourse has both individual and social functions to great advantage. *The Plural I: The Teaching of Writing* (1978) presents a semester-long sequence of writing assignments that engages students in writing self-critical phenomenology. Through the sequence, the class, as individuals and as a group, come to agree on a set of meanings and values concerning the purpose of education, in the process achieving Coles' goal of forming his students into practicing humanists. The sequence culminates in a formal review and evaluation of the work of the course. Anticipating the reflective self-assessments that have become important in current portfolio evaluation practice, Coles' final assignment asks for formal reflection: "Where did you start this term? Where did you seem to come out? . . . who were you? Who are you now?" (258). Those interested in more work connecting expressivism and reflective thinking should consult Jean MacGregor's *Student Self-Evaluation: Fostering Reflective Learning* (1993), especially Richard Haswell's "Student Self-Evaluations and Developmental Change" that argues a causal relationship between expressive work in reflective contexts and progression through schemes of both cognitive and moral development. In Kinneavy's terms, Coles is asking his students to write *apologia*, a high level of expressive discourse.

◆ RECEPTION, IDEOLOGICAL CRITIQUES, AND THEORETICAL DEFENSES

Expressivism originated in opposition to mainstream practice, offering an alternative to current-traditional teaching. The mainstream reacted in a variety of ways. Chief among these was simple dismissal. Expressivism was labeled a fringe movement. More substantial opposition came in the form of the back-

to-basics movement which, with its emphasis on grammar and standard formats, was really current-traditional teaching dressed in new clothes.

Several other rhetorical schools grew up along with expressivism, all part of the renaissance in rhetoric in the 1960s and 1970s. These other schools, especially neoclassicism and cognitive rhetoric, were not averse to theory. Expressivists distrusted theory because it often distracted attention from students and teaching. Given the early expressivist aversion to theory, it is no surprise that formal theoretical considerations of expressivism are generally critical. William Covino notes the antipathy of both classicists and cognitivists, both of whom label expressivism's *sense* of the self and its importance irrational (4). Lately, however, cognitivists have reaffirmed the important but problematic role of the self. The arch-cognitivist Jerome Bruner, though "acutely uncomfortable" with considerations of the self, concedes that merely labeling the self a cultural construct does not negate its power. In *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (1986), he theorizes a "transactional self" (57–69) that through metacognition and reflection "penetrates knowledge," allowing us to own that knowledge and ultimately become "a member of the culture-creating community" (132). Membership in such a community is the goal of much expressivist work. In *The Construction of Negotiated Meaning*, cognitivist Linda Flower includes expressive practices along with rhetorical practices among the "basics" that are the beginning point of all literacy education. She references John Willinsky's *The New Literacy* (1990) to confirm the centrality of Britton's expressive writing as both the originating point and the "heart of meaning making" (25).

The most aggressive critiques originate in social rhetoric, specifically from Berlin and Lester Faigley. Berlin offers an extended ideological critique in "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories," where he portrays "expressionism" as an untheorized and ideologically debased form of neo-Platonism. Elsewhere he links expressivism to "Emersonian romantic" rhetoric and subsequently to the "rhetoric of liberal culture" and to Dewey and the progressive education movement. He locates expressivist rhetoric among "subjective" theories of rhetoric. His critique is rich, attending in considerable detail to expressivist practices to construct a theory despite his own claim that expressivism has none. His self-admitted allegiance to social epistemic rhetoric, however, results in readings that are not verified by close analysis of expressivist work. Berlin and the other social rhetoricians view expressivism's primary flaw as a false and otherworldly epistemology of the self that privileges individualism and rejects the material world. Faigley argues that expressivism's romantic view of the self is philosophically and politically retrograde, making it ineffectual in postmodern times. Further, expressivism's concern with the individual and authentic voice directs students away from social and political problems in the material world.

⊸ SYNTHESES

Attacks by expressivism's critics have resulted in several syntheses that challenge the presumption that expressivism is atheoretical. Responding to attacks,

however, places expressivism's defenders in a position of alienation, not a position of power. Such alienation has resulted in a new and powerful strand of expressivist work that articulates the theoretical base that has always been present though latent in expressivist work. Elbow, after he gets his work with students and teachers done in *Writing Without Teachers*, turns to the theoretical with an appendix essay criticizing Western epistemology and the institutional control it exerts in education.

Merging theory and practice is the aim of much current expressivist work, work informed by feminism and critical pedagogy. Sherrie Gradin, working from a feminist perspective, has attempted to synthesize the expressivist potential for reflective consciousness raising with liberatory and critical pedagogy to articulate more clearly the practice of left and radical epistemicism. The two constituent urges, the expressive concern to potentiate self-aware individuals as agents and the epistemic concern with social context and ideology, create social expressivism.

Gradin's purpose in *Romancing Rhetorics: Social Expressivist Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing* (1995) is to politicize expressivism and "establish a pedagogy of equity" in which all can contribute and be heard (121). She explores a commonly overlooked connection between romanticism and expressivism. Pointing to German romanticism's concern for social justice and political action, she counters the claim that expressivism values individualism to the exclusion of social concerns. Rather, expressivists value autonomy as signaled in the concern to empower people through voice, and they believe that individuals can use personal awareness to act against oppressive material and psychological conditions. She also connects expressivism with feminism, noting that Elbow and his pedagogy are referenced in Mary Belenky and colleagues' *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (1986). Similarly, in *Writing from the Margins: Power and Pedagogy for Teachers of Composition* (1990), Carolyn Erikson Hill considers Elbow and other expressivists as models for building a new pedagogy of awareness and equity. Another book connecting expressivist theory, feminism, and the teaching of writing is Cynthia Gannett's *Gender and the Journal: Diaries and Academic Discourse* (1992), a work of teacher-research that offers historical as well as ideological analyses of journal use in personal and pedagogical contexts.

Responding to the complaint that expressivists are antitheoretical, Elbow reconsiders his own practice. He elaborates a theoretical frame, examines his application, and provides an extended defense of voice in *Landmark Essays: On Voice and Writing* (1994), a collection of sixteen essays by various theorists, including Bakhtin, Walker Gibson, and Walter Ong, as well as allies and critics of expressivism such as bell hooks and Faigley. In an introductory essay, "About Voice and Writing," Elbow traces the voice controversy as far back as Aristotle and Plato. He equates voice and ethos. He argues that because Aristotle includes techniques to, in Aristotle's words, "make ourselves *thought to be* sensible and morally good . . ." (Elbow's emphasis), Aristotle affirms Plato's earlier declaration that ethos—good character—is the central concern in all rhetoric. Aristotle "is affirming both positions in what is in fact a common sense view: 'It's nice to *be* trustworthy; but if you're skilled you can fake it'" (xli).

"Resonant" voice, one of five empirically verifiable instances of voice, is Elbow's primary concern. Sensitive to critiques of the expressivist view of self, Elbow walks a careful theoretical line. Resonant voice manages to get a great deal of the self *"behind* the words." Discourse can never "articulate a whole person," but at times we can "find words that seem to capture the rich complexity of the unconscious . . . that somehow seem to *resonate with* or *have behind them* the unconscious as well as the conscious [his italics]. . . . [W]ords of this sort . . . we experience as resonant—and through them we have a sense of presence with the writer" (xxxiv). As with voice, Elbow relates "presence" to ethos in classical rhetoric. A significant article illuminating the issue of ethos in classical rhetoric, especially as it is applied, correctly or incorrectly, in contemporary work on the teaching of writing is Roger Cherry's "Ethos Versus Persona: Self-Representation in Written Discourse."

Later in "Introduction: About Voice and Writing," Elbow connects resonant voice with self-identity and argues that voice in writing is a locus for power. From a pragmatic perspective, he argues against a binary view that opposes sentimental (expressivist) and sophisticated (postmodern) views of self; writers need to use both. The sentimental self (the believer) functions best in exploratory writing. The sophisticated self (the doubter) works well when revising with a pragmatic end in mind.

In the same volume, Randall Freisinger's "Voicing the Self: Toward a Pedagogy of Resistance in a Postmodern Age" counters the claim that expressivism devalues social and political engagement, arguing instead that the expressivist concept of self is a starting point for resistance as defined by Henry Giroux. Freisinger undertakes a serious examination of postmodern theory and its relation to expressivism. Examining the critiques of Berlin and Faigley in the light of Ira Shor's liberatory practice and current postmodern theories of agency and self-construction, Freisinger notes with appropriate irony that liberatory pedagogy makes extensive use of expressivist strategies to accomplish the goal of creating a consciousness of social and cultural formation in students that empowers them to resist that formation. More about that at the end.

↭ OTHER RECENT WORK

The best index of any movement's significance is its persistence in the professional literature. By that measure, expressivism thrives. The ideological critiques inspired the several volumes of expressivist theory and application noted above. In addition, two small books implicitly critique expressivism but offer expressivist applications. Both address issues of self and identity in the writing classroom. Both steer clear of the expressivist/social rhetoric anomalies addressed above to avoid tarring or being tarred in the process. Robert Brooke uses learning and identity negotiation theory in *Writing and the Sense of Self* (1991) to explore the social and intellectual dynamics of the writing workshop. In *The Performance of Self in Student Writing* (1997), Thomas Newkirk uses narrative theory to repair what he views as an unproductive disciplinary split be-

tween the social science-dominated professional compositionists, whom I would place in the long tradition of rhetorical inquiry, and the "writers," among whom he positions the expressivists Donald Murray and Ken Macrorie. Both books offer contributions but limit their value by not engaging the controversies as thoroughly as Elbow and hooks do.

In addition, expressivism continues to receive attention in *College English, College Composition and Communication, Rhetoric Review,* and the *Journal of Advanced Composition.* Expressivism's kinship with philosophy, evident in Kinneavy, explains a recent defense against the ideological critiques. In "Politics and Ordinary Language: A Defense of Expressivist Rhetorics," Thomas O'Donnell questions the motivation of some ideological critics, accusing them of being more interested in teaching a particular ideology than in providing students with the tools of social and political critique. Expressivism's strength is its insistence that all concerns, whether individual, social, or political, must originate in personal experience and be documented in the student's own language. What O'Donnell calls expressivism's "unguardedness" makes it attractive to teachers concerned with raising political consciousness. He offers a defense based on ordinary language philosophy, showing how expressivist practices "facilitate investigations of political issues in unique, sometimes necessary ways" (424).

Another strong contribution comes in the work of Steven Fishman, a philosophy professor who teaches from a writing across the curriculum perspective, and Lucille McCarthy, who introduced Fishman to writing across the curriculum theory and practice. They constitute an effective collaborative team using Fishman's teaching in general education philosophy courses as a pedagogical laboratory. In addition, McCarthy serves as research methodologist and evaluator for their pedagogical experiments.

In a series of articles, Fishman and McCarthy examine attacks on expressivism based in discourse community theory. Led by Bartholomae, critics argue that emphasizing personal writing, as expressivism does, wastes students' time. Rather, students need training in the conventions of academic discourse, so they can succeed in the institutions that will provide them access to economic and social power. Fishman and McCarthy begin their counterargument by asking "Is Expressivism Dead?" Answering no, they argue that expressivism does not endorse the concept of the isolated individual. Arguing from the same socially concerned German romanticism as Gradin, they contend that expressivist techniques can be used to achieve social-constructivist goals in a writing across the curriculum context. In "Community in the Expressivist Classroom," they explore the tension between conventional authoritarian and expressivist liberal and communitarian classroom values. Fishman claims some success in promoting student voice while teaching disciplinary conventions. However, his experience underscores the complexity of the expressivist classroom where students function as experts and teachers as learners. They conclude that this complexity, rather than the reductive either/or positions generally presented in the scholarly literature, offers significant opportunities for progress.

The last essay, "Teaching for Student Change: A Deweyan Alternative to

Radical Pedagogy," defends the safe and cooperative classroom championed by the expressivists against recent charges by feminists and critical teachers that expressivist pedagogy protects the status quo by encouraging politeness that camouflages inherent conflicts in the classroom and society at large. Fishman and McCarthy offer an alternative that privileges diversity and encourages transformation for teachers who "find certain types of conflict unattractive but who seek student critique and change" (344). In *John Dewey and the Challenge of Classroom Practice* (1998), Fishman and McCarthy propose an approach that integrates the curricular interests and needs of teachers and the needs and experiences of students. The approach is writing intensive, employing dialogical written commentaries where students pose and answer each others' questions, with Fishman providing additional written commentary as a mentor and co-inquirer. Very much in the spirit of Shor's approach in *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life*, but without ideological and political agenda, Fishman's question and answer approach merges class topics with student experience and exigencies, allowing Fishman to accomplish his goal of having students learn substantive intellectual content through personalizing and applying philosophical concepts in their own lives. McCarthy analyzes the students' written work to demonstrate that they do engage and apply the course topics and learn in the process. Their approach offers a paradigmatic example that applies expressive values to integrate the individual with the social and to serve the ultimate educational goal of fostering individual moral and ethical development to influence civic and cultural life.

⊕ CODA: PRACTICE/THEORY, THEORY/PRACTICE

Freisinger's analysis of voice and agency noted above makes extensive use of Paul Smith's *Discerning the Subject* (1988). Smith critiques postmodern theory for being a victim of its own world view, invoking the common failure of "disciplinary self-reflexivity" as the origin of the problem. He argues that postmodern theory relies so intensely on the view that humans are created entirely by their social/cultural experience—that culture and history determine identity—that postmodernism is unable to conceptualize a subject that can recognize and move beyond its determined nature. A socially constructed, totally determined self, even if it could achieve self-consciousness, is not capable of seeing anything other than social construction and determinism. This world view can only perpetuate itself, circling more and more in upon itself in its constraining views of determinism. In Smith's terms:

> Approaching disciplines in this way puts the accent not on the "nature" of the object as such, but on the aspects of agency inscribed within it. What blocks disciplinary self-reflection then is the untheorizability of the activation of its own objects—their *fabrication* as determinations of experience—and this is precisely why, contrary to certain hysterically defensive views, interdisciplinary research has always been immanent to the disciplines. Every discipline is obliged to turn to its "others" to resolve its self doubt. (xviii)

That is to say, I think, either that cultural theory in rhetoric establishes its identity only by devaluing its other—in this case the presumed naive and ideologically retrograde vision of self and resistance in expressivism—or that cultural theory in rhetoric will have to look beyond itself for an answer to its own self-contradiction: the problem is agency, but agency is impossible in a determined system. Specifically, Freisinger argues, resistance becomes possible only through expressivist strategies. The problem is disciplinary definition, and an imperative to violate those boundaries. Postmodern theory depends on resistance to alter the determined system it describes and decries, and expressivism depends on a social constructive view to discover and activate the self it theorizes.

Back to bell hooks. *Teaching to Transgress* centers itself squarely on the problem of dichotomizing theory and practice. A student of Paulo Freire, she views praxis, the convergence of theory and practice, as the primary concern of liberatory pedagogy. She recalls her childhood, a time of alienation in which she felt the oppressive power of her family shaping her into a proper black girl-child. It was then that she developed a habit of theorizing. She calls that experience her introduction to critical thinking:

> Living a childhood without a sense of home, I found a place of sanctuary in "theorizing," in making sense out of what was happening. I found a place where I could imagine possible futures, a place where life could be lived differently. This "lived" experience of critical thinking, of reflection and analysis, because [sic] a place where I worked at explaining the hurt and making it go away. Fundamentally, I learned from this experience that theory could be a healing place. (61)

Praxis is the means and locus for building critical consciousness. With Elbow she shares a goal; the aim of her pedagogy is to create a place for voices. The voices in the classroom include the voice of the teacher as well as those of the students. Her expectations of the teacher are extremely high: to bring students to voice, teachers must have and understand voice. And voice is related to self-actualization. She calls this kind of teaching, "engaged pedagogy": "Progressive, holistic education, 'engaged pedagogy,' is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (15).

Engaged pedagogy involves a holism that repairs the habitual dichotomizing of conventional thinking, repairing splits between body and mind, intellect and spirit, teaching and learning, and theory and practice. hooks describes a set of dialectical relationships that echoes Elbow's theme in "A Method for Teaching Writing": "Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks" (21). Engaged pedagogy, holistic teaching, these are the expressivist project.

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